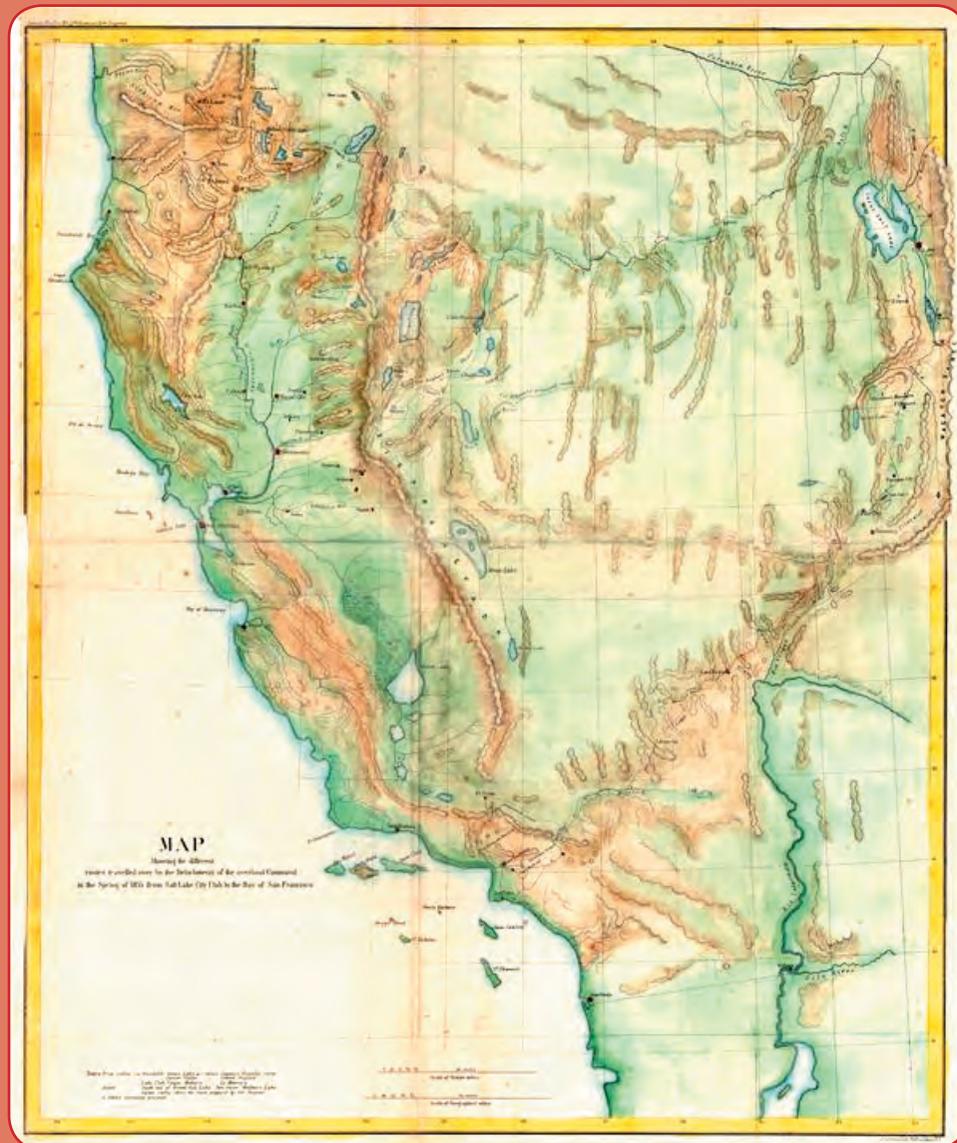


# *Desert Tracks*

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

June 2014



**The Central Southern Route from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles.**

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

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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**

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

Website: southern-trails.org

Membership: octa-trails.org

President: Jack Fletcher      jpfletcher@wavecable.com

Vice Presidents:

AZ: Greg McEachron      gmceachr@tampabay.rr.com

CA: Chris Wray      cptwray@yahoo.com

NM: Cecelia Bell      cecialj@b@aol.com

OK: David Miller      dmiller1841@yahoo.com

TX: Claude Hudspeth      cbh3ed@gmail.com

Secretary: John Fromm

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Historian: Rose Ann Tompkins

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**Mowry's "Map showing the  
different routes traveled over by the  
Detachments of the Overland Command in  
the Spring of 1855 from Salt lake City, Utah  
to the Bay of San Francisco"**

*courtesy Will Bagley*

## From the Editors

One of the highlights of the recent OCTA Southern Trails Chapter's symposium in Temecula, California, was a paper prepared by Will Bagley on the Salt Lake/Los Angeles wagon road. We have included the text of the paper in this issue. Bagley, who is one of the country's leading experts on the historic trails to California, was unfortunately not in attendance at the conference; the paper was read by Donna Middleton, an instructor in the English Department at California State University, Fullerton. Middleton's report on the conference is given on page 2, and her photos of the event are shown on the inside back cover.

Gerald Ahnert's work to locate the Montezuma Head Tank on the Butterfield Trail led to the discovery of the existence of an African-American community – Mobile, Arizona – that previously existed in the Forty Mile Desert. Ahnert's article in this issue includes details of his research on the tank and photos of former members of the community and their descendants.

Rose Ann Tompkins' and Tracy DeVault's article on the Trail Turtles' spring mapping trip – whose primary purpose was to locate an alternate trail through the Apache Pass area – mentions two interesting side discoveries: the location where John Russell Bartlett made one of the sketches in his book *Personal Narrative*, and the existence of a WWII prisoner of war camp near Lordsburg, New Mexico. We have included brief articles by Tompkins and DeVault on these finds.

On the Trail Turtles' 2003 mapping trip, the group discovered what they called a "trail paradise" near the Oatman Massacre site (*Desert Tracks*, January 2004). This included standing water, petroglyphs, and an inscription on a rock that reads "O. W. Randall 1849." Tompkins later found genealogical information on O. W. Randall which she reported in the December 2006 issue of this publication. Recently, a group of Randall's descendants traveled to the site with Rose Ann and Harland Tompkins and Dave Stanton of Mesa, Arizona. The article below by Randy Randall not only reports on the visit, but also gives new details about O. W. Randall and his family.

Several recent books will be of interest to our readers. We report on the new book by Steve Hackel on Junípero Serra, the founder of the California missions. Serra, who was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1988, is a controversial figure. Hackel, an associate professor of history at the University of California, Riverside, gives a balanced and impartial view of Serra's life. Walter Drew Hill reports on a recent book by Terri Mort on Cochise and the Bascom affair, a topic of ongoing interest to members of our chapter. Historian David Miller reviews a new book by John Kessell on Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco. Kessell, an emeritus dean of the history of the Southwest, presents the first full biography of this extraordinary 18<sup>th</sup>-century soldier, cartographer, and artist. Miller also reports on his recent activities with Jack Beale Smith to promote historic trail sites in Oklahoma.

*Deborah and Jon Lawrence*

### Upcoming Conferences in 2014

"1864 – Drama on the Medicine Road"  
Oregon-California Trails Association 2014 Convention  
Kearney, Nebraska: August 5-9, 2014  
[www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org)

"Hispanics on the Santa Fe Trail"  
Santa Fe Trail Association 2014 Rendezvous  
Larned, Kansas: September 18-20, 2014  
[www.santafetrail.org](http://www.santafetrail.org)

"West Texas Trails"  
West Texas Historical Association  
Quitaque, Texas: October 25, 2014  
[Marisue.Potts@wtha.org](mailto:Marisue.Potts@wtha.org)

## News from the Trail

**Gerald Ahnert** reports that he has recently given a number of presentations on the Butterfield Trail in Arizona, including a talk at the Hauser Museum in Sierra Vista, at the Arizona Historical Society in Casa Grande, and at the Gila Bend library. He guided a tour to Sentinel Plain for the Gila Bend library and to the Oatman site for the historical society in Yuma. He also has made a project proposal to the National Forest Service to establish historical markers at Dragoon Springs, and he has assisted the Quartermaster Museum in Yuma in their efforts to construct a replica of a Butterfield stage wagon. He plans to give presentations in the near future at the Lost Dutchman's Historical Society near Apache Junction and at the libraries in Eloy and Yuma. As mentioned in his article in this issue (page 16), he is also working with the Hudson family to have a marker placed commemorating the Montezuma Head Tank.

**Rose Ann Tompkins**, who helped guide the Randall family to the O. W. Randall rock near the Oatman site (see the article on page 27 in this issue of *Desert Tracks*), sent the following reflections on what she felt was a special day: "It was almost surreal to see five present-day Randalls, from three generations, standing next to where their ancestor had stood 175 years ago to leave his name on the hard basalt rock in this small canyon. There was a lot of personal satisfaction with this event. It was something that started when the Trail Turtles documented this find and culminated with bringing the family into contact with that day in 1849. I did not realize when the day started that it would affect me so profoundly. Well done, Trail Turtles!"

**Hale Sargent**, the interpretive specialist for the National Park Service (NPS) Anza National Historic Trail, writes that there is a new website ([www. AnzaHistoricTrail.org](http://www.AnzaHistoricTrail.org)) for the Anza Trail. The website, which was constructed in a partnership between the NPS and the Anza Trail Foundation, includes cutting-edge web mapping technology that allows the user to zoom in to locate Anza Trail sites, and also contains a timeline, expedition diaries, and archives of relevant articles.

## Temecula Symposium

On March 27-29, 2014, the Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association held its spring symposium in Temecula, California. The symposium was held in cooperation with the Temecula Valley Historical Museum and Vail Ranch Restoration Association (VaRRA).

The agenda included films, presentations, silent auctions, a chapter meeting, and tours. VaRRA hosted a welcome reception on Wednesday evening at the Vail Ranch. The symposium got underway early on Thursday with local authors and historians greeting members and presenters. The group enjoyed the films *Saving a Legacy* and *In Pursuit of a Dream*. Members experienced a full slate of high-quality presentations from speakers covering a variety of educational trail topics on both Thursday and Friday. The chapter meeting gave participants an opportunity to exchange ideas, discuss financial concerns, and learn about preservation efforts. Concluding the official business, the chapter members were treated to refreshments provided by the Temecula Valley Historical Museum. Attendees were allowed to stroll leisurely throughout the museum and enjoy the exhibits.

On Saturday, a small group of attendees arrived at the museum for a walking tour through the rustic, historic surroundings of Old Town Temecula. Docent Bonnie Martland, a citizen of Temecula, guided the group, highlighting landmarks and relating stories of Temecula's colorful residents. The ambiance of the town combined with her storytelling contributed immensely to a greater understanding of Temecula's rich past. After the tour concluded, Bonnie recommended a trip to Vail Ranch, VaRRA's History Center, and Wolf's Store. At the Open House of the History Center, visitors were able to touch artifacts and view other treasures and they were encouraged to climb aboard a replica of the Butterfield stagecoaches that traveled through the Temecula Valley from 1858 until 1861. Also, sightseers could walk on the portion of the Southern Emigrant Trail that runs through the area.

It was a rewarding experience for all who attended.

**Donna T. Middleton**

[Photos of the symposium can be found on the inside back cover of this issue.]

## News from Oklahoma

Several historic trails cross Oklahoma. There are three 19<sup>th</sup>-century emigration trails – the Trail of Tears, the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Trail (including Josiah Gregg’s pioneering wagon route and Edward Fitzgerald Beale’s wagon road), and the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail, which crosses the extreme western tip of the Oklahoma Panhandle. There are three cattle trails – the Western, the Abilene (Chisholm), and the Sedalia (Shawnee) trails. The Butterfield overland stage route passed through extreme southeastern Oklahoma between Fort Smith and the Texas border on the Red River.

In Oklahoma, there is more interest in the cattle trails than there is in the forty-niner emigrant trails to California. To increase interest in the latter, Jack Smith and I have been focusing our efforts on establishing ties with communities and land owners situated along the routes of the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Trail, Beale’s Wagon Road, and the original wagon route laid out by Josiah Gregg between the Arkansas River and Santa Fe in the late 1830s. Much of the road has been plowed under, but some sections are still visible on Google Earth. We work directly with local land owners, since virtually all of the overland trails in Oklahoma are situated on private land.



Tom Turner (right) and Jack Smith (left). The emigrant road passed through Mr. Turner’s farm to Beale’s Bridge on the Little River. Mr. Turner graciously permitted historical signs on his farm next to the county road that runs parallel to the emigrant wagon road.

*photo by David Miller*

Recently we have been doing field work related to Edward’s Trading Post, which was located on the trail near the mouth of the Little River on the north side of the Canadian River. This was the last trading post California-bound emigrants passed until reaching New Mexican villages on the Pecos River several hundred miles to the west. The post included a blacksmith’s shop and a well-stocked store. When Edward Fitzgerald Beale laid out his wagon road across Oklahoma in 1858, he selected a site for the construction of one of his iron bridges across the Little River that would lead emigrants directly to Edward’s post. The bridge has long since disappeared – a victim of the Civil War – but some of the pilings can still be seen in the river where the bridge once stood.

***David Miller, Vice President for Oklahoma***



Beale Road historian Jack Smith standing on the sandstone ledge which supported the abutment of Beale’s iron bow bridge spanning the Little River. Jack is pointing in the direction of Edward’s Trading Post, which was situated just beyond the trees on the far side of the river.

*photo by David Miller*

*Junípero Serra: California's Founding Father*

by Steven W. Hackel

New York: Hill and Wang, 2013.

ISBN 978-0-80909-531-5.

327 pages, maps, illustrations.

Hardcover \$27.

For Californians like us, Father Junípero Serra's establishment of the California mission was the focal point of our fourth-grade social studies lessons. However, few Californians – unless they are Alta California history buffs – know anything about Serra's personal life. Moreover, since he was beautified in 1988, he has been praised by those who celebrate him as the founder of the chain of Catholic missions that extended from San Diego to slightly north of San Francisco and he has been castigated by critics who see the California mission system as a dismal failure. In his new biography, historian Steven Hackel examines Serra's controversial life and places it in the social, political, and religious context of his times. A scholar of California history, Hackel spent almost ten years translating and examining letters, diaries, and other documents to create this comprehensive biography of Serra.

