

1987

**November 7 & 8, 1987
First chapter field trip
Gila River Trail**

Trip led by Bob and Betty Lee of Safford, AZ to the area along the Gila River where Bonita Creek enters the river. There is a trail monument overlooking this confluence. The trail returned to the Gila River in this general location after crossing the Devil's Turnpike.



While the group gathers around the monument,
Betty Lee points out features of the area.

The monument overlooks the confluence of
Bonita Creek and the Gila River.



January 23-24, 1988
Camping at Painted Rocks State Park, AZ
Oatman site, Southern Trail

1988

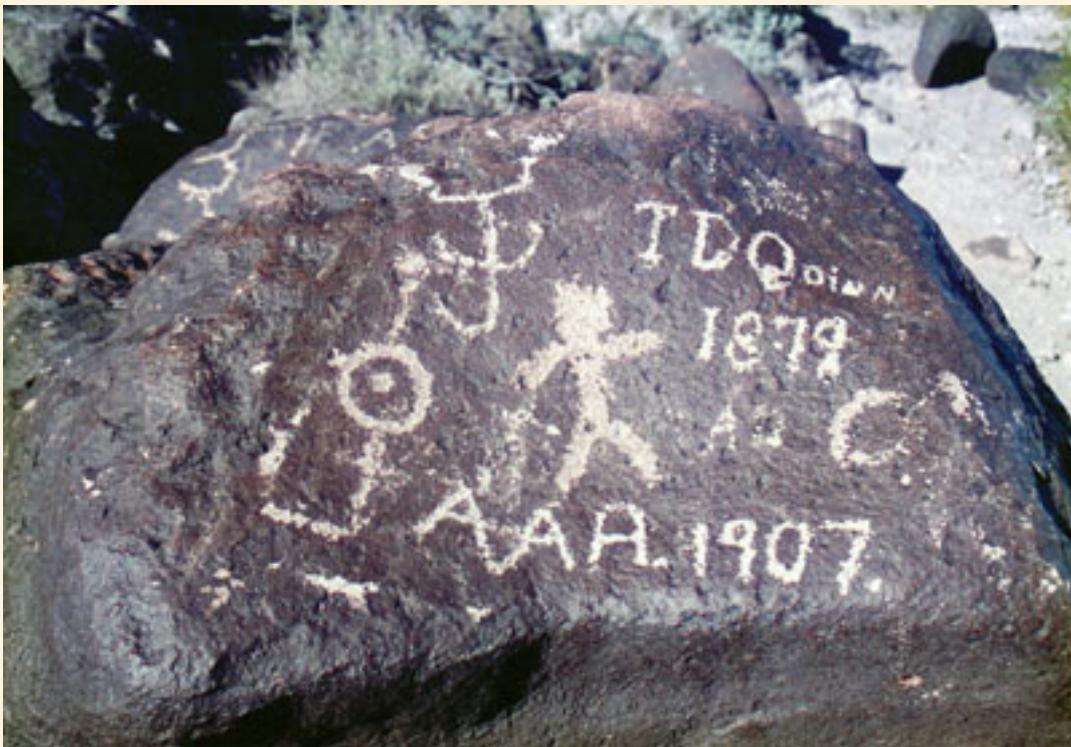
Trip led by Dan Talbot of Mesa, AZ. Guided to the area of the Oatman family massacre site along the Gila River west of Gila Bend. One day was spent at the top of the bluff where the massacre happened and included looking at the trail trace coming up the bluff from the river bottom. That evening Dan presented two slide shows about the history of the area. The next day was spent in the river bottoms, visiting the grave marker for the Oatman family and Fourr family cemetery.



The group on top of bluff at the Oatman Massacre site. The white cross was gone in 2009 when last visited.

Several walk in the swale formed by wagons going up to the bluff from the Gila River bottom.





Petroglyphs and inscriptions on the rocks at Painted Rocks State Park. The Park, including the campground, are more developed now than they were on our first visit in 1988.



The river bottom at Oatman Flat includes the marker for the Oatman family, below, and the Fourr family cemetery, right. The actual site of the Oatman burials is unknown.



