2020 OCTA Winter Symposium

“The Southern Crossing: All Roads Lead to Yuma”

February 21-23, 2020
Yuma, Arizona

Full details and registration at:

The Southern Trails Chapter of OCTA is hosting the Oregon-California Trails Association’s "Yuma Historic Trails and the Yuma Crossing" Symposium, from Friday, February 21 to Sunday, February 23. The Shiloh Inn in Yuma, Arizona is symposium HQ. The symposium will focus on Yuma and its role as the primary crossing of the Colorado River and will include looks at the American Indian, Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. eras, including local tribes, the Alarcón (Coronado) Expedition of 1540, Spanish missions, Juan Bautista de Anza, the Mormon Battalion, 49ers on the Southern Route, the Butterfield Stage, military presence, and the Old Spanish Trail Highway, among others.

The Shiloh Inn at 1550 S. Castle Dome Ave. is our host hotel. It is located at the intersection of I-8 and US 95. OCTA has a room block with single kings and double queens available. Rates are $99 per night and include breakfast. Call the hotel at (928) 782-9511 and ask for the OCTA room block. Reservations must be made by January 19 to receive the discounted rate.

(more information about the Symposium is on the following pages)
The registration options include:

- Individual, Member -- $100.00
- Individual, Non-member -- $165.00
- Couple, Non-member -- $280.00
- Educator -- $80.00
- Student -- $60.00

See the OCTA registration web page (listed above) for full details about what all these fees cover.

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The Symposium at-a-Glance...

**Friday, February 21, 2020** – Local tours in and around Yuma during the day, and an opening reception at the Sanguinetti House from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. with entertainment by award-winning American Indian musician Steve Rushingwind.

**Saturday, February 22, 2020** – Lectures during the day, the Southern Trails Chapter meeting from 4-5 p.m., followed by dinner and the keynote address from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. [note that the date is 2-22-2020 – this only happens once]

**Sunday, February 23, 2020** -- 08:00 AM - 03:00 PM: Bus Tour of Yuma and Imperial County, California, which includes multiple historic and trail sites.
Full AGENDA

Thursday, February 20, 2020

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM: OCTA strategic planning session at the Shiloh Inn

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM: Registration table open at the Shiloh Inn

Friday, February 21, 2020

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM: OCTA board meeting at the Shiloh Inn

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM: Registration table open at the Shiloh Inn

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM: Pre-symposium tours of the Territorial Prison and Quartermasters Depot (depart hotel at 8:30 AM for first tour)

12:00 PM - 5:00 PM: Registration table open at the Shiloh Inn

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM; Dinner on your own

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM: Opening reception at the Sanguinetti House with entertainment by award-winning American Indian musician Steve Rushingwind

Saturday, February 22, 2020

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM: Speakers at the Shiloh Inn (lunch will be served by the Angry Crab Shack at noon)

· Dr. Carlos Herrera: Juan Bautista de Anza

· Doug Hocking: Terror on the Santa Fe Trail: Kit Carson and the Jicarilla Apache

· Harry Hewitt: El Deseo de Cubrir Honor Nacional: The Mexican Boundary Surveyors Reach the Confluence of the Rio Colorado and the Rio Gila (Yuma) in 1849 and 1851

· William MacKinnon: ‘Yo Mismo’ - Aboard the Butterfield Mail/William Allen Wallace and His Extraordinary Cross-Country Travels, 1850-1860

· Bill Heidner: Fort Yuma: The Need for a Fort and the Strategic and Cultural Significance of Yuma Crossing

(continued on next page...)
· Tom Jonas: Tracing the Southern 49er Trail from Yuma Across the Imperial Desert to Warner’s Ranch in California

· John Krizek: Freighting on the Ehrenberg Road - The Adventuresome Legacy of Transportation from the Colorado River to the Interior of Arizona During Territorial Days

4:00 PM - 5:00 PM: Southern Trails Chapter Meeting

6:00 PM - 8:30 PM: No-Host Bar, Dinner by the Angry Crab Shack, and Keynote Address by Tina Clark, Historian and Archaeologist for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area

**Sunday, February 23, 2020**

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM: Bus Tour of Yuma and Imperial County, California. Stops include: Mormon Battalion Monument, Fort Yuma/Misión Puerto de Purísima Concepción, Misión San Pedro y San Pablo de Bicuney and cemetery, 1776 Anza Campsites, 1540 Alarcón (Coronado) Monument, Old Spanish Highway Boardwalk across the Algodones Dunes, 1849 Camp Salvation, and Pioneers Museum in Imperial. Lunch and admission included.

Yuma Territorial Prison tour (9 AM)
The tour departs the Shiloh Inn at 8:30 AM.