Born in 1713 in the town of Petra on the island of Mallorca, a Spanish outpost in the Mediterranean, Serra was christened Miquel Joseph Serra. Hackel suggests that he was likely raised “at the edge of poverty” by a strict father and that he spent his childhood working the family land and attending a Franciscan school. Before the age of 17, he joined the Franciscan Order, adopting the name “Junípero” to honor Brother Juniper, a follower of St. Francis. He spent the next two decades at the seminary and university, first as a student and then as a professor. In 1749, at the age of 36, he left Mallorca for New Spain to follow a calling as apostolic missionary to the Indians. Not long after his arrival in Mexico City, he requested a transfer to the Sierra Gorda Indian Missions, north of Mexico City. He spent nine years there, and then returned to Mexico City where he stayed for seven years in the Convent of San Fernando. Serra's skills as an administrator and his ability to minister to the Indians soon brought him to the attention of his superiors. According to Hackel, Serra quickly learned how to manipulate his New World audiences. Using theatrics and props, he cajoled

sinner to confess and repent or face the consequences of eternal damnation. In addition to his evangelical responsibilities, he served as a field agent for the Spanish Inquisition. Hackel contends that Serra was an “unrelenting interrogator of those he thought had wronged the Church,” and he details two cases where Serra, as *comisario* for the Inquisition, oversaw investigations of witchcraft.

After the Spanish Crown's removal of the Jesuits from New Spain in 1767, the government requested that the Franciscans replace them as missionaries in Baja California. Serra was appointed head of these missions. The next year the Spanish Crown decided to extend the missions into Alta California. This project was intended both to Christianize the Indians and to serve Spain's strategic interest by preventing Russian explorations of and claims to the Pacific Coast. During his 700-mile trip from Loreto in Baja California to San Diego in 1769, Serra recorded his experiences in a diary. Throughout that 95-day journey through unfamiliar territory, Serra encountered large numbers of unbaptized Indians – Cochií, Kiliwa, Pai-Pai, and Kumeyaay – for the first time.

Although he was 50 years old, asthmatic, and lame (a result of a chronically ulcerous leg), Serra led the founding of the Mission of San Diego in 1769, participated in an expedition to locate San Francisco Bay, and founded eight other missions. He was frequently hindered by Spanish military and civil authorities. In 1773, difficulties with Pedro Fages, the military commander, compelled Father Serra to travel to Mexico City to argue before Viceroy Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa for the removal of Fages as the governor of California Nueva. In 1774, Bucareli removed Fages from office, after which time Serra returned to Alta California.

According to Hackel, despite the controversies surrounding Serra, he distinguished himself by his exceptional endurance, energy, and determination. In an attempt to do penance for his sins and the sins of others, Serra wore heavy shirts with sharp wires pointed inward, he whipped himself in public until he bled, and he used a candle to scar the flesh of his chest. His zeal led to conversions; by the time of his death in 1784 at Mission Carmel, approximately 6,000 Indians had been baptized at the nine missions established by him or under his auspices.

However, Hackel argues that the Indians who accepted baptism ultimately rebelled against Catholicism and fled from the very fathers who had converted them. Hackel feels that it is important to interpret Serra correctly because he embodies a “history of Indian-missionary relations.” In his epilogue Hackel contends that Serra’s practice of Catholicism “was typical of the thousands of Catholic missionaries who came to the Americas during the early modern period” and that Serra’s “dismissive assumptions about Indians’ religious practices and his beliefs that Indians had to be saved from their own barbarousness” was similar to his fellow priests. According to Hackel, the mission system didn’t transform Indian cultures and customs as much as Serra would have liked, and although he established a chain of missions, he left a legacy of cruelty toward Indians. Serra insisted that Indians farm as Europeans and live in the missions. The concentration of large numbers of people into missions meant increased exposure to disease and soaring death rates. Serra made enemies of civil and military leaders for his irascible nature, his failure to follow orders, and his belief that he always knew what was best.

A contentious and contested figure, Junípero Serra deserves the attention of any student of early California. Steven W. Hackel’s in-depth and multi-faceted biography, *Junípero Serra: California’s Founding Father*, is sure to find its way onto the shelf of students and scholars of the history of the West.

### ***Deborah and Jon Lawrence***

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*The Wrath of Cochise: The Bascom Affair and the Origins of the Apache Wars*

by Terry Mort

New York: Pegasus Books, 2013.

ISBN: 9781605984223.

322 pages, maps, illustrations.

Hardcover, \$27.90.

In a remote corner of Arizona in 1861, Indian raiders ran off the cattle of John Ward at his Senoita Creek ranch and kidnapped his 12-year-old stepson Felix. Ward complained to Lieutenant Colonel Morrison, the commandant at Fort

Buchanan, 12 miles to the southeast, insisting that the Chiricahua were the culprits. Morrison ordered Lieutenant George Bascom to proceed into Cochise’s territory with 54 troopers to recover the boy and the cattle. The inexperienced Bascom invited Cochise to meet on neutral ground at Apache Pass, north of the Chiricahua Mountains in southeast Arizona. Cochise and a party of others, which included his brother, his wife, and his two children, arrived expecting a diplomatic parley. Instead, Bascom told them that they were hostages for the boy’s return. Cochise pulled out his knife, ripped open the tent, and escaped. One Apache male was killed and the rest of his party was captured. Unfolding outward from the Bascom affair, Terry Mort’s *The Wrath of Cochise* discusses the sequence of events that led up to the incident. His final chapter provides an overview of the resulting Apache wars that ravaged the Southwest for the next 25 years. Mort’s book offers a companion account to Robert Utley’s *Geronimo* which was reviewed in the June 2013 issue of *Desert Tracks*.

Although Bascom is usually blamed for the incident that ignited the war between the Chiricahua and the U. S. Army, Mort does not agree, and in *The Wrath of Cochise*, he attempts to set the story straight by examining the reasons why Bascom and Cochise did what they did at Apache Pass. According to Mort, their encounter had all the elements of Greek tragedy: the actions of the officer and the Chiricahua chief unleashed responses out of proportion to their mistakes, producing disastrous results. Mort examines the historical forces that brought Cochise and Bascom together and how Bascom’s ignorance of the Apaches and their culture led him to begin a war with the Apaches that lasted until 1872. Bascom’s decision to take hostage members of the family of Cochise in order to force him to return a boy the Chiricahuas did not have was a result of his ignorance. Most historians also hold him accountable for the decision to hang Cochise’s brother and nephews in retaliation for the torture and murder of the captives the Indians had taken to exchange for their relatives. This is unfair, Mort argues, because there were two Army officers and an Army doctor who arrived at the Bowie stage station shortly after Bascom arrived at Apache Pass. They outranked Bascom and participated in the council which jointly determined to hang the Apache captives.

A problem in writing an accurate history of what actually happened is that there is very little surviving Bascom correspondence, so Mort is left with conjectures as to why

Bascom did what he did. Mort contends that men like Bascom would be dependent on their West Point education, which he considers a primary cause of the lieutenant's ignorance. West Point's heavy emphasis on mathematics and civil engineering was useless to an infantry officer facing hostile Apaches in Arizona. Bascom was, therefore, unprepared for facing his Indian adversaries. This is not to say that Mort portrays the soldiers as blundering oppressors. Drawing on the work of anthropologists as well as historians to reconstruct the culture, way of life, and behavioral norms of the Chiricahuas, Mort concludes that Bascom, a young officer who was "authorized and instructed" to use all the force that was necessary, deserves our pity, while Cochise's behavior, on the other hand, was an "intentional display of defiance, a kind of hubris . . ." He asserts that Cochise was by no means entirely the victim. "I dislike the binary constructs that people put onto everything nowadays," he says. "He was an accomplished leader, but he was a murderer – and the border was an awful place."

Mort, who studied literature at Princeton, also compares Cochise to Achilles, a parallel that stretches its relevance. He uses John Dryden, James Fenimore Cooper, and Charles Dickens to elaborate on his discussion of the Noble Savage and Aristotle's *Poetics* to support his position that the Bascom affair has all of the elements of Greek tragedy. Mort's literary treatment of the Bascom incident is entirely too extended. Some readers are sure to find it perplexing and, in this reviewer's opinion, it constitutes a weak dimension in the study. Mort moves beyond established facts with questions. Why did Bascom do what he did? Why did Cochise, as older man, wise in councils and respected by his tribe, respond the way he did? What historical forces combined to bring them together in Apache Pass? In his attempt to find answers, Mort ranges far afield, at times losing his narrative thread and roaming far beyond his title's parameters. And in the end, although Mort's string of questions are certainly worthy of our consideration, his conclusions are uncertain and at times somewhat dubious.

These reservations aside, *The Wrath of Cochise* does contribute to our understanding of the origins of the Apache wars, and therefore, is recommended for anyone interested in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century history of the American Southwest.

**Walter Drew Hill**

*Miera y Pacheco: A Renaissance Spaniard in Eighteenth-Century New Mexico*

John L. Kessell

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013.

ISBN-978-0-8061-4377-4.

194 pages, illustrations, maps.

Hardback, \$29.95.

During our nation's 1976 bicentennial celebration, the states of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado established the Four Corners Regional Commission to plan and coordinate bicentennial celebrations. While states in the Northeast celebrated the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the battles of the American Revolution, it was clear that the most significant bicentennial event in the Southwest was the Dominguez-Escalante expedition which headed out from Santa Fe in the summer of 1776 to open up a trail between New Mexico and the recently established Spanish settlements in California.

The Dominguez-Escalante State/Federal Bicentennial Committee was organized to commemorate what Borderlands historian Herbert E. Bolton referred to as the "Pageant in the Wilderness," but what John Kessell has more accurately characterized as Spain's "epic exploration of the American West." Among the dozen participants in that great five-month odyssey around the four corners region in 1776 was the 62-year-old cartographer Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, who not only produced a beautiful illuminated map, but helped the two fathers find their way during their 1,500 mile expedition.

Although the explorers did not reach California, they charted what would become known as the Old Spanish Trail across New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah, and explored much of the rugged canyon country above Grand Canyon. On their return journey they were unable to cross the Colorado River at the mouth of the Paria River at Lee's Ferry due to high water. They then headed upstream for several days following their Indian guide to an old Ute crossing, subsequently known as Crossing of the Fathers. Upon descending the steep sandstone banks into Padre Creek, they were forced to cut a few steps to enable their pack animals to reach the bottom of the canyon and the Colorado crossing. These worn steps were the only visible trace they left during their epic 1,500 mile journey.

Unfortunately, like the fate of many vestiges of our southern trails system, modern development completely erased them in the early 1960s, when the completion of the Glen Canyon Dam inundated them beneath Lake Powell under several hundred feet of water.

Miera was born in Spain in 1713. His early life and education in Spain remains an enigma. Kessell speculates that Miera had training in both engineering and cartography. He first appears in the historical record in the Southwest in 1741, when he married a local belle in the presidio town of Janos. He and his bride soon moved to El Paso, where among other things he participated in several military campaigns against the Apaches, including a 1747 campaign which extended all the way from El Paso to Zuni.

Miera moved his wife and family to Santa Fe in 1756, where he joined Governor Marín de Valle's staff as engineer and cartographer. He also served as mayor of the district of Pecos and Galisteo, leading three campaigns against the Comanches during his four-year term in office. During the next three decades utilizing only a compass and a quadrant, he constructed a number of stunning illustrated maps of New Mexico and the Borderlands Southwest, served in the military on forays against marauding plains

Indians, carried out various engineering projects, carved altar screens for at least two churches, made santos, and participated in the governance of New Mexico.

Given his noteworthy accomplishments in so many diverse fields of endeavor, it is surprising that historians have largely ignored this 18<sup>th</sup>-century polymath. Herbert E. Bolton's *Pageant in the Wilderness: The Story of the Escalante Expedition to the Interior Basin, 1776* (Utah State Historical Society, 1950) serves as a good example. Although Bolton included Miera's brief 1777 report to the King of Spain and published for the first time in color the British Library's copy of Miera's iconic map of the Dominguez-Escalante expedition, he devoted less than 2 pages of his 250 page tome to Miera's biography.

Fortunately John Kessell's masterful biography of a man who "embodied the very heart and soul of eighteenth-century Hispanic New Mexico" has changed all that. In a carefully researched and beautifully written volume, Kessell has chronicled Miera's life in the context of life in 18<sup>th</sup>-century New Mexico. Miera, as Kessell notes, was a man who "had expressed himself artistically more notably, worn more hats, planned more projects, drawn more maps, known more Indians, and explored more of the boundless Kingdom and Provinces of New Mexico than any other vecino before or after him." As the book's title suggests, Miera was indeed a renaissance man.

The book is profusely illustrated, with full-color photographs of Miera's religious art, including paintings, bultos, and altar screens. Of special interest to OCTANs will be the reproductions of Miera's maps, which are some of the earliest detailed maps of New Mexico.

*Miera y Pacheco: A Renaissance Spaniard in Eighteenth-Century New Mexico* is highly recommended for all with an interest in the history of the Southwest.

**David Miller**



Crossing of the Fathers as it appeared before it was inundated by Lake Powell. The jeep in the foreground is parked directly above Padre Creek and the famous steps. The ford crossed the Colorado River diagonally to the sandbar visible on the river's left bank. Dominguez Butte frames the picture on the left; Gunsight Butte is on the right.

*photo by D. Miller, 1957*

## **The Central Southern Route: The Vicissitudes, Trials, Incidents, and Dangers on the Most Difficult Wagon Road in American History**

*by Will Bagley*

The title of this paper requires an explanation. The words “Vicissitudes, Trials, Incidents, and Dangers” are lifted “from the diary of William B. Lorton, the finest Forty-niner diary I have ever laid eyes on,” as Dale L. Morgan wrote to his friend Fawn Brodie in 1967.<sup>1</sup> Lorton used that colorful phrase in a letter written at Fort Laramie on the last day of June 1849, so Lorton wasn’t even referring to what I, virtually alone, call the Central Southern Route, which he wouldn’t see until September. The phrase might also be the title of the edition of Lorton’s journal that noted Death Valley experts Jean and LeRoy Johnson have scrupulously edited, which I hope to see published within a couple of years.

