# DESERT TRACKS

Newsletter of the Southwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association
June 2007

## Finding the Southern Trail in Mexico

***by Tracy DeVault***

Before the Mexican-American War, the entire length of the Southern Emigrant Trail was in Mexico. The war and subsequent treaties resulted in much of the Southwest being annexed to the United States. This included most of the route of the Southern Trail. However, there are still two relative short stretches that are in Mexico. One of these starts just west of the Colorado River and runs for about 60 miles on the Mexican side of the border between Algodones and Mexicali. For several years SWOCTA members have talked about exploring this section of the trail.

The SWOCTA group at the Alamo Mucho station site. Left to right: Phil Brigandi, Rose Ann Tompkins, Ken and Pat White, Marian and Neal Johns, Judy and Tracy DeVault, Felice (the Johns' dog). *courtesy Tracy DeVault*

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However, difficulties, both real and perceived, prevented us from attempting to map the trail in Mexico. That all changed in January when the perfect opportunity arose. Although it was short notice, we learned that the Yuma branch of the Arizona Historical Society was sponsoring an outing to visit stage station sites along this stretch of the route. We would be traveling with a large group of Americans and guided by Oscar Ramirez Sanchez, a Mexican historian who has located these sites through his research of the trail.

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**From the Editors**

In this issue Richard Greene reports on the Trail Turtles mapping trip from Fort Bowie, Arizona, to Lordsburg, New Mexico. In addition, several of the Turtles joined a trip led by the Arizona Historical Society at Yuma to sites on the Southern Emigrant Trail between Yuma and Mexicali that are below the Mexican border, and Tracy DeVault reports on their expedition.

The Southern Emigrant Trail received considerable use during the Civil War by both Confederate and Union troops. In this issue a new book, *Civil War in Arizona*, is reviewed by Kristin Miyagishima, an American Studies graduate student at California State University, Fullerton.

We include an interview with novelist Oakley Hall. Considered the dean of West Coast writers, Hall has written a number of novels set in the historic Southwest. His western fiction includes topics such as Billy the Kid, the Apache wars, Tombstone, Olive Oatman, and the Mountain Meadows Massacre. In our opinion, his work really brings the Southwest of the 1870's-1890's to life. His classic novel, W*arlock*, has recently been reissued and is reviewed here by Gary Pollitt, an instructor at California State University, Fullerton.

Billy the Kid has received new attention with a major exhibition at the Albuquerque Museum called *Dreamscape Desperado: Billy the Kid and the Outlaw in America*. In addition, a new revisionist biography of The Kid*, Billy the Kid, the Endless Ride*, by award winning historian Michael Wallis was published this spring. Both the exhibit and the book are reviewed in this issue.

One last note: In the December 2005 issue of *Desert Tracks*, Tracy DeVault reported that he visited the Olive Oatman grave in Sherman, Texas. Inspired by this and our own interest in the Oatman story, we recently visited Sherman in a quest for more information about Olive Oatman's life there. We include a report of our findings.

***Deborah and Jon Lawrence***

## Book Review

***Warlock***
Oakley Hall.
New York: New York Review of Books, 2005.
ISBN: 9781590171615. 471 pages. Paperback, $16.95

**Complex Cowboys**

*Warlock*, written in 1959, is Oakley Hall's excellent re-engineering of the Western genre. At first, the story seems true to form, obeying all the rules. Warlock is a nineteenth-century American frontier town with a problem. Harassed nightly by drunken cowboys who moonlight as murdering cattle rustlers, the good townsfolk declare a war on terror and hire celebrity gunfighter Clay Blaisedell to bring law and order to the region. The setup seems simple enough: overcoming a series of obstacles, the hero should by the story's end rout the town of its ne'er-do-wells, the frontier's wildness tamed. Hall, however, has different plans. Taking the classical Western form, he combines the myth of Tombstone and the OK Corral with Apache raids, mining strikes, and military incompetence, to give a realistic portrait of the era.

Hall's handling of timeless themes is expert. Although he writes about America's frontier past, he also critiques the McCarthy era, the time during which the book was first published. And in the book's 2006 re-issue, he prophetically foretells its future. Occasionally the prose is dense, while other passages read like pure western melodrama, but it is all part of the act. As Melville did one hundred years before in *Moby Dick*, Hall plays with a genre, using the simpler form to hunt for bigger game. For the lover of the traditional western, all its elements are here – the gamblers, the gunfights, the spineless citizens, and the whores – but ultimately the book's merit is its complexity, its fearlessness in facing difficult truths about America and about human nature.

*Warlock* does what a great novel should: it steals our certainty, in a good way, making us more thoughtful and less likely to rush for the comfort of oversimplification.

***Gary Pollitt***

*continued from page 1*

Neal and Marian Johns contacted the Yuma Historical Society and made the arrangements for our group to accompany them on this outing. Ken and Pat White found out where to get Mexican automobile insurance and tipped the rest of us off to the rapidly diminishing supply of rooms in Yuma. The DeVaults picked up Rose Ann and we all met in the Historical Society parking lot at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday morning, January 27, 2007.

By the time we arrived, a large crowd had gathered to make carpool arrangements. We had an extra seat and were joined by Phil Brigandi. Phil had led our group on a reconnaissance of the trail through Southern California several years ago. The Orange County Archivist, he is a local historian with a special interest in the Southern Emigrant Trail. We had a great time catching up on his latest stories.

Even with carpooling, there were still 21 vehicles that were going to travel in caravan for this outing – quite a lot of cars to keep together. The SWOCTA group was worried that we might lose some of the cars before we all got back to the United States. Several of the cars had FRS radios, which helped, but we still had difficulty keeping such a large group of vehicles together.

The group left the Historical Society and drove west on the interstate a short way before turning south and crossing the border at Algodones. This is just east of Pilot Knob and is also the route followed by the Southern Trail. We collected our guide on the far side of Algodones. He showed us a large map of the area and explained how he had located the station sites that we were going to visit.

We visited the sites of Cooke's Well Station, Seven Wells Station, and Alamo Mucho Station. We also drove by Gardner's Well Station but could not get to the site because irrigation had flooded the access road. The trail from Pilot's Knob to Mexicali dipped south to circumvent the large sand dunes area that runs along the Southern California border with Mexico. Today all of the flat land has been cultivated. At Cooke's Well and Seven Wells, the station sites are in the middle of plowed fields and nothing remains today. At Alamo Mucho the site is on the bank of a canal, and there are numerous bits and pieces of metal and glass in the area. Our guide said they had done some archeological work at the site, but I was never able to learn whether they had found artifacts that dated to early trail days.

The next stop was supposed to be a station site in what is now downtown Mexicali. However, our caravan could not hold together through the streets of Mexicali. Some of the group opted to bypass the station site and cross back into the U.S. at the east Mexicali/Calexico crossing. Our SWOCTA group decided to backtrack over our route and cross into the U.S. at Algodones. Here we hoped to avoid the long delay that was predicted for the Mexicali crossing. We had no trouble finding our way back to Algodones, but the delay there was just as long. It took us exactly two hours of waiting in line to cross back into the U.S. We were prepared for increased scrutiny at the border, but it went very smoothly.

This was an enlightening trip, and we are satisfied now that there is probably no trail to actually map south of the border. We can indicate the general corridor, similar to what we have to do in towns or heavily impacted areas we have encountered. But it was also satisfying to finally see this area with the sand dunes the emigrants had tried to avoid and to be reminded of their difficulties of finding water near the end of their long journey. ■

## SWOCTA Treasurer's Report

On March 14, 2007, the chapter's treasury books were audited by Marie Greene and found to be in order. At that time, the treasury contained $387.94. Since that time we have received dues from new members amounting to $60 so that the balance as of May 16, 2007, is $447.94.

Although we collect dues from new members, the chapter last collected dues from existing members in 2004. The primary expense for the chapter is the newsletter and we should have enough cash on hand to finance the newsletters for 2007. I expect that in December, we will again ask for dues from all members. At that time, I will send out a postcard asking the membership for dues payments. Do not send in dues until you receive the postcard.

***Harland Tompkins***

## Spring 2007 Mapping Trip: Fort Bowie to Lordsburg

*by Richard Greene*

**Thursday, March 15**

For this outing, our group included Richard and Marie Greene, Rose Ann Tompkins, Ken and Pat White, Charles Townley, Kay Kelso, and Tracy and Judy DeVault.

There is no better place for us to use as a base for mapping than the parking lot in Fort Bowie. We have come here so often that it feels like home. It is convenient to the trail and the bathroom, complete with a shower, is much appreciated. Park personnel welcome us and head ranger Larry Ludwig always helps us locate trail and advises us on local land owners. This time Larry was in Douglas, AZ, and we met a new ranger, John Workman. John has moved from the Cape Hatterras lighthouse in North Carolina to Fort Bowie.