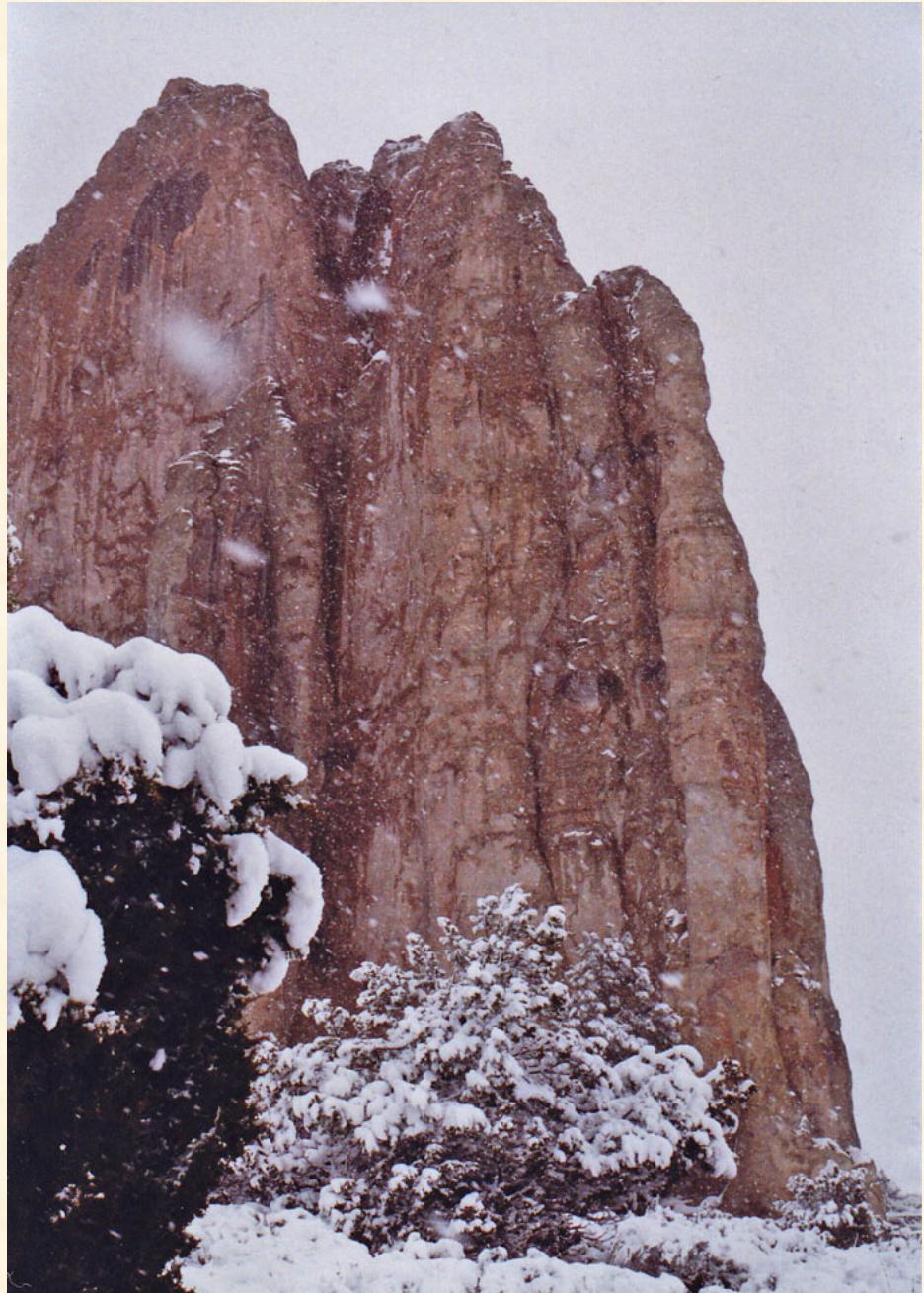
Dan Talbot stands near the last adobe walls of the Fourr family ranchhouse. The home was located in the Gila River bottoms at Oatman Flat and served as one of the stage stops. There are no longer any remains of this former home.



April 16-17, 1988

**Camping at El Morro National Monument, New Mexico
Indian petroglyphs, Spanish and Mexican inscriptions,
Beale Road Emigrant Inscriptions**

Trip led by Aubrey Haines. An unexpected late snow made for a rather unusual camping experience. All huddled in Lee's small RV for Aubrey's evening talk about the history of the area including the early explorers and Edward Beale's two army expeditions (with camels) in 1857 and 1859. This opened a new route to California across northern New Mexico and Arizona. This natural rock feature captured rain water in a large tank, bringing people here for hundreds of years for the water, forage, and protection. The remains of two Indian villages are located on the top of the rock feature. The next day did not lend itself to exploring El Morro, though there was time for a group photograph and a few spent some time looking at inscriptions before heading home. More trips were made to this inscription site in later years, although there has not been any mapping.

