

**EXPLORATION AND EARLY SETTLEMENT IN NEVADA**  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

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December 2002

# EXPLORATION AND EARLY SETTLEMENT

## Chronology

### Time Periods:

1826 - 1833	Fur Trappers and Commercial Caravans
1834 - 1853	Sponsored Exploration
1844 - 1859	Emigration
1851 - 1859	Earliest Settlements

### Subthemes:

#### Transportation and Communications

Commercial Overland

Emigration

Railroads (Surveys)

Maritime

#### Governments and Politics

Military

Exploration/Survey

#### Early Settlement

##### The People

Euroamericans/Europeans

Mormons

Hispanics/Mexican Americans

Native Americans

Chinese

### Geographical Area:

Statewide

## Exploration

The exploration of Nevada can be divided into three overlapping but distinct phases. The first phase, “Fur Trappers and Caravaners” (1826-1833), is characterized by small scale forays into Nevada by fur trappers who explored the area for its natural resources, and commercial caravaners traveling through southern Nevada between Santa Fe and Los Angeles. The second phase, “Sponsored Explorations” (1834-1853), saw the arrival of explorers seeking to chart the area for the government, the railroad, and the Mormon Church. The final phase of exploration in Nevada, Emigration (1844-1859), is typified by emigrants crossing the state to reach the temperate climate and gold fields of California, with many of these returning to the western Great Basin region with the discovery of the Comstock Lode in 1859. These activities—fur trapping, exploration, and emigration—overlap somewhat and the initiation of one phase does not necessarily mean the complete cessation of the previous activity. All of the “Exploration” phases eventually led to the early settlement (1851-1859, up until the Comstock discovery) of Nevada.

Although the advent of the railroad in Nevada did not occur until 1868-1869, necessitating the continuation of early travel and settlement modes, 1859 was the major turning point for the settlement of Nevada, the year that settlement patterns, numbers, infrastructure, and economic opportunities all changed. Thus, for the purpose of this document, 1859 is the latest date for both exploration and early settlement in Nevada.

The earliest European interest in the Great Basin was shown by Spain in the eighteenth century. Rulers of the Spanish Empire, which had expanded north of Mexico City into present-day New Mexico and California, believed it would be advantageous to link California and New Mexico. A direct route between the two northernmost provinces would help consolidate resources and reinforce Spain’s presence in western North America, a competing colonial force with British, French, and Russian governments, all racing to capture resources. In 1776, Father Francisco Garcés led an expedition from Sonora to the pueblo of Los Angeles in an effort to establish a route from Santa Fe to the colonial capital of Monterey in Alta California. He used Mojave guides and traced portions of the Old Mojave Trail, an ancient long-distance trading route. Father Garcés traveled near or inside the southern tip of Nevada. Fathers Francisco Dominguez and Francisco Escalante also led an expedition in 1776 from Santa Fe with the hopes of establishing a route to Monterey. After meandering over much of Utah, avoiding hostile Hopis to the south, they turned back east to Santa Fe at the Sevier River (in present-day Utah). Portions of their route were later incorporated into the Spanish Trail, so named later by American trappers because of its association with the Spanish padres.

### *Fur Trappers and Caravaners, 1826-1833*

American fur trappers appeared in the Great Basin in the late 1820s. They were driven into this previously unknown region by economic interests, chiefly American and British, in their desire to gain access to lucrative beaver streams and conversely, to destroy the resource base so competing

nations will no longer desire open regions. When Mexico achieved its independence from Spain in 1821, the region was opened to the fur trade, which flourished from 1826 to about 1840, when beaver fur hats were no longer the fashion in Europe.

American-born Jedediah Smith, “the greatest of all Mountain Man explorers,” (Hafen and Hafen 1954:129), entered the fur trade in 1822 and came to know more about the American West than any contemporary American. Smith was one of the first Americans to cross South Pass in Wyoming, to explore the Bear and Snake river valleys for trapping, and the first American to lead a group from Great Salt Lake to Los Angeles, and from the San Joaquin Valley back to the Great Salt Lake. He was employed by the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, searching for beaver-rich areas and the mythical San Buenaventura River (first “documented” by Fathers Dominguez and Escalante in 1776), and a route to the Pacific Ocean from Cache Valley, north of the Great Salt Lake. Beginning in August 1826, his group of 15 men blazed a trail to Los Angeles that would become incorporated into the Old Spanish Trail to San Bernardino, later known as the Mormon Road and the Salt Lake Road. They commenced in Salt Lake, traveled across Utah to the Virgin River and followed it inot southern Nevada, to the Colorado River. They followed the southern bank of the Colorado to the Mojave villages near Needles, CA (Figure 1), and then turned west across the desert, arriving at Mission San Gabriel in Los Angeles in November. Mexican officials were alarmed by the Americans’ arrival, as they had been trespassing on Mexican soil since they crossed the modern border of eastern Nevada. After detaining Smith several months for military trespass, the authorities ordered Jedediah Smith and his men to return east whence they came. Once Smith and his men were out of sight of the authorities, they turned north to the American River heading east across the Sierra at Ebbett’s Pass and continued across Nevada south of Walker Lake, through the Hawthorne, Tonopah and Ely areas (Figure 1), arriving back at Salt Lake in June 1827. It took Smith’s party one month to travel from Ebbett’s Pass to Salt Lake. His second brief foray into Nevada was later that year, following his first trace between Salt Lake and Los Angeles. During this second journey, Smith produced journals and maps of the route. Jedediah Smith’s was the first American account of Southern Paiutes (“Pa-Ulches”); he encountered groups growing maize and pumpkins along the Virgin River. He was the first to describe flora in the southern Nevada region, listing Joshua Trees, creosote, and large cacti known as “Devil Keg.” He was the first American to document Native Americans mining the large salt cave on the Muddy River that was quarried by aboriginal groups for centuries, and is now inundated by Lake Mead.

Peter Skene Ogden, chief trader of the British-owned Hudson’s Bay Company, which was competing over fur resources with the American-owned Rocky Mountain Fur Company, was probably the first Euroamerican to penetrate the present boundary of Nevada, although he was only briefly in the northeast corner of the state in spring of 1826. His 1826 sally into Nevada predates Jedediah Smith’s by a few months. However, Ogden’s greatest achievement was encountering the Humboldt River in 1828, which later served as the main emigration corridor across Nevada.

Headquartered at Fort Nez Perces on the Columbia River, Ogden made three trips to Nevada, in addition to the 1826 excursion. On his second “Snake Country Expedition” in the fall of 1828, he trapped beaver along the Snake River and made his first incursion along its tributaries, the Bruneau and Owyhee rivers, into Nevada in present-day Elko County. He reached the

Humboldt by way of the Alvord Desert, Pueblo Valley, Quinn River, and the Little Humboldt River. Ogden continued east along the Humboldt River, which he left near Elko to cross over Secret Pass, eventually reentering present-day Utah near Montello (Figure 1).

In the spring of 1829, Ogden and his trapping brigade returned to Nevada, then called the “Unknown Territory” using his previous route. The Snake Country Expedition trapped along Maggie Creek and then passed over the Great Basin Divide to trap along the waters in Independence Valley, as Ogden had done three years earlier. The men backtracked over the drainage divide and followed Evans Creek to the Humboldt River and the Humboldt Sink. They departed Nevada in June near McDermitt. Ogden returned again, following an earlier trail, in late 1829. At the Humboldt Sink, Ogden and his men found a river choked with ice and snow, ending any hopes of successful trapping there. Although his exact route from here remains uncertain, he and his men probably explored the Lower Carson River, Walker Lake, and continued on to the Virgin River, most likely following Jedediah Smith’s 1826 route at that point. Once on the Colorado River, Ogden encountered the Mojave villages near Needles, where Smith had an earlier confrontation with the Mojaves (see Hafen and Hafen 1954:122-127). Several Mojaves were killed by Ogden’s men over some horses, and Ogden returned to his northwestern headquarters by way of the Central Valley in California, trespassing all the while on Mexican soil. He never returned to Nevada.

Incursions in the northern part of the “Unknown Territory” also continued throughout this time. But after the initial expeditions of the 1820s that showed the regions rivers were not as lucrative hunting as hoped, forays into present-day Nevada for trapping purposes diminished considerably. An important crossing of the Great Basin took place in 1833, however. The Walker-Bonneville expedition was commanded by Joseph R. Walker, and began at the Green River in Wyoming in July. Whether this trip was a trapping expedition or a secretive scouting venture is debatable. This ambiguity provides a metaphor for the transition taking place at this time between fur trapping interests in the western Great Basin and the government-sponsored exploration of the region, driven by the U.S. government’s expansionist policy (also referred to as “manifest destiny” policy, named as such in mid-nineteenth century journalism). Walker’s 40-man brigade, part of the force commanded by Captain Benjamin L. E. de Bonneville, skirted north around the Great Salt Lake and Pilot Peak, reaching the headwaters of the Humboldt (then Ogden’s “Unknown”) River. The party followed the Humboldt to its sink, arriving in early October (Figure 1). Increasing tensions with the Native Americans there resulted in Walker’s men killing 30-40 Native Americans who appeared to be threatening. The expedition then crossed the Sierra and California’s Central Valley, arriving in Monterey, the Mexican provincial capital, in November, 1833.

