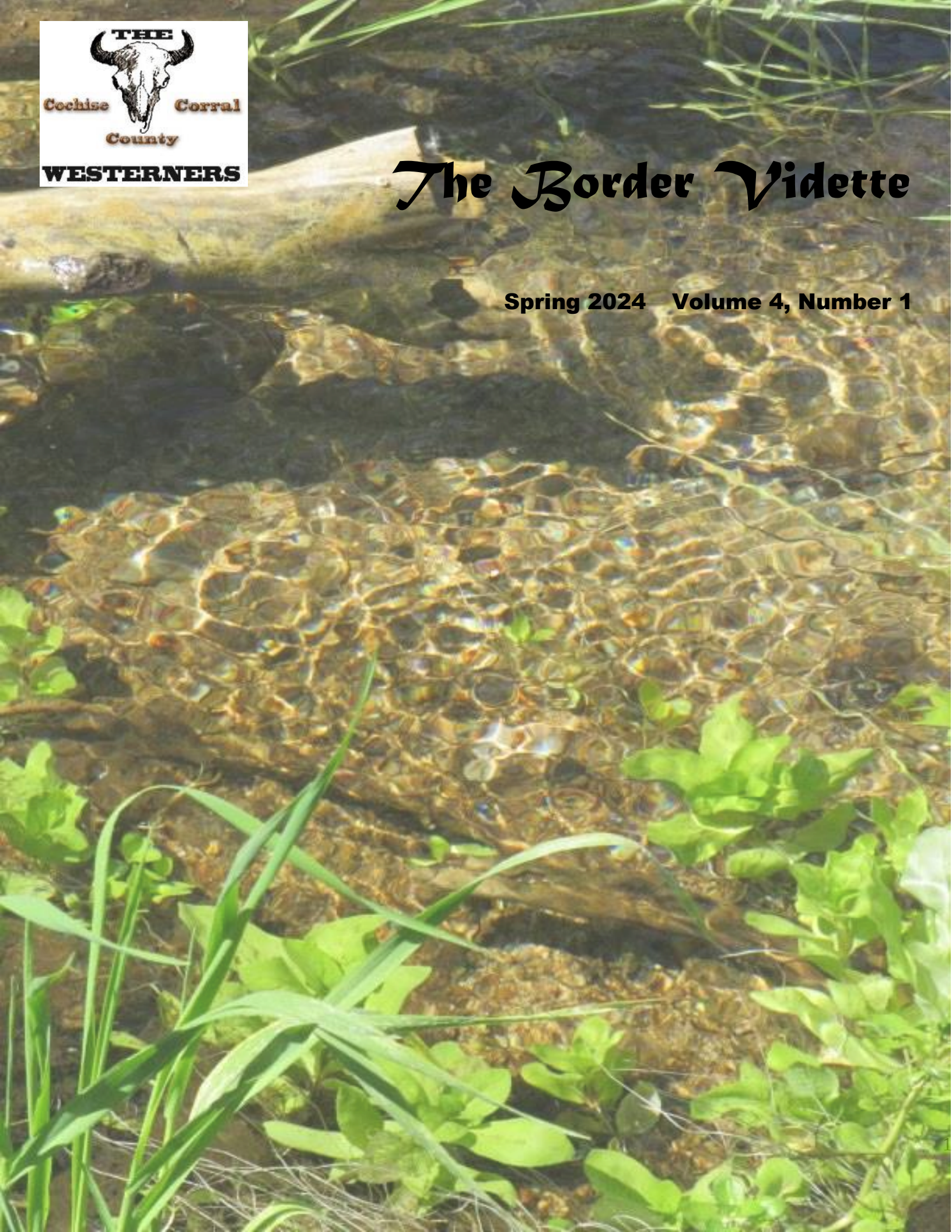


The Border Vidette

Spring 2024 Volume 4, Number 1

Ink Slinger (editor)
Doug Hocking
doug@doughocking.com or inkslinger@cochisecountycorral.org
Printer's Devil

COCHISE COUNTY CORRAL

Sheriff	-	Doug Hocking
Deputy Sheriff	-	Liz Severn
Recorder of Marks and Brands	-	Jean Smith
Keeper of the Chips	-	Deborah Lewis
Round Up Foreman	-	Gary Smith
Corral Rep	-	Debbie Hocking
Trail Boss	-	Bob Spahle

The *Border Vidette* is published quarterly by the Cochise County Corral of the Westerners. The Corral meets at 7 p.m. the first Thursday of each month at Schieffelin Hall, Tombstone. Schieffelin Hall was built in 1881 as a theater and lodge of the Freemasons. King Solomon Lodge Number 5 still meets upstairs. The Corral is dedicated to preserving Western Frontier History and Legend and to having a good time while doing so. Membership in the Corral is $20 and entitles the Ranch Hand to attend talks on the Old West, join us on Trail Rides (by automobile) to sites of historic interest, and to our publications*: The Fremont Street Mail*, a monthly newsletter, and the *Border Vidette*, our journal. More information about the Corral can be found at **www.CochiseCountyCorral.org** and about Westerners International at **http://www.westerners-international.org/**

The *Border Vidette* accepts **interesting** articles about Western Frontier History no matter how short. Articles should be sourced and accompanied by endnotes. An unlimited number of photos (JPG preferred) may accompany the article. If the author has the rights to the article, the *Border Vidette* is willing to republish it. The journal is only published on-line and may be distributed as a PDF via email. Please contact us if you think you have something interesting to share. Contact us at **InkSlinger@CochiseCountyCorral.org**

A vidette is the term used in the 19th century for a mounted (cavalry) lookout.

Cover: The spring at Seneca Creek. Photo by Doug Hocking

The Border Vidette

Published by the Cochise County Corral of the Westerners

Doug Hocking
Ink Slinger *Printer's Devil*
Volume 4, Number 1 Spring 2024

CONTENTS

Book Reviews

Editor's Note

I really hate to go to press with only a few articles. We'd like to hear from you. You may have noticed that we've added Recipes and Poetry and that we include some very short articles. We've done articles with a photo as short as a paragraph. Give us some bit of history that might be lost or the story of some person or personal hero. We've included a poem and picture of Francois Xavier Aubry, a personal favorite that too few are aware of.

F.X. Aubry was a wagon master on the Santa Fe Trail famed for getting through safely and swiftly leading as many as three caravans in a year. He is famed for riding back from Santa Fe to Independence in only five and a half days. He pioneered many shortcuts on the Santa Fe Trail. He died over and argument with a friend who had insulted him in a newspaper article. He deserves to be known.

How many of you are aware of mountain man and guide Antoine Leroux? He led the Mormon Battalion through Cochise County in 1846. He was considered, in his day, as famous and effective as Kit Carson. Would someone like to write a few paragraphs about him?

We've included two very important announcements. Friday, March 7, 2025, will be the next Tombstone Festival of Western Books. Authors and guests from this year said they had a good time and look forward to the next festival. We're going to need help and helpers.

We started a Corral book of poetry and short stories. We planned to have everything in by June 6, but if you need a little more time, let us know.

Does anyone want to be Printer's Devil and help round up stories and maintain our website?

Hear Ye, Hear Ye

The Cochise County Corral is about to embark on a fabulous enterprise. We're going to publish a book.

Authors of poetry & short stories we're looking for you!

Our course is set for **original** cowboy poetry & short frontier fiction written by Ranch Hands of the Cochise County Corral. *This is one more reason to join.* Proceeds go to the Corral general fund to support the Tombstone Festival of Western Books and all Corral operations.

Short stories should be no longer than 7,500 words. We're looking for unpublished work but will accept published work to which you have the copyright and permission of the previous publisher. Entries must be submitted in **Word** as .doc or .docx with standard one-inch margins, single-spaced, with no automatically added spaces before or after a paragraph, doubled-spaced between paragraphs without indentation, Times New Roman text, set to 12 pitch. **Submit entries NLT June 6, 2024 to InkSlinger@CochiseCountyCorral.org**

Illustrators! We're seeking your work as well. The format is 6"x9" pages in black and white.

2025 Tombstone Festival of Western Books

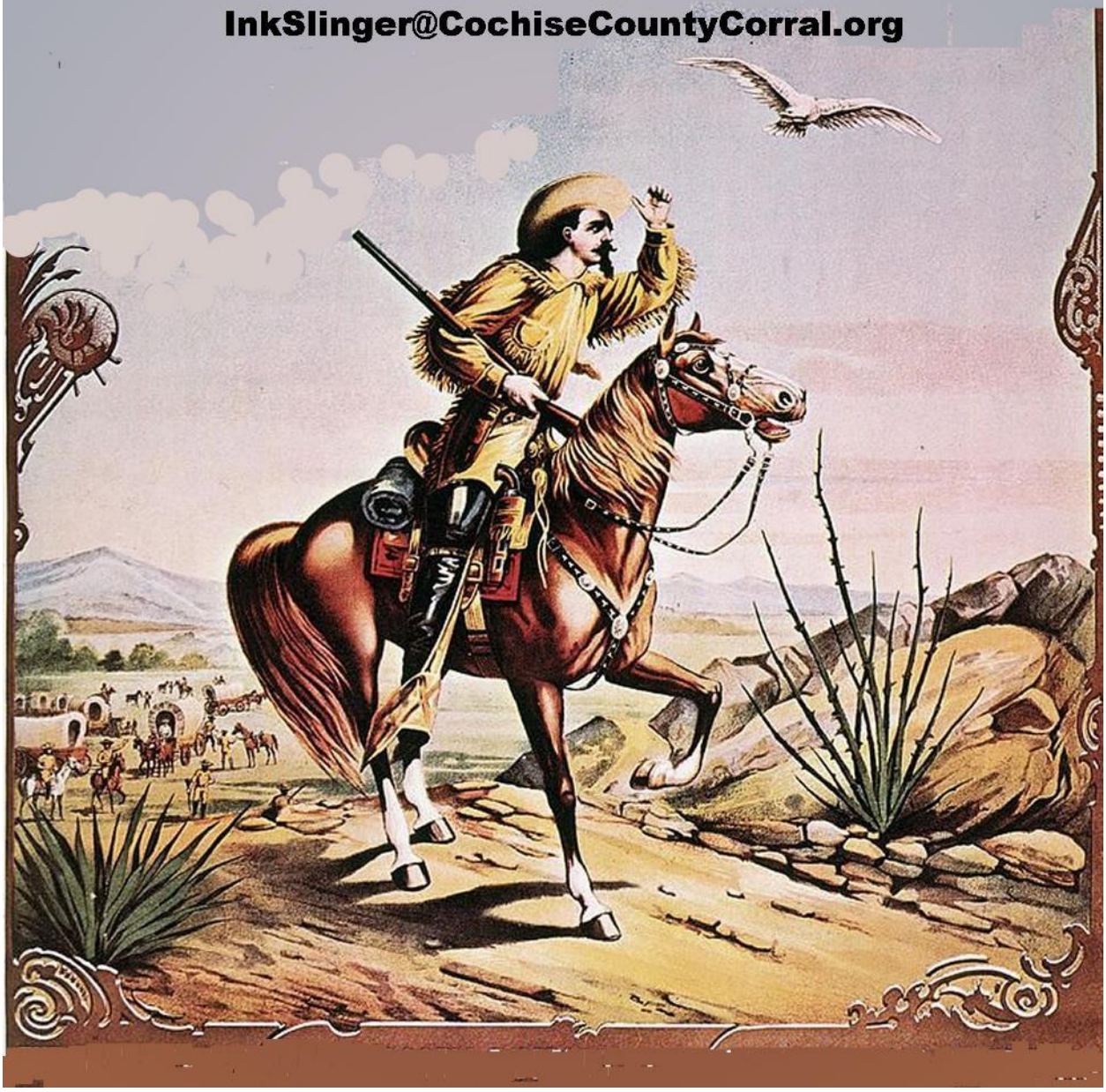
Tentatively set for Friday, March 7, 2025

Schieffelin Hall, Tombstone, AZ

The day prior to the Tucson Festival of Books

Authors & Exhibitors Contact

InkSlinger@CochiseCountyCorral.org



The Pima-Maricopa—Arizona American Patriots

by
Gerald T. Ahnert

First Lieutenant Antonio Azul.
Antonio Azul—*Er-Vah-Ah-Toe-Ka* (Spreads Out), Chief of the Pima (Akimel O'Otham).
Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives, Bureau of American Ethnology.

In 1859, Butterfield Overland Mail Company employee Silas St. John and Indian Agent John Walker had distributed to the Pima and Maricopa plows, hoes, spades, and other implements. Special Agent Sylvester Mowry went to Arizona City and to San Francisco to purchase additional goods including an American Flag for Antonio Azul to fly at his Hogan.[1] In the 1860 Federal Census Antonio Azul was listed as "President" of the Pima.

The Arizona Volunteers

There was no better way for Pima-Maricopa to demonstrate their patriotism than to serve as Union soldiers during the Civil War. They had demonstrated their ability as warriors in a battle with the warring Yuma tribes that attacked their villages in 1857. At the end of the day, the Pima-Maricopa left four of the Yumas alive to return to in shame to their Colorado River village.

