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# GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

# HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

by

**BENJAMIN LEVY**

**DIVISION OF HISTORY  
OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
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## INTRODUCTION

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, created to protect a portion of an extensive and significant fossil reef, was authorized October 15, 1966. The time has come to consider the long-term development of the Park. To accomplish this a master plan study is projected for fiscal year 1970. In order to provide the planners with adequate historical data and enable the planning process to consider the historical features of the area, this background history was proposed.

This study was authorized by Resource Study Proposal (RSP) GUMO-H-1. It is designed to accomplish several things: (1) identify the historical themes relevant to the Park and its immediate vicinity and recommend the ones that ought to be interpreted and how this might be done, (2) locate and identify historic sites and structures within the Park and recommend measures for their protection, development, and interpretation.

This study is not intended as a definitive history of the Park. It strives to be a comprehensive survey of the dominant themes. It should provide sufficient information to assess the nature and quality of these themes and enable the reader to understand the role various historic sites played in the overall story. It is hoped that each theme and its related physical features will be studied in greater detail. To that end, this report should

become one of the fundamental documents upon which to base a comprehensive historical research management plan.

Since this is primarily a management document, written to support eventual development of the Park, the master plan should be consistent with it and should specifically cite it in support of objectives involving historical development and research. Since this report will show that there are important historic episodes and sites pertinent to the Park, the Master Plan should, at the very minimum, state a commitment to, (1) the preservation, interpretation, and development of the historical features of the area and (2) a continuing program of historical research, involving those themes not adequately investigated here.

## CHAPTER 1

### MAN AND THE MOUNTAIN

The phenomenal geological horseshoe called the Guadalupe Mountains straddles the New Mexico-West Texas boundary line. The apex of this great fossil reef thrusts south into the Trans Pecos desert dividing the Salt Basin from the Delaware Plain. This arid expanse with its intruding and well-timbered reef was once submerged beneath a vast inland sea. In that gigantic watery home, algae secreted lime that settled into growing heaps. Brittle-shelled creatures died and added their hulks to the slowly growing reef.

As time passed the earth was uplifted, and the water drained to the ocean. Eventually the watery basin became arid plain and desert; the reef became a mountain range.

Today the mountains' southern point is hailed as a spectacular exposure. The famous Capitan reef with its sheer face dropping off 1,000 feet in places has been described as the most extensive of its kind on record.

At first it lay for ages unacknowledged by the eye of man. Ultimately, it became a refuge for the first Americans. Forested and grassy, moistened by spring-fed streams, the higher reaches of the Guadalupe provided the Apache and Kiowa a retreat from the searing summer heat of the plains. There they hunted deer,

bear and mountain sheep and gathered vegetation. The canyon-scarred ridge was a haven for the Indian when tribal warfare broke out. A crag or cave often meant a moment's safety and the treacherous terrain helped the savage to elude his pursuers.

The Guadalupe became a natives' sanctuary in the face of a threat greater than that posed by a neighboring clan. Spanish imperial power began to probe the "northern mystery," driving corridors of defense and settlement north to Santa Fe along the Rio Grande and to San Antonio and the short-lived mission at San Saba.

The vast desolate mid region spread out between the Pecos and the Rio Grande was to remain a forbidding frontier until the late nineteenth century. Undoubtedly the successive western powers of the region entertained vague hopes of occupying the Trans-Pecos but certainly they would have been satisfied simply to traverse it.

Since the days of Spain's presence in the New World, this region interdicted communication between the settlements of east Texas and those of the upper Rio Grande. Travelers who would brave the trip had to cross the Comanche War Trail arising in what is now the Texas Panhandle and southern Oklahoma and plunging southward across the plains, through the Chisos Mountains of the Big Bend and into Mexico. Farther along the trail, the Apaches threatened travelers among the mountain ranges of west

Texas. If a traveler survived a confrontation with hostile Indians there was always the problem of water. The few springs were usually located in the mountains and some ranges had no dependable springs. Waterholes were often dry and rock tanks were emptied in the dry season.

And so for years heavy traffic avoided the direct plunge across the trans-Pecos plains. What commerce flowed between San Antonio and the upper Rio Grande did so by way of Presidio del Norte at the mouth of the Rio Conchos and continued north along the Rio Grande. Traffic to Chihuahua and the Mexican interior flowed to Taos and Santa Fe, south along the Rio Grande to Presidio and then southwest along the Conchos.

No doubt individual explorers and small private parties ventured across the region. There is reason to believe that some of the travels that became official routes of travel evolved from trails customarily used by the common folk who left no documents of their efforts or itineraries of their ventures. Spanish exploratory records and maps were carefully guarded and were not for public use. As a result west Texas, in fact most of the Spanish Southwest, had to be "rediscovered" by Anglo-Americans.

It is not until the mid-nineteenth century, following the Mexican War and the annexation of Texas, that the need for a

better geographical understanding of the new territory was sharpened. Surveyors were deployed to determine the international boundary. Expeditions were financed to locate a possible route for a southern railroad to the Pacific Coast across Texas. Exploratory parties took to the field to determine wagon routes from the Texas coast to the western corner of the State. The Guadalupe Mountains proved both an obstacle to and a passage for new lines of communication.

The need to defend these new lines and the settlements that grew up along them led to the establishment of a string of frontier fortifications. But isolated posts were not enough. Frequent scouts and continual reconnaissance were absolutely necessary in order to battle the Comanche and Apache on his home ground. Trails and water sources had to be located and mapped and the hostile Indians kept constantly aware of the presence of their enemies. The Guadalupes were reconnoitered frequently as part of the west Texas campaign against the tribes. When a company returned to post, its commanding officer would prepare a report and map of the scout. Some of these survive and tell us of the units' experiences in the Guadalupe Mountains.

The campaign against the Texas Apaches was primarily one of massively frustrating the Indians' freedom of activity by inundating the countryside with frequent and numerous scouting

parties. For this reason, the reconnaissance of the type experienced in the Guadalupe was typical of the entire campaign.

This is not to say that there were no head-on collisions. Troops of the District of the Pecos, commanded by Col. Benjamin H. Grierson, shocked Victorio's braves twice in 1881. One clash occurred in sight of the Guadalupe -- in the Salt Basin to the south at Rattlesnake Springs. Grierson's men turned back the Apaches once again at Tinaja de las Palmas in the Quitman Valley. Frustrated, Victorio and his band crossed back into Mexico, to their doom. Grierson, for all his energetic efforts to join battle with the Apache chieftain, for all the brilliance of his campaign of saturation reconnaissance, was denied the satisfaction of final victory. The destruction of Victorio was left to the Mexicans. General Joaquin Terrasas succeeded in surrounding the Apache band in the Tres Castillos mountains. The defenders were unable to break out. The Mexicans opened up with a crushing fusillade, Victorio was killed; most of his band was destroyed. With the extermination of Victorio and his followers the trans-Pecos frontier grew relatively calm. The "pacified" region had no longer to contend with the seasonal migration of Indian hostility, but only the spontaneous threats of outlaws gone berserk, or renegades "on the lam."

The Texas Rangers played a dual-role in pacifying the trans-Pecos frontier. Along with Uncle Sam's boys in blue, they provided the state's force against the Indians and strove to corral a herd of desperados that ranged over the Texas landscape. They scouted the Guadalupe Range and occasionally confronted hostile Indians there. There is evidence that outlawry spilling over from the "Lincoln County War" in New Mexico summoned the Rangers to mountainous lairs in the Guadalupe.

One of the most atrocious conflicts engaging the Texas Rangers was the Salt War fought over the vast salt lakes that stretch to the west and south of the Guadalupe. Although the "battle" was fought at San Elizario on the Rio Grande, it was the salt beds that triggered a tragedy. In essence it was a clash of cultures -- Mexican vs. Anglo-American. Free and communal use of the salt beds was challenged by individual expropriation and possession. Those few who were determined to gain personal control of these deposits set themselves on a collision course with those who saw the salt fields as a bountiful and free source for whomever wished to lend shoulder and hand to scooping out the earth's abundance. The climax was bloody. Lives were lost and businesses destroyed. Atrocities were committed and, worst of all, justice was ignored.

The Guadalupe remained remote territory throughout the nineteenth century. Development in terms of settlement and economic exploitation is a relatively recent chapter in the region's history. At that, the area still has the appearance of untamed frontier, save the ribbons of concrete expressway that scar the landscape and the occasional gas pumps and stations that serve the roadways. There are a few unsightly slashes bulldozed for trails to communications apparatus weirdly perched on surrounding mesas. Here and there are the slowly healing wounds incised in the earth's skin where artificial steel arteries have been implanted. Gas and oil -- the blood of industry -- surge through these vessels which leave their marks across the earth as straight lines -- relentless, and infinite.

Aside from these intrusions the picture is still one of desolation and wilderness. What settlement there was, and is, is marginal. There was some mining. There has been some interest in oil but none was ever discovered. But most of the people of the Guadalupe are ranching people. Today they may operate filling stations but some of them still ranch, or did originally. The history of ranching in those parts is cloudy. The records are not clear, if they say anything at all before the turn of the century. And the "old-timers"

still living in the area are the homesteaders of the twentieth century. Undoubtedly, herds of cattle and sheep plodded across the Guadalupe countryside but the days of open range are hard to document.

The history of the Texas Guadalupe is an expansive one. Much remains to be discovered, let alone told, about this region's story. The compiling of a story never before told comprehensively leads inevitably to intriguing questions left unanswered. There are yet many of these about the Guadalupe and search for the answers should continue.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE MOUNTAIN IN THE EYE OF SCIENCE

The Guadalupe Mountains are an extensive land mass rising from the desert, containing one of the world's most extensive and significant fossil reefs. Its Permian limestone palisades and gigantic earth fault are major features to be preserved by the National Park.

The earliest travelers and explorers remarked about these unavoidable features. Their wonder and aesthetic senses were stimulated by the sheer magnitude and beauty of the mountainous landmark.

But few seemed interested in the Guadalupes as a geologic specimen to be studied with scientific precision until the mid-nineteenth century. Then, the great surveyors of America's geography were the Army engineers. One of their most famous and massive studies was the Pacific Railroad Survey. Usually a survey team included scientists of various specialities who issued papers as part of the official final report.

Capt. John Pope was ordered to examine the potentialities for a railroad along the so-called "southern route" in the vicinity of the 32nd parallel. After examining the region in 1854, he returned the following year to explore for artesian well water on the Staked Plains of Texas where the lack of

water was a hindrance to a Southern Pacific railroad. On this return trip, Dr. G. G. Shumard, a geologist, accompanied <sup>1</sup> Pope.

Shumard made the first geological observations of the Guadalupe. He touched the foot of the mountains at "the canyon known as the Pinery" (Pine Spring Canyon) and explored for about a mile collecting fossils from the limestone "remarkably rich in organic remains." He identified as Carboniferous (Pennsylvanian) the formations he examined. His brother B. F. Shumard disputed this finding and concluded that the specimens more closely resembled those of the Permian system of Europe. The latter's correct discovery received little notice for many years. In 1901, G. H. Gurly made an extremely fruitful collection trip in the Guadalupe and <sup>2</sup> produced a stunning confirmation of B. Shumard's thesis.

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1. John Pope, *Report of Exploration of a Route for the Pacific Railroad near the Thirty-Second Parallel of North Latitude from the Red River to the Rio Grande*, in *Pacific Railroad Reports*, 2 Pt. IV. Also, Philip B. King, *Geology of the Southern Guadalupe Mountains, Texas*, Geological Survey, United States Department of the Interior, Professional Paper 215 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1948), p. 7.

2. King, pp. 7 and 96. The Shumards gave their name to the 8600-foot peak above Goat Spring at the head of Shirrtail Canyon. The Canyon just to the south of Shirrtail also bears their name.

The reef exposure of McKittrick Canyon is one of the finest revelations of the Permian Age. In places 1500 feet of stratification can be seen. The canyon walls are a geological textbook read by students the world over. There are few geologists who have not heard of McKittrick Canyon.

There are also few geologists who have not heard the name of Wallace Pratt. A great geologist, he learned the lesson of the Permian Reef exposure and went on to discover more oil in the Permian Basin than any other man. Well-respected, he rose to high position in Humble Oil Company. Not only did Wallace Pratt appreciate the geology of McKittrick Canyon, but he loved its natural beauty and recognized the fragility of the wildlife preserved between its slopes. He acquired land in the vicinity of the Canyon's mouth as well as a large segment of the Canyon itself. He built a house -- it is said fashioned along lines of an oil tanker -- that looks out upon the Canyon in one direction and over the expansive Delaware Plain in the other.

Pratt wished to insure the continued preservation of this pristine property and geological classroom. He was concerned that in time the canyon might fall to increasingly divided ownership that would ultimately destroy the Canyon's natural

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3. Conversations with Roger Reisch, Ranger at McKittrick Canyon, June 22, 23, and 24, 1969.

preserve. For this reason, in 1961, he donated a critical 5,632 acres to the Department of the Interior for the National Park Service to perpetually preserve as part of a National  
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Park.

Conclusion: The history of the geological study of the Guadalupe is only sketchily presented here. There is much more that could be said. The history of the mountains as a geological classroom ought to be developed and in this regard the figure of Wallace Pratt looms large. The Pratt story is one that is significant in a number of ways. In his own right he is a great geologist. Furthermore, he is a conservationist largely responsible for the protection of a unique national feature -- McKittrick Canyon -- a foundation block upon which the National Park will be built.

Recommendations: Since Wallace Pratt is elderly, yet a vital source of historical information it is urgent that he be interviewed about many phases of the Park's history of which he is knowledgeable, including his part in the geological story. Such an oral history project should be done immediately.

There are several historic sites associated with the Pratt story. There is, of course, the Pratt residence, built in 1941. An interesting structure in itself, the sturdy building should be preserved. There is also the Pratt Lodge in McKittrick Canyon, built probably in the 1930s. It was used as a Canyon hideaway and probably served as a residence until the new home was constructed. It has become run-down from lack of use. If it can

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4. Ibid.

serve some purpose and be easily rehabilitated, which is doubtful, all the better. Perhaps it might serve as the site to tell the Pratt story. There does not appear to be any strong reason to retain the Lodge but it should be studied more closely before any decision to demolish it is made. An historical interview with Mr. Pratt should settle many of these open questions.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE FIRST AMERICANS

To discuss the European presence in the New World without having reviewed the story of the first Americans is often a justified criticism. The American Indian ought to be considered both before and apart from European man. Here is rightfully the place to leave a chapter devoted to the prehistoric Americans who inhabited the Guadalupe Mountains. There are a number of difficulties in presenting this story, however. First, the archeology of the Guadalupe Mountains is probably the least known of any culture in the Southwest. Second, a proper compilation of what is known about the early people might better be accomplished by the Division of Archeology. A brief statement here might suffice to provide a link in the story.

Archeological studies in the region were done by J. Walter Fewkes of the Bureau of American Ethnology as early as 1925 and others who have carried on since then. Taken together, a number of studies indicate a long-term occupancy beginning some 6000 years ago. A carbon-14 measurement of material located at the Hermit Cave in Last Chance Canyon dates the site back over 12,000 years.

Prior to the arrival of the most recent Indian occupants, the Mescalero Apache, the early cultures were very simple. These early people were hunters and gatherers. Apparently no crops

were raised and no masonry was employed in living quarters. Caves and overhangs provided most of the shelter.

Mescal-roasting pits are located throughout the region. The pit was a device for cooking roots, nuts, and other parts of local vegetation by burying them in a covered pit filled with fire-heated rocks. The remains of these pits are located at all elevations, indicating the Indians followed the ripening of the vegetation from the valley floors upward to the ridges.

Large numbers of pictographs are scattered in caves and shelters throughout the mountains. One of these sites is located above Frijole at Smith Springs where the remains of cooking pits can also be observed.<sup>1</sup>

A treatment of the Guadalupe Indians during historic times is the responsibility of both historians and anthropologists. As already stated, little is known of Indian activity in the region and further study is needed to compile the scattered and extraneous evidence into a comprehensive document. Much of what can be said about the natives of the region will necessarily emerge in other chapters by way of European contact with these people. A few general comments here, however, will be helpful.

The people of the Guadalupe contacted by the Anglo-American were the Mescalero Apache, one of a dozen tribes scattered from the Pecos west to the middle Gila and into northern Mexico.

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1. *Area Investigation Report on a Proposed Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas*, Southwest Regional Office, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, September 1963.

The Apache were nomads who lived on berries, nuts, roots, and small game and housed themselves in brush shelters easily constructed at any stopping place.

The Apache are of Athapascan linguistic stock, who evidently drifted from the north during prehistoric times, possibly along the eastern slopes of the Rockies. Coronado encountered them in eastern New Mexico and western Texas in a gradual westward drift which took them to Arizona by the mid-sixteenth century. They were first called Apache by Oñate in 1598, which seems to derive from "ápachu" meaning enemy by the Zuni. The Spanish used the term in the form "Apaches de Nabaju" to designate the Navajo.

The Mescalero, so named for their seemingly strong reliance upon mescal as a food, followed a migratory course from southeastern New Mexico through trans-Pecos Texas across the Rio Grande above the Big Bend and into Mexico. They followed the seasonal ripening of vegetation and as they moved they raided settlements along their way. They would move from plain to mountaintop depending on changes in temperature. The rugged terrain often provided refuge for an Indian being pursued and mountains like the Guadalupe became essential sanctuaries for Apache survival when military pressure began to build in the last half of the

nineteenth century.

Conclusion: Although only briefly dealt with here, the story of the Mescalero Apache is important to the interpretive treatment of the Park's history. The Guadalupes were important mountains for many Indian activities such as food gathering and preparation, hunting, and in providing refuge.

Recommendations: The development program should provide for the protection and interpretation of Indian sites such as mescal cooking pits and pictographs. The use of a mescal pit and construction of a brush shelter could be demonstrated as well as other native activities.

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2. This brief statement on the historic Apaches was compiled from Robert M. Utley, *Fort Davis National Historic Site, Texas*, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, Historical Handbook 38 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 32-33, and John R. Swanton, *The Indian Tribes of North America*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Bulletin 145 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1952), pp. 327-30.

## CHAPTER 4

### SPAIN'S OCCUPATION

On the northern frontier of Spain's New World dominion, the grasp of empire did not hold easily. Settlement was perilous in the southwestern deserts and plains populated with marauding Indians. Communities of presidios and missions were strung out along the security link of a river. Most notable of these was the prong of settlement that thrust into the "northern mystery" to Santa Fe along the Rio Grande. The river provided the water necessary for cultivation and those who ventured laterally away from the water course endangered their lives in hostile country.

In 1602 a number of villages were mapped along the upper Rio Grande from where El Paso stands today to Santa Fe. But beyond this line of settlement there was little to be recorded. Between the Rio del Norte (Rio Grande) and the Rio Salado (the Pecos) a thin chain of mountains was recorded -- probably<sup>1</sup> the same range that gave rise to the Guadalupes.

It is clear that the Guadalupes, like most of the surrounding country, were never the object of settlement in any way. But one wonders whether the Spanish took any cognizance of

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1. Map of Enrique (or Enrico) Martinez, 1602, reproduced and discussed in Carl I. Wheat, *Mapping the Transmississippi West, 1540-1867*, 1 (San Francisco, 1957), pp. 29-33.

those mountains at all. There is little evidence that they did. The major expeditions of Spanish exploration into the northern provinces left no documentary proof of an examination of the Guadalupe. Nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that no minor expeditions were dispatched from presidios along the Rio Grande much the way scouts were dispatched from American bases many years later. If such data exists it is contained in Mexican archives which should be examined at some time.

Maps of the sixteenth century add very little to the Guadalupe region. The De Lisle map of 1702 records "el passo" on the Rio Grande, but to the east it leaves a great void between the mountain chains west of the Pecos.<sup>2</sup> La Harpe's expeditions of 1718 and 1719 left an intriguing sketch map which indicates mountains in the region under question. That map adds the fascinating comment in the region of the upper Pecos which translates "New Biscay where there are domestic cattle." Herds were established here probably to supply beef to the Rio Grande community of Lasbarancas and the mine and fort of Paral as well as the mission Espagnole established in 1719.<sup>3</sup>

Another interesting map which includes some new features in the vicinity of the Guadalupe is that of the "Nuevo Reyno de la Nueva Navarra," dated 1710. It shows the region between

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2. Wheat, p. 49.

3. Ibid., facing p. 70.

the Rio Grande and the Pecos and describes it as "Nuevo Mexico." The region is flat with no mountains indicated. The Pecos is called "R<sup>o</sup> Salado de Apaches de los siete Rios." The term "seven rivers" appears in many later maps and continues in modern use for a number of watercourses flowing east into the Pecos north of Carlsbad. The map shows a three-branched river flowing east into the Pecos north of the area of Carlsbad. This might be the Peñasco or some other river arising in the <sup>4</sup> Guadalupes.

