

# DESERT TRACKS



Volume 9  
Number 3

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER  
OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

December  
1996

Editor - Sheri Lee, 5790 E. Territory Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85750-1801 - (520) 299-7143

## **Hunter Draw Hike**

*by Richard Greene*

On October 12, 1996 chapter members Don Buck, Rose Ann Tompkins, Jack Root, David Hollecker, Charles Townley, Ray Sayre, LaVerne Sayre, Richard Greene and Marie Green, with six visitors from local historical groups in or near Las Cruces, New Mexico, hiked Hunter Draw.

People come hundreds of miles to attend our trail hikes and fifteen of them came out on a typical Southwestern day to explore Hunter Draw in New Mexico.

We met at Percha Dam State Park, where some of us had arrived the night before, signed the OCTA Waiver of Liability and

*see HIKE page 4*

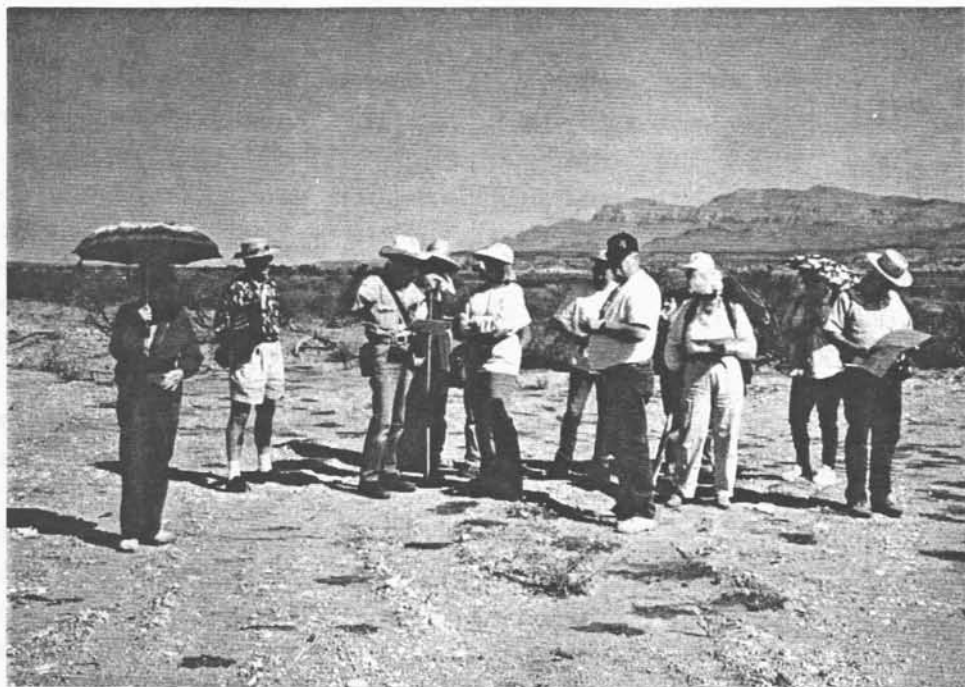
## **Southern Trail Mapping Report of October, 1996**

*by Rose Ann Tompkins, Southern Trail Mapping Committee*

Sunday, October 13

On the day following the Hunter Draw hike, the mapping group of Don Buck, Rose Ann Tompkins, Richard and Marie Greene, Jack Root and Dave Hollecker began their mapping week armed with historic maps, trail diaries, GPS & CB units, water bottles and other assorted paraphernalia. Leaving Percha Dam State Park, we drove up Berrenda Creek arroyo to the base of where the trail had dropped off the mesa (I am calling this Powell's steep hill)\*. There

*See REPORT page 2*



**Don Buck talks to hiking group at start of day.**

*From left to right: Laverne Sayre, Ray Sayre, Don Buck, Jack Root, Marie Greene (Richard Greene hidden behind Marie), five guests, and Dave Hollecker. Elephant Butte in background. Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins*

## REPORT--

we spent considerable time looking over the area and photographing it. Rust was observed on many, many rocks. It would appear that as wagons slid down this rocky hill, the loose rocks were heavily abraded by the iron wheels. Artifacts found included a pail, horseshoes, ox shoe with nails, large square nail, chain link and harness ring. The abundance of artifacts on this section of trail could lead to the conclusion that it has not been discovered by souvenir hunters. May it continue in its obscurity.

