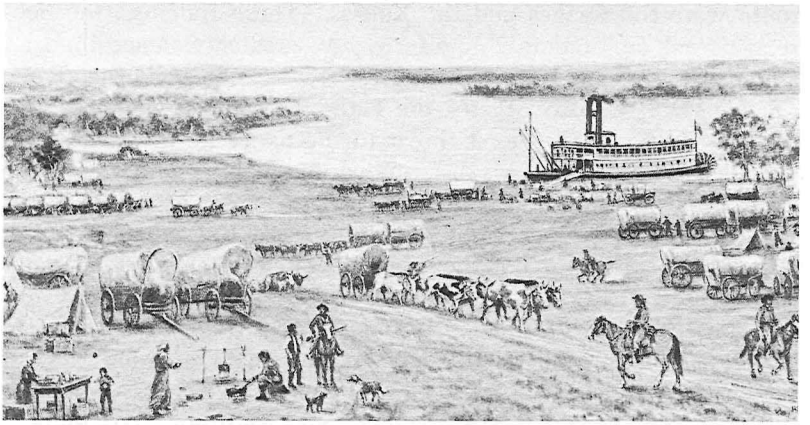


Westport Landing, now part of Kansas City. Merchants disembark at the Big Bend of the Missouri to organize wagon trains for Santa Fe Trail traffic

THE INDIAN THREAT ALONG THE SANTA FE TRAIL

SUSAN KOESTER

In 1852, William Carr Lane, Governor of New Mexico Territory, asked James L. Collins his opinion about risking a crossing of the plains from Missouri to Santa Fe. At this time Collins was serving as United States Indian Agent with the governor. The Agent had been one of the first Anglo merchants to use the Santa Fe Trail and benefit from commerce with Mexico's far north emporium. Recalling earlier years spent upon the Santa Fe Trail, Collins was especially concerned with Indian hostilities. In his letter of December 19, 1852, replying to Governor Lane, Collins recalled the "destruction of the lives and property of our fellow citizens by the marauding savage tribes that have infested the route for the last thirty years."[1]

The last thirty years to which Collins referred had witnessed both Yankee and Hispanic traders alarmed by sporadic harassment from various Indian tribes. In 1832 Andrew Jackson, one time Indian fighter become U.S. President, quiried his Secretary of War concerning the inland trade to Mexico. Lewis Cass informed the President that those tribes usually encountered along the Santa Fe

route were the Osages and the Kansas. "These Indians," the Secretary went on "seldom . . . offered any greater violence than an attempt to pillage or steal horses." Cass believed the Panis (Pawnee) of the River Platts, the Panis Piets, the Comanches and the Kiowas posed the worst threat to the Santa Fe traveler.[2]

This report is further substantiated by Don José Augustín de Escudero's observation that "grave dangers must be encountered in crossing the main branches of the Osage River; the Kaws or Kansas Indians commit a thousand depradations along this route [Santa Fe Trail], stealing merchandise and supplies from unwary travelers."[3] It appears that in this thirty year period from 1821 to 1850, no one tribe was held responsible for the aggressions against Santa Fe merchants. But, from accounts of incidents along the trail, the Comanches seem to have transgressed most frequently.[4]

Of the famous historic trails pointing west, the road to Santa Fe was among the most famous. Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821 first legalized and stimulated the inland traffic between America's Midwest and Santa Fe. By the 1830's this commerce had reached what historian Ray Allen Billington has called its "golden era." Each summer one or two Missouri caravans reached Santa Fe, while similar Mexican caravans rolled eastward to Independence, St. Louis, and other Missouri trade centers. Hundreds of men operated these caravans, with cargo totals worth $200,000. Some of the wagon trains exceeded a hundred vehicles. Billington's description of the large "Murphy Wagons" is worth quoting at length.

> Great, cumbersome affairs they were, three feet wide and up to sixteen feet long, with rear wheels that stood five feet tall and were circled by iron tires four inches thick. Over the blue-colored wagon boxes were stretched canvas

"Los Americanos" Mexicans welcome Anglo-traders at the historic city

covers of white, to protect the three-ton load of goods. Each wagon was pulled ten or twelve mules, or by three or four yokes of oxen. The latter could pull heavier loads, but they fared less well on the western prairies where grass was scant, while their hooves frequently gave out on the rough trail, even when shod with moccasins of rawhide.[5]

