

# *Desert Tracks*

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

June 2016

## **Butterfield Trail Issue II**



**Dragoon Springs Stage Station**

**\$7.50**

***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: David Miller      dmiller1841@yahoo.com

Vice Presidents:

AZ: Doug Hocking      dhocking@centurylink.net

CA: Bob Jacoby      jacoby.r@att.net

NM: Cecilia Bell      ceciliajb@aol.com

Secretary: Susan Loucks

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Historian: Rose Ann Tompkins

Webmaster: Tom Jonas

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**Front Cover:**  
**The Butterfield Dragoon Springs Stage Station**  
**as viewed from Tracy DeVault's Drone.**

## From the Editors

As our readers are aware, the Butterfield Trail, with its rich history and beautiful and varied landscape, is currently being considered as a possible National Historic Trail (NHT). The proposed Butterfield Overland Trail NHT would commemorate the route established by John Butterfield and his Overland Mail Company. As part of the effort to create NHT status for this important historic route, the articles, reports, and reviews in the pages of this issue of *Desert Tracks* are again devoted primarily to the Butterfield Trail.

Greg McEachron reports that a contingent of Trail Turtles successfully located the route of the Butterfield Trail running west of Fort Bowie to Ewell's Station. Finding this trail segment has long been a goal for the Turtles; this spring, the determination of the route was furthered by the recent discovery of the site of Ewell's Station (*Desert Tracks*, January 2016). Tom Ashmore has contributed an article on finding several related trails going west to Horsehead Crossing. One of the few fordable points on the Pecos River in west Texas, Horsehead Crossing was an important stop on the Butterfield Overland Mail route. This past February, we had the good fortune to meet R.D. Keever, a local historian in Cabot, Arkansas. In this issue, we include R.D.'s article on the stagecoach trails of central Arkansas. We also report on our recent auto tour of the Memphis/Fort Smith section of the Butterfield Trail. Historian Marc Simmons' voice is always a welcome addition to this publication, and we have included his article on the old stagecoach trails of New Mexico.

The book reviews in these pages include Walter Drew Hill's review of Kirby Sanders' *Driver's Guide to the Butterfield Overland Mail in Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma* (2008), which shows travelers how to use modern roads to follow the trail. (We note that the article "The Butterfield Overland Mail Company" by Roy Fisher in the *Journal of the Fort Smith Historical Society* Vol. 37, No.1, April 2013, also contains driving directions to 13 Butterfield sites in Oklahoma.)

We also have included a review of two recent books by Peter Nabokov on the Acoma origin myths, the biography of the man who revealed the stories to anthropologists, and the current controversy over issues regarding intellectual and cultural property. And our good friend Alan Peters reports on Michael Punke's novel *The Revenant* (2002) and

Alejandro Iñárritu's film by the same name (2015). Inspired by the experiences of frontiersman Hugh Glass, both the film and the novel should be of interest to our readers.

Hike the Hill is a week-long event that provides opportunities for participants to advocate for the protection, completion, and funding of our national trails. Each year representatives of OCTA go to Washington to speak with members of Congress, congressional staff, and leaders of the federal land managing agencies in order to advocate for important issues and legislation for our National Trails System (NTS). In this issue, Jere Krakow reports on the recent Hike the Hill.

As part of our endeavor to promote preservation of trail sites, we have included a report by R.D. Keever on the efforts to preserve an 1831 pioneer cemetery in Old Austin, Arkansas – the Butterfield Trail passed within 50 yards of this historic cemetery. We have also included photos of four sites in the eastern part of the Butterfield Trail that are badly in need of preservation. And we congratulate Cecilia Bell, who has received this year's L. Bradford Prince Award from the New Mexico Historical Society for her work at Fort Bayard. The fort was established in the 1860's to protect the mining industry. Later, Fort Bayard became the first U.S. military sanatorium for soldiers suffering from TB. By 1922, it was a veterans' hospital and during WWII, Fort Bayard held German POWs. We agree with Cecilia that it is important to preserve as much of this site as possible.

Kearny's mill in Santa Fe is an example of an historically important trail site that *has* been preserved. We include an article on the history of the mill, from the era of Spanish control of New Mexico through the onset of the Civil War.

Photos from the Southern Trails Chapter's 2016 symposium in Willcox, Arizona, can be found on the inside back cover. The meeting included two days of talks on the old trails, historic sites, and the history of the Southwest, as well a field trip to the Dragoon Springs Butterfield station. Our thanks go out to Doug Hocking, the speakers, and all of the other people who made the meeting a success.

*Deborah and Jon Lawrence*

## News from the Trail

### Cecilia Bell Receives the Prince Award

On April 16, during the annual conference of the Historical Society of New Mexico in Farmington, Cecilia Bell was awarded the society's L. Bradford Prince Award. The award, which is given annually for significant work in the field of historic preservation in New Mexico, was given to Bell for her work for the Fort Bayard Historic Preservation Society.



Left: Cecilia Bell receiving the Prince Award from Janet Sears, president of the Historical Society of New Mexico. Right: Officers' Quarters at Fort Bayard.  
*courtesy Cecilia Bell*

Nancy Owen Lewis, the chairwoman of the HSNM Awards Committee, had this to say about Bell's accomplishments: "Your extraordinary work in the preservation and promotion of Fort Bayard – from the establishment of the Fort Bayard Historic Preservation Society and the hosting of Fort Bayard Days, to conducting tours and maintaining a museum – are but a few of the many activities that have kept this historic landmark on the map. In fact, I can't think of a more worthy recipient for this very competitive award."

According to Bell, the buildings at Fort Bayard from the early 1900s are in the process of being demolished by design and/or destroyed by neglect. Only a few buildings, such as the 1910 Commanding Officer's Quarters (now the museum) and the 1939 New Deal Theater, will be saved. Hopefully, these few surviving structures will be enough to tell the story of both the military and medical years at Fort Bayard.

## Trail Turtles Archive

The Trail Turtles have created a set of CDs which document their 20 years of research and field work on the southern emigrant trails in the Southwest. These will be archived at appropriate libraries and historic societies. The project was initially supported by a grant from the Randall family (*Desert Tracks*, June 2015). To donate to the Trail Turtle Archive project, send your check to the attention of Jud Mygatt at 241 Rainbow Drive #14103, Livingston, TX 77399-2041.

### Hike the Hill 2016

In early February, representatives from a number of trail associations called on members of Congress, congressional staff, and public land agency officials to request support for pending legislation, to raise awareness of potential threats to trail resources from a variety of development projects, and to hear about agency initiatives for the coming year. We distributed summaries of the hours and money devoted by volunteers to the trail groups. OCTA volunteers contributed approximately 100,000 hours and financial contributions of approximately \$2,500,000. These are impressive figures to share with Congress to illustrate how much each appropriated dollar can be leveraged in protecting, developing, and telling the story of the nation's historic and scenic trails. I called on or dropped off materials at more than 20 offices and met with representatives of the Appropriation Committee, committee staff, and several federal agency managers who administer and manage the national trails. At the Senate Appropriation Committee staff meeting, I inquired about budgets for the national trails. The chair said budgets will be "flat or declining," which was not a surprising reply.

I attempted to remind congressional staff of the desire to find a sponsor for a Feasibility-Suitability Study for the Southern Trails. Though I came away once again without a sponsor in either the House or Senate, it has not been for a lack of trying by many of us representing OCTA over the past several years. It is quite apparent that a key step for OCTA is to secure letters of support from county commissioners, local historic societies, conservation groups, and Indian tribes. Having those in hand demonstrates to members of Congress that grass roots support exists for the southern trails.

*Jere Krakow*

## Preserving Old Austin's Pioneer Cemetery

The Austin Pioneer Cemetery is just behind the Baptist Church at 50 Old 38 North in Old Austin, Arkansas. It was founded by 1831, five years before Arkansas statehood. At the time of the first burials, the cemetery's location would have been in either Pulaski or Prairie County, depending on the year of the burial. Today the cemetery is located in Lonoke County, which was formed in 1873. Until the Civil War, it served as a cemetery for the Dunaway/Saunders/Ferguson families from South Carolina. Members of these families are known to have died in the vicinity of Austin between 1850 and 1860. Some of them are buried here in unmarked graves. Just prior to the Civil War, the Butterfield Overland Mail line ran through Austin and passed within 50 yards of this historic cemetery

In 1862-1863, the Confederate Army controlled the Austin area. A number of Confederate soldiers who died in Austin's hospitals were likely buried in this cemetery. From the fall of Little Rock in September of 1863 through November of 1864, the Union Army occupied the Austin area. The cemetery grounds and surrounding area served as a Union Army cavalry camp during the war. Because the hospitals were close to the cemetery, some of the Union dead were also buried here.

One of the last recorded burials in the Pioneer Cemetery was that of Levi Herrod. In 1962, Ralph Herrod was examining his family's papers and found an entry dated 1932 stating that Levi, who was an early Arkansas settler and who had lived in several locations in the state, was residing in Austin when he died in 1864. The entry said that he was buried in the "now abandoned Baptist Church cemetery." This suggests that the Pioneer Cemetery was at some later time referred to as "the Baptist Church cemetery." However, it is believed that no graves were placed in this cemetery after the Civil War as the Old Austin Cemetery (which is still in use today) was opened less than a mile away. On August 1, 1868, seventeen Union soldiers were reinterred and moved from the Pioneer Cemetery to the National Cemetery in Little Rock.

Over time this burial ground became lost and forgotten except to a few old-timers. In 2014, I rediscovered it and several of us have been working to preserve it physically and historically ever since. To date, we have identified 50 grave

sites. We have names for eight people known to be buried here, of which only five have marked headstones. A state archaeologist has been enlisted to help map the cemetery.

I have started the Austin Pioneer Cemetery Fund to raise money for projects at the cemetery, including cleanup work and the construction of both an aesthetically pleasing fence and a gazebo on the site. The floor of the gazebo will be made from bricks which will include the names of the persons making donations. A white engraved brick will be placed for donations of \$100 and a red engraved brick for \$50. For further information or to make a donation, contact the Austin Pioneer Cemetery Fund, 1616 W. Cleland Rd., Cabot, Arkansas 72023 or e-mail me at [convertiblecowboy@suddenlink.net](mailto:convertiblecowboy@suddenlink.net)

*R.D. Keever*



Entrance to the Old Austin Pioneer Cemetery  
*photo by R.D. Keever*



Graves and grave markers in the cemetery.  
*photo by the editors*

## Sites on the Butterfield Trail in Need of Preservation

*photos by the editors*



Horse barn at Fitzgerald's Station, Springdale, Arkansas.



Dogtrot cabin at Edward's Store, near Red Oak, Oklahoma.



Frith-Plunkett house, Des Arc, Arkansas.



Historic cemetery, Des Arc, Arkansas.

## Reviews

### **Hugh Glass: The facts, the legend, the book, and the movie.**

The fur trapper Hugh Glass (c. 1783 – 1833) is well known to trail enthusiasts for his survival after a grizzly bear attack. In 1822, Glass responded to General William Ashley's advertisement in a Missouri newspaper for 100 men to travel up the Missouri River to the Rockies on a fur-trading venture. Glass was old compared to most of the other expeditionaries. Jim Bridger, for example, was only 19. In June of 1823, Ashley's Rocky Mountain Fur Company was attacked by a party of Arikara warriors, and Glass was apparently shot in the leg. Fearing a second attack, several of the party, including Glass, traveled overland towards the Yellowstone River. Near the forks of the Grand River in South Dakota, Glass was attacked by a grizzly bear who severely injured him. His comrades came to his rescue and shot the bear. Later, Glass continued trapping. In 1833, he was killed by Arikara on the Yellowstone River.

Glass left behind no written accounts of the bear attack. The first written record of the incident is a letter dated 1824 by Daniel Potts, who was a hunter in Ashley's 1823 expedition. Potts wrote that a member of the group "was also tore nearly all to peases by a White Bear and was left by the way without any gun who afterwards recover'd." One source of information about the bear attack that is probably reasonably accurate is the account given in Dr. Rowland Willard's diaries and autobiography (*Over the Santa Fe Trail to Mexico: The Travel Diary and Autobiography of Dr. Rowland Willard*, edited by Joy L. Poole. Norman: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2015). In 1825, when Willard followed the Santa Fe Trail towards Mexico, Glass and several companions served as hunters for the expedition. During the trip, Hugh Glass told Willard a brief version of the story of the bear attack, which conforms to that mentioned above: he was attacked by a bear, severely mauled, and then rescued by a companion who shot the bear. Willard conducted a physical examination of Glass. His autobiography provides the only eye witness medical account of the deformities Glass incurred during the bear attack.