Several very satisfying maps are the ones done by the military engineer, Francisco Alvarez y Barreiro, who accompanied Brigadier Pedro de Rivera on his tour of inspection of the <sup>5</sup> *Provincias Internas* during the years 1724-28. A small map of the Province of New Mexico distinctly shows the mountainous region east of El Paso thickly inhabited by "Apaches Pharaones Gentiles" or "Apaches Pharaones," or even, "Pharaones." These Indians were held distinct from the "Apaches Mescaleros" who lived west of the Rio Grande. In Barriero's general map he assigns the Trans-Pecos southeast of El Paso to the "Apaches del natage" and the territory northeast he called "tierra de los apaches Pharaones."

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4. Ibid., facing p. 76.

5. Ibid., facing pp. 77 and 82 and pp. 80-84.

The remarkable undated (c.1745) map of Father Juan Miguel Menchero shows the Pecos River and indicates herds of cattle east of it probably just above the site of Carlsbad. The most intriguing thing about this map is that it is the earliest-known map filling in the Trans-Pecos in the Guadalupe region and may even contain the profile of the Guadalupe themselves. Moving directly east of Paso del Norte one strikes the "S<sup>a</sup> (Sierra) Platera" and then the Organ Mountains (S<sup>a</sup> de los Organos) drawn in very sharp profile. In close proximity east of the Organ Mountains are two ranges, one of which is named Sierra "D<sup>a</sup> Fina." To the north and east curving around these latter ranges are the Sierra Sandia and Sierra de San Lazare. The Salt Lakes west and southwest of the Guadalupe are definitely shown and named Salinas del Paso[?] and Salinas del Santa Fe. North of these are several lakes -- Ojo del Sibolo, one not legible, and the third, Ojo del Berrenda or Antelope Lake, perhaps the lake of the same name near the Peñasco River. Still to the east is a large profile of a mountain range named Sierra Rica from which flows a heavy stream, "Ojo de Sierra Rica," into the Rio Grande. The position and size of the mountainous profile suggests the Guadalupe but no stream flows from it to the Rio Grande. "Ojo de Sierra Rica" may be Terlingua Creek.

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6. Ibid., facing p. 84.

The Urrútia map of 1771 is an especially beautiful map which indicates that official observation of the Trans-Pecos was becoming more intense. Urrútia greatly increases the accuracy of charting this region and in so doing clarifies a number of points raised by the Menchero map. The country due east of El Paso is described as mountainous. Somewhat north and east is the "Jornada Del Muerto" and the range due east is named "Cordillera De Los Horganos" (Organ Mountains). Farther east to Seven Rivers and the Pecos are the "Sierra Blanca" and "Zerro Del Ayre" (corrupted to the Delaware Mountains). It is the latter range which appears to represent the Guadalupes thrusting south to the Salt Lakes or "Salinas Del Passo." Just north of the Salt Lakes is a tributary of the Pecos that might be Delaware Creek.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, for all its added detail, it is strange that a mountain range like the Guadalupes with its imposing point, El Capitan, is not more definitely assigned. For this reason, one must be careful not to insist that the Guadalupe's southern reaches and the Guadalupe Canyon or Pass were definitely explored by this time. It is reasonable to believe that they were, but such a position must still be documented.

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7. Ibid., facing p. 88 and p. 89.

Conclusion: An examination of the best and best-known maps of the Spanish-occupied territories indicates that the Guadalupe region of trans-Pecos Texas was a remote and forbidding area with little water and many hostile Indians. It is difficult to say with certainty that the Spanish explored the Guadalupes, or for that matter even observed El Capitan. It is hard to believe that private parties or small scouts had not reached that point, and continued research will be necessary to impart a degree of certitude to this question.

Recommendations: Research ought to be continued in the period of Spanish occupation. According to Dr. Chester Kielman, Archivist of the University of Texas Archives, little can be gained by examining the Bexar Archives or University collection. There may be isolated collections of value, but greatest hope lies with the archives of New Mexico and Mexico. To make a foray into Mexican archives both valuable and economical, several projects bearing upon needed studies in a number of southwestern Parks can be coupled together at one time.

Certainly this period should not be ignored in the Park's interpretive program and it is suggested that several of the more attractive maps referred to above be considered for display.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE SOUTHWEST REDISCOVERED

During the early nineteenth century, American understanding of southwestern geography was very poor. Threats of war with Mexico stimulated interest in surveying this potential addition to the American dominion.

As to the region of the Guadalupes, an area to be crossed by the proposed southern transcontinental railway, only a few scattered cartographic references could be located. These were unreliable and were often located at considerable distance from their correct site.

Humboldt's "Map of the Kingdom of New Spain" done in 1811 is a very good portrayal of the region. Nevertheless, one of the inaccuracies deals with the Guadalupes. While this map may be the earliest existing map to carry the name "Guadalupe," the name is assigned to a group of mountains east of the Pecos. What appears to be the Guadalupes are called "Organos" and the range today known as the Organs is left without a name. All manner of hostile Indians are assigned to the Guadalupe area -- the "Apaches Faraones" to the west, "Indians Cumanches" to the east, and "Apaches Mescaleros" to the south.

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1. Ibid, facing p. 134 and pp. 134-137.

One American map, published in 1828, indicates "Mte<sup>2</sup> Guadalupe" but places the reference in the wrong place. Several later maps correctly place the Guadalupes but do not name them.<sup>3</sup> Even after several surveys were undertaken, the cartography was rarely corrected. *Mitchell's School and Family Geography of 1846* continued to misplace the Guadalupes to the southeast as did the company's "New Map of Texas, Oregon and California."<sup>4</sup>

To eliminate the confusion, surveys were ordered in 1846 under Col. Stephen W. Kearny, John C. Frémont and Lt. James W. Abert. Abert approached closest to the Guadalupes but none of his parties reached southwest of the Llano Estacado. Lieutenant Emory reported on his military reconnaissance of the southwest and emphasized the important problem of communications in the territory acquired as the result of the Mexican War. He offered the prospect of a practicable route through the Southwest as a solution. This was the signal that hailed the Army's Topographical Bureau to their massive effort to

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2. "Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Mejico" (White, Gallaher, and White, 1828), Archives of the University of Texas, Austin.

3. "Map of Texas in 1836," reprinted 1936 by J.D. Freeman, Archives of the University of Texas, Austin. Also, *A Comprehensive Atlas: Geographical, historical, and Commercial* (Boston, American Stationers Co., 1835), p. 64a, copy of plate in Archives, of the University of Texas, Austin.

4. Published by Augustus Mitchell, Phila., 1846, and obtainable at Archives of the University of Texas.

locate suitable routes across the Southwest which could join  
the Mississippi to the Pacific by a transcontinental railroad. 5

Other needs beside communication quickly became evident. This was the problem of frontier defense against the Comanche, Apache, and Navajo. Forts had to be constructed, roads built between them, rivers surveyed as routes of supply, and the Indian trails examined and mapped. The Indian barrier from San Antonio to Fort Yuma became a military frontier. "The best part of the American Army was stationed between these points and the Topographical Engineers provided most of whatever reconnoitering service was needed for its operations." 6

These military legions quickly became the vanguard for an aggressive, positive advance of commercial settlement. Projects for military use and those civilian in nature became identical. Entrepreneurs would petition their representatives for surveys and officials would respond by appropriating funds and calling for the appointment of an engineer officer-- an early development of the military industrial complex.

In 1849 Senators Benton of Missouri, Borland of Arkansas, and Houston of Texas petitioned the Committee on Military Affairs, headed by Jefferson Davis. The committee responded by recommend-

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5. Much of the general discussion presented here can be found in William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863* (New Haven, 1959), pp. 209-39. It will no longer be cited unless necessary.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

ing an appropriation of \$50,000 for surveys of Nebraska, California, New Mexico, and Texas declaring:

The establishment of posts must be preceded by the construction of military roads, and these roads and posts, giving facility, inducement and protection to emigrants will be followed by settlements, which will remove the necessity for the maintenance of garrisons, unite the regions on opposite sides of the mountain ridge which divides the continent, by successive links of farms and villages, lead to the construction of commercial roads, and bind the whole country by constant intercourse and common interest durably together.<sup>7</sup>

#### Marcy's Expeditions

In response to this rhetoric and the pleas of constituents, many surveys were authorized. The Guadalupe Mountains region figured in the first resolution for an overland reconnaissance to California, a resolution offered by Senator Borland, who also directly petitioned the Secretary of War for a survey of the Fort Smith - Santa Fe route. On April 2, 1849, Colonel Arbuckle, commandant of the Seventh Military District, ordered Capt. Randolph B. Marcy of the 5th Infantry to escort a large train of emigrant wagons from Fort Smith to Santa Fe.

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7. Ibid., p. 212, quoting Sen. Jour., 30th Cong., 2d Sess. (1848-49), Sen. Com. Rep. 276 (1848-49), p. 3.

After reaching Santa Fe on June 28, by way of the Canadian River, Marcy proceeded down the Rio Grande to Doña Ana, a town just north of El Paso, and then turned eastward with intentions of blazing a trail across Texas that would form a direct connection with Cooke's wagon road which headed west from Doña Ana.<sup>8</sup>

Marcy struck out on September 1, 1849, through San Augustine Pass in the Organ Mountains where he met the road from El Paso to the Salt Lakes. On September 8 he was rounding the east side of the "Cornudas" at their north end "where we turned" he reported, "due east, and travelled toward the southern peak of a high range of mountains called the 'Sierra Guadalupe.'" After crossing the Salt Lakes the party encamped at Ojo del Cuervo (Crow Springs). The following day the contingent headed directly for Guadalupe Peak, slowly passing around it and gradually turning left around the base of the hills reaching "a rocky ravine which led ... directly to the foot of the towering cliff of the peak."<sup>9</sup>

Marcy encamped near the head of the ravine, today called Guadalupe Canyon, at a point on the road just 200 yards below a

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8. Randolph B. Marcy, *Report of a route from Fort Smith to Santa Fe*, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., Sen. Exec. Doc. 64 (1850), p. 196.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-201.

spring today accepted as Guadalupe Spring. The animals were driven up to the water since the wagons could not pass farther than the bend in the road at that point.

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At this campsite, Marcy recorded his observation of the stunning landscape towering over him:

The Guadalupe range ... terminates at this place in an immense perpendicular bluff of light-colored sandstone, which rises to the enormous height of nearly two thousand feet, and runs off to the north-east towards the Pecos. On the south of the peak there is a range of bluffs about two hundred feet high, running from north to south across our course, and over which we have to pass. At about ten or twelve miles south of here this bluff appears to terminate; but as we can pass up without difficulty at this place, we shall not go out of our course to avoid it.<sup>11</sup>

On September 10 the party got their wagons up the hill onto the rolling table land which, their guide informed them, descended to the Pecos. Marcy observed at this point that they were upon the summit level between the Rio Grande and the Pecos. From this point the group continued on for four miles, passing in a north-east direction around and under the mountains, encamping in a ravine which Marcy reported "runs down through a large grove of pine timber from a gap in the Guadalupe mountains; there is a fine spring three hundred yards to the west of the road, which

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10. Ibid., p. 201.

11. Ibid. It is lucky for Marcy he did not try to round the Delawares as he suggested, since they terminate at 40 miles and not 15 as Marcy supposed.

affords an abundant supply of water."

Describing the countryside at this gap, Marcy related that the mountains on the eastern side of the Guadalupe were covered with groves of large pine trees and the only timber fit for building. He discovered a new species of cedar "with bark resembling that of the oak, and very different from any we have ever

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seen before." Marcy seems to have described a variety which resembles the alligator juniper. He reflected upon the many varieties of cactus and palmettos and noted the point at which they first came upon the "maguey plant," probably mescal or agave or sotol. Marcy recorded that the maguey was

almost the only vegetable food that the Apaches and southern Comanches get for a great portion of the year. They prepare it by boiling it until it is safe, then mash it into paste, and I am told that in this form it makes a very palatable nutritious food.<sup>14</sup>

Marcy reported that many of the animals found here could not be found elsewhere. He noted that the grizzly bear -- "the most formidable animal of the continent" -- found its "lurking place in the caverns and thickets, and feeds upon the wild fruit that abounds here." He described the big horn sheep or cimarron seen

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12. Ibid. Marcy is referring to Pine Springs, which used to flow abundantly but ceased flowing altogether after an earth tremor in the 1930s.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

"skipping playfully from rock to rock upon the narrow overhanging crags, and cropping the short herbage which grows upon them."

The party killed a black-tailed deer for supper and found that it resembled the common fallow deer "of the States" but it was much larger. Of the birds, Marcy reported seeing only a few -- quail, plover and "English snipe."<sup>15</sup>

After arriving at Independence Springs, Marcy observed, upon looking back at the range, that no passage seemed possible north of Guadalupe Pass and, since the defile lay so near the peak, it was an ideal route of travel being so near to such a towering landmark. From Independence Springs, Marcy continued eastward to Fort Smith.<sup>16</sup>

Marcy judged his return route through the Guadalupe even better than his outgoing route because it provided a more direct link with the road to California west of the Rio Grande and passed through well-watered and well-timbered country. That route proved to be of considerable value to later outgoing parties of California emigrants. It also became the line along which Colonel Abert projected his plan for a railroad across Texas, cutting close to the heads of navigation of the principal

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15. Ibid., pp. 201-02.

16. Ibid., p. 202.

rivers flowing into the Gulf. The overall results of the reconnaissance were an important contribution to overland transportation and to an understanding of the geography of the Oklahoma - Texas border country. In addition, careful maps of the route were constructed which filled a gap in the knowledge of western geography.<sup>17</sup>

Marcy's expedition was only one of several surveys undertaken in 1849. Capt. Howard Stansbury and Lt. John W. Gunnison were ordered to explore potential emigrant routes along a central corridor to the west coast. Specifically, they were to locate a desert passage for travelers beyond Salt Lake City and branching from the Oregon Trail.

These surveys resulted from the intense commercial rivalry between eastern sections of the Nation. Each region sought to link itself to the potentially lucrative commerce of the west coast and provide itself with centers of transport which would provide a germ of industrial and population growth.

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17. Goetzmann, pp. 217-18. See also, "Map of the Country between the Frontiers of Arkansas and New Mexico embracing the section explored in 1849, 50, 51 and 52, by Capt. R. B. Marcy," Archives of the University of Texas, Austin.

## Texas Explorations

One author has said, "The operations of the Corps of Topographical Engineers in Texas, represent, in a sense, the perfect expression of the commercial partnership in the Trans-<sup>18</sup>Mississippi West." Texas Congressmen were among the most vehement proponents of a railroad survey and it was Sam Houston who submitted a bill to authorize the Galveston and Pacific Railroad Company "to construct and extend a railroad to the coast of the Pacific Ocean in California." All this political activity emphasized the needs of Texas and indicated its strategic value to the rest of the country.

Colonel Abert, Chief of Topographical Engineers, had long favored the southwestern route. His position was conditioned by numerous explorations from 1844 to 1849 by the Corps, the most prominent of which was conducted by Lieutenant Emory during the Mexican War. These surveys indicated that a route across Texas through El Paso and along the Gila River was the best <sup>19</sup>route for the national railroad.

Colonel Abert's plan for the development of Texas included, besides the building of a railroad from its eastern border

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18. Goetzmann, p. 225.

19. Ibid., p. 187.

to El Paso, a subsequent improvement of streams to the Gulf so that steamboats could come upriver to the railroad centers. He proposed a Red River supply route to the Comanche county and the connection of frontier forts and the Rio Grande by a military road.<sup>20</sup>

The need for frontier defense was another factor in securing federal attention. Emigration and settlement along the overland trails increased after 1849 and increasing numbers of people were being harassed by the Indians who dominated west Texas from the Canadian River to the Big Bend of the Rio Grande.

Colonel Abert detailed one of his most talented officers, Bvt. Lt. Col. Joseph E. Johnston, to service in Texas. His appointment served to heighten discussion of joint military-civilian projects for a railroad across Texas. The first effort at exploring for a road link between the Texas settlements and the Rio Grande was that of John Coffee Hays and Capt. Samuel Highsmith. Financed by citizens of San Antonio, they set out with 35 Texas Rangers and Indian guides in August of 1848. They sought to establish a route of commerce to divert the Chihuahua trade from New Mexico. Their expedition was little more than a wandering and proved to be of little scientific interest.<sup>21</sup>

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20. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

The importance of the Hays-Highsmith mission was in stimulating further and more technical exploration of the western reaches of Texas. In February 1849, Gen. William Jenkins Worth authorized a survey commanded by Lt. W.H.C. Whiting assisted by Lt. W. F. Smith. Their orders were to resurvey the Hays-Highsmith trail to Presidio del Norte and to proceed to El Paso. Having followed this direction, the expedition returned by a different route. Striking east from the Rio Grande, not far south of El Paso, they headed to the Pecos River. Striking the Pecos, they crossed down the left bank, reached Las Moras Creek, and from there moved on to San  
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Antonio.

The return trip came to be known as the "lower route" from San Antonio to El Paso, although the outgoing trail through the Davis Mountains and Fort Davis also became an important variant of the lower road.

#### Neighbors-Ford Expedition

The Guadalupe Mountains figured in a second and semi-official expedition dispatched by General Worth in search of a upper or northern plains route to El Paso. It was commanded by John S. Ford of the Texas Rangers and by Major Robert S. Neighbors

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22. W. F. Smith, *Report . . . of routes from San Antonio to El Paso*, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., Sen. Exec. Doc. 64 (1850), pp. 4-7.

the federal Indian agent for Texas.

The contingent left Waco on March 23, 1849, along a route above the San Saba and Concho Rivers to Horsehead Crossing on the Pecos. They were accompanied by an Irishman named Sullivan, who was a symbol of the humor and color of this expedition which is only touched upon here. Sullivan proved the joker and songster of the group and entertained all the way with never the same melody. Along with Sullivan came the Comanche war chief, Buffalo Hump, or Por-chanaqua-heap, who was employed as guide, along with other Comanches who joined in.

It was the custom of the Indians to arise each morning and offer a sort of sunrise matins. John Ford recalled the first stirring offering in his memoirs, remarking how each Comanche utterance evoked in him a boyhood recollection:

The calling of hogs - the plaintive notes of a solitary bull frog - the bellowing of a small bull, and all sorts of noises. Anon the awful melody of the sonorous gong was reproduced, the next moment mournful howl of a hungry wolf saluted the ear, which gradually softened into something like the gobble of a turkey. It might have been a choice assortment [sic] of Comanche airs -- but it failed to solace [the] white companions. The performance commenced about an hour before daylight and did little to sooth the slumbers of the morning.<sup>24</sup>

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23. A.B. Bender, "Opening Routes Across West Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (1933), pp. 116-35.

24. Quoted in Kenneth F. Neighbors, "The Expedition of Major Robert S. Neighbors to El Paso in 1849," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* LVIII (July, 1954), p. 42.

From the Pecos the party swung southwest through the Davis Mountains, reaching the Rio Grande on April 25. Traveling upriver they struck El Paso on May 2 and learned of a route from that city to the Pecos used by the Mexicans; which was said to be well-watered and suitable as a wagon road. Neighbors was eager to try this new route since he was not eager about his outgoing line of march, especially between Eagle Springs and El Paso.<sup>25</sup>

The contingent returned to San Elizario for supplies and hired Señor Zambrano to guide the party to the Pecos. Leaving San Elizario on May 6; Neighbors and Ford returned by way of Hueco Tanks, Ojo del Alamo, Los Cornudas, Ojo del Cuervo and the Guadalupe. Approaching the Guadalupe from the west, the leaders reported the "Great Salt Plains" lay to the right. The Cavalcade wound around the base of El Capitan and up Guadalupe Canyon. Ford described the Canyon with its

bold running stream of pure, clear water whose banks are fringed with trees and shubbery, presenting the varied appearance of pool, riffle, and lake -- now creeping through reeds, grass, and flowers, and anon tumbling from a ledge of rocks, giving to circumscribed spots, scenery of wild and singular beauty.<sup>26</sup>

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25. Ibid., pp. 46-54. Goetzmann has the party moving due west from Horsehead Crossing. His statement is confusing.

26. *Texas Democrat*, June 23, 1849.