\*H.M.T. Powell, September 4, 1849

"A gradual ascent [Hunter Draw] brought us to top of the bluff along which we travelled half a Mile and then turned toward the river again. At the turn I thought we were going to renew our acquaintance with the Rio del Norte [Rio Grande], and it made me sick, but then we came to the brink of a very steep hill leading to the valley I saw our trace led South West and I became satisfied that we were really going to leave the muddy old creek in earnest, and my equilibrium was restored."



**Artifacts found on  
"Powell's steep hill"**

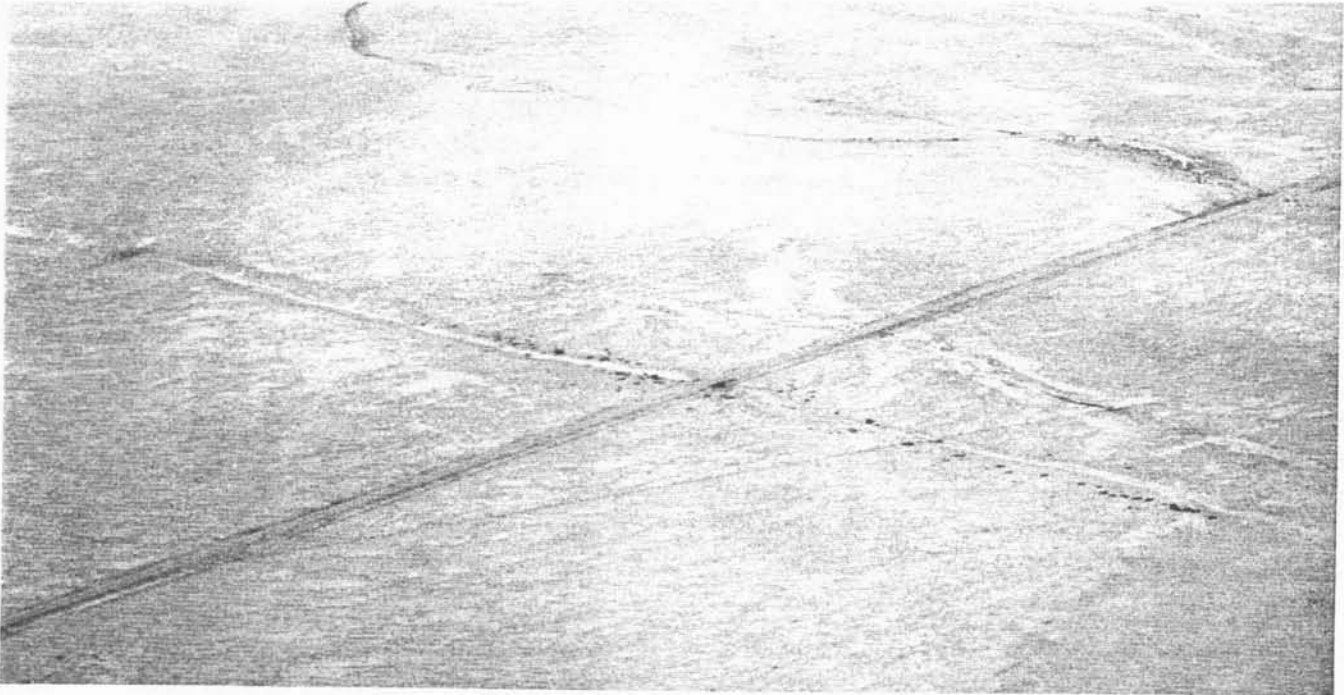
*include flattened pail,  
large square nail,  
broken horse shoe,  
broken metal rings and  
ox shoe. The two large  
rocks have rust marks  
on several sides. Photo  
by Rose Ann Tompkins*

The artifacts were photographed and returned to their resting places. A few faint traces were found out into the arroyo. We crossed to the other side of the arroyo where the Jaralosa diversion dam is now present. The aerial photos indicate the trail went up the Jaralosa Arroyo. We had searched this area last April without finding any trail traces. Additional search did not yield any better results on this day.

At the end of the day, the group split up for the night. Dave, Jack and Richard returned to Percha Dam to camp while Don camped at Leesburg State Park, closer to Las Cruces. Marie and I drove to Las Cruces for the night, opting for the luxury of a motel.