Opened while Arizona was still a U.S. territory, the prison accepted its first inmate on July 1, 1876. For the next 33 years 3,069 prisoners, including 29 women, served sentences there for crimes ranging from murder to polygamy. The prison was under continuous construction with labor provided by the prisoners. In 1909, the last prisoner left the Territorial Prison for the newly constructed Arizona State Prison Complex located in Florence, Arizona. It was also the third historic park in Arizona.

**Notable prisoners include:**
Burt Alvord – Cochise County lawman and train robber
Bill Downing - Train robber
William J. Flake – Mormon pioneer imprisoned for violating the Edmunds Act
Pearl Hart – stagecoach robber
"Buckskin Frank" Leslie – gunfighter and killer of Billy Claiborne
Ricardo Flores Magón – Mexican revolutionary, founder of the Partido Liberal Mexicano
Pete Spence – outlaw involved in the Earp-Clanton feud

The prison was also featured in the short story and movie "3:10 to Yuma."
Price: $8.00

Quartermasters Depot tour (1:30 PM)
Yuma Quartermaster Depot State Historic Park is on the grounds of the former Yuma Quartermaster Depot. The depot was established by the U.S. Army in 1864 to store and distribute supplies to frontier army posts in what is now Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada and Utah. One purpose of the depot was to ensure that a six-month supply of much needed goods such as ammunition, food, and clothing was on hand at all times. The goods and supplies were brought to Yuma from California aboard ships that traveled around the Baja California peninsula and up the Gulf of California to Port Isabel, Sonora at the mouth of the Colorado River. Supplies were shipped up the Colorado on river boats to Yuma and stored at the Yuma Quartermaster Depot.

The supplies gathered at the quartermaster depot were shipped throughout the southwest via river boats and overland on mule team freight wagons. Up to 900 mules were kept in stables at Yuma Quartermaster Depot. The arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in Yuma in 1877 signaled the end of the depot. When the railroad reached Tucson in 1880, the quartermaster depot was closed. The quartermasters moved to Fort Lowell in Tucson.

The Signal Corps, having arrived at Fort Yuma and the quartermaster depot in 1875, remained there until 1891.

Following the departure of the Signal Corps, the property was transferred to the control of the U.S. Weather Service which worked out of the depot site until 1949.

The Yuma Quartermaster Depot fell into a state of disrepair in the years following 1949. Some of the facilities were used by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection and other governmental agencies.
Price: $8.00

Combined Prison and Depot Tour
Save by going on both Friday tours!
Price: $15.00

Still more about the Symposium on the next page...
Opening Reception at the Sanguinetti House 7 PM - 9 PM
Known as "The Jewel of Historic Yuma," the charming 19th-century adobe was the home of Italian immigrant and entrepreneur E. F. Sanguinetti (1867-1945). Located in the heart of historic Yuma, it stands as a testament to the “Merchant Prince of Yuma’s” remarkable legacy. Operated by the Arizona Historical Society, the Sanguinetti House Museum and Gardens are open to the public for tours and tea throughout the day. Enjoy their exhibits and treat yourself to a delightfully decadent sweet from the Sanguinetti Chocolate Shoppe. The evening will feature a no-host bar and entertainment from award-winning American Indian musician Steve Rushingwind from the Cahuilla Tribe of southern California. Attendance is included in your symposium registration.
Price: $0.00

Sunday, February 23, 2020
Bus Tour of local trail sites, 8 AM - 3 PM
Bus Tour includes box lunch and stops related to:
-the Mormon Battalion
-Ft. Yuma
-Spanish missions
-1776 Juan Bautista de Anza camp sites
-1540 Alarcón (Coronado) Expedition
-Old Spanish Highway boardwalk across Algodones Dunes
-1849 Camp Salvation
-Pioneers Museum in Imperial
Price: $65.00

Complete details about all of the above are on the OCTA Symposium web site at: https://octa-trails.regfox.com/the-southern-crossing-all-roads-lead-to-yuma-historic-trails-symposium
A Telegraph Goes In On The Trail

Yuma was the center point of a military telegraph station built in 1873, extending from San Diego to Maricopa Wells, there splitting into lines to Prescott and Tucson. A telegraph line in Arizona in 1873 was a surely a cutting-edge innovation.

Since Tammy Snook, curator of the Colorado River State Historic Park, will be guiding one of the tours on Friday, February 21, and since one of the buildings in that park is the original telegraph office, we are here including some tidbits of info on the 1873 telegraph.

Why is a telegraph line of interest and importance to those interested in the southern trails? Because the telegraph line was installed along the old emigrant road, and particularly in western Arizona, remnants of the telegraph line are an important clue to segments of the old road, parts of which are difficult to locate.