The Central Southern Route is my attempt to give what became Utah’s territorial wagon road a distinctive name.<sup>2</sup> Others have tried, notably Mormon historians who dubbed the route “the Mormon corridor.” My personal favorite is Leo Lyman’s name: the road “from the City of Saints to the City of Angels” – and Leo’s hard work has made him *the* hands-down leading authority on the subject.<sup>3</sup>

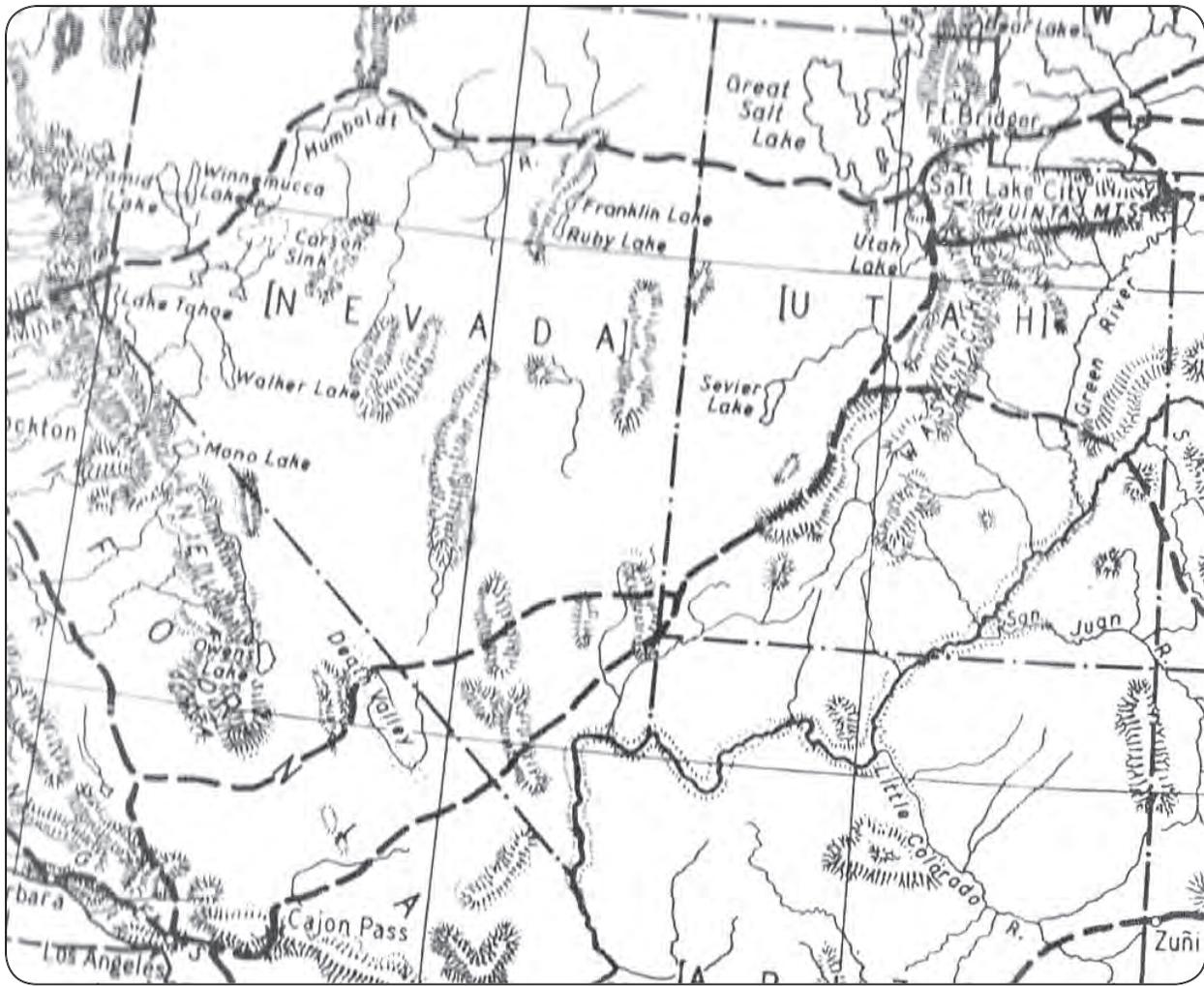
Mule trains from New Mexico had been packing wool and silver over the Rocky Mountains, across the Green River in today’s central Utah, around the San Rafael Swell, over the Colorado Plateau, and into the Little Salt Lake Valley since at least 1830. From there the trail crossed the Bull Valley and Beaver Dam Mountains, the Mojave Desert, and the southern flank of the Pacific Cordillera via Cajon Pass to reach Southern California’s ranches and the Pueblo de Los Angeles. Known as the Old Spanish Trail or simply Spanish Trail, it was neither old nor Spanish, and we would all be better served if we called it the New Mexican Trail.<sup>4</sup>

It has long been an article of faith among trail historians that the trace was strictly a pack-train trail since “its eastern passage was clearly impractical for wagons.”<sup>5</sup> But in 1853 the legendary fur trapper and overland guide

Antoine Leroux claimed, “Wagons can now travel this route to California, and have done it. In the year 1837, two families named Sloover [Isaac Slover] and Pope [William Pope] with their wagons and two Mexicans, went from Taos that way [to Pueblo de los Angeles].”<sup>6</sup>

Ute raiders and their mountaineer allies used this New Mexican trader’s trace to reach the pastures of California, where they could winter their expanding horse herds. Along with the legendary land pirate Wakara, mountain men such as Pegleg Smith and Jim Beckworth used the trail to raid the ranches of Southern California.<sup>7</sup> An alternate Mexican trading route connected the Spanish Trail with the Oregon Trail to the north, at least according to what an “Old Spanyard” at Los Angeles who “had traveled much in the mountains” told Charles Hancock of the Mormon Battalion in 1847. Such a route might, the Mormons thought, make a serviceable wagon road. There was not a single non-Indian habitation between Utah Valley and the Lugo Ranch at San Bernardino before 1851, but Solomon Sublette had returned to Bridger’s Fort in 1846 from California via Los Angeles. In October 1847, Mormon Battalion veteran Jefferson Hunt led a mounted party down the trace to get supplies for the new settlement at Great Salt Lake City. Hunt returned in 1848, and that spring Captain Daniel Davis, his wife Susan, and Porter Rockwell, the legendary Mormon Samson, hauled a small buckboard up the trail. They “arrived at the old Fort Salt Lake Valley on the 5th of June 1848 all Safe & well, bringing through with us the first wagon that ever passed that rout.” The majority of the men were packers, John J. Riser recalled, “but this wagon that we took was the first wagon that ever traveled the route, and this wagon route afterwards proved to be the only feasible wagon road from southern Utah in winter to California.”<sup>8</sup>

This snow-free alternative to the California Trail’s Humboldt River route set the stage for the most dramatic overland episode of 1849, the most sensational and colorful year of all three decades of overland emigration. William Manly summarized the heart of this epic American story as “the sufferings of the band of men, women and children who gave ‘Death Valley’ its name.” Forty-niners arriving in the Great Basin too late to risk crossing the Sierra Nevada found opening a new wagon road to Los Angeles an attractive alternative to



A portion of the map *Southern Trails to California in 1849*, drawn by William C. Culp and based on material gathered by Ralph P. Bieber. Copyright 1937 by Arthur C. Clark Company. *from the author's collection*

wintering in the Mormon settlements, which had little work and less food to share with unruly outsiders. Overlanders pouring into Great Salt Lake City heard reports that the northern route was “so obstructed with dead cattle as to admit no passage for wagons.” An eyewitness told Cephas Arms that “the road was thronged with men, women and children with packs on their backs and their feet bleeding from the roughness of the road – and all this 700 miles from their destination. What the suffering will be after the two roads come together, which they do 300 miles this side of the Sierra Nevada, God only knows.”

Travelers bringing up the rear of the Golden Horde of 1849 knew that snow would block the northern Sierra passes by November. “The Mormons, better acquainted with the road, pronounced it madness” to take the

northern road. Brigham Young feared the sojourners would eat the Mormons out of house and home, and he may have seen an opportunity to have these unwanted guests pioneer a wagon road across the southern Great Basin at no expense to the Latter-day Saints. One Forty-niner charged, “Brigham and the church wanted a short route to the Pacific Coast, and here was the opportunity of having that route prospected.”<sup>9</sup>

Why would Brigham Young want a wagon road to Southern California? Young hated California, whose attractions he feared would depopulate his isolated and hardscrabble Zion, but Mormon Battalion and ship *Brooklyn* veterans who had reached California before Young reached the Great Basin, along with apostles Amasa Lyman and Charles C. Rich, lobbied the Mormon leader to establish a snow-free route to the Golden State.

A central southern route could provide a road to Deseret for converts from Australia and the South Seas and some Mormon leaders hoped this direct trail to the Pacific would offer European converts a preferable alternative to the arduous trip across the Great Plains.

Cephas Arms heard that someone had offered to guide the emigrants “through the southern route for \$20 per wagon.” At the bowery-tabernacle on the afternoon of 12 August, Jefferson Hunt “proposed to the Emigrants to lead them for \$1000 to the City of the Angels Oct. 1 & explained the route & succeeded in forming a company,” wrote Dexter Tiffany.<sup>10</sup> By October, more than 100 wagons and about 500 people had decided to follow Hunt to California. The passage of a single wagon in 1848 proved the trip was possible, but it did not a wagon road make. The first large expedition over what historian Leo Lyman called “the most difficult wagon road in American history” became an ordeal of legendary proportions. Mary E. Neal wrote the only surviving account of the miseries of the Gruwell-Derr Company, the train that broke the trail. She left Utah Valley on September 21 with 22 wagons and provisions for six weeks, expecting plenty of grass and water and warm weather. “But instead of that we had no grass, no water, got out of provisions, had cold weather, accompanied with snow, [and] our cattle died for want of nourishment.” When their provisions ran out, the party ate their weaker oxen, “it being against the rules to kill any thing that could work.” On an arid stretch someone offered her ten cents for half of her last quart of water. “You may be sure we did not take it—ten dollars would have been no temptation, as we could not eat nor drink money.” She did not grumble, “for I thought I had to die, and there was no need of complaining.”<sup>11</sup>

Packers picked up a map from Mormon mountaineer Elijah “Barney” Ward showing a purported cutoff to the goldfields, perhaps over Walker Pass. Meanwhile, Jefferson Hunt led 100 wagons on what Dale Morgan called an “exploration by ox team.” The trek began well enough, but the farther south the wagons rolled, the harder and drier the trail became, and Hunt made mistakes. Frustrated with Hunt’s slow pace and sketchy knowledge of the country, all but seven wagons headed west in early November from near today’s Newcastle, Utah, to seek Ward’s fantasy shortcut. “Cut offs in an unknown country are very dangerous,” wrote diarist Vincent Hoover, “and too often result disastrously.”<sup>12</sup>

Most of the emigrants recognized their grave mistake upon peering into the precipitous canyon at Headwaters Wash, and “at Mount Misery the ranks were broken.” The majority backtracked or followed Beaver Dam Wash back to the Spanish Trail, but more than 100 people headed west over southern Nevada’s basin-and-range country. Two months later these desperate adventurers reached the “great desert sink,” where their hard experiences gave Death Valley its name. Those fortunate enough to stick with the old road reached the green valleys of southern California by early 1850, but their trip was only slightly less arduous. “Some of them that packed in, eat one horse, a dog, and one wolf and several ravens, and some of them had not a mouthful of bread for more than five weeks,” noted one survivor. “So there are various ways of getting to the gold mine, and all hard to accomplish.”<sup>13</sup>

Barney Ward was back in 1850, when he offered his questionable services as a guide. Ninety wagons signed up, Paul W. Cheesman recalled years later. Ward again failed to show up, but a committee including Cheesman, met with Brigham Young to request a copy of a Mormon waybill written in August said to provide details about the grass, water, camping places, and passes along the route. “After trying to dissuade them from traveling so late in the season,” historian Susan Erb wrote, “Young promised to give them a copy, but he never did.” The 1850 companies again totaled about 100 wagons, which set out in three small, manageable parties of about 30 wagons each. According to diarist Washington Peck, his party consisted of “29 wagons and two carts, 92 men, 9 women and 28 children.”<sup>14</sup>

### **The Arduous Road**

What sort of trail greeted those who followed the tracks of the Death Valley Forty-niners and their luckier companions to California? A damned hard road that, like the classic California Trail, got harder the closer it got to its end. The rough wagon trace crossed the basin-and-range country of central and southern Utah through relatively well-watered valleys, filled with virgin grass. “The trail lay constantly through the mountains, and often went across high ranges and through deep ravines,” wrote Danish emigrant Hans Peter Emanuel Hoth in 1856, but it was the easiest section of the entire route. It helps to understand that the trail crossed several mountain passes

between distinct Great Basin drainages. It started in Utah Valley, whose creeks drained into the Great Salt Lake. At the valley's southern end, it crossed a ridge into the drainage that disappeared into Sevier Lake, where in 1853 Pahvant warriors killed seven members of Captain John W. Gunnison's railroad survey expedition, including Gunnison.