It is unfortunate that Ford could not report many things of interest on the trek through the Guadalupe and on to the Pecos. He did report that they killed a "panther" in the mountains. They ate it but found it not very palatable. "It had a peculiar fresh taste," Ford reported, "very difficult to get rid of."<sup>27</sup>

Returning to San Antonio on June 2, Ford and Neighbors reported that they favored the so-called "upper route," the Guadalupe Pass road. They assessed it as suitable for a wagon road and only two places needed labor -- stones needed to be removed in Hueco Pass and some leveling was needed at the base of the Guadalupe.<sup>28</sup>

#### The Bryan Expedition

Before Smith and Whiting had returned from their reconnaissance of the lower road, two more expeditions were being readied to study the feasibility of roads from San Antonio to El Paso.<sup>29</sup> One was to accompany a supply train led by Colonel Johnston. That reconnaissance was joined by W. F. Smith when he returned. The Johnston line diverged from the Whiting-Smith route in only

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27. John S. Ford, *Memoirs* (MS.), III, p. 522, Archives of the University of Texas.

28. Neighbors, p. 55, citing Neighbors to Harney, June 4, 1849. National Archives, Letters Received, War Department. The Neighbors-Ford route was mapped by Robert Creuzbaur. The map is in the Archives of the University of Texas, Austin, and is copied in Neighbors, p. 59.

29. Smith, p. 26.

two places and the Colonel confirmed the existence of a  
30  
feasible route for wagons along the lower approach.

The other party was led by Lt. Francis T. Bryan and retraced the Ford-Neighbors route in order to confirm its practicability for wagon travel. Bryan was pleased with the upper route and pronounced it fit for wagons saying

Grass and water may be had every day, within marches of twenty-five miles, except from the head of the Concho to the Pecos -- a distance of sixty-eight miles, which is entirely without permanent water at present. The character of the country is such, however, as to leave no doubt of the success of attempts to find water by means of wells, sunk at proper intervals.<sup>31</sup>

Bryan suggested shortening the route by placement of strategic wells, a task which occupied Capt. John Pope for several frustrating years later on. The hopes of locating artesian water were to be dashed and reliable water had to wait the advent of the wind-operated water pump.

Bryan left San Antonio on June 9, 1849, with a party of 30 men. He crossed the Pecos at Horsehead Crossing and followed the river north, reaching the mouth of "Saline Creek" on July 17. The following day Bryan broke camp at 7:30 a.m. and moved out over ten miles of "undulating prairie." Three miles out they

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30. Goetzmann, p. 231.

31. F. T. Bryan, in Smith, p. 23.

came to one of those "deep, precipitous ravines which mark  
the upper parts of this sinuous course."<sup>32</sup>

After ten miles the road entered the hills and wound in all directions but generally north 60 degrees west. Bryan found the road even and hard and mostly over limestone. In several places the earth had collapsed, making it appear as if perforated with wells. The hills were "bare and strong." There were no trees in that sector which finished in the afternoon on Delaware Creek 16 miles from the Pecos.<sup>33</sup>

The party spent three days along Delaware Creek, which provided good grazing and was a perfect area for recruiting the animals. The course was generally west to "the southern point of Guadalupe." Bryan reported viewing the "three high peaks ... which serve as landmarks for a great distance." The soil of the road was limestone at times and sand at other times. As they got along, grazing became poor and timber scarce. On July 20 their campsite was located near "three fine springs" -- one impregnated with sulphur, another with salts of soda, and the third was of the "best and purest water, suited for the use of man and beast."<sup>34</sup> Grazing was judged as very good.

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32. F.T. Bryan, *Reports ... of Routes from San Antonio to El Paso*, Sen. Exec. Doc. 64 (1850) 31st Cong., 1st Sess.; p. 20.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

34. *Ibid.*

On July 21, the party followed a tortuous course around mountain spurs and making the first sighting of "dwarf cedars." By early afternoon Bryan reached Independence Spring--its water "very fine, being pure and cold." He recorded that "here we found the first trees we have seen since we left the Concho."<sup>35</sup>

The following day they marched six miles to "a fine spring of pure cold water, at the foot of Guadalupe, and encamped." Bryan reported "the spring is about one-fourth of a mile to the right of the road in a corner of the mountains."<sup>36</sup> He continued:

Here we found excellent grass for the animals, good water, and fine large timber of pine, cedar, serren, etc. The camp was separated from the road by a rocky ravine, which cost us some trouble to cross. The road today is firm and hard, and, as for several days past, lies sometimes high on the ridges, and then again follows the valleys. We are now at the foot of Guadalupe, and the mountains are covered with forests of large timber, and contain many springs of excellent water.<sup>37</sup>

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35. Ibid.

36. Ibid. It is generally believed that the spring referred to is Pine Spring. This is a reasonable guess, although it should be recognized that there are several springs in the immediate vicinity, a fact resulting in that area being called "Five Springs" in a later scouting map. Considering everything Bryan has to say about the spring, Pine Springs seems the correct location.

37. Ibid., p. 22. The ravine mentioned appears to be the wash of lower Pine Spring Canyon which becomes Cherry Canyon further east.

The contingent remained in camp on July 23 and set out the following day. They cleared the ravine with little difficulty and after a march of three miles came to the summit of the Pass just below what must be Guadalupe Spring. Describing the passage, Bryan reported:

The descent was very rough, and continued for about two miles down the mountain side. The road continued rocky and rough for seven miles, when it became smoother, and finally deep and sandy. At twenty miles we came upon a range of hills of pure white sand, extending some distance on the life of the road.<sup>38</sup>

Bryan's party had by this time rounded the foothills beneath El Capitan and headed off to the northwest to the east of the Patterson Hills. Four miles farther the party observed what seems to have been a salt lake. It was a smooth bed of white sand covered with "efflorescence of salt." By early afternoon the group arrived at "Ojo del Cuerpo [Crow Springs], a spring of brackish water in the open prairie." Interestingly, Bryan reported of the passage of a California party that had excavated a well of fair water.<sup>39</sup>

From this point the Bryan contingent moved on to Ysleta by what was to become the familiar route through the Cornudas, by Ojo del Alamo, and the "Waco" Mountains. Once achieving his objective, Bryan reported, "the country from Fredericksburg to El Paso del Norte, by the route which I have travelled, presents no obstructions to the easy passage of wagons."<sup>40</sup>

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38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p. 23.

Bryan's survey, along with Johnston's expedition, remained the lines of travel and communication for soldier, settler, and gold seeker alike. When the railroads were built through Texas, the Texas Pacific followed generally along Bryan's trail and the Southern Pacific followed part way along the lower road. Even so, with all the foregoing expeditions, Johnston remained unsatisfied and continued to order surveys. Nevertheless, the pioneering was achieved.

This episode of exploration into the western corner of Texas was oriented toward the practical. The explorers contributed a map of a relatively unknown and by-passed area of West Texas. They promoted transportation and settlement and contributed to solving the difficult problem of frontier defense. The progress of their efforts is a gauge to the progress of settlement. Furthermore, they consciously furthered southern strategy to obtain a transcontinental rail system and in doing so helped to fire the sectional rivalry over western spoils.

These surveys were the vanguard of settlement in the southwest, clearing the Indian barrier and laying out lines of communication. The west was being probed by a long series of these small tedious surveys. The overall attempt was a grand plan for the unity of the nation by a railroad, envisioned by Colonels Abert and Johnston as spanning the nation across

the Texas plains. But the grand design was routinely splintered by a burst of fragmented surveys in West Texas, the Navajo country and the gold fields of California. Everyday problems and the regularly required subservience to regional politics mired down a coordinated plan in a morass of routine logistics and frontier requirements.<sup>41</sup>

Conclusion: It becomes clear that one of the significant themes of the Guadalupe story is that of the expeditions through the region. That story is not completed with this chapter but it will be quickly realized that the sites related to these episodes reduce to a standard route and a succession of springs. In other words, the stories are different, but the sites remain virtually the same.

Recommendation: The interpretive program of the Park should be positively oriented to the history of exploration in the Guadalupe Mountains. Ideally, that story, like the others, should be presented at some site where it occurred--Pine Spring, Guadalupe Spring, or some general location along the route of travel. It should be remembered that there is exhibit material, such as maps, available for the development of an attractive display.

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41. For a complete and eloquent statement of the significance of these surveys, see Goetzmann, pp. 238-39 and 261, from which the above was condensed.

## CHAPTER 6

### MEXICAN BOUNDARY SURVEY

The survey of the boundary between the United States and Mexico was the first large-scale project undertaken by the Topographical Engineers in the trans-Mississippi West. The extended international discussions that followed the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 involved many significant issues which turned upon a correct and acceptable survey of the boundary. The port of San Diego and an opening to the Gulf of California were to be secured for the United States. El Paso del Norte (Juarez today) was to be guaranteed to Mexico. Behind these issues was the fervor being generated in the United States for a southwestern route for a transcontinental railroad--a route which Lieutenant Emory in 1847 reported should be along the Gila River.

The Guadalupes were not features under the ken of the boundary survey. They enter this episode only obliquely--through the peregrinations of the fascinating man who became Commissioner of the survey in 1850. That man was John Russell Bartlett.

From the beginning, the Boundary Survey was plagued by international and political rivalries. Sectional jealousies

and inter-agency competition harassed the course of a boundary settlement. The bitter argument between civilian and military authorities resulted in the appointment of a new commissioner by President Taylor on May 4, 1850.

Bartlett was chief spokesman for a New York literary circle similar to the Knickerbocker group. His compatriots were Ephraim G. Squier, John Lloyd Stephens, George Folsom, Doctor F. S. Hawks, Henry Schoolcraft, Albert Gallatin and, at times, Edgar Allan Poe. He was a prominent member of the Manhattan "literati" and a considerable amateur ethnologist. A slight and serious man from Rhode Island, he became a partner of Charles Welford and operated a bookstore and publishing firm on the ground floor of the Astor Hotel. The firm specialized in foreign editions and books on travel. With Albert Gallatin he founded the American Ethnological Society. He probably viewed himself as destined to be an exotic explorer and with this dream in mind applied for the commissioner's position. Undoubtedly, he felt that friends of his with explorations and travels already to their accounts would influence his selection.

He saw himself as being "thrown among the wild tribes of the interior," and exploring a new wilderness. The truth was

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1. Goetzmann, p. 168.

2. Ibid., quoting Bartlett, "Autobiography" (Bartlett Papers, John Carter Brown Library, Brown University), p. 50.

that Bartlett was to end up as a practical administrator of a monotonous survey, the preparation for which was more dangerous, and certainly more ludicrous, than the wilderness he expected to visit. The "wild Indians" proved less of a threat than the inebriated teamsters.

Bartlett's initial objective was to reach El Paso and meet with the Mexican Commissioner to decide on a starting point for a westward survey.<sup>3</sup> His trip to El Paso was captured in his *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua*, a travel book modeled after his friend John Lloyd Stephen's *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*.<sup>4</sup> One authority made the following assessment of the work:

As a piece of narrative writing about the American West, Bartlett's book ranks alongside those of Frémont, Parkman, and Gregg as a classic. Within its pages is contained a panoramic view of the way of life of an entire region previously known only to a few. It was to be of little use to scientists, but for many a hammock reader at Saratoga or Newport it opened up an exciting America and helped create an image of the exotic West.<sup>5</sup>

Bartlett carried his sophisticated comportment to ludicrous lengths in trekking across the Texas plains. He ensconced himself at the head of a courtly retinue of friends

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3. Bartlett, *Personal Narrative* (New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1854).

4. Goetzmann, p. 205.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

and relatives, politically sponsored observers and hangers-on, a contingent of civilian surveyors, a platoon of scholars from the learned societies, a detachment of Topographical Engineers, and 50 mechanics. Lt. Isaac G. Strain, United States Navy, acted as publicity agent and provided the "expeditionary force" with a small navy. The volatile Lieutenant made good on his publicity and seemed hell-bent on stimulating a long series of untidy incidents.

The trip to El Paso by way of ship from New York to Indianola, Texas, and then overland was a series of fiascoes and a truly carnival plot. Much of it is laughable, but some of it is tragic. The men reveled in a bacchanal at Key West and were quartered, many without complaint, in a bordello in New Orleans. Lieutenant Strain led his men ashore at Indianola, well-enforced by a dozen shots of brandy he belted down between "sand bar and port." The 165-mile trip to San Antonio took an entire undisciplined month capped off by a murder committed by an unruly teamster.

The final leg of the trip across the Texas plains from San Antonio to El Paso would have lent itself to a Max Sennett scenario. Regally ensconced in the cushioned finery of a four-horse rockaway carriage, the Commissioner moved out onto the Edwards Plateau armed to the teeth and capable of letting go

with a fusillade of 37 rounds. His arsenal consisted of one double-barreled gun, one Sharps rifle, two Colt's six-shooters strapped to the doors, two pairs of Colt five-shooters strapped to two passengers and a pair of derringers issued to the driver.

Bartlett pushed on to El Paso with an advanced party, leaving orders for the supply train to follow some weeks later. Before the train was prepared, one teamster murdered another. On the trail maledictions were hurled continuously between Colonel McClellan and the quartermaster. Lieutenant Strain left the expedition and hurried to Washington to prefer charges against the Colonel. Captain Dobbins mortally wounded the wagonmaster and then committed suicide before he could be informed that an extemporaneous jury had acquitted him.<sup>6</sup>

Bartlett believed that his journey through Texas followed pretty much along the line of Bryan's. On November 5 his party reached Delaware Creek 16 miles from its junction with the Pecos and established a camp at a "spot already heavily used." It was there they were overtaken by a "norther,"--"the dreaded Norther I had so much feared . . . had come upon us with all its fury and in its very worst shape, accompanied with snow."<sup>7</sup> Forced to remain in camp for two days, they protected themselves in tents surrounded by earthen embankments they had thrown up. Bartlett huddled in his canvas abode alternately roasting and freezing

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6. *Ibid.*, pp. 169-71.

7. Bartlett, pp. 83 and 110.

around the fire" and entertaining himself by a duck hunt and  
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reading Erman's *Travels in Siberia*.

By the 8th the weather moderated, the party crossed the Delaware to its north and higher bank, and then discovered the animals were in a fearful condition and breaking down rapidly. Bartlett, in no mood to slow down and miss his planned date of arrival in El Paso, formed an advance party of eight men, loaded his carriage with bedding and set out, leaving the main party behind to graze the animals.  
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Bartlett reported that the party had been traveling for some eight to ten days in sight of "the bold head of the great Guadalupe Mountain." Going on at length to describe the formation he added:

This is a most remarkable landmark, rising as it does far above all other objects, and terminating abruptly about three thousand feet above the surrounding plain. The sierra or mountain range which ends with it, comes from the northeast. It is a dark, gloomy-looking range, with bold and forbidding sides, consisting of huge piles of rocks, their debris heaped far above the surrounding hills. As it approaches its termination the color changes to a pure white, tinted with buff or light orange, presenting a beautiful contrast with other portions of the range, or with the azure blue of the sky beyond; for in this elevated region the heavens<sup>10</sup> have a remarkable brilliancy and depth of color.

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8. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-17.

10. *Ibid.*

Fifteen miles from camp, the group watered their animals at the headwaters of Delaware Creek, "probably at Walnut Creek," and traveled on another 35 miles, locating a valley good for grazing with three fine springs, obviously the spot Bryan had stopped at a year before and described similarly--"one sulphur, one mineral, and one fresh." It was at this point that the Commissioner began to wonder why the Guadalupe did not seem to be getting any closer. He reflected upon the clarity of the atmosphere and how it affects the judgment of distances. At one hundred miles off the Guadalupe range

stood out boldly against the blue sky, and when the rays of the morning sun were shed upon it, it exhibited every outline of its rugged sides with as much distinctiveness as a similar object would in the old states at one-fifth the distance. Often have I gazed at the Katskill [sic] Mountains in sailing down the Hudson; and though at a distance of but twelve miles, I never saw them as distinctly, as the Guadalupe Mountains appeared sixty miles off.<sup>11</sup>

In camp on November 10, Bartlett recorded that he arose early that morning to breakfast on cold pork, hard bread, and tea. That morning he also recorded a further reverie, a prose ode to a Guadalupe sunrise:

No sunrise at sea or from the mountain's summit  
could equal in grandeur that which we now beheld,  
when the first rays struck the snow-clad mountain. . . .  
The projecting cliffs . . . stood out . . . against  
the azure sky, while the crevices and gorges, filled  
with snow, showed their inequalities with a wonder-  
ful distinctness. At the same time the beams of the

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11. Ibid., pp. 117-18.

sun playing on the snow produced the most brilliant and ever-changing iris hues. No painter's art could reproduce, or colors initiate, these gorgeous prismatic tints.<sup>12</sup>

The contingent passed what seems to have been the Pine Spring area surrounded by a "grove of live-oaks and pines and water at the foot of the mountains." They then began their six-hour descent of the Pass which Bartlett describes as more difficult and dangerous than others. It is not at all clear as to what stretch Bartlett is describing and he may have regarded the Pass to have begun farther east than where it is regarded to start today. He may also have been traveling higher on the slopes than the wagon road, following a trail which would have made his experience considerably rougher and would account for his statement, "whenever the prospect opened before us, there stood the majestic bluff in all its grandeur, solitary and  
<sup>13</sup> alone." Had they already been descending what is called the Pass today, he would not have seen El Capitan before him, because he would have been moving away from it.

Bartlett described his approach to the head of today's Pass. The site he described seems to be the one that stimulated the water color painting of the Guadalupe he used as a plate in his *Narrative*. He said, "In one place the road runs along the mountain on a bare rocky shelf not wide enough for two

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12. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

wagons to pass, and the next moment passes down through an immense gorge, walled by mountains of limestone, regularly terraced.<sup>14</sup>"

In descending from the narrow ledge, the tongue of the carriage broke and delayed the Commissioner further until a repair was improvised from the handle of a kettle and numerous winds of cord.

Bartlett reported the discovery of numerous forms of cacti and quantities of "fouquiera" for which he had no other name. "This singular shrub throws up from just above the surface of the ground numerous simple stems, eight or ten feet high, armed with sharp hooked thorns."<sup>15</sup>

The party viewed the countryside from the crest of the Patterson Hills--the broad plain, the Sacramentos in the distance, the Cornudas del Alamos "like two great mounds rising from a vast plain." The plain was interspersed with what appeared to be "silvery and tranquil lakes, glittering in the sun." It was a great delusion. The "glassy surface" was but "the saline incrustations of a dried up lake. The vast plain . . . was dotted with these saline depressions."<sup>16</sup>

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14. Ibid., p. 121.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

From the Salt Lakes, Bartlett's party continued on to El Paso, missing Ojo del Cuervo, and suffering because of it. Much of the farce of Bartlett's trek across the Texas plains never really played itself out. The traveling comedy of errors went right on to El Paso and Socorro with all its gun play and recriminations.

Conclusions: The Bartlett journey through Texas via Guadalupe Pass is only marginally related to the Mexican Boundary Survey. It did, however provide the best early description of the Guadalupe in the first years of the American rediscovery of the Southwest. The Bartlett *Narrative* itself rates high as an excellent early journal of the frontier and it is important to the Park to realize that such a journalist passed through its confines.

Recommendations: The journey of John Russell Bartlett, his connection with the Boundary Survey, and the colorful accounts of his narrative could be told at Guadalupe National Park. Certainly his experiences in that region should be related. As to the sites connected with this episode, they are those that relate to other expeditions as well--Pine Springs and its vicinity, the wagon road itself where identifiable, Guadalupe Pass, particularly at its head, in the vicinity of the remains

of the Butterfield Stage road. Since an expedition covers a lot of ground and leaves few permanent remains, it can be interpreted at many different locations, some better than others.

Since the only record employed to get a glimpse of the Bartlett journey was his own *Narrative*, it follows that many papers relevant to his trek have been left unexplored. Further examination of this episode should be made part of the long-range historical research program to be proposed for this new Park.

## CHAPTER 7

### CALIFORNIA GOLD

The gold seekers didn't wait until the upper and lower roads were "certified." In January and February of 1849 small parties organized in San Antonio, Houston, and Galveston and most probably reassembled as the party of Captain Mays of St. Louis, the first large emigrant party to try to reach El Paso by the upper route. They actually preceded Neighbors and Ford, leaving Fredericksburg on March 17 or 18. What route was followed between the Pecos and El Paso is not clear, but they could have gone by way of Guadalupe Pass.<sup>1</sup>

By April 1849, the major newspapers were reporting almost daily departures. Those like the Mays contingent fared well but many parties faced serious difficulties. Several Fredericksburg groups became impatient waiting for army escorts and took off on their own. Many trains left with insufficient provisions and almost no arms. Most of the parties actually became lost at times. Some ended up on the trail for as long as 60 days. Many trains went without water for days and some parties almost died of starvation. The difficulties began after the parties crossed the Pecos, where the hostility of the Indians could be added to the deprivations already named. Bartlett had reported

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1. Mabelle Eppard Martin, "California Emigrant Roads Through Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXVIII (April, 1925), p. 294.

