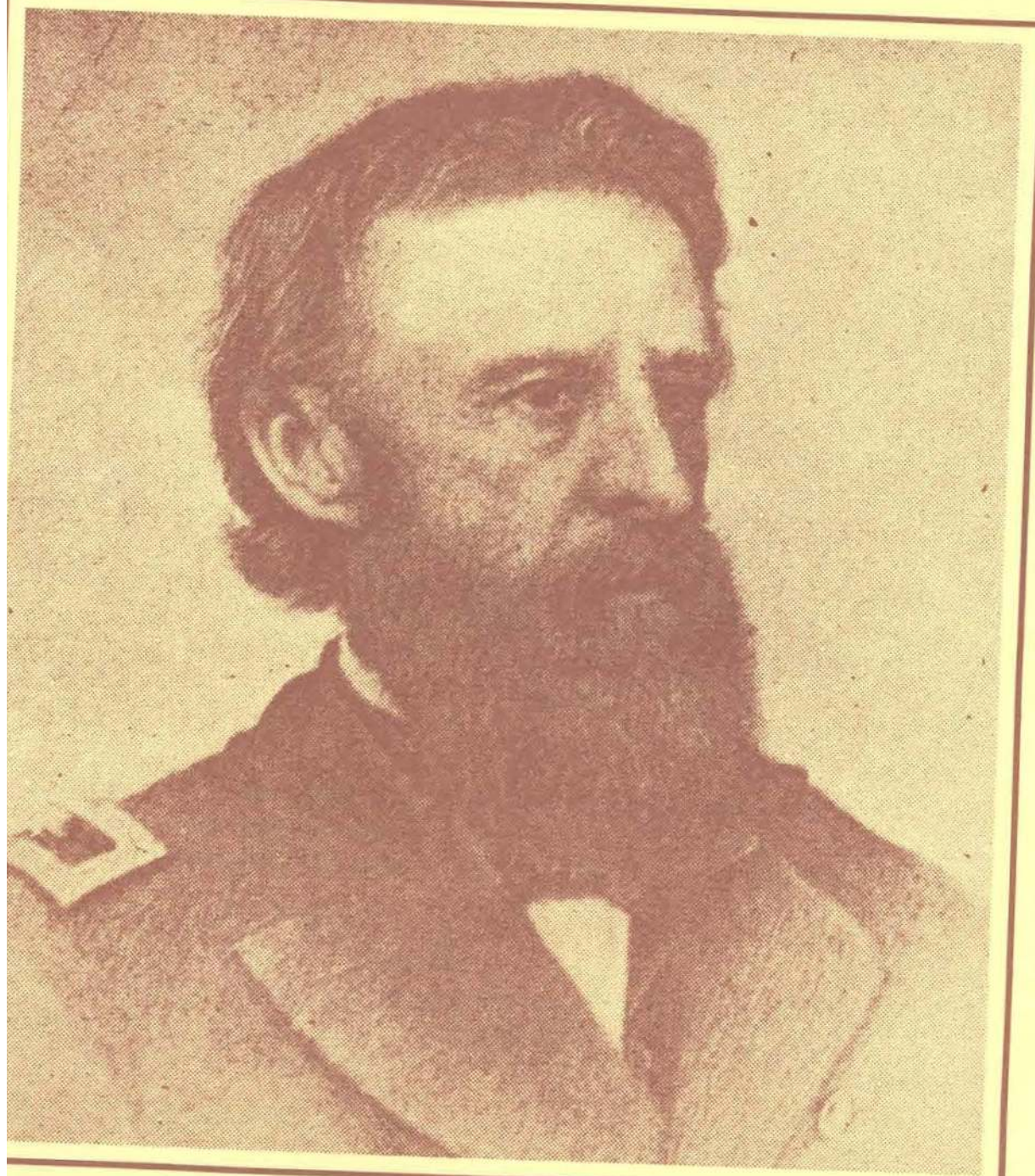


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PHILIP ST. GEORGE COOK

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* * * *

Marvin L. Follett, a long-time resident of Douglas, has studied, especially since the 1950s, the trail of the Mormon Battalion in Cochise County. His great-grandfather was William A. Follett, who was in Company B of the Mormon Battalion.

* * * *

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**THE MORMON BATTALION
IN COCHISE COUNTY
AND ADJACENT AREAS**
by Larry D. Christiansen

The war with Mexico initiated the American phase to the southwestern part of the present United States. The opening wedge and way came in the form of American soldiers. For Arizona the wedge was General of the West, Stephen W. Kearny, and his hundred mounted Dragoons who crossed the area with pack animals along the route of the Gila River in 1846. The way came the same year with the opening of a wagon road through the area to the Pacific coast by Lt. Colonel Philip St. George Cooke and his Mormon Battalion. This epic march and major accomplishment gave the first American view of Cochise County. This article will focus upon the battalion's movements in and around Cochise County and their 1846 prospective of the area.

The battalion mustered in Iowa in July, 1846, and marched down the Missouri River to Ft. Leavenworth. Here they received muskets, tents and other supplies, except uniforms. Instead, they wore their own clothes and turned part of their \$42 clothing allowance to the general welfare of their church. The some 500 men joined the battalion not for patriotic motive but at the request of their church leaders. The Mormons had just been forced out of Illinois and were looking for a new home somewhere in the West. This unique religious-military group, whose first commander died at Ft. Leavenworth, moved down the Santa Fe Trail toward the New Mexican trade center. Their new commander pushed them through a series of forced marches with only partial rations. On arrival at Santa Fe, the infantry battalion had walked approximately 1100 miles. The travel had taken its toll — a few deaths, a sick detachment sent to Pueblo (in present day Colorado), and their animals were worn out. All they knew of the future was that their orders put their destination as California; little did they know that they were halfway there, with the hardest part ahead.¹

Then fate stepped in to give them a significant part in history and someone to lead them to accomplish it. At Santa Fe the Mormon Battalion received its third commander — Lt. Colonel Philip St. George Cooke — experienced, tough, able, ambitious and disappointed. The latter due to his desire for an assignment in the main theater of the war — Mexico's heartland — where warfare, glory and promotion were most likely. Instead he was relegated to the side stage of New Mexico and California. New Mexico fell without a shot, and while en route to California General Kearny sent him

¹ *The Mormons are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. This group made one of the longest, if not the longest, infantry marches in history.*

back to Santa Fe to take charge of the Mormon Battalion. Shortly, his disappointment hit bottom when Kearny left his wagons and assigned Cooke the task of opening a wagon road to the Pacific. Still Cooke was a professional and every inch a soldier's soldier resolute to do his job. However, his new command were only soldiers by a stretch of the imagination and the order of the General of the West; yet, they were as determined to get to California and fulfill their duty-missions as was their new commander. This fierce determination perhaps made the difference between success and failure and allowed an infantry command of volunteers to make a wagon road across a vast little-known desert. So began a rendezvous with destiny — the wagon road, the Colonel and the mission soldiers.

Upon taking command, Cooke assessed his troops and their entourage and detached eighty-nine soldiers and all of the families, except for five wives of battalion men, to join an earlier sick detachment at Pueblo. The march out of Santa Fe on October 19, 1846, did not constitute a shakedown or break-in march, but it almost proved to be a breakdown march due to the sad condition of their animals upon reaching Santa Fe where replacements could not be obtained. Neither could sufficient rations be obtained, so partial rations began the second day out of Santa Fe. They expended much effort with little success trying to procure food and better animals. Thus, the trek down the sandy Rio Grande Valley showed that, notwithstanding their previous trials, their difficulties and troubles had just begun. Before leaving the Rio Grande, Cooke would send another sick detachment back to Pueblo.

En route along the Rio Grande, Cooke met his guides sent by General Kearny. The seven guides included experienced mountain men Pauline Weaver, Antoine Leroux and Charbonneau. The mounted guides assessed the Mormon Battalion as not half as well outfitted to take wagons across the area as Kearny, and they believed the battalion's mules to be so poor that most of them could not be driven loose to California. The guides refused to attempt the Gila route that Kearny's mounted dragoons took. They recommended a southern detour into an area that none of the guides had traversed and professed little knowledge. Shortly, Cooke wrote in his journal that "exploring, as we go, will be very slow or hazardous work."²

The battalion started its exploring near present day Hatch, New Mexico when they left the Rio Grande and ventured southwesterly around Cooke's Range, crossed the Mimbres River and came to Ojo de Vaca or Cow Springs, located on the old Spanish trail running from the Santa Rita Copper mines to Janos. The battalion's mules were failing fast so on the day of November

² Philip St. George Cooke, "*Journal of the March of the Mormon Battalion 1846-47*," reproduced in Ralph P. Bieber and Averam B. Bender (ed.) *Exploring Southwestern Trails 1846-54* (Glendale, Calif. 1938), 100. Hereafter cited as *Cooke's Journal*.

20 they laid by to rest the animals and make some crucial decisions as to their route. So here at Cow Springs the area of our consideration comes into view for the first time. While Cooke and his guides assessed their option as to routes, a Mexican trading party arrived. The Mexicans had come from the vicinity of the San Bernardino, and they informed Cooke (incorrectly) that it was 70 to 80 miles to the old ranch, and only two watering places existed, with one of those insufficient for the battalion. Cooke's guides added their discouraging reports. So Cooke decided to take the more sure way by following the road to Janos; they followed another trail to Fronteras, and on to the San Pedro River then on to the Gila River.³

The next day the battalion only marched a mile or two along the Janos road which progressively turned from southwest to south and then southeast. Quickly Cooke changed his mind and left the trail and broke his own across the vast tableland. On November 22 and 23 they crossed forty waterless miles to the dry lake bottom of Playas Lake. On its western edge they found water and a small trading party of Mexicans. Cooke desperately tried to trade his worn out mules, but the Mexicans refused to trade so Cooke had to buy twenty-one mules for \$716.66. Cooke learned that very near the dry lake some ten years earlier an American named James Johnson with a party of scalp hunters had treacherously lured into their camp many Apaches for trading then massacred them to collect bounties offered by the government of Sonora. Although at the time this piece of information seemed just history, it would have an effect on the battalion.⁴

Cooke's mileage estimates from Cow Springs, plus the opinion of his guides, had the San Bernardino about a day away, but the Mexicans told him it would take four more days. The Mexicans gave some encouraging information. The way to San Bernardino lay on good ground for a wagon road with plenty of water at the deserted ranch, and a Mexican trader could go with some of Cooke's men and bring the Apaches to the San Bernardino. The Mexicans said the Apaches had plenty of mules taken on a recent raid and would probably trade animals. So Cooke engaged one of the Mexican traders as a guide to San Bernardino and to assist in opening communication with the Indians. Cooke dispatched his guides and the Mexican to examine the route and report back any necessary information and then find the Apaches and bring them to the ranch.⁵

By now Cooke, through the reports of the Mexicans and the second-hand information of his guides, was looking for a traveled trail that would take him to the San Bernardino. Leaving Playas Lake, the battalion crossed the continental divide in the Animas Mountains with "some difficulty" and

³ *Ibid.*, 105-108.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 111-115.