Between today's Scipio and Holden, Utah, the trail crossed 5,970 feet-elevation Scipio Pass between the Canyon Mountains and the Pavant Range into the Pavant Valley, where Fillmore served as the capital of Utah Territory from 1851 to 1856. The wagon road (and today's I-15) then climbed Bishop Canyon through the Pahvant Range to Dog Valley Pass at an elevation of 6,150 feet. A second 6,785-foot pass opened to a descent to the Mormon settlement on Beaver Creek, which drained into the Escalante Desert. It crossed a 6,680 foot pass in the Black Mountains to enter the Parowan Valley and the drainage of the Little Salt Lake, where the Mormons founded Parowan in January 1851. Here the Salt Lake Road joined the Spanish Trail and basically followed it, except in places a wagon couldn't go, to California. South of Cedar City the wagon road followed the Spanish Trail around Iron Point and into the Escalante Valley, but in 1855 a government cutoff eliminated the long detour. The road's relatively abundant grass and water ended at Mountain Meadows in the Bull Valley Mountains, which John C. Frémont called *las Vegas de Santa Clara* – the meadows of the Santa Clara – “an extensive mountain meadow, rich in bunch grass and fresh with numerous springs of clear water, all refreshing and delightful to look upon.” When he saw it in 1851, Mormon apostle Parley Pratt called Mountain Meadows a “little mountain paradise” and found it “altogether the most beautiful place in all the route.”<sup>15</sup>

South of the meadows and west of today's Veyo, the road descended into Santa Clara Canyon and followed the river south to where it turned east. Along the line of old U.S. Highway 91, the wagon road crossed the Beaver Dam Mountains. The trail then climbed Utah Hill, entering a forest of Joshua Trees marking the beginning of the Mohave Desert. The road followed Beaver Dam Wash into the northwest corner of today's Arizona and southern Nevada, where it followed the Virgin River to the notorious Virgin Hill, the steepest ascent on the entire road, where emigrants ran into a virtual wall. David Cheesman recalled his 1850

company double and triple teamed to haul their wagons up Virgin Hill, and then used as many as twenty yoke of oxen to pull the wagon over the escarpment. After a wagon chain broke, one wagon “shot down the mountain like an arrow.”<sup>16</sup>

On the 50 waterless miles between the Muddy River and Las Vegas, the arduous road got truly arduous. West of Las Vegas, it got worse. The country lacked “sufficient vegetation to feed a grasshopper,” wrote Washington Peck. “It appears as if the goddess of desolation and barrenness has erected her throne and reigns without rival.”<sup>17</sup> From Beaver Dam, Arizona, to Las Vegas, the wagon road stayed within hailing distance (or under the pavement) of today's I-15, but beyond Sin City the trail headed south to Potosi Mountain and ran far to the east of the modern highway to the Mojave River, just short of today's Barstow. The central southern route hopped from spring to spring, whose sites became road ranches – Cottonwood Station, Point of Rocks, Lanes Crossing – before the road left the Mojave's headwaters to climb about eight miles up the Victorville Fan to California's southern gateway, Cajon Pass.

The Forty-niners used an eastern canyon to cross Cajon Pass and the San Bernardino Mountains – they thought they were crossing the Sierra Nevada. Vincent Hoover correctly described the canyon as “Nothing but rocks upon rock.” This “nearly impossible trail of the forty-niners” fell out of use until 1861, when the mountain man John Brown opened the toll road through Coyote-Crowder Creek Canyon, which eventually became Route 66.<sup>18</sup> Mormon pioneer James S. Brown recalled leading the first westbound Mormon wagon over the pass in 1849 through “mud and snow, with darkness come on, [as] every rod of the road became more steep and difficult.” Jefferson Hunt spurred the exhausted men on: “Crowd up, boys, if possible. Let us wallow on over the summit, for it is our only salvation to cross and try to open the road if possible for the weaker teams.”<sup>19</sup>

Several Mormon Forty-niners were already veterans of the California gold mines. They showed the pea-sized gold nuggets they had found at Salt Springs (now Almagosa Springs) to rancher Isaac Williams, which helps explain why southern route wagon trains in 1850 found freighter William T. B. Sanford had opened a much better road over the hogback of West Cajon Pass to haul a steam engine over the summit to the Almagosa mine.

## The Territorial Road, 1851–1857

Industrious Mormon settlers quickly overwhelmed the resources of the Wasatch Front and by 1849 began expanding south. Late in 1850 a wagon train set out to establish a settlement in the Little Salt Lake Valley, and in January 1851 the settlers founded Parowan, the first in a string of settlements that later included Nephi, Fillmore, and Beaver. On February 23, 1851, Brigham Young authorized apostles C. C. Rich and Amasa Lyman to establish a colony in Southern California, partly to provide a communications corridor to the Pacific and a year-round mail route “for a monthly communication, which by the use of mules can be effected at a moderate expense,” as Utah’s delegate put it in a petition to congress.<sup>20</sup> No doubt due to Young’s lack of support, Eugene Campbell observed that the plan to establish a string of settlements to the Pacific “never received the consistent emphasis necessary for development” and was “executed in a haphazard manner, and abandoned without the usual heroic effort that characterized Mormon enterprise.”<sup>21</sup>

Young went to bid farewell to the departing colonists, but also to “fight as hard as [he] could to keep the brethren from going with Amasa Lyman to hell at Payson.” He was outraged to find that instead of the anticipated 25 volunteers, almost 500 people with 150 wagons seized the opportunity to leave Utah for California. Young wrote, “I was sick at the sight of so many of the saints running to California, chiefly after the god of this world, and was unable to address them.”<sup>22</sup> One colonist noted, “Heber Preached & Discouraged many from going,” but some 467 colonists with some two dozen black slaves set out over the lightly traveled wagon road to California.<sup>23</sup> It was a hard trip over what John Harris called “the rufis road that I ever see, stony sharp flint stones.” The worst part was the waterless 50-mile crossing from the Muddy River to Las Vegas on May 11; “came to the Vegus and watter. come on 50 miles drive without watter or feed.” In a classic understatement, Harris wrote, “[T]his is hard.” On June 11, the Mormon wagons “came to the valley in open daylight of Callaifornnia witch looks like living.” On the twelfth, they “campt at the mouth of Calhoon pas under a butiful Sickamore grove.”<sup>24</sup>

Thus began the evolution of the central southern route from a wagon trace to a territorial and military road. “Early in

1854 John M. Bernhisel, the Utah delegate to the Thirty-third Congress, introduced a measure in the House of Representatives authorizing a \$25,000 appropriation to improve this so-called southern route to California,” wrote W. Turrentine Jackson, a great trail historian. The bill passed, but the cash only paid for a few bridges and improvements on the road between the settlements.<sup>25</sup> Major Edward Steptoe may have received a much larger sum to build a “new military road, commencing at Great Salt Lake City, and running by way of Provo, Fillmore, Parowan, and Cedar Cities, to the eastern boundary of California, in the direction of the Cajon Pass.”<sup>26</sup>

An anonymous German traveler – apparently the first of many European tourists to visit Utah’s spectacular Canyon Country – described what he found when he followed the Spanish Trail to its junction with the Territorial Road in 1853:

[H]ere in this lonesome place cut off from all civilization, we came upon a beautiful country road, a real, genuine country road with bridges over even the smallest of streams! Yes, we even found “signposts” at “crossroads” and “mileage indicators”! This contrasted greatly with what our journey through the wilderness had been hitherto and seemed almost like a fairy tale to us.<sup>27</sup>

Mormon settler and stalwart Nephi Johnson wrote an entertaining account of what happened to the cash used to build a direct road from Cedar City to Mountain Meadows:

In the spring of 1855 the government at Washington let a contract for making a road from Fillmore Millard Co. to the line of California then supposed to be about the vicinity of Washington Springs which is very good springs in Nevada. The contract was let to James B. Leach of California for 75 thousand dollars.<sup>28</sup> He hired a few men at Fillmore & started work on the road and came down as far as Cedar City where he gathered up a lot of men and supplies for there was no other settlement at that time between Cedar City and Los Angeles. He started out from Cedar. He made a cut off instead of going by way of Iron Springs and Antelope Springs to Mountain Meadows. He made the road straight across the country by way of Lucky [Leach’s] Springs and Pinto Creek to Mountain Meadows. Mr. Leach hired me at Cedar City to go with him as Indian interpreter. He was a man that was used to rough company & was used to hiring

men of all kinds and was very rough to the men he hired. The second day out the men complained to Leach they would not stand his rough language. He came to me and asked me if I could get along with the men. I told him I thought I could for I had been acquainted with them for some time and thought I could get along with them all right. He then turned the management of the men over to me. He would tell me what he wanted done and I would look after the work to see that all went right after that.”<sup>29</sup>

During its peak use as an emigrant trail in the 1850s, at best a couple of thousand people used the central southern route to reach California. As much as the arid road’s sheer difficulty, local hostility, poverty, and abusive potentates helped discourage its wider use. When Thomas Flint set out for California driving more than 2,000 sheep, oxen, cows, and horses in 1853, near Iron Springs he found “a barren road. No feed, but sagebrush. Came to a spring in the side of a mountain, scarcely enough water for our use. Some scattering bunch grass on the foot of the mountain. A kind of valley without water.”<sup>30</sup> Mormon officials repeatedly harassed Flint’s party and used local laws to extract cash from travelers. The territory’s 1851 law against swearing on the territorial road was only one legal ploy probate courts used to extract fees and fines from passing travelers.<sup>31</sup> At Nephi the authorities seized G. W. Frazer’s horses for raiding a wheat field and fined him \$20, threatening to double the fine “if he found fault or swore.” After leaving Mountain Meadows in late October, Flint was “right glad that we have passed out of the Mormon territory.” His people had not been “robbed or molested to an amount more than a set of horseshoes,” but other trains, especially those from Illinois or Missouri, were harassed “in most every conceivable manner.” Utah authorities imposed fines “for every infraction of their regulations, real or fictitious--enforced by men with rifles on their shoulders, making their demands very emphatic.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Mountain Meadows**

In the fall of 1857, an Arkansas wagon train camped at the lush alpine oasis at Mountain Meadows, where most wagon trains rested before crossing the Mojave Desert. The party was made up of about a dozen large, prosperous families and their hired hands driving about 18 wagons and several hundred cattle to Southern California. Of its 140 or so members, most were women and children.

As the travelers built campfires and brewed coffee not long after dawn on Monday, September 7, a volley of gunfire suddenly tore into them from nearby ravines and hilltops, immediately killing or wounding at least a quarter of the able-bodied men. The survivors pulled their scattered wagons into a corral and leveled their lethal rifles at their hidden, painted attackers, stopping a brief frontal assault in its tracks. The Arkansans built a wagon fort and dug a pit at its center to protect the women and children. Cut off from water and under continual gunfire, the emigrants fended off their assailants for five hellish days.

On Friday, September 11, hope appeared in the form of a white flag. The emigrants let the emissary, a Mormon from the nearby settlement of Cedar City, into their fort. Then the local Indian agent, John D. Lee, entered the camp. Lee told them the Indians had gone, and if the Arkansans would lay down their arms, he and his men would escort them to safety. The desperate emigrants, Deputy U.S. Marshal William Rogers reported two years later, trusted Lee’s honor and agreed to his odd terms. They separated the Arkansans into three groups – the wounded and youngest children, who led the way in two wagons; the women and older children who walked behind; and then the men, each escorted by an armed member of the “Nauvoo Legion,” the territorial militia. The surviving men cheered their rescuers when they fell in with their escort.

Lee led his charges three-quarters of a mile from the campground to the California Trail. As the odd parade approached the rim of the Great Basin, a single shot rang out, followed by an order: “Do your duty!” The escorts turned and shot down the men, painted “Indians” jumped out of oak brush and cut down the women and children, and Lee directed the murder of the wounded. Within five minutes, the most brutal act of religious terrorism in America history was over – and it would not be surpassed until a bright September morning exactly 144 years later.

The betrayal and murder of some 120 men, women, and children by the Nauvoo Legion, Utah’s Territorial Militia, at Mountain Meadows on September 11, 1857, is among the West’s most notorious atrocities. In contrast, the similar deception and slaughter of more than two-dozen peaceful Southern Paiutes by Mormons nine years later at Circleville has disappeared behind a bodyguard of lies and pathetic

justifications. Shrouded in mysteries, both events share haunting similarities and raise unanswerable questions, leaving the question: How accurate can the history of an atrocity be if it is only told by the men who did it?

“The complete – the absolute – truth of the affair can probably never be evaluated by any human being; attempts to understand the forces which culminated in it and those which were set into motion by it are all very inadequate at best,” historian Juanita Brooks wrote long ago.<sup>33</sup>

## The End of the Road

The Mormon colony at San Bernardino quickly grew into California’s second largest city. Military, mail, and survey parties used the trail along with random emigrant companies until 1857, when the brutal massacre at Mountain Meadows brought overland emigrant travel to a virtual halt. Brigham Young ordered his loyal followers to return to Utah in 1857, and about half of them did. The steady trickle of emigrant wagons that used the Salt Lake Road to Los Angeles southern route between 1849 and 1858 essentially stopped. The road would find extensive use as a commercial freighting route to supply Utah’s military bases or expanding mining trade and operations, but it practically vanished from the geographical awareness of overland emigrants.<sup>34</sup>