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from the Pine Springs area that at that spot a few months  
earlier a train was attacked and four men killed.<sup>2</sup>

Typical of the experiences of these Texas emigrants was the story of Cornelius C. Cox, Kentuckian and Texan, who, at the age of 24 was struck with gold fever and left Harrisburg on April 14, 1849, bound for El Paso and the Pacific coast. He joined a small party including two slaves and at Fredericksburg organized a company under Thomas Smith. He and his group reached El Paso on June 27 and broke up. Later arriving emigrants at El Paso reformed, reached Los Angeles November 18, and headed to the mines December 4, only to discover what so many already had painfully learned. Ultimately,<sup>3</sup> he returned to Texas.

What of Cornelius Cox's trip across Texas, especially through the Trans-Pecos? In his diary, Cox relates of his reaching the Savine (Delaware) Creek, which he described as sulphurous but with many small fish. On June 13 the party camped in the valley of the Delaware--"a romantic spot, a beautiful valley surrounded by a continuation

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2. Ibid., pp. 294-96. Also Bartlett, p. 120.

3. Mabelle Eppard Martin, ed., "From Texas to California in 1849: Diary of C. C. Cox," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXVIII (January, 1925), p. 36.

of monstrous hills rolling and receding in the distance like  
billows of the ocean."<sup>4</sup>

This diarist, as all the others, was stunned by the prow  
of the Guadalupe thrusting out on the horizon. Cox reported:

A few miles to the northward stands forth the majestic  
Guadalupe, nature's grandest spectacle, a wall. . .  
from earth to Heaven, grand, beautiful, sublime -  
but we must pass over it. . . . Would that I could  
picture a sunset or a dawn. . . reflected from its  
marble cliffs, the soft transparent clouds that  
veil its front, the halo of purple vapour that  
encircles its summit - What more could a painter  
wish? What more could the artist want to call  
forth the genius of the soul.<sup>5</sup>

Battling a high wind and struggling through dusty soil, they  
reached San Martin Spring (Independence Spring) on June 15.  
Cox was awed by the discovery of an abundance of springs so close  
together and yet of such different quality from Delaware Springs.  
The oasis was shaded by a few live oaks and only eight miles to  
Guadalupe Pass where the contingent anticipated considerable  
difficulty. It was here that Cox recorded that other parties along  
the trail appeared to be getting bogged down. Thompson's company  
of three hundred, which left a day before Cox, and Murcherson's  
group, which left two days earlier, were losing time and Cox's  
contingent was rapidly overtaking them.<sup>6</sup>

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4. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

5. Ibid., p. 48

6. Ibid., p. 48, citing *Texas Democrat* April 21, 1849.

At Independence Spring Cox's party camped with a company of eight or ten families from eastern Texas. They had a blacksmith shop, "cords of children" and a few milch cows. Reflecting upon the scene, Cox recorded:

I can scarcely realize . . . that we are so far from Civilization--the Sound of the Anvil, squalling of children and an occasional idler promenading the lines reminds one of the city rather than the wilds.<sup>7</sup>

While camped, Cox and several others made an excursion into the Guadalupe "in search of curiositys [sic]" but found only a century plant in full bloom which he regarded as "adequate recompense for their toiling up the mountainside." On that climb Cox lost his "old Indian knife which Lin took from  
8  
'Carancahua's' grave."

On June 17 the group moved along to Pine Spring, five miles distant, and encamped at water Cox described as the finest he had ever drunk. The following day they entered the Pass and encamped 20 miles beyond Pine Spring. Cox reported that his party had missed "the next water" which could only have been Guadalupe Spring. This oversight, he related, put his comrades in a precarious situation which was aggravated by the time they reached a "lagoon on the north(?) side of the Guadalupe Mountain." Cox grew increasingly worried and his concern is

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7. Ibid., p. 49.

8. Ibid.

reflected in his diary. His fears were further exaggerated when a detachment of Thompson's company returned from a point 30 miles beyond where they found the waterholes dry.

On the 20th brief showers came as a welcomed relief. The following day salvation arrived as described by the diarist:

A dense cloud has almost converted day into night and the thunders roar, the lightnings flash and the increasing norther, indicates the approach of rain. Already I hear the crystle [sic] drops descending upon my roof.<sup>9</sup>

Thanking God for the relief, he reported that some water was being located by digging--news that infused new life into the despondent camp. The rain ceased, the clouds dispersed and a rainbow arched across the mountainside.

Such were the experiences of numerous emigrants crossing the West Texas plains who, in their eagerness to find the pot of gold, were lucky to see the rainbow.

It wasn't long before the flood of argonauts put the "upper road" on the map. Creuzbaur's map was prepared for the General Land Office of Texas "to illustrate the most advantageous communication from the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Valley to California and the Pacific Ocean."

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9. Ibid., p. 50.

How successful the emigrant trains were in establishing a route is a debatable question. Some scholars believe that military security and exploration were the real effective elements in establishing a recognized route. Certainly it is true that in the decades of the 1850s the upper road gradually succumbed to the lower or military road which was protected by a line of fortifications.

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Conclusion: No one would deny the place the Gold Rush occupies in American history. A portion of that tidal wave of emigration swept over the upper road across Texas and through Guadalupe Pass, which provided a geographic vehicle for a succession of significant historic episodes.

Recommendations: The interpretive program of the Park ought to present the Gold Rush theme as one of the major episodes that transpired across park land. The general route of travel for the emigrants was, by and large, the course followed by explorers and surveyors. The Pass and position of the springs, tanks, and waterholes determined the route for all travels crossing the Trans-Pecos as a result, the historic sites associated with the gold rush through the Guadalupe are the same as those related to Bartlett's journey, Marcy's and Bryan's expeditions and a few years later, Pope's railroad survey. Precisely, these are the springs and encampments along the travel route.

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10. Martin, "California Emigrant Roads. . .," p. 300.

## CHAPTER 8

### PACIFIC RAILROAD

The sectional struggle that would end in bloody civil conflict permeated the issue of the transcontinental railroad. The provincial virulence generated was certainly not anticipated when Asa Whitney proposed in 1844 that iron rails span Lake Michigan and continue on to the mouth of the Columbia River.<sup>1</sup>

As the years passed, interest shifted to the "southern route" and the popular image generated was that the only scientifically feasible system was one that would traverse the Texas plains, the Southwest deserts, and via the Gila River, terminate at San Diego. However, political jealousies created demands to examine other potential routes for a continental crossing. In an attempt to soften the conflict and resolve the question through the medium of science, Congress passed the Pacific Survey bill on March 2, 1853, calling for the impossible--a full report in just ten months on all practicable railroad routes across the trans-Mississippi West to the Pacific Ocean.<sup>2</sup> The report was to be based on field survey

1. The general background presented here is largely a recapitulation of Goetzmann, pp. 274-91.

2. Cong. Globe, 32d Cong., 2d Sess., 26 (1853), p. 841.

made by parties supervised by the Topographical Corps. One of these surveys, a new examination of the region along the 32nd parallel, would bring observers to the Guadalupe Mountains.

Curiously, the southern route was not among the original surveys ordered into the field. Apparently, Colonel Abert and Jefferson Davis were so convinced of the efficacy of this route and regarded the existing data as so persuasive that they didn't consider a survey of the southern tier necessary. Their minds were quickly changed, however, when the problems of that route were suggested such as lack of timber and water, and the danger of Indians.

As a result, the Secretary of War in October 1853 ordered Lt. John Pope of the Topographical Corps to explore a line across the Llano Estacado from Doña Ana, New Mexico, to Preston on the Red River. Fifteen thousand dollars was allotted for the survey. Lt. J. G. Parke was ordered to survey to Doña Ana east from California along the Gila River.

On February 12, 1854, Pope, now a Captain, led a large contingent out of Doña Ana at 9:00 a.m. He was accompanied by Lt. K. Garrard, acting as assistant engineer. The party moved through the pass of the Organ Mountains and swung southeast,

striking the El Paso road, joining it and passing through the Hueco Mountains at Cerro Alto. Striking out somewhat north of east, the party made its way through the Cornudas de los Alamos, changing its direction to a southeast course heading for the Salt Lakes. At "Ojo de Cuerdo" [Crow Spring] they could see the approach to the Guadalupe as a vista of glistening sand hills and white salt lakes.<sup>3</sup>

On Tuesday, February 28, the party moved to Guadalupe Pass, leaving camp at 7:00 a.m. They struggled over a rocky road and several steep hills and before entering the canyon, avoided a "steep and difficult hill," by making a detour to the left of the road, striking at a short distance, the beaten track. At late afternoon they encamped in the canyon, "half way on a small rocky plateau." John H. Byrne, assistant computer, recorded in his diary:

The passage through the cañon is along the dry bed of a stream which has its source near the high peak--and very rough to travel, Wagon broke down--abandoned--Springs found at the head of the ravine under the Peak [Guadalupe Spring], 500 yards from where the road ascends the face of the bluff. The south peak rises in a bold outline, towering to the enormous height of two thousand feet.<sup>4</sup>

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3. John Pope, *Report of Exploration of a Route for the Pacific Railroad near the 32nd Parallel of North Latitude from the Red River to the Rio Grande, Pacific Railroad Reports*, 2, Pt. IV., pp. 51-56.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

The following day the party continued up the canyon over the steep and rocky ascent to an abrupt right turn and up a quarter-mile to the summit. Byrne reported that the climb took considerable time but double teams were not needed. From that elevation the view over the surrounding country was "at once grand and picturesque--the southern peak of the Guadalupe towering majestically above all."<sup>5</sup>

From the summit, Pope's contingent marched to the "Pinery" (Pine Spring) which was some 500 yards from the road "at the base of the mountains," where they found timber and good grama grass. They also located a fine "maguey" plant, earthed it in a box and carried it along. The Pine Spring encampment was their most pleasant to that point although the area was regarded as "a dangerous locality" for which reason "the animals [were] tied to the wagons as a prudent precaution" and "a strong guard posted over the cattle."<sup>6</sup>

On March 2 the party moved to Independence Spring over a "good gravelly road" and easy descent. They killed a black-tail deer, skinned and stuffed it and found some curious specimens of cactus. They found Independence Spring "clear and pure, deep" and full-flowing. They tested it with a pole of considerable

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5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

length but could not determine its depth. The following day Pope continued over the prairie to the head of Delaware Creek and ultimately to Preston.<sup>7</sup>

The geologist, William P. Blake, reported for his specialty using Pope's notes and quoting from a report of an earlier and private railroad survey:

There is an abrupt and precipitous cliff of columnar rock upon vast limestone terraces, attaining a height of 1,000 to 1,500 feet above its base, with a general elevation of several thousand feet above the plain[and] looks as if it had been shaped by some sudden and powerful convulsion of nature into the form of a large edifice or church, from which we gave it the name of Cathedral Rock. Viewed from the deep gorge below, it is truly sublime and beautiful.<sup>8</sup>

What was Pope's evaluation of the route? The problems he had to confront were the location of a suitable pass through the Guadalupe Mountains and the suitability of the Llano Estacado. His difficulties were not great--Marcy and Michler had done much previous work in the area and both had in mind the requirements of a railroad. He generally followed the course of the

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7. Ibid.

8. William P. Blake, *Report on the Geology of the Route, Pacific Railroad Reports*, V, quoting A. B. Gray, *Railroad Record*, 3 (October, 1855), p. 13.

emigrant road and although he passed somewhat north of the regular trail, he never risked his command in ventures far out on the Llano Estacado, but always sent subordinate parties into that region.<sup>9</sup>

Pope was very enthusiastic about Guadalupe Pass. Although high and steep, he judged it "superior to anything west to El Paso" and the Guadalupe mountains would not permit of any other passage. As for timber, he reported an abundance of large-size pine, particularly on the eastern faces. He recognized the need for protection of the line and recommended a line of fortifications to link the eastern line with those garrisons in New Mexico and along the Rio Grande, thus filling the gap of 500 miles which raiding Comanches and Apaches used with impunity.

The Guadalupe forests convinced Pope that a fort nearby could be supplied with timber. He suggested that Fort Fillmore on the Rio Grande be removed to the headwaters of Delaware Creek, where he located several abundant springs. He pointed to the abundance of water through the mountains particularly at Guadalupe and Pine Springs.<sup>10</sup>

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9. Goetzmann, p. 291.

10. John Pope, *Report of Explorations*, pp. 7-8, 23, 24 and 30.

Pope considered the controlling points along a possible 32nd parallel railroad route as the Guadalupe Pass and the Hueco Mountain Pass. Addressing himself to the former, Pope reported that it "became very important . . . to find some method of passing with practicable grades, from the east to the west face of the mountains." He figured this could be accomplished by passing around the south point of the range very close and under the peak. He knew this would require some heavy work--filling or bridging two narrow and deep rocky ravines which penetrate the face of the precipice. He also reasoned that the route would require two short curves and a deep cut at the point of entrance to the pass from the east. The descent to the plain of the salt lakes could then be reached by a number of different grades.<sup>11</sup>

Pope summarized the advantages of the route he surveyed: (1) there were easy grades along the entire course; (2) construction costs were reasonable; (3) timber and building materials were readily available along half the distance; (4) the line passed close to the heads of navigation of the principal Texas rivers; (5) the only obstacle, a lack of water, was easily removed;<sup>12</sup> (6) timber had to be transported only a short

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11. Ibid., pp. 42-43.

12. Not so. Pope spent several years trying to overcome the aridity of the Llano Estacado by drilling for artesian water. He was never able to locate a source of sufficient pressure.

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distance; (7) agricultural and mineral resources were good; (8) the country was suitable for a chain of military posts; and (9) the climate was very mild.

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Pope's argument reconfirmed the southern position. What came as a shock to southern politicians was that the railroad surveys demonstrated that there were indeed several practicable alternatives to the southern route. The result--instead of buffering the corrosive actions of sectionalism, the Pacific Railroad Surveys added fuel to the growing civil controversy. In this respect they were a failure.

Conclusion: The Guadalupe Mountains, particularly the Pass, were a major feature of the exploration of the "southern route" to the Pacific. As such the Park lands are significantly related to the Pacific Railroad Surveys and the railroad exploration story is a major interpretive theme.

Recommendation: The history of Capt. John Pope's explorations along the 32nd parallel for a route for the Pacific Railroad should receive considerable emphasis within the program for historical interpretation. Again, the sites of greatest importance lie along the route--Guadalupe Pass, Guadalupe

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13. Pope, p. 292.

Spring, certainly Pine Spring, and other sections of the line. There are several maps of the expedition in both the National Archives and Archives of the University of Texas, Austin, which could be attractively employed in displays.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE BUTTERFIELD TRAIL

As early as 1849 the United States Government provided for transcontinental mail service. The early routes were irregular, roundabout, and experimental. It was not until 1857 that Congress provided for a substantially based system of cross country mail service. In that year the Postmaster General was authorized to advertise for bids for a semi-weekly mail service from some point on the Mississippi to San Francisco. The contract was awarded July 2, 1857, to John Butterfield and others. On October 9, 1858, the first overland mail from San Francisco arrived at Saint Louis.<sup>1</sup>

Postmaster General A. V. Brown was left with the widest possible latitude in selecting the route. The only requirements were, that the terminals be the Mississippi River and San Francisco; that the mail be carried in four-horse stagecoaches to provide passenger accommodations; and that the trip be made within 25 days. The service could be semi-monthly, weekly, or semi-weekly and maximum amount of service was specified in the legislation.

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1. The general story of the Butterfield Stage is told in Rupert N. Richardson, "Some Details of the Southern Overland Mail," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXIX (July, 1925), pp. 1-18. Also Roscoe P. and Margaret B. Conkling, *The Butterfield Overland Mail, 1857-1869* (Glendale, Cal., 1947), p. 32.

Several bids and several routes were proposed. Brown decided that he would accept bids only for the southern route. John Butterfield and his group won the award over another syndicate proposing a similar bid and similar route. His firm was to provide semi-weekly service for \$600,000 annually for four years.

No sooner had Brown made his decision in favor of the southern route than the storms of sectional politics began brewing. Another ring was being erected in which northern and southern politicians could fight over the prize of the West. Buchanan's political enemies charged that the President was granting yet another Democratic favor to the South. Furthermore, they argued, the mail route would certainly determine the course of the proposed Pacific Railway which was a route that should be selected for reasons of public welfare and not sectional interest.

Postmaster Brown made a vigorous rejoinder to the opposition, arguing that the Platte, South Pass, and middle routes were too cold and along two of them the winter mails were often not received until spring. As to the positive qualities of the southern route, Brown relied primarily on the reports of the official explorations already discussed: First, the report of Captain Randolph B. Marcy; second, the reports of the Pacific Railway parties, especially those led by Pope and Emory;

and third, the favorable comments of John Russell Bartlett. Furthermore, the mail, in piecemeal fashion, was already being transported over most of the southern route already. Finally, the U. S. Government had already sanctioned an official road (Cooke's wagon road) from El Paso to California with an appropriation of \$200,000. Brown's argument was a good one except for one element--water. Of course, Pope felt that the southwestern aridity could be overcome by artesian wells, but he was wrong. And Marcy made his exploration during a favorable season. The fact is, however, that the stage line sank great sums of money into wells which they could not do without.

Even though Butterfield and company sought to be released from their contract, the stages started on time. To accommodate passengers Butterfield put on an adequate number of Concord coaches roomy enough for five or six passengers in addition to 600 pounds of mail. A passenger journeyed through nine divisions of the line covering 2,795 miles. The Guadalupe Pass was located in the fifth division, from west to east, from Franklin (near El Paso) to Fort Chadbourne, near the Colorado River of Texas. That section was 458 miles long and required 126 1/2 hours to traverse.

From east to west the original road log carries the following itinerary: 70 miles from the station at the head of the Concho to Horsehead Crossing on the Pecos River; thence up the east bank of the Pecos 55 miles to Emigrant Crossing and farther to Pope's Crossing; thence eight miles due west crossing Delaware Creek; thence 19 1/2 miles to Delaware Springs; 15 miles to Independence Springs; five miles to Pine Springs; thence around the south end of the Guadalupe under El Capitan Peak and northwest across salt flats to Crow Spring station; thence, to Cornudas Tanks and Alamo Springs in New Mexico and gradually southward into Texas again toward Hueco Tanks and Franklin (El Paso). The trail from Comanche Springs west was by this time a well-established road with its camp names and distances already established by Randolph B. Marcy.<sup>2</sup>

W. L. Ormsby, special correspondent for the New York *Herald*, reported that on the afternoon of Thursday, September 16, 1858, the inhabitants of the little town of Tipton, Missouri, saw the first transcontinental stage start west. Mr. Ormsby went along on that historic journey and through his paper,

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2. J. W. Williams, "The Butterfield Overland Mail Road Across Texas," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXI (July, 1957), pp. 11-17; Randolph B. Marcy, *The Prairie Traveler; A Handbook of Overland Expeditions* (New York, 1859), pp. 289-90. Maps of the Southern Overland Mail can be found in the "Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office upon the Survey of the United States and Texas Boundary Commission," Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 70, 47th Cong., 1st Sess. (Serial No. 1987). See also original field notes and maps (one of the Guadalupe Mountains) National Archives, Cartographic Section. This and other boundary surveys should be examined for their relevance to the Park's history.

left a historic account of the entire trek but herein we are concerned mostly with the stretch from the Pecos River<sup>3</sup> to El Paso.

The correspondent reported the party's arrival at Pope's Camp on the Pecos. There they prepared for the strenuous trek to the Guadalupe. Again, as with others, Ormsby was captivated by the apparent proximity of the mountains even though they were 60 miles along the trail. The stage made a stop at Independence Springs--an interesting spot, Ormsby reported. What intrigued him was the way the sand boiled up constantly near the surface of the spring. The next stop was Pine Spring ("the Pinery):

As we approached the mountain, the hills and gulleys bore the appearance of having been created by some vast fierce torrent rushing around the base of the peak, and tearing its way through the loose earth. The comparative scarcity of stone all over the Staked Plains and up to the very foot of the mountain is also noticeable, and it seems as if nature had saved all her ruggedness to pile it up in this colossal form of the Guadalupe Peak.<sup>4</sup>

The teams were changed at Pine Springs and the stage proceeded through the canyon pass. They emerged at the best time of the day--sunset. The sun's rays were casting their last beams across the western face of the range. Looking back, Ormsby wrote

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3. Hybernia Grace, "The First Trip West on the Butterfield Stage," *West Texas Historical Association Yearbook*, VIII (June, 1932), p. 62.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

I shall never forget the gorgeous appearance of the clouds, tinged by the setting sun, above these jagged peaks, changing like a rapid panorama, they assumed all sorts of fantastic shapes . . .<sup>5</sup> chasing one another through the realms of space.