Southern Trails member Gerald Ahnert has researched the telegraph line, has assisted the Colorado River State Historic Park with interpretive signs regarding the telegraph line, and has located many of the rock piles used as “foundations” for the telegraph poles between Yuma and Maricopa Wells, as well as associated artifacts. Here are a few facts about the telegraph, provided to Southern Trails members by Gerry.

According to the Report of Military-Telegraph Line, Department of Arizona, Report of the Secretary of War, 1874, the San Diego & Arizona Military Line was completed to Maricopa Wells October 11, 1873. From there, lines connected to Tucson and Prescott.

There are many remnants of the line along the trail in western Arizona. We have the details regarding the building of the line, what stage stations along the trail were used by the military for their telegraph stations, and the military orders concerning the line. For instance, Stanwix stage station was one of the main telegraph stations, the location of a military telegraph repair camp is known, and there are even remnants of the telegraph line very close to the Painted Rock area.
Where the trail is dim or cannot be followed by the ruts, the route of the trail can often be found by locating the remnants of the telegraph line – a great clue to trail enthusiasts.

LEFT is a diagram of the typical telegraph pole installation, based on the military report details. Drawing by Gerald Ahnert. BELOW: A photo by Ahnert of an in situ fragment of a telegraph pole, complete with the two double-twisted galvanized wires used to secure the pole itself to the shorter pole buried in the ground.
The Joy of Giving

by Melissa Shaw, CFP®

We feel more Thankful this time of year, and all the hardworking people at OCTA earn an extra dose of “Thanks.”

We volunteer our time and effort to help preserve the trails, and help others find them too. There is more interest in genealogy and ancestry these days as everyone tests their DNA to find out where they came from and who they are related to! It’s a fun adventure that can lead you down a path you may never have found otherwise. Who were your pioneer ancestors alive in 1850? The Census of 1850 is available to find out how old they were and who else was in their household, with ages and job titles.

America is made up of immigrants that worked together in this land of opportunity. At times we have to look at our own history to see it in a new light. History tends to be told by the winners, and some of our darker chapters don’t always include behavior we
want to be proud of today. It’s still important to get out there and learn about it, with critical thinking and your own observation skills. It is Freedom of Choice, and Freedom of Religion that was intended to be the foundation of America. We weren’t going to be a Monarchy. It didn’t matter who your father was, in America everyone had a chance to be successful.

So we say thank you for giving your time, your talent, your money and your interest. Together we all make OCTA stronger, and we cross many states with our trails. We can open minds and open hearts as we give of ourselves and share the modern-day trails with others.

Doug Hocking Awarded Prestigious Will Rogers Medallion (Silver) in Non-Fiction

Doug Hocking, member of the Southern Trails Board of Directors, was recently awarded the Will Rogers Medallion (Silver) in non-fiction for his book, *The Black Legend: George Bascom, Cochise, and the Start of the Apache Wars*. This book also was the Finalist for the New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards, out of 260 entries in history.

Congratulations to Doug for these deserved recognitions of his well-researched-and-written work. We are proud of you. His most recent book, *Terror on the Santa Fe Trail: Kit Carson and the Jicarilla Apache* came out in October.

"A man only learns by two things: one is reading, and the other is association with smarter people." —Will Rogers

I have always regretted that I didn't live about thirty or forty years earlier, and in the same old country – the Indian Territory. I would have liked to have gotten there ahead of... the barbed wire fence.

-- Will Rogers (1879-1935)
Building a Basic Library On...

For the typical “Southern Trails” enthusiast, building a library of books, articles, and maps is nearly as enjoyable and important as exploring the trails themselves. This new column in the Southern Trails Newsletter will present a basic, introductory bibliography on a number of topics related to the development of the Southern Trails system in the West. This edition’s topic is “Stagecoaches West on the Southern Route,” (below). Other topics we plan to cover in future editions of the Newsletter include...

- Mountain Men in the SW
- Exploration Associated with the Mexican-American War
- Southern-Route Forty-Niners
- Early Explorers of the West
- Border Surveys
- Civil War in the West
- Desert Rivers
- La Jornada del Muerto
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro
- Anza Travels
- Kino Trails
- The Coronado Expedition
- Cabeza de Vaca, the First European Trailblazer in the West
- Early Maps of the Southwest

We will present an introductory and basic bibliography, which in no way will be inclusive, but will contain many of the items one would expect to get started on the topic. There is no doubt that three knowledgeable people all writing such a list would come up with three different lists. So, feel free to respond via email with additional suggestions or relevant comments on any of the lists we present, and we will include that information in the next Newsletter. Also, if you would like to write one of the lists yourself, please contact Dan Judkins, Newsletter editor, at djudkins1950@gmail.com.
Building a Basic Library on “Stagecoaches West on the Southern Route”

**Government Documents and Newspaper Articles:**
The greatest sources of information about the western stagecoaches on the Southern Route are government documents and newspaper articles. The government documents are typically House and Senate Executive documents, and many can be found on-line. A partial list of these can be found in the McMillen article listed below. The newspaper accounts likely number in the hundreds. Many can be found online using one of the paid newspaper archives, or the free state-based on-line newspaper archives of Texas, New Mexico, and California. Newspapers all over the United States frequently carried articles about the stages and mails in the West. The serious historical researcher will mine this rich source of information.