⁵ *Ibid.*

then crossed the Animas Valley. On the second day from the dry lake they fell into a "well-worn trail" which they followed along the foot of the Peloncillo Mountains. Cooke fretted about the winding path of the route and of going more south than west. Continuing almost due south, they rounded a rocky spur (present day Black Point) and came to Cloverdale Springs. Turning southwest, they crossed a gap in a little mountain. Traveling a mile or two south, they struck an "old road" bearing southwest. Believing this faint trail to be the road from Janos to San Bernardino, they followed this different road ascending into the Guadalupe Mountains.⁶

The march of November 28 covered only five or six miles and ended in the morning. With his guides out on assignments, Cooke and a few others led the way until they came to the "verge of a great descent." A precipitous rocky declination of perhaps a thousand feet stood in their path; hardly a road for wagons, and all pronounced it as impassible. Cooke stopped his wagons below while he and an assistant to the guides searched in vain for a better route. Cooke then turned his wagons back to some water and encamped about 11 a.m. He sent Manuel, the assistant to the guides, to explore some "little open country" to the south which Cooke thought looked promising. Cooke waited, worried and brought his journal up to date. He worried about the safety of the group sent to find the Apaches. He fretted about being bogged down with his men on partial rations and his mules failing fast. He must get around or through this barrier and reach his immediate goal, the San Bernardino, which had plenty of water and grass and hopefully Indians who would trade mules. This was the fourth day from the dry lake, the number the Mexican traders said it would take to reach the ranch. Little wonder then that Cooke would write in his journal, "this San Bernardino seems to elude us like a phantom."⁷

Not knowing which way to go and the main party of guides absent, the battalion had the rest of the day off. Taking advantage of this, one man climbed a nearby mountain and saw that the battalion was hemmed in by mountains on the west, south and north. Another fellow felt they had arrived at the "top of the American backbone." A third man had it as the "summit of the Rocky Mountains." They were in the midst of the Guadalupe

⁶ Frank A. Golder, Thomas A. Bailey, and J. Lyman Smith, *The March of the Mormon Battalion from Council Bluffs to California Taken from the Journal of Henry Standage* (New York, 1928), 187. Cooke's Journal, 118-122.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Mountains some three or four miles north of the present day international border and a little over three miles from today's Arizona-New Mexico boundary.⁸

That evening the guides returned bringing with them the Apache chief Manuelita. Cooke considered this the best part of the guides' mission. However, they soon realized they had a nervous Indian on their hands who wanted to leave the white man's camp in the worst way. The guides informed Cooke that the Apache probably would not have come except he was drunk when they set out. It became a full time job keeping the Indian in the camp all night, and Cooke stated that Manuelita was "managed with difficulty and much address." The talk and other tactics worked and the chief stayed the night. The next morning before he left, he promised to meet the battalion at the San Bernardino and trade mules. He did tell Cooke that they did not have many, losing those gained on a recent raid when pursued.⁹

The guides' exploring bore lesser fruit. Leroux put the deserted ranch at eighteen miles distance and that the trail the battalion had followed to the brink was the road indeed, there being no other. Dr. Foster, a volunteer serving as the battalion's interpreter, assured Cooke that he would find no other pass suitable for wagons for 1500 miles to the south, for the doctor had traveled through Janos a year earlier. Manuel returned and reported no better way in the area Cooke had assigned him to search to the south. Leroux told of his reconnaissance of the same area which included views of the high mountains, and he proclaimed it to be more broken and impassable than the pass Cooke had turned away from. Besides, the trail was worse for the first three miles, and he had found two watering places along it, one nearby and the other about halfway to the San Bernardino.¹⁰

Cooke's journal entry that night summarized the situation and solution with one terse sentence — "What seemed impracticable now becomes practicable." The commander made some late night plans and issued orders

⁸ David B. Gracy II and Helen J.H. Rugeley, "From the Mississippi to the Pacific, an Englishman in the Mormon Battalion," *Arizona and the West*, VII (Summer, 1965), 148. Robert S. Bliss, "The Journal of Robert S. Bliss with the Mormon Battalion," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, IV (July, 1931), 78-79. Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion ... from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 187-188.

⁹ Cooke's Journal, 120-124, Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico ...*, 135-136. Golder, *The March ... Journal of Henry Standage*, 187-188.

¹⁰ Cooke's Journal, 120-122.

to his staff to accomplish the "practicable" crossing of the heretofore impassable brink. Not a rash leap over the edge but a planned "portage" as Cooke came to call it.¹¹

A light rain fell most of the night but the day of November 29 arrived with the clouds clearing away and was greeted with a swirl of activity. At sunrise Lt. George Stoneman, the battalion's assistant quartermaster, went with a pioneering party of twenty-one men "to make or improve the road." Mr. Willard Hall¹² went over the pass to the first water to judge whether lightened or empty wagons could be taken there with two or four mules instead of the regular eight. The men of the battalion unloaded the wagons and packed approximately half of the goods on the mules to take them to the first water. The wagons would not move on this day but about everything else would. Cooke said goodbye to his guest, Chief Manuelita, and included a talk emphasizing friendship and common cause. When Manuelita asked Cooke about the Americans who led the Mexicans to war against the Apaches, Cooke responded by telling the Apache that these scalp hunters had run off from their country and "become Mexican." He asserted that the United States could not control them in Mexico, but assured the chief that "true Americans" would treat the Apaches as friends.¹³

Then Cooke sent for Leroux and one last time posed the possibility of a better pass and again suggested the area he had pointed out yesterday and "wished him to go and examine it." Leroux repeated his assertions of having already checked the area and it contained no outlet, and that the old road leading over the edge passed over the best ground. Leroux at this time gave Cooke two general items of geography. First, from the Indians he gathered that it was less than 100 miles to the San Pedro River; secondly, back when he enlisted as a guide, he was told by Kit Carson, General Kearny's guide, while in the presence of the General, not to attempt to join the Gila River nearer than the San Pedro junction. The last response must have come because Cooke made some reference of when they would stop going south and when could they expect to reach the Gila. The commander "wished" but did not insist upon further exploration and none was made.¹⁴

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Willard Hall recently elected to Congress had resigned from a Missouri mounted dragoons and was traveling with Cooke to the Pacific, but he had no official capacity with the Mormon Battalion.*

¹³ *Cooke's Journal*, 120-125.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

In the afternoon the last guide, Charbonneau, came in and explained his long absence as the result of taking a long circuit searching for game, exploring the area and looking for the camp. Cooke thought he was simply lost. Charbonneau judged the area impassible for wagons. In his travels he had found plenty of game, killed two deer and saw some "wild cattle."¹⁵

In the meantime, the pioneer party worked on the road. They found the crowbar to be their most valuable tool. Nothing much could be done with the steep grade, but they moved boulders and rocks to make the descent less rough. After a long day of hard work, they had made about two miles of "road." Other men took their well-packed mules down to the first water, unpacked the goods and left them under guard. The majority of the men and all 140 mules returned to the camp for another load the next day. They arrived in camp about sundown, and one of the packers wrote in his journal about the rugged trail and how he wished never to travel it again, knowing he would be back tomorrow. The men at the base camp spent the day preparing the wagons for going down the mountain. Deciding the hospital wagon to be too large and heavy, they disassembled it to make needed repairs to others. The paymaster gave his light wagon to the doctor as he would pack his supplies by mule. Cooke dispatched his guides to go to San Bernardino to meet the Apaches and explain the battalion's delay and keep the Indians there to trade. Some of the guides were to return from strategic spots to direct the battalion.¹⁶

On November 30 the pioneering party resumed work on the trail, and the packers loaded the remaining goods on some of the mules and carried them to the first water. The rest of the men began the final phase of the "portage" of the Guadalupe Mountains. The remaining mules pulled the empty wagons to the top. Here the men attached long ropes to a wagon, then lowered the wagon with the men holding back on the ropes. One by one they lowered the wagons down the worst part of the descent. One wagon broke loose and ran down the mountain until completely ruined; two others received some damage but repairs made them serviceable again. All but one of the wagons successfully made the descent, with the mules being switched back and forth putting four mules to a wagon in the worst places and two in the better areas. The first three quarters of a mile was "very bad," and

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Cooke's *Journal*, 122-124. Golder, *The March ... from the Journal of Henry Standage, 188-189*. Daniel Tyler, *Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War* (Salt Lake City, 1881 and reprint), 210.

Cooke thought this "descent was steeper" than he had ever known wagons to make. The crossing had been tough but in all phases had been handled with dispatch, efficiency and good organization.¹⁷

The wagons had it much better after the first mile and a half as the remaining distance to the first water was termed "only exceedingly rough." During this latter course, the battalion encountered a surprise — wagon tracks. No wagons had come down the trail that they had just descended; pack animals alone had made the faint trail. Further investigation revealed a ravine that came in from the left that could possibly contain a good road back through the Guadalupe Mountains. Dr. Foster went back up the ravine and found an old road formerly traveled by loaded wagons, the true Guadalupe Pass Road. When he returned and reported his discovery to Cooke, guide Pauline Weaver came in reporting wagon tracks further down the canyon they were following. Cooke became "mortified" and extremely upset with his "ignorant" guides. Cooke, not content with subtle thrusts when sharp retorts would do, vented his spleen on his guides.¹⁸

The crossing of this defile was important not only in the physical advancement to the Pacific, but it increased the battalion's confidence in itself and increased their faith in their commander. In regard to Cooke, one battalion member recorded it this way, "I think no other man but Cooke would ever have attempted to cross such a place, but he seemed to have the spirit and energy of a Bonypart." In the annals of 1846 the dare and do of Napoleon received high marks of praise.¹⁹

The confusion of mountains, hills and canyons had led the battalion into Guadalupe Canyon. Some believe they came by way of Cottonwood Canyon. Not only do mileages traveled, physical features of the terrain, and

¹⁷ *Cooke's Journal*, 124-127. Tyler, *Concise History ...*, 210. Henry W. Bigler, "Extracts from the Journal of Henry W. Bigler," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, V (1933), 46.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Erwin G. Gudde (ed.), *Bigler's Chronicle of the West: The Conquest of California, Discovery of Gold, and Mormon Settlement as Reflected in Henry William Bigler's Diaries*, (Berkeley 1962), 29.

the approach to San Bernardino not fit this route, but two Guadalupe Canyon evidences are conclusive. First they marched by the famous balanced rock which still marks the canyon today. Cooke described it as follows:

The scenery today was grand and picturesque. At one spot there is a pass not thirty yards wide on one side. Just opposite, on a vertical base of solid rock forty feet high, rests another rock of a rounded cubical form of about twenty-five feet dimension. On its top rests still another of spherical form about twelve or fifteen feet in diameter.²⁰

Secondly, the junction in Guadalupe Canyon of Cooke's trail with the old Guadalupe Pass Road verifies the route taken. Cooke put his portage over the mountains at a mile and a half north of the Guadalupe Pass and claimed his route never varied from the pass road more than three or four miles. To prevent others from having to make a similar "portage", Cooke gave directions in his journal of how to find the Guadalupe Pass Road in both directions, the west to east passage so detailed as to include a large oak tree with an old cross cut in its bark where the pass squeezed between two large rocks not twenty feet apart. This narrow passage helps explain why Cooke's guides failed to find it; it was hard to find without directions from either direction. Later, travelers called this pass almost perpendicular. In August of 1852 John Russell Bartlett, the boundary commissioner, and his party traveling eastward arrived at the spot in Guadalupe Canyon where the pass road made a "sudden turn" to go over the mountains. Bartlett noticed nearby the traces of a large encampment of a few years earlier. Leroux, his guide and also Cooke's, said it was Cooke's encampment of 1846.²¹