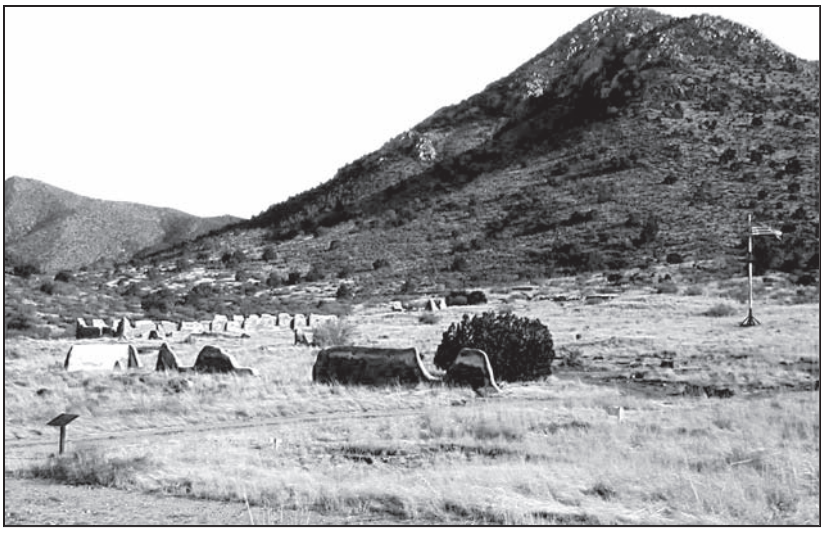
**Friday, March 16**

Larry Ludwig arrived at 8 P.M. Tracy and Larry talked about the discrepancy that Tracy had noted earlier between Cam Wade's photo of the San Simon site and the photo of the trail from the San Simon Stage Station site to Ft. Bowie in Doug McChristian's book.[1] The location of the stage station given in the book appeared to be questionable. We talked about completing a segment of trail we hadn't completed on our previous trip.

We drove out to the flats by the Emigrant Hills near Larry's house. We parked off the dirt road, apparently on private property. Marie, who remained with the car, encountered the owner who lives full time on a nearby ranch and is joined by her husband from Tucson on weekends. She had bought the acreage so nobody could build on it. She was mollified when Marie explained what we were doing. Rose Ann will mail her information on the trail through the area.

Marie and Richard shuttled the vehicles. Tracy, our trip leader, had split us into groups, each to work towards the middle of the segment to be mapped. We found excellent trail and artifacts – a 45 x 70 cartridge case from 1865, a half mule shoe, and broken glass. We met up in the middle.

Rose Ann tripped and hit her head on a rock; she had bruises and a few cuts and scrapes. Rose Ann, Judy, and Marie went back to Ft. Bowie, and Ken and Pat returned to the Emigrant Hills. Tracy, Kay, Richard, and Charles went to the San Simon Stage Station site. We knew the location of the trail and the site and the orientation of landmarks, so it was not a hard task to compare these landmarks to McChristian's photo. The position of the site of the stage station in his book was clearly incorrect. [See accompanying article, page 8.]



The ruins of Fort Bowie. *photo by Charles Townley*

**Saturday, March 17**

We drove I-10 to San Simon. We got directions from a local citizen in a truck. We broke into two groups. Tracy and Richard were to map from a levee towards Rooster Comb. The others would search west from the levee towards San Simon. Unfortunately for trail buffs, the area around the levee is being plowed up for agriculture.

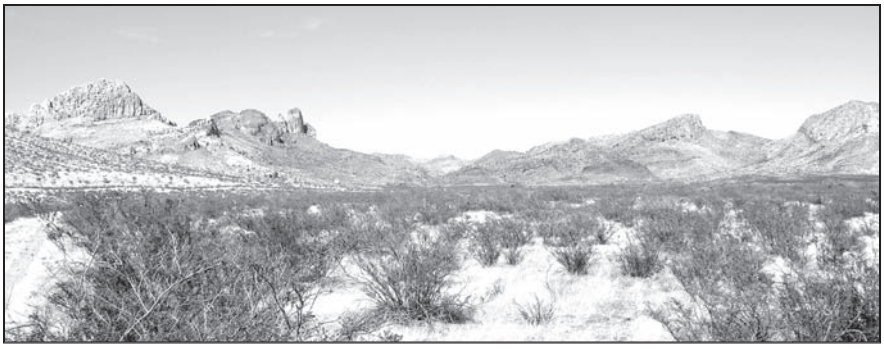
45-70 cartridge. *photo by Charles Townley*

Ranger John Workman had dinner with us and entertained the group with stories of North Carolina. Rose Ann was doing well considering her fall – she had a nice shiner as a reminder. The weather was sunny and warm and an ongoing breeze provided us some relief. In the evening, storm clouds passed over with the slightest bit of rain. The storm clouds led to a display of thunder and lightning out over San Simon.

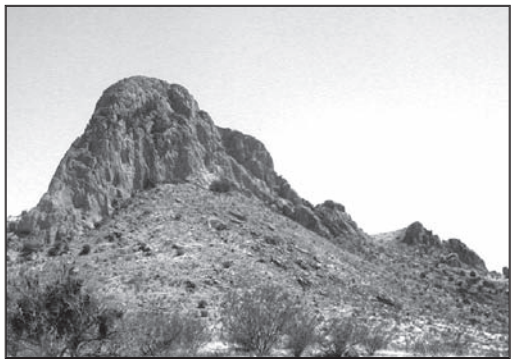
**Sunday, March 18**

We left Fort Bowie to go to Stein's Peak. It is 29 miles from Ft. Bowie to San Simon and another 27 miles to our trailhead at Stein's Peak We had barely started our mapping when an "illegal" came marching down the road from out of nowhere. He must have hidden when he first heard us coming down the road. He only had a sleeping bag and a pint of water. He said, "I am no problem" – and that he didn't need water. He was hungry and hadn't eaten in two days. We gave him a loaf of bread and some cheese. He headed down the road, a very lonely figure.

Tracy and Richard headed towards the Rooster Comb. There was plenty of rock scattered in the bushy, sandy flat but not much rust, except for a quarter-mile mile stretch. There was no hard evidence of trail and not an artifact to be seen. Tracy and Richard met Ken and Pat, coming the other direction from Rooster Comb. Rose Ann and Ken drove their vehicles to pick up Tracy and Richard while Judy, Kay and Marie returned to Ft. Bowie.



Mouth of Doubtful Canyon. *photo by Rose Ann Tompkins*



Rooster Comb. *photo by Ken White*

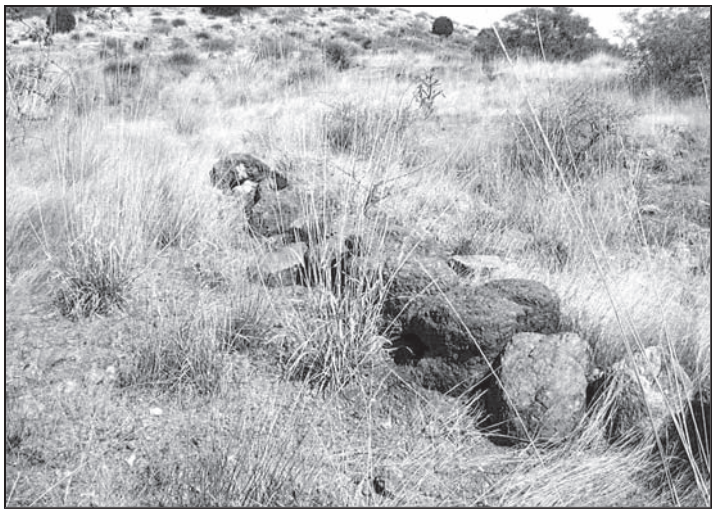
Tracy and Richard searched east towards a flooded playa and got out two miles to a broken windmill squealing in the wind. There was no sign of trail. Along the way there was a four-foot-high rock square. Someone had gone to a lot of work to build a retention wall one boulder high, three feet wide, and fifty yards long. It was interesting that the playa was still flooded since our previous visit last fall. It was a vast lake of water. Everybody else headed west and found little, even around Stein's Stage Station. We called it a day around 2:00 P.M. and drove to Deming to luxuriate in a motel.

**Monday, March 19**

It was another beautiful day with cool breezes and an intense sun. We drove to Separ, exit 62. The main dirt roads were smooth and hard, but we had a few rough patches on a pipeline road to our mapping location. Richard was driving his low clearance minivan and had to wait for a call that it was okay for him to proceed to the eventual camping area. From there Richard rode with Kay to the mapping parking point. The group split up again. Rose Ann and Marie shuttled Tracy and Richard to their starting point. The others mapped westward to Barney Stage Station.