This much of the legend of Hugh Glass appears to be historically verifiable. In 1825, Glass's story was published

in a Philadelphia literary journal, but it was probably already highly sensationalized. Glass's story quickly took on the overtones of legend: after the attack, Glass was abandoned by his comrades and had to crawl back to the safety of a frontier fort. It is very difficult to sort the legend from the facts of Glass's life, and articles on Glass are often contradictory or poorly sourced.

Glass's story was later fictionalized in John Neihardt's epic poem entitled "The Song of Hugh Glass" (1915) and in Frederick Manfred's 1954 book, *Lord Grizzly*. The story also was dramatized in the movie *Man in the Wilderness* (1971). Michael Punke's book *The Revenant* (New York: Picador, 2002) is a recent fictional account, which incorporates a mix of fact, the basic legend, and compelling characterization. It is a well-written book which gives a good feeling for the conditions encountered by the early trappers in the American West.

The 2015 film *The Revenant*, directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu, is based loosely on Punke's novel. It details the bear attack and Glass's journey as he makes his way crawling and stumbling over 200 miles to Fort Kiowa, in South Dakota, after being abandoned without supplies or weapons by fellow explorers and fur traders during General Ashley's 1823 expedition. Glass is portrayed by Leonardo DiCaprio, who won an Academy Award for his performance.

In the movie version, some of the survivors of the 1823 Arikara attack, including Lieutenant Henry, Glass, and his teenage son Hawk (whose is a Pawnee half-breed) decide not to continue up the Missouri, but to travel overland toward the Yellowstone River. While hunting near the forks of the Grand River in South Dakota, Glass finds himself between a grizzly bear and her two cubs. In a six-minute sequence in the film, the bear attacks Glass, ripping his scalp, cutting his windpipe, slashing his back, and breaking his leg. Because Glass appears to be mortally wounded, Henry asks for two volunteers to stay with him until he dies and then to bury him. John Fitzgerald and Jim Bridger volunteer to stay with Glass and his son while the rest of the party moves on. Shortly afterward, Fitzgerald kills Hawk and takes Glass's rifle, knife, and provisions. Followed by the reluctant Jim Bridger, he leaves Glass for dead. When they catch up with Ashley, they claim that Glass had died. Meanwhile, Glass regains consciousness

and finds himself severely wounded, without weapons, provisions, and alone. He is over 200 miles from Fort Kiowa, the nearest American settlement. Wrapping himself in the bear hide that Bridger and Fitzgerald had placed over him as a shroud, he begins to crawl toward the fort, fueled by his fury at being left for dead by his companions.

*The Revenant* focuses on revenge. In the film, Glass's son Hawk is killed by Fitzgerald, and Fitzgerald and Bridger take his possessions, including his prized gun, and desert him. This gives Glass the motive he needs to seek out and kill the murderer. In reality, Glass had no Indian son, and Willard's account makes no mention of Glass's abandonment and his vengeful pursuit. In the film, his companions abandon Glass to a shallow grave. When he crawls out of the grave, he is metaphorically coming back to life. Later in the movie, Glass says, "I ain't afraid to die anymore. I done it already." Glass becomes a revenant: a folkloric corpse, who has returned from the grave in order to get revenge not only for his abandonment, but also the murder by Fitzgerald of his mixed-race son.

In an attempt to render the lifestyle of the mountain man as authentically as possible, Iñárritu hired Clay Landry, a historian of the mountain man/fur trade era, as a technical advisor to help set up a period-correct trapping outpost and to teach the actors the ways of the wilderness frontiersmen of the 1820s. The cinematographer, Emmanuel Lubezki, used ambient light to give the film an amazing visual texture, totally immersing the viewer in the harsh dreariness of a long winter in the upper northwest. The musical score of *The Revenant* by Ryuichi Sakamoto contributes to the film's haunting and harsh physical reality.

The film certainly does not stick closely to the facts. There is considerable Hollywood sensationalism, such as a scene where Glass crawls inside an animal carcass to survive the cold. The book by Michael Punke is much less sensational, and I recommend it highly. But I also recommend Iñárritu's film version which, though sensationalized, does convey both the beauty and the harshness of the environment, as well as the difficult conditions faced by the explorers and trappers of the early Rocky Mountain West.

*Alan Peters*

*The Origin Myth of Acoma Pueblo*

Edward Proctor Hunt, edited by Peter Nabokov

New York: Penguin Classics, 2015.

ISBN: 9780143106050.

185 pages. Paperback, \$12.80.

*How the World Moves: The Odyssey of an American Indian Family*

Peter Nabokov

Penguin Books, 2015.

ISBN: 9780143109686.

560 pages. Paperback, \$18.00.

In 1928, Edward Proctor Hunt gave his version of the origin myth of the Acoma Indians to Smithsonian Institution scholars. Now, in this new edition of *The Origin Myth of Acoma Pueblo*, UCLA anthropology professor Peter Nabokov provides background information regarding the original storytelling sessions and compares the Acoma myths to the creation stories of other southwestern Indian pueblos. Nabokov's companion volume, *How the World Moves*, provides a detailed biography of Hunt's life as he left behind many of his traditional ways and became an interpreter of American Indians. The story Nabokov tells is a broad and complex multicultural history. It involves the arrival of the Spaniards, the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, the arrival of Kearny's troops in 1846, two world wars, the Depression, and dramatic reversals in federal Indian policy. Indeed, at times the contextual digressions almost overwhelm the story.

Day Break was born in 1861 in the mesa-top village of Acoma, New Mexico, one of the oldest continuously occupied communities in North America. When he was 10, he was initiated into some of Acoma's religious ceremonies. He left Acoma at the age of 19 to attend the Menaul Indian School, a Presbyterian boarding school in Albuquerque. In the pocket of a donated coat the school officials gave him, he found a Bible and a written note from the donor which said that whoever received the jacket could share his name: Edward Proctor Hunt. By the time he returned to Acoma three years later, he had changed his name to Hunt, wore western clothes, and converted to Christianity. His return was not easy. He kept his Protestantism secret and halfheartedly resumed his participation in Acoma rituals. As the stepson of a medicine man, he was pressured into joining several

pueblo secret societies, including the Koshare, the sacred clowns. Hunt recalls being taken into the kiva with other rebellious schoolboys where they were horsewhipped into returning to Acoma traditional ways.

In 1889, Hunt fell in love and married Marie Valle, the daughter of one of the pueblo's leading families. Perhaps because the lovers belonged to the same clan, the couple was banished to El Malpais, east of Gallup. Here they had their first three children in a cave. The family later moved to Santa Clara Pueblo where, after a few years, they were ousted for not participating in the rituals and for refusing to help clean the pueblo's acequia. They moved to Albuquerque and then to Oklahoma, where they dressed and acted like Sioux. Joining a Wild West Show, Hunt – now called “Chief Big Snake” – and his family traveled around Europe where they joined a German circus. Although the Hunt family troupe spent only one season in Europe, their sojourn there established their lifelong vocation of performing different Native American identities for circuses, Boy Scout groups, school assemblies, and church congregations.

Upon returning from Europe in 1928, Edward Hunt spent two months in Washington, narrating his version of the Acoma creation story to the director of the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnology, Matthew Sterling. Along with his sons Henry and Wilbert and Philip Sanchez (an adopted son from Santa Ana Pueblo), Hunt worked as a paid informant, revealing Acoma Pueblo's origin myth: the creation of the first humans, their emergence into the world, the population of the Earth with plants and animals, the coming of the kachina spirits, the creation of Acoma religious societies and authorities, and finally a cycle of stories about the War Twins. Acoma Pueblos consider these stories to be sacred and not to be shared with outsiders.

In an introduction to the *Origin Myth* and in its companion volume, Nabokov discusses a few of the problems regarding Hunt's version of the creation story. Hunt's sons translated their father's native Keresan into English. No transcription was made of the Hunt's narration, and therefore scholars don't have a Keresan version to reference. Because there was no film made of Hunt while he was narrating the story, his rhythms, gestures and pauses are lost as well. That said, Nabokov is a sensitive editor, and the book will provide readers with a good understanding of the mythological worldview of the Acoma people.

When the *Origin Myth* was published in 1942 by the Bureau of American Ethnology, the Hunts were not identified as informants. The title page listed Matthew W. Stirling as its sole author. The preface mentioned a group of Pueblo Indians from Acoma and Santa Ana who met with Stirling and his Washington staff in the fall of 1928. The book was neglected for a number of years until it began to be excerpted for anthologies. Nabokov feels that the *Origin Myth* should be credited to its rightful author.

However, many Pueblo Indians think that Nabokov, in publishing the *Origin Myth*, is exploiting Native people for personal gain. Fred Vallo, the governor of Acoma Pueblo, contends that Hunt never received permission from the pueblo to give Acoma sacred information to anyone. According to Vallo, the *Origin Myth* of the Pueblo of Acoma is the intellectual property of the pueblo and neither Hunt, the Bureau of American Ethnology, nor Nabokov had the right to reproduce it. (See “Sen. Heinrich backs Acoma fight to guard origin story,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, January 15, 2016.) On the other hand, Nabokov defends his new edition of *The Origin Myth of Acoma Pueblo*, arguing that the original 1946 version is in the public domain and the text is widely available online.

*How the World Moves: The Odyssey of an American Indian Family* and *The Origin Myth of Acoma Pueblo* make for interesting reading, and not only because they provide a fascinating insight into Acoma Pueblo culture. Read together, they encourage thoughtful discussion of issues regarding cultural and intellectual property rights of indigenous communities.

**Deborah and Jon Lawrence**

### **Status of the Butterfield NHT**

NPS historian Frank Norris reports that the Butterfield Overland Trail Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment should be available early this summer on the “Open for Comment” subpage of the website <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectid=33568>. At that time, comments can be submitted online or by e-mail to Mike Elliott at [Michael\\_elliott@nps.gov](mailto:Michael_elliott@nps.gov).

*Driver's Guide to the Butterfield Overland Mail Route  
Volume One: Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma*

Kirby Sanders

Springdale, AR: Heritage Trail Partners, 2008.

ISBN: 0982051409.

121 pages, maps, photos. Paperback, \$25.00.

As part of the Arkansas Heritage Trail project, Kirby Sanders began researching the Butterfield Trail route through Arkansas in the year 2000. After he completed the survey in northwest Arkansas, Sanders continued to research the trail in the other states from Tipton, Missouri, to San Francisco, California. In 2008, Sanders published the first of what was to be a series of driver's guides to the trail. Apparently, only Volume 1, which covers Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, was ever published. Sanders' research for the *Driver's Guide to the Butterfield Overland Mail Route* (2008) was the basis of his report to the National Park Service for inclusion in their Special Resource Study of the trail. He later converted his NPS report into the series of books *The Butterfield Overland Mail Ox Bow Route, 1858-1861* (2013). [See the review in the January 2016 issue of *Desert Tracks*.]

There is considerable overlap between the texts of the two versions. Historical information about the sites and the people involved is often copied verbatim from the *Driver's Guide* to the newer book. The publication quality of the *Driver's Guide* is superior, and there are more photographs of sites along the trail. A key difference between the *Driver's Guide* and the books based on the NPS report is that the former gives highway maps and detailed driving directions to the station sites, while the emphasis in the NPS-based books is on the actual location of the Butterfield Trail. The stagecoach route, which usually deviates from current highways, is notated on hard-to-read topographic maps, so that the traveler is often forced to guess the best highway route and actual location of the sites. The newer books, however, do include GPS waypoints. These are not given in the *Driver's Guide* and are often key to finding the sites.

Another difference between the *Driver's Guide* and the NPS-based book is that *The Butterfield Overland Mail Oxbow Route* includes a large set of references, which are placed at the end of each section, while the *Driver's Guide* simply lists a few references in the introductory

sections. The NPS-based volume also includes updates of recent discoveries about the trail; for example, the entry for Pusley's Station explicitly corrects the version that was initially reported in the *Driver's Guide*.

On the other hand, *The Driver's Guide to the Butterfield Overland Mail Route* will be the book of choice for those wishing an overview of the eastern end of the trail. Those who wish to drive to known trail sites in Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma will find that the *Driver's Guide* is an excellent guidebook. For a more in-depth experience, I recommend combining the *Driver's Guide* with *The Butterfield Overland Mail Oxbow Route*.

It is unfortunate that Sanders' driver's guides for the rest of the route from Texas to California were never published, but I strongly recommend the *Driver's Guide to the Butterfield Overland Mail Route* for those interested in the eastern end of the trail.