The camp at first water was near the present day Arizona-New Mexico border. On November 30, or early the next day, the first official party representing the United States entered Cochise County. On December 1 they continued down the dry canyon which widened into an arroyo and camped where water reappeared. They traveled only six miles and made camp about 1 p.m. since no guide had returned, and Cooke believed the San Bernardino to be about eight miles away. They camped a couple of miles into Mexico

²⁰ *Cooke's Journal*, 126.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 126-127. John R. Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Exploration and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua, Connected with the United States and Mexican Boundary Commission, During the Years 1850, '51, '52 and '53*. (2 vol. New York, 1854), II, 329-330. Cooke made a map of the area of his march from Rio Grande to Gila. It shows the junction of his route with the Guadalupe Pass Road, a distinct canyon amid mountains. It also showed the east approach to the San Bernardino Ranch for 8 to 10 miles.

near a hill some 800 feet higher than the surrounding area. Cooke and two men climbed the hill which much impressed Cooke, and he thought it would be a "world's wonder" if it were set on the grounds of the national capitol in Washington. The formation of crystals made it appear gemlike. It also afforded an excellent viewstand of the surrounding country. They could not see the San Bernardino but saw to the northwest a prairie for thirty to forty miles which narrowed by the mountains to a spot with a gap which Cooke supposed they would pass through.²² Slightly off in his distance judgment, as the mountains were only half Cooke's estimate, the commander was right in regard to his mountain gem under his feet and his description of the scenery in Guadalupe Canyon. He wrote:

We passed today beautiful scenery — the broken mountains about, the precipices, and confusion of rocks. Amongst them, mescal and Spanish bayonet now become true palm trees — evergreen oaks, cottonwoods, sycamores brilliantly colored by frost.²³

On December 2 the battalion struck their tents and, for the first time since crossing the mountains, fully restored the loads in each wagon and put the normal eight mules on each wagon. They resumed their normal line of march, the pioneer party out in advance sketchily improving the road and then came the wagons and men. The men of each company marched before or after their wagons, depending upon the terrain. The leading company broke trail for an hour and a half, then stopped until all the others passed and then took its position at the rear. This alternate leading rotated between the five infantry companies and the wagons of the staff. Presumably the five private vehicles stayed with the company the wife's husband belonged to. Last came three Mexican sheep herders driving what remained in quantity and quality of 380 sheep obtained a month earlier in New Mexico. The battalion followed the Guadalupe arroyo for another mile and a half, reaching their furthest point south, then turned to the west and ascended up to the table land of the San Bernardino Valley. Soon they started descending to a flat bottom land and saw the ruins of the San Bernardino ranch. Crossing the bottoms, containing grass two feet high, they camped near the adobe ruins and a large spring some fifteen paces in diameter. The spring and ruins had once been surrounded by a wall so the exact location of this encampment is known. The ruins are still visible a short distance south of the Mexican border.²⁴

²² *Cooke's Journal*, 127-129.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Cooke's Journal*, 86, 111, 129-131. Tyler, *Concise History.*, 211. Golder, *The March ... from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 189-190. Gracy and Rugeley, "From the Mississippi ...", 149.

The battalion proper saw their first wild cattle as they came down to the bottom flats. A large red bull ran across their front at full speed and caused a stir of excitement among the command. When they camped, they discovered their guides had killed three or four bulls and were drying the meat. Immediately, several men from each company were dispatched as hunters to bring in meat for the command, while more men went out on their own and all on foot. The hunt, while novel and exciting, was fired primarily from hunger. The battalion had had few if any full meals since leaving Santa Fe six weeks earlier. Partial rations had begun immediately, first three-quarters ration, then half, and even down to one-quarter, so the stomach-oriented hunt began.²⁵

One of those going out on his own responsibility was Sergeant Daniel Tyler of Company C. He found the hunting on foot hard and dangerous. At first he had several bulls run past him at a distance or in the brush so he could not get a shot. He began following some of them hoping to get a shot. Finally after walking about four miles from the camp he discovered a lone bull standing by a single tree. Guessing the distance as a half of a mile, he began closing the distance by sneaking from one mesquite bush to another. As he neared his target, he heard a shot and the bellowing of the animal. The shot broke the bull's thigh bone and a second shot put the animal on the ground. By this time Tyler, only a few rods away, pulled his knife and moved in to cut the bull's throat. However, the voice of a well known messmate stopped him by warning of the possibility of the animal getting up and recommended another shot to ensure the bull's death. The Sergeant wanted to save ammunition, still he heeded the precaution to the extent of throwing a rock at the bull some ten feet away. The rock struck a horn and "quick as thought" the bull got to his feet and on three legs went for Tyler who fired and the animal fell again. The bull arose again and pursued Tyler, who with an empty musket and slightly below the bull on a slope could only dodge, until his comrade shot and the animal fell motionless. By now the Sergeant believed safety the better part of valor; he reloaded his musket and shot the bull one last time "a little below the curl in the pate."²⁶

The two messmates had a large fat bull with six bullet holes, five of which they inflicted, most of which in vital places. They marveled at the bull's endurance as well as the enormous horns — "about two yards from tip to tip." They partially dressed the animal and then after sunset the messmate went to camp to get help and some mules while Tyler remained with the meat

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Tyler, *Concise History ...*, 211-213.

and kept a fire after dark. His friends came with mules to pack the meat, and all returned to camp about midnight. Many other hunters put in the long hours and hard work to produce the sweet rewards.²⁷

As the battalion approached the deserted ranch, the guide Charbonneau rode out to inform Cooke that the Indians had not arrived. Perhaps the Apaches were nearby observing the command before deciding to come in; for as Cooke started across the bottom, Manuelita, a superior chief and several others rode up to greet the white men and ride to the springs with the battalion. While Cooke had his tent put up, he ascertained the number of mules and Indians who had come in — three mules and the Indians in the unprecise term as “some dozens.” He invited Manuelita and the other chief to his tent and gave them the standard friendship talk. Cooke informed his red guests that he and his men were the “true Americans” who had conquered New Mexico and were going to take California and drive out Mexicans. The Americans were the friends of the Apaches. Cooke’s Chief (Gen. Kearny) had gone ahead, but he and the government expected the Indians to assist the battalion with guides and mules. They were making a road over which other Americans would travel, and it would be the “duty” of the Apaches to help these travelers. Cooke promised the Indians that if they were helpful and friendly, then the Americans would be their friends. Thus, American traders would bring goods to satisfy their wants, and the government would give presents each year to the friendly tribes.²⁸

Cooke concluded by requesting they send to another village for a specific Indian guide and mules to trade. The chief responded “that if the sun and moon fell, still they would be friends to the Americans.” All very amiable until the Americans pushed the idea of sending for the other village to come in, then the chiefs made a “difficulty.” They did not want to send for the other Indians who were afraid to come in. A day earlier Cooke had concluded that the Apaches’ fear and their reluctance to enter the battalion’s camp came from the Americans engaged in taking Apache scalps to claim rewards from Mexican state governments. Cooke’s conclusion must have resulted from information gained on the spot for he cited two of the notorious scalphunters by name — Kirker and Johnson. So what happened back near the dry lake a decade earlier affected the battalion.²⁹

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Cooke’s Journal*, 129-131.

²⁹ *Ibid.* The increased Apache raids beginning in 1831 ravaged Mexico’s northern frontier and caused the abandonment of the ranches on the San Pedro and San Bernardino. In the 1830s the Mexican National Government left frontier defense to the individual states, who in turn

One of the chiefs offered to guide the battalion to the San Pedro which the Indians put at about seventy miles, maintaining a man on a good horse could get there in a day and guessed that Cooke's wagons would take five days. Cooke gave each of the chiefs a knife and three or four yards of domestic cotton goods. He supposed to himself that many other Indians were nearby and seeing the safety and treatment of those already here, he hoped they would venture in with their mules in a day or two.³⁰

Now the official trading commenced, It proved difficult and disappointing since the Indians had only three mediocre mules, and the Indians would only trade for blankets or at least have a blanket in each trade. Cooke only had a small pack of Indian goods, and with it and available blankets, he obtained one mule. Realizing he had to have more blankets, Cooke authorized the purchase of blankets from one of his guides who was taking his blankets to California. With these Cooke obtained the other two mules. Individual members of the battalion fared better in the trading for food. The Apaches, both men and women, brought mescal, a baked root of the same-named cactus, which the men declared as sweet and nutritious and so highly prized. One man felt the Indians brought this food because they knew the battalion was short of provisions. The Apaches traded the mescal for small notions but refusal of money created a scramble to find

for the most part, left it the people. The result was the Indians had little fear and boldly increased their raids. Finally in 1835 Sonora announced a plan of war against the Apaches which included a scalp bounty system. About a year later James Johnson, a Kentuckian, entered into a contract with the Sonoran Government to deliver Indian scalps. In April of 1837 Johnson and his party fired a concealed cannon into a band of unsuspecting Mimbreno Apaches near the dry lake. In 1837 Chihuahua adopted the scalp bounty hoping to solve its Indian problem. James Kirker, an Irish immigrant, entered into an agreement with Chihuahua and soon became the undisputed king of the scalphunters. He engaged a small army of up to 200 men to hunt scalps. He was active in the 1837 to 1840 period and then again in 1845 and 1846. In the summer of 1846 Chihuahua reduced the pay for scalps after they had been collected. Kirker retired in protest and the government repudiated their \$30,000 debt to him and threatened him with arrest. So he changed sides and allied himself with some Apaches and raided Mexican trading parties and hit haciendas. In December of 1846 he joined Colonel Alexander Doniphan's army as a spy and guide and assisted the American Army in its war with Mexico.

³⁰ Cooke's Journal, 124, 128, 129-131.

additional notions for more trading. Finally, Cooke forbid this trading probably because the spare items included articles of clothing. Cooke felt the men inadequately clothed.³¹

Cooke described these Apaches as follows:

They are poor, dirty Indians, but are generally dressed in cotton shirts and many in trousers. They have fine moccasins, which have boot tops. They ride fine horses, which they prefer much to mules, and are armed with very formidable looking lances [and] with guns and bows. They are ugly and squalid, [and] wear their hair generally long and in various fashions. They wear a kind of leather skullcap, now and then ornamented with feathers and with chinpieces. They seem to understand Spanish. Their own tongue is by far the most brutal grunt that I have ever heard. Their lips scarcely move, and the words come out a stuttering, jerking guttural.³²

Robert W. Whitworth, a newly arrived immigrant from England and probably one of only two non-Mormons in the battalion gave a description of the Indians with a little English flavor:

They are a wild predatory tribe, frequently making excursions into the villages of New Mexico and Sonora and carrying off horses, mules, cattle, sheep and sometimes Females....The Apaches are a rich Nation in Horses, Mules and Impudence. They are armed with Bows and Arrows, Lances, and some with guns. They have some Squaws with them, and very good looking, plump pieces of baggage they are, and they way they can eat Beef and Muscal is nothing to nobody....³³

³¹ *Ibid.* Golden, *The March ... from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 189-190. Bigler, "Extracts from ... Bigler", 46-47. Several authors, apparently without reading the journals, have jumped on the word "mescal" and have the battalion trading for the Apaches' alcoholic beverage. At the San Bernardino the trading was for the baked root, also called mescal. Near Tucson the battalion encountered the spiritous drink, a few tried it and called it "poor stuff." However, no journal mentions any trading for it.

³² *Cooke's Journal*, 130.

³³ Gracy and Rugeley, "From the Mississippi...", 149.

