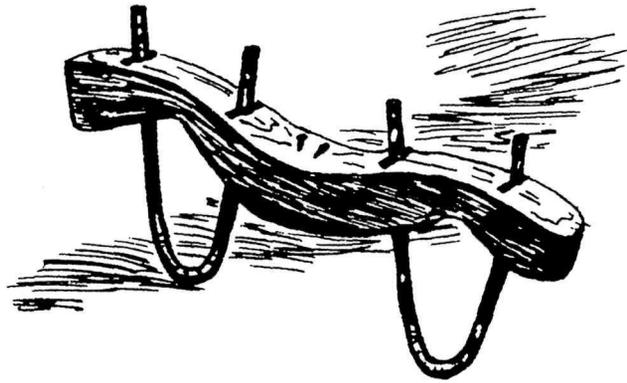


# FORT UNION AND THE SANTA FE TRAIL



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fred A. Seaton, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*



The National Survey  
of  
Historic Sites and Buildings

FORT UNION AND THE SANTA FE TRAIL

A  
Special Study of Santa Fe Trail Remains  
At and Near  
Fort Union National Monument, New Mexico

by  
Robert M. Utley  
Historian

December 1959

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Region Three  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

## PREFACE

The Santa Fe Trail had served as a vital artery of commerce, travel, and communication for more than half a century when Lt. Col. E. V. Sumner established Fort Union in Wolf Creek valley in 1851. From then until the Santa Fe Railroad reached the Mora River in 1879 the fort played a prominent role in the history of the trail. But as a historic site Fort Union today illustrates not alone the Santa Fe Trail of 1851 to 1879. Long before Sumner's dragoons arrived, a broad trail had been worn in the prairie where the post was to be built, a road that modern visitors to Fort Union National Monument may see and follow. This was the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Six miles farther south, it joined the Cimarron Branch, and the ruts of this trail, too, visitors may see as they turn from Highway 85 on to the entrance road to Fort Union. Because of these remains, the founding date of the post is in no sense an obstacle to interpreting at Fort Union National Monument the entire history of the trail.

Just as the crumbling adobe walls of Fort Union recall the years of frontier military activity they witnessed, so do the eroding ruts cut in the prairie sod by freight wagons, stagecoaches, and military columns recall the great flow of traffic that made the Santa Fe Trail so significant in the history of the West. Too often overlooked is the fact that they too are evidence of the past, historic remains that merit study, preservation, and interpretation. Superb

remains of the trail have survived throughout northeastern New Mexico. But in the vicinity of Fort Union ruts of both branches of the trail may be viewed conveniently by today's traveller. Thus Fort Union National Monument becomes an important center for preserving the remains and telling the story of the Santa Fe Trail.

As originally conceived, the scope of this study was confined to identifying the ruts of the Santa Fe Trail in the vicinity of Fort Union. This remains the primary purpose. As research progressed, however, considerable material turned up that revealed new or hitherto unappreciated facets of Fort Union's role in the story of the Santa Fe Trail. Much of the information yielded by this material has been worked into the report, not only to provide added meaning and necessary background to the identification of trail remains, but also to be used as deemed desirable in the interpretive program at Fort Union National Monument.

Acknowledgements are due a number of persons who helped in the preparation of this study. At the top of the list is Donald D. Mawson, Historian at Fort Union National Monument, who unearthed pertinent material, accompanied me on two field reconnaissances, and contributed his thought to the knotty problem of identifying the trail. Others whose assistance is appreciated are William S. Wallace, Librarian and Archivist of Rodgers Library at Highlands University, depository of the Arrott Collection; Mr. Chris Emmett of Tesuque, who is writing a two-volume history of Fort Union; Miss Laura Gilpin, who made the

excellent aerial photographs that illustrate the report; Miss Gertrude Hill, Miss Ruth Rambo, and Mrs. Elma A. Medearis of the Library of the Historical Society of New Mexico; and Dr. Margaret Jenkins, Archivist of the Historical Society of New Mexico. Mrs. Mary Huey drew Sheet No. 1, and Mr. Clyde Arquero drew the Emory map and Sheets 2 and 3. Both are cartographic draftsmen in the Region Three Office, National Park Service.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  | <u>Page</u>       |
|--|-------------------|
| PREFACE. . . . .   | 1                 |
| PART I: ROUTES AND USES OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL . . . . .                  | 1                 |
| The Route of the Trail. . . . .  | 1                 |
| Traders and Freighters. . . . .  | 3                 |
| The Army of the West. . . . .  | 8                 |
| Stagecoaches. . . . .  | 10                |
| PART II: FORT UNION'S ROLE IN THE HISTORY OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL. . . . . | 14                |
| Opening New Roads . . . . .  | 14                |
| Military Freighting . . . . .  | 18                |
| Protecting the Trail. . . . .  | 22                |
| PART III: IDENTIFICATION OF TRAIL REMAINS . . . . .                      | 35                |
| Mountain Branch from Ocate Crossing to Fort Union . . . . .              | 37                |
| Mountain Branch from Fort Union to Mora Valley. . . . .                  | 43                |
| Cimarron Branch from Wagon Mound to Mora Valley . . . . .                | 50                |
| The Mora and Sapello Crossings. . . . .                                  | 56                |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .  | 66                |
| MAPS   |                   |
| The Emory Map - 1846 . . . . .   | following page 43 |
| End Jacket   |                   |
| Sheet No. 1, Santa Fe Trail in the Vicinity of Fort Union                |                   |
| Sheet No. 2, The Fort Union Road Network                                 |                   |
| Sheet No. 3, The Mora and Sapello Crossings                              |                   |
| ILLUSTRATIONS  |                   |
| Ruins of the third Fort Union. . . . .                                   | frontpiece        |
| Following page 71  |                   |
| Mountain Branch east of Ocate Crossing                                   |                   |
| The Ocate Crossing   |                   |
| Mountain Branch four miles south of Ocate Crossing                       |                   |
| Mountain Branch approaching Fort Union from the North                    |                   |
| Mountain Branch entering third Fort Union from the North                 |                   |
| Sketch of Fort Union by Joseph Heger, 1859                               |                   |

Photograph of same view, 1959  
Alternate Mountain Branch, Fort Union to Tiptonville  
Watrous Ranch and Store  
Mountain Branch dropping into Mora Valley  
Wagon Mound  
Cimarron Cutoff three miles east of Tiptonville  
Cimarron Cutoff dropping into Mora Valley

## PART I

### ROUTES AND USES OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL

Part III of this report identifies the principal routes of the Santa Fe Trail at and near Fort Union in a manner, it is hoped, that will enable the reader to locate the ruts on the ground. As background it may be helpful to describe in general terms the principal routes of the trail between the Missouri frontier and Santa Fe, and to indicate, also in general terms, the volume and variety of traffic that passed over each of the branches at various periods of their history.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Route of the Trail

From its eastern terminus on the Missouri frontier--Independence, Westport, Fort Leavenworth, depending on the year--the Santa Fe Trail bore west-southwest by way of Council Grove to the Great Bend of the Arkansas River in central Kansas. It followed the north bank of the Arkansas southwest, then west-northwest to the Cimarron Crossing in western Kansas. Here the trail divided into the two main branches.

The most direct route to Santa Fe lay over the Cimarron Cutoff, which required long waterless marches and held the serious threat of attack by Kiowa or Comanche war parties. It turned southwest from the Arkansas and followed the dry course of the Cimarron River into the Oklahoma panhandle, entering New Mexico near present Clayton.

---

1. This subject is treated in greater detail by Ray H. Mattison's Report on the Santa Fe Trail (1958) for the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. See also inset on Sheet No. 1 in end jacket.

Landmarks were Wagon Bed or Lower Cimarron Springs, Middle Cimarron Springs, Upper Cimarron Springs, Cold Spring, Rabbit Ear Mounds, Round Mound, and Point of Rocks. The first stream of any size was the Canadian River, reached at the Rock Crossing about 250 miles from the Arkansas and 35 miles northeast of Fort Union. The road continued to Wagon Mound and, finally, the New Mexican frontier at the Mora and Sapello Crossings.

Almost 100 miles longer and with the treacherous barrier of Raton Pass, the Mountain Branch kept to the north bank of the Arkansas and ran west to Bent's Fort, in modern Colorado. Here it turned southwest, followed the base of the Rocky Mountains, ascended Raton Pass, and dropped into New Mexico. Skirting the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and fording numerous tributaries of the Canadian, the Mountain Branch passed through Fort Union and joined the Cimarron Cutoff at the Mora and Sapello Crossings.

Its main branches reunited, the trail made a wide loop to the south in order to thread its way through the Sangre de Cristos by way of Glorieta Pass. Mexican villages traced the path of the road--Las Vegas, Tecolote, San José, San Miguel, Pecos, and finally the capital city of Santa Fe.

There were, of course, many variations of the trail, especially in later years. Travellers who wished to reach Santa Fe by way of Taos continued west from Bent's Fort and crossed the Rockies at either La Veta or Sangre de Cristo Pass. From Taos a well-defined

road led down the Rio Grande to Santa Fe. Near the eastern end of the Cimarron Branch, several cutoffs ran north to the Mountain Branch. In Kansas, between the Cimarron Crossing and the Missouri River, there were also variations in the main road.

After 1851, Fort Union became the center of a complex network of roads. The Mountain Branch passed through the fort from the north and united with the Cimarron Branch six miles to the south. Travellers could leave the Cimarron Branch at the Rock Crossing of the Canadian and take the Fort Leavenworth Road to Fort Union, or they could turn west at Wagon Mound on a road that ran north of the Turkey Mountains. East of the Canadian, the Fort Leavenworth Road turned north and forked, one trace reaching the Mountain Branch at Fort Lyon, the other near the present Colorado-Kansas border.

Both the Mountain and Cimarron Branches and their variations enjoyed the favor of travellers at different times in the history of the trail. An understanding of the volume and variety of traffic that used each of the routes leads to a better appreciation of the relative significance of ruts of the trail that have survived near Fort Union.

#### Traders and Freighters

Before 1846, when Gen. Stephen W. Kearny's army conquered the Southwest for the United States, the Santa Fe Trail was a great international highway. Private traders bought goods from Missouri merchants for sale or trade in Santa Fe and Chihuahua. They gambled

their investment against distance, terrain, weather, hostile Indians, and the caprice of Mexican customs officials. This "commerce of the prairies" was international trade, and the Santa Fe Trail an important link between Mexico and the United States, New Mexico and Missouri. The Santa Fe trade largely determined the political and economic orientation of Missouri, and played no small part in the national attitudes and policies that led to the Mexican War.

The conquest of the Southwest and its acquisition by the United States revolutionized the Santa Fe trade. The international highway became a national highway, and the trader with his caravan of goods gave way to the freighter with a caravan of someone else's goods. Freighters specializing in hauling government supplies and company goods under contract replaced the speculative traders of the 1820's and 1830's. "Kearny's baggage train," wrote Paxson, "started a new era in plains freighting. . . . It became a matter of business, running smoothly along familiar channels."<sup>2</sup>

Whether trader or freighter, however, the men who drove the wagon trains from Missouri to Santa Fe by all odds preferred the Cimarron Cutoff.<sup>3</sup> There was the Indian menace and the necessity of

---

2. Frederick L. Paxson, The Last American Frontier (New York, 1910), 67. These two paragraphs are drawn from Edward Steere, Fort Union: Its Economic and Military History (Ms. Report, National Park Service, c. 1939), 53-58 and passim.

3. Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies (1844, Reprint Edition, Dallas, 1933), 207; Alexander Majors, Seventy Years on the Frontier (Denver, 1893), 138-39. Majors' first train went over the Cimarron

frequent dry camps. But time meant everything, especially to the private traders. The Mountain Route was 100 miles longer and Raton Pass a time-consuming obstacle as well as a virtually insurmountable barrier to wagons during the winter. Before 1860, only occasional trains, chiefly those with business at Bent's Fort or Taos, and military columns followed the Mountain Branch. After 1851, those destined for Fort Union took a cutoff from the Cimarron Branch, leaving it either at the Rock Crossing or at Wagon Mound.

The earliest caravans, during the 1820's, began using the Cimarron Cutoff.<sup>4</sup> Before 1834 the road was not well marked, and the trains used many variations. By 1834, however, it had become a broad, well-defined highway.<sup>5</sup> In fact, as early as the middle 1820's, that portion west of the Canadian was well enough marked that the United States Survey Commissioners, who left the Cimarron road at the Canadian, noted that "the road to Santa Fe by way of

---

Branch in 1850, and the subsequent vast business of Russell, Majors, and Waddell was transacted over the Cimarron Branch. As the Army of the West passed the Cimarron Crossing in 1846, Hughes noted that here the Mountain Branch diverged from the "main Santa Fe road," showing the relative importance of the two routes in 1846. John T. Hughes, Doniphan's Expedition; Containing an Account of the Conquest of New Mexico (Cincinnati, 1848), 50.

4. See for examples journals in Archer B. Hulbert (ed.), Southwest on the Turquoise Trail: The First Diaries on the Road to Santa Fe (Denver, 1933).

5. Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 207; J. Evarts Greene, "The Santa Fe Trade: Its Route and Character," American Antiquarian Society, Proceedings, VIII (April, 1893), 333.

San Miguel turns off to the left."<sup>6</sup> That the Mountain Route, at least those portions south of the turnoffs to Taos, carried little traffic is indicated by several travellers of the 1850's. Pvt. D. C. Lowe, who came over it in 1854, stated that it had been abandoned and that at Raton Pass "Trees had fallen across the trail, mountain torrents had made great gullies, and it took Lieutenant Craig's pioneer party--details from 'B' and 'D' Troops--several days to make the road passible...."<sup>7</sup> So unimportant did the Mountain Branch appear to Col. J. K. F. Mansfield in 1853 that on his map of the fort he labeled it the "Road to the Farm."<sup>8</sup>

By 1860 a tremendous volume of freight was flowing over the Cimarron Route to supply the military posts and commercial outlets of the Southwest.<sup>9</sup> After 1860, however, two factors influenced

---

6. Hulbert, Southwest on the Turquoise Trail, 127.

7. D. C. Lowe, Five Years a Dragoon (Kansas City, 1906), 387. See also Howard L. Conrad, "Uncle Dick" Wootton (Chicago, 1890), 418.

8. Report of Col. J. K. F. Mansfield . . . Regarding his Inspection of the Department of New Mexico During . . . 1853 (Ms. National Archives, typescript in Library of the Historical Society of New Mexico). As an experiment in economy, Sumner's troops were in 1853 growing their own vegetables at a farm located on Ocate Creek near the crossing of the Mountain Branch.

9. The following table, compiled from information in Walker D. Wyman, "Freighting: A Big Business on the Santa Fe Trail," Kansas Historical Quarterly, I, 1 (November, 1931), 17-27, indicates the volume of traffic passing over the Santa Fe Trail during the 1850's and 1860's:

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Men</u> | <u>Wagons</u> | <u>Horses</u> | <u>Oxen</u> | <u>Mules</u> | <u>Carriages</u> | <u>Freight (tons)</u> |
|-------------|------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1858        | 2440       | 1827          | 429           | 15,714      | 5316         | 67               | 9,608                 |
| 1859        | 2300       | 1970          | 840           | 15,000      | 4000         | 73               | 1,900                 |
| 1862        | 3720       | 3000          | 618           | 20,812      | 6406         | 96               | 10,000                |
| 1864        | 3012       | 3000          | 618           | 20,812      | 8046         | 98               | 15,000                |
| 1865        | 2692       | 1188          | 736           | 15,855      | 2904         | 56               | 5,245                 |

freighters to make increasing and ultimately almost exclusive use of the Mountain Route in the 1860's and 1870's.