Initially Tracy and Richard followed a swale using waypoints from a previous trip. They didn't find the rust or the cartridge that had been seen on the earlier trip but did find the coffee can noted at another waypoint. Later they ran into rust, but not as heavy as was expected given the amount of rocks. However, the trail was generally easy to follow. In the Conklings' book,[2] the section that covers this part of the trail mentions a wall near a wash close to an abandoned ranch house. Rose Ann told Tracy to take photos of the wall. "Don't come back 'til you find it," she told him. There was not much left of the wall. The trail was followed via rust; then the swale petered out.

We rode back to our campsite. That evening, as we ate dinner, we could see smoke in the distance and watched firefighting planes fly over us on their way to spray their loads over the fire. A chilly breeze whipped up, which must have been tough on the firefighters. After sunset it got chilly. We were in bed by 7:00 P.M.



Conklings' Wall. *photo by Tracy DeVault*

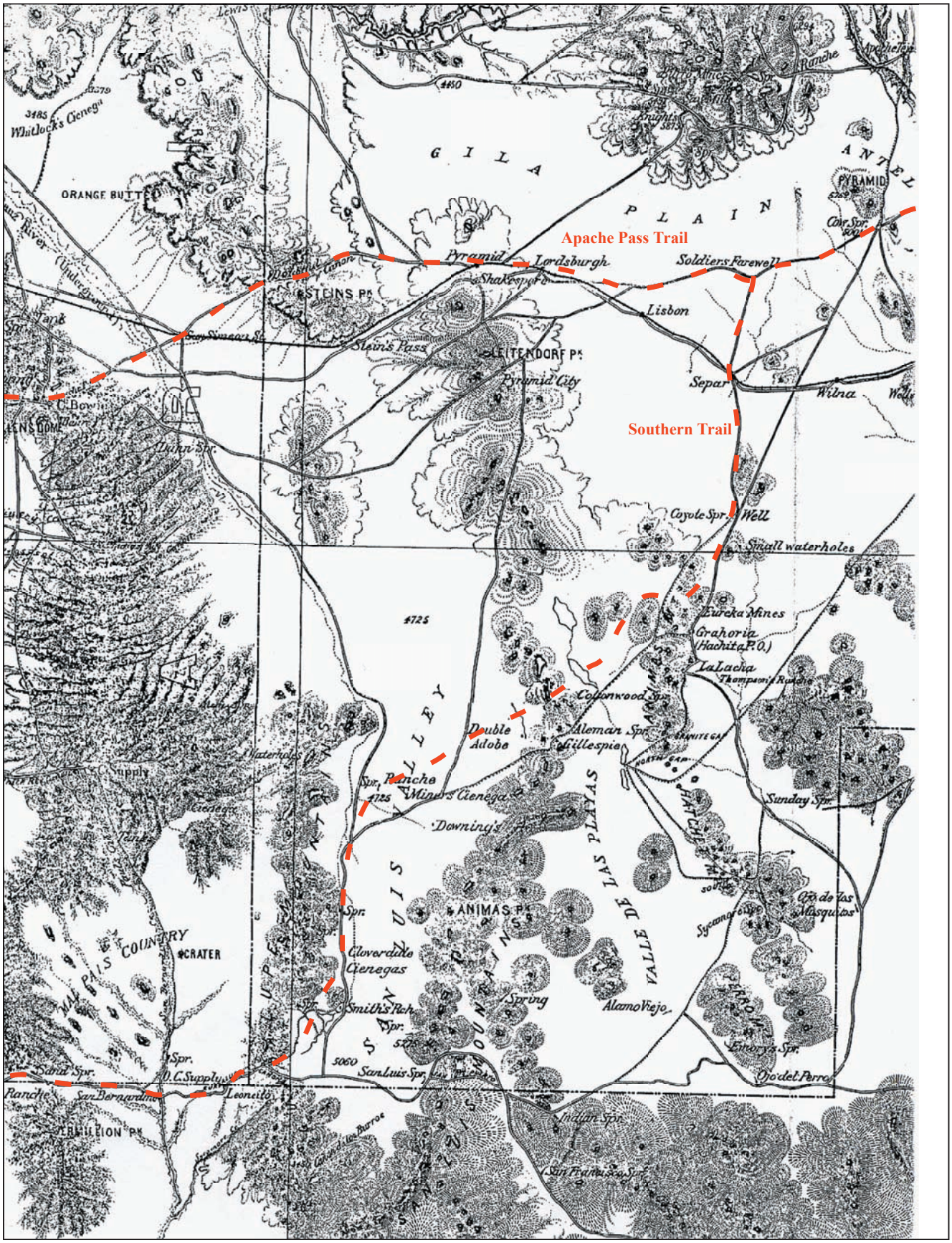
**Tuesday, March 20**

Bitters bottle found near Barney Stage Station.
*photo by Ken White*

This was the last day of mapping. We had the same weather pattern – warm, sunny, not hot. There was no breeze. After scrutinizing the maps of the area around Barney Stage Station, we left camp around 8:00 A.M. and drove to Lordsburg. At the east exit, where they are building a new travel center, we took the frontage road and parked by the side of road within sight of a truck stop. Railroad employees were working on the tracks 200 yards away from where we crossed. We went out to where the GLO[3] in 1871 said was the site of Barney Stage Station. We crossed a sparse pasture with some patches of tall dry grass to an area scattered with trash. We believe this to be the station site: we found trash from the 1920's-1930's, a 10-foot line of rocks, thick glass, and solder-top cans, but no evidence of trail. We believe local settlers carried off the original stage station materials. Based on the many enormous culverts under the railroad bridge we crossed over, it is obvious this pasture has been flooded many times. By 11:00 A.M. we called it a day – it is unlikely we will find trail through Lordsburg. Our mapping trip was over and we headed home.

**End Notes**

1. Douglas C. McChristian, *Fort Bowie, Arizona: Combat Post of the Southwest, 1858 – 1894*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005.
2. R.P. and M.B. Conkling, *The Butterfield Overland Mail*, *1857-1869*. Vol. 2. Glendale: The Arthur Clark Company, 1947 p. 126.
3. In the General Land Office maps, Barney Station was marked on the "Township No. 23 South, Range No. 18 West of the New Mexico Principal Meridian," (T23S R18W). The survey done in 1871 listed the station as abandoned.– – Rose Ann Tompkins.