**Articles:**


Ahnert, Gerald T. “Arizona’s Sentinel Plain,” Desert Tracks, a publication of the Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, January 2016, pp. 8-12.


**Books:**


Conkling, Roscoe and Margaret. *The Butterfield Overland Mail 1857 – 1869: Its Organization and Operation Over the Southern Route to 1861; Subsequently Over the Central Route to 1866; and Under Wells, Fargo and Company in 1869. Vol I & II*, Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co, Glendale, 1947. [out of print, rare, expensive \(\rightarrow\) sets on abebooks.com range from $495.00 to $1,500.00]


Lang, Walter B. *The First Overland Mail: Butterfield Trail*, privately printed, 1940. [the diaries of four Overland Mail travelers; out of print]


The Genesis of the Southern Overland Trail in Western Arizona

by

Gerald T. Ahnert

Like a giant bulldozer the Gila River carved a gently sloping path for 140-miles from the western end of the Great Bend of the Gila, near present-day Gila Bend, Arizona, to its confluence with the Colorado River near present-day Yuma. The river's erosion provided a natural pathway for the Southern Overland Trail.
A wagon pulled by mules, loaded with 4,000 lbs. of supplies, starts its early morning journey across the barren desert of the Southwest. The dew has wetted a fine layer of clay and alkali on the surface of the desert floor. The heavy wagon’s iron-rimmed wheels packed the fine wetted dust into parallel tracks. A natural kiln fired by the hot afternoon sun bakes hard the visible tracks. A trail is born that can still be seen today.

The genesis of the Southern Overland Trail, as a wagon road through western Arizona, begins with Kearny’s Army of the West and the Mormon Battalion. On June 3, 1846, Secretary of War W. L. Marcy sent the following confidential order to (then) Colonel S. W. Kearney: “...It is known that a large body of Mormon emigrants are en route to California, for the purpose of settling the country. The choice of routes by which you will enter California will be left to your better knowledge and ampler means of getting accurate information. We are assured that a southern route (called the Caravan route, by which the wild horses are brought from that country into New Mexico) is practicable; and it is suggested as not improbable that it can be passed over in winter months, or at least late in autumn.”

Captain A. R. Johnston was with Kearney’s "Army of the West," and he kept a detailed journal. In his November 16, 1846 entry he mentions that they followed a well-travelled Indian trail. "Marched at half past 8, and continued down the river, the road being still an Indian trail, old and well beaten, through the alluvial bottom of the river, ... The road was lined with the remains of ancient houses, the broken stones and pottery being the only indications for nine miles. I followed this line of houses. In many places, quantities of sea shells which had changed in shape for some purpose of ornament. Of the pottery a few pieces, only, were colored.” What they were following was an ancient Native American trail to the Sea of Cortez.

In his November 16 entry Johnston writes: “After crossing the ridge, we came to a small hill of volcanic rocks, upon which the Indians had marked, in a rude manner, a vast number of hieroglyphics. The place is frequented still by Indians, as their marks were still visible, and places where they appear to have ground corn, or made medicine.” This is now the Painted Rocks Petroglyph Site and campground about 20-miles west of Gila Bend. The Southern Overland trail is about fifty feet south of the site.

According to Dr. Aaron Wright, Archeology Southwest, “Many of the petroglyphs at Painted Rocks were authored by people from nearby villages along the Gila River. The closest villages were less than two miles to the north and west—a 20-minute walk away.”
This is one of the metates at Painted Rocks that Capt. Johnston referred to when he wrote “...and places where they appear to have ground corn, or made medicine.” Photo G. Ahnert.

A chuckwalla lizard between two ancient petroglyph images of himself. Photo G. Ahnert.
Paint Rocks Petroglyph Site. Photo was taken a few feet from the Southern Overland Trail that followed the ancient Native American trail to the Sea of Cortez. Photo G. Ahnert.

Please send your questions, comments, NEWSLETTER story ideas, photos, or manuscripts of short articles about the southern trails to Dan Judkins, djudkins1950@gmail.com.

Dan Judkins, Editor
Southern Trails Newsletter
Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association