The next spring (1834), Walker’s party headed east from the San Joaquin Valley on their way to the annual mountain man rendezvous on the Bear River. Walker discovered a suitable pass, now bearing his name, in the southern Sierra between the San Joaquin Valley and Owens Valley. The group eventually located the previous fall’s route south of the Humboldt Sink, where they encountered a group of Northern Paiutes, shot another 14 (unprovoked, but Walker’s men were “frustrated”; see Alley 1986:330), and backtracked up the river. Their divergence from the previous route, heading toward the northeast corner of Nevada, near present-day Wells, along Bishop Creek,

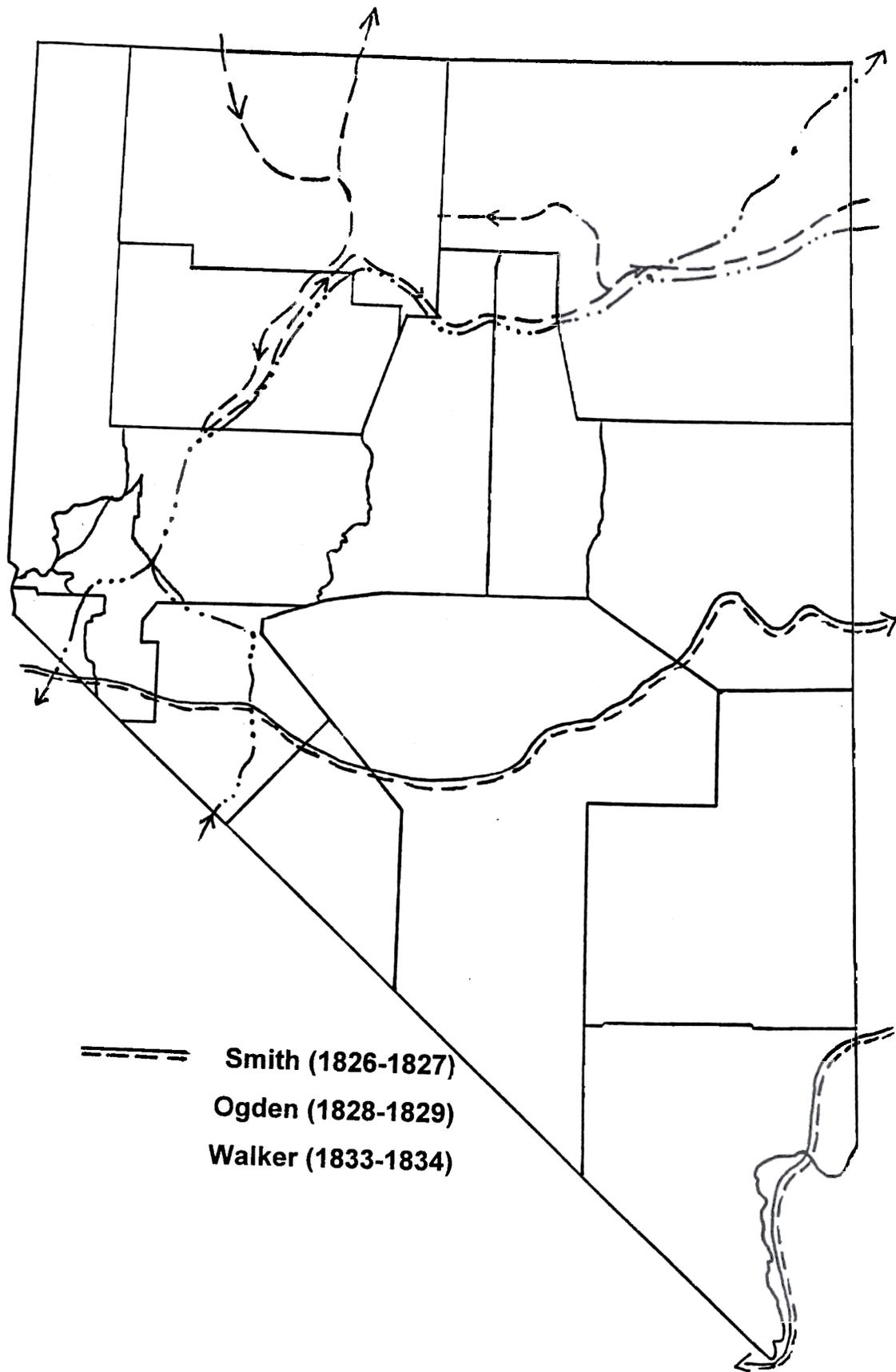


Figure 1. Early Explorers' Routes in Nevada, 1826-1834.

was the route California-bound emigrés would travel a few years later. Walker's trace connected the Oregon Trail with the Humboldt River corridor (Elliott 1987:39). He is credited by some with the Euroamerican discovery of Yosemite Valley. However, the skirmishes at the Humboldt Sink created contempt among the Native Americans in northern Nevada toward Walker and general distrust toward all Euroamericans.

Antonio Armijo, a New Mexican trader, led approximately 56 men across southern Nevada, departing from Abiquiu, New Mexico, in November 1829. They were the first Euroamericans to explore the Las Vegas Valley and travel along the Amargosa River to reach the Los Angeles area (Warren 1974). Most likely, the group followed the Las Vegas Wash up from the Colorado River, through the southern edge of Las Vegas Valley, over Emigrant Pass, eventually encountering the Amargosa in January 1830. They followed it to springs that led them to the San Gabriel Mission between Los Angeles and San Bernardino, California (Figure 2). Historian Elizabeth Warren completed a definitive study (1974) of Armijo's route and the large impact it had on the volume of subsequent traffic on the Old Spanish Trail. Warren argues that it was Antonio Armijo who established the commercial route across southern Nevada. The route Warren proposed was used by Armijo differs from Hafen and Hafen (1954); see Figure 2 for both routes. Most of the early trappers skirted around much of southern Nevada by following the Gila River in Arizona to the Colorado, then to the Mojave River and on to Los Angeles to trade their furs.

The heyday of the Old Spanish Trail extended through the 1830s and 1840s. California's *ranchos* were rich with livestock, and caravans with woolen blankets from New Mexico were eagerly sought. For further information on the areas of significance of the Old Spanish Trail, see the National Register of Historic Places nomination form (at the Nevada SHPO) and the NPS (2001) historic trail feasibility study. New Mexicans traveled on this route to trade wool products in California for mules and horses, which were extremely valuable in Santa Fe, the terminus of the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri. One route through southern Nevada was established by Antonio Armijo. Others were used across the interior deserts in Nevada by horse thieves, attempting to allude California authorities. One of these routes was explored and mapped by Captain John C. Frémont in 1844.

American mountain man Ewing Young was also based in New Mexico, and left Taos for California in August 1829, a few months prior to Armijo's expedition. Christopher "Kit" Carson, a man later destined for fame in the American West, chronicled the journey. This party may have crossed the southern tip of Nevada north of the Mojave villages near Needles. The group retraced their path in 1830 during the return trip, and trapped along the Colorado before turning east across Arizona to New Mexico. Mountain men William Wolfskill and George C. Yount traced the route of the Old Spanish Trail with about twenty men in the winter of 1830-1831. However, by following the Virgin and Colorado rivers (thus mainly avoiding Nevada) to the Mojave villages and by taking the Mojave River westward, they followed the southern branch, or Jediah Smith's route, preferred by trappers and caravaners with livestock because of the access to rivers. Wolfskill and Yount remained in California, becoming prominent citizens.



Renowned mountain men who used the Old Spanish Trail route across southern Nevada include: William Wolfskill, Kit Carson (multiple journeys), Thomas “Pegleg” Smith, George Yount, Ewing Young, James Beckwourth, Thomas “Broken Hand” Fitzpatrick, Old Bill Williams, and others. Wolfskill and Yount made the second journey over the Old Spanish Trail, “formally” establishing the trade route. Warren (1974) provides an extensive chronological description of travelers on the trail during the 1829-1849 time period.

After the early 1830s trapping expeditions became fewer and of less importance. The rivers in Nevada proved to be lacking the numbers of furs that trappers needed to make the business worthwhile, and 1840 signaled the near end of beaver trapping, due to overtrapping and an increase of less expensive silk hats reaching the European market. It is, nonetheless, useful to recognize that solitary fur trapping expeditions into the “Unknown Territory,” such as Old Bill Williams’ excursions in the Reno area in 1844, extended into the next phase of exploration in Nevada.

### *Sponsored Exploration, 1834-1853*

A second period of exploration of the western Great Basin originated in the early 1830s. During the 1834-1853 period, U.S. government-sponsored attempts to understand the geography and to exploit the more obvious trails of the western Great Basin dominate. Part and parcel of the U.S. government’s expansionist philosophy was the exploration and mapping of the western region of North America. One result of this driving force behind expansionism was the annexation of Texas and involvement in the Mexican War (1846-1848), which eventually led to an annexation of northern Mexico, comprising the states of New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

John C. Frémont, son-in-law of the foremost western expansionist, Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, made three exploring surveys into the American West for the U.S. Topographic Engineers. The second and third surveys—1843-1844 and 1845—took Frémont into the Great Basin (Figure 3). A later and less important expedition that was privately funded brought Frémont again into the Great Basin and Nevada during the years 1853-1855.

The 1843-1844 expedition led by Frémont established his reputation as an important American explorer. Not only was Frémont the first to scientifically map and describe the Great Basin, but an enthusiastic Congress printed 20,000 copies of his route map, many more than were usually printed of topographic survey maps. This map, widely available to the American public before maps of the more northerly emigration routes were printed and distributed, depicted Frémont’s “Spanish Trail,” making him responsible for naming it and popularizing the route as such.

In May 1843, Frémont began his expedition with 39 men in Kansas City, Missouri. Charles Preuss was his cartographer, and his guide was Thomas “Broken Hand” Fitzpatrick. Mountain men Kit Carson, Joseph Walker, and Alexis Godey joined the party when it reached the Rocky Mountains. They all proceeded to Oregon Territory, and moving south from the Columbia River Basin, they entered northwestern Nevada in December 1843. The party traversed High Rock

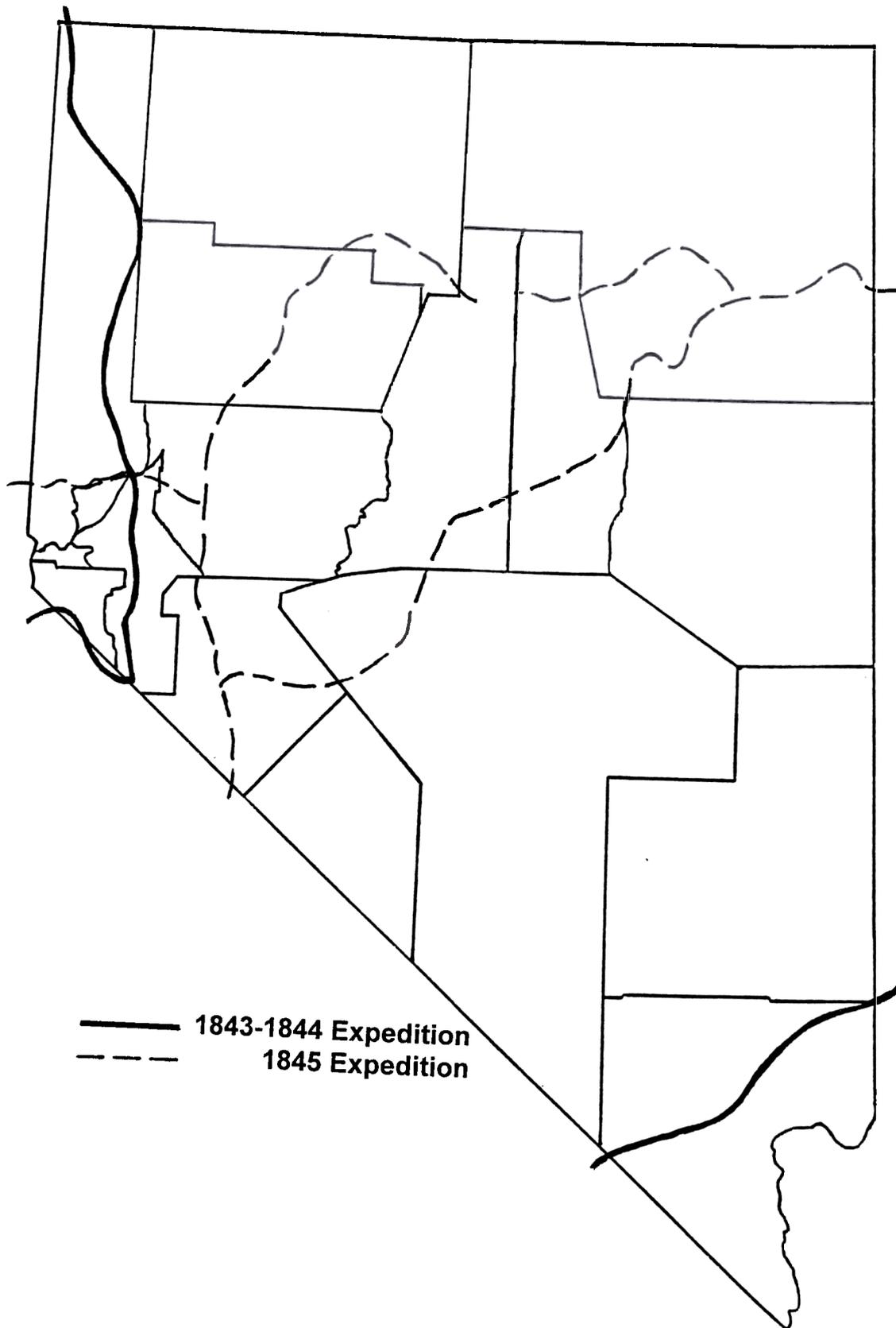


Figure 3. John C. Frémont's Exploration Routes for the U.S. Topographic Engineers