That restful and reflective moment was rudely shattered. There was the flash of an approaching light and the sound of voices. Were bandits approaching? Fortunately not. What the passengers were seeing was the approach of the east-bound stage eight hours ahead of schedule. It had left San Francisco on September 15. Here, just a few miles beyond Guadalupe Pass, the two coaches met--truly, a historic rendezvous.

The St. Louis newspapers record fairly carefully the passenger list. There are definite accounts of 47 of the possible 104 parties arriving. What do they tell us? First, only a few hundred passengers traveled by stage. This was only a fraction of the thousands who traveled by the Isthmus of Panama and Tehuantepec routes, or the thousands who availed themselves of private conveyances and wagon trains. Also, the number of passengers each way was approximately equal and as many took the entire trip as were picked up along the way. Of course, for way passengers, this form of transportation was quite useful. But all in all, as a carrier for potential settlers or as a means of injecting new blood into the frontier, it was not a significant enterprise.<sup>6</sup>

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5. Ibid.

6. Richardson, pp. 6-7.

For a small but influential group of people, the stage provided a relatively rapid conveyance for those in a hurry. Army officers changing station or on leave took advantage of the service. Politicians, lobbyists, and businessmen frequently used the line. Furthermore, communities along the way would have been completely isolated if it had not been for the stage route.

The stage line was more successful as a mail carrier which, of course, was its reason for being. Mail receipts were not sufficient to cover expenses but the Overland returned a far greater percentage of its cost than other lines subsidized by the U. S. Government. As a carrier of news it proved to be quite in demand and could deliver, by link-up with telegraph, one week sooner than the Tehuantepec route which was further handicapped by being only a semi-monthly service.

The company's original investment must have been considerable -- probably at least \$1 million. With it the firm surveyed the line, purchased 100 quality Concord coaches and an adequate number of horses and mules. The money also went for construction of numerous stations, barns, stables, and corrals, as well as the financing of equipment supply and the highway improvement.

The many stations were of different design and material. Some were of timber, other of stone, and still others were

constructed of adobe brick. The one station most relevant to the Guadalupe is Pine Spring Station or the Pinery. Constructed of stone, it is in ruins today; its foundation line is vaguely identifiable. The remains of one wall still stand about six to seven feet tall and 30 feet long.

No sooner was the line established than insoluble difficulties were met. It was nearly impossible to employ sufficient help. Many of those hired proved to be undependable and frequent flashes of news about a new gold strike regularly emptied the employment lists.

Great stretches of the road were hardly more than trails, and improvements were expensive. One traveler commented that the trip was so rough that his stage overturned three times. The heat was extreme in the summer, and the winter northers occasionally blew uncomfortably across the Texas plains, the southern orientation of the route notwithstanding. The mules were often wild and intractable and often were stolen by the Indians. Rain swollen streams frequently delayed the schedule. They could not be bridged and were too shallow to ferry.

But water was not so great a problem as the lack of it. At first some sections 80 miles long were traversed without water. Later, water supplies were located at intervening locations but this required expensive hauling. It was this

lack of water along the northern or upper road which, after only one year, caused the company to relocate along the lower road through the Davis Mountains.

Another good reason to have switched to the lower road was the protection available from the line of U. S. military posts. The upper road was the more dangerous and costly, particularly because of horses lost to Indian raiding parties. In the first year of operation, the Comanches stole no less than 200 head of horses and mules.

While the effect of the Butterfield line on the development of the country was not spectacular, its short-lived existence did make a moderate contribution. Fort Belknap, a jumping off point to the West Texas frontier, enjoyed rapid growth during the life of the Overland Mail route and became a thriving village. Several counties along the line show distinct increases in population during the 1858-60 period. Then, too, the well-digging and highway construction activities of the firm provided income for local residents hired for a time.

The significance of the mail line as an emigrant route seems to have been overstated by some early writers. The major emigrant trails were established at least a decade earlier and the only portion of the Butterfield Trail that did not traverse an established

route was between Fort Chadbourne and the Pecos River.

The stage line would have served the development of the country better if it were kept closer to the frontier settlements. In Texas some 200 miles of communities could have been served with little mileage added to the route. Instead it skirted the frontier line and broke into the desert.

The effectiveness of the stage as a news carrier was all but eliminated with the inauguration of the "Pony Express" in 1860. So badly did the ponies beat the stage that St. Louis newspapers no longer paid much attention to the "rolling" dispatches and the stories told by passengers were ignored.

The Civil War rang the death knell for the Southern Overland Mail. Several Senators began to call for a better connection to the Pacific Coast and one reported in March 1861 having learned "that the Butterfield route is cut up by the roots, that it is cut right into at the center. It is stopped in all its stages through the state of Texas some six or seven hundred miles." Even though the Texas leadership sanctioned continued operation of the line, more rebellious spirits saw secession as an excuse to seize the property

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7. Richardson, p. 16n, identifies the only section not paralleled by an emigrant trail as that between Fort Belknap and El Paso, but the segments from either Pope's or Horsehead Crossings to El Paso were already established emigrant routes.

8. Ibid., p. 18.

The major ruins, but perhaps not the entire site, are located on land owned by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Glover. The Glovers came to the Guadalupe ranch about 1910 and developed an understandably keen attachment to the historic site of the Butterfield station just across from their own humble filling station. In their later years they are reluctant to relinquish their land and this is understandable. Hopefully, they will very soon permit the National Park Service to protect and preserve this most important site, ideally located along the main thoroughfare.

The remains are rapidly disintegrating and need to be stabilized. Archeological excavation will add immeasurably to the little that is known about the site. Historical research ought to be undertaken specifically geared to this one site. The station, should, of course, receive interpretive emphasis and certainly on-site.

of the firm and did, in fact, take over several stations and steal coaches and horses.

Congress responded to this situation, on March 2, 1861, by authorizing the Postmaster General to discontinue the southern route and establish a service by way of the "Central" route. The company had no other alternative than to accept a new contract that provided for service from Atchison, Kansas, to Placerville, California, and from Denver to Salt Lake City as well as a pony express.

Conclusion: The interruption collapsed the hopes held by the promoters and friends of the Southern Overland Mail. Its short life did not permit it to develop into overwhelming significance, assuming, in the face of railroad development, that it ever would. Nevertheless, it was a pioneering effort of considerable magnitude--one that gave yet another colorful and exciting dimension to the story of our Nation's westward growth.

Recommendation: The finest remaining historic ruin in the area is undoubtedly the Pine Spring stage station. Constructed of dry masonry, it has almost entirely disintegrated save one wall. Inspection of the ground indicates the foundation alignment of other buildings, suggesting a complex of structures. The importance of the site is already suggested by the two State markers that briefly inform visitors about the location.

## CHAPTER 10

### THE SALT WAR

West and south of Guadalupe National Park are the Salt Lakes--a crystalline-impregnated mineral flat sweeping up over the plain between Delaware and Diablo mountains. All visitors across West Texas to El Paso who emerge from or enter Guadalupe Pass traverse this mineralized expanse. It is difficult to imagine that any serious conflict could be fought over such a desolate waste. Ironically, a most tragic and bloody episode unfolded over these mineral beds. Fought along the Rio Grande, rather than in the shadow of El Capitan, it came to be known as the Salt War.

The Mexican and later Mexican-American inhabitants of the Rio Grande below El Paso at San Elizario, Ysleta, Socorro, and other communities, held the lakes to be a community interest. Parties would travel 70 miles across sand hills and arroyos to collect the salt which crystallized along the shrinking shoreline as the lakes evaporated and receded.

In popular comment it is assumed that the residents of the river used the Salt Lakes from antiquity. Establishing the earliest date of use is very important in defending the Latin-American cause against those who arrived in the 1860s and attempted

to establish proprietary rights to the lakes. It is reasonable to assume that the wet mineral beds were used as early as they were identified. They appear on Menchero's map (c. 1745)<sup>1</sup> wherein the lower is named Salinas del Paso(?) and the upper, Salinas del Santa Fe. (Could this mean that each lake was assigned to a different community--one to the villages of the El Paso Valley, the other to the Santa Fe region?)

The best scholars to date are unable to document Mexican-American use of the beds prior to 1862. They contend the Salt Lakes were opened in that year when the Tularosa supply in New Mexico was threatened with closure. The valley Mexicans then decided to open a new route to the lakes--a source reputed to have been superior.<sup>2</sup> They cleared a road from Fort Quitman on the Rio Grande below San Elizario to the lakes. The return trip took two days and a night.

Several references evidently show that the Mexican river community regularly used the lakes much before 1862. In 1849, Marcy reported learning from his Mexican guide that the salt

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1. Wheat, facing p. 84.

2. C. L. Sonnichsen, *Ten Texas Feuds* (Albuquerque, 1957), p. 113; Charles F. Ward, "The Salt War of San Elizario, 1877," (M.A. Thesis University of Texas, Austin, 1932). As to the quality of the salt, Marcy reported that it was "a fine variety and equal to the best Turk's Island salt." Sen. Exec. Doc. 64 (1850) 31st Cong. 1st Sess., p. 202.

deposits had been used by his people in the past until Apache hostility stopped the gathering. The salt lay in a pure state six inches thick and could be shoveled up in large quantities.<sup>3</sup> Pope, five years later, commented that the whole countryside was supplied from the Salt Lakes which were, even then, the occasion for "many bitter controversies."<sup>4</sup> And so it can be shown that the valley people did, in fact, use the Salt Lakes at least a decade prior to 1862 and almost certainly before that.

Regardless, it is the famous name of Samuel A. Maverick that emerges from the evidence as the first antagonist of the river people's long-standing community interest in the Salt Lakes. Maverick gathered enough land scrip to cover two sections of land in 1865 and came out to pre-empt the choicest areas. A number of sharp observers discovered that many areas of the Salt Lakes were outside of the Maverick claims. To corral the remainders, several politicians federated into what came to be known as the "Salt Ring." The strong man was W. W. Mills, Republican leader of El Paso. His lieutenant was A. J. Fountain, who ultimately had a falling out with Mills and

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3. Marcy, p. 202.

4. John Pope, *Report of Explorations, Pacific Railroad Reports*, 2, Pt. IV, p. 31.

organized the "Anti-Salt Ring." Closely allied with Mills was  
"Don Luis" Cardis, a veteran of Garibaldi's revolution in Italy. <sup>5</sup>

The "Salt Ring" was a florid collection of venomous characters, apparently each trying to turn the salt deposits to his own profit. Fountain was as shrewd and ambitious as Mills. The salt conspiracy even whetted the appetite of the parish priest, Father Antonio Barrajo. Reputed to be a "gringo-hater" who badgered and bullied his own people, he raced about the parish in his buggy swiftly drawn by a pair of well-matched and high-spirited geldings. Threatening his wards with the power of his office, he could guarantee the political direction of his parishioners. Thus he became a powerful ally of the Salt Ring. It seemed as though his hatred of the Americans could be tempered only by proffered rewards of personal gain. These personalities were a brew that would ferment rapidly. Tempers flared, infighting increased, political storms raged, and the contenders became permanently embittered.

On December 7, 1870, B. F. Williams, a Salt Ring lawyer who hated Fountain, was fuming with an alcoholic passion induced at Ben Dowell's saloon in El Paso, and when Fountain unluckily

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5. The full story of the Salt War can be examined in Sonnichsen, Ward, and especially, "El Paso Troubles in Texas" in House Ex. Doc. No. 93, 45th Cong.

entered the bar, Williams emptied his derringer into him but didn't kill the hapless man. Williams barricaded himself in his room and when Judge Clarke came to summon him he charged the door, firing a double load of buckshot point blank at Clarke, killing him instantly. Fountain, apparently still on his feet, retaliated with a rifle shot. Captain Trench of the State Police replied with his pistol. Both men struck their mark, killing Williams. Fountain thought it safest to retire across the border and played out his life at Mesilla, New Mexico.

The Panic of 1873 temporarily deflated the hopes for a boom at El Paso and for several years the salt fever subsided. But then appeared Charley Howard, a man well-inspired to stir up trouble. Charles W. Howard--Missouri lawyer, barrel-chested ex-soldier, and a bulldog of a man--haughtily carried himself to El Paso determined to make a mark for himself in a growing country.

It wasn't bad enough that the border was suffering the strains of the Salt War as well as the internecine struggles between conservative and radical Republicans. Charley Howard administered the faith of a resurrected Democratic party. To be sure the new gospel was being spoken at the right time, for

Republicanism in Texas, as elsewhere, was waning, but El Paso could ill-afford another contention that would shred its social fabric.

Howard formed a powerful triumvirate with Cardis and Barrajo. Howard boosted Cardis for the State Legislature and Barrajo secured the vote, it is said, by threatening that any of his parishioners not voting for Cardis should not be buried in consecrated ground but rather on dung hills like dogs. Supposedly he made a show of sprinkling holy water on the Cardis ballots. Needless to say, the opposition received only 11 votes.

From his seat in Austin, Cardis maneuvered Howard into the district judgeship, making him supreme judicial authority over a territory some 400 miles from end to end.

What it was exactly that set Howard and Cardis at each other's throats is not easy to say. But certainly the Salt Lakes had much to do with it. There is testimony that each partner, even Barrajo, quietly moved to obtain sole control of the region. Publicly, each accused the others of harboring selfish motives, each proclaiming that his interest was for the common good. The tenor of the forum is seen in Howard's accusation that Cardis was "a liar, a coward, a mischief maker, a meddler --such a thing as could only spring

from the decaying carcass of an effete people."<sup>6</sup> On top of these accusations, Howard took the decisive step and filed on the remaining unlocated salt lakes.

Father Barrajo took this news with a near-fit of apoplexy. Not only were his own designs crushed but Howard's moves only confirmed his long-smoldering contempt for the gringo. His fury was now aflame and his attitude only served to make feelings worse among his people.

Howard set out for Fort Quitman and the Salt Lakes in order to complete a survey of his claim. Accompanying him were a surveyor, Blanchard, Howard's agent, McBride, three Mexicans, and three Negroes. At San Elizario a group of Latins stopped them and Don Luis told them not to go on. Ignoring these warnings with typical Howard arrogance, he surveyed the lakes and posted notices that the deposits belonged to him and that he would prosecute anyone who raided his property.

Howard all along misjudged the temper of the Latin population. His contempt for them was to prove his undoing. During October 1877, on his court rounds, an infuriated mob of Mexican-Americans took him prisoner near San Elizario and forced him to sign papers relinquishing claims to the lakes.

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6. Sonnichsen, p. 122, quoting the *Mesilla Independent*, October 6, 1877.

The mob compelled him to promise that he would forget the entire matter. Narrowly escaping the vengeance of the mob, he took refuge in Mesilla but never intended to forget anything. He immediately wired the Governor of Texas that a Mexican invasion was imminent and insurrection inevitable and armed forces were needed. Howard evidently figured he could enforce his rule and seek revenge at the same time. His hated opponent, Don Luis, set the Governor's mind at ease, however, by informing him that the trouble was over and there was no cause for alarm.

This interference of Cardis was more than Howard could take. He resolved to take Don Luis' life. On October 10 he picked up his double-barrel shotgun and set out to track down his enemy. He caught up with him at Solomon Schutz's store. Unloading the first barrel, he caught Cardis in the stomach. Firing again, he struck Cardis in the left breast. The victim staggered for a moment and then collapsed.

The news traveled fast and threats against Howard's life were enlarged into threats against the entire American community. Meetings were called and apocalyptic harangues delivered. A few counseled patience and order but the valley people were in no mood for cautious utterances.

Wires were sent out to Colonel Hatch for the assistance of the U. S. Army. The Texas Rangers were also called upon.

Major Jones of the Rangers responded and for a time was able to cool tempers by cautious diplomacy and quiet talking. But the valley's residents grew hostile when they learned that Jones was planning to organize a company of Rangers locally to control the situation. The fact that Howard had his hands in the recruiting of some of his local cronies didn't make the Latins any happier. Nor were they pleased on learning that Howard had been released on bail for the murder of Cardis and was now free to roam the Texas countryside.

On December 2, it was learned that a caravan of Mexicans had set out for the lakes. This was the showdown. A wagon train of 16 carros and 60 yoke of oxen had left the valley towns. There were many Mexicans among the teamsters. Howard sought the assistance of Inspector Joseph Magoffin, who proceeded to investigate the matter. The following day he turned off to the lakes from Fort Quitman and followed the trails of several teams half-way to the salt beds where he was met by six to eight men. He explained that he would have to return them to the river the following day. While encamped with the men at night he began to realize his perilous situation and escaped under cover of dark.

Ten days later, Howard declared that he would prosecute anyone taking salt and even obtained a ranger escort to

San Elizario--a move Ranger Lieutenant Tays would regret.

The day the wagon train was expected back, Howard received a writ to seize eight bushels of salt taken "forcibly and with violence."<sup>7</sup>

U. S. troops under Captain Blair came down from Fort Bayard and were prepared to move into San Elizario if aliens were found to be involved in the turmoil. His unit was blocked above the town by armed men who assured him that everyone involved was a resident of this country. Accepting this assurance without question, he turned back his force, wiring his commanding officer that the affair was local and greatly exaggerated. Had Blair exercised more determination and insisted on closer examination of the facts, he might have averted the tragedy that followed.

Howard and a dozen men were gathered at Charley Ellis' store in San Elizario, entertaining themselves in their usual air of confidence. At that moment the townspeople had gathered and were discussing Howard's fate. Ellis overheard them but was discovered and accused of being a spy. One of the mob on horseback threw a rope around the storekeeper and proceeded to drag him to his death. Pleading for his life, his misery was cut short by the benevolent blade of a flashing knife.

By this time, Howard and his defenders--civilian and ranger alike--were about 20 strong in ranger quarters preparing

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7. Ibid., p. 141.

themselves for the worst. When dawn's light appeared it was the worst they saw.

Three picket lines of armed men encircled the quarters. Before long a bullet shattered a window and a voice sounded out demanding that Howard be turned over in three hours or they would attack the tiny garrison, which would receive the same treatment they planned for Howard. Sgt. C. E. Mortimer was shot dead trying to make it between two buildings. Fighting raged all that day and the next. The second evening found the defenders realizing the lines had closed in on them under cover of darkness. The Latins were preparing an assault.

The order to attack was given and the assault was made against the horse corral. The defenders responded with a fusillade that drove the aggressors back. Twice more they tried. Both times a hail of rifle fire stopped the advance. Captain Garcia was holding out in Ellis' place. That night the mob attacked and killed his son Miguel.

The fighting, which began on a Wednesday, continued on through Friday and Saturday. Probably six of the mob were killed during that time. Several concerned mothers from El Paso showed up to plead for the release of sons and relatives. Mrs. Marsh wanted the freedom of her son Billy, the youngest of the Rangers. He was brought out and taken prisoner.

Mr. Loomis, deputy sheriff of Pecos County, decided it was better to be elsewhere. He came out under flag of truce and was swiftly imprisoned.

On Monday morning, Lieutenant Tays discovered that the Latins had constructed breastworks dangerously close to his position and that they were beginning to tunnel under the quarters. They threatened to blow up the building if Howard were not released. The situation was desperate and, it is said, at this point Howard courageously decided to give himself up. Tays accompanied him. Howard signed an agreement giving up his claims to the Salt Lakes and \$11,000 in cash was also turned over to the Latins.

Apparently the leader of the mob, Chico Barela, agreed to free everyone if the Rangers surrendered and Howard left the country. But something is said to have been done at this point which might just be a malicious claim. Chico sent a message to Father Barrajo telling him of the settlement. Allegedly, the priest responded, "Shoot all the gringos and  
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I will absolve you."

Being assured they would be freed, the Rangers filed out in threes, were disarmed, and imprisoned. Finally, Tays

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8. Ibid., p. 149.

realized what was happening. . . But it was too late. He was bodily thrown into a guardhouse.

Howard was placed before a firing squad. The volley rang out and he crumpled to the ground. While breathing his last, some members of the mob hacked and chopped away at his body with machetes. . . Two others were brought out and shot. Their bodies were then thrown down a well.

Temporarily the blood lust was satisfied and the men put off to the next day the fate of the remaining prisoners. The following day, however, Chico Barela was able to persuade them that enough life had been taken and the remaining men ought to go free.

By this time, Colonel Hatch was belatedly assembling troops at El Paso. Sheriff Kerber was ordered to assemble a posse. Interestingly, he could get no help in Texas and received volunteers from Silver City, New Mexico. The combined force, including Tay's Rangers, marched to San Elizario.

On the way the posse arrested a Crescencia Irigoyen, who had a pistol and carbine belonging to the Rangers, and an Indian named Santiago Duran. Half way to San Elizario they were murdered. Nothing was ever done about it.