### **Walter Drew Hill**

The *Driver's Guide* can be purchased from the website [heritagetrailpartners.com](http://heritagetrailpartners.com).

### **Letters**

Now that I'm spending the winter in Arizona, I am always looking for books about women's experiences during the territorial and early statehood days. *Vanished Arizona* by Martha Summerhayes (Lincoln: Bison Books, 1979) recently caught my eye. I thoroughly enjoyed the adventurous tales of Summerhayes' experiences as a young Army wife during Arizona's early territorial days. It's hard to imagine how difficult it was, but she found ways to survive, and endure the harsh climate and terrain. I found it an easy read that kept me involved throughout the book. I recommend it highly.

**Carol Osborne**

*The Texas Frontier and the Butterfield Overland Mail, 1858-1861* by Glen Sample Ely (U. Oklahoma, 2016) is a great new book on the Butterfield Trail in Texas. It will become the definitive source of information on the trail in Texas.

**Claude Hudspeth**

**Editors' Note:** We plan to include a review of Ely's book in the next issue of *Desert Tracks*.

## Mapping the Butterfield Stage Route from Ewell's Station to Apache Pass

*text and photos by Greg McEachron*

The Conklings state that the Butterfield road diverged from Bartlett's trail at a point west of Apache Pass and followed a course almost due west across the flat plain to Ewell's, the next station. (Roscoe P. and Margaret B. Conkling, *The Butterfield Overland Mail, 1857-1869*. Glendale: Arthur Clark Co., 1947. Vol. II, 139.) The last time that this portion of the stage route was located was during the Conkling's visit in 1931. Mapping this section of the trail was the Trail Turtles' next logical step after the discovery of the Ewell's Station site.

The direct route from Apache Pass to Ewell's Station passed up and down over a number of steep ridges. It initially seemed to us that a route on the north side of these ridges would have been best for the stagecoaches. During several trips in 2015 by Mike Volberg, Tracy DeVault, Rose Ann Tompkins, and Ken and Pat White, we searched for a possible route north of the hilly ridges but did not find any evidence for the trail. Subsequent analysis of the terrain suggested that the route might have run south of the hilly ridges. In February 2016, a reconnaissance was carried out by Tracy DeVault, Mike Volberg, and Richard Greene. Almost immediately they found trail evidence south of the natural gas pipeline.

The April 2016 Southern Trails Symposium in Willcox, Arizona, gave a subgroup of the Trail Turtles an opportunity to continue mapping this route. Our plan was to extend the section of trail found in February both to the east towards Apache Pass and to the west towards Ewell's Station.

The nature of the terrain led us to wonder whether the stages went in a more-or-less straight line up and over the hills, as some travelers reported, or whether they skirted the slopes on the south side. It turns out that they did both, and in some areas they drove the coaches on the side of the hill. Our approach was to walk crests of the ridges, as they presented the potential for the least erosion and disturbance over the past 156 years. Walking the crests also gave us the best chance to see trail evidence on the surface.

**Saturday, April 9:** In the afternoon, following the symposium tour of the Dragoon Springs Stage Station, Tracy, Mike, and I started the mapping trip by parking on Apache Pass Road east of Highway 186. We jumped the fence on the north side of the road and headed cross-country to the northwest. After hiking over a mile and crossing two electric fences (thankfully turned off), we arrived at the junction of a ridge, a ranch road, and the gas pipeline service road. Almost immediately we were approached by Joe Austin, the ranch owner, and Mark, his hired hand, in an eight-wheel-drive vehicle. We explained our purpose for being there and that we had tried to contact him. Joe invited us to use his extensive network of ranch roads in our search. The gate to his ranch was always open, but he asked us to check in at the ranch house and, if no one was home, to leave a note at his door to let him know that we were on his property. He owns the land from east of Fort Bowie to Highway 186 (west of the fort), as well as some land farther west. His land completely covers the route of the Butterfield Trail from Apache Pass to Highway 186. Having access to the ranch roads that crisscross his property will save us a lot of walking in the future.

We spent the afternoon searching the area, but with no luck. Later analysis of the route west of Highway 186 indicates that we were probably looking too far north.

**Sunday, April 10:** We started the day with a visit to the Ewell's Station Site. The group included Doug and Debbie Hocking, Gene and Rosanna Baker, Dan and Geri Talbot, along with Mike, Rose Ann, Tracy, and myself.



Tracy, Greg, Dan, and Mike at Ewell's Station.

After the visit to Ewell's Station, Tracy, Mike, Rose Ann, and I went west of Highway 186 and south of the gas pipeline service road near to waypoints taken on the February trip. We started on the east end of the trace that we had worked in February and immediately found evidence for trail heading east. Thus oriented, Rose Ann continued to work the trail to the east, while the rest of us searched farther west, checking out a trace that Tracy had seen on Google Earth. No trail evidence was found, however. Later in the afternoon, Tracy and I walked the north-south running ridge crests and found trail evidence. Along with many rusty rocks, Tracy discovered two lead balls, one a 0.50 caliber musket ball and, nearby, a 0.36 caliber pistol ball. He also found a horseshoe nail.



Mule shoe.



Bell clapper.



0.50 caliber musket ball.

**Monday, April 11:** We worked for 10 hours. Our team of four mapped west of Highway 186, filling in trail gaps as we worked our way east to the highway. After we reached the highway, we decided to extend the search farther east by traveling back to Joe Austin's ranch and trying to intersect the trail from the north. (This time the ranchers were sitting on their porch waving at us as we passed by.) Going east from Highway 186 along the top of a ridge, we identified only two more waypoints. At one we found a horseshoe. However, we lost the trace as it descended east into a broad wash. Highlights for the day included finding a very worn mule shoe, two wagon staples, and a bell clapper.

A dominant characteristic of the trail from Ewell's to the east is that the trace consistently aims towards the twin peaks on the horizon south of Apache Pass. This means that at some point east of Highway 186 the trail must turn north to the pass.

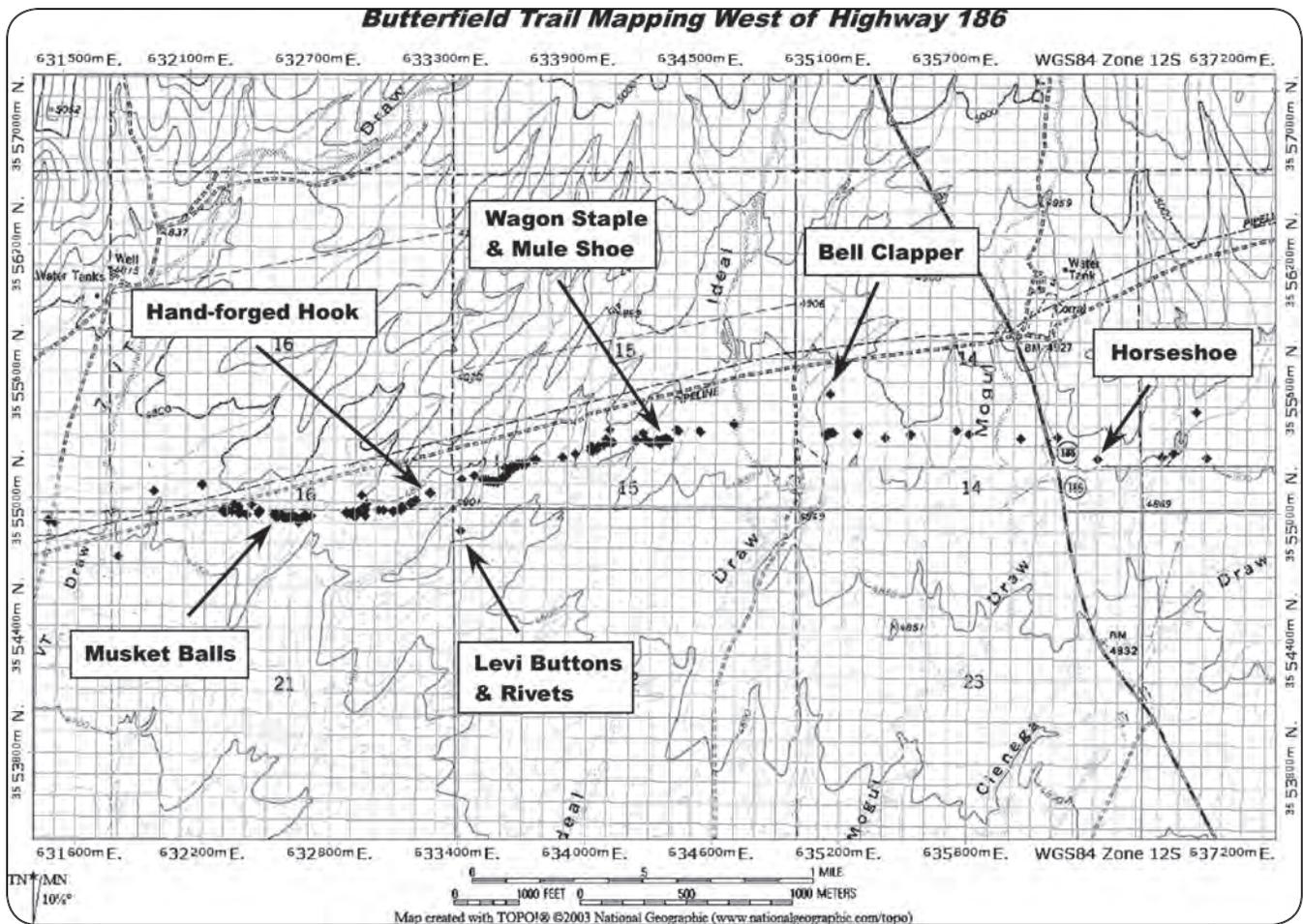
**Tuesday, April 12:** This last mapping day found our team again working

west of Highway 186. When we first started exploring this stretch of trail early last year, we discovered that we could drive almost two miles west of the highway on the pipeline service road. There the road was blocked by a heavy and securely locked gate. There is nearly three miles of trail west of the gate. On several occasions we had walked this stretch, either from the locked gate on the east or from Jeffords Road on the west. Today we had planned to work this stretch of the trail, and no one was looking forward to the long hike. Rose Ann decided to check the locked gate out for herself, and it took her only a couple of minutes to open it. This was quite a surprise for us macho men who pride ourselves on being mechanically inclined.

Mike and Greg worked west to Jeffords' Road (about two-thirds of a mile east of Ewell's Station). Tracy and Rose Ann worked to fill in a trail gap west of the trace mapped in February. Late in the day they were joined by Mike and Greg and were able to fill the gap. The big find of the day was a magnificent hand-forged wagon hook.



Wagon hook.



Map courtesy of Tracy DeVault.

It had been a successful mapping trip. We determined over 200 waypoints, of which 170 are validated by artifacts. The result of the February and April mapping trips is that we have located and mapped approximately six miles of the Butterfield Overland Mail route west of Apache Pass.

### Echoes from the Trail Turtles

As I stated in the June 2015 issue of *Desert Tracks* (page 23), the mapping group has entered a new phase of research, mapping, and data collecting, whereby small groups engage in shorter trips with focused objectives. I am pleased to report that several small groups have made trips in the past year. I hope that this can continue.

In 2015, Tracy DeVault and Mike Volberg embarked on a quest to find Ewell's Station between Apache Pass and Dragoon Pass. On occasion they were joined by a few other Turtles. As Tracy discussed in the January 2016 issue of this publication, as well as at the recent chapter symposium in Willcox, AZ, the station has now been found. More recently, several of us have been working to map the trail itself from Apache Pass to Ewell's Station. The results of the most recent trip is reported in this issue.

We encourage other chapter members to research and map other parts of the hundreds of miles of trail that still remain to be found and mapped. Tracy and I stand ready to help where we can.