Robert Bliss, a Mormon and a private in Company B, called the Indian men "War like & Noble looking," the squaws as "short & thick set." Daniel Tyler, in his book some thirty-five years after the march and three years after Cooke published his book on the march, reacted sharply to Cooke's calling the Apaches poor and dirty. He thought they were not as bad as represented and wrote, "For a downtrodden race, they had quite an intelligent, dignified look, and were certainly much more cleanly and tidy in appearance than the Iowas, Poncas, Pottawatomie or Omahas."³⁴ All of the views of the Apaches were correct as far as they went, but the description of the Apaches in 1846 which mattered most was that they were unsure, suspicious and afraid of the Americans.

The battalion remained at the San Bernardino the second day. Twenty men, four from each company, went hunting for the battalion's needs while individuals again took up the hunt on their own. The official hunters killed at least twelve bulls. This coupled with the previous day's supply gave the battalion a five-day ration of meat and no meat would be taken from their normal commissary supply during the rest of the trek across Cochise County. The men feasted on fresh meat, a welcome respite from the worn out, grubby, jelly like ox meat, entrails, roasted hide or poor mutton fare of the past six weeks. All who left a written opinion praised the bull meat as the "sweetest", fat, and tender; and more than one man called it the "best beef" they had ever eaten. Such superlatives are easily understood knowing the quantity and quality of the diet since leaving Santa Fe. Perhaps the Indians did not understand this and seriously questioned the battalion's sense of taste. On the second day at the old ranch and after the Indians had eaten some of the bull meat, three Indians left the San Bernardino and returned that night with 200 pounds of meat. Cooke extolled this meat in high terms. Had these Apaches eaten enough of the old bull meat, or did they just want to show the battalion what good meat tasted like? The evidence suggests that these Apache hunters killed either a cow or a young animal. The battalion saw very few, if any, cows and killed none. The bulls and cows did not roam together at this time of the year. The battalion believed the Indians preferred the cows over the bull; whether this came as direct knowledge from the Apaches, word of the guides or just a guess, is unknown. Nevertheless, the men of the battalion ate the bull meat with relish; apparently the Indians shared the meat only with Cooke. A couple of days after the Indians brought in their meat and as the battalion neared Agua Prieta, some bulls were killed.

³⁴ Tyler, *Concise History...*, 214. Bliss, "Journal of Robert S. Bliss...", 79. Much of Tyler's book appears to be in reaction to Cooke's of three years earlier, but it also reflected the Mormon's pro-Indian bias with a bit of the noble savage uncontaminated by the wrong kind of white men.



MORMON BATTALION MONUMENT near San Bernardino Ranch, east of Douglas. Erected by Marvin Follett and Boy Scout Troop 27 in 1960. Photo taken by Ervin Bond.

Captain Hunter's wife, Lydia, asked her husband what they were, and he told her they were heifers hoping she might have a better appetite for the beef.³⁵

On the second day, December 3, Cooke sent a pioneer party to work on an old trail leading to Fronteras. Then he waited anxiously for more Indians, especially those with mules, to come in. Somehow Leroux talked an Apache into going and requesting more Indians to come to the white man's camp. Late in the evening an Indian came into camp and informed Cooke that the Apaches were afraid to come in. While Cooke waited in vain for the Indians, his men prepared meat to carry with them. They had no salt so they cured their meat by jerkying it. Numerous scaffolds arose around the camp with many fires drying the meat.³⁶

On this day Cooke and some of the men visited the nearby ruins and guessed correctly that the old ranch's abandonment came as a result of Apache depredations. They put the ranch at covering 200 square miles and stocked with approximately 40,000 to 80,000 head of cattle. They placed the abandonment as coming thirteen years earlier. Apparently the battalion gained this information from their guides and/or the Mexican traders. Today we cannot place the date of the ranch's closing any more definite.³⁷ Cooke left the earliest American description of the San Bernardino ruins:

This old ranch was abandoned, I suppose, on account of Indian depredations. . . . Several rooms of the adobe houses are still nearly habitable. They are very extensive, and the quadrangle of about one hundred and fifty yards still has two regular bastions in good preservation. In front and joining was an enclosure equally large, but is now in ruins.³⁸

³⁵ Golder, *The March...from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 190. Bigler, "Extracts from Bigler," 47. Bliss, "Journal of Robert S. Bliss...", 79. Cooke's *Journal*, 134. Gracy and Rugeley, "From the Mississippi...", 149. *Journal of Guy S. Keysor*, Dec. 11, 1846 quoted in *Journal History* (Located in LDS Church Archives in Salt Lake City, Utah).

³⁶ Cooke's *Journal*, 131-133. Gracy and Rugeley, "From the Mississippi...", 149.

³⁷ *Ibid.* Nathaniel V. Jones, "The Journal of Nathaniel V. Jones, With the Mormon Battalion," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, IV (January, 1931), 7-8. Tyler, *Concise History...*, 214. Bliss, "Journal of Robert S. Bliss...", 79.

³⁸ Cooke's *Journal*, 132-133.

Sergeant Tyler added that the spring and dwelling had been surrounded by an adobe wall in a high state of delapidation. Another member of the battalion learned of a "strange. . . Tale of this Town." His account had the Apaches raiding the San Bernardino and killing 700 "Spaniards" and taking the Spanish women captive, but the Indian squaws became jealous and killed the Spanish women. The story had the Indians taking 7,000 head of cattle in their raid. The account, if true, was greatly exaggerated in the number killed which would have been Mexicans in either case. The real tale of the San Bernardino goes back to an obscure start; we do know that an Opaté Indian Village resided here. In the 1720s and 1730s Jesuit priests visited the Indians and established a visita in the Indian village. There is no indication of permanent structures being built or the place being designated a mission. In 1775 the site was designated as the place for the Presidio of San Bernardino, and in 1776 the Spanish soldiers at the Fronteras Presidio moved there and built an adobe presidio structure with the two diamond-shaped bastions that Cooke saw. In 1780 the ferocity of Apache attacks and general realignment of northern defensive lines caused the abandonment of this presidio.³⁹

In 1820 Ignacio de Perez petitioned Spain for the San Bernardino grant during a quiescent period in Indian raids along the northern frontier. Two years later the grant was issued and Perez obtained some 73,240 acres which extended to the sources of the San Pedro. The owner, perhaps, initially stocked his new holding with 4,000 cattle. The Andalusian cattle thrived very well in the lush grasses and mild climate of the area. The large cattle herd and such extensive holdings required the ranch to have many horses and mules. One noted expert in animal husbandry estimated that this ranch, at its peak, supported about 100,000 head of cattle as well as 10,000 horses and 5,000 mules. In the 1820s and 1830s the principal commercial value of the cattle came from hides and tallow and not meat. The Apache raids again became serious menaces beginning in 1831. In the 1830s — perhaps 1833 using the thirteen year figure cited earlier — the owner abandoned the ranch in such haste that large numbers of stock remained behind and reverted to their wild state. The battalion reported that "many" of the cattle they encountered had the Spanish brand on their hip.⁴⁰

³⁹ Tyler, *Concise History...*, 211. Bliss, "Journal of Robert S. Bliss...", 70. Letter to the Author from Sidney B. Brinckerhoff, Executive Director of the Arizona Historical Society, Dec. 22, 1971, citing data from the Society's files on the San Bernardino.

⁴⁰ Ray H. Mattison, "Early Spanish and Mexican Settlements in Arizona," *New Mexico Historical Review*, XXI (October, 1946), 288-289, 310-312. Bert Hasket, "Early History of the Cattle Industry in Arizona," *Arizona Historical Review*, IV (October, 1935), 3-9. Jones, "The Journal of Nathaniel V. Jones...", 7-8. Golder, *The March...from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 190-191.

When Cooke first arrived at the San Bernardino and saw the great opportunity of subsisting on the wild cattle and trading mules with the Apaches, he thought seriously of staying at the ranch several days if the grass was good. However, he viewed the brown colored two feet high grass as "very poor." Basing his conclusion on the grass being dry and dead, he believed his weary animals would not recoup very much on such grass. This together with the dismal mule trading and the failure of other Indians to come in had Cooke in doubt on the morning of December 4 as whether to stay or move on. Early in the day orders directed the men to "jerk" their beef, and the men built more scaffolds to dry their meat. Some of the men went hunting or to get animals killed earlier. All the men expected to remain at the ranch that day if not another day or two.⁴¹

Nearing mid-morning Cooke suddenly decided to move on. He gave up the hope of trading mules with the Indians. One of the Apaches at the ranch agreed to go to the second water or camp to assist in guiding the battalion, and Leroux thought he could persuade him to go farther. Four guides and the Indian left within an hour to explore beyond the first water and then to send one of the guides back early the next day. Cooke had five days of newly acquired beef ration and judged that carrying additional meat might tax his mules too much; besides his information had the wild cattle ranging all the way to the San Pedro. So Cooke was not concerned about leaving half-cured beef at the ranch. Six miles would take him to first water, an easy half-day journey, so he ordered the late move.⁴²

The reversal of orders caused "much dissatisfaction" to the command. They had a lot of meat on scaffolds curing over fires and had expended much work in getting the meat, acquiring the wood and building scaffolds and fires. Now much of their effort would be wasted as much meat would be left on the ground. They believed if they had another day, or at least the rest of the present day and night, they could procure much dried meat without greatly increasing the weight on the wagons. They claimed their commander had promised them back during the half-and-quarter ration period that when they arrived in the wild cattle country they could lay in enough dried beef to last through to California. Still, all the command could do was grumble, pack up and move out; which they did.⁴³

⁴¹ *Cooke's Journal, 130-131. Golder, The March...from the Journal of Henry Standage, 190-191.*

⁴² *Cooke's Journal, 133-134.*

⁴³ *Tyler, Concise History..., 214-215.*

Before marching, Cooke issued a written order claiming that six days rations had been wasted since leaving Santa Fe; but if no further wastage or accident occurred, the battalion had enough rations. The order also directed the commanders of the five infantry companies to give no permission for anyone to leave the column of march or the encampments and forbade the firing of weapons at "game." Shortly, a verbal order directed that no loaded guns be carried during the march. Sergeant Tyler claimed that was the only order not strictly obeyed by the Mormon Battalion men for the simple reason of safety. The rank and file viewed the wild bulls as dangerous and unpredictable, while Cooke believed the greater danger came from wounded cattle. In regard to leaving the camp or line of march, the Commander reacted to numerous individuals who left the column and camps to go hunting. In fact, when Cooke left the San Bernardino, several men were away hunting. When they returned to the ranch, they found no camp, only a trail and had to hasten to catch up.⁴⁴

About 1 p.m. the command resumed its westward march along an old road. The road had seen little, if any, use in the past decade but was hard and the improvements by the pioneering party made it so the wagons rolled along easily; only the thicket of mesquite proved troublesome. Fifteen minutes prior to departing the ranch, Cooke ordered all fires secured and the rear guard to complete the task. However, numerous fires were involved, many in preparing a quick meal from the ready fresh beef about to be left and more in the meat curing fires. All of the fires were not put out and shortly the grass around the camp caught fire and burned at an "awful rate" and was left burning as the battalion continued on. The wind blew away from the battalion's line of march so they were in no danger. Apparently the Apaches had moved on earlier. The battalion traveled some eight miles almost due west, paralleling the present international boundary between a half a mile to a mile in Mexico. They moved up into a narrow rocky pass of a low range of mountains. They camped between two small peaks, the one in back a hundred-foot high mound of bare rock and the hill in front with a multicolored facade of rock. A rocky basin between the hills contained water. Numerous animal trails showed that many cattle watered there. Some of the partially cured beef had been brought along, and many of the men took turns all night in drying it over fires.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Tyler, *Concise History...*, 214-215. Jones, "The Journal of Nathaniel V. Jones," 7-8.