## Endnotes

1. John Phillip Walker, ed., *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 206.
2. Overland emigrants typically named a road based on where it was going to or coming from: hence the straightforward names of the Oregon and California Trails. These names also correspond to the original title of Francis Parkman’s 1849 bestseller, *The California and Oregon Trail: Being Sketches of Prairie and Rocky Mountain Life*. My argument is that historians give names to overland wagon roads long after they have been abandoned or converted to increasingly industrialized highways. The Salt Lake to Los Angeles wagon road is a case in point. Contemporary Mormons and gold seekers called it the Southern Route, a name applied more accurately and frequently to the complicated network of wagon roads starting in Arkansas or Texas that crossed New Mexico and finally converged at today’s Yuma, where the Gila joined the Colorado River. Except for Harlan Hague and the late great Pat Etter, contemporary trail historians (me included) have ignored the Southern Route for far too long.
3. Edward Leo Lyman, *The Overland Journey from Utah to California: Wagon Travel from the City of Saints to the City of Angels* (Reno: The University of Nevada Press, 2004); and Edward Leo Lyman and Larry Reese, *The Arduous Road: Salt Lake to Los Angeles, the Most Difficult Wagon Road in American History* (Victorville, CA: Lyman Historical Research and Publishing Company, 2001).
4. See Steven K. Madsen and C. Gregory Crampton’s *In Search of the Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles 1829–1848* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 1994) for a description of the trail; and LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fé to Los Angeles* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993) for source documents.
5. Will Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1840–1848* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 386.
6. Antoine Leroux, “The Pacific Railroad—Statement of Mr. Leroux,” *New York Daily Tribune*, 16 March 1853, 5/4-6; Reprinted *New York Daily Times*, 24 May 1853, 6/1-2. Leroux wrote: “[T]here are many trails bearing southwest toward the great Spanish trail by Abiquiú, which they join in the forks of the Grand River and Green River (forks of the Great Colorado of the West), where it is a great beaten road, easy to follow day or night. The country is wooded on the streams with prairies between, and streams every three or five miles, as the Great Colorado here gathers its head-waters from the Wah-satch and Rocky Mountain ranges, which are covered all over with snow in the winter, and have snow upon their tops in the summer, which sends down so much water, and cool, clear and good. And this is the case generally out to the Wah-satch Mountains and Las Vegas de Santa Clara a distance of near five hundred miles from the head of Del Norte. Wagons can now travel this route to California, and have done it. In the year 1837, two families named Sloover and Pope, with their wagons and two Mexicans, went from Taos that way.” Credit apparently goes to Slover descendants Wayne A. Smyer and Don Cooper of the Old Spanish Trail Association for this discovery. (See [www.oldspanishtrail.org/assets/.../TrailPersonalityProfile-Slover.pdf](http://www.oldspanishtrail.org/assets/.../TrailPersonalityProfile-Slover.pdf).) Dale Morgan apparently got wind of this long ago. He wrote that the Spanish Trail “was essentially a mule path, though it is said an effort was made in 1837 to take a wagon the full length of the trail – whether successfully the record sayeth not.” Morgan, “First There Were

- Indians,” in Jay Monaghan, ed., *The Book of the American West* (New York, N.Y: Bonanza Books, 1963), 10–82.
7. See Stephen P. Van Hoak, “Native American equestrian adaptations in the eastern Great Basin, 1776-1876” (M. A. Thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1998), 309–30, for a current perspective on the Utes.
  8. Will Bagley and David Bigler, eds., *Army of Israel: Mormon Battalion Narratives* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000), 207–08, 395–400.
  9. L. Dow Stephens, *Life Sketches of a Jayhawker of 1849* (San Jose: Nolta Bros., 1916), 19.
  10. Cephas Arms, *The Long Road to California* (Private Press of J. Cumming, 1985), xi, 81–85; Dexter Tiffany, Diary, 12 August 1849, Missouri Historical Society, 33.
  11. Neal to Dear Parents, 26 May 1850, “Extracts from Mr. Day’s Letter,” *Western Democrat*, 7 June 1850, Huntington Library, 2/1–2.
  12. Vincent Hoover, Diary, 3 December 1849, Huntington Library.
  13. “Letter from J. Fish,” 1 March 1849, *Democratic Enquirer* (Muscatine, Iowa), 1 June 1850, 1/2.
  14. Susan M. Erb, ed., *On the Western Trails: The Overland Diaries of Washington Peck* (Norman: Arthur H. Clark Co., 2009), 109–12.
  15. Parley P. Pratt, *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000), 420.
  16. Peck, *On the Western Trails*, 125–26.
  17. Peck, *On the Western Trails*, 9 October, 27 and 28 November 1850, 113, 128–29.
  18. Lyman, *The Overland Journey*, 55–56.
  19. James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer, Being the Autobiography of James S. Brown* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Geo. Q. Cannon & Sons, Printers, 1900), 141.
  20. John M. Bernhisel to Brigham Young, 13 March 1852, LDS Archives.
  21. Lyman and Reese, *The Arduous Road*, 15.
  22. Manuscript History of the Church, Brigham Young Period, 1844-1877, 20 March 1851, LDS Archives.
  23. William Dectaur Kartchner, “Autobiography” (Marriott Library, University of Utah), 36; and E. Leo Lyman, *San Bernardino: The Rise and Fall of a California Community* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 39–40.
  24. A Copy of the Diary of John Harris, 1851, Feldheym Library, San Bernardino, California.
  25. W. Turrentine Jackson, *Wagon Roads West: A Study of Federal Road Surveys and Construction in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1846–1869* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 140.
  26. “Foreign Intelligence,” *The Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star*, 14 April 1855, 233.
  27. “*Ein Ritt Nach Californien*,” in *Das Buch Der Welt* [“Riding to California” in *The Book of the World*], in Michael W. Homer, ed., *On the Way to Somewhere Else: European Sojourners in the Mormon West* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010), 261–64.
  28. President Pierce signed the law appropriating \$25,000 to establish a military road between Salt Lake and California on July 17, 1854. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis directed Bvt. Lt. Col. E. J. Steptoe to let contracts and oversee construction, with emphasis on improving the most difficult sections to “obtain the best wagon road that money will make over the whole route.” Steptoe informed Davis it would take at least \$100,000 to build “a tolerably good road.” By March 1855 Steptoe selected James B. Leach, who held the mail contract between Salt Lake and San Bernardino, to build the southern sections. Leach proposed cutoffs between Cedar City and Mountain Meadows (known subsequently as “Leach’s Cutoff”) and between the Santa Clara and Muddy Rivers. Steptoe paid Leach two drafts, one for \$12,500 and one for \$2,500 apparently signed in favor of subcontractor Thomas S. Williams. See David Henry Miller, “The Impact of the Gunnison Massacre on Mormon-Federal Relations” (M. A. Thesis, University of Utah, 1968), 133–35, 138; and Jackson, *Wagon Roads West*, 140–44.
  29. Autobiography of Nephi Johnson, Sr., Andrea Johnson Alger Transcription, copy in author’s possession.
  30. Flint, “Diary of Dr. Thomas Flint: California to Maine and Return,” October 20, 1851 (in *Annual Publications of the Historical Society of Southern California* 12, 1923).
  31. Utah territorial law dictated that anyone who “shall swear, by the name of God, or Jesus Christ, in any manner using their names profanely,” could be fined five dollars “or be imprisoned at the discretion of the court.” See Dale L. Morgan, *The State of Deseret* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987), 178.
  32. *Ibid.*, 53, 58.
  33. Juanita Brooks, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 223.
  34. The central southern route is not yet part of the California National Historic Trail. Lyman’s *The Overland Journey from Utah to California* is the best history of this overlooked link in the overland trail system.

## The Discovery of Montezuma Head Tank on the Southern Trail

by *Gerald T. Ahnert*

Water sources often defined the route of the Southern Trail. It was stated in a report to the Post Office Department that “[t]he section along the Gila river is commonly pronounced by emigrants the worst portion of the whole southern road across our continent . . .”<sup>1</sup> The degree of difficulty became steadily worse for travelers along the trail in western Arizona.

A well-preserved section of the Southern Trail located southwest of Phoenix, Arizona, is situated on what is known as The Forty Mile Desert. After the establishment of John Butterfield’s Overland Mail Company on the route in 1858, the Forty Mile Desert was defined as lying between Maricopa Wells Stage Station and Gila Ranch Stage Station.<sup>2</sup> This section had no natural water sources between the two stations. It was considered dangerous because it was at least two days’ travel without water. Man-made cisterns and tanks alleviated the problem.

Fortunately, an example of each of these water sources has been preserved in the Forty Mile Desert. A rock-lined cistern can still be seen on the western entrance of Butterfield (Pima) Pass (GPS 33.0305 -112.5006). The general location of a Mexican-style tank in the Forty Mile Desert was first shown on Leach’s Map No. 2. It was based on information he gathered when he passed through the area in September 1858.<sup>3</sup> Using this information and detailed reports made in 1862 by the California Column, I was able to locate the exact site in 2011. The tank was made by James B. Leach’s construction crew that was assigned to improve the El Paso to Fort Yuma Wagon Road. The exact location of this tank is detailed in his reports. This tank, later known as Montezuma Head Tank, continued to be used by travelers and stage lines after Butterfield ceased operations in Arizona. The trail and tank were used until the railroad was completed in 1880. Later maps that show the tank still in use are Gird’s 1865 map (Tank), Echoff and Riecker’s 1880 map (Tank), and Rand McNally’s 1881 MAP (Montezuma Head Tank).

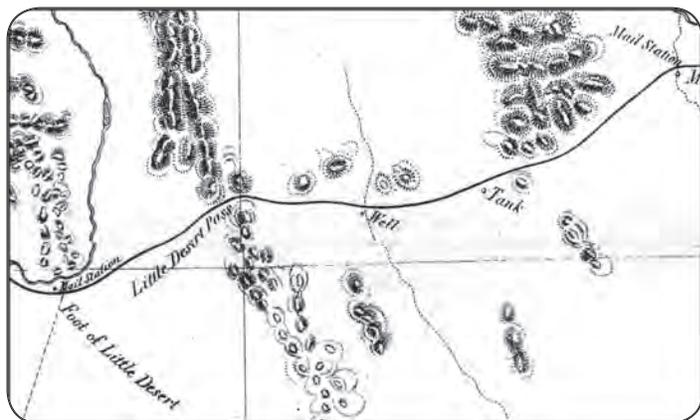
The tank’s exact location and size is established in a hand-written letter by James B. Leach to Hon. Jacob Thompson,

Secretary of the Interior, Washington, D. C., dated May 15, 1858, from Camp “Ojo” Escanada. These notes were not included in the Congressional report.<sup>4</sup>

The following is a copy of a report furnished to me [Leach] by P. G. Hume Ap<sup>t</sup> Engineer who accompanied the working party on the road between the Pima Villages and Fort Yuma . . . Upon return trip a well midway of Little Desert [Forty Mile Desert], 19 1/2 miles west of villages [Pima] was sunk on bed of large arroyo 25 x 6 feet [West Prong Waterman Wash]; though unsuccessful, a tank was also sunk on eastern edge of Desert 25 x 7 and 4 bottom slope of 3 to 1.

At the beginning of the return trip from Fort Yuma, N. H. Hutton, Engineer of the Road, wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 9, 1858. Hume was with Hutton’s construction crew. This shows us that Montezuma Head Tank was built in the month of January 1858.

This information was not included by Leach in his official report to the Thirty-Fifth Congress.<sup>3</sup> The official report was a transcribed version that was abbreviated from the original hand-written reports. It included a “[t]able of distances and camping places on the line of El Paso and Fort Yuma wagon road.” The words “Well” and “Tank” were crossed out on the hand-written version and so were not included on the transcribed version. On the hand-written version, a “Tank” is listed between “Maricopa Wells” and “Foot of Little Desert” at 11.4 miles from Maricopa Wells. In the “Remarks” column is the statement: “Rain water, grass convenient, wood at a little distance.” The hand-written



Leach’s map showing the Forty Mile Desert based on information he gathered in 1858. Although it is not to scale, it does show the important geographic features that can be located on present topographic maps. The “Tank” is shown just to the west of the lone hill south of the trail and Montezuma Head at the southern base of the Sierra Estrella Mountains.

Gila Bend.....	4	} 8	At Gila Bend, wood and water, but no grass; thence to Maricopa Wells good road, but destitute of water and grass. At the wells abundance of water, but brackish. Some salt grass.
Desert Station....	21.82		
The Tanks.....	7.42		
Maricopa Wells..	11.15		

A portion of the distance chart from General Orders No. 6 of the California Column.

version lists a total distance of 18.3 miles from Maricopa Wells for a well at “midway.” Hence, besides giving us information for the location of Montezuma Head Tank, it also establishes that the unsuccessful well at the mid-point of the Forty Mile Desert was 19.5 miles from the Pima Villages. Taken together, this information and Leach’s map locate the well as being on the west bank of West Prong Waterman Wash south of the trail. There must have been some water at times in this well as the “Remarks” column of the hand-written report states: “Water not permanent.”

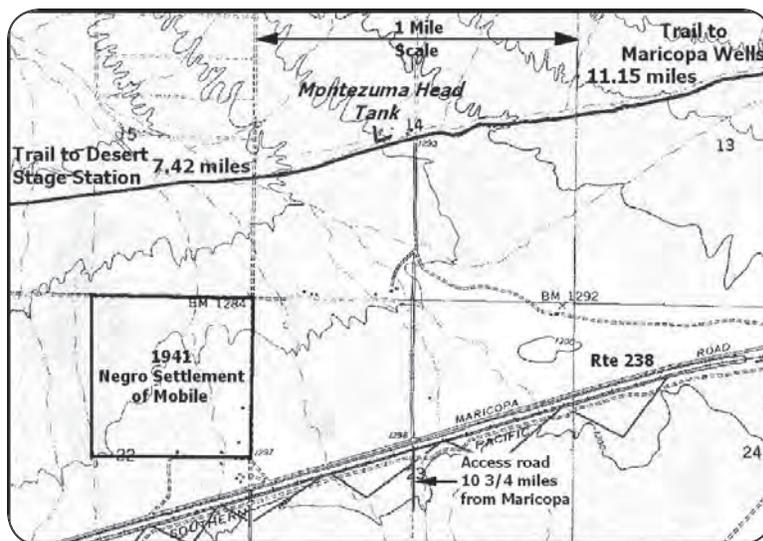
Exact distances for locating this tank were given by the California Column. Butterfield’s Overland Mail Company was ordered to leave Arizona in March 1861 because of the impending Civil War. Shortly afterwards, the Union formed the California Volunteers to drive the Confederate Army out and secure the trail and stage stations for the resumption of mail services. They moved into Arizona late in 1861 and used the Butterfield Trail as their route and the abandoned stage stations as camps. General Orders No. 6 included a chart that includes the distance to Montezuma Head Tank, which they named “The Tanks.”<sup>25</sup> As can be seen from the section of the chart shown above, the distances are measured to 1/100 mile. They were measured with an odometer connected to the axle of a caisson taken on a reconnaissance mission led by Lieutenant-Colonel West in early May 1862. The odometer incorporated the same mechanical construction as used in 1950s automobiles. The known route of the Butterfield Trail in the Forty Mile Desert is well documented, because of the ideal conditions contributing to its preservation.