First was the Civil War. Throughout the war years Union authorities in New Mexico expressed fear that Confederate guerrillas from Texas would attempt to cut the lines of supply and communication with the States. And although this threat never materialized, the mounting hostility of the plains Indians, combined with the scarcity of troops and their preoccupation with defense against Confederate invasion, made travel on the Cimarron Branch extremely dangerous. Col. E. R. S. Canby in June 1861 asked the Commanding Officer of Fort Larned, Kansas, to "advise trains passing that fort to keep up the Arkansas and come into New Mexico by the Raton route," and the following January formally requested the Commanding General of the Department of Kansas to issue orders directing all trains to use the Mountain Branch.<sup>10</sup> Freighters thereafter increasingly avoided the Cimarron Cutoff.<sup>11</sup> R. L. Duffus, historian of the Santa Fe Trail, asserts that the Cimarron Route was practically abandoned during the

---

10. 2nd Lt. & Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen. A. L. Anderson (Santa Fe) to C. O., Fort Union, June 30, 1861, War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Ser. I, Vol. 4, 49; Canby to Asst. Adj. Gen. Dept. of Kansas, July 3, 1862, National Archives, typescript in Arrott Collection, Highlands Univ., Las Vegas, N. M. Hereafter all citations of material from the National Archives in the Arrott Collection will be designated NA, AC.

11. Thirteen trains came to Fort Union during July and August 1861, following Canby's request. The first seven used the Cimarron Branch, the next six the Mountain Branch. Maj. William Chapman (Fort Union) to Anderson (Santa Fe), Aug. 18, 1861, NA, AC.

Civil War.<sup>12</sup> Although the military records of Fort Union from 1861 to 1865 definitely disprove this statement, they nonetheless show that the Mountain Branch now carried a large share of the traffic from the States to New Mexico. By 1866, according to one traveller, "The usual route is by the Raton Pass and the Arkansas River."<sup>13</sup>

The Cimarron Route never regained its favored status, for in 1866 the Union Pacific Railroad, Eastern Division (later the Kansas Pacific), began building west from Kansas City. As its rails reached into western Kansas, the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail likewise moved west. From railhead to Santa Fe the Mountain Branch became the shortest and most convenient route. Uncle Dick Wootton improved the road in Raton Pass and, while charging toll for passage, nevertheless minimized the disadvantages of the old road through the pass. The Santa Fe Railroad reached Raton Pass in 1878. Two years later the first engine steamed into Lamy, station for the New Mexican capital, and the Santa Fe Trail passed out of existence.

#### The Army of the West

The Mexican War was one of the most momentous episodes in the history of the western United States, and the conquest of New Mexico one of the major operations of the war. By virtue of this conquest,

---

12. R. L. Duffus, The Santa Fe Trail (New York, 1931), 247-48.

13. Col. James F. Meline, Two Thousand Miles on Horseback, Santa Fe and Back. A Summer Tour Through Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and New Mexico in the Year 1866 (New York, 1867), 261.

the United States acquired a vast territory that later became the states of New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. The conquerors were Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny and the Army of the West-- 300 regular dragoons, 1,000 Missouri volunteers, and 500 Mormons recruited by Brigham Young at Council Bluffs. The full story of the Army of the West cannot be told here, but it is part and parcel of the history of the Santa Fe Trail. As Bernard DeVoto has written,

In '46 the trade was stimulated by the war, rather than hampered. . . . The Santa Fe Trail was much busier than it had ever been before: the regular trade, Kearny's army, his trains and those of his supports, Price's Second Missouri, the Mormon Battalion, the developing service of supply, scouts, surveyors, couriers, expresses, ambulances, detachments of discharged and invalided soldiers. In this area Manifest Destiny took the shape of a large-scale freight operation.<sup>14</sup>

The first contingent of the Army of the West--Maj. E. V. Sumner's dragoons, two batteries of artillery, two companies of infantry, and Col. Alexander Doniphan's First Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers--marched over the Mountain Branch of the trail, Kearny having been advised that the Cimarron Cutoff was too dangerous for an army, presumably because of scarcity of water.<sup>15</sup> The second contingent, Col. Sterling Price's Second Missouri Mounted Volunteers and the Mormon Battalion, followed Kearny during September and October 1846. They used the Cimarron Branch and suffered severe hardships for want of water.

---

14. Bernard DeVoto, The Year of Decision, 1846 (Boston, 1943), 246.

15. Duffus, Santa Fe Trail, 197.

Thus the Army of the West is also part of the Fort Union story, even though the fort was not built until five years after the conquest, for it deepened and broadened the ruts that may now be seen at and near Fort Union. Kearny and Doniphan passed directly through the site where the fort was later built, and camped on the night of August 12 two miles south of this site. Another link between the Army of the West and Fort Union may be not without significance. In 1851 Kearny's dragoon commander returned to this camping place and, nearby, selected the site of Fort Union.

Interesting experiences of Kearny's and Price's commands while passing through the country where Fort Union was to be established are detailed in Part III, in order to relate them to terrain features and surviving remains of the Santa Fe Trail.

#### Stagecoaches

After 1846 and until the railroad reached Santa Fe in 1880, stagecoaching was an important activity on the Santa Fe Trail. The coaches carried passengers, but the U. S. Mail contract made the business possible and it was as mail carriers that they were chiefly important. The first mail was carried under contract in 1849, and in July 1850 regular monthly service was inaugurated.<sup>16</sup>

Basis for the mail contracts that financed the stage line was an act of Congress in 1847 designating the Santa Fe Trail "from

---

16. LeRoy R. Hafen, The Overland Mail, 1849-1869 (Glendale, 1926), 70.

Independence via Bent's Fort, to Santa Fe" a post route. Throughout the 1850's, however, the stages consistently used the shorter Cimarron Branch. This is obvious from military correspondence of the period dealing mainly with mail escorts. After 1851 the stages probably left the Cimarron Route at either the Canadian or Wagon Mound and followed one of the cutoffs to Fort Union, for Colonel Sumner in that year requested the Postmaster General to send the mail wagons by way of the fort and to appoint the local sutler postmaster of Fort Union.<sup>17</sup>

A reporter for the Missouri Commonwealth described the new stage between Independence and Santa Fe in July 1850:

The stages are got up in elegant style and are each arranged to convey eight passengers. The bodies are beautifully painted, and made water-tight, with the view to using them as boats in ferrying the streams. The team consists of six mules to each coach. The mail is guarded by eight men armed as follows: Each man has at his side, fastened in the stage, one of Colt's revolving rifles; in a holster below, one of Colt's long revolvers, and in his belt a small Colt's revolver, besides a hunting knife; so that these eight men are ready, in case of attack, to discharge one hundred and thirty six shots without having to reload. . . . Two of their stages will start from here the first of every month.<sup>18</sup>

Despite this glowing account, stagecoaching during the 1850's was primitive. There were few stations along the road, none between

---

17. Ibid.; Sumner to Postmaster General W. W. Hall, Aug. 1, 1851, NA, AC. Sumner pointed out that "It would be but a few miles farther than the present route, as this post is only six miles north of Barclay's Fort, which is one of their relay houses." As it was, the Colonel had to send a courier to Santa Fe, 100 miles distant, to pick up the Fort Union mail.

18. Quoted in Henry Inman, The Old Santa Fe Trail (Topeka, 1916), 145-46.

the Arkansas and the Mora. Passengers paid \$150, were permitted 45 pounds of baggage, and had to eat and sleep on the ground. The fare included meals. A mail train consisted of from one to three wagons, depending on the amount of mail and baggage and the number of passengers. The train on which Attorney General Davis came to New Mexico in 1853 was made up of three wagons, one for passengers, one for mail, and one for baggage and provisions.<sup>19</sup> The trip usually took 25 to 30 days, but throughout the decade the stages failed to maintain dependable schedules. As late as 1860 the commander of the Department of New Mexico complained bitterly to the Postmaster General about the "great irregularity of the Mails."<sup>20</sup>

Jacob Hall won the mail contract in 1854 and again in 1858, when he inaugurated semi-monthly service. The first contract was for \$10,990 a year, the second, because of mounting Indian hostility, for \$39,999. Hall's contract was apparently not renewed at the end of the second four years, for by 1863 the Barlow-Sanderson Overland Mail and Express Company was operating stages between Kansas City and Santa Fe. This company ran weekly coaches in both directions, and gradually evolved a service much superior to its predecessors.

---

19. W. H. H. Davis, El Gringo; or, New Mexico and her People (New York, 1857), 13-15; Hafen, Overland Mail, 72.

20. Col. T. T. Fauntleroy to Postmaster General, Dec. 16, 1860, NA, AC. Fauntleroy tried, unsuccessfully, to have the mail from the States carried by the Butterfield Company via Fort Smith and El Paso. Butterfield operated a spur line between El Paso and Santa Fe.

Because of the Civil War and the increasing settlement of the upper Arkansas country, the Barlow-Sanderson line adopted the Bent's Fort route, and by the late 1860's relay stations had been built and staffed at frequent intervals along the way. In the Fort Union vicinity the company had a station at the Ocate Crossing, another three miles north of Fort Union, and a third a mile north of the Sapello Crossing. The eastern terminus of the line moved west with the railroad in the late 1860's, and finally, with completion of the Santa Fe Railroad to Santa Fe in 1880, the firm went out of business.<sup>21</sup>

---

21. Hafen, Overland Mail, 278; Nolie Mumey, Bent's Old Fort and Bent's New Fort on the Arkansas River, Vol. I of Old Forts and Trading Posts of the West (Denver, 1956), 113-120: The stage stations near Fort Union are located on the Wheeler map of 1875 (see bibliography).

## PART II

### FORT UNION'S ROLE IN THE HISTORY OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL

Fort Union was not a passive spectator of the history flowing by on the Santa Fe Trail. After 1851 it played a direct, active, and vital part in the drama. Officers and men blazed new roads and helped improve old ones. Establishment of the Quartermaster Depot of the Ninth Military Department (later Department of New Mexico) at Fort Union made the post a freight destination rivalling if not exceeding Santa Fe in importance. And throughout the 1850's and 1860's protection of the Santa Fe Trail was the major field duty of the garrison of Fort Union.

#### Opening New Roads

One of the important functions of the frontier army in the years between the Mexican and Civil Wars was to blaze new wagon roads and improve old ones. Officers and men of Fort Union performed their share of this task. Their labors were expended principally on the Santa Fe Trail.

Shortly after Colonel Sumner established Fort Union in the summer of 1851, his Quartermaster, Capt. E. S. Sibley, laid out a road that linked Fort Union with the main branch of the Santa Fe Trail between the Mora Crossings and Las Vegas.<sup>22</sup> Although the new road saved several miles, the bulk of traffic on the Santa Fe Trail

---

22. Mansfield Report (1853).

appears to have followed the older road by way of Tiptonville and Watrous Ranch. For the first five miles, however, Sibley's road continued to carry heavy travel from Fort Union to the village of Loma Parda, where the troops sought off-duty pleasure.

The Santa Fe Trail from Fort Union to Santa Fe was part of a million-dollar Federal road program carried on in the West during the 1850's. This 100-mile stretch of road, according to one historian, was one of the most important of the Federal projects, "for it was the principal entrance to the heart of the territory; it afforded communication between that post and the headquarters of the military department, and it served as a portion of the great mail route between the eastern states and the largest settlement in the territory."<sup>23</sup> Work on this road was performed by Capt. Alexander Macomb using civilian labor.

Colonel Sumner also looked to the east. In August 1851 he sent Lt. John Pope of the Topographical Engineers to seek "a new road by the shortest practicable route between this point and Fort Leavenworth."<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, Pope's report of this reconnaissance has not been located, and his findings therefore cannot yet be mapped

---

23. Averam B. Bender, The March of Empire: Frontier Defense in the Southwest, 1848-1860 (Lawrence, Kans., 1952), 70. See also W. Turrentine Jackson, Wagon Roads West: A Study of Federal Road Surveys and Construction in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1846-1869 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952), 112-117.

24. Special Order 58, Fort Union, Aug. 6, 1851, NA, AC.

with precision. Almost certainly, however, his survey led to opening the route that later became known as the Fort Leavenworth Road. Sumner reported in October, while Pope was still at Fort Leavenworth, that the Lieutenant had "found an excellent route to the Arkansas, intersecting that river at the 'Big Timbers'."<sup>25</sup> Two years later Colonel Mansfield stated that Fort Union was now on the shortest road to Santa Fe, as a new road had been opened "to the northward of Wagon Mound and Gallinas Mountain."<sup>26</sup> The only road that lies north of Wagon Mound and the Turkey Mountains and intersects the Arkansas (and Mountain Branch) at or near Big Timbers is the Fort Leavenworth Road. It must be admitted that this evidence conflicts with that on a map of the Territory of New Mexico by Lt. John G. Parke (1851), which shows "Capt. Pope's Route 1851" striking north from the Cimarron Branch at Cedar Spring, in the Oklahoma panhandle, and descending Two Butte Creek to the Arkansas at Choteau's Island. One explanation may be that Pope returned from Fort Leavenworth by this route.

No evidence indicating the volume of traffic that passed over the Fort Leavenworth Road has been discovered. Extensive remains,

---

25. Sumner to Adj. Gen. Roger Jones, Oct. 24, 1851, in Annie H. Abel (ed.), The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun (Washington, 1916), 416-418.

26. Mansfield Report (1853). Colonel Mansfield gives credit for this to Capt. James H. Carleton, whom he almost certainly confused with Lieutenant Pope. Carleton and his company were patrolling the Cimarron route at the same time Pope was reconnoitering the new road. The mistake, therefore, is understandable.

certainly produced by many caravans, have survived northeast of Fort Union. Since almost no mention of the Fort Leavenworth Road appears in the literature of the Santa Fe Trail, these ruts are probably largely the result of trains using the segment of road southwest of the Canadian as a cutoff from the Cimarron Branch to Fort Union.

The Fort Leavenworth Road was a compromise between the Mountain and Cimarron Branches. It was shorter than the Mountain Branch and, by skirting the eastern slope of the Raton Mountains, avoided the winter snows of Raton Pass. During the Civil War it had another advantage: it was far enough from Texas to be free of the Confederate threat to the Cimarron Branch, a threat that existed less in reality than in the minds of Union commanders.

The advantages of this road, with a slight variation at its northern end to connect with Fort Wise (later Fort Lyon), were not lost upon officers at Fort Union and Santa Fe. Supply trains for Union forces in New Mexico might use this road the year around without fear of Texan guerrillas. From Fort Union to the head of the Cimarron the road had already been surveyed (by Lieutenant Pope?), and required only minor banking and grading at stream crossings. From Fort Wise south but little work was needed, principally on the eastern slopes of the Raton Mountains. During the winter of 1861 and the summer of 1862, therefore, details from Forts Union and Wise worked

towards each other on this road, meeting on the upper Cimarron.<sup>27</sup>

What share of Civil War freight the Fort Leavenworth Road carried thereafter is not apparent. It is clear, however, that the Mountain and Cimarron Branches also continued to be used by freighters.

#### Military Freighting

The Army of the West opened the era of military freighting on the Santa Fe Trail. About 250 wagons, according to one observer, accompanied Kearny, and hundreds more, though never enough, followed the army of invasion. The teamsters refused to go beyond Bent's Fort, and troops had to be detailed to take them on to Santa Fe. From 1846 to 1848, when the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican War, the provision trains ate into the immense store of goods on the wharf at Fort Leavenworth and, winter and summer, made their way across the plains to Santa Fe. Thenceforth military freighting was big business on the Santa Fe Trail.<sup>28</sup>

The Southwest proved an expensive acquisition to the United States, for the population had been promised protection from marauding

---

27. Capt. & A.Q.M. J. C. McFerran (Fort Union) to Maj. & Q.M. J. L. Donaldson (Santa Fe), Nov. 11, 1861; 1st Lt. & Actg. Asst. Adjt. Gen. W. J. L. Nicodemus (Santa Fe) to Capt. Elmer Otis, 4th Cav. (Fort Wise), Nov. 15, 1861; Nicodemus to C.O. Fort Union, Nov. 15, 1861; Special Order 125, Hq. Dept. of N. Mex., Fort Union, July 16, 1862; Special Order 144, Hq. Dept. of N. Mex., Santa Fe, Aug. 15, 1862, NA, AC.

28. Unless otherwise cited, this section is drawn from Walker D. Wyman, "The Military Phase of Santa Fe Freighting, 1846-1865," Kansas Historical Quarterly, I, 5 (November, 1932), 415-428.

Indians. In 1849 almost 1,000 soldiers, one-seventh of the United States Army, served in New Mexico's Ninth Military Department. By 1859 the number had risen to 2,000, distributed among 16 scattered frontier outposts. The land was not rich enough to subsist this army, and almost all provisions had to be hauled over the Santa Fe Trail from Fort Leavenworth.