1883 map. *courtesy Tracy DeVault*

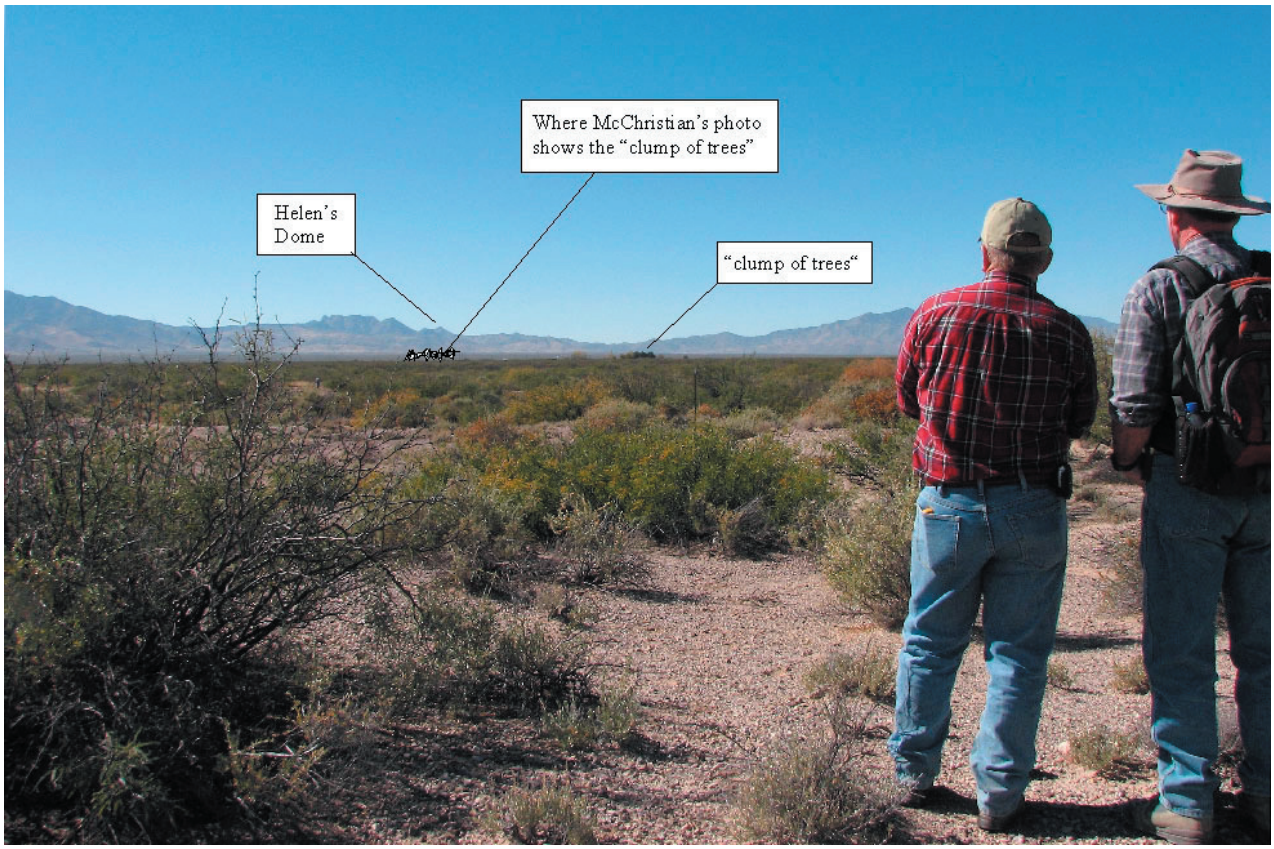



*photo by Cam Wade*

***The Location of the San Simon Stage Station***

During the Fall 2006 mapping trip, the Trail Turtles were directed to the site of the San Simon Stage Station by Larry Ludwig. Larry told us that several years ago there was quite a bit of the station left, including many trail-period artifacts. However, the site was hammered by artifact hunters and now very little remains. Larry and I were standing on site of the stage station looking towards Apache Pass when Cam Wade took the photo above showing Larry and me looking towards Apache Pass (see *Desert Tracks*, December, 2006, p.7).

On that trip, Cam happened to stop by the Fort Bowie Visitor's Center and purchase a copy of McChristian's book. After returning home, Cam read the book and discovered that it contains a photo (on page 4 of the introduction) with the following caption: "Eastern Approach to Apache Pass as viewed from San Simon Station. Pass lies at the low point on the horizon. (Author's collection)" The terrain in this photo looks quite similar to the photo that Cam took. However, it was clear to Cam that McChristian was not standing where Cam had been standing when Cam's photo was taken.

Both photos were taken on the east bank of the San Simon River, looking towards Apache Pass. There is no evidence of the stage station nor the trail in the photos. Helen's Dome is a geologic feature near Fort Bowie and is visible on the horizon in both photos. There is a clump of trees about a mile west of the river, not far off the route of the trail. These trees are clearly visible in both photos. Due to the magic of parallax, one can tell that McChristian's photo was taken from a spot north of where Cam's photo was taken.

During the spring 2007 trip, we returned to the area and were able to determine that McChristian was standing about 220 yards north of where the stage station is located when his photo was taken.

***Tracy DeVault***

## Interview with Oakley Hall

***conducted by Deborah and Jon Lawrence***

Oakley Hall is the author of more than 20 works of fiction. He is best known for *Warlock*, which was made into a movie in 1959 starring Henry Fonda, and *The Downhill Racer*, the basis for a 1969 Robert Redford film. Hall was the director of programs in writing at UC Irvine for 20 years. He is also director of the Squaw Valley Community of Writers. In 1998, he received a PEN Center USA/West Award for Lifetime Literary Achievement. In 2004, he was awarded the Poets & Writers/Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award. His recent novel, *Love and Death in California* (2007), is set in San Diego. It involves a protagonist who struggles to define his identity in terms of self, family, and World War II.

We interviewed Hall in his home in Nevada City on March 9, 2007. The interview focused primarily on his fiction set in the historic West – *Warlock*, *The Bad Lands*, *Apaches*, and *Separations* – with some discussion of *Adelita* and *The Children of the Sun*. [Synopses of these books can be found in the text box on page 21.]

**DT** (***Desert Tracks***) How did you get started as a writer?

**OH** (***Oakley Hall***) Writers always have someone in their family who was a reader, a writer, or a storyteller. In my case it was my grandmother. She was from Indiana. Her hero was the great Indiana writer Booth Tarkington.[1] He wrote a book called *Penrod and Sam* – which in some ways is like *Tom Sawyer*, but *Tom Sawyer* is so sickly sentimental that I can't stand to read it. She would read those stories to me and she would tell stories like that, the same kind of stories with the same kind of villains and the same kind of heroes. The poorer boys were the better boys, and the richer boys were the not-so-good boys.

Later I went to the University of Hawaii. When I was a freshman I was going to be a civil engineer – a terrible mistake. For the one course you could take outside the major, I took creative writing. The teacher, or TA, was Blake Clark, later one of the founders of *Reader's Digest*, but at that time he was a young surf bum. I wrote one of those stories like my grandmother's stories and he praised it. It was the first praise I had ever had in my life. What a heady thing! I didn't go back to civil engineering.

**DT** A good fraction of your novels are set in the historic West. What drew you to that?

**OH** When I was a boy in Southern California, my grandmother's house was next to Stuart Lake's house. He was the biographer of Wyatt Earp.[2] Years later I met a pulp western writer named Walt Coburn.[3] I said that I lived next door to the biographer of Earp, and he said, "That murdering son of a bitch." I had thought of Wyatt Earp as a great hero. This gave me an interest in the West because of the ambiguity. I went rushing off to Tombstone to look into things, and indeed there was a cowboy side of the story where the Earps were the bad guys. It was exactly reversed, white hats to black hats. So I wrote a book called *Warlock*, which is one of my best and is my most famous book. Someone just sent me a note saying that there is a copy for sale on Amazon for $1800, if you can believe that.

**DT** Starting with *Warlock*, your novels of the historic West represent a gritty realism. Earlier Westerns had various levels of realism. Zane Grey,[4] for example, was very romantic.

**OH** Good writing, good action, good scenery, but boy, no characterization!

**DT** Walter Clark's *Oxbow Incident* was realistic.[5]

**OH** But what a downer: lynched at the end. I admire

it for the writing rather than the concept. I knew Van Tilburg Clark from the Iowa Writers' Program.[6] When I came back from Iowa to San Francisco, I went to see him, hoping that he would give me a blurb for *Warlock*, but he wouldn't do it. A friend told me that Walter wouldn't blurb the book because he thought *he*, Walter, was Wyatt Earp. Maybe he did. He was a real tall, stalwart guy. "Stalwart" is the word for Walter Van Tilburg Clark.

**DT** What about other writers of literary westerns?

**OH** Well, there's Larry McMurtry – for heaven's sake, he writes wonderful books.[7]

**DT** Cormac McCarthy?[8]

**OH** *Blood Meridian* is vicious, so violent. There wouldn't be anybody left on the border if people lived like that. But it's awfully good writing.

**DT** You wrote *Warlock* in a very realistic mode. The characters are flawed and their motivations are mixed. There are things happening like mining strikes. You don't get that in ordinary Westerns. What were your precedents?

**OH** I don't think I was trying to be realistic. What happened was that I started to write it straight, but it didn't work. I threw away 250 pages, and that's really tough to do, you know. It was my wife's idea to include the Goodpasture journals. Goodpasture functions as a "reverberator." He takes things that happen on a common level and jacks them up a level by using abstract language, the language of a fairly educated man. The abstraction brings it up to the level where I want it. There are realistic dusty roads and things like that on the bottom, but there is also a level that takes it up where it's supposed to be. I'm bragging! [laughs]

**DT** Like a Greek chorus.

**OH** Yes, like a chorus. Goodpasture would comment on the action and make it sound more important than it was, perhaps. That's how it worked. And it worked so well that my agent said, "You can't just take somebody's journal and use it like that," and I said, "I wrote it – I wrote it."

And I'm a leftist and I wanted it in there about the miners, the Industrial Workers of the World and things like that. They were treated horribly at the border. Judicial murder, Joe Hill[9] and so on. And I was on their side. At the same time I was very affected by the *Iliad*. A lot of the characters have a characteristic of those in the *Illiad* in that their reputations were always important. Blaisedells's reputation, Miss Jessie's reputation, General Peach's reputation. I forget the Greek word for "reputation." But that was very important to me that the reputation was more important than life or death – as with Achilles.[10] So that's a big part of it. But realism is what I do well. And I had to put down a very strong realistic base.

**DT** Sometimes it's scenery, sometimes it's details of interior scenes, but you use detail so vividly that you enable the reader to experience the scene in his imagination. For example, last night we read the passage in *Warlock* where Gannon is walking down the sidewalk and you describe the violet sky above the mountain peaks.[11] We thought, "Wow, you must have seen that."

**OH** There is another scene where Morgan is sitting on the veranda, looking down the street and there is a place where a sign has come down and there is some yellow paint.[12] Remember that? I like that scene; it tells you so much. He's just thinking about the surroundings, but it tells you more about himself.

**DT** You appear to have a really good knowledge of the landscape in your novels.

**OH** Well, it looks like that, but often it's a fake landscape. Sorry, but I make it up! I haven't necessarily been down there. Well, I might have driven through, I guess. Very important to *me* is that when I have a scene that that scene be a *real* scene. There are surroundings, there are trees, and there are dusty roads, and there is somebody dead on the ground. All that stuff is filled in before the action starts.