*Rose Ann Tompkins*

## The Pecos River Horsehead Crossing: Wagon, Cattle, and Indian Tracks

text and photos by Tom Ashmore

In the entry of October 30, 1850, in his *Personal Narrative*, John Bartlett wrote the following:

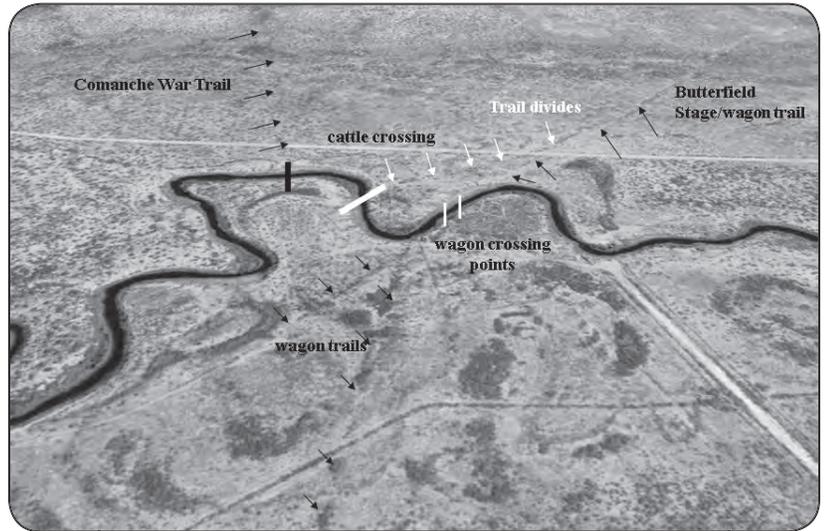
After breakfast, I examined the river with a view of crossing, intending to devote the day to it, and recruit our tired animals. Found the water at Horse-head Crossing, which was a quarter of a mile from our encampment, to afford the greatest facilities. Here there was a bank about half the height of the main bank, to which there was an easy descent, and one equally to the water. It is the place where other parties seem to have crossed, and hence rendered easy of access. I noticed long line of horse or mule skulls placed along the bank, which probably gave it the name it bears. (96)

Bartlett goes on to describe the harrowing experience of trying to cross the swift waters while preventing the wagons and mules from being swept away. In order to cross they had to let the stream pull them with the current, making it to the opposite bank some distance downstream from the entry point.



Horsehead Crossing today.

The Horsehead Crossing of the Pecos River is well known in west Texas. It was the main crossing for the Jumano Indians on their trading excursions, the Comanche on their raids into Mexico, the early immigrants on their way to California, the Butterfield Overland Mail, and numerous freighters and cattle drives on their way to and from New Mexico. Horsehead Crossing was one of the few fordable sites on the Pecos River. The river's steep and muddy banks, unpredictable currents, and quicksand were a danger in most



other locations for many miles in either direction. After long treks across the surrounding desert, thirsty animals sometimes drank themselves to death or became hopelessly mired in the mud at the crossing. This was especially true during the return of the Comanche raiders from Mexico, where horses were the main commodity of the raids.

Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving made their first cattle drive to New Mexico in 1866. After 72 hours non-stop with no water, they passed through Castle Gap, just 10 miles east of the Pecos River. When they passed through the gap, the cattle could smell the water. Crazy with thirst, they burst into a run. They ran so hard that the cattle following the leaders pushed them right across the river so they could not even stop to drink. After the herd crossed the river, Goodnight turned them back to the water to get their fill. Hundreds were lost on the three-day waterless trek and more died in quicksand along the river so that the herd of 2,000 was reduced to about 1,500. After a few days of rest, the men started what remained of the herd up the east side of the Pecos, heading northwest towards New Mexico. Thus began the many cattle drives across west Texas and on to New Mexico and Colorado.

My research on the Butterfield Trail from Fort Chadbourne to the Pecos River began simply as a challenging project to find one of the long-lost stage stops, Johnson's Station, but it turned into a three-year study. I used Google Earth satellite imagery and on-the-ground verification to find the trail and the associated sites. In the satellite imagery of the terrain east of Castle Gap, I noticed a second trail, not as clearly defined as the wagon trail, but paralleling it by about a quarter of a mile. I concluded that this was the remains of a cattle trail.



The eastern side of the Pecos where the cattle crossing broke down the embankment.

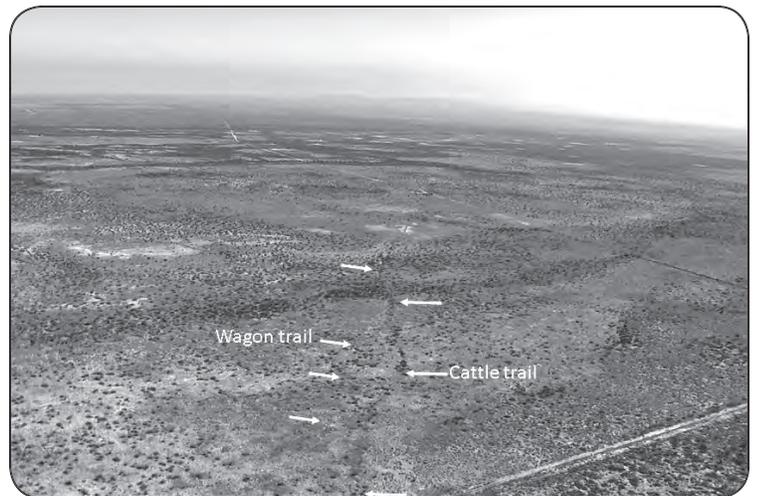
The cowboys knew that if they let their cattle actually follow the wagon trail, they would destroy it as a road, so they kept their herds on a path parallel to it.

In the Google Earth imagery of the region between Castle Gap and the Pecos River, there are three distinct trails, each of which crosses the river at a slightly different location. It takes a lot of traffic to develop a trail that can still be seen in satellite imagery 160 years later, so this was not by happenstance. In addition to the main trail coming from the east and its well-known wagon crossing, a second trail breaks off from the main trail and heads to a different crossing of the river. This trail is not as distinct as the wagon trail and it looks much like the cattle trail that parallels the main wagon trail heading into Castle Gap. It appears that the cattle were directed to this section, probably to keep them from destroying the wagon crossing. This trail also leads right into a perfect bend in the river that could be used as a natural corral for resting the cattle. Finally, there is a third crossing that appears to have no relationship to the wagon trail at all. This trail is very wide and, unlike the wagon and cattle trails which go east to west, it heads north to south. It crosses the river close to the area of the probable cattle crossing. Both the trail to the south and the trail to the north were somewhat indistinct. This trail was probably the Comanche War Trail, heading to Big Spring to the north and Comanche Springs (Fort Stockton) to the south. These springs were two well-known watering stops for the Comanches on their raids into Mexico.

I visited each of these locations in November 2010. The terrain and the embankments leading to the water made sense for these types of crossings. The eastern embankment of the cattle trail was broken down at the

exact spot where the satellite imagery showed the crossing. The Comanche Trail crossing point did not appear to be broken down, but was an easy crossing location. In all three cases the western embankments had gentle slopes, making for an easy rise up from the water.

I returned to Horsehead Crossing in March 2016 to take another look at the trails using an overhead drone that produced video and pictures. The high altitude drone flight confirmed that the cattle trail paralleled the wagon trail leading up to the crossing point, breaking off to proceed to the different crossing. The cattle trail can be clearly seen in the drone photos by a change in vegetation. While the cattle trail meanders, the wagon trail makes a very narrow and straight line to the crossing.



Drone image of the wagon and cattle trails.

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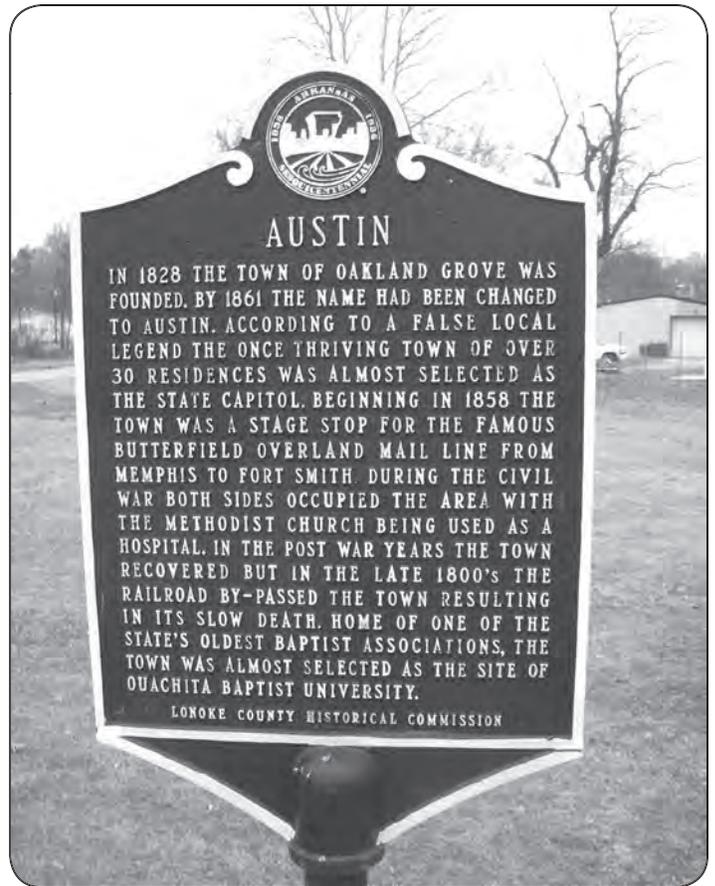
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## Stagecoaches of the Lonoke County Area

by R.D. Keever

The Butterfield Overland Mail had two starting points on the Mississippi River: one location was in St. Louis, Missouri, and the other in Memphis, Tennessee. The two branches met at Fort Smith, Arkansas. John Butterfield contracted the Memphis-Fort Smith section to Chidester, Reeside and Company, which had existing stage lines in Arkansas. The swampy roads in eastern Arkansas were so bad at the start of operations that passengers from Memphis went by steamboat down the Mississippi River and then back up the White River to Des Arc where they boarded a stagecoach headed for Fort Smith.

Stagecoaches on the main line were large and carried a heavy load of mail, passengers, and cargo. The coach was typically pulled by six horses or mules – the latter often replaced horses on rough sections of the roads. The leaders, which were the two horses or mules in the front, were the smallest, smartest, and most alert animals in the team. Before entering or leaving a rough section of the road, stagecoach drivers would usually give the team a “blow” (i.e. allow them to catch their breath), give them water, and check the harnesses to make sure nothing was rubbing the horses’ necks or backs. The stage coach drivers were often given nicknames, such as “Whip” or “Jehu” – the latter name being that of the king of ancient Israel who drove his chariot “like a maniac” (2 Kings 9: 20). The conductor rode with the driver; he collected fares,



Historic marker in Old Austin, Arkansas, commemorating the Butterfield Trail in the area. *photo by the editors*



The Sears House in Austin was built in 1860 during the Butterfield era. *photo by the editors*

took care of the passengers, and was responsible for the mail. There were two types of stations along the road. “Way stations” or “relay stations” were stops where horses could be switched out and passengers could take a 10-minute break to stretch their legs. “Home stations” were larger stations where meals and lodging were provided to the passengers.

West of Des Arc, Arkansas, the stage route followed a road that is now Highway 38, passing through the village of Hickory Plains and entering what is present-day Lonoke County at Butlerville. From there the road went to Old Austin, which at that time was known as Atlanta. J. J. Peebles (1829-1909) bought the Atlanta Public House in 1858; he remodeled it and renamed it the “Atlanta Hotel.” It became the Chidester-Reeside stage office, which was a home station for the Butterfield line. The current location of the Atlanta Hotel site is the northeast corner of Highway 319 and East Main Street, which is a block north of the junction of Highway 38 and Dogwood Lane. The stable area was east of the hotel.



Old well from the trail era that lies 100 yards south of the Butterfield Trail northwest of Old Austin. *photo by R.D. Keever*

One Austin-area stage driver has been identified. According to the 1860 census for Austin, Thomas Cohen was 25 years old at the time and living with the Ford family. His occupation was listed as a stagecoach driver. I have found evidence that Cohen was in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1861 driving for the Wells, Fargo, and Overland Stage Company and that he later drove for the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company.

The original Butterfield route went west from Austin, bypassing Little Rock in order to save time. There were two such routes to the west. The lower route went southwest towards Mayflower, then northwest to Sevier's Tavern (also called Hartje's Station), and then on to the crossing of Cadron Creek near its junction with the Arkansas River. The upper route went northwest, crossing the 1850s Moss Farm Road about seven miles from Austin. Approximately 100 yards south of the Butterfield road is a well from the trail era that still stands, although considerably reduced in height. [See accompanying photo.] A small creek ran by the well and crossed the stage road. Both the well and the creek were said to have sweet water. South of the well was a blacksmith shop which was known as a rough place where men could drink and gamble. Farther west, this upper route passed north of the Conway area and reached the Cadron Creek crossing about five miles farther to the west.