The early trading expeditions met with few other obstacles than the road itself. Inevitably, however, as the Murphy Wagons disgorged their contents, they accelerated socio-economic change in Mexico's northern province. Just as predictably, the ponderous, well-stuffed wagons aroused the raiding penchant of the Southwest's nomadic plains Indians. A convoy caravan was virtually unassailable, but a small group of men made a tempting target. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the Santa Fe region's Spanish-speaking inhabitants had established a workable cultural accomodation with the neighboring Pueblo Indians.[6] But like the Yankee overlords who after 1821 imported eastern manufactured items in exchange for the Southwest's furs and silver, the Mexican merchants feared the Comanches and their fellow nomads. Human selfishness and ethnocentricism was distinct to no people. The centuries old distrust of the "red savages" invariably magnified red-white friction along the trail. By the 1830's American traders complained that they had been forced to repel Indian attacks, some of which had been provoked by previous Santa Fe Trail merchants.[7]

Josiah Gregg, whose *Commerce of the Prairies* is the standard account of this memorable trade, observed in 1844

> The early traders having but seldom experienced any molestations from the Indians, generally crossed the plains in detached bands, each individual rarely carrying more than two or three hundred dollars' worth of stock. This peaceful season, however, did not last very long; and it is greatly to be feared that the traders were not ways innocent of having instigated the savage hostilities that ensued in after years. Many seemed to forget the wholesome precept, that they should not be savages themselves because they dealt with savages. Instead of cultivating friendly feelings with those few who remained peaceful and honest, there was an occasional one always disposed to kill, even in cold blood, every Indian that fell into their power, merely because some of the tribe had committed some outrage either against themselves or their friends.[8]

Usually the Plains Indians did not attack other groups of human beings unless they were agitated by avarice or felt genuinely threatened. We can now appreciate that Indian hostilities along the trail were in part a response to the menace of the caravans making their long and weary way to Santa Fe. These animal-drawn

caravans devoured and destroyed ground cover. The caravan personnel had to eat, and buffalo were slaughtered in great number. An ecosystem was altered; and as the buffalo herds diminished to provide sport, food and warmth for the traders, the Indians suffered correspondingly.[9]

Because of their careless traffic in arms, the Anglo merchants themselves were guilty of fostering Indian hostilities. James Calhoun, agent to the Indians, soon realized that trade with Indians required strict and careful regulation.[10] Calhoun's agency confronted one problem after another because of the merchant's stupidity and the natives' childish greed. Particularly grim was the fact that the weapons the latter obtained nullified Calhoun's exertions. In a report to Congress, Calhoun described how "the extent of the influence of the traders was manifested by their traveling with impunity through those regions in which the most hostile tribes dwelt."[11] Calhoun reported on but a small number of the traders, nevertheless, it was these men who made such a profound impact upon red-white relations.

Any unguarded commerce certainly invited Indian agressions. For some of the region's aboriginals it was customary to gain wealth by plundering. And if they were satisfied that neither the Mexican nor United States governments would bring any punitive measures against them, their predatory inclination was accordingly aroused. As late as 1849 Calhoun reported that "the wild Indians of this country do not believe we [meaning the United States] have the power to chastise them."[12]

Because of white provocation, and their appetite for loot, numerous Indian tribes along the trail might regard anything or anyone outside of a member of their particular tribe as a good raiding target. In an account of March, 1829, William H. Ashley related to President Jackson what he knew of Indian hostilities. "The Indians south of the Arkansas River, I know but little about; but they are very troublesome to the Spanish [sic] settlements and are considered dangerous in that quarter." Note, that Ashley mentions hostilities carried out against another white group - the Mexicans.[13] He continued, "They are charged with participating in the recent depredations on the Santa Fe route; but I am of the opinion that the principle actors in these outrages, and perhaps the only ones, were the Arapahoes and the Keawas [Kiowas]." He added that they "are tolerably well supplied with arms and ammunition."[14] Though Ashley admitted that he knew little about these Indians, he continued his report and further condemned two other tribes.

Santa Fe travelers sometimes kept written accounts of various

Indian depredations and noted the prevailing apprehension of their comrades.[15] In 1843 Captain Philip St. George Cooke wrote in his journal that the Mexican contingent of the caravan, under Armijo, the Mexican, feared robbers.[16] When Captain St. George Cooke referred to robbers, it is difficult to tell whether he meant marauding Indian tribes, the Texans, or some other bandit group.

Aboriginal hostility towards the Mexicans was documented October 1827, by the men commissioned to survey the Santa Fe Trail. They reported:

> Indian outrages most frequently occur on the Mexican side of the Arkansas. The Indians who are most commonly engaged in these lawless practices belong to the Nations or Tribes commonly called the Pawnees - Arapahoes - Kiawas - Comanches - Apaches and Yutahs. The first and probably seconed named, are within the Agencies of the United States and the other reside within the jurisdiction of the Mexican.[17]

Although no actual attacks against the Mexicans were cited, reference was made to Indian attacks in Mexican territory.