At Socorro, Kerber's men assaulted the house of Señor Nuñez. He was killed and his wife wounded with a bullet through her

lungs. The Rangers claimed the shot that started the fracas was fired at them through the closed door. The bullet hole was never found in the door.

Farther on, Jesus Telles, one of the machete-wielders, was cut down and Cruz Chaves was wounded. The valley people panicked and fled across the river to Mexico. The Rangers and the Silver City crowd decided to encamp along the river until the new year. In the meantime the refugees in Mexico were reported to be starving and freezing, but would not return in the face of the armed threat. The undisciplined mob from Silver City fell to looting, carrying off nearly \$40,000 worth of goods. One case of rape was reported. On New Year's day, the drunken quarreling led to the murder of Sergeant Frazer by First Sergeant Ford. Even Captain Blair of the U. S. Cavalry was sickened by the scene and protested bitterly to Sheriff Kerber.

As a result, Tays resigned and his company moved. Kerber's crowd was disbanded and later, in the month of January 1878, a Congressional investigation was launched. Witnesses' memories proved surprisingly faulty. As expected, a report with recommendations was issued and quickly forgotten. Court convened in March. No one was punished because no one was charged. In fact, no one was arrested. Most probably felt, after all, that justice had been served. Several people had been mauled and killed on

both sides. The score seemed about even. It didn't appear to matter that some of the dead didn't deserve their fate.

Conclusion: The Salt War was an important episode in the history of the Spanish borderland. It pointed up the continued and growing tension between the new and the old orders. It exemplifies the conflict of two cultures--Latin and Anglo-American--and demonstrates the destructive potential in cultural animosity. For the National Park its relevance may seem marginal. After all, the armed conflict occurred in the river valley and the salt beds themselves are just beyond the proposed boundary of the Park. Nevertheless, the saline expanse is a notable landmark visible from numerous locations within the Park and traversed by travelers on Routes 62-180.

Recommendations: There are a number of important questions still open in regard to the Salt War. Motivations and character portrayals are largely dependent upon news accounts and the depositions of less reluctant "witnesses." But have all the pertinent records been examined--correspondence, private papers, even church records? This question should be answered so that a confident attitude can be asserted about this very controversial episode.

Furthermore, this intriguing moment should be incorporated into the interpretive program of the Park. Some means should

be employed to explain the part the Salt Lakes played in the region's history. Undoubtedly, the lakes are geographic features about which visitors will have many questions. Their curiosity should be satisfied, preferably by some type of on-site exhibit.

## CHAPTER 11

### BLUE COATS IN THE GUADALUPES

Comanches and Apaches allied themselves with the natural environment of West Texas to form an effective barrier to frontier development. By the middle of the nineteenth century, that barrier was being probed--first by explorers seeking to understand the land, then by expeditions attempting to bridge the no-man's land and link the east Texas communities to the upper Rio Grande. The War Department allied itself with business in searching out wagon roads and railways.

The barrier was breached by waves of emigrants lured to the California goldfields. The routes encouraged some settlement along the way. Ultimately, travelers, businessmen, and local officials demanded protection for their endeavors. The military response was the gradual construction of fortifications along a thin line of communications traversing the frontier.

The first fort established in the trans-Pecos region was Fort Davis in the Davis Mountains. No sooner had Gen. Persifor F. Smith, commanding the Department of Texas, ordered the establishment of Fort Davis, than he drew plans for a campaign against the Mescalero Apaches. Maj. John S. Simonson was dispatched to lead a motley contingent of mounted riflemen, Texas mounted militia, and one company of infantry into the wastes west of the Davis Mountains. Their operations were an endless series

of marches and countermarches, which led to few encounters with the elusive Apaches. But their three months of scouting did compel the Mescaleros to withdraw into southern New Mexico where most of them were rounded up and concentrated on a reservation near Fort Stanton.<sup>1</sup> The few bands that remained at large took refuge in several mountain ranges--the Chisos of the Big Bend, the Davis Mountains, and, particularly, the Guadalupe. These "rebels" continued to menace the settlements and returned to haunt the westward byways.

The Guadalupe were particularly notorious for harboring Indian warriors. The earliest travelers through that region often recorded their fears at that point. John Russell Bartlett spoke of the mountains as harboring the "notorious lurking places of the Apaches," and responded to the threat by ordering "a strict guard--kept up, and relieved every hour during the night."<sup>2</sup> John Pope also regarded the Guadalupe as "a spot of notorious Indian menace" and responded by doubling the guard. When he encamped at Pine Springs he had the "animals--tied to the wagons as a prudent precaution" and ordered "a strong guard posted over the cattle."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Simonson operated north to the Guadalupe along Marcy's road where he met Major Longstreet's command from Fort Bliss. The combined units scoured the countryside for renegades. *Report of the Secretary of War, 1855*, House Ex. Doc. No. 1, 34th Cong. 1st Sess., pp. 52 and 58.

2. Bartlett, *Personal Narrative*, p. 119.

3. John Pope, *Report of Exploration*, pp. 56 and 57.

Several expeditions were launched against the Apache sanctuaries. In 1855 Lt. Col. Dixon S. Miles led a force of 300 men through the White, Sacramento, and Guadalupe mountains. Miles' efforts were temporarily successful. The Apaches sued for peace without a fight. The calm was short-lived, however. Depredations increased under charges that the reservation at Fort Stanton provided only breathing time and temporary shelter for the hostile Indians.

In April 1858, Lt. William B. Hazen led elements of the 8th Infantry from Fort Davis to the Guadalupe on an exploring and punitive expedition against the Mescalero. Although he carefully planned a surprise attack upon an Apache encampment the operation failed to inflict casualties on the enemy. Nevertheless, he did recover supplies and stolen animals.

The Civil War sapped the energies of both contenders, and both troops and interest were diverted east to fight the long struggle. This disengagement along the frontier released pressure on the Indians and renewed the terror across west Texas.

The Confederates attempted to establish cordial relations with the Apaches and seemed to have some success in the Davis Mountains. In fact, Col. John R. Baylor feted Chief Nicholas at a banquet in El Paso, ordered rations distributed to his

people, and concluded a treaty with him. For two months the climate was calm in both the Davis and Guadalupe mountains. But then hostilities broke out again. The Guadalupes remained a treacherous place throughout the war and one of several vantage points for raiding cattle herds moving northward in the 1860s along the Texas line. Most losses were to the Mescaleros who swept down the mountains to fall upon the drovers. <sup>4</sup>

When the troops returned to west Texas following the Civil War, they discovered a region swarming with marauding Indians. The Davis Mountains seemed to have been abandoned, but the Chisos and Guadalupes were still breeding grounds for raiding parties. From the Sacramentos and Guadalupes, raiding parties of ten to fifteen Apaches would sweep down upon the settlements among the mountains of the Trans-Pecos and take refuge in Mexico across the international boundary of the Rio Grande. <sup>5</sup>

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4. Robert M. Utley, *Fort Davis National Historic Site, Texas*, National Park Service Historical Handbook No. 38 (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1965), p. 18; Frank D. Reeve, "The Apache Indians in Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* L (October, 1946), p. 211.

5. Utley, p. 31.

Until the summer of 1869, the troops were cautious about penetrating sanctuaries like the Guadalupe. Typical of the early pursuits was that of Capt. William Bayard, 9th Cavalry, who led twenty men in search of an Apache raiding party that had struck the stage line east of Fort Davis and stolen the Company's stock. The exhausting pursuit was futile, as usual, After two weeks the scout reached the Guadalupe and refused to continue into that treacherous region.

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#### Cushing's Campaign

Late in 1869, Lt. Howard Bass Cushing forced a series of engagements with the Apaches in the Guadalupe that brought home to the Indians the realization that their mountains were no longer privileged sanctuaries.

Cushing stands out among officers on the frontier as a vigorous and relentless leader. One soldier who fought the Apaches under General Crook called him

a reckless man, one of the most daring and most completely regardless of consequences I have ever met. He was one of the most gallant Indian fighters in the regular army and made the Apaches of New Mexico and the Staked Plain feel his power. With his troops - - - [he] had killed more savages of the Apache tribe than any other officer of the United States Army. . . [and] had performed herculean more notable work, perhaps, than . . . any other

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6. Post Surgeon's Report, June, 1869, Fort Davis, National Archives (NA), Record Group (RG) 112.

officer of corresponding rank.

Cushing launched his campaign against the Guadalupe Apaches with a pursuit during November 1869. Finding the Indians "at home" on the 18th, he attacked their rancheria, destroyed it, and captured stolen livestock and thirty Indian horses and mules. But this was a mild beginning for what was to make Cushing the nemesis of the Mescaleros.<sup>8</sup>

His assault upon the mountains initiated on December 19, 1869, is significant not only for its military success but also for the vivid and informative account Cushing reported. Actual combat with the Apaches was not common and the joining of battle was an exceptional event. Furthermore, Cushing provided an intriguing account of the material elements of a rancheria.

Lieutenant Cushing's command consisted of one other officer, 2nd Lt. Franklin Yeaton, and 35 men of Troop F, 3rd Cavalry. Joining them were 28 civilians, both Mexican and American. On December 19, they marched out of Fort Stanton, headed south to the Rio Peñasco, and turned east down that river, encamping ten miles above its junction with the Pecos. Turning southwest, the expedition headed for the Guadalupe, arriving on the 24th at the canyon site of the rancheria Cushing attacked a month earlier. In the vicinity he located the ruins of some 75 lodges. From this point he decided to follow a very rough trail over

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7. John P. Wilson, ed., "Lt. H.B. Cushing: Indian Fighter Extraordinary," *El Palacio*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (Museum of New Mexico), p. 40, quoting John Gregory Bourke, *On the Border With Crook* (Chicago, Rio Grande Press, 1962), reprint of 1891 edition.

8. Ibid.

the mountains to the northwest and after five miles, branched to the southwest and encamped at the site of an abandoned rancheria on December 25. Cushing is believed to have been at the head of Dark Canyon at this point.<sup>9</sup>

The following day the contingent broke camp at 6:00 a.m. and followed a trail to the top of the mountain, discovering a freshly abandoned campsite and suspiciously new trails, all "leading in" and none "leading out." Some signs freshened Cushing's expectations and he scoured the countryside for fresh trails. Striking southeast, he interrupted a single pony track moving southwest. Picking up the pace, he pursued this solitary trail for ten miles, at which point it was joined by at least twenty others. Following this broadened course of footprints, Cushing's men crossed several ridges and at 11:00 in the morning entered a wide canyon running southwest.<sup>10</sup> Proceeding up this gorge, fresh signs were coming regularly and at 1:30 p.m. the men spotted several ponies grazing on the hillside. Cushing wasted no time, but ordered skirmishers to dismount and, closely following on horseback, he moved swiftly forward.

As they progressed, they heard sounds of commotion ahead and another 500 yards brought them to a rancheria. Indian

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9. Ibid., pp. 41 and 44.

10. This canyon is believed to be a western tributary of North McKittrick Canyon. Ibid., p. 44.

warriors swarmed between the campsite and the assaulting troops and let go with a barrage of arrows and an occasional rifle shot. The troops stood their ground and gradually advanced on the defenders. The Indians let go with one particularly vicious volley, which wounded several men, Lieutenant Yeaton among them, and a number of horses. Cushing responded by ordering an attack. The men dashed forward with a cheer and a vigorous fusillade. The Indians broke and fled for the neighboring hills and canyons. The soldiers pursued until exhausted, then returned to the rancheria.

Cushing reported that "a good many Indians were killed and more were undoubtedly wounded" and that "no particular effort was made to take any prisoners."<sup>11</sup> Although Cushing does not give the number of enemy dead, even a few Apache casualties was an achievement, since it was rare indeed to join battle with such elusive prey.

The Apache campsite was a considerable prize. Its destruction must have been devastating to the clans that used it. The soldiers committed the entire rancheria to the flames -- numerous buffalo robes, dressed and tanned beef hides and deer and antelope skins. They destroyed nearly 20,000 pounds of prepared mescal and 15,000 pounds of jerked and packed beef. Along

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11. Ibid., p. 42.

with all this went so many Indian saddles that Cushing  
12  
didn't bother to count them.

Realizing the Apaches would scatter wide from the destroyed rancheria, Cushing decided it was hopeless to continue the pursuit from his present location. But as he reported he "was not yet through with them." Rather, he prepared a ruse by marching two days east to the Pecos, inducing the Indians to believe he was leaving the contest and returning to base. However, with part of his command he doubled back on December 30, carrying only four day's rations. Unimpeded by a pack train, the contingent moved swiftly to "Ojo Sotalosa" and watered their  
13  
horses.

That afternoon Cushing moved on five miles west to the mouth of a canyon. One mile from the mouth of "the Upper Cañon" he detected the smoke of a campsite. An advance of skirmishers reported back that Indians were beginning to swarm about and moving for refuge into the mountains. Ordering an assault, Cushing's men galloped up the steep ridges in an urgent effort to overhaul their quarry. Reaching the top, they looked down

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12. The battle site was probably at the spring in the west branch of North McKittrick Canyon. That branch was called "Sanguinara" by Cushing.

13. The local name for the junction of Nickel and Lamar Creeks, also called Soldier Spring on one map but apparently not the present Soldier Spring farther north.

into the canyon beneath them and discovered a rancheria as large as the one they had just destroyed.

The Apaches were driving their cattle ahead of them and scaling the slopes quickly. Cushing gave the order to dismount and pursue on foot. The Indians fired heavily down upon them and the soldiers returned the fire, wounding several Apaches. Some Indian horses and mules were killed and some captured. On the ascent, twenty head of cattle were captured. The troopers descended the slopes and proceeded to destroy the rancheria. The Indians were not about to let this happen without interference.

Some forty braves laid down some harassing fire from the concealment of large boulders on the mountainside. It was futile, however, and after a moment they retreated, shouting curses at the troopers, accusing them of having wounded women and children.

The encampment proved as well-provided as the earlier one, containing "a great amount of finely prepared Mescal, Jerked Beef, - - - and indeed was but little worse off than the first Rancheria, the quantity and variety of articles destroyed being very much the same. Everything was completely destroyed."

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14. Wilson, pp. 42-43.

During the following week Cushing moved off to the Pecos River  
15  
and ultimately returned to Fort Stanton.

Two months after this campaign, Cushing and his troop were ordered to Arizona, where on May 5, 1871, at Bear Springs in the Whetstone Mountains, he was killed in an ambush attributed to Cochise. His epitaph was composed by the Arizona pioneer author, Sylvester Mowry:

There is not a hostile tribe in Arizona or New Mexico that will not celebrate the killing of Cushing as a great triumph. He was a beau sabreur, an unrelenting fighter, and although the Indians have got him at last, he sent before him a long procession of them to open his path to the undiscovered country. . . . He has left behind him a name that will not die in this generation.<sup>16</sup>

#### Dodge Pursues the Apaches

No sooner had Cushing returned to Fort Stanton than Gen. Edward Hatch, commanding a sub-district of trans-Pecos Texas, dispatched two companies of his 9th Cavalry to search out the Apaches in the Guadalupe. Hatch believed in taking the offensive against the Indians. This first of three actions in 1870 proved to be the most successful.

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15. The battle of December 30 probably took place at Manzanita Springs, a short distance from Frijole. Local tradition holds that this was the site of a fight between Cavalry and Indians.

16. Wilson, p. 46, quoting from Theron Wilbur Haight, "Three Wisconsin Cushings," Wisconsin History Commission, Original Papers, No. 3, 1910.

Capt. F. S. Dodge led a battalion of six companies against the Apaches and engaged them in the Guadalupe (at Soldier Spring?). It was a truly successful encounter and while records of the incident are slight, they suggest an engagement more significant than Cushing's. The reports conflict but indicate that between ten and 25 Apaches were slain and another 25 wounded. This was indeed an extraordinary encounter. As with Cushing's expedition, a large number of mules and horses were captured and a considerable quantity of winter supplies, robes, bows and arrows, and ammunition were destroyed.

After Dodge returned from the field, other officers continued to scour the countryside. Col. William R. ("Pecos Bill") Shafter began where Hatch left off. He also believed in vigorous and numerous scouting expeditions. The Apache apparently became more wily by the time Shafter took command in West Texas, since he was unable to join battle with the foe. He remained undaunted, however, and continued to believe that constant military currying of the countryside, even without battle, was bound to have a valuable result. He sent numerous scouts into the field and informed his superiors:

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17. Post Return, Fort Davis, January, 1870. Report of Commanding Officer, Fort Davis, to the Adjutant General, Dept. of Texas, January 28, 1871, on microfilm. Fort Davis N.H.S.

My experience has been that Indians will not stay where they consider themselves liable to attacks and I believe the best way to rid the country of them . . . is to thoroughly scour the country with cavalry.<sup>18</sup>

Shafter's belief proved accurate--for a time. The principal bands turned up at Fort Stanton in September 1871 and agreed to settle there in peace. For almost four years, West Texas enjoyed a respite from the seasonal raids of hostile Apaches, save an occasional theft and wild diversion on the part of a few renegades.<sup>19</sup>

The relative peace that descended on the Trans-Pecos was not shared equally throughout. The truce appears to have been shorter in New Mexico than in Texas. By 1873, ranchers along the upper Pecos and in the Seven Rivers region were charging that their ranches were being raided and their employees killed. Official military reports substantiate most of the charges and action was taken against the marauders.

By the fall of 1873, in only four months, over fifty head of cattle had been stolen from the ranches--Price, Reed and Co., Gillem and Briggs on the Black River, Chisum at Lovel's bend. At a spot called Adobe Walls, forty miles below Pope's Crossing, twenty Indians attacked Trig and Chisum's herd.

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18. Utley, p. 35; Post Returns, Fort Davis, April, 1871 - August, 1873; also Report from Commanding Officer to Adjutant General, Dept. of Texas, January 28, 1871.

19. Utley, p. 35.

Three men were on guard and fired a hundred shots, but the Indians made off with all 36 horses. On that same day, August 20, and farther north, a band attacked a herd and killed a Mr. Kirth, a large owner of cattle. On September 13, Alexander Huggins, one of Chisum's men, was killed. Four days later, Thomas Levine was murdered. In this same time nearly 100 horses were stolen.

It was not long before the military responded to these hostilities. In September of 1873, Capt. James F. Randlett was dispatched from Roswell, New Mexico, in the direction of the Guadalupe. Randlett felt that most of the Mesaleros were on the Llano Estacado rather than in the Guadalupe and he confined his searches to the plain.

Capt. George W. Chilson, commanding Company "C" of the 8th Cavalry, had a finer regard for the Guadalupe Mountains as a Mescalero refuge. Mounting an expedition on September 28, he reached Guadalupe Springs in three days, taking the suggestion of his guide to ascend the pass in order to reach good water and an easy access to the mountain heights. On the fourth day

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20. "List of Depredations Committed by Mescalero Apache provided the Agent at Stanton by Price," NA, Microcopy No. M-666, Roll 528. Also contains, Letter, Edward L. Dudley, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Territory of New Mexico, Santa Fe, from Bvt. Gen. John Pope, Commanding Dept. of the Missouri, October 29, 1873.

21. James F. Randlett to Col. R. W. Price, September 18, 1873. Letters received, Adjutant General's Office.

he ascended into the rugged interior of the southern Guadalupe, apparently by way of N. McKittrick Canyon. Moving up what may be today Upper Dog Canyon, he reached the head of West Dog Canyon and therein spied an encampment of Indians with their livestock.

Chilson's plan was to cut off the Indians from their horses and cattle. Ten men were to remain mounted, the remainder moving on foot. The ten on horseback charged ahead and severed the campsite. The startled foe discovered their isolation and scattered to the hillsides. The men opened fire, killing three Indians and capturing six horses. From the supplies, the company took three days' rations and destroyed the rest.

Following this encounter, Chilson continued to scout the southern reaches of the Guadalupe, getting his command caught in perilously rough country and finding it increasingly difficult to maneuver. Water was running out and desperately his contingent attempted a dangerous descent of the steep slopes.

Halfway down, a party was sent on ahead to obtain water. Their successful return saved the unit, which continued south to  
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Guadalupe Pass, swinging east and returning to Roswell.