The need for a depot on the eastern frontier of New Mexico to receive and distribute these goods to other posts early became apparent. In the spring of 1851 the Department Commander, Maj. and Bvt. Col. John Munroe, sent his Quartermaster, Capt. L. C. Easton, and Lt. John G. Parke of the Topographical Engineers to "examine the country in the vicinity of Las Vegas and on the Moro [sic] Creek with a view of selecting a site for the establishment of a depot for supplies coming from the U. S."<sup>29</sup> By late April the reconnaissance had been completed and a report turned in (it has not been found),<sup>30</sup> but Munroe was almost immediately replaced by Lt. Col. and Bvt. Col. Edwin V. Sumner. Nevertheless, in July 1851 Sumner established a supply depot such as envisioned by his predecessor and located it in the area reconnoitered by Parke

---

29. Lt. & Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws to Lt. John G. Parke, March 12, 1851; Special Order 14, Hq. Ninth Mil. Dept., Santa Fe, March 14, 1851, NA, AC.

30. Munroe to Adj. Gen. Roger Jones, April 30, 1851, NA, AC, transmitted the report to Washington.

and Easton. He also moved Department Headquarters from Santa Fe to the new depot, which was named Fort Union.<sup>31</sup>

Military freight hauled from Fort Leavenworth was unloaded at the Fort Union depot, repacked, and assigned as needed to the posts of New Mexico and Arizona. Often, when wagons or entire trains contained shipments for one fort only, they continued directly to the destination without unloading at Fort Union. Other Quartermaster depots were established, at Yuma and San Antonio, but Fort Union continued throughout its lifetime to be the supply center of the frontier army in the Southwest.

Virtually all military freighting on the Santa Fe Trail was performed under contract by civilian companies. Waste and inefficiency had characterized the logistical support, managed by the Quartermaster Department, of Kearny's Army of the West, and in 1848 the Government turned to the contract system. For \$11.75 per hundred, James Browne of Independence in that year agreed to transport 200,000 pounds of supplies to New Mexico. The next year, in partnership with William H. Russell, he contracted to haul all government stores over the Santa Fe Trail for \$9.88 per hundred. Joseph Clymer and David Waldo entered the field in 1850, and that year 278 wagons of military freight passed over the trail to Santa Fe. Some continued to the new post at

---

31. Throughout the 1850's and 1860's Department Headquarters was located variously at Fort Union, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and elsewhere depending on the scene of most active operations.

El Paso. Browne, Russell, and Company were the largest contractors, accounting for 135 of the 278 wagons.

In 1853 another new freighter made his appearance, his name destined to be linked to that of William H. Russell. Alexander Majors made two round trips to Santa Fe, one with a consignment of goods from Independence to Santa Fe, the other under government contract from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Union. In 1854, again under contract, he sent 100 wagons in four trains from Leavenworth to Union. The following year he went into partnership with William H. Russell. In 1856 Majors and Russell had 350 wagons on the trail, and the next year contracted to deliver five million pounds of freight. In 1858, a third partner having joined the firm, Russell, Majors, and Waddell contracted to deliver all freight turned over to them by the Government, and by 1860 and 1861 were the principal contractors freighting between Fort Leavenworth and Fort Union.<sup>32</sup>

According to Majors, a typical train on the Santa Fe Trail during this period consisted of about 25 wagons. Each carried from three to three and one-half tons of freight. Majors preferred oxen to mules. They were cheap, reliable, and, properly managed, could make the trip to New Mexico and back in one season. Skilled wagon-masters, capable of maintaining discipline and obedience among the

---

32. Wyman deals only briefly with the activities of Russell, Majors, and Waddell. See also Majors, Seventy Years on the Frontier, 140-143; and Steere, Fort Union: Its Military and Economic History, 55-57.

teamsters, were a necessity, and to them Majors attributed much of his success as a freighter.<sup>33</sup>

Large-scale military freighting, dominated by Russell, Majors, and Waddell, continued until 1866, when the railroad moved west into Kansas. Each railhead town thereafter served briefly as the port of embarkation for freight wagons. After the rails reached Denver in 1870, wagons continued to move supplies over the Mountain Branch of the trail between Pueblo and Fort Union. The Santa Fe Railroad crossed the Mora Valley in 1879 and ended the era of military freighting on the Santa Fe Trail.

#### Protecting the Trail

Military protection of the Santa Fe Trail is a chapter in the history of the trail that remains to be written. Historians have dealt with early attempts to provide escorts from the Missouri to the Arkansas, notably those of Maj. Bennet Riley in 1829<sup>34</sup> and Maj. William Gilpin in 1847-48,<sup>35</sup> but the part played by troops from Fort Union has never been fully told. Although less dramatic, it spanned 15 years and was far more effective.

No sooner had Fort Union been established than Colonel Sumner, in August 1851, issued orders for Capt. James H. Carleton to patrol

---

33. Majors, Seventy Years on the Frontier, 102, 164.

34. Otis E. Young, The First Military Escort on the Santa Fe Trail, 1829 (Glendale, 1952).

35. Wyman, "Military Phase of Santa Fe Freighting," 422-23.

the Cimarron Branch of the trail between Fort Union and the Arkansas. With his Company K, First Dragoons, Carleton remained in the field until November 4. So successful was he in preventing depredations on freight trains by the Kiowas, Comanches, and Jicarilla Apaches that he drew the same assignment the next year. During the summer of 1852 Company K twice marched to Fort Atkinson, at the Arkansas Crossing, and returned to Fort Union.<sup>36</sup>

After 1852 there is no record of further patrolling such as Carleton had performed. Rather, protection took the form of military escorts of the Independence-Santa Fe Mail. During the 1850's the Kiowas and Comanches were in general friendly, or at least not actively hostile, and the war against the Jicarillas kept that tribe busy in the mountains around Taos and Abiquiu. Nevertheless, escorts were furnished whenever officials of the stage company or Post Office Department feared that danger existed. Late in 1857, as the result of a directive from the Secretary of War, the Commanding Officer at Fort Union began providing regular escorts for the mail.

The escort usually consisted of an officer and 20 to 40 men, later of a sergeant and 15 to 20 men, who accompanied the stages to the Arkansas and returned to Fort Union with the next west-bound mail.

---

36. Sumner to Carleton, Aug. 1, 1851; Special Order 23, Hq. Ninth Mil. Dept. near Albuquerque, March 28, 1852; Special Order 31, Hq. Ninth Mil. Dept. near Albuquerque, May 3, 1852; Annual Returns, First Dragoons, 1851 and 1852, NA, AC. Sumner to Adj. Gen. Roger Jones, Oct. 24, 1851, in Abel (ed.) Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun, 416-18.

The soldiers, infantry or dismounted horsemen, rode in wagons. This method had been adopted by Col. John Garland, Department Commander, because it afforded better defense in the event of attack and because of the scarcity of grass, especially in winter, along the road between the Canadian and the Arkansas. Even so, the mules drawing the escort wagons frequently broke down and always had trouble keeping up with the mail coaches. The stage company had relay stations with fresh animals on the Mora and the Arkansas, but the army mules travelled over 600 miles, from Fort Union to the Arkansas and back, without relief. So troublesome did this problem become that Colonel Garland in March 1858 requested the Adjutant General of the Army to have instructions issued to the mail company to keep pace with the slower moving escort.<sup>37</sup>

The necessity of furnishing escorts kept the Fort Union garrison constantly below strength, and proved a serious handicap to the post commander. Nevertheless, Colonel Garland could report early in 1858 "that no mail has been lost since my administration of this Military Department--four years and a half--and that I have never failed to

---

37. Lt. & Actg. Asst. Adjt. Gen. W. A. Nichols (Albuquerque) to Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke (Fort Union), March 12, 1854; Unsgd. (Fort Union) to Nichols (Santa Fe), March 8, 1856; Nichols to Col. W. W. Loring (Fort Union), Jan. 29, 1857; Col. B. L. E. Bonneville (Santa Fe) to Asst. Adjt. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, Feb. 28, 1857; Loring to Nichols, Jan. 25, 1858; Garland to Adjt. Gen. Samuel Cooper, Jan. 30 and March 14, 1858; Loring to Capt. & A.Q.M. L. C. Easton, March 9, 1858, NA, AC.

furnish escorts whenever in my judgment they were deemed necessary."<sup>38</sup>

Probably as a result of these difficulties, and the apparent friendliness of the Indians on the Cimarron Route, Garland in May 1858 discontinued the escorts. In October 1859, however, the mail from Independence failed to arrive in Santa Fe on schedule. Citizens and postal officials became so alarmed that Col. B. L. E. Bonneville, Garland's successor, was induced to order two officers and 75 men, virtually the entire garrison of Fort Union, to escort the next east-bound stage to the Arkansas. At Cottonwood Spring the mail and escort, under Capt. R. M. Morris of the Regiment of Mounted Rifles, met the west-bound mail. It was accompanied by Col. Thomas T. Fauntleroy and escort enroute to Santa Fe to replace Colonel Bonneville. Fauntleroy issued orders on the spot assuming command of the Department of New Mexico and relieving Captain Morris and half his command of further escort duty. At the same time he called upon the Adjutant General for "particular instructions at the earliest moment" on the subject of furnishing regular escorts for the mail.<sup>39</sup>

---

38. Garland to Adj. Gen. Samuel Cooper, Jan. 30, 1858, NA, AC.

39. Lt. & Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen. J. D. Wilkins (Santa Fe) to Capt. R. M. Morris (Fort Union), Oct. 15, 17, and 18, 1859; Wilkins to D. V. Whiting, Postmaster at Santa Fe, Oct. 16 and 17, 1859; Wilkins to Lt. A. Jackson (Fort Union), Oct. 17, 1859; Bonneville to Asst. Adj. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, Oct. 17, 1859; Bonneville to Gov. Abraham Rencher, Oct. 18, 1859; Fauntleroy to Adj. Gen. Samuel Cooper, Oct. 25, 1859; Fauntleroy to Morris, Oct. 25, 1859; Fauntleroy to Thomas, Nov. 6, 1859, NA, AC.

No sooner had Fauntleroy reached Santa Fe, however, than he authorized continued escorts. It was a fortunate move, for on December 4, at Cold Spring in the Oklahoma panhandle, 20 Kiowa warriors attacked the mail wagon and its escort, slightly wounding one soldier. The Indians were repulsed, but kept the troops pinned down with long-range rifle fire for several hours.<sup>40</sup>

Thereafter raiding Kiowas and Comanches became increasingly active, and throughout the Civil War years travel on the Cimarron Branch was a dangerous undertaking. Fauntleroy reinforced Fort Union, and escorts regularly accompanied the mail. A new system was devised. Troops from Fort Union escorted the east-bound mail about half way to the Arkansas. There they met the west-bound mail under escort by troops from Kansas. Each detachment then accompanied the mail back to its home base.<sup>41</sup>

Later in 1860 Fauntleroy authorized the Commanding Officer at Fort Union, Lt. Col. George B. Crittenden, to seize any opportunity offered to strike a blow at the Kiowas and Comanches. In December Crittenden learned that a war party was harassing traffic on the Mountain Branch about 70 miles north of Fort Union. With 88 men

---

40. Wilkins (Santa Fe) to Maj. J. S. Simonson (Fort Union), Nov. 14, 1859; Special Order 70, Fort Union, Nov. 16, 1859; Simonson to Wilkins, Dec. 9, 1859; Fauntleroy to Asst. Adj. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, Dec. 12, 1859, NA, AC.

41. Wilkins to Lt. D. Bell, 1st Cav., Pawnee Fork, K. T., Jan. 3, 1860; Wilkins to Simonson, Jan. 10, 1860; Wilkins to Simonson, Jan. (?), 1860, Jan. 28, 1860, NA, AC.

of Companies D, H, K, and E, Regiment of Mounted Rifles, he marched up the trail. The Indians, however, had moved east and were preparing to attack traffic on the Cimarron Branch. The Mounted Riflemen followed their trail night and day and, on January 2, 1861, surprised a village of 175 Kiowa and Comanche lodges on the Cimarron River 10 miles north of Cold Spring. The Indians were driven from their camp with a loss of 10 killed and an unknown number wounded. Crittenden had three men wounded. The troops destroyed the village and its contents and returned to Fort Union with 40 captured horses.<sup>42</sup>

It is noteworthy that, throughout the decade of the 1850's, there is no record of military detachments assigned to escort freight caravans. Except for Carleton's operations in 1851 and 1852, which were designed to safeguard all traffic simply by the presence of troops on the trail, all escorts were of the Independence-Santa Fe Mail. To the extent that these escorts advertised to the Indians the proximity of soldiers, they indirectly protected freight trains. The freighters, however, understood the conditions of the trail and organized for their own protection. They consequently felt no need of military protection and made no demand for such service.<sup>43</sup> The picture changes in the 1860's. The mounting Indian menace, the fear of Confederate attacks

---

42. Special Order 103, Fort Union, Dec. 26, 1860; Crittenden to Actg. Asst. Adjt. Gen. at Santa Fe, Jan. 11, 1861; Fauntleroy to Asst. Adjt. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, Jan. 12, 1861, NA, AC.

43. Cf. Steere, Fort Union: Its Economic and Military History, 34-35.

on freight caravans, and the vital need of assuring a continuous flow of provisions to Union forces in New Mexico led to escorts of freight trains on the Santa Fe Trail.

In June 1861 Col. Edward R. S. Canby, who had just assumed command in New Mexico, promptly took two steps to protect the Santa Fe Trail.<sup>44</sup> Fearing a Confederate move against his lines of supply and communication, he instructed Maj. William Chapman at Fort Union to organize parties of Mexican or Indian spies to watch the Cimarron Branch and the road from Fort Smith via the Canadian River to Anton Chico and Santa Fe. Masquerading as hunters or traders, they were to operate well south of the roads and give timely warning of Confederate movements. By June 25 Chapman had employed nine Mexicans for this duty.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time Canby ordered Capt. Thomas Duncan at Fort Union to lead 100 Mounted Riflemen and two companies of recently organized New Mexico Volunteers to the Arkansas Crossing to escort freight trains to Fort Union. In August he sent a squadron of Mounted Rifles to Fort Wise, on the Arkansas near the site of Bent's

---

44. On March 22 Colonel Fauntleroy, having resigned his commission to join the Confederacy, turned over command of the department to William W. Loring, Colonel of the Regiment of Mounted Rifles and post commander at Fort Union. Loring also resigned to join the South and, on June 11, left Canby in "general charge of affairs" in the department. His command of the department was later made official by the War Department. Max L. Heyman, Jr., Prudent Soldier: A Biography of Major General E. R. S. Canby, 1817-1873 (Glendale, 1959), 137.

45. Lt. & Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen. A. L. Anderson (Santa Fe) to Chapman, June 19, 1861, NA, AC. Notation on back lists names of Mexican spies employed by Chapman.

Fort, to strengthen that post and help protect trains using the Mountain Branch. In the same month Lt. Col. Christopher "Kit" Carson marched four companies of New Mexico Volunteers to the Arkansas Crossing to bring in trains using the Cimarron Route.<sup>46</sup>

Patrols and escorts carried out similar missions throughout the winter of 1861 and summer of 1862. In August 1862 a system of patrols was inaugurated on the Mountain Branch, troops from Fort Union covering the trail to Raton Pass, troops from Fort Lyon (formerly Wise) from the pass to that fort. A force of the First Colorado Volunteers was ordered to establish a temporary camp on the Mountain Route midway between Forts Wise and Union and give protection to freight trains and mail coaches.<sup>47</sup>

That troops were assigned to such duty during 1861 and 1862 reflects the importance Canby attached to keeping open the Santa Fe Trail. These were the critical Civil War years in New Mexico. Texans under Lt. Col. John R. Baylor occupied southern New Mexico

---

46. Anderson to C.O. Fort Union, June 30, 1861, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Ser. I, Vol. 4, p. 49; Canby to Chapman, Aug. 15, 1861; Chapman to Col. Ceran St. Vrain, First New Mexico Volunteers (Fort Union), Aug. 18, 1861; Chapman to Anderson, Aug. 22, 1861, NA, AC.