On February 20, 1864, John Noble Goodwin, governor of Arizona, asked authority to raise a regiment of volunteers in Arizona for service for three years or during the Civil War. He was granted the request by Provost Marshal General James B. Fry, Fort Whipple, Prescott, Arizona. Raising a regiment did not take place until June 1864.[2] In September 1865, one company of Pima and another company of Maricopa were organized: "Company B, with ninety-four Maricopa privates, and Company C, with ninety-two Pimos [Pima], officered by [some] whites, are reported ready for duty at Maricopa Wells, and were mustered into the United States Service last month."[3]

John D. Walker was made Captain and Chief Antonio Azul was made First Lieutenant of Company C.[4] They were known as the "Arizona Volunteers."

In March 1866, they were headquartered at Pima Villages: "The company left this place on the 27th ult., accompanied by two hundred and sixty volunteer Pimas [Company C] and forty enlisted men of Company B, 1st Inf., A. V. Had a fight with the Apaches on the morning of the 31st, killing twenty-five Apaches, taking sixteen prisoners and eight horses. Had three Pimas wounded, one of whom died on the 1st. "[5]

Captain John D. Walker: "being part Indian himself, was adopted into the tribe [Pima]. He was descended from one of the Illinois tribes. To all intents and purposes Walker became an Indian and was one of the big chiefs of the Pima tribe. He was a leader in all their councils and big talks. It is that when they were in the field you could not tell him from the other Indians. He dressed like them, with nothing on but a breech-clout, and whooped and yelled like his Indian comrades."[6]

Although the Arizona Volunteers only served for about two years: "These Arizona Volunteers, besides killing a great number of Apaches, carried the war into the heart of the Apache country. They explored the Tonto Basin country; the country in and around Globe, and the upper waters of the Graham Valley in Gila County, going as far as the Natural Bridge in the northern part of Gila County."[7]

March 14, 1924, the House passed a bill granting pensions of $20 per month to the five surviving members of Company B, First Volunteer Infantry. They were all Maricopa and their names are Cheroquis (no. 1), Katok, Mosak, Wamett Shom, and Machie Gulack (no. 3).[8]

Veterans of the First Arizona Volunteer Infantry Company "B," 1865-66. *Thomas Edwin Farish, History of Arizona, Volume IV, Phoenix, Arizona, 1916.*

NOTES

[1] Mowry, Sylvester, *Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1859*, No. 173, Washington, D. C., November 21, 1859, Washington: George W. Bowman, Printer, 1860, 356.
[2] Farish, Thomas Edwin, *History of Arizona*, Volume IV, Phoenix, Arizona, 1916, 93-95.
[3] *Daily Alta California*, San Francisco, October 3, 1865.
[4] Farish, *History of Arizona*, 96.
[5] Farish., 97.
[6] Farish, 117-18.
[7] Farish, 116.
[8] *Senate Documents, 89th Congress*, 38.

Construction of the Overland Mail Stations in Apacheland

by
Doug Hocking

Real descriptions of Overland Mail stations are rare. Would you write home a description of every bus station you stopped at? Travelers didn't either. At best we get a simple note that the "men were living in a tent," or "they lived in a small stone house." Unfortunately, these come from early travelers writing because the Overland Mail was still a novelty. The descriptions imply that the stations were not as yet complete.

Station keeper, James Tevis, supplied a description of the Apache Pass Station:

> "A stone corral was built with portholes in every stall. Inside, on the southwest corner, were built, in L shape, the kitchen and sleeping rooms. At the west end, on the inside of the corral, space about ten feet wide was apportioned for grain room and storeroom, and here were kept the firearms and ammunition."[1]

Unfortunately, there are elements missing and Tevis was imaginative and less than honest in his reporting. How high were the walls? How large was the corral? There was an interior room in an L shape in the southwest corner, but there was a storeroom in the west. How did these two relate to each other?

An 1860 sketch of the Dragoon Springs Station shows what appears to be a plank roof around the edge of the corral – to the right of the gate. We know that Silas St. John's crew, tasked with finishing the roof, had axe and broadaxe,[2] as well as a stone sledge. The broadaxe would have been a useful tool to split logs into planks, smooth, and flatten them. These would have been used to create the dividers between stalls, while a thatched roof provided protection from the elements, especially the sun, for livestock.

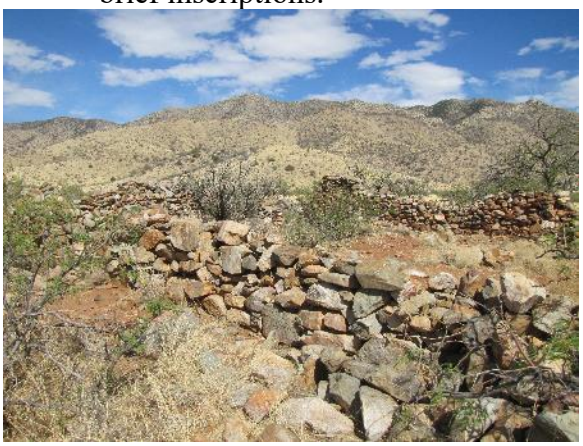
The Conklings variously described station walls as "having been built" ten to twelve feet high.[3] This has been generally accepted by other authors having no better frame of reference. It should be remembered that they

Grosvenor's 1860 sketch of the Dragoon Springs Station. Note the two graves in the foreground, flag, gate and the mule and gentlemen near the gate.

first viewed the stations in the 1920s, when the walls had been in ruins for over 70 years. In the sketch, the crew quarters, taller section on the left, in comparison to the men, appears to be no more than ten feet high, while the corral wall is lower and appears to be not more than eight feet high. Today, not enough stone remains to get the walls of the corral at Dragoon Springs up higher than about eight feet.

In 1860, H. C. Grosvenor passed this way on a stage and wrote:

This station, or corral, is 85 miles east of Tucson. It is a rectangular enclosure, protected by a stone wall eight foot high. One third of the space is occupied by storehouses and the sleeping apartment of the station master. These structures are covered by thatched roofs. The mules are kept in the other part, ready for change on the arrival of the mail. A heavy wooden gate defends the entrance. The two graves in the foreground are mementos of a tragedy that occurred on the night of September 8, 1858. Rude wooden slabs at their head bear brief inscriptions."[4]

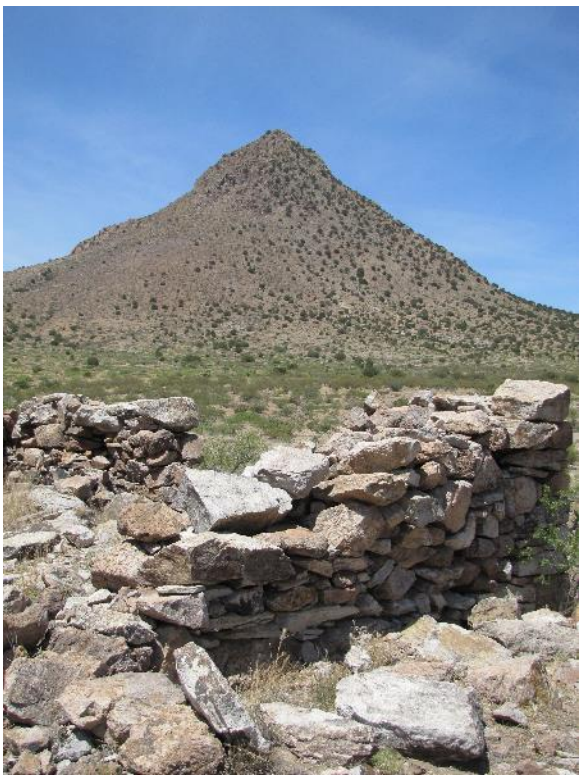


Dragoon Springs Station today

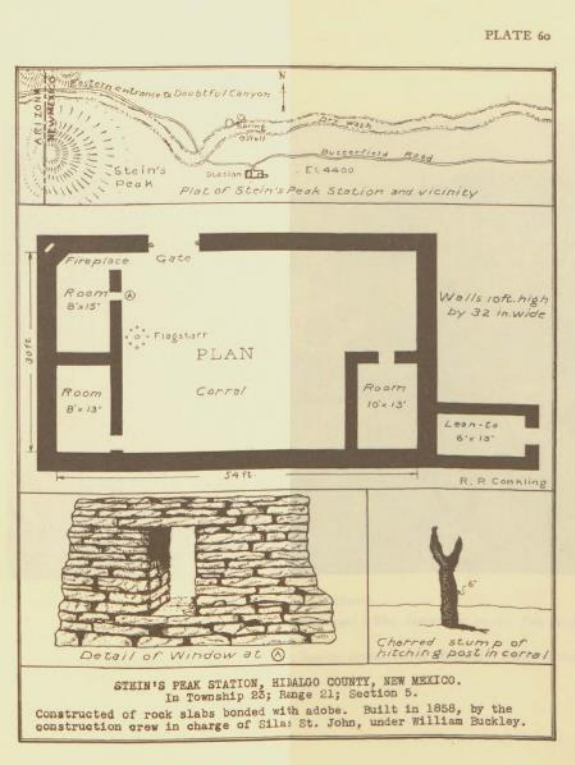
The sketch does not appear to show port holes or more correctly, firing ports. These were not unknown. The Pennington house on the Santa Cruz River, built in the same era, had them built in. Note how they are framed with a lintel. No similar framing remains at Dragoon Springs or at Stein's Peak Station, the best preserved of the remaining stations.

Pennington Stone House on the Santa Cruz River

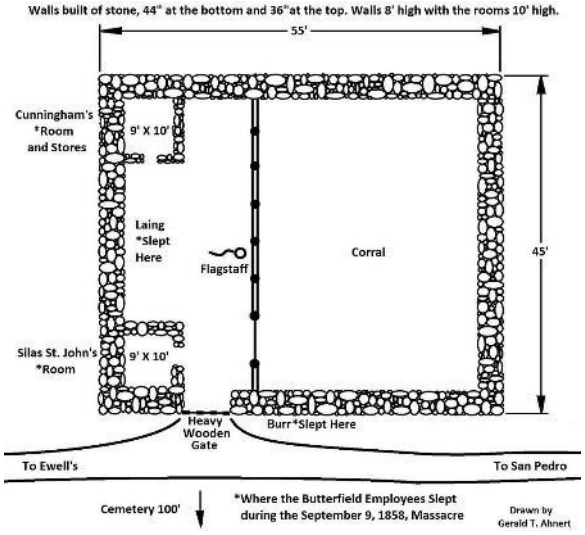
The Stein's Peak Station is similar to what Tevis described at Apache Pass. Crew quarters and storage rooms were inside the station corral. The crew quarters contained a corner hearth used for cooking.



Stein's Peak Station



The Dragoon Springs Station had a similar floorplan. Needs at these defensive stations were similar including a place for sleep, a place for storage, and a corral for the stock. The interior rooms were 9x10 or 10x10, and at Stein's 15x10.

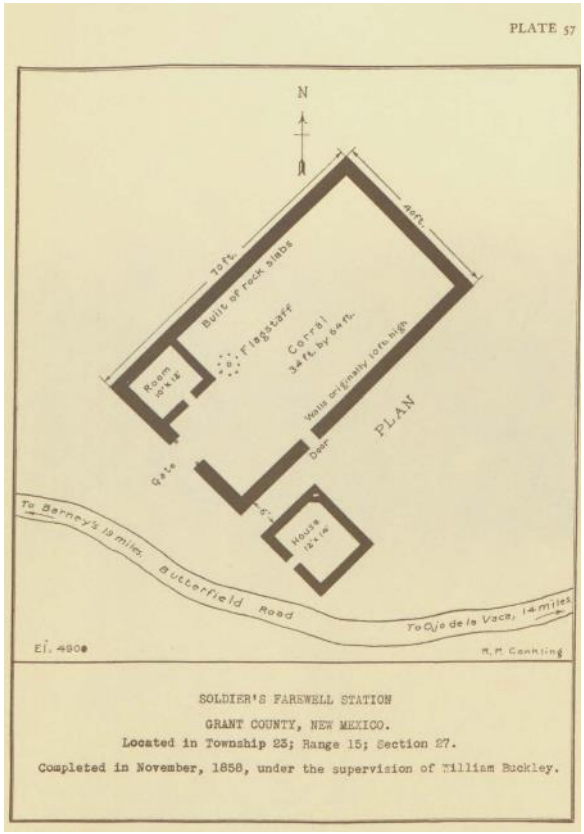


A distance of ten feet from the interior to the exterior wall is a constant. The roof would naturally have tilted towards the outside wall so as not to spill its load of rainwater within the corral. Roof beams, when not using a truss, have a maximum length of 12 to 16 feet no matter how wide or thick they are and this is assuming that Douglas fir, pine, or larch are used. Inferior wood would have required a shorter span. At great distances between walls the beams sag and the roof begins to leak. Ten feet appears again and again as a limit in old structures. Length along the wall was not an issue as suggested by Tevis's writing and by the 10x15 foot room at Stein's.

Nothing remains of any of the roofing or what supported it within the corral. This would indicate that wooden supports and dividers were used, and stalls had a depth of 8 to 10 feet. This is consistent with the 1860 sketch of Dragoon Springs where it seems we can see the distant ends of the roofing planks only 8 or 10 feet from the outer wall.