After the mid-1820's, reports of strikes made against Anglo merchants and their consequent losses mounted. One Anglo trader, Thomas Talbot, returning to the United States along the Santa Fe Trail in September, 1827, was attacked, along with his comrades, at the Pawnee fork of the Arkansas River. The Indians, identified as Pawnees, drove off all of the merchant's livestock, none of which was recovered.[18] Alphonso Wetmore, in a petition before Congress in 1833, noted that in this same year the robberies on the Santa Fe Trail amounted to 130 head of stock.[19]

In the following year, M. M. Marmaduke and party, on returning to Missouri over the Santa Fe Trail, were attacked by Indians. The Marmaduke men lost 660 of their cattle.[20] In Wetmore's petition for reimbursement of stolen property, he estimated the loss for the year 1828 at 825 animals of all kinds. Wetmore added that "since 1828, the losses have been so inconsiderable, that no mention is made of the particulars." He further charged the Comanches and "Panis" with these forays. Though considerable livestock (by nineteenth century standards) was lost, no reference is made of lives lost.[21]

Usually depredations along the trail were sporadic and small, and many merited but brief attention. Invariably the small party or careless trader suffered unduly. For instance, on October 20, 1842, One Thomas Fitzpatrick, trapper and guide, was approached by Indians when returning to St. Louis after leading parties to Oregon for two years. The Indians appeared to be friendly, but when

Fitzpatrick started to leave, they took his gun and other property, leaving him his horses. Fitzpatrick later said, "the loss I have sustained is very trifling, but the insult is very great to have occurred as it were on the very borders of the settlement."[22] Fitzpatrick counted himself exceedingly fortunate. Eleven years earlier on the Santa Fe Trail he had been in company with famous mountain man, Jedediah Smith. Sadly Smith had not then enjoyed Fitzpatrick's good luck. The late Dale L. Morgan has left us a vivid description of what occured.

> Apparently a Comanche hunting party, numbering fifteen or twenty men, lying in wait for buffalo at one of the water holes along the Cimarron, saw Jedediah approach and kept themselves concealed until he was too close to escape. Jedediah had seen too much of the West, and knew too well the reputation of this most savage of all the Shoshonean tribes not to be able to appraise his chances. A brave front was his only hope, and he rode directly up to the red men. A brief colloquy followed, but neither could understand the other, and they paid no attention to his signs of peace.
>
> The Comanches began to spread out. Watchfully Jedediah tried to keep them from getting behind him. His horse danced nervously, and was suddenly startled into wheeling. Instantly the Comanches fired at Jedediah's exposed back, a musket ball entering his body near the left shoulder. Gasping at the impact, Jedediah turned his horse and leveled his rifle at the chief, killing him with the single shot he had time to fire. Before he could draw his pistols, the rest rushed on him with their lances, thrusting and stabbing.[23]

One rather serious aggression made by an Indian tribe was rereported in *Nile's Register* in 1833. On their trip home from Santa Fe to Missouri, a company of traders was attacked at the Canadian Fork of the Arkansas. After a long fight, the traders, with two of their men dead, fled into the night. They left behind them property valued at ten to twelve thousand dollars. Forty-two days later they reached settlement. On their trek they faced unparalleled hardships as they were encumbered with wounded men, no horses, and little food.[24] It should be emphasized, however, that incidents such as this were rare.

Neither the Anglos nor the Mexicans were happy with this state of affairs. The Santa Fe trade had become important to the economy of both Mexico and the United States. Continued Indian harassment would have to end. Menacing Indian attacks would have to be curtailed by various means. The United States Commissioners who surveyed the Trail in October, 1827, reported, "It is not supposed that irregularities of these savages can be suddenly suppressed." They recommended that the Indians "may be ma-

terially checked, and ultimately entirely prevented by a seasonable interference of the two Governments . . ." They warned that ". . . unless this is done, some of the Tribes may be tempted to form combinations and establish something like a system of highway robbery, that may be extremely difficult to suppress if too long neglected."[25]

Other requests and recommendations went up from merchants and politicians alike. Licenciado Don Manuel Simon de Escudero was commissioned by the territorial government of New Mexico to obtain armed protection from the United States. In 1849, at his own expense, he made the journey from Mexico to the United States capital. He asked Washington legislators for the necessary protection for caravans traveling across the vast unoccupied spaces, and also to protect our frontiers from the Indians who were perpetrating depredations on both frontiers." William Clark, the Indian agent at St. Louis, informed Escudero that the United States government sincerely desired to prevent these depredations by the Indians and furthermore stated that it was necessary for peace to be made with the Indians in order that trade might be carried on between the two countries with absolute freedom."[26]