47. Nicodemus to C.O. Fort Union, Dec. 8, 1861; Canby to Col. J. M. Chivington (Fort Craig), June 30, 1862; Chapman to C.O. Fort Union, July 2, 1862; Canby to Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen. Dept. of Kans., July 3, 1862; Capt. & Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen. Gurden Chapin (Santa Fe) to Col. J. H. Leavenworth (Fort Lyon), Aug. 7, 1862; Chapin to C.O. Fort Union, Aug. 9, 1862, NA, AC.

in the summer of 1861, and the Confederate brigade of Brig. Gen. Henry H. Sibley carried the invasion north to Albuquerque and Santa Fe during the first four months of 1862. Battles were fought at Valverde in February and Glorieta Pass in March before the Texans withdrew from the Territory. At the same time the Navajos and Mescalero Apaches were raiding settlements throughout New Mexico. Still, these demands on the small Federal army in New Mexico did not prevent Canby from detaching troops to guard the Santa Fe Trail.

When Canby went east to other duty in September 1862, Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton, who had led the California Column to New Mexico, took command of the department and retained it until the end of the war. He appreciated the importance of the Santa Fe Trail and, from his experience in patrolling it in 1851 and 1852, was familiar with the problems involved in its protection. He believed that troops should be temporarily stationed on the most dangerous section of the trail, and recommended to the Adjutant General in May and again in July 1863 that four companies be placed at Cold Spring and four at Cimarron Springs.<sup>48</sup>

This plan called for reinforcements and seems not to have been adopted until 1864, by which time the plains were in the throes of a disastrous Indian uprising, and Kiowas, Comanches, and Cheyennes

---

48. Carleton to Adj. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, May 10, 1863, July 14, 1863, in U. S. Cong., Condition of the Indian Tribes: Report of the Joint Special Committee Appointed Under Resolution of March 3, 1865 (Washington, 1867), 109-110.

were attacking trains between the Arkansas and Fort Union. In the summer of 1864 Carleton stationed 50 cavalrymen and 50 infantrymen at the Arkansas Crossing, an equal force at Lower Cimarron Springs, and 50 cavalrymen and 30 infantrymen at Upper Cimarron Springs. He also sent one company to Fort Lyon and one to Gray's Ranch, on the Purgatory River in Colorado, to police the Mountain Route. These troops, California and New Mexico Volunteers, were rationed for 60 days.<sup>49</sup>

Carleton next decided to strike at the home country of the Indians who were raiding on the Santa Fe Trail. Late in November 1864 he sent Col. Kit Carson and the First New Mexico Cavalry, fresh from victory over the Navajos, into the Texas panhandle, heart of the Kiowa-Comanche country. On November 26 the troops attacked a large camp of Kiowas on the Canadian River near the ruins of William Bent's old trading post. Joined by Comanches, the Kiowas counterattacked and besieged Carson in the ruins. The battle of Adobe Walls raged all day, but mountain howitzers kept the Indians at bay. At dusk the troops burned the Kiowa village and withdrew.<sup>50</sup>

---

49. Carleton to Capt. Edward H. Bergmann (Fort Bascom), Aug. 22, 1864; Carleton to Adj. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, Aug. 27 and 29, 1864; Special Order 32, Dept. of N. Mex., Aug. 20, 1864; Special Order 34, Aug. 28, 1864, in ibid., 191-95, 241-42.

50. R. N. Richardson, The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement (Glendale, 1933); idem., "The Comanche Indians and the Fight at Adobe Walls," Panhandle-Plains Historical Review, IV (1931); C. Boone McClure (ed.), "The Battle of Adobe Walls, 1864," ibid., XXI (1948).

Meanwhile, General Carleton made preparations for guarding the trail during the approaching travel season. He had hoped to establish temporary camps during the summer of 1865 at Lower Cimarron Springs, Cold Spring, Rabbit Ear Creek and Whetstone Creek,<sup>51</sup> but, probably because of insufficient men, modified this plan. Instead, on February 8, 1865, he published the following notice:<sup>52</sup>

To the people:

Owing to Indian difficulties upon the roads leading from New Mexico to the States, a company of troops will leave Fort Union, New Mexico, for Fort Larned, Kansas, on the first and fifteenth of every month, until further orders, commencing on the first day of March, 1865. The first company will go by the Raton mountain route, the second by the Cimarron route, and so on, alternately. The merchants and others who wish to send trains in after goods can assemble their trains at such points near Fort Union as may be desired by them, so as to have the protection of these periodical escorts, if such be their wish. Arrangements will be made with Major General Curtis, commanding the department of Kansas, so as to send these companies back from Fort Larned at such times as may best promote the interests and safety of all who may have trains upon the road coming in this direction.

By command of General Carleton:

Ben C. Cutler,  
Assistant Adjutant General

Carleton provided these escorts for two months, but by May all the troops that could be spared were in the field, and he had to discontinue the service. At the same time, however, he ordered Col. Kit Carson, with two companies of the First New Mexico Cavalry and a company of California cavalry, to leave Fort Union on May 20 and

---

51. Carleton to Maj. Gen. S. R. Curtis (Fort Leavenworth), Jan. 24, 1865, Condition of the Indian Tribes, 215-16.

52. Reproduced in ibid., 243

establish a cantonment at Cedar Bluff or Cold Spring, on the Cimarron Route. Carson was to occupy this camp until November 1865 and protect trains passing to and from the States. He was also to have a talk with the Kiowa, Comanche, and Cheyenne chiefs. "Tell them this," advised the General. "They must not think to stop the commerce of the plains, nor must they imagine that we are going to keep up escorts with trains. We do this now until we learn whether they will behave or not. If they will not, we will end the matter by a war which will remove any further necessity for escorts."<sup>53</sup>

Near Cedar Spring Carson's men built Camp Nichols, a fort consisting of stone officers' quarters and walled tents surrounded by stone breastworks banked with earth. The first escort left Camp Nichols on June 19 and accompanied a caravan of 70 wagons to Fort Larned. Carson had no opportunity to convey Carleton's sentiments to the hostile chiefs, for he was almost immediately called to Santa Fe to testify before a joint congressional committee investigating Indian affairs. Maj. Albert H. Pfeiffer, his second-in-command, remained to furnish escorts to caravans for the remainder of the season. Camp Nichols was presumably abandoned in November 1865 as planned, for Col. James F. Meline found it in ruins the following summer.<sup>54</sup>

---

53. Carleton to Carson (Taos), May 4, May 8, 1865; Special Order 15, Hq. Dept. of N. Mex., Santa Fe, May 7, 1865, in ibid., 225-26, 245.

54. E. L. Sabin, Kit Carson Days, 1809-1868 (2 v., New York, 1935), II, 751-55; Aurora Hunt, The Army of the Pacific, 1860-1866 (Glendale, 1951), 163-65; Meline, Summer Tour, 269.

Carson's expedition of 1865 marked the end of escort service on a significant scale by troops from Fort Union. The railroad moving west into Kansas in 1866-67 caused traffic on the Santa Fe Trail to shift increasingly to the Mountain Branch. The Army mounted campaigns against the Kiowas, Comanches, and Cheyennes in 1868-69 and again in 1874-75, but not in the locale of the Santa Fe Trail and not primarily because of depredations on the trail. These campaigns crushed the power of the tribes on the southern plains. At the same time, the railroad put an end to travel on the Santa Fe Trail.

PART III  
IDENTIFICATION OF TRAIL REMAINS

The Santa Fe Trail has by no means disappeared. Large portions of its route lay across prairie grasslands that have since been subjected to no other use than stock grazing. Deepened in places by erosion, interrupted in places by modern cultural features, the wide band of ruts cut in the sod by wagons destined for the New Mexican settlements has remained largely undisturbed. The longest stretches of unimpaired trail remains may be followed through the Oklahoma Panhandle and northeastern New Mexico as far as the eastern base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

But there are also prominent traces of other roads in the prairie sod. To separate them from the principal and alternate routes of the Santa Fe Trail is not always an easy task. Historic maps, often crudely drawn and topographically inaccurate, must be studied and compared with modern maps. The journals of early travellers on the trail must be consulted, for they reveal much about terrain features and the route of the trail at different periods of its history. Careful comparison of these data with physical remains is the next step. This is accomplished by study of the large-scale aerial photographs of the Soil Conservation Service and, where possible, by field and aerial reconnaissance. Aerial observation is preferable, for the ruts are frequently so broad that only from the air does their pattern emerge clearly.

These techniques have been seriously applied to the entire length of the Santa Fe Trail by only two researchers who were attempting to relate surviving remains to topographical and cultural features so that modern travelers might follow the trail.<sup>55</sup> Both works are helpful but suffer serious defects. Kenyon Riddle's text is all but worthless. His maps represent exhaustive research, field and documentary, and incorporate much detail. Although crudely drawn, they yield returns to one patient enough to study them. Margaret Long has compiled mileage tables and written minute instructions for following the trail in all its ramifications. Despite inadequate maps, her volume is much the more valuable to the person who wishes to find the ruts of the trail on the ground. Both Riddle and Long have reached similar, and generally correct, conclusions on the route of the trail, but neither adequately documents the findings. Thus the student who must prove his findings is left to ferret out the evidence for himself.

The techniques described above have been applied, for purposes of this study, to an area bounded roughly by Ocate (O-ka-taf) Creek on the north, the Canadian River on the east, and the Mora

---

55. Kenyon Riddle, Records and Maps of the Old Santa Fe Trail (Raton, N.M., 1949); Margaret Long, The Santa Fe Trail: Following the Old Historic Pioneer Trails on Modern Highways (Denver, 1954). Despite the relatively recent publication date of the Long book, much of her work was done before recent changes in highway routes.

River and Sapello (Sap-ee-yó) Creek on the south. Fort Union lies somewhat west and south of the center of this area. It is largely a volcanic plain cut by few streams. Except for the Turkey (Gallinas) Mountains, it is grassland devoted almost exclusively to stock grazing, and thus preserves prominent remains of virtually every wagon road and trail that crossed it during the 19th century. Of the intricate road network centering on Fort Union, only the main and alternate routes of the Santa Fe Trail, together with some of the more important secondary roads that might be confused with the trail, are here described.

Mountain Branch from Ocate Crossing to Fort Union

The Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail entered New Mexico through Raton Pass, as do Highway 85 and the Santa Fe Railroad today. Near the present town of Hoxie the trail divided into three alternates (see inset on Sheet 1). Two joined at Rayado, the third just south of Sweetwater Creek, at the northern base of Ocate Mesa.<sup>56</sup>

---

56. For the exact route of these three alternates see Riddle, Records and Maps, Sheet No. 4. The middle route seems to have been the earliest, with traffic taking increasingly to the western fork in the 1850's, after Lucien Maxwell settled at Cimarron and Kit Carson at Rayado. Kearny's Army of the West took this western fork in 1846, then, according to Lt. William H. Emory: "Colonel Kearny became dissatisfied with the upper road, and determined to strike for the old road */italics mine/*. We did so after reaching the Vermejo, 9 1/2 miles in a diagonal line, and rejoined it at the crossing of the Little Cimarron. . . ." W. H. Emory, Notes of a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 7, 30th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1848), 21.

Its three alternates united, the Mountain Route approached Ocate Creek from the north. It climbed Ocate Mesa, a large volcanic plain that extends south and east beyond Fort Union. The trail ran along the eastern base of another mesa, higher, but long and narrow, which comes to a point on the bank of Ocate Creek. As the stream here has cut a canyon in Ocate Mesa, there is no ford. The trail therefore turned sharply to the west and, channeled by the canyon on the south and the mesa on the north, ran upstream two and one-half miles to an easy ford.

Associated with these prominent terrain features, the Ocate Crossing is described in detail by most diarist and identified with precision by most map-makers. The Emory map (1846) shows it quite plainly, and Emory has left a good description, although the Army of the West left the main trail at two points in this vicinity. Lt. J. W. Abert, who had fallen ill and been left at Bent's Fort, followed Kearny a month later. At the Ocate he stayed on the road:

Presently . . . we ascended to a "mesa" or horizontal plain; and, when we looked to our right hand, we saw another horizontal plain yet higher than the one we were then travelling on, and covered also with a bed of volcanic rock about five feet in thickness. Keeping close to the foot of this highest "mesa," we reached the "Ocate;" as it is cañoned, that is, is enclosed with high rocky walls, we were forced to go two miles up stream in order to reach the crossing.<sup>57</sup>

---

57. J. W. Abert, Report of Lieutenant J. W. Abert, of His Examination of New Mexico, in the Years, 1846-47, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 23, 30th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1848), 27.

Maps by Marcy (1849), Judd and Kern (1850), Parke and Kern (1851), Morrison (1872), and Wheeler (1875) leave no doubt that the road in the vicinity of Ocate Crossing remained entirely unchanged from 1846 until the coming of the railroad and modern highways. Aerial photos and field and aerial reconnaissance confirm the existence of excellent remains of the trail here.

The advance guard of the Army of the West and the First Dragoons under Maj. E. V. Sumner camped at the Ocate Crossing on the night of August 11, 1846. The night before, the Americans had captured 10 or 12 Mexicans from Taos, who had been set free the following morning. At Ocate Crossing two more Mexicans came into camp. They said that they were from the town of Mora and were scouting for signs of hostile Indians. Kearny had no doubt that they were spies who had blundered into the American camp, and held them over night. The next morning he released one of them and sent him back to Mora with proclamations, setting forth the pacific intentions of the Americans if unopposed, for the alcalde and the people of the town, together with a message asking the alcalde to meet the Army at the Mora Crossing. At noon the troops broke camp and marched south on the trail.<sup>58</sup>

The next evening, August 12, the remainder of the Army of the West under Col. Alexander Doniphan camped at the Ocate Crossing. The Colonel assembled his men and delivered a speech "reproving

---

58. Emory, Notes, 22-23.

them for their indiscretion in wasting their ammunition upon game, assuring them . . . that there was every reason to apprehend an engagement with the enemy in a short time; that strict discipline and prompt obedience were essential [the Missourians never learned this, but nevertheless performed some remarkable military feats] . . . ; that their own honor, and the reputation of their State, demanded the cheerful performance of duty; that to retreat or surrender was a proposition that could not be considered; and that we must conquer or die, for defeat was annihilation." The next morning the Missourians followed the trail south.<sup>59</sup>

Immediately after crossing Ocate Creek the road again forked, its two alternates reaching a maximum distance apart of about four miles before coming together just south of Turkey Rock, a prominent landmark on the northwest edge of the Turkey Mountains. The road then continued southwest to a point two miles north of the present Fort Union visitor center, where it again forked, one branch continuing directly to the site of the first Fort Union, the other veering south to the site of the second and third Forts Union.<sup>60</sup> By aerial photo measurement, the distance from Ocate Crossing to

---

59. Hughes, Doniphan's Expedition, 69-70.

60. The first Fort Union was built in 1851 by Colonel Sumner at the base of the bluffs on the western side of Wolf Creek valley. In 1861, when the Confederates invaded New Mexico, a star-fort earthen fieldwork was built in the middle of the valley east of Wolf Creek. In 1863, the Confederates having been expelled from New Mexico, a third fort along conventional lines was begun adjacent to the star fort. It was garrisoned until 1891.

Fort Union on the western alternate is 18 miles, on the eastern about 20 miles.

The country between the Ocate Crossing and Fort Union is a rolling volcanic plain with few distinguishing terrain features other than low volcanic hills. Rarely did travellers record descriptions of this country, and identification of the trail rests mainly on map and physical evidence. The Wheeler survey map (1875) shows these two alternates clearly, and relates them to the few elevations in the area.