Butterfield's workers had no efficient means of leveling the grounds. We know that, in July 1858, at Mesilla, Superintendent Buckley had about 60 men recruited in the east and along the way. At Mesilla, he hired Mexican workers. As he proceeded west to Tucson, he dropped off three and four men and a few Mexican workers at each selected site to build the stations. In many places, when the first stages came through in September and October, the men were still

living in tents. This was a very small workforce at each site.



They would have chosen the flattest ground available. At Cooke's Spring, the ground, although flat, slopes downhill many feet. This would have been level enough for a corral, but the crew quarters would only be comfortable if the 10x10 room was flat and did not slope. Ground would have been chosen accordingly. The two well-preserved stations at Dragoon Spring and Stein's show an external dimension of about 40'x60'. This appears to have been a standard size adjusted for terrain for 35-45'x55-70'. Apache Pass rearranged by Tevis and "preserved" by the National Park Service still shows the 40'x60' pattern

Apache Pass would be consistent with this and with Tevis's description if the extended room on the west end were built later, perhaps when Tevis occupied the site in the 1880s.

A similar pattern shows up at Soldier's Farewell.

Mimbres Crossing has been a puzzle. On the site in 1860, Hank Smith provided the following description of the station:

> "After resting two days I left for Rio Members (Rio Mimbres - willows), about twenty miles distant. Found plenty water and grass.
>
> "[A]bout forty men [miners from Pinos Altos] mounted come out to meet them [Apache raiders], they concluded that they did not want to fight as bad as they did before they found out that the Pinos Altos roughs were after them. The Indians left in the direction of the lower settlement of the Rio Members [Mimbres]. We ascorted (sic) Haydon [wagon train] and the Mexican families to the houses at [Faywood] Hot Springs[5] and after getting something to eat and resting our horses we all proceeded to the Rio Members, about seven miles distance . . . As the settlement was a mail station for the Overland Mail Route the company had built and adobe corral big enough to hold all of our horses."[6]

The Apaches were on the warpath attacking mines and the upper Mimbres River settlements. Hank Smith rode with a party of forty Pinos Altos miners out to rescue the people of the upper Mimbres about 20 miles above Faywood or the Overland Mail crossing. The miners escorted the people of Mimbres to Mowry City,[7] a land scam that among other things promised that there were paddlewheel riverboats docking at the site. Its location and proximity to the Overland Mail Station provide the best evidence available as to the location of the station. In 1885, Sam

Bean, brother of Roy, wrote about Mowry City:

> "Old Timer," *Silver City Enterprise*, May 22, 1885
>
> "In the year 1859, after the overland mail commenced running, a mixed party of Americans and Mexicans made a small settlement on the lower Mimbres, above the overland crossing. The town consisted of about thirty persons, one hundred acres of land planted in corn and beans, and two whisky mills, all told; but as this little village was destined to travel on the wings of fame, and made a bigger racket than any other town ever made before or since in New Mexico."[8]

The Conklings visited the Mimbres Station perhaps as early as the late 1920s, but still more than 70 years after the Overland Mail abandoned the station. They wrote:

> [The Station] comprised a rectangular corral two hundred and fifty feet by three hundred, the walls of which were built of adobes set on a heavy rubble stone foundation. There were two wide gates on the east and west sides of the southern section of the corral through which the road evidently crossed from one side to the other. There appear to have been four rooms in the northern court of the corral, besides a large well. The blacksmith shop was located at the northwest corner. After removing a foot or more of wind-drifted and water-washed sand, a part of the original floor was found quite intact, the joints between the flags being filled with bits of charcoal and bituminous coal. The tree stump on which the anvil had rested was still in place. . . [9]

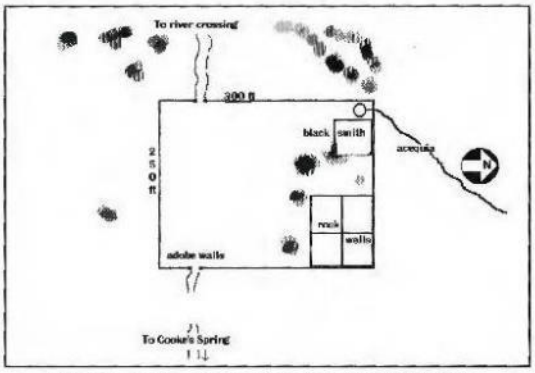


Fig. 13.4. Mimbres Station as described by Roscoe Conkling.

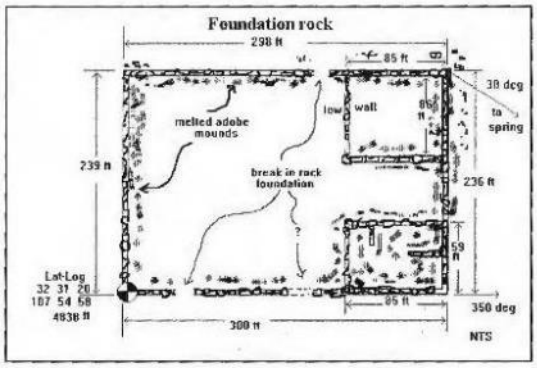


Fig. 13.5. Field survey of the remains of Mimbres Station.

Hackler, writing within the last 20 years, provides two potentially confusing sketches of the site.[10]

The first he calls "as described by Roscoe Conkling." Unfortunately, Conkling does not describe stone walls. Moreover, Conkling did not describe the relationship of the "four rooms" to each other. Hackler's sketch is quite detailed and matches my personal observations on the site, picking up on something I missed. The site has been bulldozed[11] and nothing remains of the adobe walls except flat stone foundations. Hackler noticed that the stone of the foundation in the northeast corner were not flat but were the foundation of a stone wall.

According to Hackler, Keith Humphries, who visited the site nearly 100 years ago described it as "a twelve-foot high walled enclosure three hundred feet square with two ninety-foot square buildings in each north wall corner."[12]

In the years since the Overland Mail departed the site has been occupied and used by others, by stagecoach lines and the people of Mowry City. The structure we see today is far too large to have been built or defended by three Overland Mail employees. This led Hackler to speculate that Mimbres Crossing was a home station. Twelve-foot high walls seem unreasonable and pointless, a lot of work for nothing. These must have been "described" to Humphries or imagined by him, as within the same decade, Conkling didn't see standing walls. No 90x90' structure could have been roofed with the techniques then available so the blacksmith shop may have comprised a portion of the area or been open-air. Since this was not a home station, the blacksmith shop didn't belong to the Overland Mail and may have been a later development.

The 250x300' structure was probably a corral as was the area around the blacksmith shop. Smith described an adobe corral but only tells us it was large enough to hold all of their horses, probably around fifty. In 1861, the 40x60' station at Apache Pass somehow managed to accommodate about 80 mules. The 90x90' blacksmith shop in the northwest corner originally had adobe walls. We know this from the nature of its foundation. There is, however, no indication there of crew quarters or storage shelter.

The 59'x85' stone structure in the northeast corner is about the same size as the other stone stations and Hackler shows divisions within that might have included crew quarters and storage. Negative evidence is evidence of nothing. Smith was interested in the adobe corral as a place to defend and defend his horses from theft. He wasn't interested in crew quarters and storage. They may have been there within the stone structure, and he simply didn't mention these items.

Since the site was favorable for grazing and watering livestock, the Overland Mail employees may have found it convenient to build a 90x90' corral. Smith notes the Mimbres Valley as a place where he allowed his stock to feed after difficult terrain he had just crossed and in preparation for what lay ahead. Perhaps there was a need to house stock from other stations.

The only portion of the foundations that displays the structural complexity typical of the stone stations is the area in the northeast corner. This was subject to later remodeling. Remodeling in other areas would not have erased the original foundations, only made them more complex.

Mimbres is transitional between stone stations, for which we have good evidence, and stations built of other materials. We have what was likely a stone station at Mimbres as well as an adobe corral. To go further, we need to understand construction techniques and the materials available.

Materials in limited use

There were a number of materials in common use today that would not have been in widespread use in the 1850s. Glass is heavy and difficult to transport by wagon. When used, we see it in small panes, windows with multiple lights. It will not be widely used until it can be locally produced, sometimes by blowing, or until railroads can transport heavy loads without too much jolting.

Concrete is made of sand, Portland cement, and gravel. Portland cement is made by crushing and burning limestone in a kiln. It is heavy and when used in construction is reinforced with steel rods or steel mesh. It is very heavy to transport and so we usually don't see it in use until after the railroads arrive or until it can be manufactured locally.

Finished lumber is not seen in more than limited and specialized use until a sawmill has been constructed locally. Finished lumber is needed for doors and doorframes, windows and window frames, and furniture. An 1860 account from Pinos Altos gives some idea of its relative value: "Lumber was worth $250.00 per M and the saw pit man could not supply it fast enough."[13] When a town or building was abandoned, windows, doors, and roof framing quickly disappeared for reuse elsewhere. This pattern can even be seen in ancient Indian ruins, such as Chaco Canyon, where walls were collapsed to recover vigas, roof beams, for reuse.

Finished lumber could be obtained in several ways, all of them labor intensive. Pit sawing was one. Logs could be split with wedges along the grain, resulting in a very rough product. This could be smoothed with adz or broad axe. An adz was often used in New Mexico to finish and square-off vigas. The adz leaves distinctive marks.

Trusses have been in use since the Middle Ages. They were used in churches, cathedrals, and barns and, in a reverse sense, in shipbuilding. They are tricky and require skilled craftsmen and hardwood timber. The large timber in the southwest is not hardwood; it is pine and cottonwood. The truss redirects force away from the center of a beam, hopefully downward into the wall. Miscalculation results in the wall being forced outward rather than downward, hence the flying buttresses we see on ancient cathedrals. Adobe and rough stone walls can't support the additional weight. This is one of the reasons we see adobe buildings limited to one and at most two stories.

The hearth at Stein's (Steen's) Peak Station

Finished stone is an expensive way to build as many man hours go into squaring and finishing stone. The stone buildings we see at Butterfield stations are rough stone where instead of finishing stone before it is used, stones are fitted together when size roughly coincide. This makes walls not nearly as durable as finished stone. Within a few years, they start to collapse. The weight of the wall rests unevenly on the stones below.

Fired brick is what you might think of as red brick. The firing process draws out iron from the clay turning it red. We see this same effect in stone and adobe fireplaces and in buildings that have burned. It's one of the ways to determine the location of a hearth.

Fired brick is fired in a kiln and is usually manufactured locally when there is sufficient demand and when coal is available as fuel or railroad available for transport.

What Was There and What Came After

The Civil War has left a gap in our understanding of the country west of Mesilla. The population dropped significantly due to

the lack of military protection against Apaches and Mexicans. During and after the war, a new population arrived. They seldom knew what buildings been in use for what purposes and when changes had been made to them. Add 60 years more time and some of the first investigators arrived in the 1920s, among them the Conklings, Humphries, and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). They had the "old timers" accounts to rely on. Often the old timers hadn't arrived until the 1880s or 90s and "had been told" by people who didn't know.

Thus, the DAR erected a monument identifying part of Fort Cummings as Cooke's Spring Station. Humphries and Conkling were equally as confused over Mimbres Crossing and there is plenty of honest debate over the location of Barney's Station and some dishonest debate from folks trying to enhance their tourist business on the basis of stories from a 1920s novel.

Legend attaches itself to buildings and they become what the owners wish. Buildings are legitimately repurposed, reused, and remodeled. Foundations are added expanded, but it's close to impossible to erase the original foundation. Discerning which parts are original may be difficult.

Since the stations between El Paso and Tucson were built under the supervision of Superintendent William Buckley for identical purposes, we should find a common pattern and common techniques. The exception to this is the "home stations" built in towns, El Paso, Mesilla, and Tucson. The pattern seen at the stone stations should also show up at the other stations. That pattern is a corral with dimensions roughly 40'x60' with two interior 10'x10' rooms, one for storage and one for crew quarters. Rooms were extended and added, inside and out, as the crew found useful and convenient.

Building Techniques in Use

We've discussed stone. Here is a summary of the process. Stone is collected and roughly formed to shape with a stone hammer or mall. A shallow trench is dug outlining the desired shape of the building. Stones are selected that fit together as nicely as possible forming an uneven foundation. The next set of stones is laid on top fitting them as nicely as possible and filling in gaps with smaller stone. There is no true "course" as there would be with brick, adobe, or finished stone. Gaps between stones admit drafts. These could be filled with adobe mud, but at the Overland Mail stations, there is no evidence that this was done.

Wood frame construction did not come into wide use until sawmills were established when there was enough demand to support them. Hand-hewed wood was used for framing windows and doors and for creating roof beams. Often the foundation of these buildings consisted of no more than a flat rock set every 8 to 10 feet. This meant they could be picked up and moved as happened in early Tombstone when there was confusion over the ownership of town lots. It also meant that these buildings could be transported to new locations if the mines closed. We find that town lots were often only 15 feet wide. The framing wouldn't support floors, ceilings and roofing any wider. Where two or more lots were joined, the interior of the building would be divided by walls or pillars supporting the floor or roof above.