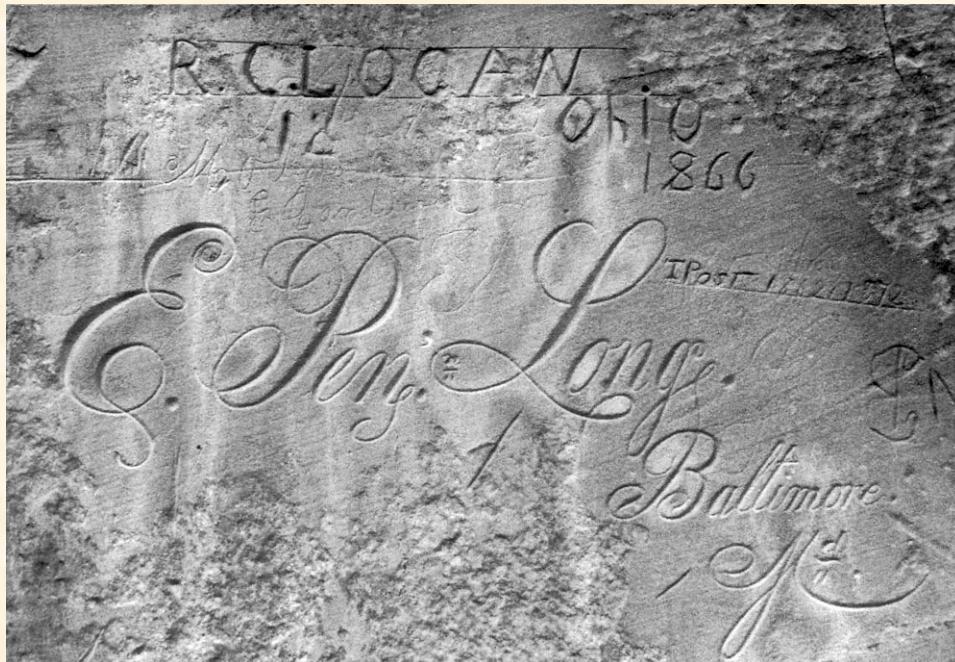




Group photo: Jack Root, Ruth Root, Rose Ann Tompkins, Harland Tompkins, Susan Doyle, Wilma Haines, Betty Lee, Aubrey Haines, Bob Lee

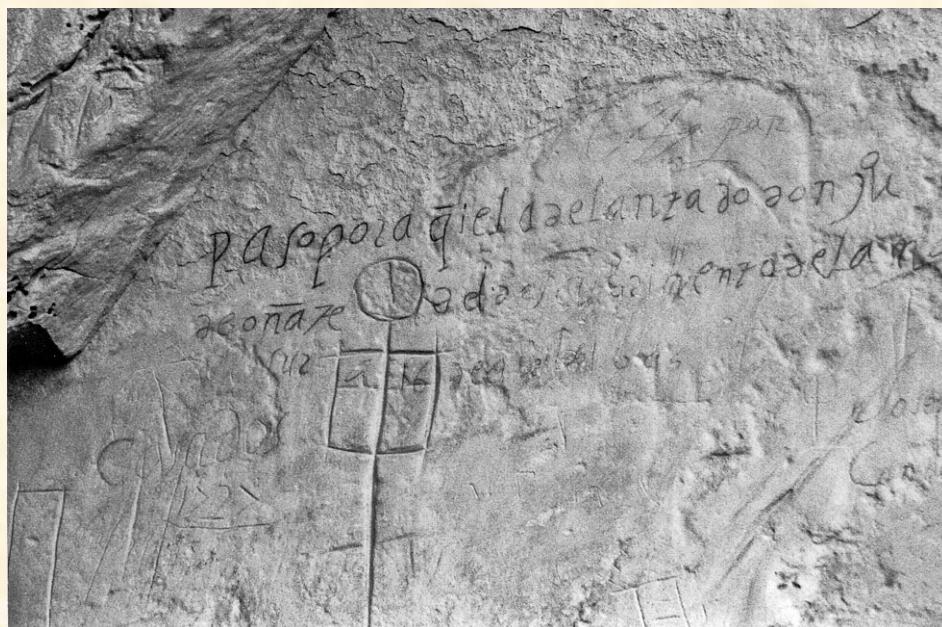
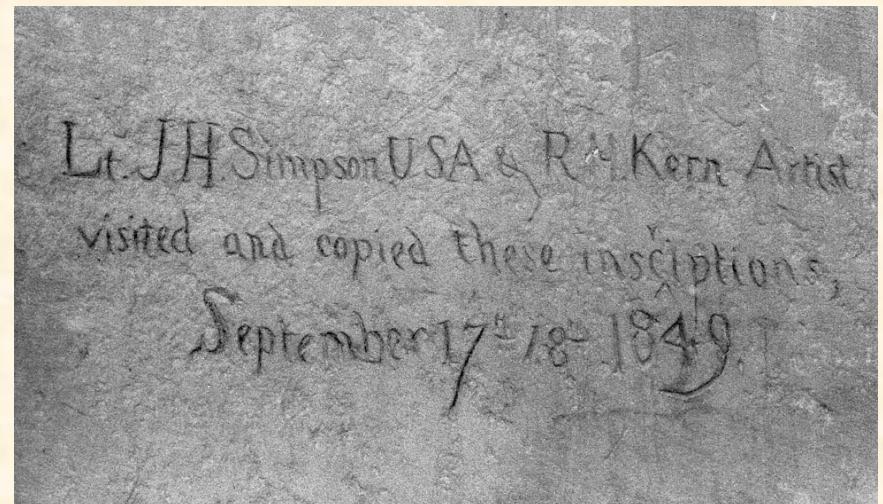
Chilly sleeping