Canyon and spent New Years Day in the northwestern portion of the Black Rock Desert. They continued across the Black Rock and San Emidio Deserts. On January 10, 1844, Frémont found and named Pyramid Lake, due to a pyramid-like formation rising out of the water. He followed the Truckee River, which Frémont named the “Salmon Trout River,” from the lake, to the Wadsworth area, and continued south to the Carson River (named by Frémont in honor of his friend and guide) and the Carson Sink before turning west to cross the snowy Sierra Nevada near Carson Pass. During this journey, Frémont was the first American to document sighting Lake Tahoe on his way over the Sierra Nevada. His expedition reentered Nevada on April 30, 1844, along the Amargosa route of the Old Spanish Trail (near Armijo’s earlier route), followed the “northern branch” of the route (Warren 1974) through Las Vegas Valley, the Moapa Valley and along the Virgin River. They left present-day southern Nevada on May 10, 1844.

In 1845, Frémont crossed the Great Basin again, examining the area around the Great Salt Lake in October and traveling past Nevada’s eastern landmark, Pilot Peak, shortly after. While in Nevada, Frémont and his men re-mapped and clarified the limits of the Humboldt, Carson, Walker, and Truckee river basins. This expedition helped Frémont truly understand the physiographic features of the interior drainage, which he named the Great Basin. The expedition split up at Mound Spring to cover more of the Great Basin terrain. Theodore Talbot was the leader of the newly-formed group, and Joseph Walker, the guide. They followed Ogden’s 1829 route through Secret Pass, then down the Humboldt River to rendezvous with Frémont at Walker Lake. Frémont had traveled south around Spruce Mountain and crossed the Ruby Mountains by way of Harrison Pass. He then crossed the Diamond Mountains, passed through the Diamond and Kobeh valleys, and continued south through Big Smoky Valley, arriving at Walker Lake November 24, 1845. Here the expedition split up again. Frémont traveled northwest toward the Truckee River into California. Talbot’s group continued south of Walker Lake, through Whiskey Flat, and on to Owens Valley before meeting Frémont again in California.

Federal exploration of Nevada did not begin in earnest until the 1850s. The U.S. victory over Mexico in 1848, and the discovery of gold in California the same year, led to additional federal exploration in the Far West. The chief task, in addition to exploration, was to locate transportation routes, particularly a functional path for a transcontinental railroad. For several years, Congress was unable to agree on a line from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, but money was finally approved for extensive surveys, and Secretary of War Jefferson Davis chose four potential routes. Ironically, none of these was chosen for the railroad in the end.

Lt. Edward F. Beale led the first of the Pacific Railroad surveys in Nevada in 1853, originating in Missouri. From Utah, the expedition followed Frémont’s Spanish Trail to California. Although no unexplored territory was covered, Gwinn Harris Heap kept a journal of the expedition that was published in 1854. A section of the Spanish Trail corridor in southern Nevada became the general route of the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake railroad line in 1905, however.

Frémont’s last and least important exploration of Nevada occurred in 1853, with the purpose of finding a potential railroad route near the 38 degree, 39 minute parallel. Frémont and his men entered Nevada near present-day Pioche, crossed the White River Valley, continued across

the Tonopah Test Range and then past Stonewall Mountain before leaving Nevada near Beatty. Little was written by Frémont on this trip, but an excellent account to Parowan, Utah was written by fellow surveyor Soloman Carvalho in his memoirs. Another minor railroad survey commanded by John Ebbetts in 1854 (which ultimately did not identify a practical railroad route) extended over the Sierra and entered into western Nevada, exploring the area around Walker Lake and then traveling south to Sarcobatus Flat, presently dissected north-south by Highway 95, west of Pahute Mesa.

Edward G. Beckwith, First Lieutenant, Third Artillery of the War Department, commanded a transcontinental railroad expedition in 1854 after his superior, Capt. J. W. Gunnison, fell under an attack by Native Americans in Utah. Beckwith's orders were to explore the Basin "passing south of the Great Salt Lake in the direction of the 'Sink' of Humboldt or Mary's River, thence towards Mud Lake (Black Rock Desert) and across to the tributaries of Feather River, and thence by the most practicable route to the valley of the Sacramento River." Beckwith's mapping expedition left Salt Lake City on May 5, 1854, and entered Ruby Valley, and crossed numerous mountain ranges south of the Humboldt River. Beckwith crossed the Humboldt at Lassens Meadows and continued across the Black Rock and Smoke Creek deserts. Beckwith's maps and journal provided new information on the Great Basin, including the first pictorial views along this portion of Nevada, by company artist Egglofstein.

Jules Remy, French naturalist and Julius Brenchly, his English traveling companion, filled a unique niche in the exploration of the Great Basin and Nevada. Collecting specimens and documenting observed plant and animal life, they traveled to Salt Lake City from San Francisco in 1855, passing through Carson Valley to Ragtown (near Fallon), across the Forty Mile Desert to the Humboldt River, and then to Peter Haws Ranch near the present town of Elko. On their return to California, they took the Mormon Road through southern Nevada and Las Vegas, stopping over at the Las Vegas Mormon Mission on November 16, 1855. Remy and Brenchly's travel log is one of the best of the explorers.

During the mid-1850s, Lt. Col. Edward J. Steptoe, commander of the U.S. Army in Utah, was ordered to survey for a direct wagon road from Salt Lake City to northern California. The first of these surveys was completed in 1854 by O. B. and C. A. Huntington, and John Reese, the builder of the first permanent Euroamerican building in Nevada, among others. They began by following Beckwith's route in and through Nevada. On their return, they explored the area east of Carson Lake. Four years later, Captain James H. Simpson hired Reese as a guide, and named the Reese River in central Nevada after him.

Sponsored by the War Department, Capt. James H. Simpson of the Corps of Topographic Engineers led a group of 64 specialists on a geographic and map-making expedition, leaving Camp Floyd, Utah on May 2, 1859. The group entered Nevada through Pleasant Valley and followed the Overland Mail and Stage Route through the Ruby Mountains. From the south end of Huntington Valley, Simpson cut a new road to Genoa. This trip was one of the most thorough government explorations across Nevada, producing a comprehensive map of the region. Simpson's journal provides ethnographic data on Native Americans in Nevada and detailed geographic information.

Henry Engelmann, expedition geologist, was the first Euroamerican to recognize shoreline features of Lake Lahonton (named at a later date), an ancient, extinct lake that once covered much of northern Nevada.

### *Emigration, 1844-1859*

The early 1850s highlight the transition between two phases of exploration—official and emigration. The western Great Basin was becoming an increasingly familiar place, and was at the same time being traversed by growing numbers of emigrants on their way west, the majority of traffic surging through Nevada in 1849.

Emigration across Nevada began on a small scale with the Bidwell-Bartleson party in 1841. The group left Sapling Grove near Independence, Missouri, with news and few details, that a route would take them somewhere to the west. En route the group encountered Thomas “Broken Hand” Fitzpatrick, who guided them for hundreds of miles. In Nevada, the Bidwell-Bartleson group was the first set of emigrants on the California Trail, including the first woman, Nancy Kelsey, and her daughter. The group’s excursion into the Sierra (in winter) lasted two weeks; they probably crossed somewhere near Sonora Pass (See Figure 2). One member of the group, Joseph Chiles, returned to Missouri to encourage friends and others to journey to California. In May 1843, Chiles and a party of 13 struck out for California with Joseph Walker as their guide. They followed Walker’s 1834 route along the Humboldt (see Figures 1 and 2), traveling south around the Sierra Nevada via Walker Pass. Chiles made at least six journeys between Missouri and California during the 1842-1854 period, and one may have followed the later-named Carson River Route of the California Trail prior to 1848 (see Kolvet and Mehls 1999:6). Walker’s assistance and Fitzpatrick’s association with the Bidwell-Bartleson group demonstrates the intermingling of fur trapping, exploration, and emigration in the little-known Nevada region in the early emigration era.

In 1844, Elisha Stevens led an emigrant party from Fort Hall, also following Walker’s route along the Humboldt River to its sink. From here, an elderly Paiute named Truckee guided three scouts to the Truckee River near Wadsworth. The party continued along the river across the Truckee Meadows, through the rugged canyon beyond, and on to Donner Lake (not yet named). By hauling their wagons over the Sierra near the vicinity of Donner Pass, the group opened the California Trail that was subsequently traveled by thousands of people and their pack animals.

The California Trail had several sections, or “legs,” as the emigrants called them. The eastern Nevada section extended from Goose Creek for 65 miles to the head of the Humboldt, offering easy passage and access to a multitude of small streams. The second “leg” followed the Humboldt River to the Sink, a distance of 365 miles, requiring approximately three weeks to travel. Following the Humboldt, emigrants passed through traditional Shoshone and Paiute territory. The third section of the trail extended from the Humboldt Sink to the Truckee River across the Forty Mile Desert, a sandy and waterless 55-mile stretch. The last and westernmost Nevada leg of the Humboldt Route California Trail continued 70 miles up the Truckee River to Donner Lake, demanding a week of toiling up the steep grade across numerous boulder-strewn fords (see Figure

2).