Tents were used quite often. Accounts from Tombstone have people living in tents and businesses operating out of tents. In Ruby, a former mining town, much of the population was still living in tents when the town was abandoned in the 1950s. These often had

wooden floors and interior walls, but the roof was still canvas. In 1858, as the first stages came through, station keepers and crew were described as living in tents. Unless we have a subsequent description or find the foundations of something else on site, this may have remained the case through 1861.

We know some of the stations were serviced by water tankers bringing water from a distant spring and depositing it in a cistern. Careful and trained eyes, like those of Gerald Ahnert, can often spot the remains of these cisterns having seen them at many locations. Water in the southwest was always a problem. In March 1859, the *Arizonian* provided the following information:

> "For the benefit of travelers, we give the following table of distances between the stations on the Overland Mail Routes from San Francisco to St. Louis, via Arizona:
>
> Tucson to the Cienega 35,
> San Pedro (without water) 24,
> Dragoon Springs (without water) 23,
> Apache Pass (without water) 40,
> Steen's Peak (without water) 35,
> Soldier's Farewell (without water) 42,
> Ojo de Vaca 14,
> Mimbres River 16,
> Cook's Spring 18,
> Picachio (without water) 52,
> Fort Fillmore 14,
> Cottonwoods 25,
> Franklin 22.
> Total 300 miles, time 82 hours."[14]

There are some surprises here. Ewell's, San Simon, and Barney's are missing, and so is Mesilla, although often listed as a home station instead of El Paso (Franklin). It may be that these stations had not been established yet as is certainly the case for Rough and Ready and Goodsight. We are also left to wonder at all of the stations listed as "without water." It seems likely that there would have been water for livestock. This lack of water might mean that no additional water would be provided to passengers and they should bring their own. March in this region is the driest time of the year. The rains don't come until late June or July when most the places listed would have had water abundant water.

If these stations had difficulty with water, how much more difficult would the situation have been at Ewell's, where the spring was five miles away, Barney's, Goodsight, and Rough and Ready? At the latter two, water was brought from Cooke's Spring. It's difficult to imagine building an adobe station without an abundant supply of water near at hand. San Simon was another matter. Water was abundant and the Overland Mail grazed a large herd of livestock at that location.

In the 19th century, adobe and rock were the most common building materials in the American Southwest. Adobe contains clay, sand, and fines (fine silt). In most places, the local soil contains the basic ingredients. If there is any question as to whether there is enough of any particular component, a handful of soil can be mixed with water. The components will settle out in layers with clay at the bottom. Too much sand and the bricks crumble. Too much clay and they shrink and crack.

In New Mexico, soil will be dug out for use in making adobes creating a sort of basement for the dwelling. This isn't necessary but soil must be sourced from somewhere and a shallow pit in required in which to mix batches with water. A level, dry spot is needed in which to allow the adobes to dry and cure.

Mud is mixed until doughy and then forced and leveled in a form. The form is usually created to make bricks 10”x4”x14” which results in a brick weighing 35-40 pounds. Any heavier and they become to hard to lift overhead to place on the upper portions of the wall. The form will usually be created to make 8 or 10 bricks at a time. Any more than this and it becomes a two-man job to lift the form. The bricks are allowed to cure. When the form is lifted off, the bricks should not slump under the weight of a man standing on them.

They are now left to dry for at least three days until they can be picked up and stood on edge. They are then allowed to dry three more days when they are stacked on edge, leaning towards one another and allowed to cure for at least two weeks.

Two things should emerge from this. If the workmen want the bricks to dry properly, they probably don’t want to make them in the rainy season, July and August. It is going to take a lot of time to make enough adobe bricks to build a 40’x60’ corral, even if they only build shoulder high.

Consider, the workman might have enough room to make 200 bricks. The blocks must dry for 6 days before they can be stacked where they will dry for two more weeks. After the first six days, the workman can make 200 more. The perimeter of a 40’x60’ foot corral is 200 feet. One course will take 172 blocks. To make a wall five feet high they will need 2580 blocks. It will be 60 days before the workmen have enough bricks for a wall.

Meanwhile, the workmen dig a shallow trench around the perimeter and in it they set the flattest stones they can find at least 10 or 12 inches wide, wider than the adobes, and using adobe mortar, they build this foundation up at least 6 inches above ground. Any less and the adobes will be in ground contact and will crumble in the first rain. The surface prepared in stone must be flat. If it is too uneven, the adobes will crack and crumble when laid.[15]

This foundation is easily recognizable because it is so flat and because it is embedded in the ground, it is hard to remove. The US Forest Service and ranchers have found it convenient to level adobe structures

The foundation of an adobe building bulldozed at Mowry, Arizona. Note that the stones are flat. Rough stones would have cracked adobe bricks.

with bulldozers. This always left behind the foundation. If it had not been bulldozed, the foundation would still be covered by a mound of adobe.

Where adobe is protected from the elements, it is also protected from bulldozers. The town of Charleston was abandoned in the 1880s and soon stripped of windows, doors, and roof beams. Nonetheless, adobe walls still stand quite high.[16]

.

Babocomari Ranch was built in the 1830s. During the Civil War, Camp Wallen used the building. In the 1880s, it was occupied by the Tombstone famous McLaurys and by the 1890s it was a store. Today the walls are an adobe mound more than four feet high. It

conceals within adobe blocks too fragile to support any weight but still easily distinguished.

Charleston, Arizona. Note the mound of adobe at the foot of the wall

The roof of an adobe is built up starting with *vigas*, tree trunks pealed of bark, 10-12 inches thick, every two to three feet. To span the gap between vigas, *latillas*, wrist-thick branches are laid. On top of this several inches of vegetable matting, such as spruce or hay is laid. The whole is finished with about 4 inches of adobe mud. The vigas are set so they tilt downward beyond the outer wall at a drop of about ½ inch per foot. This allows the roof to drain.

Adobe doesn't just disappear. It leaves behind a mound that conceals bricks and a foundation.

In the 1850s, the U.S. Army, along with the poorest of Mexicans, built *jacals*. Typically, since the government didn't provide money to hire Mexicans to make adobes, soldiers were used to build forts. The technique is quick and inexpensive, and the result doesn't last very long. After ten years, very often, nothing remains above ground.

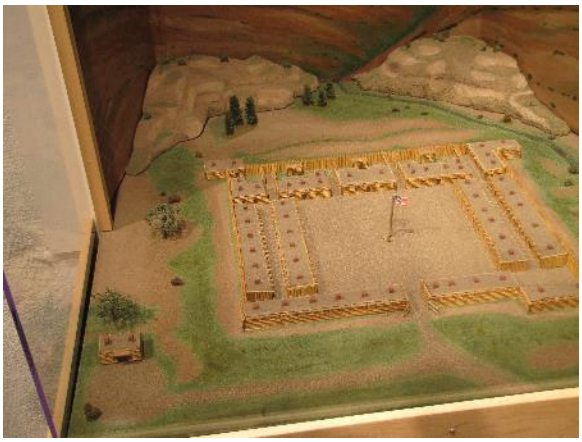
Usually, a pit is dug to obtain soil for making adobe mud. It is deepened along the perimeter and logs are set upright in it like the walls of a frontier palisaded fort. The surface is smeared with adobe mud and the chinks filled in the same manner. All sorts of unpleasant things come to live in these walls and the thatched roof above. Drafts and roof leaks can be counted on.

Remains of the pine palisade at Fort Massachusetts, New Mexico Territory (now Colorado). Jacal leave similar traces.

It was in a jacal, at lower San Francisco Plaza, that the famed Elfego Baca survived several days of cowboy gunfire, over 3,000 rounds. He lay on the floor below ground level. Apart from this, nothing nice can be said about jacals. When they rot, as they do since the logs are in ground contact, they leave no visible remains above ground level.

Destruction

There are a lot of ways jacal, stone, or adobe structures may come to ruin. Jacal will burn rather thoroughly, as happened at Fort Massachusetts, leaving little or no evidence above ground. Rotting logs eventually collapse and the rotting wood, when burned, doesn't even leave much charcoal. Because



Fort Massachusetts model showing palisade

there was so little surface evidence, the location of Fort Massachusetts has been lost twice. There were no old timers to say where it was, the historical record provided only vague reference that it was on a certain creek, and there was only a slight littering of trash on the surface.

The wooden portions of stone and adobe structures – doors and door frames, windows and window frames, and roof beams – are soon repurposed by neighbors. The recovery of vigas often results in at least one wall being pushed down. Once one knows what to look for, the "mysterious" absence of wood is easy to spot. It hasn't all rotted away and disappeared. In ground contact it will rot. If completely encased in soil, its outline remains. If left in the air, wood can survive for centuries in the southwestern climate.

A collapsed roof, containing 4-inches of packed adobe, can be mistaken by archaeologists for a floor. The two are similar. They are densely packed and hard. Digging down through soft layers of crumbled adobe wall and wind-blown material, one comes to a hard, in comparison, relatively flat surface about 4-inches in depth.

Most floors were simply packed adobe. Flagstones were rare and might be considered expensive. The same applies to wooden floors. Before sawmills were started, a wooden floor represented a lot of work and expense. The commanding officer's quarters at Fort Massachusetts had a wooden floor. Like the palisade, its impression remained and like adobe roofing is difficult to distinguish floor from roof.

Floor or roof at Fort Massachusetts? Adobe roofs are made of the same material as the floor. Compacted dirt looks like compacted dirt.

Adobe and stone can be pushed over but this takes more effort than one might think seeing the structures 100 years later when the roof is gone and the walls more fragile. Adobe blocks, like brick walls, are interlocked, placed half-over the block below. If there is an adobe roof above, the roof must be demolished first as it stabilizes and lends strength to the walls. What is later mistaken for weathering, earthquake, military operations, and deliberate destruction is often no more than the result of repurposing of doors, windows, and roof.

The thatched roof of a stone structure will burn taking with it the roof beams. We can count on an adobe structure having an adobe

roof. No one would put the time and effort required to build in adobe without finishing it with a proper adobe roof to protect it. Adobe doesn't burn. If it gets hot enough, some will harden, some become brittle. Creating a fire hot enough to burn the structure is difficult. The only wood is in the ceiling covered with pack adobe. It is difficult to get enough air to the wood to get it to burn. This can be done by digging up the roof, exposing the wood. That takes time and effort. Otherwise, the wood will only be partially consumed and will burn at low temperatures. A viga or two might burn and collapse leaving the structure unstable.

A Final Point

Where stone can be easily gathered, it is easier and less time-consuming to build in stone than adobe. It would have taken at least two months to erect an adobe corral and sleeping quarters. The result would be far more expensive, stable, and comfortable than stone. Adobe is famously warm in winter and cool in summer. The blocks absorb heat from the sun in the daytime and release it at night. Compared to stone, adobe is draft-free. Compared to thatched-roof, adobe roofs are leak-free.

Jacals are dirty, bug-infested, drafty and subject to burning down. They are the least expensive of the three – stone, adobe, or jacal – to build. They can be erected quickly. When they burn or rot, they leave little trace on the surface. Containing little adobe, only in the chinks, they don't leave much of a visible mound.

Conclusions

In 2011, historian John Kessell wrote:

> "First off let us ignore the postmodernists' claim that none of us can possibly know objectively what actually happened, only objectively what is said to have happened. As historians, that is our business - to say what happened, to pursue historical truth as objectively as possible. Historians Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff suggest in *The Modern Researcher* (1992) that practitioners of the craft apply six rules: accuracy, orderliness, logic, honesty, self-awareness, and imagination (I might add calmness). Evidence gathered in this way one bit reinforcing or challenging another, provides us with the probability upon which to base our "truth," that is, the probability that something actually happened pretty much the way we say it did."[17]

It is our duty as historians to say what happened as truthfully as possible. We need to present the facts along with our logically derived conclusions stating clearly that these are speculations.

The pattern found in the stone stations - 40'x60' corral with two 10'x10' interior rooms should be accepted as the "standard." We should look for this pattern in the adobe stations. Indeed, at Seneca/Cienega Station we find this pattern with additional structures added. Whether the additions existed during the years of Overland Mail operation cannot be determined from the foundation alone but the portion of the foundation that matches the pattern can be reasonably accepted as "the station," especially since the trail can be seen to pass by here and it shows on maps as at this location. The station is also close to water making it relatively easy to make adobe in comparison to places like Ewell's where water had to be hauled five miles.

There is little visible trace of a mound of adobe at Ewell's. There are only a few stones

that were probably the cistern and a few poles that might have been part of a rope corral. Was there an jacal or did the men live in tents?

At San Simon there was sufficient water to build in adobe but there isn't much of a surface mound and no visible foundation. Would a lesser station like this have had an expensive adobe corral and crew quarters, or did the men live in tents or jacals? A few feet of trench might expose the remains of an jacal.

Barney's, Ojo de Vaca, Goodsight, and Rough and Ready require further investigation.

---

[1] Ahnert, Gerald T. *Arizona's Butterfield Trail through the New Frontier 1858-1861: Alkali Dust and Blistering Sands*. New York: Gerald T. Ahnert, 2023, p 46.