**DT** It really brings the story to life.

**OH** Good! I try to make it come to life. Recently a guy wanted me to blurb his book about the earthquake and fire in San Francisco, and that's a subject I know quite a lot about. It's by a screen writer. I was reading his book and I thought, "This guy doesn't make anything come to life." I could *tell* him how to. You have to read *Madame Bovary*[13] for one thing. You might not like *Madame Bovary*, but, boy, Flaubert gets everything to come to life. To do it, he uses the senses. He describes always with the senses, the sensory impressions. The validity of the sense impression convinces you of the character and the character convinces you of the scene. He should have known that *before* he tried to write a book. But he doesn't know how to do that because he's a screen writer. He had certainly done a lot of research—well, actually he hadn't done much of that either. So I sent his book back.

**DT** What do you think about the film version of *Warlock*?[14]

**OH** I liked it. I did. I mean, Henry Fonda just walked down the street and captured the whole character of Blaisedell. And Anthony Quinn and Richard Widmark. With Anthony Quinn, they had to give him a limp, to show he has odd goings-on in his head. That's okay. But they made it a little too gay between Morgan and Blaisedell. Put them making house together, things like that. A lot of people commented on that. And I hadn't thought of it that way. I just thought they were good friends in the old fashioned way.

**DT** Did you help with the film?

**OH** No, I just saw it afterwards.

**DT** The novels of yours that are easiest for us to read are the ones in which we are familiar with the history. *Warlock* was familiar because we'd been to Tombstone a number of times and knew the basics. This allowed us to delight in the story you are telling, but also simultaneously we were able to observe what you are doing with the historical events and characters. But because we knew so little about the Johnson County War, *The Bad Lands* was more challenging for us. On the other hand, on reading it, we were led to a greater interest in the Johnson County War.

**OH** Nate Champion.[15] The Regulators came in and tried to kill him. He was one of the rustlers. "King of the Rustlers" they called him. He was in a cabin and they couldn't get him out for a long time. Finally they burned him out and shot him. It took a long time and it gave the settlers the opportunity to form a settler army which went after the cattle barons' invaders. The settler army was going to kill them. They had the wagon running gear set up so that they could set off dynamite bombs, and they were going to get the invaders. Then the cavalry came, to save the Regulators. And I put this in my book and my editor said, "No one will ever believe the cavalry came." But the cavalry *did* come, and it saved the invaders. But I took it out. He was right: it was one too many!

**DT** What led you to write *The Bad Lands*?

**OH** My editor rediscovered *Warlock*, and he had a couple of historical figures he wanted me to consider doing a novel about. One of them was a Frenchman, the Marquis de Morès. I changed him into a big Scotchman because I didn't want to deal with a French accent for 400 pages.

**DT** So that's how you make your choices!

**OH** In *Bad Lands* I was going for character. I had this Machray, based on the Marquis de Morès,[16] who was kind of the hero. A very strong character. And I had a protagonist, Andrew Livingstone, who had something to do with Teddy Roosevelt, who was there in Johnson County at the time. But I didn't want him to be too much like Teddy Roosevelt because Roosevelt was so bumptious. I wanted him to be more like Henry Adams. I did a lot of research on Henry Adams for that character. That character was a combination of Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Adams. So it was character work set in the background of what I knew about the Johnson County War.

**DT** How does *The Bad Lands* stand up against the complex history of the range wars and how does it compare to *The Virginian*[17] or *Shane*?[18] In *Badlands*, Machray was actually on the cattlemen's side, and some of the settlers in the book are rather dubious. You were taking a nuanced perspective. Whereas

in Owen Wister's novel, the Virginian is the loyal employee of cattle barons, and in Jack Schaefer's novel, Shane is the hero of the homesteaders.

**OH** Bernard DeVoto[19] said that the first American western, *The Virginian*, was on the wrong side, the side of the cattlemen. But Jack Schaefer said later that he was sorry he'd written *Shane* because the small settlers ruined the West. That's what he said.

**DT** The Minutemen at the borders in southern Arizona and New Mexico are today's vigilantes, enforcing their prejudices with violence. How do they differ from the ranchers who attempted to murder the homesteaders in the Johnson County War?

**OH** Well, nobody is threatening their livelihood. But the settlers were threatening the big ranchers' livelihood. This country was terribly unfair to the ranchers, giving breaks to the miners that they wouldn't give to the ranchers. They were stuck with that terrible 160 acre limit.[20] Powell[21] said, "You can't raise a cow on 160 acres in many parts of the West." The ranchers had to engage in all kinds of crookedness to get land along the rivers. They went as far as they could. Then here come these farmers. God knows it was not their fault. The train companies advertised all over Europe to bring them out here and give them land. But then they offended some cattle baron because his night riders would go out and run into barbed wire and tear up their horses.

Did you see the movie *Heaven's Gate* by Michael Cimino?[22] It starts with people dancing in a big circle celebrating graduation at Oxford. It ends up with the wagons circling at the end, and the bad guys with linen dusters going around and picking them off. They swiped that from my book. I left the manuscript of *Bad Lands* – this was before it was finished – on the desk of the producer. I shouldn't have done that. One of the painful things in life is to have to pay a lawyer to read your book. I did that. Michael Cimino is a very bad guy. My lawyer said that just to get Michael Cimino on the stand would turn the jury against him.

**DT** Our next question has to do with your research. Your novels exhibit a vast knowledge of the post-Civil War history and cultures of the West. How much research do you have to do to get all the details correct?

**OH** Well, for example in writing *The Adelita*, I would have had to do a lot of research in Spanish, but I didn't speak Spanish well enough to use primary sources. And we've lived in Mexico a couple of times. We lived in Cuernavaca, and there was an old road off the freeway, the road that Maximilian and Carlota[23] would have taken. We took that road once and beside the road were 1300 crosses, painted blue. And that experience led me into the Mexican Revolution. And then I got to learn all this fascinating stuff about the Mexican Revolution: all different kinds of points of view. And we'd driven through Mexico, so I knew what Mexico looked like. But it's shameful that I don't know the language.

**DT** Let's take *Apaches* as an example because that's one of our favorites.

**OH** Good. Mine, too.

**DT** Do you read primary sources such as journals, diaries, government documents and old newspaper accounts?

**OH** In general, there are plenty of secondary sources. You read two or three different things and you kind of get a shot at what it's all like. So I go with secondary sources and fill in the blanks the best I can. No, I didn't read old newspapers.

**DT** You must have read *On the Border with Crook*.[24]

**OH** Oh, yes. That's the level I was working on.

**DT** So when you have details about the culture of the Apaches, the way they think, where you are getting that from?

**OH** I'm glad you have brought up the Apaches. Do you remember in my novel where they have the snake tacked up and they whack nails into it? That seems to illustrate to me the Apaches' sense of revenge. They were so vengeful.

I guess I made up my Apaches. But I had some base by having read about them. More books than *On the Border with Crook*. *Apaches* was based on one of the Apache scouts. I can't remember his name – I think it was Britton Davis.[25] Once in a while I would run into a guy who would know the characters I was working with, someone who was interested enough in that era to find out something about it. Probably by the same route I took – by reading all the books he could find. I read a lot.

**DT** Did you read William Levington Comfort's book *Apache*?[26]

**OH** No. Are the Apaches made to be all bad in it?

**DT** No, it's told from the point of view of Mangas Colorado. It shows both their savagery and their humanity.

**OH** How interesting! I read *Blood Brother.*[27] I forget who wrote that.

**DT** For us, a major delight of *Apaches* was the character Cutler, somebody you can identify with who is caught in a very bad situation and who is trying to make his way through it, but things keep going wrong. And he makes bad choices.

**OH** I had a terrible time settling on his name. In the end it was a good name, but I tried twenty different names until I settled on "Cutler. "

**DT** *Apaches* is also a great example of an approach you seem to use in all your historical fiction. You take events, like the Cibicue incident,[28] that really happened in Arizona and put them in New Mexico; you make composites. For example, Cutler combines the characters of Lieutenants Gatewood and Davis. And you compress the time so that events that happened over a longer period all fall within the shorter time scale of the novel.

**OH** I just try to get the most effect I can get out of all this stuff.

**DT** You wrote *Apaches* in 1986, and it wasn't long after that that there was a revival of Billy the Kid scholarship by scholars like Fred Nolan[29] and Robert Utely.[30] But when you wrote *Apaches*, you didn't have access to this more recent scholarship, so what did you read? Walter Noble Burns?[31]

**OH** I just kind of knew about Billy the Kid. I went to Lincoln[32] and hung out. I looked at where he got the gun out of the toilet. I can't remember how in *Apaches* I handle the scene where he gets his gun in the toilet, but it is probably pretty well based on what really happened. Things like that that people recognize, I wouldn't want to change too much. In the Peckinpah movie, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid,* Billy filled a shotgun barrel with quarters or dimes and shot the guy. The movie is so vivid, my God. Too vivid.