The exact location of Desert Stage Station (GPS 33.0665 -112.3580) and Maricopa Wells Stage Station (GPS 33.1614 -112.0807) are known. This allows a plot of the distances to “The Tanks” from both stations. The General Land Office (GLO) survey maps that supplied an accurate route of the trail east and west of the tanks are Township 3S, Range 3E (1876), Township 3S, Range 2E (1868), Township 4S, Range 2E (1868), and Township 4S, Range 1E (1916). When plotted, the two distances terminate about 50 feet from each other. A GPS location was determined from this “within a stone’s throw.” In February 2011, I visited the GPS location and found that I was standing only a few feet from the trail and about 50 feet from a Mexican-style tank. Leach’s 1858 report describes this style of tank as being an earthen bank across a wash to trap rain water. I observed that there was evidence that the tank had been used in the recent past as part of homestead.

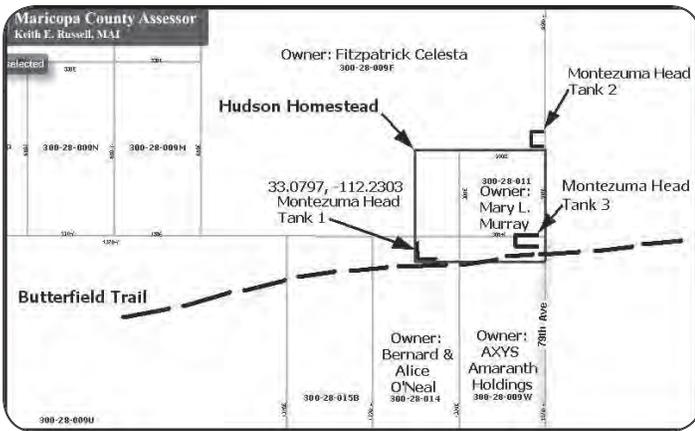
### The Recent History of the Montezuma Head Tank Site

The surviving tank and trail are located on lot APN 300-28-014. A small farm at this site was owned by the Hudson family who from 1949 to 1995 continued the use of this historic tank as a source of water for their livestock. I contacted Bernard A. O’Neal, the current owner of the

site, to inform him of this historical structure. Bernard is the brother-in-law of Naomi Hudson Skinner, the daughter of James and Diamond Hudson. With her 12 brothers and sisters, she lived on the homestead from 1949 to 1995. Naomi supplied much of the family history for this report and, along with other members of her family, she accompanied Bernard and me to the site. While standing near the main tank (Tank 1) in the southwest corner



The location of Montezuma Head Tank: Township 4S Range 1E Section 14.



Schematic map of the area of the Hudson homestead.  
by Gerald Ahnert

of the homestead, Mary Hudson Murray stated that the tank was already there when they built the homestead and they improved it by digging it deeper. Naomi showed me the location of two other tanks (Tank 2 and Tank 3) which had been filled in. The outline of Tank 2, however, can still be seen. This explains the use of the plural term “Tanks” in the California Column’s General Orders No. 6. These must have been added between 1858 and 1862, as Leach only gives details for one tank in his report.

Naomi supplied this information about their use of these historic tanks:

The land was owned by Mr. John Nelson Cobb. I’m not sure if it was given to my parents or if they paid a very small fee. I also was told that Mr. Cobb sought out my family because we were a large family and that [the town of] Mobile was attempting to create a community and the county had told them that they needed a certain amount of children to establish it. I spoke with my oldest living sister [Bette Williams] who states that the tanks already existed there. We used both tanks. The one on the S/W corner is the one that we used the captured rain water for our animals. The one on the N/E end of the property is the one that we eventually used for dumping trash into.

The O’Neal-Hudson property is located adjacent to land that was reserved as a “Negro Settlement” in 1941 and named Mobile, Arizona. The settlement was located in Township 4S, Range 1E, Section 14, northeast quarter of Section 22. The existence of this settlement was a key reason that the Hudson family settled in the area. There are other geographic names in the vicinity which reflect the history of the “Negro Settlement” such as Negro Tank and

Negro Flats north of Montezuma Head Tank. The purpose for the settlement is given on a map (see page 20) titled “Map of Mobile Arizona”:

This Town site is intended strictly for a Negro settlement. All adjoining lands, including the corporation now existing, whose purpose is for the irrigation development of some 20,000 acres of land, belongs one hundred per cent to Negro citizens. The town site management have agreed to work in harmony with said corporation.

Although Bernard bought the property for investment, he and Naomi have expressed an interest in preserving the historic integrity of the site and have asked me to aid them in its preservation and for the wording on possible interpretive markers. Kevin Turner, the district manager of the Butterfield Trail Solid Waste Management just north of Montezuma Head Tank, is going to have a road graded into the site. He has also expressed an interest in possibly aiding in future plans for this historic structure



Bernard O’Neal and Gerald Ahnert.  
photo by Darryl Montgomery

### Endnotes

1. *The Senate of the United States, Second Session, Thirty-fifth Congress, 1858-’59*, Washington, William A. Harris, Printer, 1859, “San Antonio and San Diego Route,” p 747.
2. Ahnert, Gerald T. *The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail Company in Arizona, 1858-1861*. Canastota Publishing, 2011, pp 90-105.
3. Leach, James B. Map no. 2 accompanying his report “El Paso and Fort Yuma Wagon Road” in *The Executive*

*Documents, printed by order of the Senate of the United States, Second Session, Thirty-Fifth Congress, 1858-'59, Washington, William A. Harris, Printer, 1859.*

4. From *Leach Wagon Road*, Micro Film 47 Reel 3 part II in the National Archives. A copy of the microfilm was furnished by Norman Wisner, a registered land surveyor from Oracle, AZ. Wisner is an expert on the El Paso/Fort Yuma Wagon Road.
5. *The War of the Rebellion*, Series I, Volume L, Part 1, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897, p 1056.



Diamond Hudson working on the homestead near Mobile, Arizona, where she raised 13 children by herself from about 1949 to 1995.  
*courtesy Naomi Hudson Skinner*



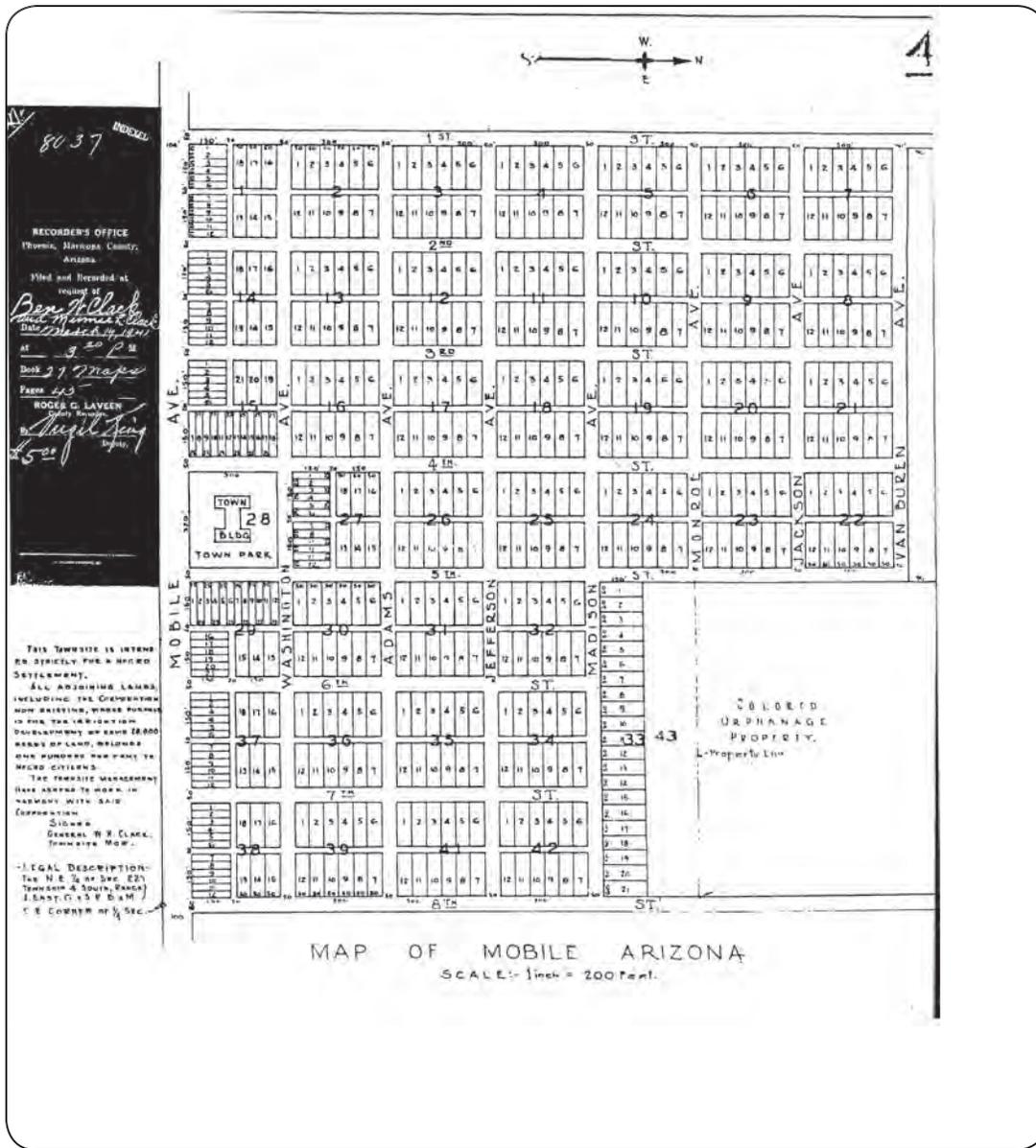
Tracy Devault is in the upper left of the photo at the base of the western bank forming Montezuma Head Tank. To the right can be seen the hard-packed ruts of the Southern Trail. In the upper right along the skyline can be seen the lone hill that is shown just south of the trail on Leach's map. *photo by Rose Ann Tompkins*



The Hudson family acquired the property for their farm containing the site of Montezuma Head Tank from John Nelson Cobb in 1949. The children are Marvin and Mary Hudson.  
*courtesy Naomi Hudson Skinner*



Hudson family members. To the author's immediate left is Naomi Hudson Skinner; to his right is Mary Hudson Murray.  
*photo by Rose Ann Tompkins*



Map of Mobile, Arizona.  
 courtesy Naomi Hudson  
 Skinner

**Southern Trails Chapter's 2015 Symposium**

April 9-11, 2015

Western New Mexico University

Silver City, New Mexico

Contact: Cecelia Bell at [cecelialjb@aol.com](mailto:cecelialjb@aol.com).

The symposium will have presentations on April 9 and 10, and field trips on April 11. Tentative speakers and topics include Cynthia Bettison on the Mimbres Indians, Anthony Romero on the Janos Trail, David Remley on Kit Carson in Silver City, Tom Jonas on Carson's trail west of Silver City, and Doug Sinwiddie on Lieutenant Emory.

## Trail Turtles' Spring 2014 Mapping Trip: Mapping in Southwestern New Mexico

by Rose Ann Tompkins and Tracy DeVault

In 1849, gold seekers began streaming west, following the route opened in 1846 by Lieutenant Philip St. George Cooke and the Mormon Battalion. In the fall of 1849, Colonel Jack Hays led a large number of emigrants from San Antonio, Texas, to California. Hays' plan was to try a shortcut, leaving Cooke's Wagon Road near Soldiers Farewell Hill (New Mexico), traveling directly west, and reconnecting with Cooke's Wagon Road several miles east of Tucson, Arizona. Others had made their way across to California via this shortcut, but Hays was the first to take wagons across. Hays' expedition was successful, and the route, which cut over a hundred miles off of Cooke's route, became known as the Apache Pass Cutoff.

We often speak of the Apache Pass Cutoff as if it were a single route – most often as the route adopted by the Butterfield Overland Mail. The fact is that there were a number of routes through the area. The map below shows two routes that ran from Soldiers Farewell east to Apache Pass. The upper route was the one followed by the Butterfield Overland Mail. The lower route was opened by explorers and emigrants. It was in heavy use until the stage lines began following the route through Doubtful Canyon.

Although we have long been aware of the lower route, most of our mapping work in this area has been on the Butterfield route. We decided to use this mapping trip to

see if we could find evidence of this earlier, lower route. For six months, we Turtles reviewed emigrant diaries and military reports and spent many hours looking at satellite images to see if we could locate any visible traces of the early wagon road. By April we were ready to give it a try.

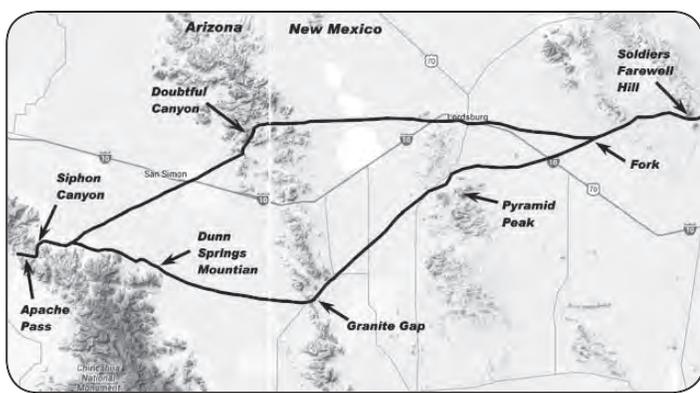
Greg McEachron arrived in New Mexico a few days early. Armed with the coordinates where we intended to look for the road, he decided to get a jump on the rest of the group. Even before most of us were on the road to New Mexico, Greg was sending enthusiastic emails, telling of the trail evidence he was finding. Although we were afraid he might map the entire trail before the rest of us got there, there was still plenty left to discover. On Monday night, April 14, the group of 15 Turtles, plus Cecelia and John Bell from Silver City, met for dinner in Lordsburg, New Mexico, our headquarters for the mapping week.

The mappers came from far and wide: Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. In attendance were Greg McEachron (FL), Claude Hudspeth (TX), Levida and Brock Hileman (NM), Cam Wade (NM), Tracy DeVault (AZ), Rose Ann and Harland Tompkins (AZ), Jeri and Dan Talbot (AZ), Pat and Ken White (AZ), Marian and Neal Johns (CA), and Mike Volberg (CA).