⁴⁵ Cooke's Journal, 133-134. Golder, *The March...from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 190-191. Gracy and Rugeley, "From the Mississippi...", 150. Bigler, "Extracts from...Bigler," 47.

MAP KEY

Cooke's original map covered the area from the Rio Grande to where the Mormon Battalion struck the Gila River. This segment of Cooke's map covers the area from Ojo de Vaca to Tucson.

Cooke's Explanations: Camps

Distances between marked-in figures

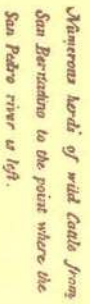
Water at all camps, unless the contrary is stated

Added letter keys for the segment of Cooke's map:

- A.** Ojo de Vaca (Cow Springs) located on the road from the Santa Rita Copper Mines to Janos. Here the battalion met the first group of Mexican traders.
- B.** Playas Lake in present day Hidalgo County, New Mexico, where the battalion met the second group of Mexican traders and learned of the impact of the scalp bounty hunters.
- C.** Junction of Cooke's "portage" road of the Guadalupe Mountains and Guadalupe Pass road ("Yanos Road").
- D.** San Bernardino Ranch.
- E.** "Black Water Creek" or Agua Prieta — Cooke's route following the road to Fronteras much of the way dipped south. A dotted line above the battalion's route carries the note: "Said to be better road."
- F.** Two Indian trails listed as "Oyetero trails for plundered cattle & mules." One in the San Pedro Valley and the other near the San Bernardino ranch.
- G.** Battle of the Bulls on the San Pedro.
- H.** Cooke describes the portion of the San Pedro north of where he turned west for Tucson as—"Very mountainous and broken."
- I.** Cooke's note along the dotted line reads: "Believed by Mr. Leroux to be an open prairie & a good route if water is found sufficient." The guide's belief would prove correct and in the 1850s this cutoff would be the major change in Cooke's Wagon Road.

of part of the march & wagon road of Lt. Colonel COOKE,

*[From a point on Grande River, (near which the road should cross,) to the Puma Village, where we fall into
 & followed the route of Don Henry, down the Gila River]*



During the short march, some of the men deviated from the normal procedure of carrying their heavy knapsacks and blankets, placing these in the private vehicles. Earlier, in going down the Rio Grande, some had put their muskets in the wagons but not this time. The muskets were carried and some of them were loaded, notwithstanding Cooke's recent order. Perhaps the men did this in reaction to Cooke's orders which upset them. In any case, Cooke became irate and directed that tomorrow all, except the pioneer party, would shoulder their knapsacks and blankets. When someone appealed to the Colonel stressing the use of private wagons with no added burden to government mules, Cooke replied rather warmly that he did not care, the men would carry them. Both command and commander had separate views, but the unity of getting to California transcended all other differences.⁴⁶

The next morning, December 5, concern over the condition of the mules heightened when two died during the night. The loss of these animals, after the rest at San Bernardino and the poor mule trading, illustrate why Cooke pressed his men forward. Thus far in their travels Cooke had seen his poor mules progressively deteriorate, and he feared their complete breakdown before reaching his goal. The battalion moved out through the rough pass and a wagon tongue broke. Cooke decided to abandon the wagon. He had arrived at the conclusion the wagons were not worth their transport to California even if he had enough good mules to pull them. Already he had contemplated leaving more wagons before reaching the journey's end. The men transferred the 1200 pounds from the disabled vehicle to other wagons and perhaps on a few pack mules. They disassembled the useful parts from the wagon and carried them for spare parts. They cleared the pass and entered into a valley some eighteen to twenty miles wide. They followed the old road until it turned southwest to Fronteras, then they continued due west. En route they encountered plenty of cattle; one man estimated they saw between 4,000 and 5,000. Officers, not affected by Cooke's orders of no shooting from the column, killed three bulls along the road and several others at a distance. The men carved some of the best cuts from the animals and carried the meat with them.⁴⁷

Nearing Agua Prieta, they saw the temporary Indian guide on his gray horse riding fast eastward and giving the white man's column wide berth. Cooke was able to bring him in for a short conference in "barbarous Spanish." The Apache exhibited great nervousness and Cooke initially thought this meant the Indian had run away from Leroux. Instead, he had gone farther than he had agreed to and was now returning to his people.

⁴⁶ Bigler, "Extracts from...Bigler," 47.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Cooke's Journal, 134-135. Tyler, *Concise History...*, 215. Jones, "The Journal of Nathaniel V. Jones," 8.

Although the Apache had stayed with the battalion a couple of days at San Bernardino, his uneasiness came from being one Indian alone among nearly 350 armed strangers and knowledge of the impact of American-led scalp bounty hunters. The Apache was following his natural instincts of being alert, cautious and suspicious. Before leaving Cooke, the Indian pointed out the lofty peaks to the west and said they lay beyond the San Pedro. Later Cooke would praise the Indian guide for his accurate information about the route.⁴⁸

The battalion camped at a large spring which sank into the sand after running a hundred yards. The spring's water helped give the descriptive name of Agua Prieta - Black Water. Around the spring the men perceived a perfect cattle yard, and they estimated that some 5,000 cattle used it. Cooke said he saw at least fifty from this camp. The original San Bernardino grant covered this area in its operations. In mid-1830s a second family operated a cattle ranch in and around Agua Prieta. Either at Agua Prieta or en route, a wild bull charged Mr. Hall, and his mule put him in some danger by refusing to respond quickly. The bull chased Hall and his mule a short distance then stood his ground. The bull was just challenging, but all who saw the incident knew the portent of real danger. At the camp they discovered a damaged axletree on a wagon. With no replacement, they broke up this wagon for parts. Now the column had fifteen wagons left, down from the twenty-five that rolled out of Santa Fe. The five private wagons remained.⁴⁹

Late that night some of the men caught mules and sneaked out of camp and backtracked several miles to pick up some meat from bulls killed "slyly" during the march. Perhaps these men bagged a wild bull or two without drawing the attention of unfriendly eyes with the confusion of the wagons, five infantry companies, staff, advance and rear guards spread out on the road. Also during the night one of the Mexican sheep herders slipped away — "deserted" according to Cooke after traveling all the way from the Rio Grande and receiving no pay.⁵⁰

The morning of December 6 dawned clear after a night of rain and hard wind. The high mountains in front and beyond the San Pedro had a coat of snow on them. The march began about a half a mile south of the present border in Mexico. (Black Water springs is in the southwest quadrant of the city named after it.) The battalion traveled about a half a mile and struck a creek with water. They turned northwest following this stream and recrossed into present day Cochise County just west of Douglas, Arizona. Turning west

⁴⁸ *Cooke's Journal*, 134-135. Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico...*, 142.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* J. J. Wagoner, "History of Cattle Industry," *University of Arizona Bulletin*, XX (1952), 24-25.

⁵⁰ Jones, "The Journal of Nathaniel V. Jones," 8. *Cooke's Journal*, 136.

they ranged north of and parallel to the border. The column soon caught up to the pioneer party. The advance party's seventy-five minute head start evaporated in thickets of mesquite which the battalion had to cut its way through. One of the guides returned and led them to a spring at the eastern edge of the Mule Mountains and the Sierra de San Jose after traveling some twelve miles. The stream ran through a "fine grove of ash and walnut" trees. The men called the place "Little Ash Creek."⁵¹

They camped before 3 p.m. because the guides were only a short distance ahead and had no knowledge of the next water. Rain and snow began to fall with a very cold wind, and the men disassembled an old cattle pen of dry wood for fires. Again they encountered many wild cattle, and they killed quite a few fat ones. It is not clear whether the officers shot the bulls or if the enlisted men received permission to hunt, probably the latter. Cooke was trying to make up his mind as to his next move. He wondered, if his guides did not return, about staying another day at the present location if only to dry the meat. However, he thought the meat had reached the point of encumbering his command.⁵²

When the guides did not return, Cooke decided the next morning to spend the day of December 7 in camp. Much of the command kept busy smoking meat from the killed bulls. Cooke sent a pioneering party out. They followed the guide's trail west three miles through the pass and viewed the open country. Since it contained little mesquite, they returned to camp per instructions. The guides returned in the afternoon reporting no water in the twelve to fifteen miles they had explored. They reported good grass and viewed indications of the river. The distance necessitated a dry camp, so Cooke directed preparations for camping without water the next night.⁵³

Guide Pauline Weaver recognized several points on the San Pedro and Cooke questioned him closely. Although he was the head guide, he always seemed to take a back seat to Leroux in guiding the battalion. Always the battalion was to follow the San Pedro to the Gila. Leroux confirmed this at the crossing of the Guadalupe Mountains. But now, well before finding the San Pedro, Weaver proved his worth as a guide. He told Cooke that they would strike the river near an old ranch and then travel along the river for about sixty miles. This would bring them to Tres Alamos where they could choose between two routes. If they continued along the river to the Gila, they would encounter "very bad road" — a lot of mesquite, little grass and

⁵¹ *Cooke's Journal*. 135-137. Bigler, "Extracts from...Bigler," 47. Gudde, *Bigler's Chronicle...*, 31.

⁵² *Cooke's Journal*, 135-137.

⁵³ *Ibid.* Cooke, *Conquest of New Mexico...*, 143.



Grave of Elisha Smith of the Mormon Battalion, west of Douglas about eight miles south of Paul Spur. Marker was erected in 1960 by Boy Scouts with Mr. Follett. Standing by headstone are Vadna and Marvin Follett.

photo courtesy Marvin L. Follett



MORMON BATTALION MONUMENT at Paul Spur, directing to the Elisha Smith grave. Erected by Marvin Follett and the Boy Scouts of Sierra Vista in the 1960s. Photo 1983, courtesy Marty-Dess Photo Service, Inc., Douglas.

very rough terrain. However, they could turn by Tucson over a better trail and then hit a dry stretch of seventy-five or eighty miles with one watering place about halfway to the Gila. Weaver preferred the latter route and Cooke took his advice.⁵⁴

During the night wolves nearby rent the air with their mournful howls. Sometime before reveille, Elisha Smith died after being sick for several days. His was the only death experienced between the Rio Grande and California. Although not an enlisted man in the battalion, he served as a teamster and servant for Captain Daniel Davis of E Company. He drove Captain Davis's private wagon and his wife had accompanied him until Santa Fe where she went to Pueblo with the sick and family detachment. No reason was ascribed for his death but he was called an "old man" by one of the battalion's journalists. While some dug a grave, others rolled Smith in his blanket and buried him in the Ash grove near the stream. His friends piled brush on his grave and burned it hoping thereby to drive away the scent and protect the grave from wolves and Indians. Then the battalion resumed their line of march.⁵⁵

No slab or tombstone marked the grave initially, but today a fine cement memorial with a steel railing marks the site some ten miles west of Douglas, Arizona and near the Rancho San Jose and the gas pipeline. This marker and all others associated with the march of the Mormon Battalion in Cochise County came as a result of the tireless efforts of Marvin Follett, whose great grandfather served in the battalion. In the late 1950s Follett decided that marking the battalion trail would be a great project for the Boy Scouts, and he involved eight Cochise County troops in the marking of the trail. Much time and effort were expended on each one of the markers placed along the route, but attempting to find a century-old grave in the desert was closely akin to finding a needle in a haystack. Only the general areas could be identified, as the nice Ash grove had disappeared. In fact, it had nearly disappeared by 1852 when Boundary Commissioner John Russell Bartlett's party camped on the same site. Leroux, Cooke's guide, was with Bartlett and identified the site as Cooke's camp. Bartlett surmised that emigrants had used most of the Ash trees repairing their wagons.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Cooke's Journal*, 123, 137-139.