**DT** So you did go to Lincoln. What about Fort Stanton? You describe it so well…

**OH** Maybe I did . . . Billy the Kid is fascinating because he changes generation by generation. He's a bad guy, then a good guy, dirty little Billy, David to the Philistines. You can load him with anything you want to. He's a fascinating character. One of the things that interested me was that he was a hero of the Hispanics. What did they call the little Hispanic ranches?—Las Placitas. They got a little bit of that in the movie when Pat Garrett shoots him and the little Hispanic boy throws a rock at Garret's horse. Just as Pancho Villa had a number of wives, but one wife in particular who carried his reputation on, my Billy the Kid had to have a beautiful Mexican girl who would do that for Billy. It's just a little tiny bit of the novel but very important to the writer, something like that.

**DT** In *Anything for Billy*, Larry McMurtry treats Billy as a homicidal goofball, while in your *Apaches*, he is a good young man in a bad situation.

**OH** Billy was certainly a killer. I love that scene where the guy asks him to "spare the mirrors." He had put new mirrors in the barroom and if there was going to be brawl with Billy, he didn't want anyone to break the mirrors. Isn't that just what a bartender would say?

**DT** Have you read Michel Ondaatje's *Collected Works of Billy the Kid*?[33]

**OH** Oh, that's just a wonderful book. My son-in-law,[34] who's a writer, had a story in Wendy Lesser's literary quarterly *The Threepenny Review.*[35] The great man, Michael Ondaatje, saw the story and wrote in. My son-in-law came to me and said, "You have to read Michael Ondaatje because he's written a letter and I haven't read any of his novels." So I read *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*. I don't remember it well anymore – I remember the abstraction – but I remember that it's just wonderful.

**DT** One of the themes in your novels that is made both implicit and explicit is "What really is historical truth?" You can read a series of facts, you can go look at everything that's written about Billy the Kid, but it's contradictory and it's based on people who lie, who forget. In *Adelita,* Robert MacBean tries to give a historical account of the Mexican Revolution, but admits that his memory fails him and "that there are mechanisms" in himself that seek to preserve him "from remembering too accurately." So what is truth?

**OH** Do you remember at the beginning of *Warlock* the author's note where it says, "The pursuit of truth, not of facts, is the business of fiction"? You're after the truth. What would be the truth? I don't know what it would be, but the most effective thing in a novel is the thing that makes real meaning out of all this otherwise meaningless stuff.

**DT** In *Apaches* Governor Richard Underwood, who is supposed to be Lew Wallace,[36] is writing his journals in the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, and he is deliberating on all of this.[37] He says, "I can see these historians, both the scientific and literary ones, are lying and distorting and blowing up their own egos when they write these journals." He can't even trust the primary sources because the authors of these first-hand accounts are actors in their own histories. And he compares the ridiculous invention of the Billy the Kid pulp novels to the self-serving distortion of facts in the journals and diaries used as primary sources by the historian.

**OH** Indeed, how do you find the truth?

**DT** We thought we heard your voice in Underwood's.

**OH** Maybe. He is my guy. He is sure based on Lew Wallace.

**DT** In a similar vein, myth and legend are important in your novels. Do you agree with Richard Slotkin's statement that "myth is the language in which a society remembers its history"?[38]

**OH** Didn't Slotkin say somewhere that myth was what it was really like? I don't know if that's true. I think myth is what we want. We want to make some meaning out of this, something that will pertain to our own lives. I unabashedly was trying to get myth into *Warlock* and *Apaches*. Well, how do you make somebody mythic? Don't ask.

**DT** The way you keep Billy's body hidden at the end of *Apaches* creates myth. Not displaying Billy's body makes him live forever – it's the stuff of myth.

**OH** Why, of course. [laughs] In that famous book *The Hero*,[39] it is stated that one of the requirements of hero-dom is multiple sepulchers. That means that you don't simply die in the last fight. In the case of Billy the Kid, there was a guy, Brushy Billy, who claimed to have been him. The same with Butch Cassidy, he was seen back in Oregon after he was killed in Bolivia.

But the scene where Billy, in his delirium, rides off to a mountain paradise with his girl friend —I wish I hadn't put that in. If they do a revised edition, I'll take that section out. But I like all that stuff where they hide the body.[40]

**DT** We enjoyed *Separations* especially because we had done a lot of work both on the Mountain Meadows Massacre[41] and John D. Lee and the Oatman massacre and captivity.[42] The book took on an added dimension because of this background reading.

**OH** You could see the sources for the characters. John D. Lee—they sat him in his coffin and shot him.

**DT** What did you read about the Mountain Meadows Massacre? Have you read Will Bagley's *Blood of the Prophets*?

**OH** No, I read Juanita Brooks.[43]

**DT** Prior to writing *Separations*, you must have done a float trip down the Grand Canyon.

**OH** I did. Lee's Crossing[44] is still there. If you go to that part of the Grand Canyon, you can see the way the Mormons crossed. They made tracks for one set of wheels on one side of the wagon and then they held the other end up with a rope from above. Just on that track they would go through the canyon. Isn't that amazing?

**DT** *Separations* would make a great movie.

**OH** Wouldn't it? I wish I could give it to Robert Redford. He could do the old guy just right. But the book got published by a university press; people didn't like it.

**DT** Your overall approach also involves realistic inclusion of the larger political, industrial and environmental forces at work in the Old West, which are left completely out of most westerns. *Separations* concerns railroad capitalists who are willing to destroy the Grand Canyon in order to build a railroad. It also mentions the battle over hydraulic mining in California. Are you consciously trying to lead your readers to a deeper understanding of the forces at work during this era of our history?

**OH** Oh, yes, definitely.

**DT** Perhaps point of view is one of the most important differences between history and historical fiction. A work of history must be written from a point of view that represents that of the actual author. A fiction writer, on the other hand, has the freedom to tell the story in many different ways. For example, in *Separations* the point of view revolves between Asa Haden, Mary Temple and Jake Buchanan in a manner that is enormously effective. When you write a novel, what prompts your decision to choose a certain point of view?

**OH** I usually rotate between a number of different points of view. Ever since I read William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, which caught me just as I was learning how to write, I've never stopped shifting characters. It has been very important to me to get different shots of reality in order to make the story more real. I can't imagine doing anything without a narrative point of view. And narrative point of view fits with all this that I've been saying. You use narrative point of view to get sensory impression, and the sensory impression feeds back on character. And that's very important to me. I can't think of a novel where I haven't used such an approach.

**DT** In your novel *Children of the Sun*, about Cabeza de Vaca, we tend to be with Dorantes for the most part.

**OH** In that story, you have a God infested man, and a terrified man, and a sexually oriented man, and a sensible guy, Dorantes.

**DT** And we stay with the sensible man for about two thirds of the novel.

**OH** Did you know that Dorantes' descendants are still alive and living in Mexico City?

**DT** When you begin work on a novel, do you come in to it with a point of view or vantage point? How do you choose?

**OH** I think I have an idea of my principle characters or the roles of the characters. I would have started out *Warlock*, I think, with Gannon because he was the principle point of view, but then Morgan was also very important to me. And much later, as I say, I invented Goodpasture. You don't want to use the hero's point of view. You want to use the hero's best friend.

**DT** So you have Gannon, the force for law, and his brother, the cowboy, and they discuss the situation together.

**OH** In here is a lot of advice from Sir Walter Scott.[45] Walter Scott invented the historical novel. There are always two contending forces, and the principle character can always fit in on either side because he knows what's going on in both contending parties.

Like Ivanhoe, who's on the king's side but understands his violent father. So you know what's happening both ways. That was very important to Walter Scott, so it is necessary to pay attention.

**DT** Are we correct in sensing that your novels progressively are becoming less dark with time? It's not that the dark element isn't there. In *Separations*, there is plenty of darkness. But Asa Haden and Mary Temple are heroic characters, and *Separations* has such a happy ending. Overall it seems as if you have mellowed with time.

**OH** I hadn't thought about that. I guess I wanted them to be heroic. But I suspect you're right. I wrote five mysteries, and they are all fairly happy. They didn't do well. You know what happened? I gave a talk at the Pacific Union Club on the early days of the *San Francisco Examiner* and on William Randolph Hearst and Ambrose Bierce.[46] William Randolph was a really bad guy, a fascist. He was playing footsie with Mussolini and Hitler up until Pearl Harbor. And I said all that. Will Hearst was there at the talk and the *San Francisco Chronicle* never reviewed another book.

**DT** So you never got any exposure for the mystery novels? For us they have been a delight. We especially remember the one where you incorporate the Mussel Slough incident.[47] We had read Frank Norris and we had visited the site. Did you go there?