In early August, 1848, the Mormon Battalion reached Carson Valley from the goldfields in California, traveling over Carson Pass and down Carson Canyon (present-day Highway 88). These were the first Mormons to pass through the area. Washoes were noted by a couple of members of the party, one of the first accounts of the aboriginal group. From 1848 through the early 1850s, this route was the preferred one from the Carson area to Placerville and the Mother Lode. The second Mormon party to enter Carson Valley and follow the Carson Pass route to California followed right on the heels of the first one; in late August, the first Mormon group traveling west arrived in the Carson Valley area. They may have heard of the newly-discovered route from the Battalion members on their way back to Salt Lake City. Suddenly, as many as 400 travelers made their way along the new Carson River route of the California Trail (Figure 2) the first summer the route was established. It quickly became known as the Carson Emigrant Road (in 1974, this route was recognized as part of the Mormon Emigrant Trail).

The discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill significantly affected the volume of traffic on the California Trail. Upon hearing the news of California goldfields reported by President Polk to Congress in December 1848, multitudes of poor and middle-class Americans assembled at trailheads at the Missouri River (Hulse 1991:52) to walk or ride to California to make the fortune of a lifetime. Approximately 15,000-25,000 made their way overland to California in 1849 alone.

Likewise, the spring and summer of 1849 was the height of traffic moving along the Carson River through Eagle Valley, Carson Valley, and Hope Valley in the Sierra. Perhaps as many as 6,000 folks passed through Carson Valley in 1849 (Ellison 2001:49). As early as 1849, two bridges were reportedly built by the Mormons over the Carson River (then known as "Pass Creek") in Carson Canyon. Many wagoners could not make the climb up Carson Canyon even with the bridges, and had to modify their vehicles into smaller, lighter ones (e.g., transformed into two-wheel carts), or leave them at the base of the canyon, packing their belongings up the canyon and over the pass. One traveler noted that all the 'waggon[sic] broken down and abandoned' (Ellison 2001: 34) had at least some part of their load still strapped on them. This traveler named the location of abandoned wagons as the "Waggon Boneyard." This later became a valuable resource of cut timber, and other useful parts for early settlers.

As in 1848, '49er travelers remarked on the quality and quantity of grasses in Carson Valley, along with the beautiful scenery. Many were relieved and thankful to finally see trees ample enough for firewood and bountiful grasses for livestock, after crossing huge tracts of alkali desert. Some even reflected on the possibilities for agriculture in the valley. However, most of the 6,000 travelers made no mention of the valley on the eastern front of the Sierra because of the actual rush they were in to get to California. Carson Valley became known as such in the summer of 1849. This was the summer that the first emigrant was buried in Carson Valley, a man named John Blair, who was buried near the Foothill Road corridor (State Highway 206) about a mile south of Walley's hot springs. It was also a pivotal year in terms of Euroamerican influence on the Washoe culture (Ellison 2001:50). Because a major influx of emigrants were moving through their traditional homeland, the Washoes were increasingly trading and interacting with the travelers, obtaining

Euroamerican material culture. Paiute and Shoshone groups acquired these items nearly a decade earlier.

The following year was the initiation of settlement in valleys east of the Sierra. The earliest group to travel the Carson River route in 1850 arrived at the base of Carson Canyon before the spring snowmelt. To occupy their time while waiting for the snow to melt, they built a corduroy road in one locale and two crude bridges (the 1849 bridges probably washed away with the spring run-off). Then in June 1850, H. S. Beatie and other Mormons from Salt Lake City built the first trading post in Carson Valley. It was first documented on July 2 that about 100 Mormons from Salt Lake and California had converged where 'the Mormons have fixed upon for a new settlement' (see Ellison 2001:57). Later that summer, several travelers noted trading posts all along the Carson River, from Ragtown (near present-day Fallon) to Beatie's Mormon Station. They were evidently packing their goods to sell from Sacramento (Ellison 2001:63-64). Also, the Georgetown Trail was opened, known later as Kingsbury Grade. This steep but short route up the eastern front of the Sierra was reputed to shorten the trip to Sacramento by 40-75 miles.

One group reported that the three bridges over Carson River in Carson Canyon were toll bridges by summer 1852, exacting a fee of \$1.00 (Ellison 2001:108). But another group encountered the bridges burned down by Washoes a few days later (and their camp was besieged by arrows). This indicates increasing tension with the Washoes that summer.

While a heavy flow of traffic plodded west, an eastward trickle began in 1845 consisting of horseback parties and pack trains. These people either did not like California enough to stay, or conversely, liked California so much they were returning home to encourage family and friends to relocate to California (e.g., Joseph Chiles; see above). This eastward movement continued through the early settlement era in Nevada.

In 1846, professional engineer Jesse Applegate led a party from La Creole, Oregon, in order to open a southern route to the Willamette Valley. He found the route, terminating at the "Great Bend" (near Imlay) on the Humboldt River and the California Trail. The route crossed the Black Rock Desert, extended up High Rock Canyon and over the Hays Canyon Range to Surprise Valley, California. The Applegate Trail served as an alternative route to portions of the Oregon and California trails from 1846 through the 1850s. The apex of traffic on the trail occurred in 1849. Peter Lassen advertised his new cut-off, established in 1848, which diverged from the Applegate Trail at Goose Lake (in northeast California), extended south past his trading post near Chico, and terminated at the California goldfields. Although Lassen's advertised "shortcut" was actually driven by potential profits at his store, and not a shorter travel distance, probably 50% of the forty-niners followed the Applegate-Lassen Trail (Figure 2). Applegate had no way of predicting the great volumes of traffic along his route in 1849, which simply, did not have the carrying capacity for the California gold rush. The watering holes became quagmires filled with animal carcasses, making the route a journey of horrors and quickly infamous. After 1849, the traffic diminished and the trail was mainly used by Oregon-bound travelers.

Lansford W. Hastings also developed an alternative route that came to be known as the

Hastings Cutoff. Returning east in 1846 from California, he explored the route that John C. Frémont had traveled west on and had mapped the previous year near Humboldt and Wells, heading east toward Pilot Peak. During this trip, Hastings encouraged other emigrés to try his cutoff. The route took travelers from Pilot Peak through Jasper Pass in the Pequop Mountains. It crossed the Ruby Range at Overland Pass before turning north along Huntington Creek and the South Fork Humboldt River to the California Trail.

Traveling west to California, George Donner followed Hastings and his cutoff, losing valuable time when they took his alternative route through the Ruby Mountains. Arriving late in the season in 1846 at the foot of the Sierra, the group climbed the pass and faced a snow storm, which spelled disaster for the emigrants. As a result of the infamy of the Donner Party, the Hastings cutoff fell into disuse until 1849.

By 1850 the main emigrant roads across Nevada were well established. The early 1850s ushered in the development of road branches in western Nevada. In 1851, the African American mountain man James Beckwourth, discovered a route over the Sierra north of Donner Pass, and emigrant wagons first rolled across the road in 1852. The route left the Truckee River at present-day Reno and continued through Long Valley and over Beckwourth Pass into Sierra Valley at the headwaters of the Feather River. Another alternate to the Truckee River route was established as the Henness Pass Road, by 1849 or 1850 by Patrick Henness. In 1852, the road was improved for wagon traffic to draw travelers to Yuba and Nevada counties in California. In 1855, it was surveyed by D.B. Scott as part of a bid as the selected California State Wagon Road (the U.S. 50 route, or the Carson-Placerville route was eventually chosen). After the gold strike and silver at Virginia City in 1859, this road became an avenue of exchange of people and ideas, including most importantly, mining technology, between Virginia City and Nevada City, California.

Most followed the California Trail along the Humboldt River in northern Nevada, although some traveled on the Spanish Trail in winter months. By 1848 the route had fallen into disuse by the New Mexican caravaners (Mexico ceded California and New Mexico to the U.S. in 1848), but was suitable for wagon traffic, later becoming known as the "Mormon Road," due to extensive Mormon migration between Salt Lake City and their mission in San Bernardino, the western terminus of the route. Until 1848, only one wagon train had taken the trail from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles (in 1838; see Warren 1974:118). One of these was the Death Valley Party led by Lewis Manly and Jefferson Hunt. The group of 107 wagons left Salt Lake City in autumn 1849. The group split into two camps in present-day southern Utah because of a dispute over which route to take to southern California. Having traveled the route previously, Jefferson Hunt insisted on staying on the well-established Spanish Trail/Mormon Road, and thus led seven wagons to California without incident. The other 100 wagons were led by Lewis Manly across Nevada through unmapped areas in a westerly direction (across Lincoln and Nye counties, through the present-day Nevada Test Site and Nellis Air Force Ranges), because of a rumored short-cut to California. The large group finally reached the springs at Ash Meadows, on the southeastern edge of the Amargosa Desert, before reaching the driest and lowest point in elevation in the U.S., Death Valley. This party named the valley such because of the extremely dry and barren landscape they survived in the winter of 1849-1850, although miraculously, only one life was lost from the 100-

wagon caravanning group. The Donner Party disaster certainly illustrated the dangers of the northern route if followed late in the season, making the Spanish Trail/Mormon Road more desirable at certain times. The emigrants who struck out to the southwest, however, found themselves crossing some of the most inhospitable land in the Great Basin.

William Nobles identified a short-cut from the Applegate-Lassen Trail while prospecting for gold in the Black Rock Desert in 1851. This route departed from the Applegate-Lassen Trail at Black Rock Point, continued to the hot springs at Gerlach, and continued due west, skirting along the northwestern edge of the Smoke Creek Desert among the various springs, on to the Honey Lake area and Shasta, California, much to the delight of Shasta's entrepreneurial residents.

Nobles' route did save time and distance for travelers bound for the California goldfields, who would have potentially followed the Applegate-Lassen to Oregon and then made their way south to the Sacramento region. This route became the designated road in the federal wagon road act, first proposed to the U.S. Senate by California Senator John B. Weller in 1856, and passed in 1857 (Shahrani 1993:61-63). The act appropriated \$300,000 in funding for the construction of a Ft. Kearney-South Pass-Honey Lake wagon road to link California to the eastern states. Additionally, the route was developed as a more direct route, extending from Granite Creek Station to Trego Hot Spring, to Rabbit Hole, shortening the total length of the route (D. Valentine, personal communication 2002). In 1859-1860, F. W. Landers supervised the project that included mapping and road development of the National Wagon Road, in addition to development of the springs along the route.

The Sonora Road, opened in 1852, was developed by the citizens of Sonora, California. In July of 1852, the townspeople of Sonora collected money for a relief train to be sent to the aid of emigrants and to persuade them to move to Sonora, and so they met a group with seven wagons on the Carson Road near present-day Silver City. They persuaded the emigrés and their seven wagons to follow them through Mason and Smith valleys and along the West Walker River into California.

The early settlement in Eagle Valley (Carson City) led to the development of an emigrant wagon road between Eagle Valley and Placerville, known as Johnson's Cut-Off. Primarily used during the 1852-1854 period, it passed over Echo Summit and Spooner Summit, extending along Lake Tahoe's south shore. This is today's US Highway 50, and was in turn, integral to the initial settlement of Carson City. The northernmost section of Johnson's Cut-Off, in Carson City (then known as Eagle Ranch) became Kings Canyon Road during the Comstock boom era. Frank Hall, original settler of Eagle Valley, and his business partners graded the road up King's Canyon in order to exact tolls from wayfarers.