Because the citizens of Little Rock were unhappy that the Butterfield mail did not go directly to their town, a spur was added to provide them with mail and passenger service. It ran south from Austin and passed by the public grounds, which later was the site of Camp Nelson during the Civil War. (Public grounds were the equivalent of what today are rest stops on interstate highways.) The spur connected with the military road a few miles east of Jacksonville, Arkansas. A second spur traveling northwest from Little Rock used the 1820 military road and joined with the lower Butterfield route on the southwest edge of today's Mayflower.

Austin was the hub of five roads that passed through the town, each of which may have served as a stagecoach mainline or branch route at one time or another, depending on the time of year and the weather. The Des Arc-Little Rock Road, which may have served as a branch mail and passenger stage route, bypassed Austin entirely. It left the Butterfield route just west of Hickory Plains, passing through Oak Grove and crossing today's Highway 89 about four miles south of Cabot.

The stagecoach roads that once snaked their way through northern Lonoke County are all but forgotten. Where sections of these routes are still in use, they are often called "Stagecoach Road" on the highway signs. In places where the old roadbeds pass through fields or woods, they often remain as winding ditches that are sometimes incorporated into a driveway. Today's travelers who pass by these sections of lost roadways may wonder about the ditch, never thinking of all the stagecoaches, wagons, soldiers, and pioneers who traveled these old roads over a century and a half ago.



The ruins of Sevier's Tavern as seen in 1947. *courtesy R.D. Keever*

## Back on the Butterfield Trail: Memphis to Fort Smith

*text and photos by Deborah and Jon Lawrence*

Having recently completed a trip on the Butterfield Trail from St. Louis, Missouri, through Fort Stockton, Texas, we decided this past February to investigate the spur of the Butterfield Trail from Memphis, Tennessee, to Fort Smith, Arkansas.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, there is very little information available for readers interested in this section of the Butterfield trail. Kirby Sanders's book on the Butterfield Overland Mail through Arkansas was our primary source.<sup>2</sup> According to Sanders, almost all of the research on this section of the route was done by Ted R. Worley of the Arkansas History Commission for the 1958 National Overland Mail Centennial. We also made use of websites on the Butterfield Trail, such as the one by Charlie Alison of Fayetteville, Arkansas, and another by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.<sup>3</sup> As we traveled, we met local trail enthusiasts, such as R.D. Keever of Lonoke County, Arkansas.<sup>4</sup> These individuals provided us with considerable information about the route and the sites of the trail.

We made our way to the trailhead and checked into the Vista Inn and Suites in Memphis. For \$200 a night, we found ourselves in a filthy room that was only slightly larger than the bed. The revelers on the stairway outside our door serenaded us until the wee hours of the night. Two blocks from Beale Street, the inn's good location did not begin to compensate for this overpriced and noisy crackerbox. While the fried chicken at Gus's restaurant in Memphis was some of the best we have ever tasted, we were happy to leave town the next morning.

John Butterfield's original plan was to carry the mail by steamboat down the Mississippi River from Memphis to the Arkansas River and up the latter to Little Rock. However, the Arkansas River proved unreliable for steamboats, so an alternative route was adopted. The mail was first transported on the Little Rock and Memphis Railroad to Madison, Arkansas, about 40 miles west of Memphis, where the railroad terminated. Sanders believed that the "station" at Madison was simply a cargo transfer platform at the rail terminus on the east bank of the St. Francis River, and that passengers and mail were transferred directly from the train to a light wagon at the platform because there was no actual building.



White River at Des Arc, Arkansas.

Between Madison and Fort Smith, Butterfield sub-contracted the operation of the mail service to the Chidester and Reeside Stage Company.<sup>5</sup> This Arkansas company had operated a coach and freighting network prior to Butterfield, so their stations were already in place. Stagecoaches from Madison used a ferry to cross the White River at Des Arc. According to Kirby Sanders, the ferry was run successively by Erwin,<sup>6</sup> then Frith & Vader, and finally William H. Harvey. Eastern Arkansas is swampy and subject to flooding, and R.D. Keever suggests that when the roads were too muddy, the mail and passengers went by steamboat down the Mississippi from Memphis to the junction with the White River and then up the latter to Des Arc.

In Des Arc, we were impressed by the width and beauty of the White River. We found the site of the Jackson House, which served as the stage station. The 12-room structure was run by Marion Martin Erwin and was located near what is now Main Street and South Second Street. We next visited the Frith-Plunkett House at 8<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets. Built in 1858, the house is the oldest standing residence in Des Arc and is currently in disrepair.<sup>7</sup> Both the house's builder, John Frith, and its second owner, William A. Plunkett, were associated with the town's early economic history. We then went to the the Oak Grove Cemetery, which is located on 7<sup>th</sup> Street near the White River. The oldest public cemetery in Des Arc, it contains 182 burials, including the grave of Marion Erwin. A large tree in the cemetery has fallen on a number of the gravestones; the cemetery is in need of a concerted preservation effort.

West of Des Arc, the stages followed the 1830s Old Military Road, which crossed the White River just north of Des Arc near the mouth of Bayou Des Arc.<sup>8</sup> The Des Arc road to Austin is sometimes north and sometimes south of



Grave of Marion Erwin in the Des Arc cemetery.

Highway 38. We continued on to Atlanta, current-day Old Austin. The first settlers in this area, among them James Erwin, came here in 1822. In 1848, Isaac Dunaway and Colbert Moore build the settlement's first store. Gabriel Conner and O. Chism opened the second store in 1852, and six

years later they began operating the area's first flour mill. The Atlanta Public House, also known as the Atlanta Hotel, served as the Butterfield station. It was run by J.J. Peebles. The Sears House, which dates to 1860, is the last building in Old Austin that remains from the Butterfield era; it is now on the National Register.

In Old Austin, R.D. Keever – who lives in the nearby town of Cabot – gave us a tour of the Butterfield stage sites and swales, as well as other historic sites in the area. In his bright red Mustang convertible, Keever drove us east of Old Austin to show us locations along Highway 38 (the Des Arc/Austin Road) where deep, impressive ruts of the old stage line can still be seen next to the highway. There are places where the original roadbed lies as much as ten feet deep compared to the lay of the land. He then showed us the site of the Atlanta Hotel, which is one block north of the intersection of Highway 38 and Dogwood Lane. The trail ran southwest from the hotel through land that is now occupied by the Old Austin Baptist Church.

The Austin Pioneer Cemetery is on land immediately behind the church. Founded by 1831, it probably started out as the family cemetery of the Dunaway/Saunders/Ferguson families from South Carolina. It was used for that purpose up until the Civil War. There were members

of these families that died in the Austin area between 1850 and 1860, and some of these deaths are probably lost graves in this cemetery. In 1862-63 when the Confederate Army controlled the Austin area, a number of Confederate soldiers died in make-shift hospitals at Austin and are likely buried in this cemetery. With the fall of Little Rock in September of 1863 and through November of 1864, the Union Army occupied the Austin area. The cemetery grounds and surrounding area served as a Union Army cavalry camp during the war. R.D. Keever has organized archaeological investigations of the site and is working to preserve and document this historic cemetery.

According to Keever, when the Butterfield mail route left Old Austin, it headed west to Fort Smith and by-passed Little Rock. This agrees with Worley's assessment that the lack of reliable roads initially forced the route to bypass Little Rock completely. In order to make citizens of the state capital happy, a spur was run south to Little Rock. A second branch then ran northwest from Little Rock, rejoining the main stageline in the Mayflower area. [Editors' note: Charlie Alston's research indicates that Butterfield eventually rerouted to include Little Rock.<sup>9</sup>]

The Atlanta station served as a connecting point where Butterfield travelers transferred to Hanger's Stageline to reach Little Rock. The spur to Little Rock leaves Old Austin on the old Stagecoach Road. With R.D. as our navigator, we proceeded to follow the Stagecoach Road southwest a little over two miles to Campground Road.



Swale of the Butterfield Trail on private property between Des Arc and Old Austin, Arkansas.

Here we passed the western edge of old Camp Nelson, which was a central staging point in Arkansas for Confederate troops. We continued south, and in several areas Keverer showed us places where deep swales of the stage route can still be seen in the woods near the highway.



R.D. Keverer and Deborah Lawrence in the Old Austin pioneer cemetery.

We said goodbye to R.D. and drove on to Little Rock to spend the night. The next day, we went first to the Arkansas Old State House for a tour of the 1858 capital building. The building is now a museum that houses excellent exhibits on the history of Arkansas. The Anthony House, which was nearby, served as the Little Rock station. It stood on the east half of the block that is now bounded by Markham, Scott, Cherry (Second), and Main Streets. The original structure was built in 1830 by Major Nicholas Peay. His one-story frame building on Markham Street was a tavern and hotel. Mayor Samuel Trowbridge leased the hotel in 1839, when it was known as the American Hotel. In 1841, Major James C. Anthony and his son Phillip purchased the hotel and changed the name to the Anthony House. The hotel burned to the ground in 1876, and the site is now occupied by commercial structures and a parking lot.

West of Austin and northwest of Little Rock, the next stage stop was Hartje's Tavern and Inn. According to Charlie Alison, Hartje's Tavern may have been run by Augustus and Louisa Barlett Hartje. Augustus Hartje was born in 1825

in Hanover, Germany, and immigrated to the United States when he was 11. Soon after his marriage to Louisa Bartlett in 1830, the couple



Old State House in Little Rock.

journeyed to Arkansas by boat. They landed at the mouth of Cadron Creek and acquired 80 acres of land one-half mile west of the present site of Conway. He built a "dogtrot" home, and tavern. This log structure served as the Butterfield Overland Mail station. Although there is no headstone, his descendants believe that Augustus Hartje is buried in the Hartje Cemetery. After Hartje's station, the stage continued towards the ferry at Cadron Creek. When Thomas Nuttal first visited Cadron in 1819, he described the Cadron settlement as a chain of farms.<sup>10</sup> Although the town soon died away, a ferry across the Cadron Creek continued for several more years and was on the Old Military Road.

Butterfield's Plumer's Station was run by Samuel Plummer (1801-1876). Plummer first came to Arkansas Territory in 1825. He purchased 160 acres of land on high ground north of the Arkansas River and built a log house. The Fort Smith to Little Rock stagecoach line ran by his home, which became known as Plumer's Station, and Plummer became a saddler, hotelier, and tavern keeper. A village grew around his stage stop. When the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad replaced the stage line in 1870, Plummer provided land for right-of-way. Consequently, the railroad decided to name the rail stop "Plummerville," which was later shortened to "Plumerville" with the elimination of one "m" in the name.<sup>11</sup>

We had read that Samuel Plummer and his wife Henrietta are buried in the Plummer Cemetery within 50 feet of the railroad tracks. We searched for the cemetery in vain. Finally, we stopped at a Plumerville gas station and asked a local resident for directions. Fortunately for us, the man we asked, William Deaver, has lived in Plumerville all of his life. He took us right to the Plummer family cemetery, a small plot in Mad Dog Zachary's backyard and within 50 feet of the railroad tracks. We never would have found this



Grave of Samuel Plummer in Plumerville, Arkansas.

site without William’s help. William then took us back to his house to watch a YouTube video on historic Plumerville.<sup>12</sup>

Located about 50 miles west of Little Rock, Lewisburg was the earliest river port along the way to Fort Smith. Around 1820, Major William Lewis, his son, Stephen D. Lewis and Dr. Nimrod Menifee settled near the Arkansas River and Point Remove Creek. Five years later, Stephen Lewis established a trading post and called it “Lewisburg.” The town of Lewisburg was incorporated in 1844. By 1850, Lewisburg was flourishing: there were two sawmills, two grist mills, an opera house, two dentists, hotels, two druggists, two livery stables, two blacksmiths, two saddlery stores – about eighty business establishments in all. The first ferry at Lewisburg was established about 1848. When the railroad bypassed the town in 1875, the town died. Today the Lewisburg Cemetery is all that remains.

We continued on to Pottsville where a Butterfield station is still standing. Built and operated by John Kirkbride Potts (1803-1879), the Potts Inn is today a museum that is open for tours Wednesday through Saturday, 10-4. John Potts traveled by covered wagon to Arkansas from his home in Pennsylvania. A young bachelor, he brought with him two families of slaves. He settled in an area south of the Arkansas River. After his marriage to Pamela Logan, Potts moved across the river to Pope County and constructed a two-story log cabin at the foot of Crow Mountain. Between 1850 and 1858, Potts and his wife built a large house patterned after the Classical Revival style. The building served as a post office, a social and cultural center, and inn,

overnight Butterfield Stage stop, and home. According to caretakers of the Potts Museum, the inn was the only “scheduled” stop on the route between Fort Smith and Memphis. The good cooking and immaculate rooms made the inn the center of the community that would become Pottsville. Fourteen buildings once were located on the Potts’s property. These structures included barns for the stagecoach horses and family animals, a chicken house, tack rooms for the family’s leather goods and the stage, carriage houses for the wagons and buggies, and a building for overnight stagecoaches. John Potts and his wife are buried in Potts Cemetery overlooking Galla Creek. Potts’s descendants occupied the home until they sold it to the Pope County Historical Foundation in 1970.