Major Redwood Price, commanding the troops in southern New Mexico, upon hearing of Chilson's exploits was moved to

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22. Capt. George W. Chilson to Field Adjutant, October 8, 1873. Letters Received, Adjutant General.

praise the captain and his men. Reporting to the District Adjutant in Santa Fe, Price noted that the company suffered greatly and praised the men for their "endurance and cheerfulness in the face of hardship. "The result," Major Price remarked, "following so rapidly upon the brutal murder committed by these Indians on the Rio Pecos . . . makes it peculiarly gratifying."<sup>23</sup>

Price had particularly personal reasons to be gratified by Chilson's action. Price had gone into the field as the result of a partial failure on his part to successfully counsel with the Apache chieftains. On September 4, near the Fort Stanton Reservation, he met with Chino Gordo, brother of the Chief Roman who succeeded the dead Cadetta. Also present was Santana, son-in-law of Cadetta. Roman promised to gather his people and return stock if he was met only by Price and twenty men. Price agreed and met Roman at the appointed time but it was clear that Roman's leadership was being challenged by the younger braves who sat on horseback and displayed a belligerent manner. In the end Price succeeded in returning only 100 Indians to the reservation. The embarrassment of this failure<sup>24</sup> set him on an expeditionary course to the Guadalupe.

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23. Major Wm. Redwood Price to Asst. Adjutant General, District of New Mexico, October 8, 1873. Letters Received, Adjutant General's Office, 1871-80. NA Microcopy M-666, Roll 528.

24. Price to Asst. Adjutant General, District of New Mexico, September 8, 1873. Letters Received AGO, 1871-80, microcopy as above.

While Chilson drove southward along the tortuous backbone of the Guadalupe, and Randlett was plunging eastward through the Llano Estacado, Price had gathered the bulk of his command, companies A, E, and K of the 8th Cavalry, and driven southeast along the base of the Guadalupe. He turned southwest through Guadalupe Pass and five miles beyond Castle Rock (Guadalupe Peak? El Capitan?) he struck the fresh trail of the Indians moving southeast along the western slope. The Apaches had escaped to Mexico or, perhaps, the Davis Mountains. The Apaches eluded Major Price and left a body count of only three to testify to his four-company effort.

25

Depredations against the ranches of southeast New Mexico continued and shocked Col. J. Irvin Gregg, 8th Cavalry, commanding the District, to demand the Department's reinforcing Price's command by two companies. Gregg insisted that Price be permitted to carry his campaign into winter, if the Apaches had not returned to the reservation. He asked that rations be withheld from the Indians until stolen property was returned and the murderers given up. He insisted that the Indian Department was treating the hostiles with "too great leniency and consideration."

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25. Price to AAG, District of New Mexico, October 8, 1873. Letters Received, AGO, 1871-80. Microcopy as above.

26. Gregg to Headquarters, District of New Mexico, October 23, 1873. Microcopy as above.

Whether Gregg's pleas were met is not clear, but the hostilities of southern New Mexico by mid-decade were spilling southward along the Apache migration routes and aggravating trans-Pecos Texas.

By late 1875, scouts were being dispatched from Fort Davis to comb the vicinity of the Guadalupe Mountains, although their efforts south to the Big Bend and along the border to El Paso were sufficiently demanding. On September 3, 1875, Capt. Louis Carpenter proceeded to the mountains with his own Co. H, 10th Cavalry, and Co. I, 25th Infantry, arriving at Guadalupe Pass on September 14. The infantry was detached and marched directly to Fort Bliss as escort for a supply train and Carpenter moved out to Crow Springs and thence along the west slope of the  
27  
Guadalupes.

During the years 1876 and 1877, occasional scouts were undertaken to the Guadalupes. The records seem to indicate that these were placid years for the Guadalupes. For the troops at Fort Davis, this was so only because they were encountering a vicious upsurge of hostility along the overland route from Fort Stockton to Fort Bliss. In order to bolster operations along the road, the Guadalupe sanctuaries had to be left  
28  
unscouted.

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27. Post Returns, Fort Davis, September, 1875; also Col. George S. Andrews to CO, Fort Quitman, September 5, 1873. Microfilm, Fort Davis National Historic Site.

28. Utley, *Fort Davis*, p. 35.

Nevertheless, an occasional foray could be managed to the Guadalupe. Captain Carpenter led companies H and K on a trail of some 300 head of Indian cattle in March 1876. He followed the trail through the mountains but only succeeded in scattering the Indians.

29

2nd Lt. C. G. Ayres had better success than his fellow officer. Accompanied by 2nd Lt. George Andrews, 25th Infantry, son of the Colonel commanding, and Asst. Surgeon H. S. Terrill, the contingent moved out on June 1, 1877, to return 17 days later. Marching 350 miles, they captured 13 head of stock and broke down eight of their own horses, which they shot -- not a very good balance sheet.

30

By 1878, trans-Pecos hostilities were becoming so severe that the Department of Texas commander, Brig. Gen. Edward O. C. Ord, took measures to halt the increasing threat. He formed west Texas into the District of the Pecos with Fort Concho as headquarters. He selected famed Civil War general, Benjamin Henry Grierson, to command the district. First, Grierson blanketed the countryside with a network of sub-posts from which the main-traveled trails of the Apaches could be closely watched and the waterholes carefully guarded. Second, he ordered recurrent scouts into the field, fanning out from his system of sub-posts.

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29. Post Return, Fort Davis, March 1876.

30. Post Returns, Fort Davis, June 1877.

At Fort Davis he stationed three troops of his own 10th Cavalry under the vigorous leadership of Captains Louis H. Carpenter, Charles D. Viele, and Thomas C. Lebo. Aggressive officers like these racked up the highest scouting mileage in the service for Fort Davis in 1878.

### PINE SPRINGS

The frontier arena west of the Pecos stretched north to the southern edge of the Guadalupe Mountains. By now those peaks were well known as the signs of a major refuge of the Apaches. From the base of Guadalupe Peak along the east slope of the ridge, the land was well watered by a number of springs--an obvious attraction to the roving bands of hostile Indians. In order to protect that flank of the district and interdict the Indian passage, the commanding officer at Fort Davis was ordered to establish a post "west of the Guadalupe or in the Pass - - - on the overland mail route at or near the head of 'Martin Creek' after careful exploration." A company of cavalry<sup>31</sup> and one of infantry were dispatched to locate this new post.

What the survey proved is not clear but the site chosen for a camp, not a post, was located farther east than specified by

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31. AAG, Department of Texas to CO, Ft. Davis, March 27, 1878.

the Departmental order. It was, however, an excellent choice. Not only was it situated along the "upper" overland route but at a source of water directly in the midst of a number of springs. In short it was a very strategic location. The sub-post was established on April 30, 1878, at Pine Springs (also called Bull Springs), near the site and remains of the overland stage station.

It was not long before the region of the many springs about Pine Springs became a scouting rendezvous. From May through August of 1878, Captain Carpenter was on the trail north of Fort Davis. Reaching Independence Spring on August 11, he reported encampments at Pine Spring to the southwest and one of Company M to the northwest. Four miles farther east, Captain Norvell was located ready to move to Dug Springs on the Staked Plains. It would seem that Colonel Grierson had strung out a line of interference along the eastern slope of the Guadalupe, compelling the migrant Apaches to follow a line west of the Guadalupe.

Carpenter was still on the lookout for a site suitable for a military post but was ordered to attack Indians whenever he came upon them "vigorously, at all hazards, and spare neither horses nor men to secure the desired results, which

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32. 46 Cong. 2 Sess., House Ex. Doc. 1, part 2., p. 113.

is the destruction of the Indians, or the severest punishment that can be inflicted upon them, to accomplish which, you will not hesitate to follow Indians even to their reservations."

Interestingly, Carpenter encamped 1 1/2 miles from Pine Spring in a canyon, perhaps at Upper Pine Springs, and along his route reported discovering the old overland mail station house. The indication is that the campsites were dispersed in the area and that the station house ruins were not the exact location of the camp.

On September 4, Capt. Thomas C. Lebo set out from Fort Davis on a scouting expedition, reaching the "old Mail Station" at the head of Delaware Creek (not Pine Springs) and the following day striking west to Guadalupe Peak to Norvell's encampment at "Ojo Toro or Bull Spring near the base of the Mountains." Lebo recorded on September 12 that he decided to locate the permanent camp at Pine Springs "about 3 miles west of Bull Springs." This is an important statement, for it distinguishes Bull Springs from Pine Springs. Where then was Bull Springs? Could it have been as far east as Soldier Spring; as close in as Choza, or Frijole Springs?

Lebo described the location of Pine Springs as 500 yards east of the springs. The spring branch ran about 100 yards

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33. Scout Book, District of the Pecos, Ft. Davis, Vol. 89 Record Group 395.

from the camp. "The site is a narrow trace of pretty smooth ground between two deep gullies at a high elevation on the slope at the base of the mountains. It commands an unobstructed view of the valley. . . . Beside Pine Spring on the West, there is another spring (nearly as large. . .) about 100 feet above and about 200 yards to the east of camp." This description does not entirely fit the present Pine Springs but there does appear to be the remains of tent foundations on a ridge as Lebo described as well as a pit which could well have served as a rifle pit for a lookout.

34

Lebo reported that Pine Springs was sufficient to supply four or five companies of cavalry with water. The water was impregnated with lime but very good. The grazing was fine with abundant grass of the finest quality. Wood was plentiful, juniper was found in the valley along with oak, manzanita, and a great many pines in the gullies along the base of the mountains, and a few in the open valley.

On the tops of the Mountains, and in the canyons cut deep in the eastern slopes, Lebo discovered great quantities of heavy timber (pine and piñon). Many pines were found to run ten to 30 inches in diameter and 25 to 60 feet in height. He also reported a plentiful supply of building stone easily quarried.

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34. Scout Book, Report of Capt. Thomas C. Lebo to Post Adjutant, Fort Davis, September 4 to November 30, 1878, p. 129.

On September 19, Lebo started a scout from Pine Springs with 40 men to the Cornudas west of the Guadalupe. They followed the Indian trail which lay higher on the slope closer under the ridge around the west side to Bowen Spring (now Bone Spring). Returning to Pine Spring, Lebo began the examination of the eastern slope and by October 8 ascended high in the Guadalupe by way of "Guadalupe Creek" at the head of which he discovered an old corral. The rancher Briggs said that the corrals were constructed by a band of rustlers who infested that section of the country for several years and used it to pen cattle while changing their brands. Lebo continued to scout the perilous high reaches of the Guadalupe during the first half of October.

35

In mid-October, Colonel Grierson arrived from Fort Concho to inspect the region. Captain Lebo led an escort of ten men to accompany the colonel, in an exploration of the "Canyon of the Black River," undoubtedly McKittrick Canyon. They entered the canyon eight miles from Pine Springs, reached the fork of the canyon and turned south. Lebo reported "a great quantity of water in both forks, forming deep pools at the bottom of the gorge." Gradually the canyon widened, "the side of the cañons in some places stand out as bold vertical bluffs nearly a thousand feet in altitude. There is a dense growth of trees

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35. Ibid., 129-44.

and shrubs of many varieties "producing a very picturesque effect. The natural scenery of this cañon is perhaps excelled by none in this state in beauty and grandeur. In some places the timber is very heavy and comprises the following species -- pine, piñon, juniper, oak, maple, walnut, cedar, ash, wild cherry, elm, mansanita, etc. The stream is not continuous throughout, but rises and sinks in its bed of gravel at short intervals. It sinks at the mouth of the cañon and does not rise again for a distance of about twenty miles (near Rattlesnake Spring, N.M)."<sup>36</sup> This is an accurate picture of McKittrick Canyon. Following Grierson's inspection, Captain Lebo continued his reconnaissance of the Guadalupe, locating a new route from Wild Horse tanks to Pine Springs in addition to the old route by way of the head of Delaware Creek. He returned to Fort Davis at the end of November.<sup>37</sup>

### Manzanita Springs

Manzanita Springs, near Pine Springs was an important encampment as well. Scouting maps carry the site and it was frequently referred to in scouting diaries and itineraries.<sup>38</sup>

36. Ibid., p. 144.

37. Ibid., p. 147.

38. "Map of Field operations of Company 'K,' 10th Cavalry from camp at Manzanita Springs, Texas, July 22nd to December 1st 1879 under command of Capt. T. C. Lebo, 10th Cav'y." Also, Scouting Report, Capt. Charles D. Viele, 10th Cavalry, April 7-August 2, 1879." Record Group 393, Scouting Records, Fort Davis, Texas.

Capt. Charles D. Viele reported a military funeral at Manzanita Springs on July 19, 1879. Lt. R. E. Safford died of acute dysentery from which he suffered for two years. Captain Viele recorded that Lieutenant Safford "possessed many rare qualities of mind and person that made him a general favorite with all with whom he came in contact, and his soldierly and conscientious discharge of any duty assigned him, rendered him a valuable officer and one whom the service could illy[sic] spare."<sup>39</sup>

Captain Lebo reported having encamped at Manzanita Springs July 29 to August 14, 1879. It was there that the overseer of Mr. Morris' Sheep Ranch reported on a return trip from El Paso that he had been attacked by a small party of Indians near Guadalupe Springs. Captain Viele dispatched a party to investigate the incident but the overseer was unable to show him any trails or signs. Viele discredited the report, a fact that further confirms that local ranchers did indeed fabricate tales of Indian guile when much of the cattle thievery<sup>40</sup> was practiced by ranchers who did their own share of rustling.

#### The Bullis Scouts

General John Lapham Bullis, "Thunderbolt of the Texas frontier," began his meteoric rise to military fame during the Civil War.

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39. Viele, "Scouting Report" p. 248.

40. Lebo, "Scouting Report."

Serving in the campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, he was captured at Gettysburg, later exchanged, and rose from private to bvt. captain by the age of twenty-three. He commanded the 118th U.S. Infantry, a regiment of negro soldiers, and following the war he was appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the 41st U. S. Infantry, Colored, which was combined into the 24th Infantry in 1869.

Bullis and his black soldiers engaged hostile Indians on several vigorous campaigns while stationed at Fort Clark, Texas. He was recognized as an energetic officer and was selected to lead a detachment of twenty Seminole-Negro scouts in conjunction with Col. Ranald McKenzie's six columns which marched against the Kickapoos, Lipans, and Mescalero Apaches in Mexico during 1873. McKenzie commended Bullis' command and the behavior of his scouts.

Seminole-Negro scouts were an interesting outfit. They descended from runaway Negro slaves and Seminole Indians of Florida who fought the U. S. Army from 1834-44. When they were pacified they were removed to Indian Territory. Led by Chief Wild Cat, one recalcitrant group fled across the Rio Grande and took up residence in northern Mexico. In 1870 many of these people were invited to join the U. S. Army as scouts. Many did just that, bringing their families and settling around Fort Clark.

Lieutenant Bullis was placed in command of the scouts and held that position from 1873 to 1881. During that period he led his men on 25 expeditions against hostile Indians. Early in 1879 Bullis set out on a scout which likely led his unit through the Guadalupe Mountains.

The Mescalero Apaches at the Fort Stanton reservation were beginning to leave and raid in the vicinity. Bullis and his scouts were ordered to scout the countryside and pursue the Apaches. On January 31, he led a group of 39 Seminoles, 15 troopers, three friendly Lipans, and a former comanchero, José Tafoya, set out after a hostile party. Their trail led them across the desert for 34 days, during which the party nearly perished from thirst.

It would seem that somewhere in the Guadalupe David "Bowlegs" discovered a "sleeping spring" which the Indians had stopped up and camouflaged. He dug it out and caused it to flow again. Having quenched their thirst, the party continued its pursuit all the way to Fort Stanton. Bullis demanded the release of the Indians in question. The Indian Agent refused and the scouts returned to Fort Clark empty-handed.

Probably the finest eulogies to General Bullis was the reminiscence of one of his former scouts, Joseph Phillips, who in later years recalled his officer:

The scouts thought a lot of Bullis. Lieutenant Bullis was the only officer ever did stay the longest with us. That fella suffer jest like we all did out in [the] woods. He was a good man. He was an Injun fighter. He was tuff. He didn't care how big a bunch [there was], he went into 'em every time but he looked after his men. His men was on equality, too. He didn't stand back and say, "Go yonder," he would say, "come on boys, let's go get 'em. 41

### Victorio's Challenge

During the last three years of the 1870s the Mescaleros, confined to their reservation at Fort Stanton, grew increasingly restless. The reservation was surrounded by white settlements and racial tension inevitably led to bloodshed. The Lincoln County cattlemen's War of 1878 stimulated an anarchy that further exacerbated an already highly charged situation. Many Indians began slipping away from the reservation and joining family and friends in both the Big Bend and Guadalupe mountains. In June 1879 Victorio appeared on the Mescalero reservation.

The aggressive chief, escaping the reservation, led his followers on a trail of destruction through northern Mexico and New Mexico, crossing and recrossing the border in recurring

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41. Frost Woodhull, "The Seminole Indian Scouts on the Border," *Frontier Times*, December 1937, pp. 118-27. The story of the Bullis Scouts is told in Kenneth Wiggins Porter, "The Seminole Negro-Indian Scouts 1870-1881," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, January 1952, pp. 358-77, and Edward S. Wallace, "General John Lapham Bullis: Thunderbolt of the Texas Frontier, II," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, July 1951, pp. 77-85.

seasonal raids. The favorite crossing lay between Fort Davis and El Paso, and Colonel Grierson was determined to block that entrance from Mexico, and hopefully entrap the Indians by thorough scouting of that corridor from a string of subposts along the border near the waterholes frequented by the Apaches.

Late in 1879, increasing reports of Indian depredations were received. Colonel Hatch, now commanding the District of New Mexico, was convinced that raiding parties were being supplied with men and supplies from the Fort Stanton reservation. Receiving permission to disarm the agency Indians, he planned to converge on the reservation on April 12, meeting columns under Colonel Grierson from the south and west.

Grierson was determined to engage the fugitives as he proceeded to Fort Stanton. With Companies C, E, F, K, and L of the 10th Cavalry and a detachment of the 25th Infantry, he moved with a force of 280 men converging from widely separated points between Forts Concho and Davis. The men rendezvoused at the Black River in New Mexico. From this point, Grierson dispatched units to engage the enemy.

Lt. Calvin Esterly pursued Indians on a trail to the White Sand Hills. His party wounded one Indian, recovered

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42. Utley, pp. 38 and 39.

eight head of cattle and rejoined the command on the Black River. On April 6, Co. K under Capt. Thomas C. Lebo was dispatched to thoroughly scout the Guadalupe and then move north via "Blue-water" to the central settlement on the Peñasco, where they were met by the main column marching by way of the Pecos and Seven Rivers. The main line of march covered a belt fifty miles wide and engaged the Apaches at a number of points and retraced a number of trails back to the reservation.

Lebo had struck a new trail on April 7 and followed it through the Guadalupe. On the 9th he sighted an Indian encampment at "Shake-hand Springs" (also known as Bullis Springs) and at this point forty miles south of the Peñasco, he attacked. He reported that the chief of the band was killed, four squaws and one child captured, and one Mexican boy recovered. Beside this, twenty to thirty head of cattle were returned, along with many agency supplies. After burying the chief and destroying the camp, Lebo's unit moved on to rendezvous with the main column.

Grierson, upon reaching the falls of the Black River, learned that the settlers were so unnerved by reports of escapes from the reservation and reports of depredations, frankly admitted by Grierson to be exaggerated, that he dispatched Co. F

to scout the immediate vicinity and Co. L to the Guadalupe.  
His units scouted from Dug Springs on the plain west of the  
Pecos to El Paso and then north to Fort Stanton.  
43

At this time, the Texas Rangers were involved in the Guadalupe. Captain Baylor's company attacked an encampment of Apaches killing several. One woman and two children were captured and turned over to the commanding officer at Fort Davis. The Rangers' arrival at Fort Davis makes for an interesting aside. Legend has it that rivalry, even animosity, ran deep between the Rangers and the bluecoats. If this is true, it is reflected in the paltry notice each gave the other in their respective reports. But on this occasion, Colonel Grierson left a curiously rare comment upon endorsing the issuance of provisions to Baylor's men. He wrote, "These companies have been very useful in repressing irregularities on the frontier, and I respectfully recommend  
44  
that the issue of rations be approved."

Upon reaching Fort Stanton on April 12, Hatch and Grierson were able to round up at least 320 Indians and proceeded to disarm them. The Apaches were exceedingly nervous and evidently hostile to the idea of abandoning their weapons. One by one they began slipping away and moving up the mountainside. As more and more began to break away, Grierson ordered his men

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43. The preceding account of Grierson's march to Fort Stanton is found in his official report in Letters Sent, Fort Davis, May 9, 1880.

44. Letters Received, Adjutant General's Office, Endorsement 11, April 7, 1879.

to pursue them. Carbines firing away, the 10th Cavalry worked its way up the slopes after the fugitives and succeeded in corralling all but about thirty to fifty Mescaleros who probably joined Victorio. Hatch struck out in search of the Chieftain's party and Grierson proceeded to scout the  
45  
Guadalupes.