⁵⁵ Tyler, *Concise History...*, 215-216. Golder, *The March ... from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 191. Jones, "The Journal of Nathaniel V. Jones," 8. Gracy and Rugeley, "From the Mississippi ...," 150. Bliss, "Journal of Robert S. Bliss ...," 80. *Cooke's Journal*, 141.

⁵⁶ Letter to the author from Marvin W. Follett, September 8, 1977. Bartlett, *Personal Narrative ...*, II, 326.

All Follett could do was follow the old stream bed and look for rocks which were usually piled on top of graves. One day he met the owner of the ranch Albert Christiansen; they discussed Follett's frequent non-hunting season appearances at the ranch. Follett told the owner he was hunting for an old grave. Christiansen told of his father homesteading and fencing the ranch in the 1880s and in 1890 his father discovered the only "Christian grave" he ever found on his property. The grave had rocks the size of a man's head covering it and they were blackened as by fire. Christiansen's father protected the grave and before his death in 1940 asked his son Albert to continue to see that no one molested the grave. A short time later a gas line went through the ranch and the original survey had it pass right through the grave. Christiansen persuaded the gas company to relocate its line a few rods north of the grave. During the construction of the gas line, the large blackened rocks disappeared from the grave, presumably used on the line, so Christiansen rolled a large rock on the grave to mark it. Follett asked to permanently mark the grave, and Christiansen graciously agreed, stating that he had taken care of it a long time and now his friend could take care of it. Follett and a couple of Scouts did in 1960. As they erected the marker, they had to remove some earth for their cement base; in so doing, they found a row of rocks around the grave with blackened tops and the part underneath colored red and gray, the natural color of the rocks in the area.⁵⁷

On December 8, 1846, the battalion resumed its march towards the San Pedro. They followed an old trail over barren ground, hard and covered with loose rocks. Their snake-like course over the hilly landscape skirted the high San Jose Mountains — covered with snow at the time — to their south. Crossing the pass, they soon struck smooth prairie and encountered troublesome mesquite. They could now see the "great valley" of the San Pedro stretching out to the north but no signs of the river. After traveling about seventeen miles, they camped without water and only mesquite for

⁵⁷ Follett letter Sept. 8, 1977. One might quibble that this grave is not necessarily Elisha Smith's. That may be correct, it could have been another traveler on the southern portion of Cooke's Wagon Road, even one of those using up the Ash grove. Notwithstanding this concession, it does not detract from the appropriateness of the Smith marker, if by chance the Smith grave is a few rods away. The marker is close and probably right on the Smith grave. The only error, and it is minute, is the death date given as December 6, 1846. It really was December 7 or 8. Tyler's book and three other journals suggest or state the burial was on Dec. 7. However, two of these have the battalion on the march immediately after the burial. Furthermore Tyler's book is not a daily chronicle and the other three are off on the dates of other events. Cooke's journal and two other Mormon daily diaries — the ones with the best date-event corrolation — put the burial on December the 8th, the day the battalion resumed its march.



MORMON BATTALION MONUMENT placed by Marvin Follett and the Boy Scouts of Pomerene in the 1960s in the Veterans Memorial Park, 8th Street, Douglas. Photo 1983, courtesy Marty-Dess Photo Service, Inc., Douglas.

wood at a location a little north and west of present day Naco. Cooke had their afternoon travel as being "west northwest" which may have allowed them to have crossed south of the International Boundary and then back into Cochise County. No wild cattle were killed on the road although officers had shot at some. At the camp one bull ventured too close and became rations. For the first time they saw a "gang" of wild horses with colts.⁵⁸

The next morning the battalion marched just after sunrise. Traveling due west they approached broken ground with a long black streak of mesquite. Cooke felt sure that here he would find the river; instead, he found only a dry creek bed, Green Bush Draw, which wound to the northwest. They crossed the Draw and continued westward towards the Huachuca Mountains before them. All evidence of a river — broken ground, trees and bushes — disappeared and only smooth ground showed clear to the mountains. Large bands of wild horses, cattle and antelope invited Cooke's attention but little consideration was given them. It was commander-worrying time. Where was the San Pedro and why hadn't the guides brought him word of the river? Cooke concluded that either they had passed too far south to pick up the river or the dry branch just crossed was the head of the San Pedro. Cooke's concern, reinforced by the many times when his guides had failed him, brought him to the point of making a command decision in regard to the trail. He pushed his mule at a fast pace to catch up to his guides to stop them. He ascended a rise and beheld a bottom land running north and south with a little brush and a few Ash trees. These signs plus the many cattle paths indicated water. So the battalion pushed on and finally when only twenty paces away, they saw a "fine bold stream." They struck the anxiously pursued San Pedro near present day Palominas. They had made the turn to begin their last leg of their long detour; now, they were truly headed for the Gila where they could strike General Kearny's trail and go on to California.⁵⁹

The valley of the San Pedro, especially the area near the river, teemed with wildlife — bear, deer, antelope, wild cattle and horses. The river enlivened the battalion, and one member described its effect as causing them to forget their past suffering and fatigue, being impressed by the prospects of the San Pedro Valley — "It seemed like a new world ready for population." The new world's human inhabitants were few and resided mainly in the mountains. But as early as 1697 a Spanish captain had counted at least 2,000 Sobaipuri Indians in the San Pedro Valley. Apache inroads caused the Sobaipuris to abandon the valley in the 1760s and the Spanish garrison left in 1789. The Spanish-Mexican ranching operations in the 1820s and 1830s likewise failed due to the Apaches. So other than the nomadic

⁵⁸ *Cooke's Journal*, 139-141. Tyler, *Concise History ...*, 218.

⁵⁹ *Cooke's Journal*, 139-142.

Apaches, the valley remained "wilderness" ready but waiting for population until reoccupied by whites in the late 1800s. One of the first settlements would be led by a member of the Mormon Battalion.⁶⁰

The battalion nooned where they first struck the stream, then crossed the river without difficulty since the west side offered the smoother ground. They moved on down the northward flowing San Pedro for six miles and camped near present-day Hereford. Probably right after the noon break Cooke dispatched four of his guides and Dr. Foster to press on ahead fifty or sixty miles and find the best place to leave the river per Weaver's suggestion and move toward Tucson. They were to get information on the route to Tucson and beyond and the status of the garrison at Tucson. When Weaver suggested that Tucson might be garrisoned, Cooke never wavered in his determination to go through it, believing it, correctly, to be the better and shorter way.⁶¹

En route to the river they had seen many wild cattle, but on the San Pedro their numbers increased. Cooke said the wild cattle were "thickest at their old haunts," referring to the ranches on the San Pedro which had suffered the same fate as the one at San Bernardino. The mesquite thicket concealed the number and exact location of the closest cattle. But from sightings and the many cattle trails, one man proclaimed the wild cattle to be as numerous as the buffalo on the plains east of the mountains. Cooke changed his mind about the straw-colored and dead-looking grass as animal feed. He considered the thousands of wild cattle and horses grown fat on this grass, plus the improved condition of his own animals, and concluded the grass made good feed.⁶²

On December 10 the battalion moved along the river some seven or eight miles until hills drew near the river, forcing the men to pass over some hilly ground. Nearby stood some adobe ruins of a deserted ranch or perhaps just a cattle pen. After marching a total of fifteen miles, they again camped on the river just south of Bronco Creek. As usual they saw "plenty of antelope"

⁶⁰ James Ferguson quoted in Tyler, *Concise History ...*, 366. Charles C. DiPeso, *The Sobaipuri Indians of the Upper San Pedro River Valley, Southeastern Arizona*, (Dragoon, Arizona, 1953), 46, 268-275.

⁶¹ Cooke's *Journal*, 139-142. Tyler, *Concise History ...*, 218. Golder, *The March ... from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 191-192. Bigler, "Extracts from Bigler ..." 48.

⁶² Cooke's *Journal*, 139-142. Bliss, "Journal of Robert S. Bliss ...," 79.

and large herds of wild cattle. With regard to the latter, Cooke wrote in his journal: "There is not on the open prairies of Clay County, Missouri, so many traces of the passage of cattle and horses as we see every day."⁶³

Along the river they saw bear, deer and fish. The latter received the most interest. Despite the cold weather, several men went fishing and caught "great numbers" of fish they called "Salmon trout." The fish proved a welcome addition to the constant diet of beef of the past week. Cooke reported seeing fish caught measuring eighteen inches in length the first day. The following day the "abundance of fine fish" had some "three feet long" according to the commander's report. The fishing was good and the eating even better for three or four days along the river. In 1846 the San Pedro had enough water for that size and quantity of fish encountered. The battalion described it as a "fine bold stream" and a "small clear stream." In at least one place the river was "very rapid" and one man felt it offered abundant mill privileges. The mills came in the late 1870s and early 1880s, but were of a different kind—mining rather than associated with agriculture as envisioned by the man. Today the river has much less water in it and less fish in number and size. The serious droughts of the 1880s had an impact on the fish. The stream flow probably diminished due to the long-term climatic changes, and the great Sonoran earthquake of 1887 may have restructured the underground aquifers. We know that the Babocomari, which flowed into the San Pedro, dried up. Once it flowed all year.⁶⁴

On December 11 the battalion struck their tents at 8 a.m. after a very cold night, formed a column and proceeded along the river. Private Henry Standage of D Company and a comrade went fishing. Following the stream instead of the new wagon road, they experienced poor fishing, perhaps due to the cold weather and the portion of the river they fished moved rapidly. Leisurely fishing and taking time to notice bear signs under the trees, they lagged behind until about 3 p.m. Deciding to catch up to the command, they came out onto the road and found nine dead bulls. They made a fire and cooked some fat ribs to eat. Then they walked to the encampment to find they had missed the most exciting day their comrades had experienced.⁶⁵

⁶³ Cooke's *Journal*, 142. Golder, *The March ... from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 191-192. Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico ...*, 144-145.

⁶⁴ Cooke's *Journal*, 140, 142, 144. Golder, *The March...from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 191-192. Bliss, "Journal of Robert S. Bliss....," 80. Charles C. DiPeso, *The Babocomari Village Site on the Babocomari River, Southeastern Arizona*, (Dragoon, Ariz. 1951), 5.

⁶⁵ Golder, *The March ...from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 192.