According to Kirby Sanders, the Potts Inn to Fort Smith section of the Butterfield route is poorly documented, but it is fairly certain that the Butterfield stages continued to follow the earlier Memphis to Fort Smith Military Road through this segment, which pursued a course slightly north of today’s Arkansas Highway 22. According to Ted Worley, coaches were ferried across the Arkansas River at Dardanelle. A marker in Dardanelle commemorates Stinnett’s Station.

Moses and Patsy Stinnett established a station in 1850 along the Military Road as it approached Fort Smith. When the Butterfield Overland Mail Company began operations along the route, the Stinnetts contracted to provide a relay station with coaches and teams of horses. The station was about 100 yards from the marker on the east side of the Stinnett Creek, near the Stinnett Cemetery. The trail then continued west along the southern bank of the Arkansas River towards Fort Smith, instead of staying on the north bank of the river. Pioneers settled into the area of what



The Potts Inn in Pottsville, Arkansas.

would later be the village of Paris in about 1820. It was on the Old Military Road just down the pike from Stinnett's Station and five miles south of the Arkansas River. Moffett's Station was nearby, but the exact location is not known.<sup>13</sup> Curtis Varnell of the Western Arkansas Education Service Cooperative, suggests that it was in the vicinity of Kalamazoo Road and Old Military Road near Paris.<sup>14</sup> Jack James (curator of the Military Road Museum in Lavaca, Arkansas) reported that there may have been a stage station farther west in Lavaca, on private property at 2706 E. Main near Feather Hill Road. This was the site of Strang's Farm and would have been the last stop before Fort Smith.

As we headed back to Santa Fe, we felt satisfied that many remnants of the trail and its sites still remain on the Memphis/Fort Smith section of the Butterfield Trail.

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### Endnotes

1. See "Airstreaming the Butterfield Trail from Tipton, Missouri through West Texas." *Desert Tracks*, January 2016.
2. For an obituary for Kirby Sanders and a review of his Butterfield Trail books, see the January 2016 issue of *Desert Tracks*.
3. See the bibliography for these websites.
4. R.D. Keever, who lives in Cabot, Arkansas, is a local historian with a particular expertise in Civil War sites and stagecoach trails of central Arkansas.
5. The McCollum-Chidester House in Camden, Arkansas, was built in 1847 by Peter McCollum. McCollum purchased the building materials in New Orleans and had them shipped

- upriver by steamboat to Camden. In 1858, Chidester purchased the wood frame house for \$10,000 in gold. Today the house is a museum and visitors can see not only this historic building, but Chidester's furniture, photographs, letters, books, and jewelry as well.
6. James Erwin purchased land where Des Arc is now located and in the late 1840s laid it into town lots. He opened the first store and erected the first cotton gin, gristmill, and sawmill. His son Marion Martin Erwin (1828-1892) was the first inn keeper in Des Arc, where he ginned the town's first bale of cotton. From 1872-1874, he served as a Representative in the Arkansas Legislature.
7. The Frith-Plunkett house, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, is in disrepair. In 2002, the current owner purchased the building to save it from demolition, but the house has since remained vacant. The condition of the building has caused the city council to consider a resolution to demolish the house. A few concerned citizens are working to raise awareness about the importance of saving the structure.
8. One of the most important military roads in Arkansas was the Memphis to Little Rock Road. The construction of this road opened settlement in west Arkansas. By 1827, sixty miles of the road had been constructed from Memphis west toward Little Rock. It was completed by the mid-1830s.
9. Because Butterfield's inclusion of Little Rock in his route is in question, Kirby Sanders' report on the Butterfield route through Arkansas for the National Park Service does not include the town.
10. In 1834 Lieutenant Joseph W. Harris led a party of Cherokees up the Arkansas River. They were stranded by low water at Cadron, and before they could continue on, the party was struck by an outbreak of cholera. A plaque in the park lists the known dead who were buried at Cadron.
11. There is some confusion about the spelling of Samuel's last name. While the name is spelled with one "m" both on the gravestone and in the name of the town, family members today spell it with two letters "m."
12. The address for the YouTube video titled "Plummerville, Arkansas" is <https://youtu.be/m5Ii5aQNzZc>.
13. In 1863, a skirmish between General Joseph Shelby's Confederate troops and Captain William Parker's Union men occurred at Haguewood Prairie/Moffett's Station.
14. Curtis Varnell is the author of *Roads Less Travelled: A Study of the History, Culture, and People of Arkansas*. He lives in Paris, Arkansas, and works as a content specialist for Western Arkansas Education Service Co-op at Branch.

## Stagecoach Stations in New Mexico Lore

by Marc Simmons

The romance of stagecoaching is an ever popular chapter in the history of the Old West. In the public mind, it has become forever identified with adventure and danger, owing perhaps to our recollection of movies such as John Wayne's *Stagecoach*.

The first regular stage service for New Mexico was not inaugurated until 1850. In July of that year, a coach left Independence, Missouri, for Santa Fe. The fare was \$250, one way. The route over the Santa Fe Trail entered New Mexico by way of Raton Pass. The first stop in New Mexico Territory was Will Springs Station, inside the town limits of today's Raton.

The next stop was Vermejo Station beyond the Canadian River. Near there in 1871, two outlaws held up the eastbound coach and seized the strongbox. The company, fearing trouble, had shipped no valuables on this trip, so the highwaymen got nothing. Newspapers reported that they had neglected to rob the passengers, one of whom was carrying \$15,000 in cash.

From Vermejo, the coaches rumbled down to Rayado where Kit Carson once lived, threaded their way through a series of mesas to Fort Union and Gregg's Station, and then rolled into Old Town Plaza at Las Vegas. To the west, stops were made at Pigeon's Ranch Stage Station, near the top of Glorieta Pass, and at Rock Corral Station, just above Lamy Junction. The end of the line was the Santa Fe Plaza, where stage drivers unloaded their passengers at the Exchange Hotel (on the site of the present La Fonda Hotel).

Around every stage station along the Santa Fe Trail, an interesting history soon accumulated. That was also true of stations on other routes throughout the territory.

The Overland Mail Company's line ran across southern New Mexico to Arizona. Its stations had such colorful names as Rough-and-Ready, Ojo de Vaca, Soldier's Farewell, and Dragoon Springs. The route lay through the heart of hostile Apache country. Attacks on the stations and the coaches form a dramatic chapter in the history of the Indian wars. By the late 1850s, another major stagecoach company was

operating between Albuquerque and Las Cruces. Below Socorro, the road left the Rio Grande to descend the long desert of the Jornada del Muerto. An occasional ranch, such as the one at Aleman Wells, became a stopping place for the coaches. Point of Rocks, a landmark at the southern end of the Jornada, was an ambush site used by the Apaches.

A lesser-known stage route connected the two territorial capitals of Santa Fe and Prescott. Starting on the Santa Fe Plaza, it headed south to Peña Blanca where it forded the Rio Grande. From there, the road crossed the Jemez Mountains and dropped into the Puerco Basin. There, the town of Cabezón provided a rest stop for the coaches before they continued on to Fort Wingate in Arizona.

The El Dado Stage Station stood in an open flat halfway to Wingate. I learned an interesting story about it when I visited the well-preserved ruins in the early 1970s. El Dado is in the middle of the huge Floyd Lee Ranch southwest of Mount Taylor. My guide on that occasion was the late Mr. Lee himself. As a lowly cowboy, he had lived in the stage station right after World War I when the building was serving as a line camp. He learned its history from old timers. Originally, Lee said, the place had been called La Jara Station, but because of something that happened in the 1870s, it became known as "El Dado." (He pronounced it, as New Mexicans often do, "El Dao.") It seems the station had a keeper known to be a tough hombre. He wore two guns and chewed tobacco. In one end of the building, he operated a small saloon. Whenever passengers alighted from the stage, the keeper demanded that they roll dice, double or nothing, for their drinks. No one dared to challenge him, so they rolled as ordered . . . and lost every time. The dice were loaded. Soon the station was known as "Loaded Dice" but after a while, simply as "The Dice" (which in Spanish is "El Dado").

Such lore concerning New Mexico's historic stage stations is hard to come by, but I have found that it is worth the effort.

From *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, April 30, 2016, with the permission of the author.

## Entangled Transactions: General Kearny's Mill Site, 1731-1860

by Deborah Lawrence

Tinged with mystery and intrigue, the trail the Spaniards referred to as *el camino del cañon* runs along the south side of the Santa Fe River. In 1731, the governor of New Mexico granted Manuel Trujillo<sup>1</sup> a tract of land near Talaya Hill, east of the city of Santa Fe, which included a large portion of *el camino del canon*. In April of that year Alcalde Diego Arias de Quiros, his witnesses, and Trujillo went to the premises<sup>2</sup> and Quiros proceeded to deliver legal possession of the grant to Trujillo. The requested tract was bounded by the following natural objects:

On the north, up the river from where Acequia has been taken out, which is in front of a peñasco on the margin of said river at the first arroyo; on the east, with the mountain called Talaya; on the south, a deep arroyo; and on the west, a deep arroyo which is in front of the furnace together with the upper Acequia Madre, which also serves as the boundary.<sup>3</sup>

After the survey of the property, Quiros most likely had Trujillo perform the customary ceremony connected with the land acquisition, such as scattering handfuls of earth, breaking off branches from the trees, plucking up grass, casting stones, and uttering loud exclamations of joy in testimony of his possession. Trujillo used his land for grazing livestock and gathering firewood. Over 100 years later, part of this property was purchased by Captain William M. D. McKissack with funds of the quartermaster's department for the site of General Stephen Watts Kearny's mill. This article is a detailed examination of selected events important to the history of the property at this old mill site. The discussion derives from the sources provided in the accompanying bibliography.

In the spring of 1846, President James K. Polk created an "Army of the West" commanded by Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny.<sup>4</sup> Kearny was directed to march his army from Missouri over the Santa Fe Trail and invade the Republic of Mexico with the goal of capturing the Mexican territories between the United States and the Pacific Ocean. In August, a few days after Kearny and his exhausted and starving troops<sup>5</sup> arrived in Santa Fe, he ordered the construction of a fort that would overlook the town. Lieutenant Jeremy Gilmer of the Corps of Engineers and Lieutenant William H. Emory prepared a map in 1846

entitled "Reconnaissance of Santa Fe and Environs," indicating the site for the fort.<sup>6</sup> The fort was to be an earthwork construction five feet thick and nine feet high in an irregular hexagonal polygonal shape with one adobe blockhouse and a dry moat. Although very little wood would be required for the fort itself, Kearny needed milled lumber, for many purposes, including casement bases and barracks for a garrison in event of siege—and since there had never been a sawmill in operation in New Mexico, Kearny's troops were obligated to construct their own. On October 5, 1846, First Lieutenant George Gibson,<sup>7</sup> of Murphy's Platte County infantry volunteer company, wrote of the engineers doing a reconnaissance of the upper Santa Fe River with his company and William Murphy, a miller. In his entry for October 8, Gibson stated that Gilmer and Murphy had returned from the mountains and that they represented the "lake as a small affair, a hundred and fifty yards long and seventy-five wide, the head of this stream, and a canyon with precipitous and rocky sides running in the shape of a horseshoe into the heart of the mountain."<sup>8</sup> The Army of the West hadn't brought millworks themselves. Richard Smith Elliott complained about Kearny's fondness for "rapid marching" and all of the work that it took to set up a camp . . . packing, loading, getting the horses ready . . .<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the army travelled with only the minimum of provisions<sup>10</sup> and sought to purchase supplies locally. However, of immediate concern to Kearny on his arrival in Santa Fe was that, with the exception of meat, very few supplies could be secured locally.