[2] "The broad axe has a relatively short handle and an expansive blade that is broad and wide. It is typically used for hewing or squaring off round logs. Its large, sharp bit can easily slew off pieces of wood to make a flat surface. . . Broad axes were historically used as weapons and over time also got used for carpentry, hewing, and chopping. It was a popular tool for making railroad ties, ships, log cabins, and timber frames." https://axeadviser.com/what-is-a-broad-axe/

[3] Conkling, Roscoe P., and Margaret B. Conkling. *The Butterfield Overland Mail, 1857-1869*. Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1947.

[4] Barber, John Warner. *Our Whole Country or the Past and Present of the United States*, Vol. II. Cincinnati, 1861, p 1448. Ahnert, Gerald T. *Arizona's Butterfield Trail through the New Frontier 1858-1861: Alkali Dust and Blistering Sands*. New York: Gerald T. Ahnert, 2023, p 57,

[5] They were bring the Mexican families from the Upper Mimbres farm and ranch settlement about 20 miles upriver from the Overland Mail Station

[6] Smith, Henry Clay, and Hattie M. Anderson. "Mining and Indian Fighting in Arizona and New Mexico, 1858-1861," *Panhandle Plains Historical Review* II (1929), p 86 & 95-96.

[7] Mowry City did not involve Sylvester Mowry. The people who set it up used his name to attract business. Mowry City is also referred to as Lower Mimbres Settlement. More recently writers, and probably the locals, have come to refer to it as Old Town. This is confusing because Old Town is a Mimbres Indian archaeological site located on a nearby bluff.

[8] Finch, L. Boyd. *A Southwestern Land Scam: The 1859 Report of the Mowry City Association*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989, p 20.

[9] Conkling, Roscoe P., and Margaret B Conkling. *The Butterfield Overland Mail, 1857-1869*, Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1947, pp 120-121.

[10] Hackler, George. The Butterfield Trail in New Mexico, Rock Hill: Yucca Enterprises,, 2005, p 132.

[11] Foundation stones are remarkable difficult to remove, even with a bulldozer. Digging down through ancient cities, archaeologists unearth the outlines of buildings long gone. We know the site has been bulldozed since there are no adobe mounds on top of the foundations. Weather alone does not remove these.

[12] Hackler, George. The Butterfield Trail in New Mexico, Rock Hill: Yucca Enterprises,, 2005, p 128.

[13] Smith, Henry Clay, and Hattie M. Anderson. "Mining and Indian Fighting in Arizona and New Mexico, 1858-1861," *Panhandle Plains Historical Review* II (1929), p 90.

[14] "Table of Distances," *Weekly Arizonian*, 17 March 1859.

[15] McHenry, Paul Graham, Jr. *Adobe Build It Yourself*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985. pp 42-51.

[16] The are two stories about Charleston. One says it is completely gone which is completely false. The other says that the U.S. used it for target practice in WWII. There is no indication of artillery fire and the town was then on private property.

[17] Kessell, John L. "So What's Truth Got to Do with It? Reflections on Oñate and the Black Legend," *New Mexico Historical Review* 86 (Summer 2011).

Expectations at Seneca Station
On the Overland Mail

By

Doug Hocking

Our expectations can lead us to see things we think should be there. Seneca Station on the Overland Mail Road, 1858 to 1861, was the only station between San Pedro Crossing and Tucson. The name Seneca seems to be a touch of whimsy on the part of John Butterfield. He was from up-state New York and used the names of New York places and Indian tribes for some of his stations in Arizona, hence: Seneca, Onieda, Mohawk. Perhaps the names originated with homesick station keepers. J.P. Thorp, one of the first Overland Mail employees to work at Seneca hailed from Seneca Co., New York. Seneca was known by everyone, except the Overland Mail Company, as *Cienega de los Pimos*, the Swamp of the Pima Indians. Seneca and Cienega sound almost alike.

Cienega[1] is said to derive from *cien agua*, one hundred waters, hence a swamp, marsh, or a wet place. Cienega Creek rises near Sonoita, flowing north and then west. Usually dry, like many desert rivers, water rises to the surface where rock forces it upward and sinks again below the sands. Today, where Davidson Canyon joins the creek, a clear stream, shaded by giant cottonwoods, trickles around the rock on which the station perched. This beautiful stream is not at all what imagination leads us to expect of a swamp.

From the San Pedro River the trail ran through what is now the town of Benson and is largely obliterated. One can pick it up near Mescal Road where it joined Mescal Wash to descend to Cienega Creek. The trail ran in the sand along the wash bottoms scoured smooth and flat by occasional thunderstorms and gully-washers. At Seneca Station, where the wash bottom flowed with water, cuts took the trail up onto the rocky rise where the buildings stood safe from floods. Running along wash bottoms, the trail avoided the tedious up and down of crossing arroyos laterally.

Hollywood, as well as dime novels and their pulp descendants, have led us to have certain expectations of what a stage station should be.[2] There should be a ticketing office and a waiting room for passengers, as well as a dining room, kitchen, and home for the station keeper. There would also be a corral where change horses are kept and perhaps a barn. At the better stations there might also be a saloon with obligatory tin-horn gambler and a few hotel rooms. This was not at all what the San Antonio & San Diego Mail, colloquially known as the Jackass Mail. provided, at least in its first year of operation across Arizona. Phocion Way, an early passenger, wrote of his experience:

> "June 11th Camped last night about 10 miles this side [west] of the San Pedro.[3] Hobbled our mules, stationed our guard, and retired to rest on the ground as usual. Started at daylight this morning. Traveled 8 miles and stopped at the de los Pimos Creek for breakfast. The water is clear and beautiful, but slightly alkaline.
>
> "June 12th. Arrived at Tucson about 6 o'clock last evening. We had heard bad reports of this town all along the route, and we were fully prepared to see a miserable place - and we were not in the least disappointed. It contains about 200 inhabitants, all Mexican and Indians with the exception of about a dozen.
>
> ". . . The mail company do not run their stages farther than here, and those who paid their passage through must ride over a sandy waste on mule back and furnish the mule themselves, or stay here and get the fever and ague. This is a most rascally imposition and the company will very likely have to pay for it.[4]"

A run by the Jackass Mail was a tiny caravan of one or two, according to those who rode them, broken down wagons which had to be frequently repaired, a string of replacement mules, and, in Apache country, five or six mule-mounted guards. There were no formal stations between Mesilla and San Xavier del Bac, near Tucson. As Way says, they stopped and camped along the trail, often sleeping under the wagons. It was all about timely delivery of the mail, not passenger service. They used light wagons including a type of light stage wagon.

Mail was not about writing home to Aunt Tilly. Mail is the lifeblood of commerce. It was used to order supplies and pay for them. It was used to work out business deals and financing. Lastly, the government used it to communicate. Passengers were an afterthought. Once Butterfield took over the route, the Jackass Mail was not allowed to carry the mail across Arizona. It still did in Texas and California and continued to run across Arizona carrying passengers. What sort of accommodation the two companies worked out over stations and facilities is not clearly known.

Many writers have assumed that the SA & SD ceased to run but the evidence is clear that the line was still in operation.

A stage wagon at Tubac Presidio Park. Photo by Gerald Ahnert.[5]

From 1856 to 1863, Arizona was almost synonymous with Doña Ana County, New Mexico Territory. The county seat was at Mesilla on the Rio Grande. Everyone called it Arizona even in official documents. It stretched at least from the Rio Grande to the Colorado River. Its northern boundary was less well defined, perhaps because population north of Tucson and Pinos Altos was limited in numbers. The boundary may have coincided with the Gila River. The same applied to the eastern boundary which should have been the current boundary with Texas, established by the Compromise of 1850. Many writers would say that the use of the term Arizona dates from the April 12, 1860, attempt at Tucson, to establish the provisional Territory of Arizona, or the similar attempt on March 16, 1861, at Mesilla, to form a government. During the period from November 1856, when the United States took possession, until August 10, 1861, when Lieutenant Colonel John Baylor, Confederate States Army, declared the "Confederate territory of Arizona," the nearest court and law enforcement were at Santa Fe. Soldiers to protect the people from the Apache were few and far between and often consisted of only two companies of the 1st Dragoons (cavalry) and six companies of the 7th Infantry. The people of Arizona felt ignored and unprotected. Arizona was truly lawless and Tucson, especially, a haven for men on the run from Judge Lynch in California. The term Arizona was in use long before these two ill-fated attempts to make it official. The Confederacy took advantage of the desire of the people of "Provisional Arizona" for effective government and protection.

Unlike the SA & SD, Butterfield's Overland Mail ran day and night at an average of 9 miles-per-hour stopping for a half an hour at change stations to swap mules or horses for fresh and to give passengers a chance to eat and visit the facility. If the passenger didn't finish in time, he or she was stuck waiting at least two days for the next stage. At the stations remaining to us today, Stein's Peak, Apache Pass, and Dragoon Springs, there is little indication of any kitchen or dining room. There were two or three 10-foot by 10-foot rooms, roofed and enclosed, used for storage and sleeping and an open or partially roofed corral. Waterman Ormsby, a rider on the first westbound stage in 1858, thought that accommodations might improve with time. There is little indication that they did. Here's what he reported:

> "The breakfast was served on the bottom of a candle box, and such as sat down were perched on inverted pails, or nature's chair. There were no plates and but four tin cups for the coffee, which was served without milk or sugar. As there were six of us, including drivers and workmen, those not lucky enough to get a first cup had to wait for the second table. The edible - for there was but one - consisted of a kind of short cake, baked on the coals, each man breaking off his "chunk" and plastering on butter with his pocket knife, but butter is a rare luxury between the Red River and the Rio Grande - at least on this route at present - though doubtless it will be plenty when the line gets in running order so as to convey supplies to the stations. Such, nevertheless, was our meal here, and were advised by the host to "hurry up before the chickens eat it" - which we did, to the no little discomfiture of the chickens. It tasted good to me, and I can assure you that it would doubtless taste as well to any one coming over the same route at the same rate of speed."[6]

Basic commodities were hard to come by for the men of the Overland Mail. There were mercantile stores at Mesilla and Tucson, as well as at Pinos Altos, 30 miles off the route. At Pinos Altos, the general store was run by Sam and Roy Bean. The latter later became a judge of some renown. These mercantile establishments had difficulty maintaining basic stores of coffee, sugar, and flour. There was a flour mill at Tucson that supplied the entire area. There were farms and ranches along Sonoita Creek, Mimbres River, and along the Rio Grande that supplied produce, milk, beef, lamb, chicken, and eggs. Without refrigeration, few things would have kept long enough to arrive unspoiled at the stations other than eggs, bacon, chili peppers, garlic, and onions. Potatoes, we are told, were difficult to grow in Arizona. At San Simon, and perhaps Mimbres Crossing, the Overland Mail kept herds of sheep and cattle, providing meat on the hoof.[7] Ormsby indicates that the station men kept chickens and perhaps hogs. Everything else had to come from farther away. Weight would have been a factor. There is plenty of evidence that the stations were supplied with canned goods such as peaches, pears, sardines, ham, and beans as well as preserves and liquors in glass containers. Considering the weight and the distances involved, these would have been luxuries, and the station keepers might have hesitated to share them, preferring to feast their guests on pounded jerky, bacon, beans, and johnnycake.[8] In the desert southwest, *pinole*, finely ground cornmeal mixed with cinnamon, cocoa, and agave to make a nutrient dense drink or mush would also have been available. Travelers also often carried *atole*, finely ground parched corn, which was a common travelers' fare used to thicken soups and add caloric energy.

Ormsby commented on the things he found unique and unusual. Most of us do the same. We do not mention everything we expect to see and assume that our readers understand that these things are there. In consequence, descriptions are often incomplete, lacking descriptions of the expected and normal. Today, the cottonwoods grow large along portions of Cienega Creek. They propagate where there is flowing water. Mesquites grow large in wash bottoms where ground water is plentiful. They also grow on the flats above the arroyos, but once-frequent grass fires destroy woody plants. In the washes, well-nurtured mesquites grow tall losing a few twigs to fires while the trunks survive. Both cottonwood and mesquite are native to Arizona. We find their remnants in ancient rat nests and Indian ruins and campsites.

Ormsby described the ride from San Pedro Crossing to Cienega Station without mentioning either tree. He may have left them out of his account because he expected to see them. Here's what he wrote:

> Our road now leads us to the Cinqua [Cienega] River - the only evidence of which is its fine white sandy bed, through which we drag wearily for four miles. The land, however, is good, and capable of cultivation; at present it is covered for the whole length of the river with a species of coarse salt grass, which grows to a great height, and large numbers of sun flowers, which are quite welcome after the flowerless hills and deserts through which we had passed. On the banks of the valley are some of the largest cactus plants I had yet seen, towering to a height of from ten to twelve feet, and often even higher, with bodies of full two feet in diameter. We ascend from the valleys of the Cinique [Cienega], with its

> beautiful grass and weeds, to the mountainous district approaching Tucson, the first city in Arizona, after leaving Messilla [Mesilla], for its heavy sand and coming hard hills are very wearing upon the animals.[9]

Ormsby places Mesilla in Arizona. He is astonished by the saguaro cactus and the grass which was probably Sacaton grass. He passed along the route in October and the flowers he saw were the last of the season. The "flowerless hills" were a result of weeks of dry weather following the summer rains and summer flowering. Travelers in the American west detect distant rivers and water sources by looking for telltale cottonwoods. Perhaps Ormsby thought them too common to mention.

