



A number of southwestern trails and connecting trails are illustrated on the Southern Route Trails map. American Indians, Spanish and Mexican explorers and missionaries, American trappers and surveyors, the U. S. Army, and thousands of goldrushers located and trod these tracks between 1775 and 1857.



Abo Pass Trail Followed an ancient trade route over New Mexico's Salinas Plains. Numerous 49ers used it as a shortcut to bypass Santa Fe.

Anza Trail Following an exploratory trip in 1774, Juan Bautista de Anza started out from Tubac Presidio in 1775 with 200 soldiers and emigrant families who founded San Francisco in March of 1776.

Apache Pass Trail Originally used by Indians and the Mexican Army, this route was traveled by a small percentage of emigrants in 1849 and was briefly used by the Butterfield Stage.

Beale Wagon Road Former naval lieutenant and Mexican War hero Edward Fitzgerald Beale surveyed and constructed the first federally-funded wagon road along the 35th Parallel.

Beckwith Route In 1849 Lt. Edward Beckwith led a party on this Indian route from the Zuni Pueblo to the junction of the Salt and Gila Rivers, then along the Gila Trail to Yuma.

Camino del Diablo This was an ancient trail from Caborca, Mexico to the Yuma Crossing. Some 8,000 Sonorans were said to have used it during the Gold Rush.

Gila Trail Gen. Stephen W. Kearny and Lt. William H. Emory with the Army of the West followed this Indian/trapper route along the Gila River in 1846 to seize California during the Mexican War. It never became well-used.

Janos/Copper Road: Ore from the Santa Rita del Cobre Copper mines was shipped along this road to Janos, Chihuahua. The Gila Trail connected with the road at the Mimbres River where a number of emigrants turned south toward Cow Springs continuing along the Southern Trail to Yuma.

Mojave Road Originally an Indian trail, this route along the Mojave River was followed by Whipple's 35th parallel railroad survey and Beale's wagon road crew to Cajon Pass.

Old Spanish Trail A 15th century pack route pioneered by Mexican traders to connect Santa Fe with the missions of Southern California. The western portion later became an important wagon road connecting Salt Lake and Los Angeles.

Sitgreaves Trail In 1851, Captain Lorenzo Sitgreaves set out to survey a new overland route to California across northern Arizona. He reached the Colorado near present Bullhead City and followed the river south to the Yuma Crossing.

Southern Trail The most heavily used route by emigrants heading south from Santa Fe kept to the west side of the Rio Grande before turning southwest toward Cow Springs and Guadalupe Pass.

The wagon road through Guadalupe Pass by way of the San Pedro River was first opened in 1846 by Colonel Philip St. George Cooke leading the Mormon Battalion to California. Major Lawrence P. Graham, returning from Mexico in 1848, first took the trail to Santa Cruz Village and Tubac. Together these routes became known as the Southern Trail.

Temecula & San Luis Rey River Routes Once across the Colorado River the road in California dipped south into modern Mexico to avoid the Algodones Sand Dunes. After crossing the desert, travelers could go west to San Diego or follow the Temecula Road to Los Angeles. A few chose an alternate route along the San Luis Rey River and past the Pala Mission.

Whipple Railroad Survey Lieutenant Amiel Weeks Whipple explored this route in 1853 and 1854 to find the best location for a railroad to connect the East with the West along the 35th Parallel. Much of Whipple's trail was later followed by the Beale Wagon Road, the Santa Fe Railroad, and modern highways Route 66 and Interstate 40.



For additional information see:
To California on the Southern Route, 1849: History and Annotated Bibliography, by Patricia A. Etter (The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1998)

Road to California: The Search for an Overland Route, by Harlan Hague (Author's Choice Press, 2001)