Anticipating leaving the San Pedro in a couple of days, Cooke wanted to increase his supply of fresh beef. He sent those with the better weapons, cap lock yaugers, to go out hunting. Most of the men, carrying flint lock muskets, formed the marching column. The terrain ahead had bluffs on each side of the river which narrowed down the bottom lands. The bottoms had a few trees, a "kind of cane grass" four to six feet high and numerous thickets of mesquite. In this cover the hunters closed in on and startled the wild cattle who rushed into the restricted river bottom where the hunters wounded a couple of bulls. The wounded animals and perhaps other bulls came "jumping" into the marching column hitting Company B. The men in this company, complying with the orders against loaded guns in the ranks, were both surprised and unprepared. A few lucky ones scampered up on the wagon wheels or climbed up the few trees available. The rest of the men had to watch the "enemy," be ready to dodge and attempt to load their muskets. One of the wounded bulls knocked down and ran over Sergeant Albert Smith of Company B. Soon the loaded muskets discharged a volley, bringing the two wounded bulls to the ground. The men loaded the badly bruised Smith in a wagon and the command moved on. The sergeant, who became the first casualty, missed being gored when the bull's horns passed on either side of his body.⁶⁶

After the first skirmish, the battalion moved a short distance and descended to the river to water their teams where another couple of bulls charged Company D. One bull ran on Private Amos Cox and caught him in the thigh and threw him clear over its body. Then the same animal charged a team of mules knocking them down and eviscerating one of them. Shots poured on the two bulls. The wounded bulls retreated and were closely pursued by the soldiers. While these two bulls wreaked their havoc, more wild cattle watched a "few rods" away. Some of the officers shouted orders to shoot them while other officers cried out to let the animals alone. Amid this confusion, some of the men attended to Cox and then put him in a wagon. Cox had a deep gore wound which the doctor attended. The mortally wounded mule was cut out and replaced, and the wagons moved on. Then the infantry left behind renewed the battle on the bulls and soon the "enemy lay weltering in their blood." Perhaps this was the place where the fishermen found nine dead bulls in one area. The wagons and part of the command moved about half a mile when a lone bull rushed out of the thicket and charged a horse tied to the back of a wagon. The horse pulled out of the

⁶⁶ Tyler, *Concise History...*, 218-221. Gudde, *Bigler's Chronicle...*, 32. Guy M. Keysor's *Journal* cited in *Journal History* (LDS Church Archives) Dec. 11, 1846.

way and the bull rammed the back end of the wagon, lifting it partly around and knocking down a mule. A shower of bullets quickly ended the bull's career of combat.⁶⁷

Early in the conflict, the mounted commander saw a large black bull charge Corporal Lafayette Frost of Company A. The bull began his move from a hundred yards away, and Cooke ordered Frost to load his musket. When the enlisted man made no move but kept looking straight at the charging bull, Cooke believed he was frozen with fear and in great danger. The commander, in strong language, ordered the corporal to run for his life. Frost did nothing but look straight ahead, raised his musket, aimed carefully and fired when the bull closed to within ten paces. The animal landed in a heap at Frost's feet. Cooke later credited the cool Frost as being one of the bravest men he had ever seen.⁶⁸

During the engagement, a bull gored a pack mule to death. One man, caught with no place to run or hide, in desperation threw himself flat on the ground. The bull jumped over him and he quickly got up and beat a hasty retreat to safety. The only humorous scene recorded in the fight occurred when a wounded bull fell near butcher Robert Harris of E Company., Harris, with knife in hand, ran to cut the animal's throat, but the bull rose to its feet just as Harris skidded to a stop right next to the animal. Somehow the butcher's cap fell or caught on the animal's horn. The bull ran off with Harris pursuing and shouting "Stop you thief, I'll have some beef." The chase covered approximately seventy-five yards when the bull fell again, and the butcher's knife fixed the "thief" and the hat returned to the rightful owner.⁶⁹

William Spencer, steward to the assistant surgeon, had a bull charge at him. He shot the animal down, it rose and pursued until another shot dropped it. The rising, shooting and falling continued until a sixth shot proved fatal. Spencer found two of the shots went through the lungs, two into the heart and two into the pate or crown of the animal's head. He cut the heart out of the bull and carried it with him for two or three days. He exhibited the heart to all interested persons and related his experience until his visual aid began to smell. So the heart went but not the memories.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *Ibid. Golder, The March...from the Journal of Henry Standage, 192. Cooke's Journal, 143.*

⁶⁸ *Cooke's Journal, 143-144. Cooke, The Conquest..., 145-146. Tyler, Concise History..., 218-221.*

⁶⁹ *Tyler, Concise History..., 218-221.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid. Cooke's Journal, 143.*

Colonel Cooke referred to the encounter with the wild cattle near present day Charleston as “quite an engagement.” A sergeant had it as a “regular pitched battle.” Probably it could best be described as a series of unattached skirmishes and different for each company. At one point in the major skirmish, the swirl of dust from the bulls put everything “out of sight for a few seconds.” Initially the bulls had the advantage through surprise and unloaded guns. However, the fire power of the battalion soon put them in charge of the situation. Sergeant Tyler of Company D wrote some thirty years later that every man had a loaded musket. Yet a member of Company B, in a daily journal, had his company with unloaded weapons when the bulls attacked. Perhaps Company C’s weapons were loaded, but as luck would have it, they probably played the smallest role in the fight as not one recorded incident can be traced to this company.⁷¹

Casualties of the fight included Cox with a gored leg which laid him up for several weeks, Smith with bruised ribs and Lieutenant George Stoneman’s thumb. The last injury happened when Stoneman fired his fifteen shot rifle, and it misfired out the side of the chamber, injuring his thumb. The estimate of the number of bulls killed ranged from the teens up to eighty-one. One man claimed he counted nineteen dead bulls along the road. Undoubtedly some died further afield and others succumbed later to fatal wounds, but no precise figure can be given. The same is true of the total number of wild cattle killed from the San Bernardino. Fifty-one can be put in the dead column from the few journals giving exact numbers, but even these accounts give other kills in unprecise terms as “others,” “several” and “quite a number.” Plus, only a fraction of the hunters out on their own at the San Bernardino are taken into account.

Cooke named a small, nearby stream entering the San Pedro “Bull Run” — probably the Babocomari. He was not a prophet looking a decade and a half into the future but a realist who saw his men win the “Great Bullfight.” The wild cattle ran and never appeared in the battalion’s path again. Except for the meat and memories, the command was through with the bulls. They had feasted upon them, and they were extremely fascinated by the wild cattle, both commander and command. Amazed by these animals, they compared them to the buffalo of the plains in regard to habits, use of dry wallows, separation of the bulls from the cows and calves during part of the year and difficulty in killing. They even thought the cattle in the wild state seemed to grow physically like the buffalo. They concluded that the wild cattle were ten times more dangerous, novel and exciting than the buffalo. For ten days

⁷¹ *Ibid. Gudde, Bigler’s Chronicle....*, 32. Jones, “*The Journal of Nathaniel V. Jones*,” 8.

the bulls were very much a part of the life and thoughts of the battalion, even reaching the enchantment of speculation, and the "Great Bullfight" proved to be the climax to this fascination.⁷²

After the fight, the battalion moved on a short distance where it came to a restrictive canyon along the river. Cooke settled for a short march and camped at 2 p.m. since he had wounded men needing rest and medical attention plus a lot of dead beef down the road. He ordered Charbonneau to find the best way around the terrain obstacle. Cooke sent back men to butcher ten of the dead animals to provide rations for that night and the next morning. However, the commander stressed that not more than two days rations of the fresh beef could be carried along with them the next day. The encampment was made just west of present day Fairbank.⁷³

The following day, December 12, they passed around the canyon in front only to find the travel growing tougher as they continued north. The broken and rough country forced them to cross the river twice and make sweeping turns away from the San Pedro to avoid canyons and hills. They camped near the present-day Curtis siding of the railroad just southwest of St. David. Here they found the only good grass encountered all day. This Mormon town was colonized in 1877 under the leadership of Philemon C. Merrill who served as an officer in Company B and adjutant of the battalion twenty-nine years earlier. St. David is the only Mormon settlement on the route of the Mormon Battalion.⁷⁴

They traveled under beautiful weather across land they judged to be good. The river ran slower and the bottom lands were covered with the tall grass and overgrown with mesquite. Cooke had the problem of not knowing where to leave the San Pedro and strike for Tucson. He mistook a single desert plant as a signal stick marking a turn away from the river. Charbonneau partially persuaded him to discount this. Still Cooke remained uncertain until Leroux returned that evening. He informed Cooke that they must follow the river another eight to ten miles then turn west for Tucson. Leroux reported that his party had reached an old ranch some fifteen miles from the river. Here they found twenty-five Indians, with their families, and a few Mexicans making mescal whiskey. These Indians were the same Indians who chased the Apaches, those the battalion met at the San Bernardino, and recaptured their stolen animals. Leroux passed his party off as trappers leading a front

⁷² *Cooke's Journal*, 144.

⁷³ *Cooke's Journal*, 130, 135, 136, 141, 142. Tyler, *Concise History*...., 211-214. Cooke, *The Conquest*...., 142-145.

⁷⁴ *Cooke's Journal*, 144-145. James H. McClintock, *Mormon Settlement in Arizona* (Phoenix, 1921), 232-238.

guard of 360 men followed by a large army. The size of the following army was to be judged by the strength of the front guard. To bolster this invention and possibly get more informatin, the American party said they were going on to Tucson and started in that direction. Only Dr. Foster went to Tucson, the four guides slipping back to the battalion by roundabout ways.⁷⁵

The guides learned that Tucson lay about fifteen miles beyond the ranch, and all of the Mexican garrisons of the nearest presidios had gathered there numbering not more than 200 men with two cannon. The Mexican command had been observing the battalion's movements for several days and knew of General Kearny's march along the Gila twenty days earlier. Leroux also gained needed information on the road and available water on the route from Tucson to the Gila River. Two confusing tidbits gleaned, and later proven false, concerned three of Kearny's men at Tucson, and a treaty allowing the Americans to pass through any place if they stopped the northern Coyotero Apaches from raiding south of the Gila. This information puzzled Cooke, but did not stay or change his course.⁷⁶

On December 13, 1846, the battalion made its last march down the river bottom of the San Pedro. The weather and road proved good except for the mesquite growth which Cooke likened unto a planted orchard. It had to be cut by the pioneering party in the lead. After a march of about seven miles, they camped at some distance from the river just south of present day Benson. The following day's route dictated a camp which placed them where grass and water were not easily accessible. When they took the animals to the river for water, they experienced "extreme difficulty" in getting the animals down to the water. Cooke's daily mileage estimates had the battalion on the San Pedro for sixty-five miles. The actual miles were only about fifty, not counting the sweeps away from the river. Now Tucson was their objective.⁷⁷

The Tucson preparation differed from the getting-ready routine of all their other marches. Much of the afternoon was spent in an inspection of arms, manual of arms and drilling of companies and then the whole battalion. The battalion had been in the service for five months and had their weapons for 132 days. However, formal military drill was rare, a seemingly voluntary gesture rather than a requirement. Cooke stated that the men were "never drilled." For the past two months Cooke enforced reveille under arms and

⁷⁵ Gracy and Rugeley, "From the Mississippi....," 150. Golder, *The March...from the Journal of Henry Standage*, 194. Cooke's *Journal*, 145-146. Tyler, *Concise History....*, 224-225.

⁷⁶ Cooke's *Journal*, 145, 146. Cooke, *The Conquest....*, 146-147. Tyler, *Concise History....*, 224-225. Bigler, "Extracts...Bigler," 48.

⁷⁷ Cooke's *Journal*, 146-148.

the carrying of weapons while marching. The battalion's military experience thus far was largely marching, getting to Fort Leavenworth, then to Santa Fe and now in building a road to California. Nevertheless, they had become experienced with their weapons, and the bull fight gave them a small taste of battle. Each man received twenty-eight rounds of ammunition and had read to them Cooke's order. In announcing the march on Tucson, Cooke ordered the battalion not to war nor to destroy but to "overcome all resistance" along the shorter and straighter course. So the battalion drilled and made ready, the first American military drills in Cochise County and Arizona.⁷⁸

Early on the morning of December 14 the battalion marched forward leaving the San Pedro and proceeded northwest. They wound up the bluffs and ascended for some nine miles and crossed into present day Pima County about two or three miles north of the Interstate Highway I-10.⁷⁹ They moved on to take Tucson without firing a shot then moved up to the Indian villages on the Gila River. They followed the Gila to the Colorado River and then marched on to San Diego, completing an infantry march of over 2,000 miles and carving out a "road of great value."