Ruts defining the western alternate are plainly visible today for the entire distance between Ocate Crossing and Fort Union. That this road was in use as early as 1846 is indicated by Lieutenant Abert, who described the two volcanic hills between which the road passed three miles south of Ocate Crossing.<sup>61</sup>

The eastern alternate may be followed from Ocate Crossing to Highway 120, and from Turkey Spring (Ojo de Gallinas) to Fort Union, but there is no evidence of it between the highway and spring, a distance of about four miles. It is possible that this road bore little traffic, and that the prominent ruts at the northern and southern ends result from travel on other roads that in these places duplicated the alternate but at Highway 120 on the north and Turkey Spring on the south diverged towards other

---

61. Abert, Report, 101.

destinations.<sup>62</sup> That such an alternate existed in 1875, however, is shown by the Wheeler map. That it was in use as early as 1846 may be inferred from Susan Magoffin's diary, for the Magoffin party, following the Mountain Branch, camped on the night of August 24, 1846, at Turkey Spring.<sup>63</sup> Further support for early use of these roads comes from D. C. Lowe, a dragoon who came to Fort Union in 1854. Travelling northeast from the fort to Turkey Spring, he was about eight miles from Fort Union when "I saw Colonel [Thomas T.] Fauntleroy, staff, band and 'D' Troop [First Dragoons] en route from Riado [sic.] to Fort Union. The shortcut that I was on and the road they were travelling were a mile apart."<sup>64</sup>

Turkey Spring was a major road junction during the years of the Santa Fe Trail. In addition to the eastern alternate of the Mountain Branch, the Fort Leavenworth Road and a heavily travelled cutoff to Wagon Mound passed by the spring. As stated above, all three, united with the western alternate of the Mountain Branch,

---

62. Between Fort Union and Turkey Spring, this road is the same as the Fort Leavenworth Road and a road that skirts the Turkey Mountains to the north and joins the Cimarron Branch of the Santa Fe Trail at Wagon Mound. Ruts that coincide with the alternate between Ocate Crossing and Highway 120 turn east and follow the highway to Wagon Mound, probably denoting a road to Wagon Mound that came into use after the Wheeler map of 1875.

63. Stella M. Drumm (ed.), Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico: the Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-1847 (New Haven, 1926), 89.

64. Lowe, Five Years a Dragoon, 183.

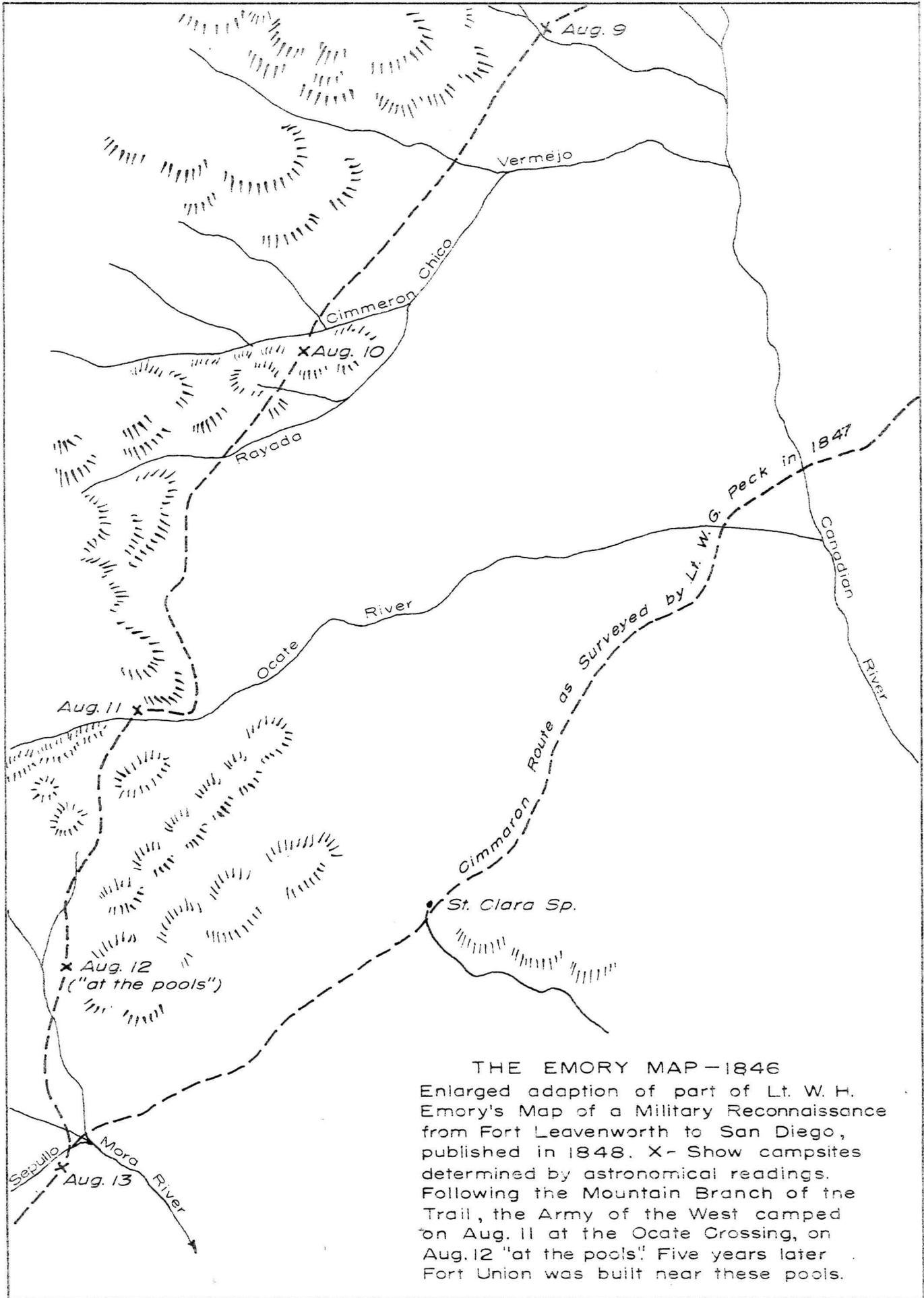
formed one road between Turkey Rock and Fort Union. The Fort Leavenworth Road went northeast from Turkey Spring, passed at the eastern base of a volcanic crater called La Chata (flat-bottomed boat), and dropped off Ocate Mesa to strike for the Canadian and a junction with the Cimarron Branch. The cutoff from Fort Union to Wagon Mound headed directly east from Turkey Spring, hugged the northern foothills of the Turkey Mountains, and joined the Cimarron Branch at Wagon Mound. Both of these roads are shown on the Wheeler map (1875). Judging by the prominence of the ruts, they carried considerable traffic. It is probable that most of the caravans destined for Fort Union on the Cimarron Branch used one of these roads, the former from the Canadian, the latter from Wagon Mound.<sup>65</sup>

#### Mountain Branch from Fort Union to Mora Valley

In the immediate vicinity of Fort Union, and between the fort and the Mora Crossings, there is a complex network of old roads with remains visible today. Through comparison of these remains with

---

65. The dragoon party of which Lowe was a member escorted Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke to the States in 1854. They used the Cimarron Branch, but reached it by one of these cutoffs. Ibid., 183-84. A similar escort for Col. James F. Meline in 1866 used the cutoff to Wagon Mound. In his journal and on the accompanying map, Meline implies a belief that this cutoff was part of the main Santa Fe Trail. Meline calls Turkey Spring Burgwin's Spring. Meline, Two Thousand Miles on Horseback, 261-62 and map.



THE EMORY MAP - 1846

Enlarged adaption of part of Lt. W. H. Emory's Map of a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth to San Diego, published in 1848. X- Show campsites determined by astronomical readings. Following the Mountain Branch of the Trail, the Army of the West camped on Aug. 11 at the Ocate Crossing, on Aug. 12 "at the pools". Five years later Fort Union was built near these pools.

historic maps and with the journals of early travellers, it is nevertheless possible with reasonable assurance to identify the several routes followed by wagons arriving in Wolf Creek valley on the Mountain Branch, whose route north of Fort Union is open to little question.

The key terrain features between Fort Union and the Mora Valley are two large pools of water in Wolf Creek valley between two and four miles directly south of the second and third Forts Union. Named Los Pozos (water-holes) by the Spanish, they became an important camping place on the trail before establishment of Fort Union.<sup>66</sup> We know that Los Pozos lay on the trail in 1846, before the founding of Fort Union, for the Army of the West camped there on August 12 of that year. Emory's journal gives the correct mileage from the camp of August 11 at Ocate Crossing, and his map identifies the camp of August 12 as "at

---

66. It is probable that Los Pozos were chosen in 1851 as the general location of Fort Union, and that the exact site was selected after the first troops arrived. Pvt. James A. Bennett tells of finding three companies of dragoons camped at Los Pozos and noted in his diary, "Commenced building a fort." Clinton E. Brooks and Frank D. Reeve, "James A. Bennett: A Dragoon in New Mexico, 1850-1856," New Mexico Historical Review, XXII, 1 (January, 1947), 73. Many years later another of Sumner's dragoons recalled that "Forty years ago, this evening, the command of Col. E. Sumner . . . formed camp at what was then known as Los Posos, now Fort Union." Las Vegas Optic, July 15, 1891. The Santa Fe Weekly Gazette, Feb. 19, 1853, refers to Fort Union having been built at "Holes in the Prairie."

the pools."<sup>67</sup> Lieutenant Abert, following Kearny a month later, also camped at Los Pozos, which he called "Ponds in the Prairie." He was more specific than Emory. Travelling at night and searching for a camping place, "At last we heard the cry of water, and we found ourselves close by some fine pools, that were, fortunately, just in the old road, or we could not have seen them *[italics mine]*."<sup>68</sup>

Thus it is apparent that, before the founding of Fort Union, the Mountain Branch touched Los Pozos. To link these pools with the Mountain Branch north of the maze of roads that later developed in connection with Fort Union is not difficult. Well-defined ruts, made wide and deep by the heavy volume of traffic that used this road after establishment of the fort, may be followed directly north from Los Pozos along a natural roadway, through the present residence and utility area of Fort Union National Monument, then north and northeast towards Turkey Rock. Another series of ruts, diverging at Los Pozos and converging at the hospital ruins, lies immediately east of and parallel to this trail. Given the configuration of the terrain,

---

67. Emory, Notes, 24. That night Emory's assistants took astronomical readings and arrived at a latitude of  $35^{\circ} 54' 21''$  and longitude of 6h. 59m. 49s. (based on Washington Naval Observatory), which is  $104^{\circ} 57' 15''$  (based on Greenwich). A triangulation station of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey at Fort Union gives the fort's position as  $35^{\circ} 54' 21''$  latitude,  $105^{\circ} 00' 43''$  longitude. See also R/Adm Charles Pierce, Asst. Dir., US C&GS to Utley, Oct. 14, 1959, in Region Three Office files.

68. Abert, Report, 27, 101.

there can be little doubt that, in the years before 1851, the Mountain Branch went directly through the site where the second and third Forts Union were later built.

Continuing south from Los Pozos, the most prominent ruts today skirt the eastern shore of the pools, ascend a gentle slope, drop into the Mora Valley, and cross the Fort Union entrance road before disappearing in the cultivated lands northeast of Tiptonville. At the top of the slope the road forks, the main trail continuing as just described to Tiptonville and Barclay's Fort, another road keeping to the benchlands and ending at Watrous Store (see Sheet 3). This route, as will be shown, cannot be entirely reconciled with evidence in the journals of 1846 and earlier. It therefore seems apparent that the trails to Tiptonville and Watrous Store developed after 1848, when Barclay's Fort was established, and 1849, when William Tipton settled at the site of Tiptonville and Samuel Watrous built Watrous Store.

We know that the trail in 1846 touched Los Pozos, and we know also that, shortly after crossing the Mora, it went by the home of James Boney. According to Emory, Boney lived on the Mora two miles above its junction with the Sapello.<sup>69</sup> And according to Joab Houghton he lived about 600 yards above the later site of Barclay's Fort, which is definitely located on the 1876 map of the Scolly Grant.<sup>70</sup> Although

---

69. Emory, Notes, 25.

70. Testimony of Joab Houghton, House Report No. 321, 36th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1860), 175.

these two observers differ by about one-half mile, their information still permits us to establish the approximate site of Boney's home as shown on Sheet 3.

A third checkpoint, about half-way between Boney's place and Los Pozos, may be deduced from Abert's journal. Returning to the States early in 1847, Abert camped on the night of January 2 one mile south of the Sapello Crossing. The next day his party travelled ten miles, fording the Sapello and Mora, and halting for the night about five miles north of the Mora Crossing. They camped "about three-fourths of a mile from the road, in a mountain gorge, where the high precipices which surrounded us completely protected us from the cutting winds. We had snow water for our own use, and drove our mules to a spring which was about a mile distant, near 'Ponds in the Prairie.'"<sup>71</sup> Abert obviously camped in one of the coves of the bluff that lines the west side of Wolf Creek Valley. To have been three-fourths of a mile from the road and a mile from Los Pozos, he would necessarily have been travelling on a road at least one-fourth mile west of Los Pozos.

It remains, then, to find the ruts of an old road linking Boney's house with Los Pozos by a route conforming to the information in Abert's journal. Such a road skirts the most northerly of the two ponds on the north and west, ascends the benchland just south of the site where the Fort Union lime kilns were later built, and reaches

---

71. Abert, Report, 101.

the Mora at a point near the site of Boney's ranch. This road is not as well defined today as the other routes of the Mountain Branch, for most of the Santa Fe caravans followed the Cimarron Branch before establishment of Fort Union in 1851, by which time this early trail had probably ceased to be used.

The advance guard of Kearny's army and Sumner's dragoons reached Los Pozos on the evening of August 12, 1846, and set up camp. They left the following noon, just as Doniphan's men arrived at the water holes and went into camp. About a mile south of the campsite William Bent, who commanded a special detachment of "spy-guards," met Kearny with an ensign and four privates of the Mexican Army. A paper found on the officer was an order to reconnoiter the Mountain Branch of the trail in order to learn the position and strength of the American troops. He said that 600 Mexicans were waiting at Las Vegas to give battle, a force and an event that never materialized. Kearny detained the Mexicans. As the soldiers descended the slope into the Mora Valley, someone reported a company of Mexicans at the river crossing. Lieutenant Emory led a detail from the (St. Louis) Laclede Rangers to investigate, but the Mexicans turned out to be the pickets of a stock corral.<sup>72</sup>

---

72. Emory, Notes, 24; Dairies of Abraham R. Johnson and Marcellus B. Edwards in Ralph P. Bieber (ed.), Marching with the Army of the West, 1846-1848, Southwest Historical Series, IV (Glendale, 1936), 97-98, 151.

There remains to be considered yet another branch of the trail between Fort Union and the Mora. As already shown, the Mountain Branch forked two miles north of Fort Union. The main branch turned south, followed the east bank of Wolf Creek through the second and third Forts Union, and skirted Los Pozos, the earlier route on the west, the later on the east. The other branch, presumably developed after 1851, crossed Wolf Creek and led directly to the first Fort Union.

An old road displaying characteristic wide and deep ruts goes south from the first fort along the base of the bluffs that line the western side of Wolf Creek valley. This road is about one mile west of Los Pozos and the main Mountain Branch, but converges to join it at Tiptonville. It was probably an alternate route of the Mountain Branch between Fort Union and Tiptonville. The remains, in contrast to less heavily travelled and more recent historic roads in the vicinity, look like those of the Santa Fe Trail. Moreover, logic favors this conclusion.

From 1851 until 1861 all traffic to Fort Union from the States had to cross Wolf Creek to the western edge of the valley in order to reach the first fort. For wagons continuing to the settlements, it was about one mile shorter to Tiptonville if they followed this alternate rather than return to the main route east of the creek. It is therefore logical to conclude that, during these years, most of the travel on the Mountain Branch used this alternate. Even after the fort was moved to the site east

of Wolf Creek, some traffic still went west of the creek and then to Tiptonville, for the Fort Union arsenal was built on the site of the first fort. This alternate appears on the Enos map of Fort Union Military Reservation (1866) and the Wheeler map (1875).

Cimarron Branch from Wagon Mound to Mora Valley

Wagon Mound early became one of the most famous landmarks on the Cimarron Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Its distinctive form, resembling a covered wagon drawn by a span of oxen, came into view many miles to the north. Santa Clara Spring, at its western base, made the site a favorite camping place. One more day's march would bring weary travellers to the Mora Crossings and the New Mexican frontier.

In the vicinity of Wagon Mound, before the American conquest, traders could count on meeting a detachment of Mexican soldiers sent from Santa Fe to prevent smuggling, sell provisions, and protect the trains from Indians. Dr. Adolphus Wislizenus described such a party that met the caravan of Albert Speyer at Wagon Mound in June 1846.