By the early 1850s, emigration on the California Trail and its various branches was steady. Emigration along these trails continued as part of the nation's westward expansion until the opening of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. After the opening of the Comstock Mining District in 1859, many people migrated eastward from California. Toward the end of the period, emigrants also utilized such mass transportation opportunities as the stage coach lines, developed by entrepreneurs who cashed in on the rush to California.

In the mid-1850s, several surveys between Sacramento and Carson Valley took place. The surveys were on the rise along with plans for a transcontinental railroad and federal road construction. Further, California's 1855 Wagon Road Act necessitated more surveys and road improvement projects. The Seneca Marlette-Sherman Day Survey of 1855 included portions of Johnson's Cut-Off (US Hwy 50) between south Lake Tahoe and Eagle Valley, but the surveyors recommended Luther Pass as the preferred route between Sacramento and Carson Valley instead. Thus, Luther's Pass became the favorite route through the Tahoe Basin during the 1858-1860 period (Lindström and Hall 1994:22).

Concerning riverine exploration in Nevada, Mormon missionary Rufus Allen led the Las Vegas Mission's (see below) Colorado River exploration in 1855. The summer months proved to be too hot to explore the desert region surrounding the river, however. Nonetheless, Lt. Sylvester Mowry of the U.S. Army received news of the Mormon river exploration plans while passing through Las Vegas that summer, and informed commanders at Fort Tejon in California of the plans. Making sure that the Mormons would not be the first to profit from the potentially-navigable river route, Lt. Joseph Ives was ordered to survey the river in 1856. In a steamship, Lt. Ives made the journey up the Colorado from the Gulf of California to the lower Black Canyon; then rowing a skiff further to the confluence with Las Vegas Wash, Ives deemed the watercourse navigable (Smith 1978:33) for approximately 500 miles. Then in 1857, Mormon missionaries Ira Hatch and Dudley Leavitt made it to Cottonwood Island, only to nearly lose their lives to Mojaves. There were additional explorations of the Colorado during later surveys and settlement periods.

### Early Settlement

There is a connection between the transportation routes and settlements in their vicinity. Early settlements in the East were almost invariably along water courses, to facilitate the gathering of necessary resources as well as communication and transportation. Towns were often directly related to transportation corridors, especially in the early settlement of Nevada, where pioneering entrepreneurs established themselves along the routes to capitalize on the voluminous traffic. This includes the Mormon settlements of the Las Vegas Fort and the Mormon Station (Genoa) in western Nevada.

A discussion of early settlement in Nevada must include the arrival of Mormon settlers. After Mexico ceded lands to the U.S. in 1848, the Spanish Trail was no longer used by New Mexican traders. Mormons in Salt Lake City began utilizing the western portion of the route to southern California beginning in December 1847, when Porter Rockwell led a party and their wagons from Salt Lake to southern California for supplies. From this time, the route was predominantly used for wagon traffic instead of pack animals. Most likely, the majority of the traffic during the 1848-1857 period was of the Mormon faith, giving the popular route its later name, the Mormon Road.

The Mormon Road was one component of the Mormon Church's plans for expansion in

the Great Basin and southern California. Brigham Young developed plans for the “State of Deseret” in 1849, his vision of a large Mormon holding of land in the Great Basin (sparsely inhabited by non-aboriginal people), the Colorado River drainage and southern California. However, California was awarded statehood in 1850, and in the same year, lands east of there were divided along the 37th Parallel: the southern section became New Mexico Territory and the northern section was “Utah” Territory. Young’s “Deseret” was never even considered by the federal government. Nevertheless, Young was appointed Territorial Governor by President Fillmore, and the early and mid-1850s saw expansion of Mormon settlements to southern California (San Bernardino Mission established in 1851), the Lower Colorado River region, the eastern front of the Sierra (Reese’s Mormon Station in Carson Valley in 1851), and the Las Vegas area (Las Vegas Mission established in 1855). By 1857, however, Mormon settlers were called back to Salt Lake City due to political tension between Young and President Buchanan.

Regardless of the Mormon Church’s intentions to strategically settle unoccupied lands west of Salt Lake City, Nevada’s earliest settlements were founded because of a basic need to supply the hordes of emigrants passing through the area on their way to California. It happened to be mostly Mormons who settled first in attempts to capitalize on the volumes of traffic moving across these vast desert regions.

## Genoa

Genoa, Nevada’s first Euroamerican settlement with a permanent structure, was established in 1851 by John Reese, a Mormon businessman from Salt Lake City. The original trading station consisted of a log cabin and stockade. The locality, on the Emigrant Trail in Carson Valley, fell within the newly-created Utah Territory at its western boundary.

In 1850, Joseph DeMont and Hampton S. Beatie built a temporary cabin at the site, estimating that the location near the Carson River, and at the base of the Sierra Nevada, would be a lucrative one to sell supplies to emigrants rushing to California. By the end of the summer that year, the trading outfit was known as a “Mormon Station” and reportedly, two trading posts and five log cabins were erected there (Ellison 2001:67), making the small settlement swiftly known as “the principal trading-post east of the Sierra” (Angel 1958:30[1881]). Just before winter that year, Beatie and DeMont returned to Salt Lake City, first selling the cabin to Mr. Moore (first name unknown), who then sold it in the summer of 1851 to John Reese.

Reese built a second, more permanent cabin near Beatie’s. He sold supplies to emigrants on their way west over the Sierra, which rose above “Reese’s Mormon Station” on its western edge. The successful trading business attracted other settlers to the area by the end of Reese’s first summer of business. Mormon Station, as reported in the *Sacramento Union* in a letter dated July 20, 1851, consisted of 3-4 buildings, tent, a spring house, and 2-3 corrals (Griffith 1998:13). The trading station also served later as one of Woodward and Chorpene’s Overland Mail stations.

In November 1851, over 100 settlers met at the Mormon Station and in three meetings.

formulated basic local government through a sort of “squatter” consensus. Salt Lake City, the seat of Utah’s Territorial government, was too remote from Carson Valley to effectively govern the settlers, who were Mormon and non-Mormon alike. Then in 1853, Carson Valley residents petitioned the California legislature to annex the land to California as a stop-gap measure until the U. S. Congress could act on the legislation. The annexation effort forced the Utah government to take notice of its most distant settlement, and it created Carson County from the westernmost parts of four other counties in the territory (Elliott 1987:53). However, this was a stop-gap measure taken by the Utah government noted in documents only; eventually the Salt Lake City-based leaders had to give up what little control they previously had over their westernmost and most distant colony.

In May 1851, a group of eight men brought the U.S. Mail east from Sacramento to Salt Lake City for the first time. In summer of 1852, traveler John Farrar noted thousands of wagons at Humboldt Sink. At Ragtown, he observed a corral made entirely of wagon tires (Ellison 2001:101). Gardens in Carson Valley, with vegetables, such as onions, potatoes, watermelons, pumpkins, musk melons, and beets, were described by travelers in the summer of 1852 (as well as hay fields), and a blacksmith shop at Mormon Station was established by July 1852. Another traveler wrote of passing gardens and houses on his way to Mormon Station (along the road from Gold Canyon), about ½-mile apart from each other, irrigated with ditches. He also noted a bakery and “good farm” at Mormon Station (Ellison 2001:107). The settlement began taking characteristics of a Mormon farming community, “with distinctive large lots providing for widely spaced houses to be surrounded by gardens, lawns, groves or orchards” (Lyneis 1982:261).

In September 1852, Henry Van Sickle arrived in Carson Valley to set up a smithy at the base of Georgetown Trail; later he became a major landholder in the valley, Justice of the Peace, County Commissioner, County Treasurer, and State Assemblyman, as well as eventually holding other positions. Also by this time, a post office was noted at Mormon Station (Ellison 2001:110). Israel Mott settled four miles south of Mormon Station in the fall of 1852, building his home out of abandoned wagon beds salvaged at the base of Carson Canyon and Mormon Station. On December 1, 1852, Carson Valley residents recorded first formal land claims (Ellison 2001:111), including Israel Mott and John Reese, who legitimized their claim on collecting toll in Carson Canyon on this date. After this, fencing and landowners controlled movement of emigrants through the valley.

In general, Euroamerican settlers enjoyed amicable relations with Native Americans based in Nevada except for small conflicts among the large volumes of travelers on the emigrant trails in northern Nevada. In *Life among the Piutes*, Sarah Winnemucca (1994:59-65[1883]) gives a detailed account of a situation in 1857 in Carson Valley involving Washoes accused of murder, Northern Paiute negotiators, and Major Ormsby serving justice. Battles at Pyramid Lake in 1860 between Paiutes and Anglos were probably a result of hordes of permanent settlers rushing to the Comstock, disrupting Paiute, Washoe, and even Shoshone traditional culture and economics.

John Cary sawed his first plank at his new sawmill at the northern boundary of Carson Valley, in July 1853. It was the first sawmill in western Utah Territory (Angel 1958:30[1881]).

In 1854, Brigham Young developed a government for western Utah Territory. A prominent

Mormon church official, Orson Hyde, was appointed as probate judge to organize Carson County as part of Utah's Territorial government. Hyde arrived in Carson Valley in 1855 along with 38 Mormon settlers. He changed the settlement's name to Genoa.

The arrival of a large group of Mormons to Carson Valley was noted by the area's non-Mormon settlers, and they took up the annexation cause again in 1855 with the California legislature, who warmly received the proposed addition of lands to their state. However, the action was opposed by many in the U. S. Congress who believed California was already too large (Elliott 1987:56), and no action was taken. Meanwhile, Hyde had placed Mormons in all but one elected position (enough Mormon voters facilitated Mormon control), surveyed the town of Genoa, established the Franktown community in Washoe Valley, and built a much-needed sawmill. However, Hyde left Carson Valley in November 1856, and in the summer of 1857, 64 Mormons left Carson Valley to return to Salt Lake City, followed by another 450 Mormons called back by Brigham Young. Mormon control of Carson Valley was again ineffectual, although it officially fell under the purview of Utah's governance.

By fall of 1857, Genoa consisted of roughly 25 buildings (including a store, billiard saloon, hotel and blacksmith shop). Two hundred residents remained after Young's recall, some of them Mormons. Again, the "squatter movement" rose to the occasion in Carson Valley, petitioning this time for separate territorial status. They were unsuccessful at gaining that status until 1861, after the discovery of gold and silver in Virginia City, although they formed their own local government in the interim. For instance, the Carson Emigrant Road became a county road in 1856.