Earlier, the United States government felt compelled to respond to the demand for protection along the Santa Fe Trail. In 1829 the first limited military shield was supplied by an escort under the command of Major Bennet Riley.[27] Four companies of the Sixth Regiment of the United States Infantry left Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, on May 5 to protect a caravan headed west on the Santa Fe Trail.[28] Josiah Gregg noted that this escort and one other, in 1834, composed of about sixty dragoons under Captain Clifton Wharton, were the only military protection furnished by the federal government until 1834.[29] Wharton was shocked to discover that his principle task was to prevent the killing of peaceful Indians by bullwackers itching to gun down every Indian in sight.[30]

Between the year 1829 and 1834, there are no government records of military escorts along the length of the Santa Fe Trail. An item appeared in the *St. Louis Republican* on April 23, 1832, which defined the extent of Uncle Sam's police arm:

> Many of our enterprising young men have already left, and others are preparing to take their departure for Santa Fe. The upper country will also send out an unusual number of traders. They are to rendezvous at the round prairie, where they will be escorted as far as the boundary between the United States and New Spain [sic] by a detachment of the United States army.[31]

Eleven years later Captain Philip St. George Cooke, with a large escort, accompanied two caravans as far as the Arkansas River.[32]

"The Santa Fe Trader." Weary Missourians enter the sunbaked outskirts of the historic city

As late as 1850, two years after the entire Trail formally became United States soil, Dragoon recruit, James A. Bennett with twenty men, was ordered to accompany the mail on the Santa Fe Trail. Ostensibly they were to safeguard it from Indian encroachments.[33]

Forts were only slowly established along the Trail to offer what protection they could for the merchants. Remote and ill-equipped, some of these posts were anything but bastions of security. In 1850 Bennett reported that Fort Atkinson, with a garrison of one company, constantly feared attack from a nearby camp of 1500 hostile Indians.[34] But by 1859 the Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred a bill to establish certain new bases on the Santa Fe Trail, reported that there was no such urgent necessity for additional posts.[35]

From the outset the United States and Mexican government would have preferred to deal with the tribes along the Trail by making treaties. Treaties were cheap. As early as 1824 Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, petitioned the Senate for the government to secure permission from the Indians to create a road over which men could travel safely. He envisioned peaceful measures rather than a show of military might as the answer to Indian hostilities. The President was consequently authorized by the Senate to appoint a Commission to make treaties with "the inter-

vening tribes of Indians for the marking of the road and for its unmolested use."[36]

Another treaty important to Anglo-Mexican relations with the Indian tribes was the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo which terminated the United States-Mexican War. This Treaty suggested that the way to block Indian aggression was by use of military force.[37] No westerner would have disagreed with this opinion, but the Southwest was enormous, and the police power of the peacetime army was extremely limited.

By far the most economic method of assuring trail security was for traders to employ a convoy-like system. But the Yankee peddler was famous for his independence and could not always be induced to travel with the veteran Santa Fe traders in their large caravans. George Douglas Brewerton summed up their advantage in his journal of 1848: "By thus uniting our people [we] obtained a more perfect assurance of journeying unmolested through the hostile Indian range than if we had pursued our course in smaller numbers; for the Arabs of the plains - as the Comanches may not improperly be styled - seldom lack caution.[38]

On October 4, 1848, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs reported that fewer robberies had been committed on the travelers on the Santa Fe Trail during that year than the two previous ones.[39] Why had the Indians lessened their attacks upon Santa Fe traders? Any number of explanations are possible. The Indian agent of the Santa Fe area, Thomas Fitzpatrick, believed that the Indians had secured so much wealth during the tumult of the United States-Mexican War in 1846 and 1847 that they were presently enjoying it. Fitzpatrick warned against "the conclusion that any real solution of the problem had been reached."[40]

Following the Mexican Cession of 1848 Far West isolation and with it Indian freedom were doomed.[41] The movement of Anglo-Americans into the Southwest increased; and Mississippi Valley railroad construction accelerated the pace. Miners, military, and particularly merchants had a way of dulling the fighting edge of even the most militant warrior peoples. Alphonso Wetmore's suggestion that "commerce is the civilizer of mankind" was indeed being put into practice.[42] Perhaps the Indians saw this as the only peaceful alternative left to them. Whether the nomadic Plains Indians wanted to become civilized according to Anglo-Mexican standards is highly questionable.[43] Certainly the recent United States-Mexican War had impressed many of the Indians with the United States' armed might.[44]