During my excursion [up Wagon Mound] the caravan had come to a halt, and camped on a spring near the Wagon Mound, called Santa Clara. On riding to camp I was taken by surprise at hearing suddenly the warlike sound of a trumpet, and seeing a captain, with 30 Mexican soldiers and a flock of sheep, encamped near the caravan. The soldiers looked as poor and miserable as they could be. Some wore pieces of uniform; some were dressed in mere rags; some seated on mules, some walked barefooted. All of them were armed with short lances, like the Ciboleros, but few had rusty guns. . . . It was the usual escort sent out by the Governor of Santa Fe to receive the caravans. . . . <sup>73</sup>

---

73. Adolphus Wislizenus, Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico, Connected with Col. Doniphan's Expedition, in 1846 and 1847, Senate Misc. Doc. No. 26, 30th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1848), 16.

The Mormon Battalion under Lt. Andrew J. Smith and the Second Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers under Col. Sterling Price, enroute to Santa Fe to join Colonel Doniphan, camped at Santa Clara Spring the following October. The Mound proved an object of great curiosity to the Missourians. Some tried to climb it, but only one succeeded. By contrast, the Mormons, absorbed in a feud with Lieutenant Smith and the battalion surgeon, took little notice of the Mound or, indeed, of any other topographical feature on the route.<sup>74</sup>

Wagon Mound also acquired a somewhat sinister reputation, for hostile Ute and Jicarilla Apache warriors often lurked nearby. In May 1847 two companies of the Second Missouri Mounted Volunteers and a detachment of the Laclede Rangers, under Maj. B. B. Edmondson, were scouting the country around Mora. A grazing party from this command, camped near Wagon Mound, was attacked by Indians about May 20. They killed one soldier, wounded two more, and made off with 250 horses. Major Edmondson immediately came to the relief of the grazing detail, finding it in camp about eight miles from Wagon Mound on May 24. Here also were 12 sutler wagons belonging to the firm of Rich and Pomroy. Enroute to Santa Fe with sutler goods for the army of occupation, they had been attacked the day before

---

74. Several journals cover the march of Price and Smith, but see especially "William H. Richardson's Journal of Doniphan's Expedition," Missouri Historical Review, XXII (1927-28), 226; and "The Journal of Robert S. Bliss, with the Mormon Battalion," Utah Historical Quarterly, IV, 3 (July, 1931), 74.

at Santa Clara Spring. Several charges on the wagons failed. Then the Indians, hoping to immobilize the train, drove off between 60 and 70 oxen and slaughtered them on the prairie nearby. Probably learning of Edmondson's approach, they lifted the siege. The Missouri cavalrymen followed the hostile trail to the canyon of the Canadian River, where they surprised several hundred Indians and Mexican allies. After a spirited encounter, the raiders withdrew and, their trail obliterated by an antelope herd, escaped.<sup>75</sup>

Disaster struck again at Wagon Mound in May 1850. Utes and Apaches attacked the mail coach from the States. They killed the mail carriers and five or six travellers accompanying it, in all ten men, and plundered the mail. A party of traders going to Missouri discovered the bodies and, returning to Las Vegas, reported the massacre to Capt. E. B. Alexander, commanding the military post there. Alexander sent a mounted detachment of the Third Artillery under Lt. Ambrose E. Burnside and Lt. P. W. L. Plympton to examine the scene and bury the dead. Alexander Barclay, of Barclay's Fort at the Mora Crossing, accompanied the troops. Burnside and his men found the mail wagon

about half a mile from the foot of Wagon Mound with the Tongue broken & a dead mule still in harness, attached to it. Two of the Bodies, in a complete state of putrefaction, were found in the Wagon, the

---

75. Edmondson to Col. Sterling Price, Santa Clara Springs, June 14, 1847, in Report of the Secretary of War, 1848, Pt. 1, 537-38, typescript in Arrott Collection.

remaining Eight very much eaten by Wolves, in its immediate Vicinity the farthest one probably seventy five Yards off, one horse and two Mules were killed near the Wagon, & two American Horses near the foot of the Mound; The Ground from these two horses to the Wagon, was strewn with arrows. On the road which passes the foot of the Mound & about a Mile from the Wagon we found where the party had encamped before they were attacked; . . . We . . . secured all the mail that could be found which consisted principally of "blank forms" & a few private papers.<sup>76</sup>

After the building of Fort Union in 1851, Wagon Mound became a less favored haunt of raiding warriors, who moved their locus of operations farther east on the trail. Travellers thenceforth could count themselves out of danger upon reaching Wagon Mound.

The Cimarron Branch approached Wagon Mound from the northeast, at about a 45° angle to the modern highway. Extensive remains are visible from the air to a point about three miles north of the present town of Wagon Mound, which lies in a gap between the Mound on the east and two volcanic hills, known to early travelers as Pilot Knobs, on the west. Santa Clara Spring is located in a canyon one mile northwest of town. A dam has been built across the canyon and a reservoir, fed by the spring, created. Santa Clara Creek is thus dry.

The Wagon Mound-Fort Union Cutoff of the Cimarron Branch (see page 43 and Sheet 1) strikes west from the present town, skirting the

---

76. Burnside to Lt. J. N. Ward, Post Adjutant, Las Vegas, May 23, 1850; Alexander to Lt. Lafayette McLaws, Actg. Asst. Adjt. Gen. at Santa Fe, Las Vegas, May 24, 1850, in Abel (ed.), The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun, 197-200. See also Davis, El Gringo, 47-48; and Majors, Seventy Years on the Frontier, 138-39.

northern base of Pilot Knobs, and reaches Fort Union by a route along the northern foothills of the Turkey Mountains. Good remains are visible south of Highway 120 for some distance beginning at a point one and one-half miles west of town. Two monuments west of the railroad station purport to show where the main trail crossed the railroad, but ruts are not again unmistakably evident until reaching a point about a half-mile south of the village limits.<sup>77</sup>

Between Wagon Mound and the Mora Valley the Cimarron Branch followed the path of least resistance, keeping the Turkey Mountains and Maxson Crater to the north and west and crossing Dog and Wolf Creeks before dropping into the Mora Valley. From Wagon Mound southwest for three and one-half miles the trail lies between Highway 85 and the railroad. Judging from the ruts that appear on aerial photos, it then forked, the two branches rounding a hill mass on both sides. The western fork immediately crosses the highway, and the eastern fork crosses it 10 1/2 miles farther south, just before the two alternates again unite to form a single road at the foot of Maxson Crater. Calley's Lake is immediately south of the hill mass and thus lies between the two forks. The trail then follows the highway, often with ruts on both sides, across Dog and Wolf Creeks

---

77. See Long, Santa Fe Trail, 25; and N. H. Darton et al, Guidebook to the Western United States: Part C, The Santa Fe Route, U.S.G.S. Bulletin No. 613 (Washington, 1915), 65, for Wagon Mound's associations with the Santa Fe Trail.

to a point one-half mile south of Wolf Creek crossing. Here it again forks, one branch continuing beside the highway to Watrous Store, the other turning west to Tiptonville, thus reaching the Mora River at separate crossings.

The maps of Emory (1846), Marcy (1849), Judd and Kern (1850), Parke and Kern (1851), and Morrison(1872) all show the Cimarron Branch between Wagon Mound and the Mora Valley at the junction with the Sapello. They route it across the plain at the southeastern edge of the Turkey Mountains. These maps are not sufficiently detailed to permit more than a general identification, and the Wheeler map (1875), which also traces this road, does not differentiate it from a number of other roads that by 1875 had come into use in this area. However, from the journal of Wislizenus, who accompanied the Speyer caravan in 1846, and from Marcy's emigrant guide of 1859, it is apparent that the main trail crossed both Dog and Wolf Creeks.<sup>78</sup> This fact is also evident from maps of the John Scolly Grant drawn in 1846 and 1876, which do not extend north of Dog Creek.<sup>79</sup> Judging from physical evidence as well as from the Wheeler map, the only road between Wagon Mound and the Mora Valley at Tiptonville and

---

78. Wislizenus, Memoir, 16; Randolph B. Marcy, The Prairie Traveler: A Handbook for Overland Expeditions (New York, 1859), App. II, 262-63.

79. These maps are filed with the John Scolly papers, Claim No. 9, in the Office of the Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe, N. M. The Scolly Grant extended six and one-half miles east, west, north, and south from a point at the junction of the Mora and Sapello.

Watrous that crossed both streams is the one whose route is shown on Sheet 1. The distance between Wagon Mound and Mora Crossing by this road is 22 miles, which coincides with a table of distances compiled by Manuel Alvarez, U.S. Consul at Santa Fe, in 1839.<sup>80</sup>

After the establishment of Fort Union in 1851, one or more cutoffs apparently linked the Cimarron Branch with the fort by routes that passed south of the Turkey Mountains. One seems to have gone south of Maxson Crater, as shown on Sheet 1. The Wheeler map (1875) and the 1876 map of the Scolly Grant both show this road, the latter labeling it "Fort Union to Cherry Valley and Fort Bascom," and extending it across the main trace of the Cimarron Branch and on to the southeast. Traffic to Cherry Valley (modern Shoemaker) and Fort Bascom probably accounts for its prominent remains today. Another road, north of Maxson Crater, may also have been used, although not shown on Sheet 1. The Wheeler map suggests such use, but surviving remains do not warrant definite conclusions.

#### The Mora and Sapello Crossings

The Mountain and Cimarron Branches of the Santa Fe Trail joined at the Mora River, which here forms a pleasant, tree-lined valley

---

80. "Distancias de Santa Fe al Independencia," Diario 1839, Manuel Alvarez Papers, Historical Society of New Mexico, Santa Fe. There is also in the same volume a compilation of "Distancias de Santa Fe al Fuerte Leavenworth por el Fr'te de Bent." Both tables are reproduced in Ralph E. Twitchell, The Leading Facts of New Mexican History (5 v., Cedar Rapids, 1911-17), III, 397 notes 254 and 255.

known since Spanish times as La Junta de los Rios Mora y Sapello-- the junction of the Mora and Sapello Rivers. Until engineers of the Santa Fe Railroad laid out the town of Watrous in 1879, the area was known simply as La Junta. It early became an important camping place on the trail, for the Mora traced the New Mexican frontier, separating the settlements from the arid plains infested by hostile Indians.

From the first years of the trade, travellers destined for Missouri formed the custom of camping at La Junta until wagons and men numerous enough for self-protection had collected, whereupon the entire group elected officers and adopted regulations for the journey across the plains. An observer who passed La Junta in 1848 wrote:

As Independence is the eastern, so may the Mora be considered the western port of the great Santa Fe Trail. It is here that the returning caravans make their final preparations for the trip, and catch their final glimpse of even Mexican civilization. The Mora is therefore, during the season of travel, a halting place of no little importance, and presents at times, when visited by busy traders, quite a lively appearance; indeed during the summer of 1848 there was scarcely a day which did not witness the arrival or departure from this camping-ground of a fleet of those prairie ships, the unwieldy Santa Fe Wagons.<sup>81</sup>

It is not surprising that a settlement grew up at La Junta early in the history of the trail. The soil of the valley was fertile, and surrounding grasslands were perfect for stock grazing. The

---

81. George D. Brewerton, Overland with Kit Carson: A Narrative of the Old Spanish Trail in '48 (New York, 1930), 219.

two branches of the trail joined here, and traders and travellers weary from the long journey across the plains made good customers. After 1843, therefore, La Junta replaced Las Vegas (which in 1833 had replaced San Miguel) as the first New Mexican settlement reached by caravans from Missouri.

Leader of the colonization scheme was John Scolly, who with nine others on March 27, 1843, petitioned Gov. Manuel Armijo for a grant of land at La Junta. The history of Scolly's efforts to have the grant legalized, first by the Mexican regime, later by the American, spanned 17 years.<sup>82</sup> But Scolly and his associates, together with an Englishman named James Boney, an American named George Carter, and several others who settled on lands with permission of the grantees, had by November 1843 colonized the triangular valley at the junction of the two streams.<sup>83</sup> The first few years were difficult, for hostile Indians and Texan raiders under "Colonel" Charles A. Warfield made life on this frontier dangerous.

The settlement, however, was on a firm footing by 1846, when so many literate travellers passed through it. The Army of the West camped in the valley, near the crossing of the Sapello, on the night

---

82. All documents in the Scolly case are reproduced in House Report No. 321, 36th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1860). The original documents are filed in the Office of the Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe, N. M.

83. Testimony of Judge Joab Houghton, in ibid., 175.

of August 13, 1846--"the first settlement," wrote Lieutenant Emory in his journal, "we had seen in 775 miles."<sup>84</sup> If La Junta was New Mexico the Missourians wanted no part of it. Pvt. Frank Edwards recalled that "Nothing could be more discouraging to men fated to remain a whole year in Mexican territory than the first view of this town. The houses or huts were built half underground, and consisted of but one room roofed with logs. . . . The few Mexicans who came around the camp certainly did not inspire us with any fear, but rather with disgust--swarthy, lean and dirty, in a few rags and with a torn old blanket around them, they were pictures of misery."<sup>85</sup> Another soldier thought the houses resembled brickkilns.<sup>86</sup> Susan Magoffin, passing La Junta 12 days later, compared them to "some of the genteel pig stys in the States."<sup>87</sup> While La Junta contrasted unfavorably with their Missouri homes, the soldiers and other travellers found the cheese, milk, and other produce available there a welcome change from the fare of the road. James Boney drove a herd of cattle into Kearny's camp and slaughtered the largest and fattest for the troops.<sup>88</sup>

---

84. Emory, Notes, 24.

85. Frank S. Edwards, A Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan (Philadelphia, 1847), 40-41.

86. Diary of Abraham R. Johnson in Bieber (ed.), Marching with the Army of the West, 98.

87. Drum (ed.), Down the Santa Fe Trail, 90-91.

88. Emory, Notes, 25.

Men of the Second Missouri a month later discovered an additional kind of refreshment--whiskey at \$1.00 a pint dispensed by a Frenchman from a barrel strapped to a mule.<sup>89</sup>

In 1849 Alexander Barclay, an eccentric Englishman, and J. B. Doyle, an American, came to La Junta. They had been Indian traders on the Platte and Arkansas Rivers, and planned to build a trading post at the Mora Crossings to engage in the Indian trade and sell produce to passing travellers on the Santa Fe Trail. During the 1850's Barclay's Fort on the Mora was a well-known stopping place on the trail and a relay station for the Independence-Santa Fe Mail.<sup>90</sup> W. W. H. Davis, enroute to Santa Fe to become Attorney General of New Mexico, described the post as it appeared in November 1853:

It is a large adobe establishment, and, like the immense caravansaries of the East, serves as an abode for men and animals. From the outside it presents a rather formidable as well as a neat appearance, being pierced with loop-holes and ornamented with battlements. The rooms within were damp and uncomfortable, and all the surroundings looked so gloomy, the hour being twilight, that it reminded me of some old state prison where the good and great of former times have languished away their lives. . . .<sup>91</sup>

Surrounding Barclay's Fort were an ice-house, a mill capable of grinding 45 bushels of grain each day, corrals, and miscellaneous out-buildings. Two large acequias ran the mill and irrigated 200

---

89. "Richardson's Journal of Doniphan's Expedition," 227.