Heading back to Fort Davis from the Guadalupes, Colonel Grierson left Co. L, 10th Cavalry, to scour the mountains. On May 5, Lt. Mason M. Maxon and 2nd Lt. Esterly left Briggs Ranch on the Black River for Rattlesnake Springs (N.M.), thence to Grape Spring (possibly Grapevine Spring), Marr's Ranch and arrived on May 9 at Manzanita Springs. Maxon described the area of the spring as rough for maneuvering heavy loads but having plentiful water and wood. He described the timber as large and the vicinity devoid of grass. A herd of sheep had been grazing the past season, he noted, and had eaten the grass, almost the very roots. He named the camp at Manzanita Springs, Camp Safford, and designated it as  
46  
supply "depot" for scouts to be launched in the area.

The party continued to scout in this vicinity to May 22, moving back and forth from Wild Horse Tanks to Camp Safford. At that time a message was received at the camp ordering Esterly

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45. Utley, pp. 40 and 41.

46. "Scout of Co. L, 10th Cav. from March 29, 1880 - July 22, 1880" in the "U.S. Field Diary of Lt. Mason M. Maxon," transcription and original in archives of Fort Davis National Historic Site, Fort Davis, Texas.

to intercept depredating Indians in the area of Bass Canyon. Their trek took them west along a trail, rather than the road, to a peak 99<sup>0</sup> from Guadalupe Spring described as a very small spring surrounded by very little grass. Returning from Bass Canyon to the Guadalupe on May 26, the contingent scouted to Morr's Ranch and Grape Spring, returning to Guadalupe Spring on June 23 (the guide referred to this latter spring as San <sup>47</sup> Martin Spring).

After continued scouring of trans-Pecos Texas and New Mexico, it was clear that Victorio and his followers again took refuge in Mexico. Scouting continued in the Guadalupe Range as elsewhere. Final victory over Victorio was not to come in those mountains, however.

On July 30, 1880, at Tinaja de las Palmas and again on August 4 at Rattlesnake Springs at the foot of the Sierra Diablo, Grierson successfully outmaneuvered the clever Victorio. After a series of sharp clashes, the Indian leader was forced south across the Rio Grande after unsuccessfully trying to penetrate Grierson's screen. The Colonel had, for the first time, denied Victorio freedom of movement. Nevertheless, final victory was not his. Mexican soldiers were to glory in that final moment.

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47. Ibid.

On October 14, Col. Joaquin Terrazas caught Victorio at Tres Castillos. The Chieftain led his followers in a bloody defense until a Tarahumari sharpshooter dropped him and ended the stunning and terrible career of this remarkable leader. His following was nearly annihilated. Their destruction virtually eliminated the Indian threat to trans-Pecos Texas and the Guadalupe Range.<sup>48</sup> Frontier bases continued to be occupied into the early 1890s but the scouting was routine and uneventful. The threat turned from Indian renegades to outlaws, the pursuers from cavalry to Texas Rangers.

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48. Utley, pp. 42-45.

## CHAPTER 12

### RANCHING AND RUSTLING IN THE GUADALUPES

After the Civil War, ranching sprang up throughout the Pecos Valley. The early ranchers established at the base of the escarpment and in the canyons where springs supplied water. John Simpson Chisum moved in just a year after the great war knowing the United States Government would need cattle for its reservations and garrisons. In 1866 he was in charge of one herd of 6,000 head on the Pecos. Another herd was run by the man who gave his name to the great canyon of the Guadalupe, one McKittrick, who turned his herd loose on the east side of the river and claimed all the country from a point east up Seven Rivers to above Bosque Grande -- 100 miles<sup>1</sup> of river and a virgin paradise.

It wasn't long before jealousy emerged in the Seven Rivers area -- an envy that was to culminate in the Lincoln County War and populate the Guadalupe with rustlers and outlaws. In the 1780s<sup>2</sup> two Texas outfits, the Harrels and the Horrels, moved into the Seven Rivers area after ranching west of the Sacramentos. They became known as the Seven Rivers faction. Allegedly, they had their eyes on the Chisum headquarters at Seven Spring River.

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1. Frank Collinson, *Life in the Saddle* (Norman, Okla., 1963), p. 138.

They encircled Chisum by obtaining the Matador, Dutchman Creek and Ballard Springs properties. By 1878, Chisum was driven to the wall.

Seeing the Chisum ranching empire tottering, Hunter-Evans Co., a commission firm from St. Louis, merged the company and sent the Jesse Evans outfit to manage the ranch. Old cowmen called the Evans group the "biggest, best-mounted, and best-armed" outfit ever seen on the trail.<sup>2</sup>

In the primitive conditions of early ranching along the Pecos, it was nearly impossible to determine who was in legitimate possession of the land. Much territory was held by force of arms, if not by conniving. The fruits of this cultivated feuding dropped in the form of the Lincoln County War. It is not the purpose here to examine that illusive slice of the Cattlemen's War, but only to say that the refugees of that conflict often holed up in the convolutions of the Guadalupe Range. Exactly where their encampments were is impossible to say, but the few shreds of evidence testifying to their presence indicate they permeated the mountainous terrain.

The records of the Texas Rangers contain an intriguing and poignant letter written by such a desperado holed up in the Guadalupe. Writing to his sweetheart from a spot called "Dark Canyon," on Sept. 1, 1878, he describes his situation:

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2. Ibid., p. 136.

This is headquarters for my gang. I have got ten men with me -- the best armed and best mounted outfit you ever saw. There is war going on here between two strong parties, and we have got an independent scout of our own. We just got in off of a raid and made it pay us big. Darling I am making money fast, but I see a hard time and am troubled to death about you. If I had you here I would be the happiest man on earth. August Gross and McGuire got into a fight. McGuire shot Gross; I shot and killed McGuire. We buried him as nice as we could. You know you are the joy of my life. Baby, take care of yourself and be sure to write.<sup>3</sup>

Following the disaster of the cattlemen's war, the fury of gunplay subsided and land title was secured by more legal methods. A drought in the timber lands of the Sacramentos brought ranchers and settlers to the Salt Valley west of the Guadalupe. The Southern Pacific and Texas Pacific railroads hastened the development of the region as a sheep and cattle region.

The old timers who entered the lowlands east and west of the range at the turn of the century relate how lush the grasslands were but how rapidly this verdurous growth was decimated. The waterholes of the Salt Valley would be surrounded by a thousand head. Today, fifteen head of cattle can hardly be supported at a hole. The land was over-grazed and irrigation lowered the water table. Many wells employed to encourage a bit of farming turned salty and destroyed the crops.

The larger ranches were split up and sold off. The small tracts could not support themselves and were reconsolidated in

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3. Archives of the State of Texas, Austin, *Reports of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas*, 1878, p. 8.

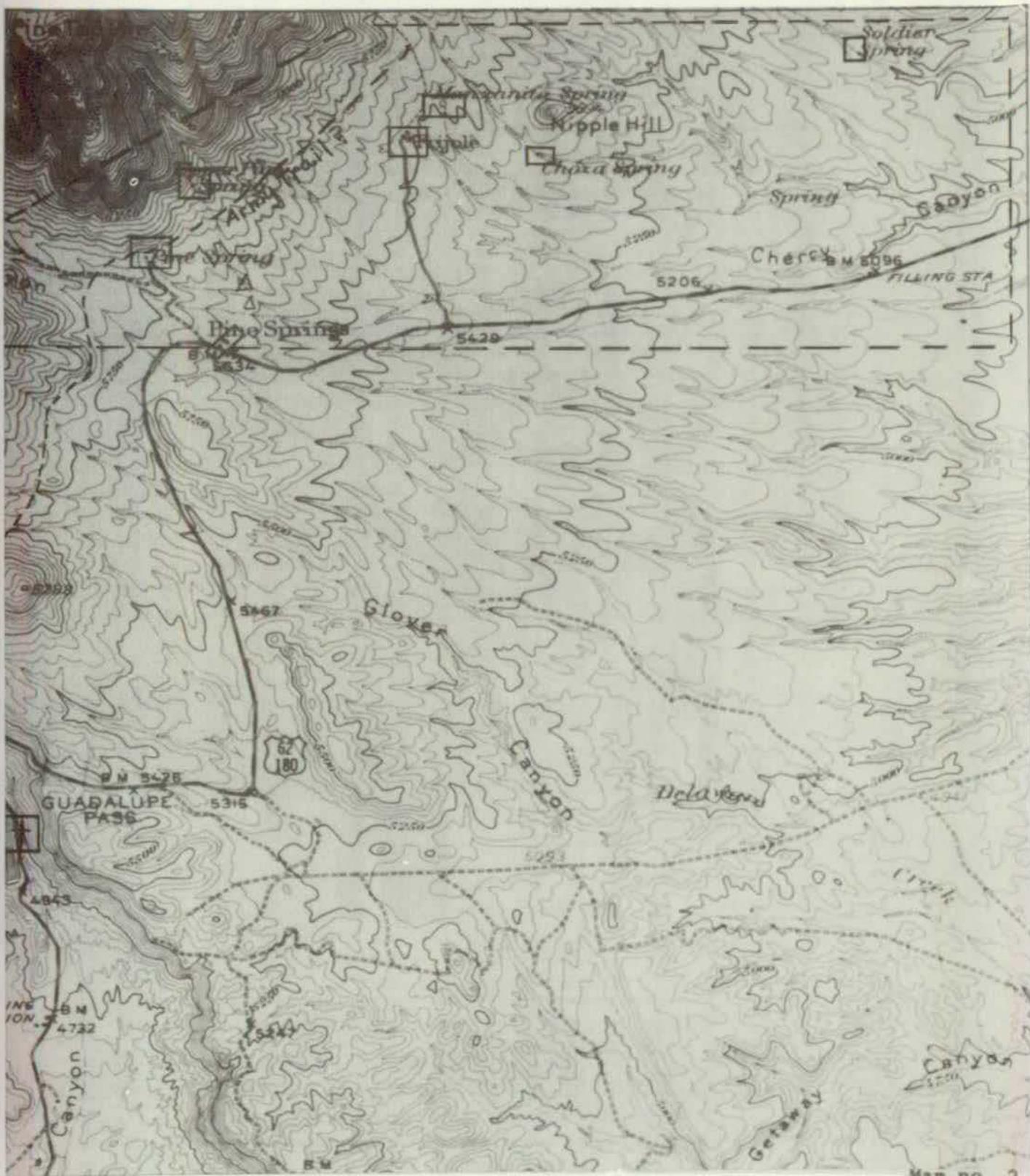
those long years of farming depression. Finally, most of them were absorbed by the J. C. Hunter enterprise, which ultimately became the prime benefactor of the National Park. The latter days of ranching are memorialized by a number of sites, which testify to this more recent but no less intriguing chapter of Guadalupe history. These are the Frijole Springs' headquarters and the Williams Ranch.

Map. No. 1: Section, Guadalupe Peak,  
Texas quadrangle, scale 1: 62,500, surveyed  
1933, United States Geological Survey. His-  
toric sites designated are: (1) Grisham-  
Hunter Lodge, (2) Pratt Lodge, (3) Smith  
Spring, and (4) Hegler Ranch. These proper-  
ties should be nominated to the National  
Register of Historic Places.

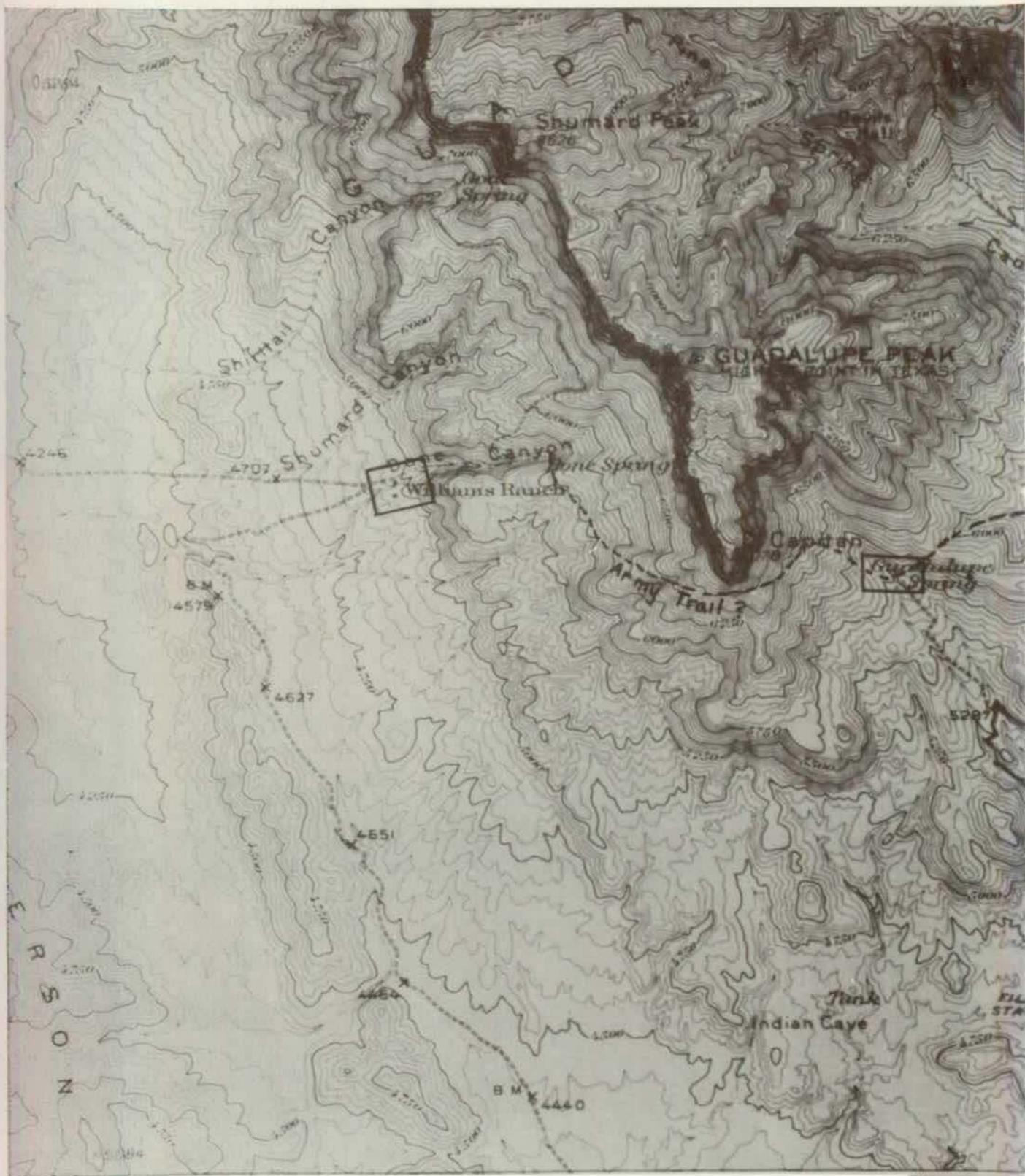
MAPS



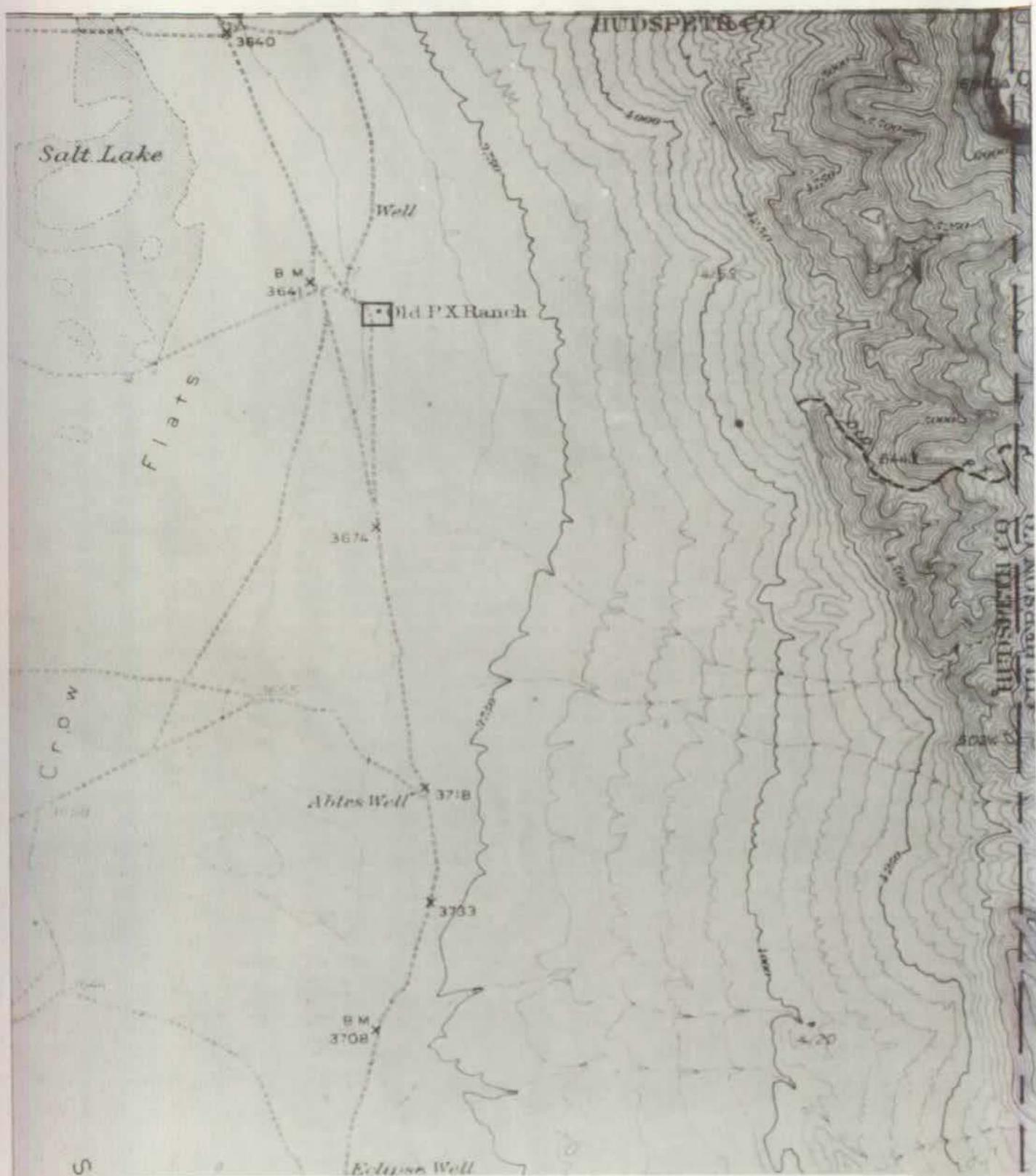
Map No. 2: Section, Guadalupe Peak, Texas  
Quadrangle, scale 1:62500, surveyed 1933,  
United States Geological Survey. Historic  
Sites designated are: (1) Pine Spring,  
(2) Upper Pine Spring, (3) Pine Springs Stage  
Station complex, (4) Frizole Ranch Headquarters,  
(5) Choza Spring, (6) Manzanita Spring, (7) Soldier  
Spring, and (8) Polancio grave site in Guadalupe  
Pass. The region encompassed by the broken line  
is an area of considerable historical importance.  
All planning in this area should proceed with  
extreme caution since all historical data,  
especially archeological, is not yet available.  
These areas should be nominated to the National  
Register. In addition, the Butterfield Stage  
road within the Park, parts of which are still  
identifiable, should be protected and placed on  
the National Register. The same should be done  
for the "old army trail" and Guadalupe Pass  
itself.



Map No. 3: Section, Guadalupe Peak,  
Texas quadrangle, scale 1:62500, surveyed  
1933, United States Geological Survey. His-  
toric Sites designated are: (1) William's  
Ranch, (2) old army trail, and Guadalupe  
Spring. These properties should be  
nominated to the National Register of  
Historic Places.



Map No. 4: Section, Guadalupe Peak,  
Texas quadrangle, scale 1:62500, sur-  
veyed, 1933, United States Geological  
Survey. Historic Sites designated are:  
(1) Old PX Ranch and (2) Old PX Trail.  
These properties should be examined further  
for possible nomination to the National  
Register of Historic Places.



ILLUSTRATIONS



Illustration No. 1: Grisham-Hunter Lodge, South McKittrick Canyon, 1969.



Illustration No. 2: Williams Ranch House, at mouth of Bone Canyon, 1969.



Illustration No. 3: Ruins of Pine Spring, 1969.



Illustration No. 4: Hunter sheep-shearing complex, below Pine Spring, 1969



Illustration No. 5: Butterfield Stage Road, Guadalupe Pass, 1969



Illustration No. 6: Polancio Gravesite, Guadalupe Pass beneath Guadalupe Peak, 1969



Illustration No. 7: Ruins, Pine Springs Stage Station, Butterfield Trail, 1969