### Tuesday April 15

The 15 mappers headed east on I-10. At the Separ exit, we were joined by Jim Renn of El Paso, Texas. He is from the BLM in Las Cruces and has helped our group in the past. We then drove north to the Pitchfork Ranch, owned by A.T. and Cinda Cole.

Cinda joined us and led us to *Ojo de Inez* (Inez's Spring), named by John Russell Bartlett in 1851. This lush oasis of cottonwoods and willows in a rugged, dry landscape was a delight to the eyes. The Coles are attempting to return their land and the Burro Cienega back to its original landscape before cattle ranching was introduced. We spent our time there trying to locate where Bartlett's wagons would have turned west from the spring. Tracy and Greg found what appears to be the place where Bartlett made a drawing as the boundary survey party went west from the spring area. (See *Bartlett's Viewpoint*, page 24.) Later, the Talbots took several mappers to visit the site of Soldiers Farewell Stage Station.



Area covered on the spring 2014 mapping trip.  
courtesy Tracy DeVault



Group at Inez Spring. Ranch owner Cinda Cole on the left, the Talbots in the center, Tracy DeVault with back to camera.  
*photo by Ken White*

### Wednesday April 16

There is a trail fork a few miles west of Soldiers Farewell Hill. This is where the Butterfield Trail left the earlier emigrant road and headed due west. The emigrant road continues southwest, crossing the Pyramid Range just north of Pyramid Peak and then crossing the Peloncillo Range at Granite Gap. The trail then crosses the San Simon River Valley, joining the Chiricahua Range near Dunn Springs Mountain. Finally it follows up the east side of the Chiricahuas, reconnecting with the Butterfield Trail just east of Siphon Canyon. The plan for Wednesday was to map a portion of this emigrant road northeast of Granite Gap. There was some miscommunication about where we were going to meet, but eventually all of us were busy mapping. Although we had not done any work on this piece of trail before, our work was fruitful thanks to our preparation. The find of the day was an ox shoe.

### Thursday, April 17

Unfortunately, Tracy was not feeling well enough to remain on the mapping trip. Harland drove Tracy's van as far as Chandler, and then Tracy drove the rest of the way home. He had put many, many hours into planning this trip, and it was hard to lose him for the rest of the week as he enjoys exploring with the rest of us.

The Las Cruces BLM has a large collection of high-resolution aerial photographs<sup>1</sup> taken in the 1930s and 1940s. While Rose Ann was reviewing several 1947 photos for trail traces, she discovered a large building complex south of Lordsburg. It was learned that this facility was built during World War II as a Japanese-American internment camp. (See the article on page 26.) Later it was converted for use as a German prisoner-of-war camp. Little remains at the site today. The fences and buildings are gone, and the land has returned to farms and ranches. The site was on our way, and we decided to make it the first stop of the day.

South of the internment/POW camp we attempted to locate another section of the same trail we had worked on the day before. No trail evidence was found in this area, though there was a scattering of Indian artifacts. After lunch we attempted to access the Butterfield Trail east of Barney's Stage Station. Most of this has been previously mapped, but on this day locked gates prevented our access to the segment remaining to be mapped. We did spend some time at the Barney Station site as some mappers had not been there before.

### Friday, April 18

On Thursday, while looking for trail south of the POW site, we met a rancher who saw us working the area and



Ox shoe showing almost no sign of wear, found on the trail to Granite Gap.  
*photo by Dan Talbot*

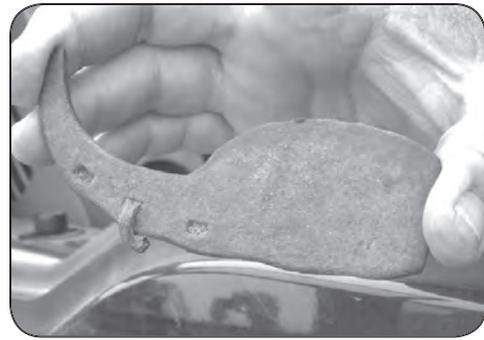


Riparian area around Burro Cienega, with Neal Johns crossing the flowing water.  
*photo by Rose Ann Tompkins*

stopped to visit. Dan Talbot made arrangements to see him and his brother that evening. In the ensuing conversation, these ranchers indicated they knew Gerry Billings, owner of the Cow Springs Ranch. As a result, on Friday the Talbots were able to get access to the Cow Springs Ranch where they saw several historic buildings. Although we had mapped the trail through the ranch some years ago, in recent years the gate had been locked when we attempted to take new members of the group to see it. Dan was able to reestablish a friendly relationship with Billings, and hopefully we may be able to return in the future.



Historic sign for the Lordsburg Internment Camp.  
*photo by Ken White*



Ox shoe showing extensive wear, found on the trail to Doubtful Canyon. *photo by Neal Johns*

By Friday morning several mappers had departed for home. The rest of us drove to an area between the Lordsburg playa and the east end of Doubtful Canyon. Google Earth satellite images along with a 1947 aerial photo obtained from the BLM showed possible trail traces through the area that we had not been able to find on earlier visits. Unfortunately, we were not as successful in locating trail as we had hoped. The find of the day was another ox shoe.<sup>2</sup> By the afternoon, the Turtles had headed for home.

#### End Notes

- 1 We often refer to satellite images and aerial photographs. The two should not be confused. Satellite images, as the name implies, are taken from earth-orbiting satellites. The images we use are taken from a height of four to five hundred miles. Public availability of satellite images is relatively recent. The Trail Turtles have been able to make good use of these images to locate trail traces. Aerial photographs (as opposed to satellite images) are taken from high-flying aircraft. In the late 1930s and 1940s, much of the Southwest was photographed with high-resolution cameras mounted in specially modified aircraft flying at 25,000 to 30,000 feet. The intended purpose was to assess erosion and flood control projects. The Trail Turtles have sometimes been able to use these photographs to find trail traces, but historical aerial photographs are not as effective as satellite images. One benefit that they have is that they show what the terrain looked like before 75 years of development and erosion took their toll.
- 2 The Turtles have always felt that an ox shoe is one of the best evidences that emigrants were on that particular route. In over 20 years of mapping, only five ox shoes have been found, all in New Mexico and on five different trails. Never before have two ox shoes been located on the same mapping trip.

## Bartlett's Viewpoint

by Tracy DeVault

In February 1848, following the Mexican-American War, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo established a new boundary between the United States and Mexico. The treaty also established the U.S.-Mexican Boundary Survey commission, whose charter it was to survey and mark the new boundary. On June 15, 1850, following the short-lived tenure of two previous commissioners, John Russell Bartlett (1805-1886) was appointed United States boundary commissioner. In December 1850, he arrived at El Paso del Norte where he met the Mexican boundary commissioner, General Pedro García Conde. The two commissioners quickly realized that the treaty language was problematic. The treaty was, in part, based on John Disturnall's 1847 map, which had a large error in its geographic coordinates for El Paso. Bartlett conceded the issue to General Conde and allowed use of the latitude shown on the flawed map rather than the actual location of El Paso to determine the new southern boundary of New Mexico. Their agreement put the southern boundary of New Mexico at 32° 22' latitude, 34 miles too far north. As a consequence of this grant of territory to Mexico, the U. S. government removed Bartlett from the survey; the dispute over the boundary was later settled by the Gadsen Purchase of 1853.<sup>1</sup>

In 1851, Bartlett's survey party, while traveling west from Ojo de Vaca (Cow Springs), deviated from Cooke's Wagon Road by turning north, up Burro Cienega.<sup>2</sup> The following is taken from Bartlett's *Personal Narrative*.<sup>3</sup>

Leaving *Ojo de Vaca*, we struck across the open plain due west, to pass a spur of the Burro Mountains. Twelve miles brought us to this mountain,<sup>4</sup> when the Mexican lancer said that by turning up a cañon or defile to the northward, we should find an excellent spring of water, and that none would be met with again for about forty miles. We accordingly left the trail and followed him. In a short time we entered a narrow and picturesque defile thickly wooded with scrub-oaks. This we followed for about five miles, when it opened upon a beautiful grassy meadow about three hundred yards wide, in which were many fine springs. Here we encamped, near the base of the hills, and about three miles north of the line where the Mexican Astronomers had their observing camp . . .

The weather to-day was extremely warm, so that our captive girl<sup>5</sup> has suffered much from the exposure to the sun.

[I] Named this spring *Ojo de Inez* or Inez's Spring, after her. I believe it is known to the Mexicans as *Ojo de Gavilan* or Hawk Spring.

In hope that we might be able to find a passage across the mountains, without retracing our steps through the defile by which we had entered, and thereby save some six or seven miles of a very bad road, I sent a small party out to search for a practicable route. Towards evening they returned and reported that they had found one.

*August 30<sup>th</sup>*. The defile through which we were to pass, was about half a mile south of our camp. I rode in advance accompanied by several to reconnoiter, and followed by the pack mules. This enabled us to select the best route for the wagons, which brought up the rear. The course was very tortuous, but without a hill that required us to lock our wagon wheels.

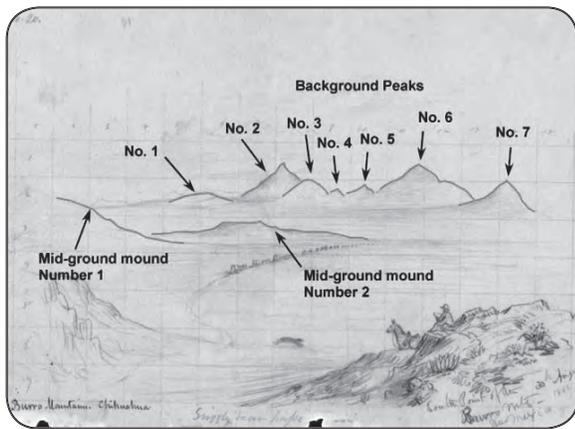
As we emerged from the mountains I rode up to the top of a hill with two gentlemen, in order to obtain a better view of the country. While seated on a rock enjoying the prospect before us, we were startled by the appearance of a huge grizzly bear, about fifteen rods distant, advancing in our direction. He discovered us at the same moment we did him, and seemed quite as much alarmed, for he suddenly sheered and made his escape at full speed along the base of the hill.

. . . On entering the plain, our course was west to the southern point of a short mountain range. The country was quite rough and intersected with deep gulleys.

Bartlett fails to mention that while he was seated on the rock, he sketched the scene with the wagons in the distance and the grizzly bear running past. The sketch appears on page 364 of his book and is reproduced below.

Normally the Trail Turtles would not spend a lot of time trying to determine Bartlett's route through the Southwest. Later travelers through this area, however, often mentioned Inez's Spring (usually shortened to "Inez Spring"). In late 1857, the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line established their route to California via the Apache Pass Cutoff. Roscoe and Margaret Conkling, in their book on the Butterfield Trail,<sup>6</sup> state that the route of San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line also deviated from Cooke's Road in order to make use of the water and grass at Inez's Spring. According to the Conklings:

Prior to 1858, the camping place at Soldier's Farewell peak is believed to have been near the site of Hawk Spring on the



Bartlett's sketch, looking west from the Burro Range. The numbers, added by the author, help identify features seen in the accompanying photo.

north side of the peak. Bartlett when he opened this trail for wagons in August, 1851, renamed the spring "Ojo de Ynez,"<sup>77</sup> in honor of a young Mexican girl Ynez Gonzales, who had previously been rescued from the Indians by his party while at Santa Rita, and whom he was conducting back to her home in Santa Cruz. In 1857, the spring was made a camping place on Birch's route. It was William Buckley who laid out the straight road south of the peak and established the station on the present site, thus avoiding the tortuous twelve-mile detour around the north side of the peak.<sup>8</sup> Leach altered the line of his survey on this section to conform to Buckley's line.

We Trail Turtles decided that we needed to pin down the exact location of Bartlett's *Ojo de Inez*. It is shown on many early maps but none of these maps are drawn to scale. Consequently, all you can really tell from them is that the spring was several miles north of the Butterfield Trail. Bartlett, however, in his narrative gives us several really good clues as to its location. Using Google Earth's satellite images, we were able to locate a wide meadow area that fits Bartlett's description about five miles north of Cooke's Road. It turns out that there are still active springs there today. Bartlett says that his entourage traveled west from *Ojo de Inez*, crossed the Burro Range, and then crossed a plain as they headed west towards the southern tip of a short mountain range. Today we know this short range as the Langford Mountains. Also, Bartlett made a number of sketches during his sojourn through the west. They depict the scenes he observed with reasonable accuracy. The sketch he made from the top of a hill as the train of wagons emerged from the Burro Range helped us

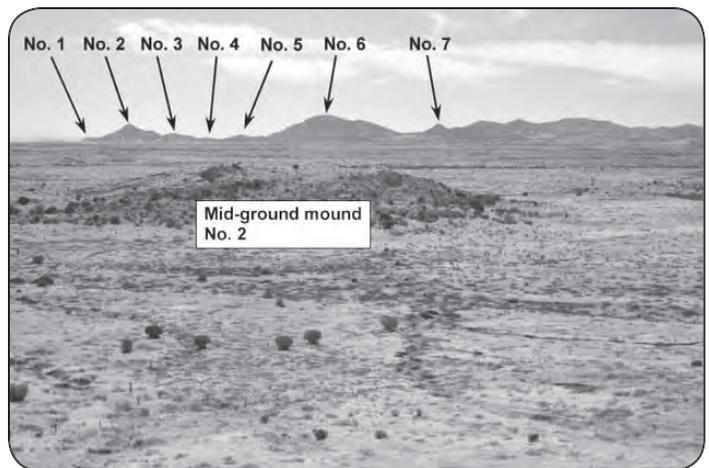


Photo taken from the same location as Bartlett's sketch; the numbers correspond to those on the sketch.  
*photo by Tracy DeVault*

to determine the location of Inez Spring. We knew that if the place on the western side of the Burro Range where Bartlett drew his sketch was almost due west of today's wide meadow and active springs, we could be sure that this area was Bartlett's *Ojo de Inez*.