Familiar with the stone stations of which Dragoon Springs is the last, or more correctly, furthest west, my expectation for Seneca Station was a sixty-foot by forty-foot corral with two interior 10-foot by 10-foot covered rooms. In the 1880s, the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks went through the building at Seneca Station. The builders of the railroad would have scraped the adobe blocks away leaving only the flat foundation stones too difficult, inconvenient, and unnecessary to remove. Today, there are two sections of wall remaining. A short section about eight feet in length is made of flat-topped stones that would have been the foundation of an adobe wall. It ends, obliterated, at the railroad easement.

Foundation of the adobe wall

The other is made of rough, uneven stones and would have been the lowest layer of a stone wall. This extends away from the railroad for more than 20 feet before being lost in shrubbery where it seems to make a right angle turn roughly parallel with the railroad and first wall described. It may

continue along this line for as much as 60 feet before making a second right angle turn towards the tracks. It is difficult to tell without disturbing the earth.

Lower course of a stone wall

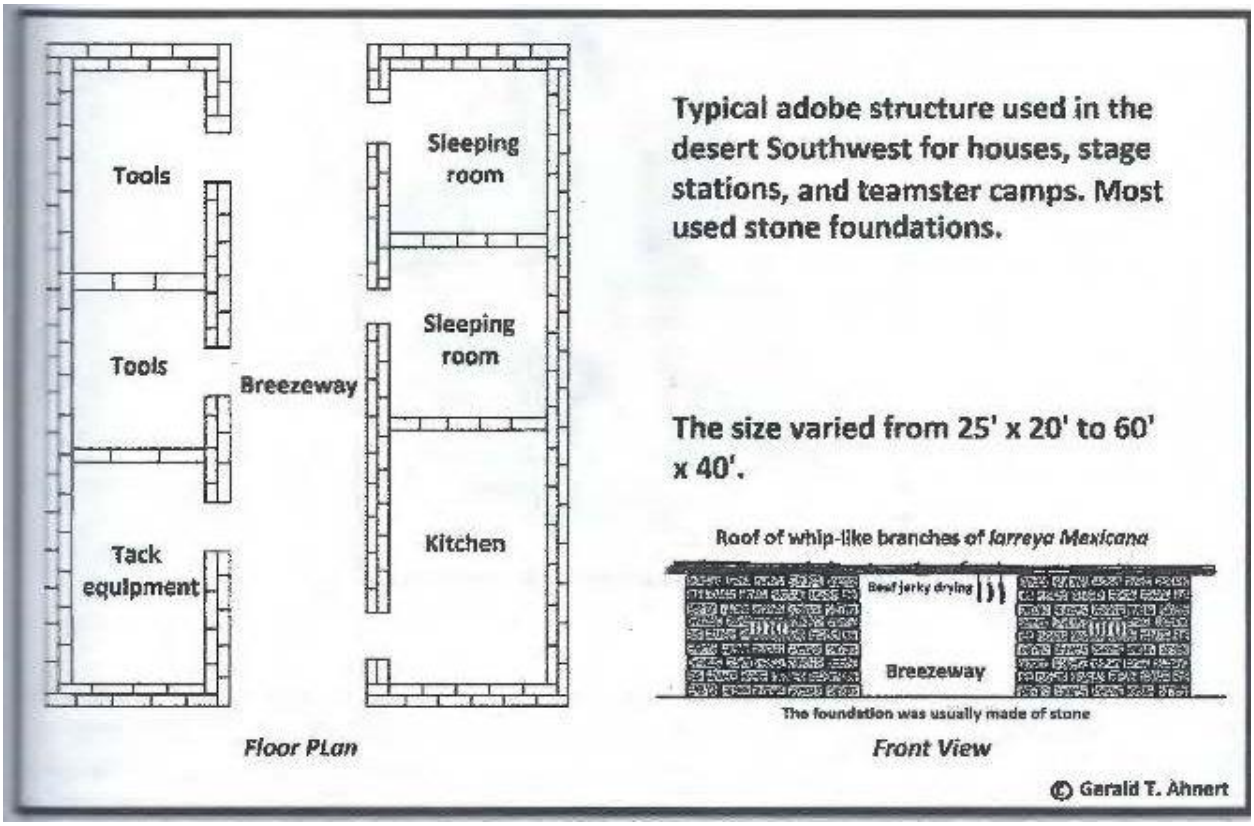
Google Earth shows discolored patches of ground or vegetation extending from these walls. There are also squarish patches of discoloration nearby. References say that there were buildings, plural. If these follow the pattern of the stone stations to the east, the 10-foot by 10-foot patches of discoloration might indicate where two storage buildings once stood. Cuts in the earth leading downward to the cienega give ample indication of where the trail once ran. They are now choked with shrubbery but still visible. Vegetation now obscures much of what I once thought I saw. It is clear that one set of stones is the foundation of an adobe wall and the other the base of a stone wall.

I grew up in a hybrid adobe home. The first floor was two-foot-thick adobe. The second floor was frame. The basement was the borrow pit from which the adobe had been taken. Compared to jacal and rough stone, building with adobe is expensive and slow. The blocks need time and space to dry thoroughly. Somewhere a borrow pit should be in evidence. Atop Seneca's rock, which causes the stream to rise to the surface and curl around the knoll, the soil is thin, rock close beneath. There is little room for drying adobes. Covered rooms would be unlikely to be larger than 10 or 12 feet between walls or supporting posts. Rafters, unless formed into trusses, don't support more. The wide open, unsupported space seen in the music halls and saloons of Western movies are a myth, needed for the camera angles desired by the mythmakers. Look at 19th century photos of saloon interiors or visit an early theater and you will see how narrow the buildings were except where pillars are in evidence.

Exposed adobe walls melt and protect the blocks beneath. When buildings and towns are abandoned, it isn't long before people in the area remove what is valuable. Finished lumber is in this category as are *vigas*, roof beams, along with doors and windows. This leaves adobe without protection from the elements. In most cases, we find a mound over four feet in height concealing adobe block. That is, unless those in control of the land bulldozed the walls in which case the foundation blocks, being hard to disturb, remain.

Gerald Ahnert, who knows more about the Butterfield Overland Mail than anyone alive, expected a 60-foot by 40-foot adobe structure bifurcated by a breezeway lined by three or four rooms 10 or 12 feet in width. Length is not an issue as long as the supporting walls are only 10 or 12 feet apart. Such a building might have existed at Seneca Station and been obliterated by the railway except for a few feet of foundation stones. Besides railroad construction, the site has been repurposed several times, added to and rearranged. Descriptions give very little help. People saw what they expected to see, which may differ greatly from our own expectations. In 1862, the California Column reported the site "in ruins." This may mean anything from the door was off its hinges and the roof had a hole in it or that the walls had been pushed down to free up the vigas.

The stone stations east of Dragoon Springs are at close to 5,000 elevation. In the southwest, that means cooler temperatures than at lower elevations. From San Pedro Crossing at 3,000 feet, the stations to the west are at progressively lower elevations and the climate is warmer. The adobe breezeway would have helped to keep things cool. The pattern proposed is entirely different from that of the stone stations.



West of Dragoon Springs and the Chiricahua Apache country, Butterfield found that it was no longer necessary to have high stone walls and built instead in adobe. Mr. Ahnert, I believe, sees this as an inexpensive and swift way to build. Having lived in, excavated, and worked with adobe, I see it as slow and relatively expensive. The bricks must cure and require flat curing space. A flat, stone foundation is a must. The lowest blocks on a wall, if left in direct contact with earth, melt and collapse the building during the first rain. Jacal, posts set in the ground and plastered with adobe, is a cheap and swift way to build. It is often mistaken for adobe. When it disintegrates, as it does very rapidly, it leaves almost no indication above ground. Posts rot to ground level and leave a discoloration below grade.

With few exceptions, the stations from Seneca westward have been obliterated by flooding and development. Some, on Native American lands, are closed to exploration. In the 1960s, Dale Berge conducted an archaeological investigation of Gila Ranch Stage Station.[10] He discerned the pattern to which Mr. Ahnert refers, rooms on either side of a breezeway. Berge found adobe blocks as the foundation, not stone. It may be that the archaeologist did not go deep enough and upon finding the collapsed roof, thought it was the floor. Both are made of compacted earth.

All of the Overland Mail station sites except Stein's Peak, have been reused, added to, and disrupted. It's difficult to tell what was original. At Seneca Springs, a new pattern emerges but subsequent occupation and the railroad leave us little more than two bits of wall to work from. It's an adobe station but we don't know if it will be more like Stein's Peak or Gila Bend. A large corral with tiny living spaces is the pattern for the stone stations.

In the stone station at Stein's Peak, one corner of the living quarters shows evidence of having once had a fireplace. That room is about 10'x15'. At Apache Pass, the station suffered an 1862 loss of stone as the California Column erected nearby "first Fort Bowie." In the 1880s, James Tevis

Fireplace at Apace Pass probably added to living quarters by Tevis in the 1880s when he used the station as a sutler's store.

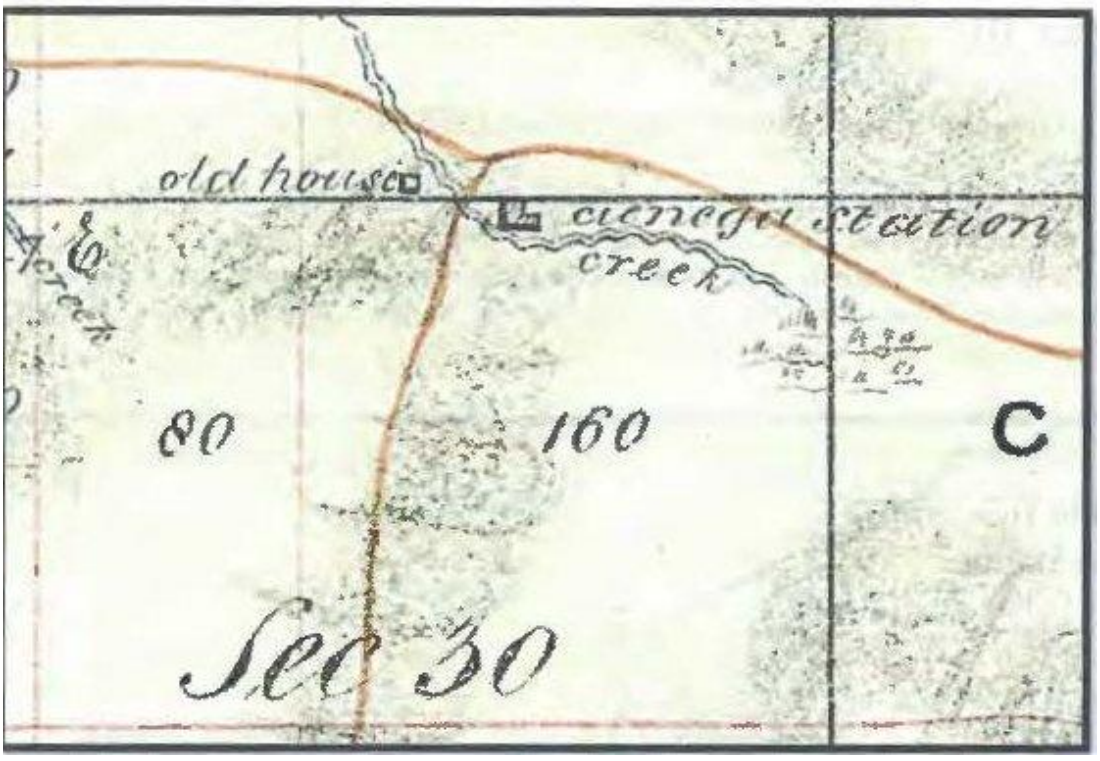
occupied the station and modified it to suit himself. The beautiful fireplace probably dates from this period. There was no discernable fireplace at Dragoon Springs. Apparently, any cooking was done outdoors. This is consistent with what Ormsby described during his trip.

The pattern of the stone stations is consistent. There was a small, simple living space, and additional covered storage space. More storage rooms were added later. In each case, there was a large corral. There is nothing to suggest a kitchen. Meals for passengers must have been highly irregular in timing. Road conditions and minor accidents slowed stages and drivers would attempt to make up time. In February 1861, we know that the westbound stage arrived at the station at least four hours early, surprising Cochise who set an ambush but didn't have it manned. Perhaps all of the stations kept a bit of food and some coffee on the fire for passengers.

Living quarters at Stein's Peak Station. The reddish hue of the rock in the far corner indicated that the rock was heated by fire and thus was a fireplace.

Google Earth may reveal patterns not visible on the ground. Seen from the air, there is an L-shaped disturbance of the ground consistent, in all but the location of the trail, with the 1874 General Land Office Map of Township 16S, Range 17E. The building is a little closer to the creek than topography would allow and the trail north of where the railroad is today. These may be approximations close to the actual sites. The ridge to the north is very close to the railroad. The Butterfield Trail cannot have been completely north of the Southern Pacific.