A native of Spain, Manuel Alvarez<sup>11</sup> was U.S. counsel in Santa Fe from 1839 until the beginning of the American occupation. He was also a Santa Fe merchant and a prominent Santa Fe trader. Several years before Kearny's troops arrived, he had brought millworks back from Missouri, but because of the hostility engendered by the 1841 Texan Expedition,<sup>12</sup> he had kept the works in storage. In September of 1846, he told a member of Kearny's staff that he had the equipment: the works, irons, and wheel. In his entry for September 5, 1846, George Rutledge Gibson wrote:

A set of sawmill irons nearly complete were found today in Mr. Alvarez's store, our former enterprising and accomplished consul. They were brought out by him some year since to engage in milling, but the unstable condition of the public mind deterred him from the undertaking. They may be found of great benefit . . .<sup>13</sup>

On October 16, Gibson recorded that “a large party has been camped in the mountains, getting out timber for the fort and mill . . .”<sup>14</sup> In a letter to Major General Thomas S. Jesup, Quartermaster General, U. S. Army, dated September 16, 1846, Captain Thomas Swords wrote, “By direction of General Kearny I have commenced building a sawmill preparatory to building quarters and finishing the block house and Fort now being constructed by the Engineers Department at this place.”<sup>15</sup>

Kearny’s Army of the West included a volunteer artillery company of German-speaking immigrants. Organized by Woldemar Fischer,<sup>16</sup> a St. Louis merchant and former Prussian officer, these men became Company B, Missouri Light Artillery Battalion. The Fisherschens<sup>17</sup> (Fischers’s boys) were placed on the sawmill detail. Fischer’s senior first lieutenant, engineer Louis Garnier, had experience in sawmill operation and erecting the equipment was simple for him. Historian Tim Kimball suspects that the mill had a small vertical wheel since several soldiers wrote of using the wheel spill for a shower.<sup>18</sup>

Louis Garnier put up the works and framed a building around it with the first production of lumber. Richard Smith Elliott wrote that the Mexicans were amazed at a building framed of sawn lumber, since the only sawn lumber in New Mexico before that was produced in sawpits, pits over which lumber is positioned to be sawed with a long two-handed saw by two men, one standing above the timber and the other below.

Yesterday I visited the saw mill erected on Santa Fe creek by the quartermaster’s department, under the superintendence of Lt. Garnier. The structure is, in the first place, curious to us as being entirely of pine wood, and to the Mexicans, because they “never saw the like before.” There was a large crowd of men, women, children, dogs and babies, at the mill to view the machinery, which was all entirely new to them, being the only thing of the kind in New Mexico. Some would ride on the carriage as the small turning wheel sent it back—and then any quantity of mixed Spanish was spoken, and cigarritos smoke in most desirable profusion. Heretofore, in this Province, anything in the shape of a board had been general cut out of solid timber with a small axe, or sawed by hand.<sup>19</sup> In a letter from Santa Fe, dated October 19, 1846, Captain McKissack complained, “The sawmill is progressing slowly and I am apprehensive will not be completed this

Fall but I am using every effort to complete it as soon as possible as lumber cannot be obtained at any price.”<sup>20</sup> The mill was powered by water diverted from the Santa Fe River, which is described in an article in the *Santa Fe Republican*, dated October 23, 1847.

It [the mill] has a large ditch the water several feet deep, affording a pleasant place to bathe, and which was used through the summer for that purpose—scarcely a Sunday passed that large crowds of both sexes could be seen enjoying this luxury.<sup>21</sup>

Troops were soon put to work hauling saw logs from miles away. This was not an easy task because the ox teams needed to pull the wood wagons were weak because of the scarcity of forage. Therefore, getting the saw logs down to the mill was a constant struggle. In a letter from Santa Fe, dated November 11, 1846, Captain McKissack wrote,

Corn is very scarce, advertised for 2,000 bushel. Hay and oats are unknown. Fodder very scarce. No lumber. Had to use wagon lids for coffins. Hope to have the sawmill done by January. I am using every effort to finish it. I hope to have it sawing before January but no calculation can be made of work performed by volunteers who only work when they please.<sup>22</sup>

The mill’s early production went for lumber used for Fort Marcy and for bunks in the old presidial barracks. Soon after the sawmill was erected, a grist mill was also established in the same place. According to an October 1847 article in the *Santa Fe Republican*, the grist mill would “no doubt be a great curiosity, as the country contains nothing but Tub-mills of the most simple contrivance.”<sup>23</sup>

Other men in Company B associated with the Government mill included Fischerschen Charles Deus<sup>24</sup> and August de Marle.<sup>25</sup> Historian Tim Kimball asserts that Charles Deus was on the sawmill detail most of the first year and then reenlisted in Franz Hassendeubel’s<sup>26</sup> company as bugler. An interesting aside, is that on November 21, several of the Fischerschen did not show up to work at the mill and instead “remained in the town of Santa Fe the whole of that day”—depriving Lieutenant Garnier of the number of workmen necessary to work on the mill. On November 27, these men were court martialed.<sup>27</sup> The Fischer Company left in June 1847, and the quartermaster continued to operate the mill through the end of the war.

Alexander Reynolds<sup>28</sup> was quartermaster of the post at Santa Fe from October 1849 through March 1850, chief quartermaster of the territory from April through August 1850, and quartermaster at Santa Fe from September 1850 until October 1851. Historian Robert Frazer writes that while serving in these positions, Reynolds purchased or became part owner of two sawmills, two gold mines, four ranches, two houses and several lots in Santa Fe, and three Santa Fe hotels--the Exchange, the Independence House, and the Hillary.<sup>29</sup> These properties were acquired through questionable business dealings, as well as embezzlements from the quartermaster's department.

According to an 1856 affidavit by James B. Wood, the proprietor of Santa Fe's Waverly House,<sup>30</sup> Thomas S. J.

Johnson was the owner of coal mines near Galisteo and the owner of two circular sawmills near Santa Fe from 1849 to 1851. One mill was at the Rock Corral, just south of the city and worked by horse power. The other mill was on the "Big Chiquito," a few miles east of the city and worked by water power. Wood testified that Johnson, who was the clerk of Alexander Reynolds, had "an agreement with Captain A. W. Reynolds, assistant

quartermaster, and had a monopoly in both of his businesses.<sup>31</sup> Tim Kimball has suggested that, given the corruption of Reynolds and Johnson, it is probable that they got Kearny's mill for next to nothing and without public bidding.<sup>32</sup>

In 1850 Johnson purchased 32 wagons on credit from Ceran St. Vrain.<sup>33</sup> Reynolds gave Johnson permission to place them for safe keeping in one of the army corrals in Santa Fe. Johnson used the wagons to haul saw logs to the mill to be cut into lumber. Although Johnson was Reynolds' salaried clerk, making the wagons, logs, and mill government property, Johnson and Reynolds were business

partners who paid themselves for the logs with army funds and then shared the proceeds.

In 1851 Colonel Edwin V. Sumner<sup>34</sup> was instructed to proceed to New Mexico and assume command of the department and revise the whole system of defense. His first action was to relocate the department headquarters and the main supply depot from Santa Fe, "that sink of vice and extravagance," to a location that was strategically situated near the junction of the Mountain and Cimarron Branches of the Santa Fe Trail.<sup>35</sup> Realizing the corruption of Reynolds and Johnson, Sumner quickly put them out of business. Consequently, Johnson was unable to pay his debt to St. Vrain for the wagons that he had purchased on credit. St. Vrain then sued Johnson and Reynolds and attached the mill property. According to



The Randall Davey House, which incorporates the structure of Kearny's mill.  
*photo by Jon Lawrence*

historian Robert Frazer, the suit involved St. Vrain and Johnson, but the army was involved because it had paid rent to Johnson.<sup>36</sup> On June 21, 1852, St. Vrain purchased the mill for \$500 at a court-ordered public auction. What is perplexing is that one month later, Sumner claimed that although the mill had been the legal property of Reynolds and Johnson, their uses of it and the manner in which they financed it were illegal so the army had the right to repossess it. The army, however, had no need

of the mill and it was in poor condition. According to Second Lieutenant John C. Moore, the assistant quartermaster at Santa Fe, "[t]he stone is broken and every time there is anything of a rain, the whole stream runs through the mill."<sup>37</sup> Moore also stated that the property included "Mexican mill stones, the saw, the house and the water wheel." In a letter to Sibley, dated July 28, 1852, Sumner said that the army would be willing to sell the mill for \$1,000.<sup>38</sup>

In June 1853, the property and the mill, which had been known as "the Government mill" and then "the Reynolds and Johnson mill," were once more put up for auction. The

sale, however, was not because the army no longer wanted the mill. Inexplicably, the sale was the result of another court action, a lawsuit that again involved St. Vrain and Alexander Reynolds in which the property, including the gristmill and the sawmill, was used as Reynolds' collateral because he did not have the money to pay his part of the fees accrued to him in the suit.<sup>39</sup> At the auction, St. Vrain repurchased the property, this time for \$220. According to legal documents, the property consisted of "one grist mill, one circular sawmill with extra gearing; the building for said sawmill is a good two story building, built for that purpose. Also two dwelling houses and one stable."<sup>40</sup> Even more confounding, is that two months after St. Vrain took possession of the premises, Colonel Joseph K. F. Mansfield wrote that the army had a good sawmill with an attached miller's house.

There is a good saw mill about one and one-half miles out of the city on the Santa Fé River and attached to it a miller's house. This although new, having been erected soon after General Kearney [sic] took possession of the country, it seems difficult to sell and a soldier is constantly quartered there to keep charge of it.<sup>41</sup>

In 1856, St. Vrain sold the mill machinery to Joseph Hersch<sup>42</sup> and Isaiah Smith, also the owners of a Santa Fe sawmill. They established a new mill downstream on the Santa Fe River near the source of the Acequia Madre irrigation ditch at the western end of Upper Santa Fe Canyon. In addition to the sawmill, Hersch operated a brewery, distillery, soda fountain, billiard tables, and a gristmill.<sup>43</sup> According to historian Leo Oliva, because of the investment required in flour milling during the 1850s, there were only four millers, including St. Vrain and Joseph Hersch, who filled all of the contracts for flour produced for the army in New Mexico.<sup>44</sup> Shortly after the sale to Hersch, St. Vrain sold the original mill site and structures to Louis Gold,<sup>45</sup> a local trader and the nephew of Joseph Hersch. Together with Hersch, Gold contracted to provide supplies for the army.<sup>46</sup>

Ownership of the property subsequently passed through several hands. In 1919, the artist Randall Davey purchased the property and remodeled it to make it his home and studio. Following his death it was subsequently deeded to the New Mexico Audubon Society, who currently maintain the property. Tours are given regularly on Friday afternoons, and special tours can be arranged.

Obviously this initial study of the old government mill site is anything but definitive. In fact, what is most interesting about the history of this place at the moment is the extent to which the land transfers are entangled, confused, or dead ended. This story longs for further scholarship that would expand and further clarify the land transfers and uses.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Manuel Trujillo was the son of Agustin Trujillo (the descendant of a Pre-Pueblo Revolt family) and Micaela Marin Serrano from Santa Fe. Micaela Marin Serrano was the daughter of Captain Pedro Martin Serrano and Juana Arguello.

<sup>2</sup> The Act of Possession does not mention the day of the month on which Quiros delivered possession or the name of the governor who made the grant. Governor Juan Domingo de Bustamonte was dismissed in 1731, after having been found guilty on a charge of illegal trade. He was succeeded by Governor Gervacio Cruzat y Gongora.

<sup>3</sup> See J. J. Bowden's "Talaya Hill Land Grant" at <http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=24719>.

<sup>4</sup> Kearny learned of his promotion to brigadier general when he

arrived in Las Vegas, New Mexico, on August 15, 1846.

<sup>5</sup> In *Murder and Justice in Frontier New Mexico*, Jill Mocho writes: For more than two weeks the soldiers had been suffering from lack of food, for, after entering New Mexico, the army subsisted on one-third rations until it reached Santa Fe" (151-152).

<sup>6</sup> First Lieutenant William H. Emory, U.S. Topographical Engineers, selected a site at the top of a hill overlooking the town for Fort Marcy. First Lieutenant Jeremy F. Gilmer, U.S. Corps of Engineers, supervised the construction of an earthworks and blockhouse on the selected site. W. H. Emory and J. F. Gilmer's "Reconnaissance of Santa Fe and the Environs," August 1846, is the second oldest known map of Santa Fe. It was produced under the orders of Kearny.

<sup>7</sup> George Rutledge Gibson (1810-1885) was born in Christiansburg, Virginia. He studied law in Vincennes, Indiana. In 1844, he moved to Independence, Missouri, and published the *Independence Journal*. Later in 1844, he moved to Weston, Missouri, where he published the *Weston Journal*. At age 36, during the Mexican War, he joined the Platte County infantry volunteers. After the war he remained in Santa Fe and edited its first American newspaper, *The Santa Fe Republican*. He died in Woodland, California.