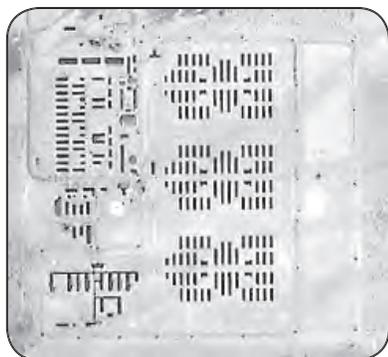
Bartlett's sketch was drawn as he was looking west. It displays two low mounds in the middle-ground near to, but separate from, the Burro Range. In the distance it depicts a number of peaks in the Langford Range. Bartlett's sketch shows the tallest of the distant peaks lined up with the low mound on the right. What we needed to do was locate a place on the western side of the Burro Range where we could see this same alignment of two low mounds in the middle-ground and the Langford peaks in the distance. Again using Google Earth, we were able to locate such a place. However, the image from Google Earth did not exactly match Bartlett's sketch.

On the day the Trail Turtles visited Inez Spring, Greg McEachron and I (Tracy), armed with a copy of Bartlett's sketch and the UTM coordinates of this potential viewpoint, headed across the Burro Range to check out the view in person. We arrived at the viewpoint, and it definitely looked like the correct location. Even the rock bench, where Bartlett showed himself seated making the drawing, was there. (We may have been the first humans to sit on this bench since Bartlett drew his sketch almost 163 years ago.) We took several photos trying to replicate Bartlett's sketch as closely as possible. Bartlett's sketch and the best of our photos are shown above.

## End Notes

1. These events are discussed in Robert Hine's *Bartlett's West: Drawing the Mexican Boundary*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.)
2. Burro Cienega crosses Cooke's Road just east of Soldiers Farewell Hill.
3. *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora and Chihuahua, 1850 – 1853*, John Russell Bartlett (New York: Appleton and Company, 1854).
4. Soldiers Farewell Hill.
5. The captive girl was Inez Gonzales. She had been captured by Apaches and later freed by Bartlett at the Santa Rita copper mines. Bartlett was taking her back to her family who lived in Santa Cruz, Mexico.
6. *The Butterfield Overland Mail, 1857 – 1869*, Roscoe P. Conkling and Margaret B. Conkling (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1947).
7. "Ojo de Inez" is the more common spelling for the name of the spring and the one used by Bartlett.
8. Later analysis suggests that the Conklings were not correct in stating that the San Antonio and San Diego (SA&SD) stages made the 12-mile detour past Inez Spring. In 1846, Lieutenant Philip St. George Cooke and the Mormon Battalion had opened the road south of Soldiers Farewell Hill where they found water. Later, thousands of '49ers followed Cooke's route. They also found water south of Soldiers Farewell. Although the SA&SD itinerary states that Inez Spring was one of their stops, the mileages given in the same itinerary do not support a route that passes Bartlett's Inez Spring. I (Tracy) suspect that the SA&SD stage line applied the Inez Spring name to one of the water sources south of Soldiers Farewell.

Information on the Lordsburg camp can be found at [newmexicohistory.org/places/lordsburg-internment-pow-camp](http://newmexicohistory.org/places/lordsburg-internment-pow-camp).



Left: Image 10, April 17, 1946, from the files at the Las Cruces BLM office, showing the layout of the camp at that date.

Right: Recent Google Earth image of the same area as the 1946 image.



freeway exit and the road that passed the former camp.

## Lordsburg Internment and POW Camp

by Rose Ann Tompkins

It has largely been forgotten that there was a WWII internment/POW camp just three miles east of Lordsburg. The camp was located about two miles south of the former Barney Stage Station along one route of the Apache Pass Cutoff. Earlier this year, when I examined the collection of aerial photographs at the Las Cruces BLM office, I located an image taken during the 1930s and 40s that shows the trail going through the Barney Stage Station site. In the image was a collection of buildings. I became curious as to what these buildings were.

In 1942, a total of 282 structures with full utilities were built on the site at a cost of almost two million dollars. In June of that year, nearly 2,000 Japanese-American citizens arrived at the new internment camp. These men were considered by the FBI to be potentially dangerous and their incarceration essential for national security. By late 1943, the Japanese internees had been relocated and the Lordsburg site became a prisoner of war camp. Italian POWs were the first residents. In 1944, the Italians were relocated and German POWs were brought to the camp. Eventually 5,500 German prisoners were crowded into the facility, which had been built to house only 3,000. By the summer of 1945 the camp was no longer in use and the facilities were sold.

A few of the original buildings remain which are used by the farmers and ranchers who now own parts of the site. The Trail Turtles made a visit to the site during our recent mapping trip. Unfortunately, due to the "no trespassing" signs, our visit was confined to a historical sign (see page 23) near the closest

## The Quest of the O. W. Randall Rock

by Randy Craig Randall

I vividly recall a conversation I had as a young man with my paternal grandfather, whom we called “Daddy Jack.” One evening at his home in the Piney Woods around Nacogdoches, Texas, I asked him to tell me what he knew about the Randall family. He began to recount the story of his father, then his grandfather, and finally his great grandfather. He knew their names, the names of their wives, many of their children (his uncles and great-uncles), and various tales about their lives. But it was the story of his great grandfather that was the most intriguing of all.

This man – who was always known as “O. W.” – was Osborn Woods Randall. O. W. was born in New England, but came to Texas as a young man. He settled in Nacogdoches, fought in the Texas War of Independence from Mexico, and was awarded land. Like many people of his day, he dreamed of striking it rich in the 1849 Gold Rush and travelled to California. He returned to Texas with two tin cans filled with gold nuggets. But as he approached home he was chased by robbers. He rode home “fast as lightning” and immediately buried the tin cans in a peach orchard. My grandfather then went on to give his own substantiation to the claim of O.W.’s gold discovery. He recounted that he and his brother Jesse were slaughtering a hog when they were young and discovered a gold nugget wedged between the hog’s teeth. This caused considerable excitement at the time, but no one had any idea where the hog might have rooted out that gold nugget, and no one knew where O. W.’s peach orchard was.

Knowing that family stories are often exaggerated through the years, I was dubious of O. W.’s trip to California, his discovery of gold, and his return with cans of gold nuggets. A few years later, however, I read the entry for August 1, 1851, in Adolphus Sterne’s diary of Nacogdoches, which stated that O. W. Randall had “returned from California last night.” This led me to suspect that some of the story must be true.

In October 2003 the Trail Turtles, led by Rose Ann Tompkins and Tracy DeVault, were exploring the Southern Emigrant Trail along the Gila River. In an unnamed canyon near the Oatman Massacre site, Tracy DeVault saw

petroglyphs and then an inscription on a boulder: “O. W. Randall 1849.” [See *Desert Tracks*, January 2004.] Dave Stanton, of Mesa, Arizona, also explored this canyon and realized that O. W. was probably from Texas since he used this southern trail. He searched the Internet for information and discovered records of an O. W. Randall in Nacogdoches, Texas. [A summary of an article that Stanton found on O. W. Randall was printed in the December 2006 issue of *Desert Tracks*.] Not satisfied with this general information, Dave then contacted the county office in Nacogdoches, inquiring if any of O. W. Randall’s descendants might still live in the area. Indeed, my uncle lived on the original O. W. Randall land grant. Photos and emails were exchanged, and we talked about visiting the site. Unfortunately, my uncle Javan and his son, Rick, died in the next few years, and the idea languished.

Earlier this year, the idea of visiting the O. W. rock resurfaced. I still had all the materials detailing the location of the rock that Dave had sent to us. I searched for the rock on the Internet and found a photo of the rock in *Archeology Southwest*’s Gila Bend Gallery. My brother, Perry, and I decided that we had to go see this rock, and we persuaded my father, Tom, and my two sons, Regis and Trevor, to go as well. My dad, my brother, and I flew to Phoenix, and my sons drove from Berkeley, California. We met in Gila Bend, and arranged to meet with Dave and Rose Ann the following day so that they could guide us to the rock.

Rain was forecast, and we weren’t sure what difficulties this might cause. After we gobbled our breakfast, we drove about 30 miles on Interstate 8 and then turned off onto a dirt road across the desert. This road grade is actually lower than the surrounding desert, so it had retained the previous night’s rain. Some of the water was too deep for my two-wheel-drive rental SUV, so we slipped and plowed through the water and mud, drove off-road to avoid the deeper water, and even had to be towed through a particularly deep pool.

We finally arrived safely at the Oatman Massacre site. Rose Ann and Dave explained the perils that goldrushers like our ancestor would have had when crossing this desert – hostile Native Americans, searing heat, rocky paths, and the back-breaking work of moving the wagons up steep slopes. It is sobering to grasp how much pain and sorrow and hope is strewn along this trail.



Left to right: Perry Randall, Randy Randall, Regis Randall, Tom Randall, and Trevor Randall.  
*photo by Rise Ann Tompkins*

Nearby is a small depression or “wash-out” that begins the canyon that ultimately leads to the Gila River. As we hiked down the canyon, over boulders and small pools of water, our anticipation became extreme. Had we travelled so very far simply to see a rock in the desert? Suddenly, there it was! Near a deeper pool of stagnant water overgrown with algae, and close to small depressions in the rock used by Native Americans to grind corn, about halfway up the west side of the canyon was a large black boulder inscribed 165 years ago with the name of my great-great-great grandfather: “O. W. Randall 1849.”

It was a peculiar time of joy and reflection. Unanswerable questions flooded into my thoughts. What was he doing here in this canyon? Why does the inscription almost appear like a tombstone? What was O. W. thinking and hoping? Could he have possibly dreamed that his descendants would one day return to this site? Did he simply want to make sure his quest would not be forgotten?

Shortly afterwards, Dave and Rose Ann returned home. Our gratitude to the two of them was immense and can never be properly expressed. That night, we five Randall men camped in the desert. We set up camp, sat around the fire, ate, listened to the thunder, avoided the intermittent rain, and listened to

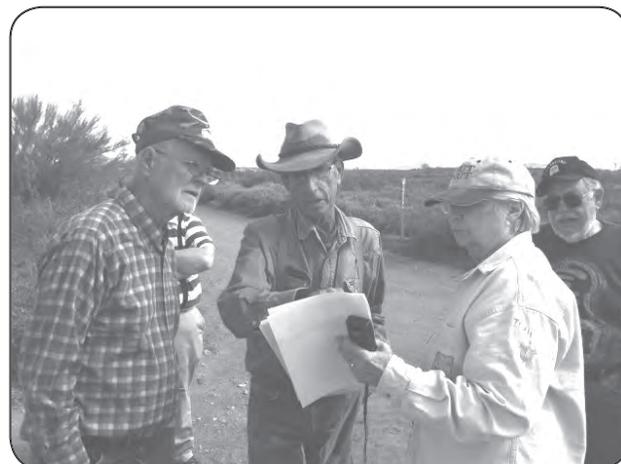
bird calls and distant coyotes. Each of us wondered: was this what it was like for O. W.? Would we have had the fortitude to undertake such a quest?

To commemorate our visit, we built a five-foot cairn near the inscription. In it we placed a container of a few mementos: our photos and signatures, a coin, a record of our family tree back for over 2,000 years, and some red dirt from land owned by my father which was part of O. W.’s homestead in Nacogdoches County. He would have liked that.

We had also discovered that O. W. had returned to Texas by ship. He travelled through Panama and sailed with the steamship *Falcon* to New Orleans, landing on July 11, 1851. He then arrived in Nacogdoches about three weeks later. We realized that he must have made substantial money in California to take such a trip. He probably did discover gold, or, as Dave Stanton surmised, maybe he “mined the miners.”

A friend of mine once commented that there is an important distinction between an adventure and a quest. An adventure is done just for the experience and thrill of it. In a quest, however, you seek to be *changed*. And so, I know each of us will be changed – by the kindness and generosity of our guides, by the austerity of the desert, and by the realization that one of our ancestors travelled on such an incredible trek.

[This article is adapted from the online version:  
[www.archaeologysouthwest.org/2014/04/07/the-quest-to-the-o-w-randall-rock](http://www.archaeologysouthwest.org/2014/04/07/the-quest-to-the-o-w-randall-rock).]



Left to right: Tom Randall, Dave Stanton, Rose Ann Tompkins, and Harland Tompkins.  
*photo by Randy Randall*

**Scenes from the Southern Trails Chapter's 2014 Symposium in Temecula, CA**  
*photos by Donna Middleton*



Downtown Temecula.



Pat Fletcher at the podium.



Replica of a Butterfield stage coach.



Adobe building at the Vail Ranch.



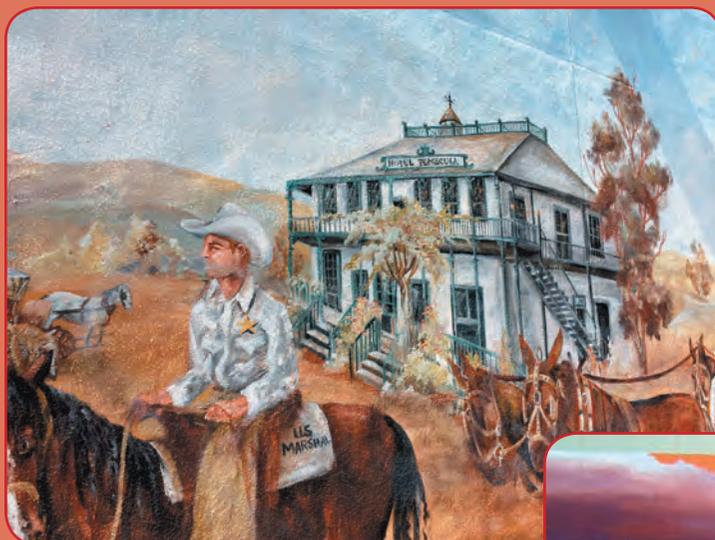
Bonnie Martland in full regalia.

# Southern Trails Chapter

Oregon-California Trails Association



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



**Historic Mural in**  
**Temecula, California**  
*photo by Donna Middleton*



**Overland Mail Company Coach**  
**Mural in Benson, Arizona**  
*photo by Bob Nilson*