The Reservation Era in native American history is also foreshadowed in Nevada's early history: Indian Agent Frederick Dodge filed his first report from the Carson Valley agency on January 4, 1859 (Johnson 1975:27). This was also the year the Pyramid Lake Paiute and the Walker River Paiute reservations were established, and Indian Agent Jacob Forney gave gifts to the Western Shoshone in Ruby Valley, promising them a six-mile square reservation (Clemmer and Stewart 1986:527).

## Dayton

The discovery of gold in Gold Canyon in 1849 by Abner Blackburn, a member of the Mormon Battalion (who did not stay at Gold Canyon after the discovery), led to seasonal encampments of miners moving back and forth across the Sierra Nevada in their search for "pay dirt." As early as 1850, miners migrated over to the mouth of Gold Canyon, at the Carson River downslope from Mount Davidson, from the crowded California goldfields, but returned to California before the snow flew in winter. In August of that year, travelers noted Chinese camps, as well as "Mexicans and Indians" digging at Gold Canyon. The precursor of Virginia City, one the most ethnically diverse settlements in the far west, Gold Canyon, was attractive to multiple ethnic groups from the beginnings of work there. In September 1850, one Carson Valley traveler mentioned miners on the "other side" of the Carson River, i.e., the Pine Nut Mountains (Ellison 2001:78). This was also the summer when "troubles with Indians" was mentioned numerous times

in travelers diaries, mostly referring to stolen livestock.

In 1850-1851, James "Old Virginny" Finney (the namesake for Virginia City) wintered over at Gold Canyon, possibly making him the first Euroamerican to winter in western Nevada (then Utah Territory). Spafford Hall established a trading post in a log structure sometime in 1852, later sold to James McMarlin, who in turn sold it to Major William Ormsby. According to diarist Lucena Parsons, there were "some 200" prospectors in Gold Canyon in the summer of 1851, although the settlement that summer still had a transient, temporary air since no permanent buildings were erected. Ms. Parsons reportedly met John Reese on June 6 or 7, 1851 with sixteen wagons on his way to establish a trading post at Mormon Station. This is intriguing due to the fact that John Reese is credited with establishing the first permanent Euroamerican settlement in Nevada, although he passed a community of over 200 people twenty-six miles away from his final destination. However, the on-going debate of "Dayton First vs. Genoa First" as settlements in Nevada may never be resolved because of the paucity of diaries from the year of 1851.

By 1852, Gold Canyon exhibited some permanency by the appearance of structures, namely, three log cabins housing the trading post, boardinghouse and tavern, as well as water diversion features, livestock, and a rail system that carried ore from upper Gold Canyon down to the Carson River (Griffith 1998:15). By contrast, Genoa ("Mormon Station") in 1852 boasted houses, blacksmith shops, ranches, farms, and trading posts. William Dolman, one of the original claim holders in the Gold Canyon/Virginia City area remembered that upon arriving at Gold Canyon in October 1852, he saw his first gold mining operations ever, although he was *en route* to California's goldfields (Hutcheson 1947:9). This is most likely the case for many individuals traveling to California along the route, during the period 1851-1859.

In the summer of 1853, it was noted that there were four females--three adults and one 12-year old girl--residing in Gold Canyon (Angel 1958:35 [1881]). "Johntown," a small mining settlement which began as a trading post established by Walter Cosser in late 1853 was 2.5-3.0 miles north of Dayton in Gold Canyon. One traveler recalled one trading post (Spafford Hall's), a "substantial" log house, and a blacksmith shop constructed of wagon beds (Angel 1958:35 [1881]) in the summer of 1853. In 1857 another traveler noted a ditch to carry water from the Carson River to the placer activities in Gold Canyon, "about four or five miles long" (*Hutchings' California Magazine*, Vol II, No. 12:306). The construction of the ditch, known as "Rose Ditch," "Douglas Ditch," and the "Dayton Town Ditch," may have initiated the arrival of Chinese to the Gold Canyon locale (Reno et al. 2001:1.14). The area in present-day Dayton between U.S. Highway 50 and the Carson River was known as "Chinatown" by 1856. In the late 1850s, a small community of 40-50 Chinese were re-working the placer deposits there. A Chinese residence listed as a Nevada State Register property in 1990, is the last remaining structure representing Chinatown. It was occupied by Hep Sing and Ty Kim sometime after 1873.

While in Gold Canyon during the winter of 1857-1858, William Dolman and several other men built Nevada's first *arrastra*, refined the first quartz in Nevada (the first ore in Virginia City), and produced the first bullion (Hutcheson 1947:4). Dolman himself created a set of laws for Nevada's first known mining district, organized as the "Columbia District." He also kept record of

the first claims, in 1858, which was not available after the Comstock strike and many of these early claims were never recognized (Hutcheson 1947). Dolman recalled inhabiting abandoned miners' dugouts and cabins in Johntown that winter, suggesting that there were residences in Gold Canyon prior to 1857. At that time, Johntown consisted of Dolman and his company (known as the "Placerville Company"), Ormsby's store, Job's store, John Child's store, Harris Jacobs and Lal Weil's store, "Dutch Nick" Ambrose's store, and Gray and McBride's saloon. Families included Lyman Jones, wife and daughter, Will Dover, wife and son, the future Mrs. Bowers (then Mrs. Cowen), "Dutch Nick," and his wife. Sarah Winnemucca, her sister Marie, and brother Natchez of the Pyramid Lake Paiutes also wintered there. He also remembered some 40 or so miners in Johntown that winter, including Comstock, Finney, Peter O'Riley, John Walker, and others. After getting shot in the leg, "Dutch Nick" Ambrose left Johntown to establish "Empire City" in 1857-1858, at the bend of Carson River four miles east of Carson City (Hutcheson 1947:18).

### Other Western Nevada Settlements

In 1851, settlement of western Nevada seems to have finally germinated. Several small settlements sprang up along the eastern front of the Sierra in 1851, including Franktown, French's Fort, Jack's Valley, and other "way stations" such as Ragtown, Jamison's Station on the Truckee River, and others. Mason Valley was settled by the late 1850s, due to productive agricultural lands. The Walker River area was also inhabited early in the 1850s by hopeful placer miners (Rocha 2001, personal communication). In October 1851, Frank Hall settled his Eagle Station and Ranch in the southwestern corner of Eagle Valley, although it was not referred to as "Eagle Station" in print until September 1852. The successful "Reese & Co." from Mormon Station purchased the Eagle Ranch in fall 1853 (Angel 1958:35 [1881]). The station was originally located at the southwest corner of Fifth and Thompson streets in Carson City, although it is no longer extant. Jack Redding settled the valley just south of there, giving the location its name, Jack's Valley. Redding, a Mormon, left the area without ever filing a claim on the land, and it is unclear how early he arrived to the Carson Valley area, but possibly as early as the summer of 1851 (see Rocha, Myth #63, <http://www.nevadaculture.org/docs/nsla/archives/myth>). Ragtown, a small supply station on the western edge of the Forty Mile Desert (west of Fallon), was a seasonal, entrepreneurial community since 1849, according to forty-niners' diaries. Ragtown may have been occupied year-round by 1853 (Rocha, Myth #22, <http://nevadaculture.org/docs/nsla/archives/myth>).

Abraham Curry purchased Eagle Ranch and much of Eagle Valley in 1858, along with other investors. He surveyed and established Carson City later that year. By the late 1850s, Carson City was touted as a "gateway" between the Sierra Nevada and the Great Basin in *Hutching's California Magazine* (Lindström and Hall 1994:14). In 1857, a tri-weekly stage line called the Pioneer Stage Line was established between Carson Valley and Placerville, following the Carson Emigrant route over Carson Pass, through Hope Valley and Carson Canyon (Angel 1958:104 [1881]). Telegraph services into and through Nevada were being developed simultaneously from California and the eastern states. Western Nevada was afforded telegraph service from the Placerville and Humboldt Telegraph Company as early as the fall of 1858. The line ran from Placerville, California to Genoa in 1858, then extended to Carson City in 1859, and Virginia City in 1860 (Angel 1958:106).

[1881]). The first delivery of U.S. mail from the east via the Overland Stage arrived in Placerville July 19, 1858, with great fanfare.

Mr. Jamison (or Jameson) settled on the Truckee River in 1852, after moving from Carson Valley, and operated "Jamison's Station" by selling supplies and fattened, rested livestock in exchange for hungry, worn-out livestock from the emigrants. A "Mr. Clark" constructed a log cabin at the present site of Franktown in 1852, but vacated the property in 1853. By 1853, there were at least four settlers in Washoe Valley, including the original claimants of the Bowers' and Winters' ranches. In 1856, Alexander Cowan and his wife Eilley bought a 56-acre parcel north of Franktown (Angel 1958:623 [1881]). The following year, 20-30 newly-arrived Mormon families settled in the Valley, probably at Orson Hyde's request. Most of the Mormon settlers returned to Salt Lake City the next year, including Mr. Cowan. Eilley Cowan remained at their ranch however, and secured a divorce. Soon after she ran a boarding house in Gold Canyon before striking it rich on a Comstock claim with her subsequent husband, Sandy Bowers. The Bowers re-settled the original parcel in Washoe Valley (which still carries their name), building an extravagant mansion with their new wealth in 1865.

Curry's Warm Springs, now the location of a Nevada State Prison, opened for therapeutic soaking shortly after the establishment of Carson City in 1858. The hot springs had been used by Washoe people prior to the arrival of Euroamericans. Walley's Hot Springs, two miles south of Genoa, was also used by the Washoe until the advent of Euroamericans in the area. In 1854, Scottish settler William P. Cosser was the first concessioner of the springs, where he erected a modest bathhouse (see Rocha 2000, Myth #58, <http://www.nevadaculture.org/docs/nsla/archives/myth>). David Walley later purchased the property and opened his health resort at the springs in 1862.

## Las Vegas

William Bringhurst established the Las Vegas Mission on Las Vegas Creek on the Spanish Trail along with twenty-seven other brethren on June 14, 1855, as part of the Mormon Church's "Southern Indian Mission." They dug gardens, built irrigation ditches, surveyed lots, built a 150-foot-square walled fort, a corral, and a few small houses. Today, the remains of this mostly-adobe structure are the oldest of any structure in Nevada, although much of the Las Vegas Mormon Fort has been reconstructed in recent times.

Their "Indian farm," or fields used to grow agricultural products by Southern Paiutes under "supervision" of the brethren, was located about 1.5 miles north of the Mormon Fort, at the Las Vegas Springs. However, the Paiutes at Las Vegas were probably practicing horticulture prior to the Mormons' arrival (see Kelly and Fowler 1986:370-371). The missionaries built a couple of small bridges that crossed the small stream, fences enclosing the farm plots, a corral for the livestock, and a ditch. They also designated a small group to explore for timber at Cottonwood Springs, approximately 20 miles away from the mission. The brothers explored the Colorado River for navigability and for Native American groups to convert.