Monday, October 14

Dave, Jack and Richard spent the day driving through Cooke's Pass, noting that the 4WD road has deteriorated since the last time we drove it. Marie went to Mexico with Charles Townley as a guide. Don and I met at 8 A.M. at the Las Cruces airport, where arrangements had been made with Mike Ellis to fly the trail. Mike is a Professor of Economics at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces and took us up in his Cessna 180 for just the cost of gas. We spent two and a half hours flying between the Rio Grande and Vista Tank (south of Separ), observing trail traces all along the way. I photographed and Don made notes on the topographic maps. This



### **Southern Trail crosses Hwy. 20**

*This aerial photo shows the trail trace between Foster's Hole and Cooke's Spring. The trace goes from the lower right to upper left and the highway goes from lower left to upper right. For those who have been in the area, the pyramid-shaped Mormon Battalion marker is located on the highway about a mile north of the trail. Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins*

was fruitful to say the least as we saw much more than we had expected to see.

By evening all six of us were camped at City of Rocks State Park. The wind came up and made it difficult to do very much, but Dave had a small B&W portable TV and several watched Monday Night Football. Roughing it only goes so far!!

Tuesday, October 15

We spent the day re-mapping the area on the Goat Ridge quad, one of two quads that had been lost. We found additional evidence of trail we had not found earlier, including evidence that the trail had forked. One fork went to the hot springs near City of Rocks, while the other headed straight west. Research had been showing that some emigrants made a stop at this hot springs; today it is a commercial place called Faywood Hot Springs.

Wednesday, October 16

We packed up camp and went to Cow Springs to remap that quad, it being the other lost quad. The manager of the Cow Springs Ranch welcomed us again, as she always has. We walked the trail east of the ranch, again finding additional evidences of trail. Jack left the group about midday. In the afternoon, we mapped the area west of the ranch. Dave had our first and only rattlesnake encounter, with both parties departing in peace. The day ended in Hay Draw, west of Cow Springs, where we dry camped. We watched the presidential debate on Dave's small TV as we fixed and ate dinner. We were on open range, but none of the cattle seemed inclined to view the debate. We wonder if they knew something we didn't?

Thursday, October 17

Marie spied antelope wandering by camp in the early morning light, but the rest of us missed them. I was awake, but busy downloading GPS information into the laptop computer. This meeting of the wilderness and technology always leaves me a bit disoriented.

Thinking it would be beneficial to view the BLM aerial photos again, Don, Greenes and I decided to return to Las Cruces for that purpose. Don and I had spent some time looking at them on the previous Friday, but we did not have time to cover the entire trail area.

Dave headed for home. We arrived in Las Cruces about 10 A.M. and stayed until the office closed at 4 P.M. We were able to correlate some of our findings from the flying on Monday with the 1930s aerial photos in their files. It was time well spent. Greenes then headed for home. Don and I drove to the south end of Coyote Hills and dry camped, arriving at dark.

Friday, October 18

We went to the springs on the west side of Playas Lake where the trail came out of the lakebed. Then we attempted to follow the trail towards Whitmire Pass. Finding a trace that correlated with an old topographic map that Pat Etter has, we followed it about a mile. We returned to the cars, had lunch and then drove via a jeep road to an area about one mile east of Whitmire Pass. Here we attempted to find the trace coming up from where we had left it that morning, but were unsuccessful. As it was getting late, we decided to start for home while there was still some daylight.

This completes another mapping trip, one that added additional information to our slowly growing pile of information. Thanks to those who came along this time, using their brains, feet and eyes to assist in the work. It is tiring, but rewarding. And, as always, the scenery is magnificent. One

new delight was the "group salads" produced; very tasty after a dusty day on the trail of the trail. We thought perhaps we would give Richard the nickname "Rusty" as he is so good at spotting rust marks on rocks. That is sometimes our only clue that we are on the trail. Our souvenirs? Additional mapped trail, photographs, memories and a couple of cow skulls. What more can you ask for?

### **HIKE--**

both Don Buck and Rose Ann Tompkins stimulated our interest with a short presentation on the research done by members of the Southwest Chapter in discovering Hunter Draw. Don Buck then led a very motivated group from our camp ON the Rio Grande to the area where William W. Hunter in his 1849 diary indicated the emigrants LEFT the Rio Grande on the Southern Trail to California.

It was hot. The sun was intense. We drank our water gratefully. Rose Ann's diary excerpts and Don's interpretation of the living history we saw made the hike the experience for which we had hoped.

So, what did we see in the hot sun? We saw trail; we saw rust spots on rocks; and we saw grooves. I am also sure in the hot sun some of us "saw and heard" the wagons. After a hike of one and a half miles we came out of Hunter Draw on top of a mesa that overlooked Berrenda Wash about 100 feet below us. Our group split up to explore the trail across the mesa and then to find the way down to the wash. Not only did we confirm the way across the mesa, but we found the "chute" the wagons took to go down to the wash.