By the summer of 1852 Colonel Edwin Vose Sumner had insti-

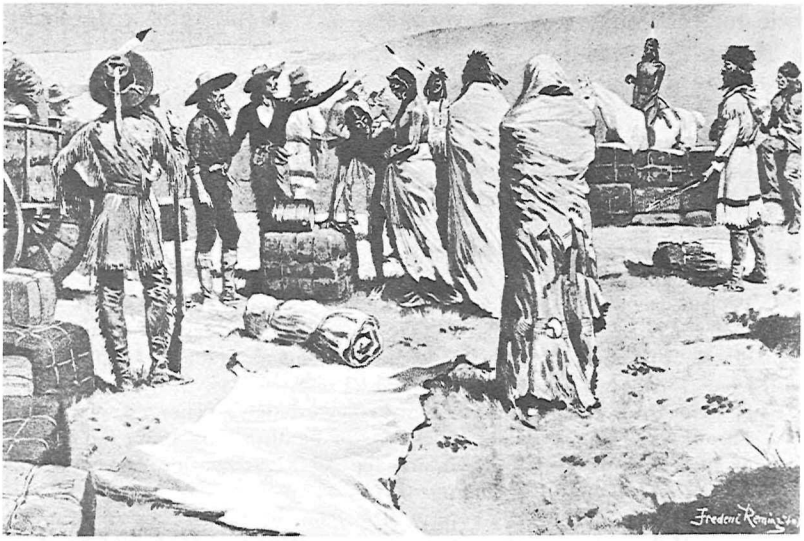
tuted further measures for defense of the Santa Fe Trail and the surrounding territory. Colonel Sumner was able to report that for that year a "happy state of quiet upon this part of the country."[45] His cheery dispatch was premature, to put it mildly. In truth, however, the marauding freedom of the Plains Indians had passed its zenith; likewise the great days of the Santa Fe Trail had passed into history.

Further evidence of the decline in Indian aggressiveness can be found in the claims being brought against them by the United States government. Claims for property lost by Anglos because of Indian attacks were presented to the offending Indians by their agent. If they admitted to the crime, they would have to pay for it. On the other hand, if they denied it, the agent would report the facts to the Indian Department. If the claim could be substantiated by proof, payment would come out of annuities due the guilty Indians.[46] Clearly if the bribe of an annuity had supplanted the threat of a U.S. military attack, something had happened to the fighting verve of those who had once threatened the Santa Fe Trail.

As in our own age, the lure of the urban community proved irresistable. No one knew the Southwest any better than Kit Carson of Taos, and few knew the Indian so well. In his *Autobiography* Carson reveals the subtle subversion of not merely the Anglo's trade goods but his urban setllements with their booze and bacilli.

> I cannot see how the Superintendent can expect any of the Indians to depart satisfied after he has called them to see him from a distance of two or three hundred miles, and compelled them to go several days without anything to eat, except what they have brought with them. They are given a meal by the Superintendent, after which the presents are distributed. Some receive a blanket; those that get none are given a knife, or a hatchet, or some vemillion, or a piece of red or blue cloth, or some sugar, and perhaps a few more trinkets. If they were left in their own country, they could more than earn the quantity of gifts they receive in one day's hunt. They could hunt for skins and furs, and the traders could furnish them with the same articles which the government gives them, and they would be saved the necessity of having to travel without food themselves. If presents were given it should be done in their own country. They should not be allowed to come into the settlements, for every visit an Indian makes to a town causes him more or less injury.[47]

This paper has emphasized the negative side of white-red relations in an attempt to explore the Indian hostilities along the Santa Fe Trail. But there is another side to the coin. Colonel Henry Dodge, commander of an expedition of dragoons, in 1834 traveled over the Santa Fe Trail with no problems at all. In his



"Trading on the Trail" note that the white traders have their guns ready

report he recalled visiting all the Indians from the Arkansas to the Platte, and as far west as the mountains. He established friendly relations with each of them and was able to make peace between several tribes.[48] And there were numerous other men who were able to communicate and co-exist peaceably with Indians.[49]

Professor Howard Robert Lamar has titled the 1850 created, New Mexico Territory "A Conquest by Merchants."[50] From the outset the merchants had wanted it both ways. They clamored for government protection to sell their violence-producing liquor and guns to the Indians and then government protection from Indians when booze and bullets threatened them. Granted, some Indians were just as greedy as the whiteman.[51] But whereas the whiteman had military might as his ally, the redman had only nature. And even nature could not withstand the onrush of the traders' technology.

This paper has sought to examine the Indian threat along the Santa Fe Trail. In full historical perspective we can now see that the red-white frictions along that historic pathway west were but small assimilation stones caught under the grinding glacier of an advancing commercial-industrial America. Veteran Far West trader Fitzpatrick accurately predicted that it would take many years before the American and the Mexican governments could achieve genuine harmony with the Indians. Perhaps a more apropos

title for this study might have been – "Was the White Merchant a Threat to the Indians along the Santa Fe Trail?"