**OH** Happy Valley. I didn't go there, but I knew guys from there. When I was in college I had jobs in construction, and I hung out with cat skinners [bulldozer drivers]. I hero-worshipped cat skinners. Where did those guys come from? Well, they were young farmers. They learned how to do that working on the farm, and then the war came and they did it building airfields. And this one guy, Howard Lane, who was the hero of my book *So Many Doors*, was from Hungry Valley. And that's where he learned his bulldozing, down there by Mussel Slough. That's as close as I got to Mussel Slough. Sorry to disillusion you. You have to depend on your imagination for a lot of this.

**DT** Can we speak of other authors who you read for pleasure or profit?

**OH** I have been working on a book about all the books that were very important to me as I learned to be a writer, what I learned and what I didn't learn from them. These are all famous books, like *The Iliad*, *King Arthur*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Idiot,* and *Treasure Island*. The book is great fun to write. You know the best plot? *Wizard of Oz*. That's such a good plot. Everybody there wants something. Dorothy wants to go back to Kansas. The Cowardly Lion wants courage, the Tin Man needs a heart, and so on and so forth. And each character has inherent in him what he wants. Just a wonderful plot.

**DT** What about Wallace Stegner?[48] Didn't you write the libretto for an opera based on his *Angle of Repose*?

**OH** I did indeed.

**DT** Is there a recording of it?

**OH** There isn't. I tried to get one, too. The opera is not that good. That's a long, long novel and I had to boil it down to 14 or 15 pages, which is hopeless. There's no way of doing it. I had to leave big chunks out. In fact, when they put it on, they had to leave out the whole second act because they had a dictum that they had to get people out by midnight. That was not a happy experience.

**DT** *Angle of Repose* introduced us to Mary Hallock Foote.[49] It is a good example of what can happen when people read your novels. For example, they might read *Separations* and say, "Who is Ina Coolbrith?"[50] And then they begin to investigate who she is and read her poetry.

**OH** That's like what happened to my daughter [Sands Hall[51]]. Because of living here in Nevada City, which is where Mary Hallock Foote ended up, she got very interested in Foote and Stegner. Her boyfriend was working on something in San Mateo and she would drive down with him. She went to the Stanford library and looked up all the correspondence between Stegner and the Foote family, and it was not honorable. He was kind of a bad guy. She got really down on Wally, who I knew very well and who was a good friend of mine. She wrote the play *Fair Use.* Have you read it?

**DT** No.

**OH** It's pretty good. I won't tell you what happens, but it's very clever. I would have said that Wally could have gotten away with what he did if he had written a masterpiece. But that book is not a masterpiece. The best parts of it are all written by Mary Hallock Foote. No kidding. All of the sections on the past are Mary Hallock Foote's writing. The front part is all Wallace Stegner with his sick people. After a certain point he only wrote about sick people. I got tired of that guy in that wheel chair.

**DT** On the other hand, who reads Mary Hallock Foote? Most people know about her *because* of Stegner's book.

**OH** However, she was as famous in her time as Stegner was in his. And his book crucified her. I am on Sands' side.

**DT** You were head of the UC Irvine writing program for many years. It has produced a significant number of noted authors.

**OH** I'll say we have. Richard Ford. Michael Chabon.

**DT** We like the Orange County writer Kem Nunn.

**OH** Know what's happened to him? Last I heard Nunn was one of the writers on *Deadwood.*

**DT** *Deadwood*, talk about gritty realism.

**OH** Gritty realism. Yeah, I saw two or three episodes and was kind of repelled. A friend said you have to go back and look at the rest, but I haven't yet. I didn't like the guy who was supposed to be the ultimate hero. So far he's just bad.

**DT** What about your own novels? Do you read them again critically or with pleasure?

**OH** I wouldn't think of reading any of them again. It just makes me shrink. "Why did I use *that* word?"

**DT** When they recently re-issued *Warlock*, didn't you go back and reread it?

**OH** No. Maybe at some point I will go back and reread one, but so far I haven't done it. I haven't gone back and read any of them. If I went back and reread one, I'd be more apt to read one of the mysteries. I think they are pretty good.

**End Notes**

1. Booth Newton Tarkington (1869-1946) was an American novelist and dramatist best known for his Pulitzer Prize-winning novels *The Magnificent Ambersons* and *Alice Adams*. *Penrod and Sam* was published in 1916.
2. Stuart N. Lake (1889-1964) was a writer whose material dealt largely with the American West. He is the author of *Frontier Marshal,* the 1931 biography of Wyatt Earp.
3. Walter Coburn (1889-1971) was a writer of western novels and short stories, most of which were published in western magazines in the 1920's to the 1940's.
4. Zane Grey (1872-1939) was an American writer of adventure novels and pulp fiction that represented an idealized image of the Old West. His best-known book is *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912).
5. Walter Van Tilburg Clark (1909-1971) was a writer of short stories, poetry, and novels. In 1943, his best known novel, *The Ox-Bow Incident*, was adapted into a movie starring Henry Fonda.
6. Founded in 1936, the Iowa Writers' Workshop was the first creative writing program in the country. In its early years, the program enjoyed a series of distinguished visitors, such as Robert Frost, Robert Penn Warren, Dylan Thomas, John Berryman, and Robert Lowell.
7. Larry McMurtry (1936- ) is a novelist, screenwriter, and essayist, best known for his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Lonesome Dove* (1985). Along with Ken Kesey, Peter S. Beagle, Robert Stone, and Gordon Lish, McMurtry studied writing under novelist Wallace Stegner.
8. Cormac McCarthy (1933- ) is an American novelist who has been widely regarded as an heir to William Faulkner for his biblical prose and rural settings. *Blood Meridian* is an extremely violent novel based on the activities of the Glanton gang, who killed Apaches and sold their scalps to the Mexican territorial government. Part of "The Border Trilogy," *All the Pretty Horses* (1992) won the National Book Award and National Book Critics Circle Award. The other two books in the triad are *The Crossing* (1994) and *Cities of the Plain* (1998).
9. The Industrial Workers of the World was a radical labor

organization founded in Chicago in 1905. To reach its goal of worker control of the means of production, it advocated general strikes, boycotts, and sabotage. Its tactics led to arrests and adverse publicity, though it made gains through strikes in the mining and lumber industries. Many of its early members, also known as the Wobblies, were immigrants, and some, like Joe Hill, rose to prominence in the leadership. Hill (1879-1915), a radical songwriter and labor organizer, was executed for murder.

10. In Greek mythology, Achilles was a hero of the Trojan War. He is the central character and greatest warrior in Homer's *Iliad*.
11. *Warlock*, p 64.
12. *Ibid*, p 374.
13. Considered to be one of the first modern realistic novels, Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* was attacked for obscenity when it was first serialized in 1856. After being tried and acquitted, it became a bestseller.
14. The film *Warlock* (1959) was adapted from the novel by Oakley Hall. Directed by Edward Dmytryk, the film focuses on three men: the gambler, gunfighter and lawman-for-hire Blaisedell (Henry Fonda); his crippled friend and partner Morgan (Anthony Quinn); and Johnny Gannon (Richard Widmark), a cowboy more burdened with scruples than his fellow San Pablo Ranch cronies, who have made the silver-mining town of Warlock their violent playground.
15. Nate Champion was a small rancher and a key figure in the Johnson County War. He was accused by the wealthy cattlemen's association in Wyoming of being a rustler. On the night of April 5, 1892, a special train halted outside Casper, and a troop of heavily armed men disembarked and prepared to ride north to Johnson County. Sent by the cattle barons, they called themselves Regulators. The Regulators surrounded the cabin where Champion and a companion, Nick Ray, were sleeping. Ray was shot when he stepped outside at dawn to relieve himself. Champion dragged the dying man inside, and the siege began. Champion held out for several hours, killing at least four of the Regulators and wounding several others. The Regulators ended the standoff by loading a neighbor's wagon with flammable materials and setting the log cabin on fire.
16. The protagonist of *The Bad Lands*, Scottish Lord Machray, is based on the historical Marquis de Morès (1858-1896). A native of France, de Morès moved to the Badlands of Dakota Territory in 1883 to find a fortune in the cattle industry. He was famous for having challenged Theodore Roosevelt to a duel and for having attempted to revolutionize the ranching industry by shipping refrigerated meat to Chicago by railroad, thereby bypassing the Chicago stockyards.
17. *The Virginian* (1902) was written by Owen Wister (1860-1938). Wister was in Wyoming during the Johnson County War (1892) and set his novel against a highly mythologized version of the Johnson County War, taking the side of the large land owners.
18. An American writer and journalist, Jack Schaefer (1907-1991) is the author of *Shane* (1949), the story of a young boy's relationship with a former gunfighter who comes to work on his family's farm and gets involved in the Johnson County feud between the farmers and cattlemen.
19. Bernard De Voto (1897-1955) was an American historian and author who specialized in the history of the American West. His western histories include *The Year of Decision: 1846* (1943), Across the Wide Missouri (1948), and *The Course of Empire* (1952).
20. The Homestead Act was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1862. It granted 160 acres of unoccupied public land to each homesteader on payment of a nominal fee after five years of residence; land could also be acquired after six months of residence at $1.25 an acre. Its purpose was to lure unemployed workers from cities in the industrializing North, decrease the chances of civil unrest, and establish a stable, agrarian society in the wide-open territories of the West.
21. John Wesley Powell (1834-1902) was a U.S. soldier, geologist, and explorer of the American West. He is famous for the 1869 Powell Geographic Expedition, a three-month river trip down the Green and Colorado Rivers that included the first passage through the Grand Canyon, a journey which forms the background for Oakley Hall's novel *Separations*.
22. Michael Cimino (1939- ) is the writer and director of *The Deer Hunter*, *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot*, and *Heaven's Gate* (1980), a fictionalized account of the Johnson County War.
23. Maximilian I, Emperor of Mexico (1832-67), was a member of Austria's Imperial Habsburg-Lorraine family. He married Princess Charlotte of Belgium (also known as Empress Carlota of Mexico) in 1857. In 1864, he was proclaimed Emperor of Mexico, but from the outset the Mexican liberals, led by Benito Juárez, refused to recognize his rule. There was continuous warfare between his French troops and the Mexican republicans. Maximilian was executed by the republicans in Querétaro in 1867.
24. John Gregory Bourke (1843-1896) served as an aide to General George Crook in the Apache Wars from 1870 to 1886. Written over a century ago, his memoir, *On the Border with Crook*, is one of the classics of the Indian Wars.