Charles Davis of Amarillo, Texas discovered the "chute" and then we swarmed down the "chute" to prove this was the place. The "chute" was a bonanza; an abundance of rocks with rust spots, artifacts, rocks lined up on the sides and erosion coming down the chute. It was the stuff dreams are made of for those who go out into the field.

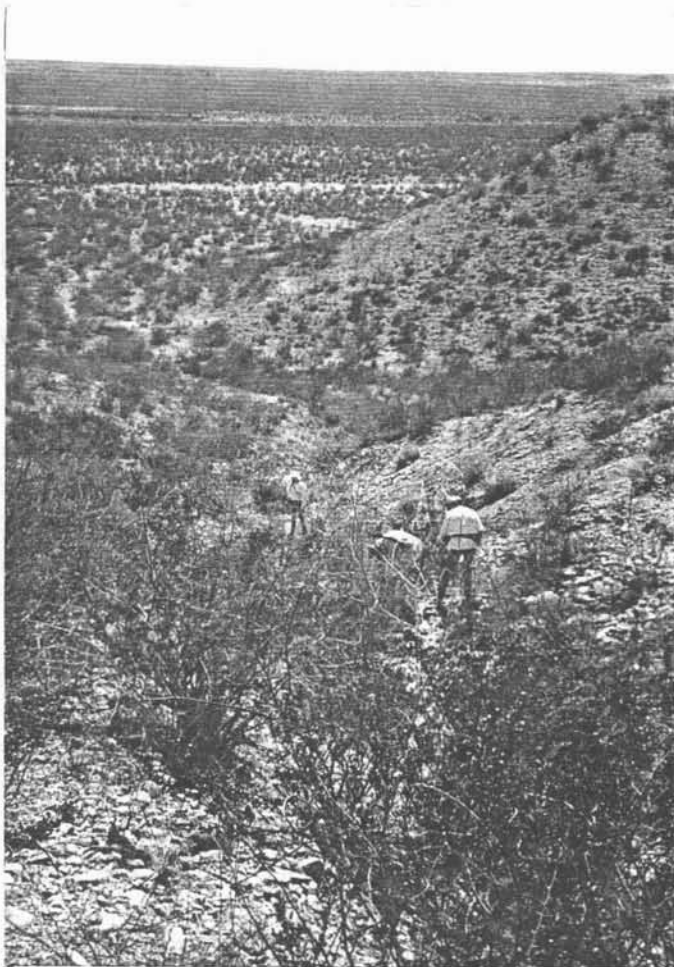
*con't next page--*

The heat wore some of us down on the way back and we were glad to get back to the shady spot of our cars, but the hike along Hunter Draw in New Mexico will always be memorable.

Thanks go to Charles Townley for making all the arrangements and publicizing the hike. And only Charles knows every good restaurant there is for atmosphere and our hunger. We dined Saturday night at Los Argos in Truth or Consequences, a great place to eat.

Thanks to Rose Ann and Don for making it all enjoyable. Most of all we'd like to thank William W. Hunter and his 1849 diary.

A good time was had by all.



**Newly discovered "Powell's steep hill"**  
Richard Greene, Don Buck and Charles Davis study the hill on Hunter Draw hike. The trail goes down this hill and across Berrenda Creek. Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins

### **Kudos**

Member Pat Etter received the Westerners International Coke Wood Award during its recent conference in Lincoln, NE. The award was for her article in the Fall, 1995 issue of OCTA's *Overland Journal*, entitled "To California on the Southern Route-1849". Congratulations to Pat and our thanks for spreading the word on the Southern Trails.

### **Observations of Preacher Udell**

*Contributed by Rose Ann Tompkins*

You may recall that Rev. John Udell was a member of the first emigrant train to use the Beale Road across New Mexico and Arizona in 1858. Udell made three previous trips to California in the 1850s, using the California Trail. He wrote a book about his first three trips, called *Incidents of Travel to California, across the Great Plains*. In his summaries at the end of this book he wrote the following :

"Second Trip. This trip, I realized more vividly than I ever did before, the influence of woman upon my own sex. There were one or more ladies in nearly every company, and the conduct of the men presented as great a contrast to that of those whom I fell in with during my former trip, as perfect civilization does to a state of savage rudeness. Few of us are aware of the mighty influence woman exer's over man in all his actions; and of its extent we never can be aware until circumstances put it to the test. The presence of a woman, if she carries herself virtuously and becomingly, always awes the rough and vulgar man into decency and respect."  
(pp.111-112)



**Book Review:**  
***Confederate Pathway to the Pacific***  
*reviewed by Jack Root*

*Confederate Pathway to the Pacific* by L. Boyd Finch. Published by the Arizona Historical Society, 1996

This book is a Southwestern Gem. The product of over 30 years' research by L. Boyd Finch, it pulls together the story of Arizona's birth pangs as the Civil War and Apache terror swept across our region.