Seneca Station: Blue line is the road. The cuts make this almost certain. Solid yellow line surrounded by red line is the remaining foundation of an adobe wall. Dashed yellow is a guess at what might have been. Discoloration of the ground cover may indicate the former locations of structures. Loose stone outlines these spots. Brown line surrounded by red is the foundation of a stone wall. Dashed brown line shows the probable location of the rest of this wall.



1874 GLO Map

We can conclude that we don't really know what the station was like between 1858 and 1861. It might have been the same pattern of breezeway encountered at Gila Bend Station built on a stone foundation but now obliterated by the railroad. It might have been a much simpler adobe building with a stone corral. What can be said with certainty is that it was on this knoll and it continued in use until the stage was replaced by the railroad.

In 1873, Governor A.P.K. Safford said, "From Tucson to Camp Bowie the distance is about 110 miles and is one of the best natural roads in the Territory. Twenty-five miles east of Tucson the Cienega Station is reached; and is owned and kept by James Douglas and good accommodations are given to man and beast."[11] The food had improved since 1858. The next year, according to the *Arizona Weekly Citizen*, the station saw new owners. "James S. Douglass has sold the Cienega Station to Messrs. A.A. Wilt and Thomas Dunbar. They have already taken possession, and as both have families the station will be kept in "apple pie order," for we are positively assured that they not only known how to keep it that way but have the will and industry to do it."[12]

On February 20, 1861, two men were working at Asa McKenzie's ranch[13] about one half mile from Seneca Station, when a dozen Pinal Apaches attacked. McKenzie was in Tucson buying supplies. They resisted but the odds were overwhelming. Working with muzzle loading weapons, slow to reload, they did their best calling for help from the nearby Overland Mail employees. The ranch hands retreated toward the station only to find it abandoned. The Butterfield men had shamelessly concealed themselves in the chaparral. The Indians set fire to McKenzie's house destroying it. Watching the ranch burn, the cowboys called out to the timid, hidden men coaxed them forth. Mounting four mules they rode toward San Pedro Crossing 18 miles distant. Apparently, the mules, used to the stage harness, were unaccustomed to being ridden and were soon left by the trail as the men continued on foot. The mules were recovered by more reliable men sent from San Pedro. At Tucson, William Oury arranged "to place agents at that point who could be depended upon; and if the Indians revisit that locality, they will not be required to beat round the chaparral to find objects to attack."[14] They did revisit and there are many unmarked graves in the area. Within a few months, the Civil War resulted in Congress ordering the Overland Mail moved to the central route on the Oregon-California Trail away from the Confederacy.

In the spring of 1862, the soldiers of the California Column found Seneca Station "in ruins." After the Civil War, the focus of communications with California remained on the central route where the Overland Mail continued to run until the Union Pacific Railroad was completed. The Federal government did not appear to be anxious to benefit the South with a mail line. 1867, when the mail service was finally revived to Tucson, it ran to Santa Fe and then over the Santa Fe Trail. In this period, Seneca Station was revived as a station and remained so until the coming of the Southern Pacific Railroad. For a while, in 1880, it was "end of tracks" where one took the stage to Tombstone.

[1] Ahnert, Gerald T. *Arizona's Butterfield Trail through the New Frontier, 1858-1861, Alkali Dust and Blistering Sands*. Syracuse: Ahnert, 2023, p 69. Limited edition. Expect publication from a major publisher summer 2024.

[2] Dave Meek has an amusing video on building a Butterfield Stage Depot for his model railway at Thunder Mesa Studio in Jerome, AZ. His concept is based on Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm. https://youtu.be/LqDy-O4silU?si=dfF2yg88CdCjlUal

[3] The San Antonio and San Diego Mail, known as the Jackass Mail for the preponderance to mules employed, descended from Dragoon Springs to the San Pedro River by way of Dragoon Wash, which is shown on maps as Quercus Canyon, the scientific name for oak. This made the route initially used by the mails a little longer.

[4] Duffen, William A., Ed. "Overland vis "Jackass Mail" in 1858: The Diary of Phocion R. Way," *Arizona and the West*, Vol. II (1960), pp 158-159.

[5] Gerald Ahnert on *Facebook* 4/14/2024. "There are two classes of passenger carrying stages—the stagecoach and stage wagon. Shown first a type of stage wagon replica called an "ambulance" in the Tubac, Arizona, museum. It was made by Hansen Wheel & Wagon Works and represents the only reliable passenger carrying wagon used by the San Antonio & San Diego Mail Company (Jackass Mail). It is based on Jackass Mail passenger Phocion R. Way's drawing from his journal."

[6] Ormsby, Waterman L., Lyle H. Wright and J.M. Bynum, eds. *The Butterfield Overland Mail*, San Mateo: Huntington Library, 1954, pp 85-86.

[7] "Exciting Life on the Overland Mail." Utica Daily Observer, 18 March 1861, in a letter from Nelson Davis, a conductor for the Overland Mail, wrote: ""So we were left at the station without teams to proceed any further until the next coach arrived from the west with an escort of soldiers to take us through Stein's Peak (or Doubtful Pass). We left the Pass on the morning of the 18th, and on arriving at San Cemone, (21 miles) we found the Indians had been there and run off six mules, three hundred head of sheep, one horse, and a lot of beef cattle belonging to the Overland Mail Company. The boys gave them "a brush," and said they killed some two or three, but I did not see them. We stopped over night at the station, left the next morning and came on through without being further molested."

[8] The term is no longer in wide use. It referred to various forms of cornmeal flatbread.

[9] Ormsby, p 45.

[10] Berge, Dale L. "The Gila Bend Stage Station," *The Kiva*, 33/4, April 1968.

[11] "Observations of a Governor," *Weekly Journal-Miner*, 4 October 1873.

[12] "Cienega Station Sold," *Arizona Weekly Citizen*, 11 July 1874.

[13] Shown on the 1874 GLO map as "old house."

[14] Altshuler, Constance Wynn. *Latest from Ariona! The Hesperian Letters, 1859-1861.* Tucson: Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, 1969, pp 236-237, quoting *Sacramento Union*, March 7, 1861.

Poetry

For the Love of Horses

By Deborah Lea “Wild Woman” Lawson

When the old man retired, and the farm was sold,
He said "now these horses have got to go."

The cows are all gone, nothing left to chase,
A good cutting horse would be just a waste.

The broodmares and fillies, worth more than gold,
Had all gone to Texas, new lives to unfold.

Old ChiChi and Rusty, still trail-horse sound,
Went to friends in Carolina, they're still ridin' around.

Jane and Too Tall had earned their easy years,
They lived out their lives, watching the others chase steers.

Then, there was Alice. The last one to go.
I'd spent years trying to sell her, with little to show.

She had a pretty paint color, sparkling white, and burnished red,
But that was all you could say for that stubborn redhead.

She was bred to cow-horse, but she didn't care to,
She'd failed every test the trainer tried to make her do.

Not built quite right, wide, flat withers, and high rump,
If you asked her to lift her feet, she just stood like a stump.

She couldn't juke, or slide, couldn't do a rollback,
She was round as a barrel, and hard to fit to tack.

But give her the rein, and she'd run, despite her pudge,
Always on the wrong lead, but who am I to judge?

She's getting old now, we don't saddle up to ride,
I spend most days just brushing her hide.

She's getting dim in the eyes, and creaky in the knees,
But I'm still glad I said yes, when the boss said "She's yours for free."

Santa Fe Ghosts

By Inez Ross
Away to Santa Fe: A Collection of Santa Fe Trail Poems, Santa Fe: New Mexico State Library, 2021

Late at night when the moon has set
And the Plaza shops are all locked,
If you stand on the street named Santa Fe Trail
You may hear the strange clippity-clop

Of a horse that is galloping up the hill
Pounding along the street
Following the tracks to Old Missouri
Where Trail and river meet

They say it’s the ghost of Francis X. Aubry
Riding to win a bet
Of a six-day ten-thousand dollar ride
And a new record to set

He won the bet with hours to spare
And rode the Trail again

And lost his life in a Plaza fight
And departed the world of men

And now his spirit continues to ride
Listen! You cannot fail
To hear the sound of Aubry's horse
On the enchanted Santa Fe Trail

Between September 12 and 17, 1848, the "Skimmer of the Plains" rode from Santa Fe to Independence, Missouri, in an astonishing five days, 16 hours covering over 600 miles. On August 18, 1854, at the La Fonda Hotel, Santa Fe, he encountered newspaper editor, Major Richard H. Weightman, who had disparaged some of Aubry's feats in his journal. FX drew a revolver and Weightman fatally stabbed him. He blazed new and better routes and was one of the most successful wagon masters who ever lived.

Hayin'

By Deborah Lea "Wild Woman" Lawson

There's hay in my boots, and hay in my hair,
These damned legumes get everywhere.
It sticks in your socks, and sticks in your craw,
And if you're an unlucky cuss it'll stick in your paw.

It makes me sneeze, and my eyes get to runnin',
This haying season, well it ain't much funnin'.

It's 3 months a'growin'
And 3 days a'mowin',
3 days a'dryin'...
Unless it rains, then I'm cryin'..
3 hours riding the tractor around,
Watching the baler chuck'em out on the ground.

Now comes the fun part, stackin' and storin',
1500 bales a day, it sure ain't boring.
We stack'em all neat and tight in the shed,
Til the orders come in, then we stack'em again.

On trailers, and trucks, and rickety farm wagons,
We've got the best hay! You can just hear us braggin'..

We stack and restack, til our backs and knees groan,
Til the sun's goin' down, and we hobble on home.

At home, it's waiting, another stack of bales,
The horses, all hungry, twitch ears and flick tails.
I dole out the flakes, and watch them dig in,
And think how tomorrow I'll do it all again.

It's still in my hair, still makes my nose run,
But hayin' pays the bills, so I guess I'll "git'er done."

Outhouses
By Bob Spahle

The outhouse shur is a special treat.
When you've been long on the trail it can't be beat.
No need to wait if you like one another,
You can share the space in a two-holer.

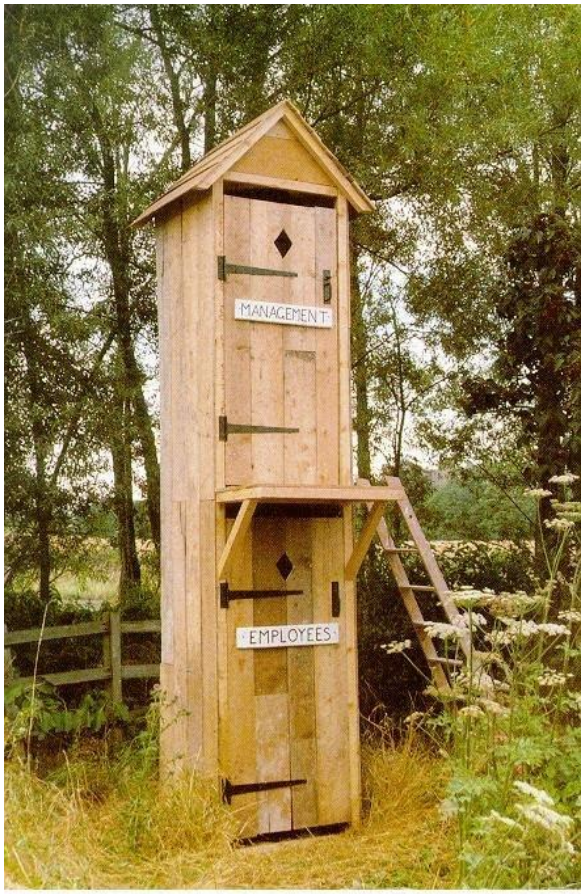
Toilet paper hard to come by,
So, remember my friend,
Catalog pages are softer to use than cactus
On your hind end.

I've use oak leaves and maple leaves
And moss off a log,
But nothing beats the fine print
Of a Sears catalog.

Yes sir, after months on the trail
Squatting by a bush,
Hoping a rattlesnake don't
Bite you on the tush.

Outhouses on the prairie
A welcome relief
No more worries about
Poopin' on your feet.

So, the next time you see
An outhouse outside
And ponder to use it
But just can't decide,
You can bet a cowboy would use it,
After a ride,
Rather than take a chance
Of getting a thorn in his backside.



The Greenhorn
By Bob Spahle

He ain't no cowboy,
I could see it right away.
His legs are too straight,
Bet he bought his boots just today.

His hands are too soft,
And his clothes are too new.
Nobody ever told him
What a cowboy should do.

I always wanted to be one,
And would do what it takes.

And was willing to learn
And to make some mistakes,

To get his hands dirty
And to learn how to ride,
Do a hard day's work
And do it with pride.

His hands would blister
But they'd heal up fine.
He'd learn how to brand
But it would take some time,

Work in the snow,
And work in the rain,
Ride 12 hours a day
And never complain.

You cowboyin's more
Than a horse and a gun,
It's getting' the job done,
While still having some fun
.
It's learning the job the first time
And doin' the best you can.
Now, he wasn't just a cowboy now
He was a man.

The Rattler

By Bob Spahle

It was a month before Christmas,
And all through the house
A creature was stirring.
It was bigger than a mouse.

My dog was barking
Upon my bed,
Making enough racket
To wake up the dead.