The crossing of Cochise County proved a welcome respite on the battalion's long march to the Pacific. The crossing of the Guadalupe Mountains had been their toughest obstacle, but thereafter the traveling improved considerably. With plenty of water, good grass and some short marches, the battalion's animals improved for perhaps the only time on the march. The wild cattle proved the greatest blessing by providing full rations for the men for the first time since leaving Santa Fe. Not only fresh meat but dried beef supplemented their commissary provisions for days after leaving Cochise County. The area had been good for the Mormon Battalion, and they were good for present day Cochise County. Their march and road ensured that the area would be attached to the United States and thus began the Americanization of the area.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 69, 146-148. Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico...*, 146-147. Gracy and Rugeley, "From the Mississippi...", 136.

⁷⁹ *Cooke's Journal*, 148-149.

Editors' Note

Larry Christiansen's mention of Marvin Follett at some length caused the Editorial Committee to want to talk with Mr. Follett about the work he has done in this area. As a result, an oral history tape was made on February 19, 1983 by Ruth D. Elliott and Garth Johnston, both of whom have known Mr. Follett many years.

In our correspondence last spring, Larry Christiansen wrote that Mr. Follett had done more than any other person or group to preserve and mark the trail of the Battalion across Cochise County. Marvin is a good friend of mine, Larry wrote; I know we disagree over the route the Mormon Battalion traveled, especially in eastern Cochise County. We also disagree on the death date of Elisha Smith by one day. Perhaps there are other differences, but that is not as important as that Marvin deserves and should get a great deal of credit for his work.

Following is an edited transcript of the tape.

MR. FOLLETT: Well, on the 28th of November 1846, the Mormon Battalion camped at the head of what is now called Cottonwood Canyon. At that time, of course, there was no name, but they mentioned that the canyon was covered with cottonwood trees and ash. When they reached the divide, one of them said, "Well, this is the Great Continental Divide of the western mountains of the United States."

Their job was to descend this canyon to the bottom to complete their travels. On the 29th, they were unable to let their wagons down so they took their camping equipment and supplies and loaded them on pack horses and took them down six miles from the top and left them there under guard and then went back to get some more. Then after they'd taken all their supplies down to this 6-mile camp, they undertook the job of letting the wagons down this steep, narrow, rough canyon and they had pretty good luck using long ropes, the men holding onto the ropes. But the rope broke on one of the wagons and it went down by itself and crashed, going so fast it was beyond repair, so they left it in the cottonwood canyon. It had been seen in the early 1900's by two people who lived in Douglas when they found the wagon and where it was.

The Battalion continued on two days' travel and they were in the old San Bernardino Ranch on the 2nd of December, settled there and rested three days. There is a lot of controversy on where they came down. Some people claim they came down Guadalupe Canyon. Well, there's no place in Guadalupe Canyon that I've been in that has the steeper place where they would have had to let the wagons down with rope. You can hardly tell when you pass the divide in Guadalupe because it's so level and smooth. You can

go anywhere; you can just go on, then on to the other side into present-day New Mexico without any effort at all because there are no mountains. And then they also claim that Guadalupe had lots of beautiful monuments and rocks, because they said when they came down the canyon that the rocks were so beautiful and there were individual rocks that stood out because of their beauty and appeared to be painted, which had been caused from years of weather. They were all that way until the early 1880's when they had an earthquake out there and all these individual rocks were destroyed and a lot of the bluffs were destroyed, too. Mr. Rex McDonald and his five sons homesteaded through there, raised their families; they had a school in Cottonwood Canyon, which comes on down and makes a turn and goes into Mexico.

In 1964 or '65, I was working with Mr. Hiram Floyd who had come from California and was living with his folks in Guadalupe Canyon. When we were working, I was talking about the Mormon Battalion and I told him about losing a wagon and he said, "Well, I can take you out to see a Guadalupe wreck that burned up."

He took me out and showed me where it was and I had to let the Boy Scouts build a monument out in Guadalupe Canyon against my better judgment as to where the wagon was. Anyway, after they built the monument, all the old-timers who'd spent their lives in Guadalupe Canyon came to me and wanted to know why I was building a monument to a man who went to Douglas to get a load of cement and got drunk and came back and turned the wagon over, which killed him and burned the wagon.

Of course, the Boy Scouts had already put up the monument out there, which was a false monument to the Mormon Battalion because they never came down that way. I was contacted by all the people asking why the monument was put there, and I was sure tickled when the flood turned it over and broke it. It's still there, and as far as I'm concerned, I have no intention of having it straightened up because the Battalion didn't come down Guadalupe.

In my several visits to Guadalupe, there's no such thing as a steep mountain. You can hardly tell when you go across the country and reach the other side going into New Mexico. The real wrecked wagon connected with the Mormon Battalion was lost in Cottonwood Canyon. In the last year or two, or three or four, I have contacted Rex McDonald; he came to me and told me that he saw the wagon in the early 1900's in Cottonwood Canyon and no one knew how it got there until I started searching for it and talking about it. And then there's Leona Taylor, who was his cousin. When she and her husband were chasing lions up Cottonwood Canyon in 1934, that was after the road was built in Cottonwood Canyon, and they were following

the lions and they saw parts of the old wagon then. But I've never been able to find any, and the Boy Scouts neither, because they searched over in Guadalupe Canyon several times for the wagon parts; and there have been any number of people writing stories on it coming out looking for wagon parts.

Around 1960 when I became interested in marking graves, I read where they camped at Ash Creek and where they buried Smith, and so I asked around where Ash Creek was and found it. I'd read about the grave and how Smith was buried and the fire they'd built on it and the black rocks, so I started out to find that. I couldn't find any such place with black rocks on it.

Albert Christiansen's father had homesteaded there in 1881, had built this pasture, and had protected the grave. When he was on his deathbed, he called his son Albert and told him, "Don't let anyone destroy that grave because it's the only Christian grave that I've ever found in this part of the country and I want to preserve it because someday someone will come looking for it."

I started hunting for the grave but couldn't find anything. The second time I was told to ask Albert about the grave, I ran into him downtown and told him I'd been told to ask about the grave.

"I've been all over your pasture."

"What are you doing out there? It isn't hunting season."

"Well, I'm looking for a grave."

You didn't find it, did you?" I said no.

He said, "Well, I'll tell you why and then you come out there and I'll show you where it's at. You were looking for a grave with black rocks on it?" I said yes.

He said, "It was there until late 1945 when they put the gas line through and they had the survey right over the grave and I wouldn't give them permission to put it in there unless they went down underneath the hill and promised me they wouldn't destroy the grave or touch the grave. When they were putting the cable across one of the draws, it kept pulling out so they went there and hauled the rocks off the grave and used them to weigh the pipe down and that is where the black rocks are. Come out and I'll show you where the grave is."

I went out there and he took me around and he'd rolled a big rock to the head of the grave and that's where the Boy Scouts and I marked the grave and put the headstone where he showed me. When we were digging to put the uprights in each corner, there was a black rock, just the top of the rock was black. It was out of the ground. The rest of it was just the regular color of the rocks, and so that's where the grave is, where Albert told me, and that's where it was when they homesteaded there in 1881.

When I started to build monuments on the Mormon Battalion Trail through here, I started working with the Scouts to give them an opportunity to get an award from the Boy Scouts of America. They had to build a historical monument and hike fifty miles on the trail to get the award. They had to have permission from the National Boy Scouts and the Scoutmaster had to have that permission with him. And with all the monuments along here, the Scoutmasters would not, or did not, get a permit and of course the boys who built the monuments did not get any award for their work because of the way the leaders did not comply with the Boy Scouts of America's rule on receiving the award. Now they've changed it a little bit: they only have to hike eight miles and camp all night on the 8-mile trek to get an award. But I had a committee, Harold Mathews from Pomerene and Ward Ray from Benson went with me and helped me choose the places and helped me decide what type of monument the boys could build without too much trouble — they would have to put it up in the places assigned them.

There were eight monuments, no, I think only seven are left; I think they tore one up where the road crosses the San Pedro River on the old road going to Sierra Vista from Bisbee at a crossing. They pushed it off down in a hole and it's covered up. Anyway, there was a marker given to each troop in Cochise County and the LDS Boy Scouts had them registered.

They started in Willcox, put one up at the Slaughter Ranch (San Bernardino). The Pomerene boys put one up in Douglas City Park (Veterans Park, 8th Street); the one directing them to the grave at Paul Spur was put up by the Sierra Vista Boy Scouts; the one over by Palominas was put up by the Douglas Boy Scouts; the one down on the other highway across the road the other side of Bisbee was put up by the Douglas Explorers. The one down at the Battle of the Bulls at Charleston was put up by the Bisbee Boy Scouts; the one down at St. David was put up by the Elfrida Boys; the one in Benson was put up by the Sierra Vista Explorers, I think it was.

I had so much trouble putting them up; some people were opposed to what I was doing on an individual basis. It was quite a job. I was able to get the county and the state to haul in gravel and sand where they had a permit to put them up. All the boys had to do was buy the cement, go to the farms and build the monuments as they are today, with the plaque in

the front giving the date that it was erected in 1960 and the date that the Mormon Battalion camped there in 1846 on their travels. All that any of the Boy Scouts paid for the cement was \$8.00 for each monument and it took one day's work with the leader.

In the 1950's when we organized the present Mormon Battalion, members had to be direct descendants of the men who were in the original group. Now it has changed. But when we got the book (Sergeant Daniel Tyler's "Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War, 1846-1848," 2nd edition, 1964, Rio Grande Press, Chicago, Illinois) — he'd kept a daily record from Santa Fe to Los Angeles — we found out why we'd started another Mormon Battalion. It was because Brigham Young promised all the men in the Mormon Battalion after they returned to Salt Lake, that the third and fourth generations would rise up and bring honor and glory to their name for the sacrifice they had given to the United States and members of the church when they joined the Mormon Battalion. That is the reason, we figured, that we were doing a wonderful job, when only members of the families of the men could join the Mormon Battalion.

My great-grandfather, William A. Follett, was in Company B of the Mormon Battalion. He completed the march and then went back to Utah.

The COCHISE COUNTY HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, founded in 1966, was incorporated under the laws of the State of Arizona September 13, 1968. Tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code was granted December 17, 1971. Its AIMS AND OBJECTIVES are to promote the science of archaeology and the study of history in Cochise County; to gather and protect facts and artifacts of the past; to publish or otherwise make available the information obtained by the Society; to establish, maintain and operate a museum. Membership is open without regard to color, race, religion or origin, upon payment of dues which are set annually by the Board of Directors. Membership includes a subscription to *The Cochise Quarterly*, the *Newsletter* and other CCHAS mailings in the year of payment of dues, as well as participation with vote in meetings, participation in field trips, and after meeting certain requirements, the right to engage in archaeological activities of the Society.

THE COCHISE QUARTERLY, the CCHAS journal of Arizona history and archaeology, contains articles by qualified writers, as well as reviews of books on history and archaeology in this area. Contributions are welcome. Manuscripts should be submitted to the CCHAS Editorial Committee, P.O. Box 818, Douglas, AZ 85607.

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