Finch weaves his narrative on a loom personified by Major Sherod Hunter, CSA, one of the lesser known and celebrated figures in the epic struggle that wrenched the nation in 1861-65. It was he who commanded the Troop that (bloodlessly) entered Tucson on February 28, 1862 and raised the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy over the Presidio the next day.

How did this "quiet Everyman", Sherod Hunter, eventually become Arizona's most respected Confederate Officer? The answer to this question is embedded in Mr. Finch's story.

Losing his young wife and infant son in Tennessee in 1857, a grieving Hunter sold his interest in his father-in-law's store and went West. By 1860 he was farming in New Mexico on the Mimbres, near the Overland Stage Station and Mowry City. Swift moving events following Ft. Sumpter and the Secessions brought Sherod Hunter into the Confederate Service as 1st Lt. of the Arizona Rangers at Ft. Fillmore on August 1, 1861.

In addition to Sherod Hunter, numerous other shadowy figures of the time and place move in and out of Finch's story. Many are names that a history buff recognizes, others are more obscure, but the author ensures that we understand their place in the drama. Each chapter is thoroughly

annotated and a bibliography and index are provided. An unusual and pleasing feature is a "Biographical Sequel", in which Finch describes the post-war activities and fates of 32 confederate activists. Most had a hard time.

SWOCTA members will recognize many of the scenes and settings of this book as places they've visited while tramping over the trails on mapping expeditions.

Dedication to quality - writing, illustrations, editing - is evident from cover to cover.

*Confederate Pathway to the Pacific* is a major contribution to the understanding of the Civil War in the Southwest from a Confederate perspective. *JDR*

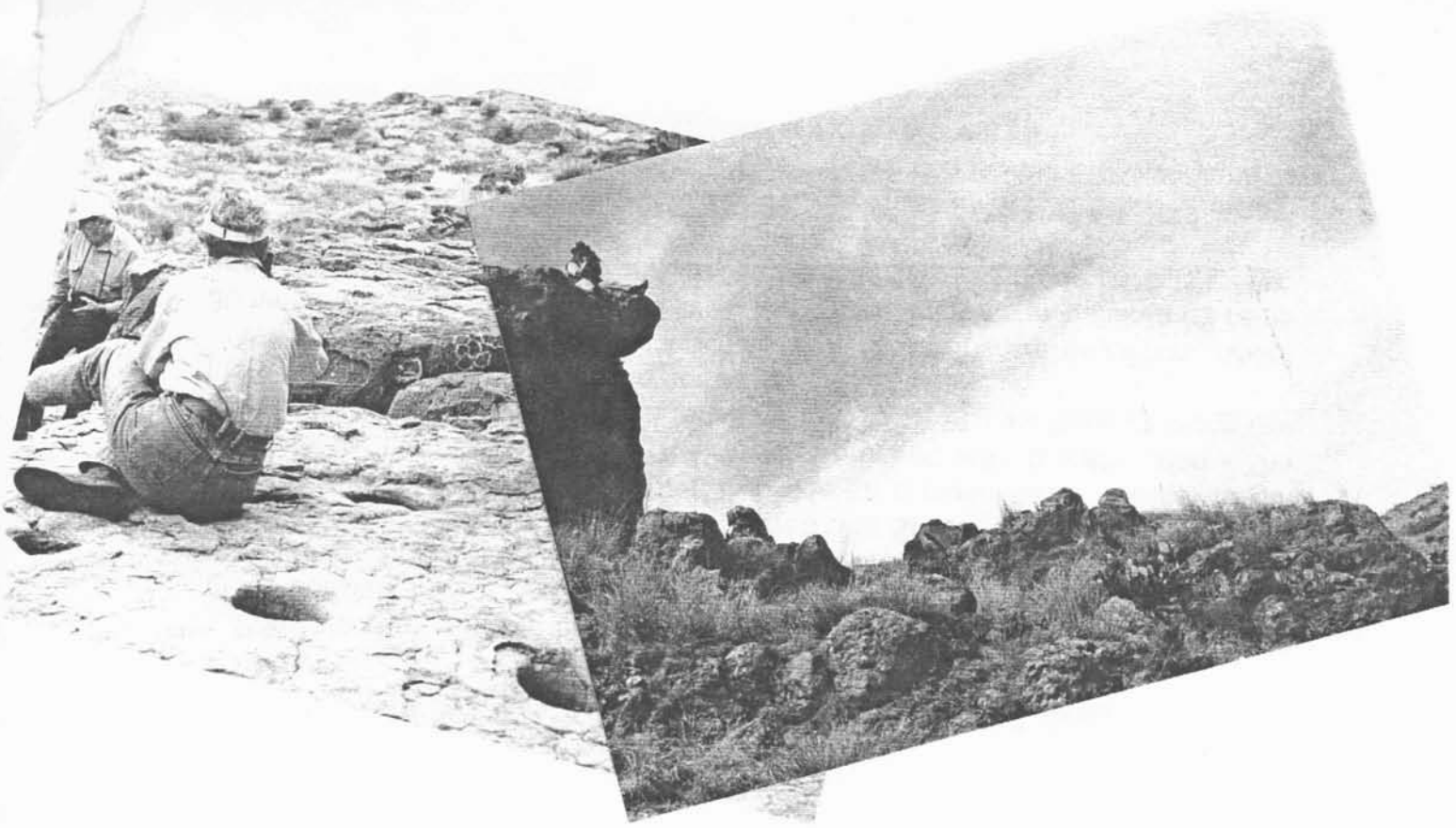
***From the Adobe Hacienda of the Trail Marm***