A description of the "Vegas" by Brother George Bean reads, "We found Las Vegas to be a

nice patch of grass about half a mile wide and two or three miles long, situated at the foot of a bench forty-fifty feet high. The valley faces east, and a pretty stream of water, about the size of a common millrace, comes from two springs about four miles west of our location.” In the same letter, Bean later describes the Paiutes encountered on the Colorado River: “We found about 50 Indians (Piedes) [sic] on the Colorado, in a perfect state of nudity, except breechcluts; the men and women all dressed alike. They had raised a little wheat on a sandbank; it was all ripe and harvested. They were very friendly” (Jensen 1926:137-138). The Mormon brethren enjoyed mostly peaceful relations with the Southern Paiutes in the Las Vegas area; the Paiutes may have seen the missionaries as a friendly “buffer” between the Paiutes and their slave-captors, the Western Utes (the only captors this late in time).

An important task undertaken by the Las Vegas-based missionaries was their exploration for mineable wealth. Potosi Mine, the oldest lode mine in Nevada was mined beginning in April 1856. Nathaniel V. Jones lead the missionary team responsible for extracting the ore. By September 1856, the first smelting furnace was operating at the mine. The missionaries mined for lead until January 1857, when the richer ore was depleted and nearby wood fuel for smelting was quickly disappearing. Silver ore was discovered at Potosi four years later, and the mine was again in operation during the 1861-1863 period; after the turn of the nineteenth century, zinc was the primary mineral extracted and processed at Potosi.

In 1857, when Brigham Young feared a U.S. military campaign led by Col. Albert Sydney Johnston against the Mormon Church (known as the “Mormon War”), he and other church leaders ordered an exploration party to identify a refuge for church leaders in the event their worst fears were realized. Meadow Valley, an oasis at the headwaters of the Muddy River in southeastern Nevada, was chosen as this secret retreat. Mormon scouts built ditches and broke ground for agricultural fields at the site of Panaca. However, the anticipated military conflict never occurred and the need for a refuge never transpired. Panaca remained deserted for years.

### Recommendations

Investigations of early transportation routes and early settlements should include survey of areas that may appear “outside” the property’s boundaries. Often camps, dumps, parallel ruts made by avoiding mud holes on the established route, and other travel-related features will occur somewhere adjacent to the route of travel. Slender corridors on either side of the route, roughly 20 feet wide, comprise the “pitch zone” where early travelers often threw unnecessary items from the wagon.

Early settlements may show adaptations through time and advances in technology. At several properties within the Genoa Historic District, for example, researchers can find original structures dating to the 1850s still in use today. Many of these have modifications and/or additions that illustrate changing needs of family households and adaptations to modern available technology. These properties dating to the original settlement period may also have significant subsurface

remains. In the case of Gold Canyon, early mining features may exist, as this area was mostly abandoned by 1859 in favor of ore-rich areas further up in the Virginia Range that became quickly overrun by hopeful miners rushing to Virginia City.

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## Chronology

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 1760-1820 | Era of Spanish influence and exploration<br><br>Dominguez-Escalante expedition from Santa Fe; Garcés expedition from Sonora, possibly the first Euroamerican to enter present-day Nevada (undocumented) |
| 1821      | Mexico gains independence from colonial power Spain   |
| 1826      | First documented Euroamericans, Peter Skene Ogden and Jedediah Smith,   |

- enter Nevada
- 1826-1840 Era of fur-trapping activity in northern Nevada and along Colorado River corridor
- First commercial caravan over the Old Spanish Trail (Antonio Armijo)
- Walker expedition explores northern Nevada
- Bidwell-Bartleson party crosses Nevada as the first on the California Trail
- 1843-1844 Frémont's first expedition into Nevada
- Frémont's second expedition in Nevada; recognizes the topographic feature he names "The Great Basin"
- Jesse Applegate and Lansford Hastings discover and promote their respective cutoffs from the California and Oregon trails. The Donner party follows the Hastings cutoff late in the season and is trapped in the snowy Sierra
- Mexico cedes lands at the end of the Mexican War; discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, California; Peter Lassen opens his cutoff from the Applegate Trail
- 15,000-25,000 Forty-niners emigrate across Nevada on California and Oregon trails; gold discovered in Gold Canyon, Utah Territory (present-day Dayton)
- 1850 Northern Nevada region becomes Utah Territory and southern Nevada becomes New Mexico Territory (divided at the 37th parallel); California is granted statehood
- Two hundred or more individuals searching for gold in Gold Canyon (Dayton); Mormon Station, Carson Valley (Genoa) established; other nascent settlements along eastern front of Sierra
- Sonora Road opens
- Frémont's last expedition in Nevada
- Beale's railroad survey along the Old Spanish Trail
- Beckwith's railroad survey in northern Nevada
- Establishment of Mormon Mission at Las Vegas springs

Abandonment of the Las Vegas Mission; Mormon settlers are recalled from Carson Valley to Salt Lake City

Gold strike at the Comstock Mining District; era of Early Settlement and Transportation ends

### Cultural Resource Types

Recorded sites include: Las Vegas Mormon Fort (partially reconstructed with some original structural fabric), Genoa Historic District and Reese's Mormon Station (reconstructed), Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road traces, California Trail traces, Oregon Trail traces, traces of cut-offs across the Black Rock Desert such as the Applegate-Lassen Trail, and improved watering holes on the Black Rock Desert, such as Trego Ditch. Associated archaeological deposits may exist.

Engineers on topographic surveys documented the location of mapping camps in journals or diaries, some of which were used for substantial periods. These camps, or cartographic field stations including rock cairns on or near elevated landforms (W. White personal communication 2002) marking the survey instruments reading locations, may still be identifiable.

Stone structures, or ruins thereof, may still exist near emigrant trails. Because timber was so difficult to obtain in desert regions, only native stone foundations or alignments may survive from this era, although structural remains made of salvaged timber may exist (such as the purported wagon-wheel corral at Ragtown). Recycling and reuse of emigrant materials such as wagon parts and other supplies may also be discovered as archaeological deposits. Remains of adobe structures that date to this period might also exist. Many artifacts have been collected from the emigrant trail corridors over the last several decades, so artifact concentrations with any data potential will be extremely rare to non-existent.

Anything in early mining settlements, including placer mining sites, foundries, ditches, boarding houses, saloons, mining, and trading posts were important due to the contributions in the areas of labor, equipment, and the transportation of ore (see Reno et al. 2001:1.31). Thus, features of an early settlement, such as a barn, post office, smithy, trading post, church, irrigation system, ranch complex, cemetery, corral, or residence, contributed to the initial stabilization of a community in an economic and social sense. Many of these, if still extant, will have been modified, especially resources with multiple features such as a ranch complex, but each of these modifications can illustrate a distinct period style, expanding family units, and/or changes in subsistence or other activities, as needed through time. Cellars themselves are usually built in a vernacular style and may be important in that respect, and may also contain rich archaeological deposits that may have significant research potential in terms of subsistence and storage patterns.

**National Register of Historic Places: Listed Properties (by county)**

Carson City: N/A

Churchill: Parran Flat (cut-off from the California Emigrant Trail (determined eligible)

Clark: Kiel Ranch, Mormon Fort, Potosi Mine, Old Spanish Trail (National Historic Trail status pending 2002), Spring Mountain Ranch

Douglas: Genoa Historic District (13 structures pre-date 1859, reconstructed Mormon Station), Dangberg Ranch, CrNV-03-1411, trail segment (determined eligible)

Elko: N/A

Esmeralda: N/A

Eureka: N/A

Humboldt: Applegate-Lassen Trail

Lander: N/A

Lincoln: N/A

Lyon: N/A; Site 26Ly259, a 2.75-mile long trace of the California Emigrant Trail (Carson Route) has been determined eligible for listing

Mineral: N/A

Nye: N/A

Pershing: Applegate-Lassen Trail

Storey: N/A

Washoe: Applegate-Lassen Trail, Old Winters Ranch

Clearly, there is a dearth of identified properties applicable to this context in several regions in the state. In some places this is due to a complete lack of early period remains, and in others, a lack of survey data may be the reason. Efforts should be made to record portions of early

transportation corridors before these are gone forever. Other sites, such as Ragtown, Eagle Station, the Dressler Ranch in Carson Valley, and others should be evaluated for significance and integrity. Some properties that post-date the period of significance for this context may also be linked with this time period due to direct association with some of this state's earliest and most influential settlers.

Suggested recordation methods can be found in the BLM's protocol agreement with the State of Nevada (posted on Nevada BLM's website), and in the Oregon-California Trails Association's *Mapping Emigrant Trails (MET) Manual*.

### *Threatened Resources*

Early transportation routes are disappearing fast, particularly in urban areas (Las Vegas, Reno, Carson City, Carson Valley). Until the mid 1970s, traces of the early emigrant routes were visible in the northern and southern sections of Nevada (see Ellison 2001). Many trail experts, archaeologists, and historians have noted the obliteration of early trail traces over the last 30 years, a period of the most extensive growth that Nevada has experienced. Much of the California Trail is "checkerboarded," making continuous segments of the trail difficult to study and preserve.

Naturally, many early long-distance transportation corridors have been overlain by modern transportation routes and surfaces, because the choice of a route by early travelers is for the same reason as for modern ones: the route with the least natural barriers to cross is usually the first choice (close proximity to water and grazing is also a determining factor for routes).

### *Threats to the Resources*

Threats include unrestricted access and inappropriate recreational driving on former emigrant roads, development and/or urbanization, tourism, expansion of military reserves and training exercises, and erosion.

However, some recent shifts in attitude and land-managing policy have created some opportunities for research, preservation, and interpretation of these early resources. The designation of the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area will protect the Applegate-Lassen emigrant trail from some of the above-mentioned threats. Increasingly, federal agencies and the State Historic Preservation Office are working with local governments and groups to preserve and interpret even small sections of early trails because of a heightened awareness of the importance, and public interest, of these resources.

### *Location*

Spanish exploratory influence extended along the southern Nevada border, near the

Colorado River corridor. Fur trapping and trading trails were concentrated along the same Colorado River corridor, but also extended into the southern Nevada interior along branches of the Old Spanish Trail, opened in 1829. In northern Nevada, trapping activities were mostly centered around the Humboldt River corridor and north of there. Several different trails were blazed across the Sierra to California in the fur trapping/caravaner phase, but in 1844 Elisha Stevens forged the Donner Pass route for wagon traffic, completing the western extreme of the California Trail. This became the main corridor for travel during the emigration phase.

Much of the early exploration travel also fell along these main northern and southern routes, with a few exceptions. Frémont's 1843-1844 journey into Nevada was primarily in western Nevada, from the Honey Lake area to Carson Valley and over Carson Pass to California, and in southern Nevada along one of the Old Spanish Trail routes.

Early settlements were found in Carson Valley, Dayton Valley, Eagle Valley (Carson City), Truckee Meadows, Washoe Valley, and at the Las Vegas Springs.