90. Anon., "History of New Mexico," c. 1895. Typescript excerpts in Miscellaneous folder, Arrott Collection

91. Davis, El Gringo, 51.

acres of farm land on which the proprietors grew fruit, grain, and vegetables. There were also large numbers of cattle, horses, and hogs.<sup>92</sup>

Barclay and Doyle at once found themselves at odds with the military authorities at Fort Union. When the Army established a farm on the Mora River above La Junta, Barclay protested that it seriously threatened his farming operations by reducing the flow of water in the river.<sup>93</sup> He also served notice on Colonel Sumner that Lt. John Pope's survey of the Fort Union military reservation encroached on his lands and that he would defend his title, which seems to have been obtained through purchase from the Scolly grantees.<sup>94</sup> In 1853 Capt. James H. Carleton caught Barclay selling whiskey to his troops and destroyed a large quantity of the merchandise. Determined to sell whatever he wished to whomever he wished on his own land, Barclay sued Carleton in the U. S. Court at Taos, with what result has not been ascertained.<sup>95</sup> Later, when Col. W. W. Loring commanded Fort Union, he accused Doyle (Barclay had died two years earlier)

---

92. Santa Fe Weekly Gazette, Jan. 15, 1853.

93. Barclay to C.O., Fort Union, Oct. 27, 1857, NA, AC.

94. Barclay to Sumner, May 24, 1852, NA, AC.

95. Fragment of letter, Carleton to Lt. S. D. Sturgis, Actg. Asst. Adjt. Gen. at Albuquerque, c. April 1853, NA, AC. As the Scolly Grant was later legalized by the United States, Barclay probably was legally right.

of sending Dick Wootton, later proprietor of the Raton Pass toll road, to the plains with a train loaded with powder for sale to the Indians.<sup>96</sup>

After Barclay's death in 1855, Doyle operated the trading post until 1857, when he sold it to William Kroenig and, in 1859, joined the rush to the Colorado gold diggings. Kroenig lived at the post until 1868, when he built his own ranch (still standing) next to Phoenix Lake. The buildings of Barclay's Fort fell into ruin after abandonment of Fort Union in 1891 and were swept away by flood waters in 1906.<sup>97</sup> William Kroenig died at his home in December 1900.<sup>98</sup>

Samuel B. Watrous, who had come to New Mexico from Vermont in 1837, settled with his family at La Junta in 1849. He bought one-seventh interest in the Scolly Grant (108,000 acres) and built the great adobe ranch house and store that still stands beside Highway 85 at the junction of the Mora and Sapello. He amassed large herds of cattle, which grazed the grasslands north of the Mora, and sold merchandise to the troops at Fort Union and to

---

96. Loring to Doyle, Feb. 23, 1857, NA, AC.

97. "History of New Mexico;" L. H. Kronig to D. D. Mawson, Historian at Fort Union NM, Aug. 18, 1959. L. H. Kronig is the grandson of William Kroenig. He lives at Gonzales, Texas, with his father, who was born at the Phoenix Ranch at La Junta in 1869 and lived in the Mora and Sapello valleys for 75 years.

98. Santa Fe New Mexican, Dec. 22, 1900.

travellers on the Santa Fe Trail.<sup>99</sup> In the fall of 1857 he established another ranch, on the Canadian River 130 miles to the southeast, but Comanches visited it the following spring, killed the American overseer, ran off the Mexican laborers and the stock, and burned all of the buildings.<sup>100</sup> One of Watrous' daughters in 1849 married William Tipton, who went into partnership with his father-in-law and settled on the north side of the Mora a mile from Barclay's Fort. The village of Tiptonville grew up around his ranch. Another daughter married William Kroenig, and a third George Gregg, who managed the Barlow-Sanderson stage station (still standing) a mile south of the Phoenix Lake during the 1860's and 1870's.<sup>101</sup> When the Santa Fe Railroad reached La Junta in 1879, the chief engineer named the new town laid out around the station after S. B. Watrous.<sup>102</sup> Watrous took his own life in 1886.<sup>103</sup>

The valley in the angle formed by the Mora River and Sapello Creek has been under cultivation for many years. There are therefore few visible remains of the old road system to which the written

---

99. "History of New Mexico;" Anna N. Clark, "Fifty Years of Change," New Mexico Magazine, XVI, 2 (February, 1939), 15-17, 35-38.

100. Col. John Garland to Asst. Adj. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, May 1, 1858, NA, AC.

101. "History of New Mexico;" Clark, "Fifty Years."

102. Santa Fe Weekly New Mexican, June 28, 1879.

103. Santa Fe New Mexican, March 17, 1886.

evidence of early diarists can be applied. By the use of maps and journals, however, it is possible to trace the approximate routes of the trail in this area and to locate the main crossings of the two streams.

There were several places at which the trails crossed the Mora. The crossing of the Mountain Branch before about 1849 has already been discussed, and is shown on Sheet 3. After 1849 the Mountain Branch passed by Tipton's Ranch and, it is clear from the Parke Map (1851) and the maps of the Scolly Grant (1876), crossed the Mora at Barclay's Fort, whose exact location is shown on the latter map. It is apparent from ruts visible today north of the Mora that a spur of the Cimarron Branch diverged from the main route at Wolf Creek and joined the Mountain Branch at Tipton's Ranch, permitting traffic arriving by the former route to pass Tipton's and cross the Mora to Barclay's Fort. As late as 1859, however, the main Cimarron road passed Watrous Store, crossed the Mora just west of the present highway bridge, and followed the west bank of the Sapello to a junction with the Mountain Branch at the Sapello Crossing.

That the two roads joined at the Sapello Crossing is clear from the maps of Emory (1846), Marcy (1849), Judd and Kern (1850), and Parke and Kern (1851). Most journalists, too, allude to the junction at the Sapello Crossing. Abert, for example, says that the Sapello is smaller than the Mora "but worthy of the greatest share of notice as it is the point at which we again meet the road that we left at

the crossing of the Arkansas."<sup>104</sup> Marcy's guidebook, published in 1859, says of the Sapello Crossing, "The Bent's Fort Route comes in here."<sup>105</sup>

The Sapello Crossing can be pinpointed by the prominent ruts visible today just south of the crossing, and by the information in Manuel Alvarez's table of distances, as well as in several journals, that from the Sapello to the Mora on both trails was four miles.<sup>106</sup> (Actually, it is three and one-half.)

With the ruts visible today identified north and south of the Mora and Sapello Crossings, and with the above information on key points that it passed between the two streams, it is possible to trace the route of the trail through the cultivated land in the valley. This can be done with some precision because the map of the Scolly Grant (1876) shows the roads in this area in detail, and labels the "Stage Road Fort Union to Santa Fe," which corresponds to the Mountain Branch, and the "Old Road from Santa Fe to Kansas City," which corresponds to the Cimarron Branch. Without identifying labels, the 1892 map of the Scolly Grant shows these roads in even greater detail.

As deduced from the above evidence, the entire road complex at the Mora and Sapello Crossings is shown on Sheet 3.

---

104. Abert, Report, 28.

105. Marcy, Prairie Traveler, 263.

106. See p. 56, note 80.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Maps

Map of a Military Reconnaissance of the Arkansas, Rio del Norte, and Rio Gila by W. H. Emory, Lieut. Top. Engrs. Assisted from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe by Lieuts. J. W. Abert and W. G. Peck, and from Santa Fe to San Diego, on the Pacific, by Lieut. W. H. Warner and Mr. Norman Bestor, made in 1846-7 with the Advance Guard of the "Army of the West" under Command of Brig. Gen. S. W. Kearny. Constructed under Orders of Col. J. J. Abert, Ch. Corps of Engrs., 1847. Drawn by Joseph Welch.

Map of the Territory of New Mexico made by order of Brig. Gen. S. W. Kearny, under instructions from Lieut. W. H. Emory, U.S.T.E. by Lieuts. J. W. Abert and W. G. Peck, U.S.T.E., 1846-47.

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, 5th U. S. Infantry.

Map of a military reconnaissance of the Rio Pecos under command of Bvt. Capt. Henry B. Judd, 3rd Arty, by order of Bvt. Col. John Munroe, Comd'g 9th Mil. Dept. Surveyed and drawn by Richard H. Kern, Santa Fe, N. M., 1850.

Map of the Territory of New Mexico compiled by Bvt. 2nd Lt. Jno. G. Parke, U.S.T.E. assisted by Mr. Richard H. Kern, by order of Bvt. Col. Jno. Munroe, U.S.A., Comd'g 9th Mil. Dept. Drawn by R. H. Kern, Santa Fe, N.M., 1851.

Map of the Military Department of New Mexico drawn under the direction of Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton by Capt. Allen Anderson, 5th U. S. Infantry, Acting Engineer Officer, 1864.

Map of the Military Reservation at Fort Union, N. M., surveyed and drawn by John Lambert under the direction of Bvt. Col. H. M. Enos, U.S.A., Chief Quartermaster, District of New Mexico, December, 1866.

Map of the Territory of New Mexico, U. S. Army, District of New Mexico, Santa Fe, July 1872. Drawn by Lt. C. C. Morrison, Asst. Engineer Officer.

U. S. Geographical Surveys west of the 100th Meridian - Part of North Central New Mexico, by 1st Lt. George M. Wheeler, Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, Prof. John J. Stevenson, Geological Assistant, 1875.

Plat of the grant to John Scolly and others surveyed by U. S. Deputy Surveyors Sawyer and McBroom, August and September, 1876. Files of the Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe, N. Mex. There are two such maps, one apparently the field base map from which the finished map was drawn. Each has details not found on the other. There is also a plat of the Scolly Grant surveyed by F. F. Norbert, Surveyor General, Sept. 26 - Oct. 8, 1892. An unidentified sketch-map is almost certainly the original 1846 map of the Scolly Grant drawn by the Alcalde of Las Vegas.

#### Government Documents

- Arrott Collection, Highlands University, Las Vegas, N. Mex. This collection consists of typescripts of records of Fort Union and the Department of New Mexico from the National Archives.
- Abert, J. W. Report of Lieutenant J. W. Abert, of His Examination of New Mexico, in the Years, 1846-47. House Ex. Doc. No. 41, 30th Cong., 1st sess. Washington, 1848.
- Darton, N. H. et al. Guidebook to the Western United States: Part C. The Santa Fe Route. U. S. Geological Survey Bulletin 613. Washington, 1915.
- Emory, William H. Notes of a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth, Missouri, to San Diego, in California. Senate Doc. No. 7, 30th Cong., 1st sess. Washington, 1847.
- Mansfield, J. K. F. Report of Joseph K. F. Mansfield, Colonel & Inspector General, United States Army, Regarding his Inspection of the Department of New Mexico During the Summer and Fall of the Year 1853. Typescript from National Archives in Library of Historical Society of New Mexico, Santa Fe.
- U. S. Congress. Condition of the Indian Tribes: Report of the Joint Special Committee Appointed under Resolution of March 3, 1865. Washington, 1867.
- U. S. House of Representatives. "To Confirm Certain Land Claims in the Territory of New Mexico." House Rep. No. 321, 36th Cong., 1st sess. Washington, 1860.
- U. S. War Department, Surgeon General's Office. A Report on the Hygiene of the United States Army with Descriptions of Military Posts. Circular No. 8. Washington, 1875.

- - - - - . War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. 4 series, 128 vols. Washington, 1880-1901.

Wislizenus, Adolphus. Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico, Connected with Col. Doniphan's Expedition in 1846 and 1847. Senate Misc. Doc. No. 26, 30th Cong., 1st sess. Washington, 1848.

#### Newspapers

Weekly New Mexican (Santa Fe), Nov. 9, 1875; June 28, 1879.

Santa Fe New Mexican, March 17, 1886; Dec. 22, 1900.

Santa Fe Weekly Gazette, Jan. 15 and Feb. 19, 1853.

Las Vegas Optic, July 17, 1891.

Great Bend (Kansas) Register, July 20, 1876, in Kansas Historical Society, Collections, XVII (1928).

#### Books

Abel, Annie H., ed. The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun. Washington, 1915.

Bender, Averam B. The March of Empire: Frontier Defense in the Southwest, 1848-1860. Lawrence, Kansas, 1952.

Bieber, Ralph P., ed. Marching with the Army of the West, 1846-1848, by Abraham Robinson Johnson, Marcellus Ball Edwards, Philip Gooch Ferguson. Vol. IV of Southwest Historical Series. Glendale, 1936.

- - - - - . Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade, 1844-1847, by James Josiah Webb. Vol. I of Southwest Historical Series. Glendale, 1931.

Brewerton, George D. Overland with Kit Carson: A Narrative of the Old Spanish Trail in '48. New York, 1930.

Conrad, Howard L. "Uncle Dick" Wootton. Chicago, 1890.

Cooke, Philip St. George. The Conquest of New Mexico and California. New York, 1878.

- Davis, W. H. H. El Gringo; or, New Mexico and her People.  
New York, 1857.
- DeVoto, Bernard. The Year of Decision, 1846. Boston, 1943.
- Drumm, Stella M., ed. Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico:  
The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-1847. New Haven, 1926.
- Duffus, Robert L. The Santa Fe Trail. London, New York, Toronto, 1931.
- Edwards, Frank S. A Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan.  
Philadelphia, 1847.
- Gregg, Josiah. Commerce of the Prairies. 1844, Reprint Edition,  
Dallas, 1933.
- Hafen, LeRoy R. The Overland Mail, 1849-1869. Glendale, 1926.
- Heyman, Max L., Jr. Prudent Soldier: A Biography of Major General  
E. R. S. Canby, 1817-1873. Glendale, 1959.
- Hughes, John T. Doniphan's Expedition; Containing an Account of  
the Conquest of New Mexico. Cincinnati, 1848.
- Hulbert, Archer B., ed. Southwest on the Turquoise Trail: The  
First Diaries on the Road to Santa Fe. Denver, 1933.
- Hunt, Aurora. The Army of the Pacific, 1860-1866. Glendale, 1951.
- Inman, Henry. The Old Santa Fe Trail. Topeka, 1916.
- Jackson, W. Turrentine. Wagon Roads West: A Study of Federal Road  
Surveys and Construction in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1846-  
1869. Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1952.
- Long, Margaret. The Santa Fe Trail: Following the Old Historic  
Pioneer Trails on the Modern Highways. Denver, 1954.
- Lowe, D. C. Five Years a Dragoon. Kansas City, 1906.
- Majors, Alexander. Seventy Years on the Frontier. Denver, 1893.
- Marcy, Randolph B. The Prairie Traveler: A Handbook for  
Overland Expeditions. New York, 1859.
- Meline, James F. Two Thousand Miles on Horseback. Santa Fe and  
Back. A Summer Tour through Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and  
New Mexico in the Year 1866. New York, 1867. London, 1868.

- Mumey, Nolie. Bent's Old Fort and Bent's New Fort on the Arkansas River. Vol. I of Old Forts and Trading Posts of the West. Denver, 1956.
- Paxson, Frederick L. The Last American Frontier. New York, 1910.
- Richardson, Rupert N. The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement. Glendale, 1933.
- Riddle, Kenyon. Records and Maps of the old Santa Fe Trail. Raton, N. Mex., 1949.
- Robinson, Jacob S. A Journal of the Santa Fe Expedition Under Col. Doniphan. Ed. by Carl L. Cannon. Princeton, 1942.
- Sabin, E. L. Kit Carson Days, 1809-1868. 2 v., New York, 1935.
- Steere, Edward. Fort Union: Its Military and Economic History. Ms. Report, National Park Service: Santa Fe, 1939.
- Twitchell, Ralph E. The Leading Facts of New Mexican History. 5 v., Cedar Rapids, 1911-17.
- Young, Otis E. The First Military Escort on the Santa Fe Trail, 1829. Glendale, 1952.

#### Articles

- Anon., "William H. Richardson's Journal of Doniphan's Expedition." Missouri Historical Review, XXII (1927-28).
- Bernard, William R. "Westport and the Santa Fe Trade." Kansas State Historical Society, Collections, IX (1906).
- Bieber, Ralph P., ed. "Letters of William Carr Lane, 1852-1854." New Mexico Historical Review, III (1928).
- - - - - "Some Aspects of the Santa Fe Trade." Missouri Historical Review, XVIII (1923-24).
- Bliss, Robert S. "The Journal of Robert S. Bliss, with the Mormon Battalion." Utah Historical Quarterly, IV (1931).
- Brooks, Clinton E., & Reeve, Frank D., eds. "James A. Bennett: A Dragoon in New Mexico, 1850-1856." New Mexico Historical Review, XXII (1947).

- Clark, Anna N. "Fifty Years of Change." New Mexico Magazine, XVI (1938).
- Greene, J. Evarts. "The Santa Fe Trade: Its Route and Character." American Antiquarian Society, Proceedings, VIII (1893).
- McClure, C. Boone, ed. "The Battle of Adobe Walls, 1864." Panhandle-Plains Historical Review, XXI (1948).
- Raber, Charles. "Personal Recollections of Life on the Plains, from 1860 to 1868," Kansas State Historical Society, Collections, XVI (1925).
- Reeve, Frank D. See Brooks, Clinton E.
- Richardson, Rupert N. "The Comanche Indians and the Fight at Adobe Walls." Panhandle-Plains Historical Review, IV (1931).
- Wyman, Walker D. "Freighting: A Big Business on the Santa Fe Trail." Kansas Historical Quarterly, I (1931-32).
- - - - - "The Military Phase of Santa Fe Freighting, 1846-1865." Kansas Historical Quarterly, I (1931-32).