FOOTNOTES

1 Benjamin Read, "Perils of the Santa Fe Trail in Its Early Days, 1822-1852," **El Palacio,** XIX (November 15, 1925). Basic source studies for those researching any and all aspects of Santa Fe Trail history are: Louis Barry, **The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854** (Topeka, 1972), and Jack D. Rittenhouse, **The Santa Fe Trail: A Historical Bibliography** (Albuquerque, 1971).

2 Lewis Cass, **In Reply to Message from the President of the United States Concerning the Fur Trade and the Inland Trade to Mexico,** 22nd Cong., 2d Sess., Sen. Doc. 90 (Serial 213), 8.

3 H. Bailey Carroll and J. Vallasana Haggard (eds.), **Three New Mexico Chronicles: The Exposición of Don Pedro Bautista Piño 1822; the Ojeada of Lic. Antonio Barreiro 1832; and the Additions by Don Jose Augustín de Escudero 1849** (Albuquerque, 1942), 117.

4 For an 1845 opinion of an Army officer on the Comanches and Kiowas along the trail see : James William Abert, **Report of an Expedition Led by Lieutenant Abert, on the Upper Kansas and Through the Country of the Comanche Indians, in the Fall of the Year 1845,** 29th Cong., 1st Sess., Sen. Doc. 438 (Serial 477), 42.

5 Ray Allen Billington, **The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860** (New York, 1956), 28. This wonderfully written summary study has a whole chapter devoted to the colorful Santa Fe Trail story. No less enjoyable and factual is the classic: David Lavender, **Bent's Fort** (New York, 1954) that is packed with Santa Fe Trail data.

6 Edward H. Spicer, **A short History of the Indians of the United States** (New York, 1969), 64-65.

7 The white merchants "instead of cultivating friendly relations with the few peaceful and honorable Indians, murdered in cold blood any Indian who fell into the hands merely because one of their tribe had committed some depredation on their friends." Carrol, **Three New Mexico Chronicles,** 113.

8 Josiah Gregg, **Commerce of the Prairies** (Philadelphia, 1962), I, 7-8.

9 In the Riley expedition of 1829, Riley notes time and time again how pitifully small the supply of buffalo was getting. Major Bennett Riley, **Report of Major Riley of the Santa Fe Expedition,** 21st Cong., 1st Sess., Sen. Doc., 46 (Serial 192).

10 For more on James Calhoun, see: James S. Calhoun, **The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun, while Indian Agent of Santa Fe and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in New Mexico** (Washington, D.C., 1915).

11 James S. Calhoun, House Executive Doc. 17, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., 51-71 **passim,** as quoted in Sister Mary Loyola, **The New American Occupation of New Mexico** (Albuquerque, 1939,) 91.

12 Loyola, **The New American Occupation of New Mexico,** 89. As late as November 6, 1847, the **St. Louis Republican** declared that "Indian depredations in New Mexico had been more destructive to life and prop-

erty during the preceding year than at any other period for twenty years. This was attributed to the lack of military resistance and the fact that American traders were allowed to continue to barter their wares with the Indians who were constantly outraging the people of New Mexico." **Niles' Register** (November 6, 1847), 155, as quoted from Loyola **The New American Occupation of New Mexico,** 83.

13 W. H. Ashley, **Message from the President . . . Relative to the British Establishment on the Columbia and the State of the Fur Trade,** 21st Cong., 2d Sess., Sen. Doc. 39 (Serial 203), 3. Useful sources on Old Santa Fe and its Mexican caravans are: Lansing Bloom, "New Mexico under Mexican Administration 1829-1846," **Old Santa Fe,** Vol. 1, No. 1, 3-49, and Vol. II, No. 4, 351-80; Max L. Moorhead, **New Mexico's Royal Road** (Norman, Okla., 1958); Benjamin Read, "In Santa Fe during the Mexican Regime," **New Mexico Historical Review,** II (1927), 90-97.

14 Ashley, **Message from the President,** 3.

15 William E. Connelley (ed.), "A Journal of the Santa Fe Trail," **Mississip pi Valley Historical Review,** XII (June-March, 1926), 79.

16 **Ibid.,** 79.

17 Buford Rowland (ed.), "Report of the Commissioners on the Road from Missouri to New Mexico - October 1827," **The New Mexico Historical Review,** XIV (July, 1939), 224. "It is also manifest that the custom of plundering within the limits of Mexico, which is common to all the western prairie tribes, is one of the greatest obstacles to their civilization. They will never adopt the regular habits of industry and civilization, so long as their thirst for war and plunder can be gratified by incursions into Mexico." U.S. Congress, House, **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo - Indian Incursions,** 31st Cong., 1st Sess., House Report 380 (Serial 584), 2.