This is one of several elaborate inscriptions from the Beale expedition.

James Simpson was head of an early Army expedition into the region. Richard Kern was the artist who accompanied the expedition.



This is the earliest known Spanish inscription at El Morro.

It reads:

*"Passed by here the Governor Don Juan de Onate,
from the discovery of the Sea of the South on the 16th
day of April 1605"*

He was returning with 30 men from a visit to the Gulf of California, however, had already been discovered.

July 16, 1988

First Planning Meeting, Chandler, AZ

This first chapter planning meeting was held at the Tompkins' home in Chandler with 13 members attending. Programs and outings for the next year were scheduled. After a potluck dinner, the evening had three presentations. Jack Root shared slides from an RV trip along the Oregon Trail, the Tompkins showed slides of the three chapter trips so far, and Aubrey Haines presented a slide show on wagons, their parts and construction.



Chapter members at the first planning meeting were:

Front, left to right:
Bob Lee (the younger),
Sheri Lee, Wilma
Haines, Harland
Tompkins, Susan
Doyle, Rose Ann
Tompkins.

Back, standing left to right: Ruth Root, Dean Keller, Gary Keller, Betty Lee, Bob Lee (the elder), Aubrey Haines, Jack Root.

November 12-13, 1988

Douglas, AZ area to San Pedro River

Southern Emigrant Trail and Mormon Battlion Trail

This weekend outing was planned by the elder Lees and the Tompkins, with Dan Talbot as a guide for part of the area. With 17 members and 5 guests, this was our biggest attendance so far. The first stop was the Slaughter Ranch, east of Douglas. This afforded views into Mexico where the Southern Trail travelers recorded visits to the ruins of the San Bernadino Ranch. Some viewed the western end of the Guadalupe Canyon part of the trail at the locked gate to the present day ranch in that area. After an evening potluck at the Douglas Country Club RV Park, Dan Talbot showed slides of the area of trail where we were. The next day we traveled along a gravel road just north of the Mexican border, while Dan shared his knowledge of the area. We had lunch along the San Pedro River, which remains a free flowing river, and ended the day at a stop where the BLM was planning an interpretive center.



With the help of an OCTA sign, the group found each other at the beginning of this November outing.



This is the entrance to the Slaughter Ranch, located 17 miles east of Douglas. Known as the San Bernardino Land Grant, the 73,000-acre ranch covered the southeast corner of modern Arizona and extended far down into Sonora, Mexico. The ranch was abandoned as the Apaches made it impossible to continue defending the land. Emigrants often stopped here as there was a good water supply and grass for their animals. The northern third of the land became part of the US. John Slaughter of Texas acquired some 65,000 acres of the old San Bernardino land grant. Today the ranch has been restored Slaughter Ranch Museum.

Susan Doyle and Better Lee look south into Mexico
From a vantage point at the Slaughter Ranch.





The group stopped at a border marker to view the rolling hills to the south in Mexico. In this area, the trail was south of the border.



This large cottonwood tree near the San Pedro River is estimated to be 12 feet in diameter and 400 years old. It took most of the group with joined hands to encircle the tree.