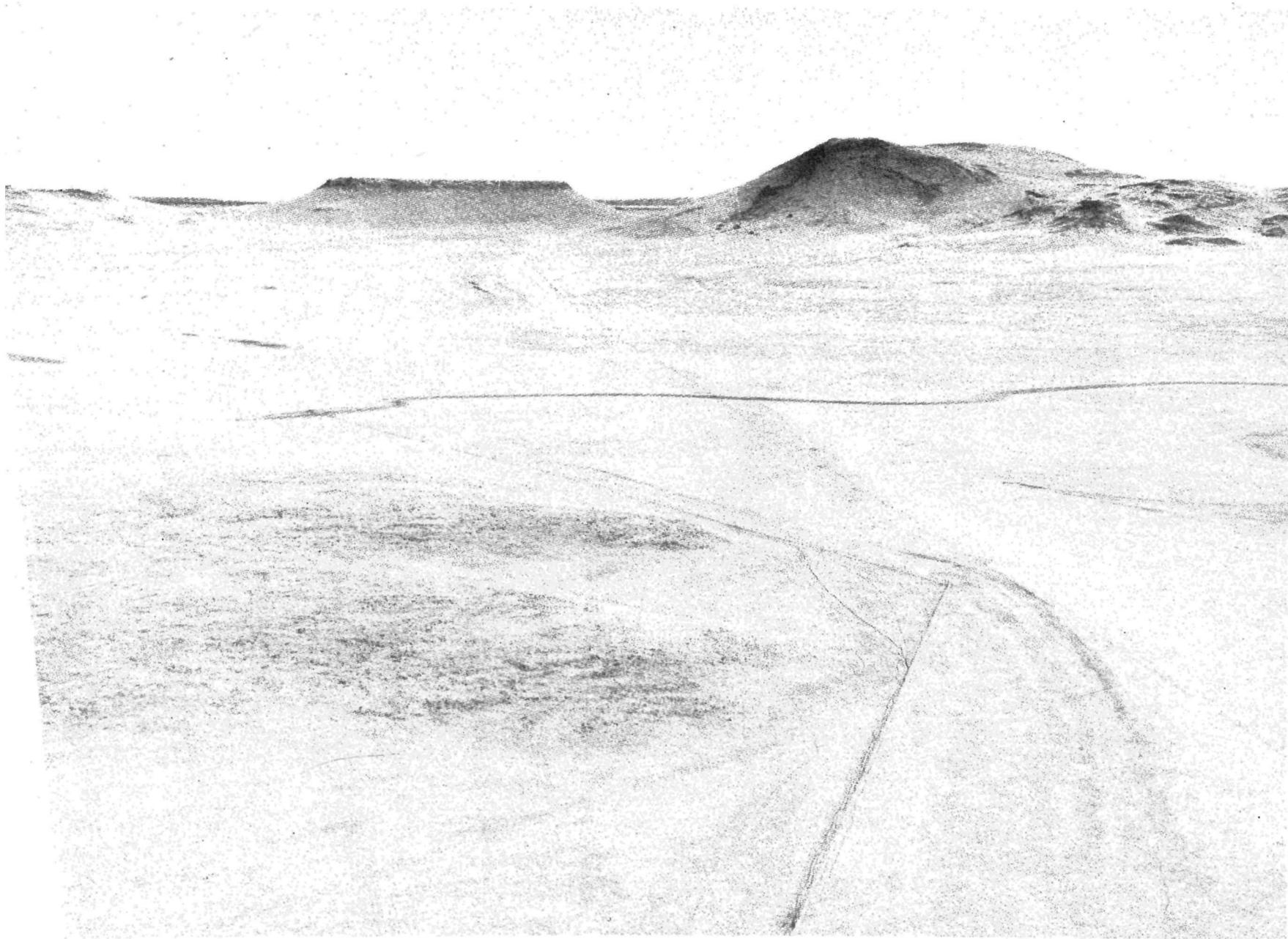
Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail two and one-half miles east of Ocate Crossing, looking north. The trail here rounded the nose of a long mesa and, unable to cross the canyon of Ocate Creek (foreground), followed the base of the mesa west to an easy ford. Ruts in foreground represent a more recent road. Photo by Laura Gilpin, 1959.



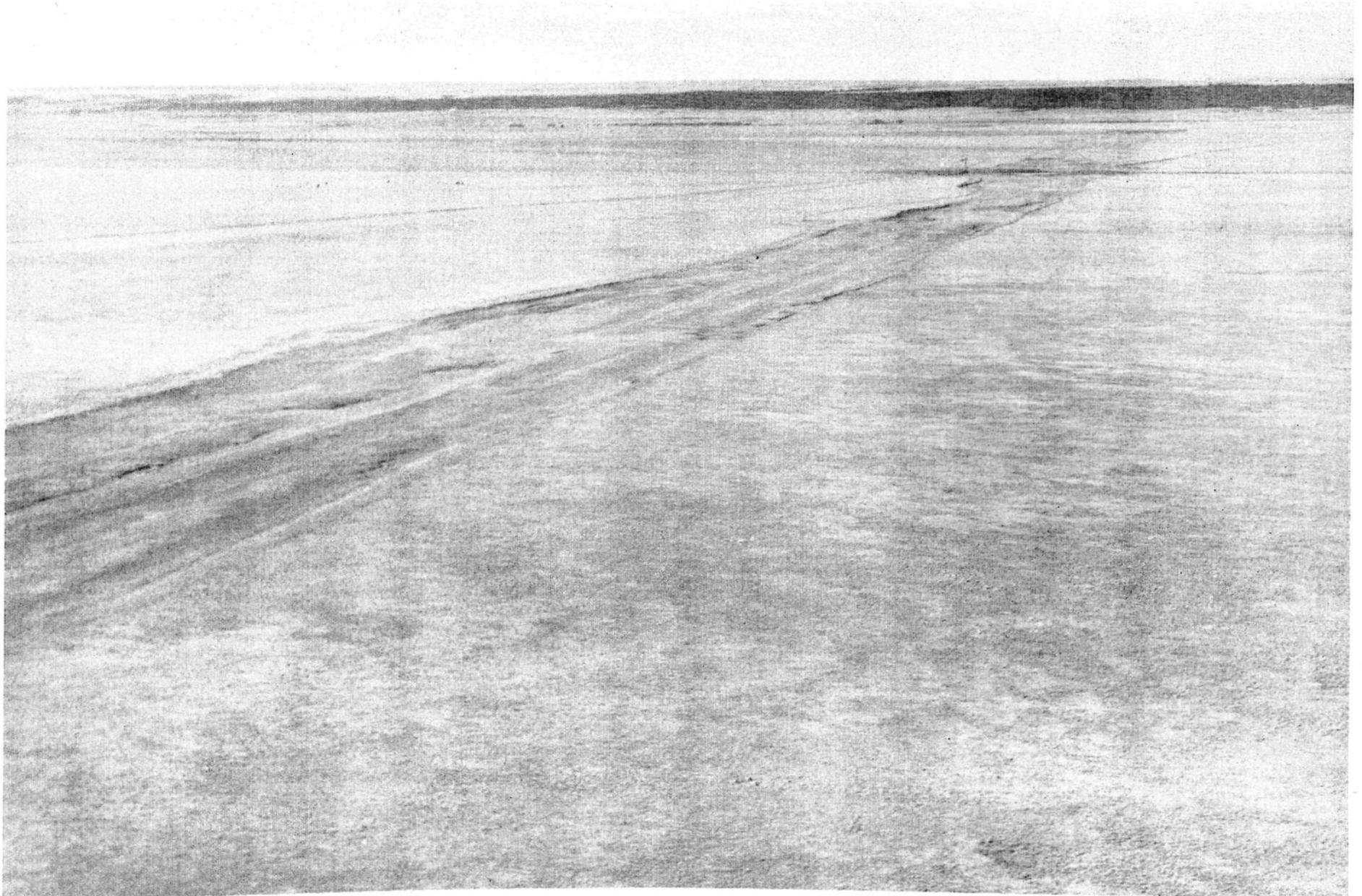
The Ocate Crossing, looking north. Photo by Laura Gilpin, 1959



Ruins of the third Fort Union, looking northeast. Ruts of the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail may be seen running north to south and paralleling the fort on the east. Trails on either side of the water tower were timber roads to the Turkey Mountains. Photo by Laura Gilpin, 1959.



Mountain Branch four miles south of Ocate Crossing, looking north. The trail passed between two volcanic hills shown on the Emory map and described by Abert. Photo by Laura Gilpin, 1959.



Mountain Branch approaching Fort Union from the north. Site of first fort marked by ruins at base of bluffs, extreme right. Ruins of third fort appear in center. Mora Valley at extreme left. Photo by Laura Gilpin. 1959.

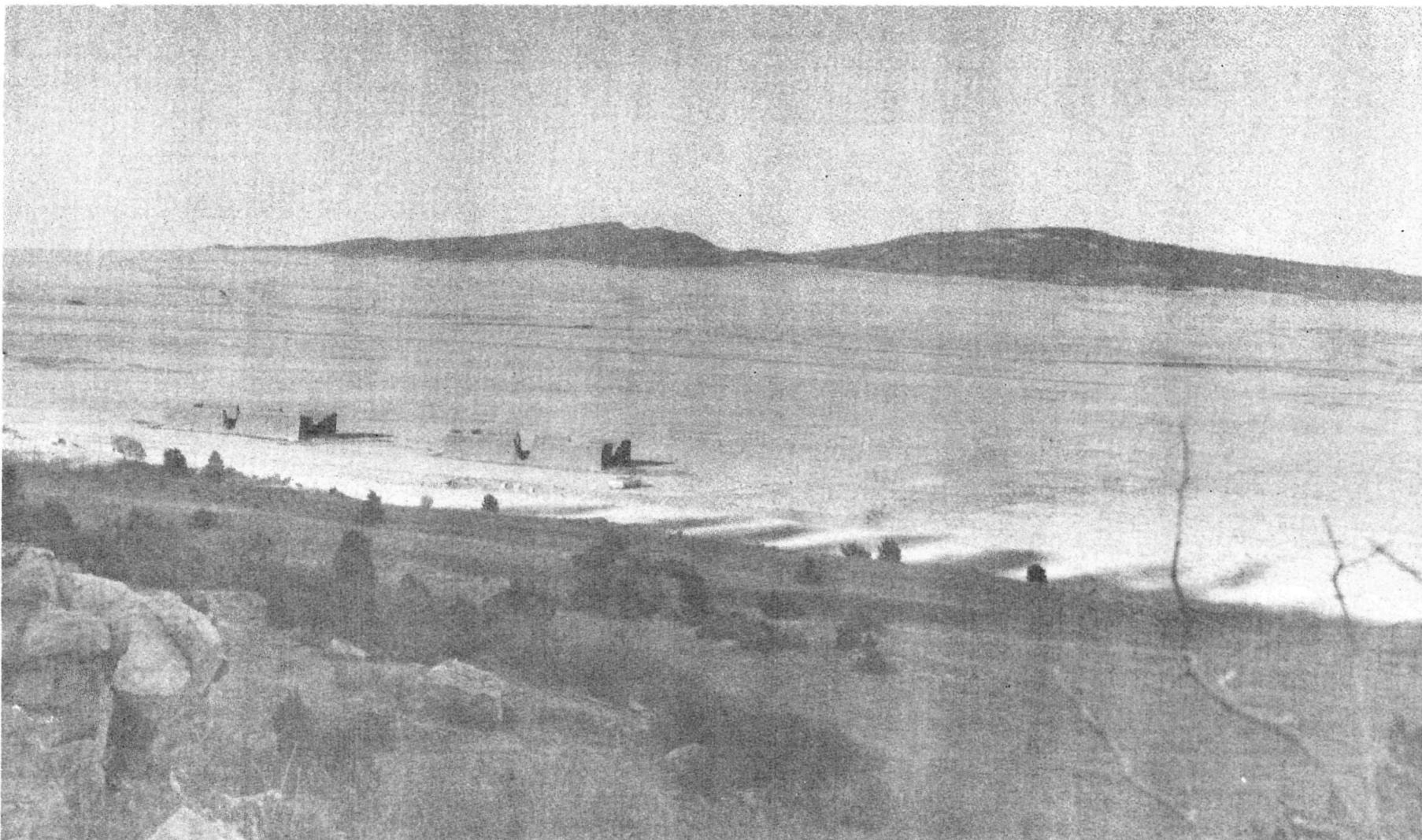


Mountain Branch entering the third Fort Union from the north. Los Pozos and Mora Valley in background.  
Photo by Laura Gilpin, 1959.

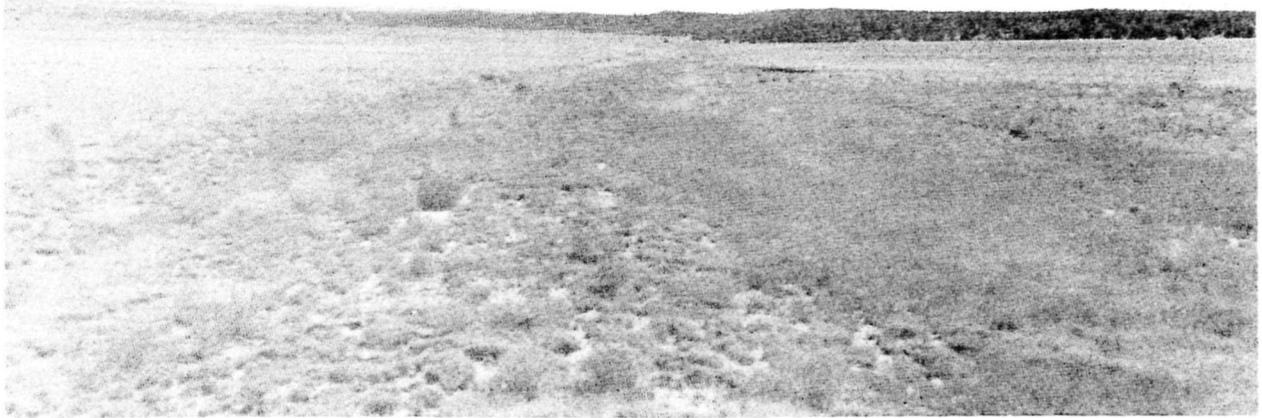


Fort Union

J. H. W. May 28/59



In 1859 Joseph Heger sketched Fort Union (above), faithfully including the Santa Fe Trail approaching from the northeast and, parallel to it on the south (right), a timber road to the Turkey Mountains that also served as an alternate of the trail as far as Turkey Rock. Photograph below, taken from the same spot, shows remains of these two roads. Ruins are those of the arsenal later built on the site of the first Fort Union. Sketch from John Van Deusen DuBois, Campaigns in the West, 1856-1861, ed. by George P. Hammond (Tucson, 1949). NPS photo, 1959.



Well defined ruts today trace the alternate route of the Santa Fe Trail from the site of the first Fort Union to Tiptonville. This view looks south, with the Mora Valley at the far left. NPS photo, 1959.



The Watrous Ranch and Store was built in 1849 at the junction of the Mora River and Sapello Creek and became a way-station on the Santa Fe Trail as well as a gathering place for soldiers from Fort Union. NPS photo, 1959.



Mountain Branch dropping into Mora Valley, looking north. Ruins of third Fort Union appear in background left of center, Los Pozos immediately below. Road is State No. 477 from Watrous to Fort Union. Photo by Laura Gilpin, 1959.



Famous landmark on the Santa Fe Trail, Wagon Mound came into view many miles to the north. It early took its name from the striking resemblance to a covered wagon drawn by oxen. The trail approached Wagon Mound from the north, to the left of the highway traced in the photo by the line of telephone poles, the wagon-masters aiming for the gap between the Mound (left) and Pilot Knobs (right). NPS



Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail three miles east of Tiptonville, looking west. Highway 85 in foreground. The trail divided here, one fork continuing with the modern highway to Watrous, the other turning towards Tiptonville. Photo by Laura Gilpin, 1959.



Cimarron Cutoff dropping into Mora Valley, looking west. Tiptonville in left and right center. Road is State No. 477 from Watrous to Fort Union. Photo by Laura Gilpin, 1959.