Thought it was a burglar
And looked around outside.
Shining my flashlight
In the places he could hide.

No body to be found,
I went back to bed.
Only to have my dog, again,
Barking by my head.

It must be something inside,
As thoughts raced through my mind,
Sending chills up my spine
By what I was to find.

I picked up a cooler
And what did I see,
But the last four inches
Of a rattler staring back at me.

He seemed really small to me,
Judging from his tail,
But as I kept pulling him out,
My face got mighty pale.

I pulled and pulled and out he came,
What a frightful sight.
He was three feet long and angry.
And was about to bite!

I dropped him quick to get a better grip,
And he bit me on the thumb,
Looking back on it, all I thought to myself,
That was really dumb.

And in the end, I got the best of him,
And killed him like at rat!
Now he has the place of honor
On my cowboy hat!

And it only took a helicopter evacuation to Tucson and a stay in the ICU. But Bob says the new hat band was totally worth it. That there is a $90,000 hat band, but Bob only had to pay the $5,000 deductible.

Old West Recipes
By Debbie Hocking

Roast Quail

With thanks to Sherry Monahan and here excellent book A Taste of Tombstone, A Hearty Helping of History. *Debbie says that if you aren't prepared to shoot your own quail, you should try substituting Cornish hens.*

6		Quail
6		Large Oysters, fresh shucked or canned
1	Cup	Flour
6	Slices	Bacon
		Salt
		Pepper
		Butter, softened

Wash quail or hens inside and out and pat dry. Place one oyster in the cavity of each bird. Close the bird by tying the legs together. Combine flour, salt, and pepper in a shallow pan. Dredge the birds to coat evenly. Butter the breast of the bird and lay a half slice of bacon over each leg. Place in a roasting pan and bake uncovered at 350° for 25 minutes or until done. Or coat the bottom of a Dutch oven with butter and place the birds within. Cook with coals top and bottom for 25 minutes or until done. Remove bacon before slicing.

New Mexican Stuffed Chicken

This recipe comes from Mora where Ceran St. Vrain ran a flourmill and is buried.

1 lg	Chicken (fryer)
2 cups	Chicken Broth
1 lb	Round Steak, minced fine
1 qt	Beef Broth
¾ cup	Golden Sultana Raisins
1 sm	Onion, minced
½ tsp	Cinnamon
1 pinch	Cloves
½ tsp	Salt
1 Tbs	Chili Caribe Oil
or	
1 Tbs	Red Chili, ground fine &
1 Tbs	Lard

In a large, covered pot simmer steak in beef broth for one hour until well done. Reserved beef stock. Chop beef to a fine mince. Make a stuffing by adding golden raisins, minced onion, cloves, cinnamon, salt, and chili oil or lard. If Caribe Oil is not available, use a tablespoon of lard mixed with ground red chili.

Boil chicken in chicken broth for approximately 12 minutes. Mix beef & chicken broth.

Brown the stuffing in 3 Tbs of oil or lard. Stuff in chicken cavity.

Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 35 minutes until tender basting with combined broth occasionally.

Recipe adapted from Eating Up the Santa Fe Trail, *2001, by Sam'l P. Arnold.*

Baked Beans

With thanks to Sherry Monahan and her excellent book A Taste of Tombstone, A Hearty Helping of History.

4	cups	Pinto beans
½	lb	Salt pork (or bacon)
1	tsp	Saleratus (baking soda)
1	Tbs	Salt
2	Tbs	Molasses
3	Tbs	Bown Sugar
1	cup	Water, boiling
1	cup	Tomato sauce
½	tsp	Mustard, dried

Cover beans with water in a Dutch oven and soak overnight. Drain and add water to cover. Add baking soda and simmer until bean skins burst, about 30 minutes. Drain.

Score the rind of the salt pork and add to beans. Be sure to leave the rind exposed (rind side up) when placing in the beans. If using bacon, cut into quarter-inch pieces.

Combine salt, molasses, brown sugar, mustard and tomato sauce and mix well. Add the boiling water and stir well. Pour over the beans. Marke sure the mixture covers the beans completely.

Place the cover on the Dutch oven. Place coals under and over the oven and bake for one hour until beans are soft. If using a conventional oven, bake at 300° for 6 to 8 hours until beans are soft.

If using a conventional over, uncover the beans during the last hour. If the beans become dry, add water.

Book Reviews

BOGGS, JOHNNY D.
Killstraight Returns: A Killstraight Story
New York: Five Star Publishing, 2022.
Hardcover, pp. 254,
ISBN 9781432899912
http://www.gale.cengage.com/fivestar

Killstraight is a departure from Boggs' usual fare and is the chronologically final book of a new series. Demonstrating his chops as an author, he maintains a very high degree of tension unleashed finally in two incidents. A smallpox epidemic adds suspense and dread along with the possibility of a Commanche uprising or massacre of Indians. His protagonist is a Comanche tribal policeman who is treated as a human being, not as a caricature. This work sets the stage for an interesting series. Killstraight has become the subject of a series of dime novels in which he is drawn much larger than life. As it turns out this is a plot by a would-be Buffalo Bill showman who wants the Comanche to star in his show. There are a number of interesting characters who seem destined to reappear including anti-hero, newsman Kyne and a Cherokee warrior.

Doug Hocking

FARMER, W. MICHAEL
Chato, Desperate Warrior
Hat Creek, 2023

Michael Farmer is one of very few authors who writes about the Apache as human beings rather than as victims or barbaric savages, the terror of the Southwest. Farmer did a superb job in *Trini! Come!* the story of a Mexican girl held by Geronimo capturing the feelings of both captor and captive. Chato was a brilliant warrior whose exploits are still talked about today. Here the story is told as two aging warriors recalling the past around a campfire. Michael Farmer brings the story to life.

Doug Hocking

GORENFELD, WILL and JOHN GORENFELD.
Kearny's Dragoons Out West: The Birth of the U.S. Cavalry
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016
Includes bibliographical references and index, pp. 472

This is an indispensable source for anyone interested in the United States cavalry and the westward expansion of the nation. From the inception of the dragoons in 1833 until the 1850s, the 1st Regiment of Dragoons kept the peace on the Great Plains, protected caravans on the Santa Fe Trail, explored the land, conquered the Southwest, and developed doctrine that would guide American cavalry. Informative and well-written this book is a delightful read and an essential reference for the library of anyone interested in the Frontier west.

The dragoon was a hybrid soldier trained to fight as cavalry with saber and pistol and as infantry with musketoon, a foreshortened musket. In Europe, generals employed dragoons as shock troops, but in the United States a unique strategy evolved deploying small units over vast distances from Arkansas to Wisconsin. The country initially relied on militia disbanding small numbers of mounted troops after its wars. Cavalry was too expensive and so it was only in the 1830s that Congress finally authorized a regiment. Even then that body stinted on necessary equipment and training.

President Andrew Jackson, intolerant of professional soldiers, appointed many officers to the regiment from the militia combining the Army's professionalism with the hardscrabble skills of frontier scouts. The first colonel, Henry Dodge, who had earned a measure of fame in the Indian Removal and Black Hawk War, was poor at training, discipline, and organization, debilitating men and horses on an ill-conceived journey across the plains. Nonetheless, he established a tradition of martial display coupled with diplomacy that became a hallmark of the 1st Dragoons and maintained peace on the Great Plains for the next twenty-five years.

In 1837, West Point trained Stephen Kearny took command and led the regiment for the next ten years molding its officers into some of the finest the Army has ever known and turning the 1st Dragoons into a polished professional fighting force. The enlisted men of the regiment were noted for "fine talents and learning" about one-third having been in elevated stations in life. Included initially were four lawyers, three doctors, and two ministers. Diplomacy and restraint marked the actions of the 1st Regiment of Dragoons. Men enlisted to see the far frontiers and to become the knights of the prairie.

The Gorenfelds include an excellent discussion of the Battle of San Pascual. As the only battle U.S. troops "lost" in the Mexican-American War it has often been misunderstood, over-simplified, and misinterpreted. They present the case that Kearny attacked when he shouldn't have in a quest to secure glory while there was still a war to win. The Fremont-Kearny dispute over governorship of California cost the Pathfinder his commission and rightly so. The book includes the role of Kearny and the regiment in the conquest of the New Mexico and California. The regiment and its officers participated in other battles of that war including Buena Vista and Santa Cruz de Rosales, a fight seldom discussed because of the misbehavior of the Missouri volunteers.

During the Civil War, the dragoons passed into history becoming the U.S. Cavalry leaving in their wake a tradition of mounted warfare and peacekeeping that persisted until the Army remade the last cavalry unit as armor at the beginning of the Second World War.

Doug Hocking

HERRERA, CARLOS R.
Juan Bautista de Anza: The King's Governor in New Mexico.
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015
308 pages, $29.95.

This is an immensely readable and interesting book covering the life of Juan de Anza, one of the most dynamic figures of late colonial New Spain. While providing background on de Anza's early

life and career, this tome focuses on his years as governor of New Mexico, rather than his service as presidial captain in Tubac and the expedition to establish a land route to California. He was remarkable for his times in being 'the king's governor,' that is, he neither sought wealth from office nor self-aggrandizement. Instead, he sought to carry out the will of a distant, absolutist, Bourbon monarch. Juan de Anza was born in Sonora at the furthest end of the Spanish empire and governed New Mexico its most remote province. Nonetheless, he did not take the path of residents of the Rio Arriba who considered themselves independent of the wishes of southern officials. He endeavored to carry out the king's will.

Doug Hocking

PREZELSKI, TOM
Californio Lancers: The 1st Battalion of Native Cavalry in the Far West, 1863-1866.
Norman: The Arthur H. Clark Company/University of Oklahoma Press, 2015.
Maps, illus., appendixes, table, notes, biblio., index, 248 pages.
ISBN 978-0-87062-436-0. $32.95.

This is a detailed, well-researched and readable account of a forgotten unit. *Californio Lancers* delves into an important but often overlooked part of the Civil War. Lucid and well-written the book provides a complete account of the unit, its men and challenges. Our sense of that war tends to focus on the divisions between North and South, slave and free and miss the many other divisions that tore at the nation. Union leaders struggled to keep northern slave states in the Union and to keep Illinois and Indiana Butternuts from going south. In the West, the Union had gained huge territories populated by Mormons who had fought an 1857 war against the country and former Mexican citizens who hadn't completely assimilated. To the south in January 1862, the French, taking advantage of U.S. distraction landed an expeditionary force in Mexico. They posed a threat not only to Mexico but to the newly acquired lands of the southwest. California was difficult to tie into the Union because of its distance from the east coast. It also faced threats from outlaws, Confederate sympathizers, and native population not yet assimilated.

On May 5, 1862, a set back to the French was celebrated in distant California where Cinco de Mayo remains a source of pride. Local leaders recognizing both the French threat and native Californian dislike for colonial French, decided in 1863, to raise a mounted battalion of native Californios, fabled horsemen. They would be lancers because that was the weapon of choice of their ancestors. To many the weapon seems archaic, but at the time it was a source of pride.

Each of the four companies was recruited in a different city at in 1863 and 1864, and had a different initial experience. The companies raised in the north did not attract native Californios, instead drawing immigrants from France, South America and Germany. They suffered from slow enlistment and desertion rates in the 50% range. They might have ceased to function had not most of the deserters returned to the ranks. They chased bandits and Indians in California and served to quiet tensions where Confederate sympathy ran hot. The battalion suffered from unsuitable officers, rivalries between leaders and irregular keeping of the unit rolls and pay books. The two companies recruited at Santa Barbara and Los Angeles in 1864, attracted natives and had much lower desertion rates. Finally, in late 1865, the battalion consolidated at Drum Barracks under Major John Cremony and marched, a company at a time, across the desert to Fort Mason,

Calabasas, Arizona, south of Tubac. There most of the battalion became sick with fever. They guarded against Maximillian and confronted his forces at Magdelena, Sonora, in a small action that may have been significant stalling the French. They fought one campaign against Apaches before returning to California for discharge in 1866.

Former members of the unit took pride in their service and this was significant in binding California to the Union. They faced prejudice and had officers replaced for indiscretions that might not have been considered so in the Mexican army or in the Hispanic population of the west coast. The Battalion of Native Lancers is something Californios can take pride in.

Doug Hocking

SHEA, WILLIAM L.
Union General: Samuel Ryan Curtis and Victory in the West.
Lincoln: Potomac Books, University of Nebraska Press, 2023.
8 photographs, 3 maps, biblio., index, 368 pages.
ISBN 978-1-64012-518-6, $34.95 (hard-cover).

Engagingly and intelligently written, the work brings light to the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi. General Curtis won great victories at Pea Ridge and Westport, preserving Missouri and Kansas for the Union. He was the eighth most senior general in the U.S. Army. While he was not dashing or flashy, he was a brilliant general, calm and efficient and also the engineer on some of the greatest infrastructure projects in the West. So why have we previously heard so little about him? Is the author an enthusiast? General Philip Sheridan, who knew him well, thought he deserved better, writing: “I was always convinced that Curtis was deserving of the highest commendation, not only for the skill displayed on the field, but for a zeal and daring in campaign which was not often exhibited at that early period of the war.”

Doug Hocking