<sup>8</sup> See Gibson's *Journal Of A Soldier Under Kearny and Doniphan 1846-1847*, pages 247-248.

<sup>9</sup> See Gardner and Simmons, *The Mexican War Correspondence of Richard Smith Elliott*, 50.

<sup>10</sup> For an excellent discussion of Kearny's attempts to acquire and transport the supplies and provisions required by his Army of the West, see Leo Oliva's "The Army's Attempts at Freighting during the Mexican War, 1846-1848," pages 17-24.

<sup>11</sup> Manuel Álvarez (c.1794-1856) was a Spanish-born Santa Fe trader. An intimate friend of Charles Bent, Álvarez played a major role in the 1850 state government, serving as interim governor and clashing with military governor John Munroe much as he used to with Manuel Armijo. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1842, and in March 1846, he was appointed the U.S. commercial agent at Santa Fe. For a biography of Álvarez, see Thomas Chávez's *Manuel Alvarez, 1794-1856*.

<sup>12</sup> The Texas-Santa Fe Expedition was a commercial and military expedition in 1841 to secure the Republic of Texas's claims to parts of northern New Mexico. The expedition was unofficially initiated by President Mirabeau B. Lamar, in an attempt to divert to Texas a portion of the lucrative Santa Fe trade and further develop the trade links between Texas and

New Mexico.

<sup>13</sup> George Rutledge Gibson's *Journal of a Soldier*, 232.

<sup>14</sup> George Rutledge Gibson's *Journal of a Soldier*, 254.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Captain Thomas Swords in Santa Fe, to Major General Thomas S. Jesup, Quartermaster General, U.S. Army, dated September 16, 1846. Santa Fe: Historical Santa Fe Foundation, Randall Davey file.

<sup>16</sup> "Woldermar" is also spelled "Waldemar" and "Woldemar." A native of Germany, Fischer received his military education as an artillery officer in the Prussian army. After immigrating to the United States, he became commander of Company B (part of Major Clark's Battery of Artillery) of General Stephen Kearny's Army of the West during the Mexican-American War. According to Tim Kimball, near Trinidad, Colorado, fellow Fischerschens Kribben and Hassendeubel accompanied Fischer to the base of the palisades of what was originally named Raton Peak but later renamed "Fischer Peak" for Woldermar Fischer by Emory. Some of Abert's 1845 party did actually climb all the way to the top shortly after they left the Frémont party and began their side trip to map the Canadian.

<sup>17</sup> Tim Kimball is a historian with a special interest in archival research on occupation-era New Mexico. My information on the Fischerschens in this article is from personal correspondence with him. For Kimball's article on the Fischerschens, see "Most Beautiful Are the Evenings: Fischer's German-American Artillery Volunteers on the Santa Fe Trail, 1846-1847."

<sup>18</sup> First lieutenant Richard Smith Elliott has a story about when he, Garnier, and first sergeant F. Charles Weber walked their girlfriends to the newly constructed mill. See Gardner and Simmons. *The Mexican War Correspondence of Richard Smith Elliott*, 160, 167, 180.

<sup>19</sup> See Gardner and Simmons. *The Mexican War Correspondence of Richard Smith Elliott*, 60.

<sup>20</sup> Captain W. M. D. McKissack, Santa Fe, dated October 19, 1846. Santa Fe: Historical Santa Fe Foundation, Randall Davey file.

<sup>21</sup> See Gary D. Lenderman's *The Santa Fe Republican: New Mexico Territory's First Newspaper, 1847-1849*, October 23, 1847. The ditch, the Acequia del Llano, which served as its millrace, still runs behind today's Randall Davey house at the site of the old mill. For a discussion of the Santa Fe acequias, including Acequia del Llano, see David Snow's *The Santa Fe Acequia Systems: Summary Report on Their History and Present Status, with Recommendations for Use*

*and Protection.*

<sup>22</sup> Captain W. M. D. McKissack, Santa Fe, dated November 11, 1846. Santa Fe: Historical Santa Fe Foundation, Randall Davey file.

<sup>23</sup> See Gary D. Lenderman's *The Santa Fe Republican: New Mexico Territory's First Newspaper, 1847-1849*.

<sup>24</sup> Charles Deus was born in Germany in 1823. His family came to Mt. Pleasant (Augusta), Missouri, where he farmed and operated a grist mill and a distillery for wine. At the age of 16 he trained as a tanner where he worked until he was 21. In 1845, he took a job herding cattle for Charles Blummer's caravan. Later, at Bent's Fort, he shipped furs to St. Louis. When the U.S. declared war on Mexico in 1846, he joined Company B. After he later mustered out of the service in 1848, he returned to Santa Fe, erected a grist mill and brewery. According to Tomas Jaehn, in 1860, Deus was listed as the only German brewer in the entire territory. See Jaehn's *Germans in the Southwest, 1850-1920*, page 86.

<sup>25</sup> Fischerschens second lieutenant August de Marle was the last lover of Gertrudis Barceló (circa 1800 to 1852), a saloon owner and master gambler in New Mexico Territory. A communist philosophy professor and refugee from the Leipzig Rising of 1845, de Marle was gun captain of the six pounder used at Taos Pueblo. He became a commissioner of the territorial court of claims, territorial auditor, publisher of the *New Mexican*, and a founding member of the original New Mexico Historical Society. See Mary Jane Straw Cook's *Doña Tules: Santa Fe's Courtesan and Gambler*, 23.

<sup>26</sup> Franz Hassendeubel (1817-1863) was second lieutenant in Captain Woldermar Fischer's artillery battery. During the occupation of Santa Fe, the section of the battery under command of Hassendeubel was called into action on February 4, 1847, to quell the Pueblo de Taos uprising.

<sup>27</sup> Volume 43 ½, Orders and Special Orders, Army of New Mexico, 1846; Army in New Mexico, 1847; 9<sup>th</sup> Military Department from June 1847-August 1847. Record Group 94, Record of the Adjutant General. General Court Martial Index: EE326. The court-martialed Fischerschens, Privates Henry Doerr, William Elend, Adam Aulman, and John Wokenhauer were sentenced to three days on extra guard or fatigue duty, and Henry Wilkes to one day on extra guard or fatigue duty.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander Welch Reynolds (1817-1876) was a career United States Army officer who was a captain in the Mexican-American War. He served as the Army's Assistant Quartermaster beginning August 4, 1847. Reynolds was dismissed from the Army on October 8, 1855, following

- the disappearance of \$126,307 from his office, but he used his political connections to be re-instated three years later. He was a Confederate Army brigadier general during the American Civil War, after which he served as a staff officer in the Egyptian Army.
- <sup>29</sup> Jordan, Weymouth T., Jr., John D. Chapla, and Shan C. Sutton, “‘Notorious as the Noonday Sun’: Capt. Alexander Welch Reynolds and the New Mexico Territory, 1849-1859,” page 464. The four ranches were a 2,500 acre spread near Galisteo, the San Cristobal Ranch (also near Galisteo), Loya’s Galisteo Ranch (about 500 acres), and the Ranch of Maragua (near La Cienega, about 12 miles southwest of Santa Fe). One of the gold mines was called the “mine of Polivadero”; the other was located about 32 miles southwest of Santa Fe.
- <sup>30</sup> In 1850, Manuel Álvarez, United States Consul, was the owner of the Waverly House, a boarding house that rented room to discharged soldiers.
- <sup>31</sup> In 1856, Thomas S. J. Johnson filed a petition requesting alleged payments not received for the amount of \$859.86 from the United States for coal and lumber that had been delivered to the army in New Mexico. See 37C/2Sess. House Rep CC No. 284, 4 Dec 1861; T S Johnson, pages 1-88.
- <sup>32</sup> Alexander Reynolds was cashiered for his corruption in 1855, but returned to service in 1858. For a discussion of both Johnson’s and Reynolds’ shenanigans, see Jordan, Weymouth T., Jr., John D. Chapla, and Shan C. Sutton, “‘Notorious as the Noonday Sun’: Capt. Alexander Welch Reynolds and the New Mexico Territory, 1849-1859.”
- <sup>33</sup> For information regarding the wagons that Johnson purchased on credit from Ceran St. Vrain, see Jordan, Weymouth T., Jr., John D. Chapla, and Shan C. Sutton, “‘Notorious as the Noonday Sun.’” Ceran St. Vrain (1802-1870) was a fur trader and merchant. He and his partner William Bent established the trading post of Bent’s Fort in southern Colorado. Later St. Vrain settled in Mora, New Mexico.
- <sup>34</sup> Edwin Vose Sumner (1797-1863) was a career United States Army officer who became a Union Army general and the oldest field commander of any Army Corps on either side during the American Civil War. He served as the military governor of the New Mexico Territory from 1851-53.
- <sup>35</sup> Quoted in Robert Frazer’s *Forts and Supplies*, 62.
- <sup>36</sup> See Robert Frazer’s “Purveyors of Flour to the Army: 1849–1861,” page 217.
- <sup>37</sup> Moore to Sumner, Sept. 38, 1852, Department of New Mexico, United States Army Commands, let. Rcvd. Quoted in Frazer’s “Purveyors of Flour to the Army: Department of New Mexico, 1849–1861,” page 217.
- <sup>38</sup> Sumner to Sibley July 28, 1852. Quoted in Robert Frazer’s “Purveyors of Flour to the Army: Department of New Mexico, 1849–1861,” page 217.
- <sup>39</sup> Santa Fe County Deeds, Book A, 200-02. For information regarding the suit involving Lucien B. Mawell and James H. Quinn vs. Robert Cary, St. Vrain, and Alexander Reynolds, see House Documents, Volume 4; Volume 112, page 316, no 5. (This can be found online.)
- <sup>40</sup> Santa Fe County Deeds, Book A, 42-43. See Robert Frazer’s “*Purveyors of Flour to the Army*,” 216.
- <sup>41</sup> See Robert Frazer’s *Mansfield on the Condition of the Western Forts, 1853-54*, 42.
- <sup>42</sup> Joseph Hersch was a Prussian trader who came to New Mexico in 1847 and proceeded to purchase properties in and near Santa Fe. One of these properties was a sawmill and flour mill on the banks of the Santa Fe River.
- <sup>43</sup> For information on Joseph Hersch’s Santa Fe business dealings in Santa Fe, see Robert Frazer’s “Purveyors of Flour,” 225-227. According to Frazer, Hersch also purchased a sawmill from St. Vrain shortly before 1856, but his only army contracts were for flour and corn. The 1882 Stoner Map shows that from Bridge Street (now Galisteo Street) west to the Guadalupe Church, the street ran along the edge of the small bluff overlooking the river and had no buildings on the north side except for one of Joseph Hersch’s sawmills, a three-story pitched roof building.
- <sup>44</sup> See Leo E. Oliva’s *Fort Union and the Frontier Army in the Southwest*, 538. For a discussion of the supply of the army in the Southwest, see Robert Frazer, *Forts and Supplies: The Role of The Army in the Economy of the Southwest, 1846-1861* and Darlis Miller, *Soldiers and Settlers: Military Supply in the Southwest, 1861-1885*.
- <sup>45</sup> “Louis” is also spelled “Luis” and “Lewis.” Born in Poland, Louis Gold (1820-1880) followed Joseph Hersch, who is referred to as his uncle, to Santa Fe, arriving shortly after the American occupation. He quickly established a mercantile business, “Gold’s Provision House,” at the corner of San Francisco Street and Burro Alley. In addition, he and Hersch provided supplies for the American army posts.
- <sup>46</sup> For a discussion of Gold’s life in New Mexico, see Doyle Daves. “George and Louis: Golds of Territorial New Mexico.” For a report of Gold’s contracts by the quartermaster’s department in Santa Fe for supplies for the army, see the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 16, 1875.

**Scenes from the Southern Trails Chapter's Symposium in Willcox, Arizona  
April 2016**



David Miller and Doug Hocking at the podium.



Tracy DeVault speaking on the recent discovery of Ewell's Station.



Jere Krakow discussing OCTA business with Travis Boley.

The ruins of Dragoon Springs Stage Station.



Tracy DeVault's drone in operation at Dragoon Springs (see front cover).



Tour group at Dragoon Springs.

*photos by the editors*

# Southern Trails Chapter

Oregon-California Trails Association



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



CROSSING THE PECOS.—p. 66. vol. II.

## **Crossing the Pecos at Horsehead Crossing.**

from John Russell Bartlett's *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua.*

## **Horsehead Crossing today.**

*photo by the editors*