18 Thomas Talbot, **The Committee of Indian Affairs, to Whom Was Referred the Petition of Thomas Talbot and Others,** 29th Cong., 2d Sess., Sen. Doc. 75 (Serial 494), 75.

19 Alphonso Wetmore, **Petition of Sundry Inhabitants of the State of Missolri,** 18th Cong., 2d Sess., Sen. Doc. 79 (Serial 116), 31.

20 M. M. Marmaduke and others, **Report to the Committee on Indian Affairs,** 35th Cong., 1st Sess., Sen. Doc. 293 (Serial 965).

21 Wetmore, **Petition,** 31. In his journal, Captain St. George Cooke reminds us that death all too often appeared as a frequent threat. Cooke recorded three men killed on the Pawnee Fork and remarked, "It is not extraordinary that such desparate, heedless, small parties [referring to the party that these three men belonged to] should meet such fate in this lawless wilderness, the wonder is that so many escape." Connelley, "A Journal of the Santa Fe Trail," 85.

22 Thomas Fitzpatrick, "Robbery on the Santa Fe Trail in 1842," **Kansas Historical Quarterly,** XIX (February, 1951), 50.

23 For more on the incident see: Dale L. Morgan, **Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West** (Lincoln, Nebr., 1964), 330.

24 **Nile's Register,** March 23, 1822, 51, as cited in Otis E. Young, "The U.S. Mounted Ranger Battalion, 1832-1833," **Mississippi Valley Historical Review,** XLI (December, 1954), 461-2.

25 Rowland, "Report," 224.

26 Carroll, **Three New Mexico Chronicles,** 114. This was not the first request for protection. Alphonso Wetmore, in his petition on behalf of the

inhabitants of Missouri presented to Congress in 1842, asked the United States government for military protection of trader caravans. He noted that the "provincial government of New Mexico has sometimes facilitated the operations of our traders; and in 1829, furnished the return caravans with an escort commanded by Colonel Biscarara, a very distinguished officer of the Mexican Army." Wetmore, **Petition,** 33.

27 For more on Major Bennett Riley, see: Otis E. Young, **The First Military Escort on the Santa Fe Trail, 1829; From the Journal and Reports of Major Bennett Riley and Lieutenant Philip St. George Cooke,** (Glendale, Cal., 1952).

28 Riley, **Santa Fe Expedition.**

29 Gregg, **Commerce of the Prairies.** I, 10.

30 Fred S. Perrine, "Military Escorts on the Santa Fe Trail," **New Mexico Historical Review,** II (1927), 269-285, as cited in Billington, **The Far Western Review,** 38.

31 **St. Louis Republican,** April 23, 1832, as quoted in Perrine, "Military Escorts on the Santa Fe Trail," 176.

32 **Ibid.,** 175. For more on Philip St. George Cooke see: Otis E. Young, **The West of Philip St. George Cooke, 1809-1895** (Glendale, 1955).

33 Clinton E. Brooks and Frank D. Reeves (eds.), "James A. Bennett: A Dragoon in New Mexico 1850-1856," **New Mexico Historical Review,** XXII (January, 1947), 67. For additional information on military escorts see: Leo E. Oliva, **Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail** (Norman, Okla., 1967), and Barry, **The Beginning,** 166 ff.

34 Brooks and Reeves, "James A. Bennett," 62. This seems hard to accept in light of their superior fire power. It could have been that yesterday's military, like today's, was inclined to exaggerate the price of defense.

35 U.S. Congress, House, **Military Posts on the Road from Missouri to New Mexico,** 35th Cong., 2d Sess., House Report 154 (Serial 1018). For more information on military forts along the Santa Fe Trail, see: Robert W. Frazer, **Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios and Posts Commonly Called Forts West of the Mississippi River to 1898** (Norman, Okla.); Averam F. Bender, "Military Posts in the Southwest, 1848-1860," **New Mexico Historical Review,** XVI ( ), 125-147; H. P. Beers, **The Western Military Frontier, 1815-1846** (Philadelphia, 1935). An excellent summary of the U. S. Army's total Far West duties during these years is Francis Paul Prucha, **The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier 1783-1846** (London, 1969).

36 Rowland, "Report," 214. For more on this commission see: Kate L. Gregg (ed.), **The Road to Santa Fe: The Journal and Diaries of George Champlin Sibley and Others Pertaining to the Surveying and Marking of the Settlements of New Mexico 1825-1827** (Albuquerque, 1952).

37 "The only proper course to be pursued in connexion [sic] with this subject is to place upon the frontiers a sufficient military force to restrain and if possible prevent these hostilities." U.S. Congress, **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo - Indian Incursions,** 2.