When predicting the location of early transportation routes, remember that many of these follow natural topography conducive for land travel. These areas include river corridors, relatively low passes over ranges, flat terrain, and natural springs as designations for water replenishment. The early transportation corridors were subsequently major factors in the placement of nascent settlements in Nevada, which often were supply centers for travelers.

## Evaluation of Integrity and Significance

### *Early Transportation Resources*

It is important to establish guidelines for evaluating resources significance under Criteria A, B, C, or D, as defined in NR Bulletin Number 16a. Besides meeting significance criteria, a property must possess historical integrity, as "evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's prehistoric or historic period," including qualities of *location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association*. Following Myhrer et al. (1990), in order to evaluate an early transportation route, the following conditions should be met:

- 1) The resource must be part of a route mapped by early cartographers.
- 2) Evaluated sections must be part of the entire route.
- 3) Road segments that have been totally or partially disturbed are not eligible because they have lost integrity in workmanship, design, feeling, association, and materials.
- 4) Very short, pristine segments (shorter than 0.125 mile) have lost integrity due to close proximity to disturbed portions (in the qualities of association and feeling), are considered non-

contributing elements, and are therefore not eligible. However, short segments in the midst of urban areas would still have educational and interpretational value in terms of Nevada's past.

5) Long sections (more than 0.125 mile) of the road showing wagon traces, associated artifacts, or other road-related features, are considered to be eligible, contributing elements of the property.

Due to the nature of very early transportation routes (a linear feature created by years of use, not necessarily a designed one), aspects of integrity such as *design, workmanship, and materials* generally do not apply. Exceptions to this general rule are associated constructed features, or portions of the routes that have been modified to facilitate movement of traffic; for example, the Mormon Mesa segment of the Old Spanish Trail, at the steepest climb up Virgin Hill, past travelers used small boulders (which are still present) to shore up the outer edge of the road. This segment thus shows integrity in materials, in addition to location, setting, feeling, and association.

Early transportation routes will generally be significant under Criteria A, B, and D. Rarely will extant remains of an early route be significant under Criterion C, "[t]hat embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction" (NR Bulletin 15), although associated constructed features may be eligible. If the remains of a route or its associated features are eligible under Criteria B, "associated with the lives of persons significant in our past," these remains must pertain directly to that person's significance. In general, one should ask, "Is the property associated with an event(s) important to history of settlement in Nevada, or development of transportation routes in Nevada? Many early routes will be significant due to their roles in initial settlement in the state.

### *Early Settlement Resources*

The following guidelines may be used to evaluate early settlement resources for significance:

Does the property meet evaluation criteria for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places? For example, is it associated with a specific event marking an important moment in American history, or a pattern of events, or historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, Nevada, or the nation (i.e., Criterion A; see NR Bulletin 15)?

Is the property physically representative of a specific period, specific structure, or landscape such as Victorian residences, Mormon farming settlements, or trading post performing multiple functions (Criterion C)?

Is the property associated with an event important to history of settlement in Nevada?

Is the property a rare example of its type to be built in its locality (eg., local, state, nation-wide), in the area of settling Nevada (Criterion C)?

Does the site or settlement show innovative use of local materials, or means to meet

the requirements of specific environments (Criterion C)?  
Does the property have interpretive or educational value due to integrity?  
Is the property associated with an important person in history (Criterion B)?

National Register Bulletins that may be useful in guiding evaluations for significance include *How to Apply National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (#15), *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes* (#30), *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons* (#32), and *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties* (#36). Others may provide additional information in evaluating and documenting National Register-eligible properties. Be aware that the National Trails System Act (P.L. 90-543) provides for evaluation of long-distance historic trails to be designated as National Historic Trails (NHT). The evaluation criteria are different than those of the National Register of Historic Places; in general, the National Historic Trails system allows for routes that have no physical remains to be recognized and interpreted through the historic documentation of the routes, whereas the National Register requires intact physical remains to be present in order to be eligible for listing. Check the 1978 amendment of the National Trails System Act or any of several studies completed by the National Park Service or the Long Distance Trails Office (Salt Lake City) on National Historic Trails for further information on that system's evaluation criteria.

## Research Areas

### *Early Transportation*

In terms of significance under Criterion D, there are some pertinent research issues that could be applied to eligible early transportation resources, in the following categories:

#### *Establishment*

- What do the wagon traces tell us about topographic or other environmental factors that affected the choice of route and then, early settlement patterns in the region? What does the absence or presence of dry camps present between water resources tell us about traffic (after Myhrer et al. 1990)?, its volume, and changes through time and modes of transport? Were the dry camps extensively reused?

#### *Use*

What is the environmental impact of historic wagon traffic (after Myhrer et al. 1990)?  
What do the artifacts associated with wagon road use tell us about the chronology of usage; and, how do the artifacts inform us on pedestrian travel over long distances, through desert environments in the west in the mid-nineteenth century (after Myhrer et al. 1990)? A lack of early-era artifacts due to looting or a low volume of users, with relatively few "disposable" artifacts discarded or lost, does not nullify the presence of people using the trail during the period of significance, or earlier.

After Reno et al. (2001), do the physical remains of road segments demonstrate formal construction, establishment through extended use, or maintenance? How does this maintenance reflect the importance of the road route itself, its position in the area's road network, and who is maintaining the road?  
How did the early routes facilitate communication and interaction (see Purser 1989)?  
How does the historic function of the road affect its associated features and artifacts (after Lindström and Hall 1994:105)? What types of traffic used the route?

### *Change*

Does the road segment show change through time?  
How did the types of traffic using a road route change through the years of usage? Is a change in traffic evident in the archaeological remains?  
How does the road relate to the history of the area, and reflect that history?

### *Early Settlement*

Research questions pertinent to the domain of Early Settlement might include:

Domestic occupations (households, small businesses, agricultural operations) that span extended periods can provide valuable information on cultural processes changing through time. After Hardesty (1982, see below), data on changes in household composition, structural rebuilding, subsistence/wage strategies, etc. are significant areas of research. Related to this area of research,, what consumer goods are available or not, in comparison to other locations in the western United States (from Reno et al. 2001:1.32)? Is there a discernable pattern to the commodities found in trash deposits? What do trash deposits and settlement patterns reveal about life in early Nevada, pre-1859?

Does consumption of goods and/or community planning differ between agricultural settlements and mining settlements? Are there discernible differences between Mormon and non-Mormon sites (see Lyneis 1982)? What are those differences and how can they be explained?

Is there a distinctive and identifiable building and landscaping style used by Mormon settlers in the early settlements? If so, describe how this vernacular style differs from non-Mormon vernacular style in the region and if applicable, from architecture in the Mormon "core" area of Salt Lake City (see Carter 1997; Lost City Museum and Moapa Valley Historical Society 1984).

Does the archaeological record provide previously unknown information regarding women and children in the early settlement era?

Are Victorian ideals seen in the archaeological remains, such as use or display of status objects (see Branstner and Martin 1987), or strict morality codes surrounding the consumption of alcohol?

Early settlement in Nevada involved either farming/ranching enterprises or mining efforts. Both of these activity types will modify an environment. How does the site's features inform us on ecological change through use?

### Future Needs

Maps to aid future survey efforts  
Large-scale settlement pattern surveys  
Documentation of remaining traces of early transportation corridors and related features

### Additional Information Sources

Some sources for information on early settlements and exploration are:

Many wagon trains had official and unofficial diarists; these are extremely valuable for identification of landmarks along the route, and for an overall view of what travel was like in the early historic period in Nevada. U.S.-sponsored parties had hired diarists and map makers. Fremont's map was one of the most widely-distributed U.S.-printed maps. It provides very good detail of the surrounding terrain along the trails. Later historic-era survey maps (GLOs, U.S. Topographic Engineers) give mostly adequate documentation of the early routes. However, some U.S. government survey maps are erroneous and have fictitious landmarks, rivers, mountains, etc. plotted on them, an unfortunate product of paying surveyors for every mile of map they produced.

Aerial and infra-red photography showing historic routes

Images (paintings, illustrations, photos) of historic landscapes

County records

- **Historians**

Nevada Historical Society in Reno, Nevada State Museum and Historical Society in Las Vegas, Special Collections at UNR and UNLV libraries; unpublished diaries are available at these research centers

Trail Associations: Oregon-California Trails Association ([www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org)), Old Spanish Trail Association ([www.slv.org/History/osta](http://www.slv.org/History/osta)), Trails West ([www.emigranttrailswest.org](http://www.emigranttrailswest.org)), etc. Often trail enthusiasts, who have spent hundreds of hours pouring over primary and secondary sources and who have walked the trails themselves, will be delighted to help

identify archival material that may be useful, or take people out on a field visit.

Contemporary newspaper accounts, especially those based in California

Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs website:

<http://www.nevadaculture.org/docs/nsla/archives/myth>

This section of the department website offers a list of articles written by State Archivist Guy Rocha, who sleuths for the facts behind some of Nevada's most popular legends. This list of articles includes discussions of many of "Nevada's Firsts" including the first settlement, the first health resort in Nevada, Carson City's oldest tree, the first post office in Las Vegas, etc., in addition to place name origins, and other useful historical facts.

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2001 *Supporters of the Comstock: Historical Archaeology of the Carson River Mercury Site, Dayton and Silver City, Nevada*. Summit Envirosolutions, Carson City. Submitted to Ecology and Environment, Inc., Seattle, WA. Context of early Dayton, as well as in-depth discussion of quicksilver process used to process Comstock ore at mills along the Carson River, especially Dayton.

Sanchez, Joseph P.

1997 *Explorers, Traders, and Slavers: Forging the Old Spanish Trail, 1678-1850*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman. Dr. Sanchez is an experienced researcher on colonial New Mexico and has been researching the Old Spanish Trail for years. This book deals with Spanish explorations that led to the eventual discovery of the Spanish Trail and the Mexican

users of the trail.

Warren, Elizabeth von Till

1974 *Armijo's Trace Revisited: A New Interpretation of the Impact of the Antonio Armijo Route of 1829-1830 on the Development of the Old Spanish Trail*. Master's thesis, Department of History, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Available through inter-library loan. Copy on file at the State Historic Preservation Office. The definitive study of the Old Spanish Trail route through the interior of Nevada.

### Maps

Capt. George M. Wheeler's survey maps:

1869 map, *Reconnaissance Expedition through Southern and Southeastern Nevada, U.S. Engineers* [P.W. Hamel, Chief Cartographer]

1871 survey map, found in *Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nevada and Arizona*. 42 Congress, 2 sess. *Sen Exec, Doc. 65*. Washington, 1872.

Accompanying map to Frémont's 1845 report to Congress

U.S. Army 1877 survey

U.S. Army 1855 survey

GLO Survey Maps, 1861-1880s (surveys were completed in Nevada into the 1940s)