It was good seeing several new faces at the October outing to Hunter's Draw. We want all our new members to come out and enjoy the trail with us. We have so much fun, and there's the thrill of discovering traces of the trail; we want to share it with everyone.

During the mapping trip we had the opportunity to experience the hardships of the trail. We were reduced to watching Monday Night Football and the second of the Presidential Debates on a four inch television supplied by David Hollenbecker. Gathering around the screen while dry camping on the trail was a new experience for all. It was really hard to digest politics after a delicious salad, nature's silence and a sky full of stars. These are the little things that make our trips fun while accomplishing a lot of trail work.

There is never enough thanks for Rose Ann Tompkins and Don Buck. They put in so much time and work preparing and leading us on the mapping trips. SWOCTA owes them a great deal of gratitude.

*Marie Greene*, President



***Our Photographers at Work***

Betty Lee photographs petroglyphs

Rose Ann Tompkins high above Foster's Hole

---

December 4, 1996

**Membership Renewal for 1997**

It's that time again. The Southwest Chapter fee of **\$10** per year for either individual or family was due on December 1st. Please make your check for **\$10** payable to our Strongbox Custodian (treasurer), **Harland Tompkins** and mail it to:  
Harland Tompkins  
1125 W. Mission Dr.  
Chandler, AZ 85224-2354.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, 9 digit zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

(We are seeking this information to see how many members are on the Net and can be reached electronically.)

Please return this form.

Thanks,  
*Richard Greene*  
Membership Chairman



Harland & Rose Ann Tompkins  
1125 W. Mission Drive  
Chandler, AZ 85224-2354

December 1996 dues  
notice-see last page

FIRST CLASS MAIL



**DESERT TRACKS**  
Sheri Lee, Editor  
5790 E. Territory Avenue  
Tucson, AZ 85750-1801

### Next Trip - January 18, 1997 - Yuma, AZ Area

Boma Johnson of the BLM office in Yuma, Arizona, has generously offered to guide our field trip on January 18, 1997. Boma will guide us to Sears Point and the Oatman Massacre sites. These sites will be reviewed by SWOCTA so a recommendation can be made to the Graves and Sites Committee of OCTA for consideration of one, maybe both, of the sites for a monument. Should we get approval for the monument, SWOCTA would proceed with its installation. The monument will be a first time experience for SWOCTA and we hope to recognize more Southern Trail history in the same way.

We will meet at 9 A.M. on January 18, 1997. Directions are as follows: About 30 miles west of Gila Bend, on I-8, take the Hyder Road-Aqua Caliente off ramp and meet at the gas station at 9 A.M. (Yes, this is the area made famous by two recent major train wrecks.)

Please call Richard Greene, 505-377-6342, or write him at P O Box 483, Angel Fire, NM 87710 if you plan to attend. This way we can account for everyone at the gas station and not leave without you. It will be a great trip!