38 George Douglas Brewerton, **Overland with Kit Carson: A Narrative of the Old Spanish Trail in 1848** (New York, 1930), 220. Major Riley recorded on the 11th of July in his journal that merchants were attacked

by Indians because they didn't stick together despite Riley's warnings. Riley, **Report.**

39 House Exec. Doc. I, 30th Cong., 2d Sess. 440, as cited in Loyola, **The New American Occupation of New Mexico,** 83.

40 **Ibid.,** 472.

41 Doubtless the heavy military movement over their country for the last three years in support of the Mexican-American War had shaken the confidence of many an aboriginal warrior.

42 Wetmore, **Petition,** 79.

43 On February 3, 1849, Colonel John Macrae Washington communicated to the War Department that there were indications that the wild tribes in the outlying regions "were becoming convinced that they must restrain themselves within prescribed limits and cultivate the earth for an honest livelihood or be destroyed." House Exec. Doc. 5, 31st Cong., Sess., 105, as quoted from Loyola, **The New American Occupation of New Mexico,** 83-84.

44 Connelley, "A Journal," 85.

45 Ralph P. Bieber (ed.), "Letters of William Carr Lane, 1852-1854," **New Mexico Historical Review,** III (April, 1928).

46 Talbot, **The Committee of Indian Affairs,** 75. Such was the method used in the case of Thomas Fitzpatrick who had $207.50 worth of goods stolen from him. When the offending Indians met at Council Bluffs in 1843, they admitted that they had taken all of his goods and Fitzpatrick was consequently reimbursed from Pawnee annuities. The Indians could hardly afford to keep stealing from the traders when they were forced to repay. Thomas Fitzpatrick, "Robbery on the Santa Fe Trail in 1842," **Kansas Historical Quarterly,** XIX (February, 1951), 50-51.

47 Milo M. Quaife (ed.), **Kit Carson's Autobigraphy,** (Lincoln, n. d.), 168-169.

48 Henry Dodge, "Report on the Expedition of Dragoons, Under Colonel Henry Dodge to the Rocky Mountains in 1835," **American State Papers, Military Affairs,** Vol VI, Doc. 654, p. 144.

49 In a letter to President Andrew Jackson, Thomas James told of his encounters with the Comanches and asked for a position or agency among them. James wanted to awaken countrymen to the importance of friendly and peaceful relations with the Comanches. The Comanches informed James in 1824 that they were anxious to talk with the President and become friendly with him. They asked for protection against the Osages and other Indian tribes at amnity with the United States government. They desired American traders and assured James that the Santa Fe commerce would not be molested and that they would protect merchants. Thomas James, "Letter to President Andrew Jackson, February 21, 1834, in **Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans** (Philadelphia, 1962). Nineteen years later the Indians were just as eager to exchange goods. Louis Pelzer, **Marches of the Dragoons in the Mississippi Valley . . . Between the Years 1833 and 1850** (Iowa City, 1917), 102.

50 Howard Roberts Lamar, **The Far Southwest 1846-1912: A Territorial History** (New York, 1970), 56

51 For instance, on September 5, 1859, James A. Bennett's dragoon was mislead by the apparent friendly nature of the Indians. At the Indian

Mission at Council Grove, red-painted Indians begging for whatever the troops could spare amused his men. But as Bennett later remarks in his journal, "When they had gone our laughter turned to rage for it was found that they had stolen anything they could take." Brookks, "James A. Bennett," 61-62.

In June I will graduate from San Diego State College with an A.B. in Speech Communications and a minor in History. I feel that I have had a successful college career having made Dean's List six semesters and participated in activities such as Reader's Theatre, yearbook staff, and college forensics.

My love for history and the study of communications has lead me to pursue graduate work, combining the two areas of study in my Master's Thesis. I may possibly research the rhetoric of militant feminists and the effect they have had on the women's liberation movement.

I am ambitious for myself and hope one day — in the not too distant future — to teach at the Junior College level. Eventually, I would like to work on my PhD. Since both of my parents are in teaching I realize that a career in education is not all glamour. But I'm idealistic enough to think that I can turn my students onto learning as I was by enthusiastic professors.

History does not occupy all my time. I enjoy snow skiing, tennis, and cooking up concoctions in my kitchen. Much of my free time is spent with my husband reading, bicycling and walking along the beach.

I have been fortunate in that my parents always included my sister and me in their adventures. We've lived in numerous places and visited Alaska, Hawaii, Europe and motored all over the United States extensively. When we moved from Indiana to California, carefully following the Oregon Trail, I remember being amused with my father's insistence that my sister and I climb Independence Rock with him. As a child it all seemed very silly but his passion for history has certainly made its's mark on me.

Susan Koester — photographed by her husband

— Photos courtesy of the Author