25. Lieutenant Britton Davis was the officer in charge of the reservation Apaches who lived at San Carlos Reservation in southeastern Arizona. He helped Charles Gatewood track and convince Geronimo to surrender. His account of the controversial "Geronimo Campaign," *The Truth about Geronimo*, offers an important first-hand account of the famous Chiracahua warrior.
26. Will Levington Comfort (1880-1932) was an American writer, primarily known for adventure novels such as *Apache* (1931).
27. Writer Elliott Arnold (1912-1980) is probably best known for his novel *Blood Brother* that was made into the 1950 film *Broken Arrow* (1950) and the ensuing 1956 television series by the same name. Depicting the Southwest, from the time of the Gadsden Purchase in 1856 until the end of the Indian wars, *Blood Brother* follows the adventures of Cochise, chief of the Chiricahua Apaches, and Tom Jeffords, famous peace maker and Indian agent.
28. In August 1881, an Indian Agent ordered the Army to arrest Nakai de Klinni, a prominent Apache medicine man. A tense confrontation at Cibicue on the White Mountain Reservation in Arizona Territory left six soldiers and the Apache medicine man dead. Through the winter, both sides tried to preserve peace. Finally on July 6, 1882, a band of some 50 warriors jumped the reservation and began raiding throughout the Rim country. The Army located them at Big Dry Wash, 37 miles east of Fort Verde. The resulting battle on July 17, 1882, was the last major action of the northern Apache Wars.
29. Frederick William Nolan (1931- ) is a British editor and writer. He has spent over fifty years researching Billy the Kid and has written several books on Billy and the Lincoln County War.
30. Robert M. Utley is a former chief historian of the National Park Service and the author of many books and articles on western history, including biographies of General Custer and Sitting Bull.
31. Walter Noble Burns'1926 biography, *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, was a bestseller.
32. Lincoln, New Mexico, was known as *Las Placitas* in the 1840s by the original settlers. The Lincoln County War came to a climax there in July 1878 in a five-day battle that made Billy the Kid, infamous in his own time.
33. Sri-Lanka native Michael Ondaatje (1954- ) is best known as a novelist, but his work also encompasses memoir, poetry, and film. In his extended poem, *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, Ondaatje both underscores and undermines the romantic associations of the outlaw.
34. Louis B. Jones is the author of the novels *Ordinary Money, Particles and Luck* and *California's Over*. He is married to Oakley Hall's daughter Brett.
35. An American arts critic, novelist, and editor, Wendy Lesser (1952- ) is the founding editor of the arts journal *The Threepenny Review*.
36. Lewis "Lew" Wallace (1827-1905) was a lawyer, governor, Union general in the Civil War and author. He served as governor of New Mexico from 1878 to 1881. As governor he offered amnesty to many men involved in the Lincoln County War—including Billy the Kid. Also while he was governor, he completed the historical novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of Christ* (1880).
37. *Apaches*, 367.
38. Richard Slotkin is a cultural critic and historian. His award-winning trilogy on the myth of the frontier in America, which is comprised of *Regeneration Through Violence*, *The Fatal Environment*, and *Gunfighter Nation*, offers an original and thought-provoking interpretation of the United States' national experience.
39. Joseph John Campbell (1904-1987) was best known for his work in the fields of comparative mythology and comparative religion. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, he identifies the mythological journey of the hero.
40. In Chapter 28 of *Apaches*, Johnny Angell is shot by Sheriff Grant, the Pat Garett surrogate. In a delirium, Johnny imagines riding to safety to a hideout in Colorado with his girlfriend, Elizabeth Fulton. In reality he dies, and Elizabeth and Lieutenant Cutler hide his body in a remote Anasazi ruin because "[it] must never be known that Jack Grant has killed him."
41. John Doyle Lee (1812-1877) was a prominent Mormon who was executed for his role in the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre. The mass killing of between 100 and 140 Arkansas emigrants by Mormon militia and Paiutes took place at Mountain Meadows, a stopover on the Old Spanish Trail in southwestern Utah.
42. In 1851 a band of southwestern Indians attacked the Oatman family in present-day Arizona. All but three members of the family were killed. The attackers took Olive Oatman (1838-1903) and her younger sister captive and left their wounded brother for dead.
43. Juanita Leone Leavitt Pulsipher Brooks (1898-1989) was a historian and author, specializing in the American West and Mormon history. Brooks' notable books on Mormon history include *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (1950) and *John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Scapegoat* (1961).

44. Lee's Crossing is named after John D. Lee, who established a ferry crossing on the Colorado near today's Page, Arizona.
45. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) was a Scottish historical novelist and poet. His famous titles include *Ivanhoe*, *Rob Roy*, *The Lady of the Lake*, and *Waverley*.
46. William Randolph Hearst I (1863-1951) was an American newspaper magnate. He employed the best journalists available, including Stephen Crane, Mark Twain, Richard Harding Davis, Jack London, and Ambrose Gwinnett Bierce (1842-1914). Bierce is best known today for his *Devil's Dictionary*.
47. The Mussel Slough Tragedy, the dispute over land titles between settlers and the Southern Pacific Railroad, took place on May 11, 1880, in what is now Hanford, California. The tragedy left seven people dead and inspired Frank Norris' novel, *The Octopus: The Epic Of The Wheat A California Story* (1901), which describes the raising of wheat in California and the conflict between the wheat growers and a railway company.
48. Wallace Earle Stegner (1909-1993) was an American historian, environmentalist, and novelist. Stegner's novel *Angle of Repose* was directly based on the letters of Mary Hallock Foote. Stegner founded the creative writing program at Stanford University. His students included Sandra Day O'Connor, Edward Abbey, Wendell Berry, Ken Kesey, and Larry McMurtry.
49. Mary Hallock Foote (1847-1938) was an author and illustrator who went west with her husband, a mining engineer. She is best known for her stories which portray the rough mining life of the West.
50. Ina Coolbrith (1841-1928) was the first poet laureate of California. A friend of Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Ansel Adams, and Joaquin Miller, she contributed articles to the *Overland Monthly*.
51. Sands Hall (1952- ) is the author of *Fair Use*, a dramatic exploration of the controversy surrounding Wallace Stegner's use of Mary Hallock Foote's life and writing in his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Angle of Repose*.

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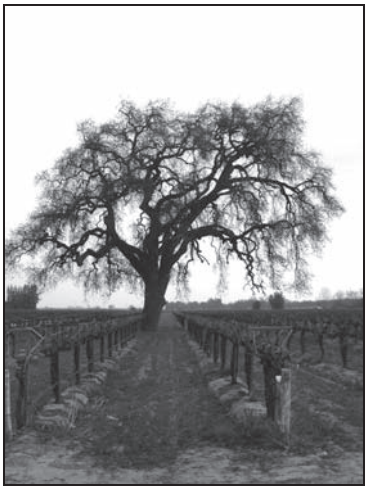

The Mussel Slough Oak. *photo by Jon Lawrence*

## Selected Oakley Hall Novels

***Warlock*** revisits the myth of Tombstone, the OK Corral, and Wyatt Earp. It is the story of a gunman, Clay Blaisedell (Earp), who is asked to restore order in the mythical silver mining town of Warlock. In addition to badman Abe McQuown and his men (the Clanton gang), Blaisedell has to reckon with a greenhorn deputy Johnny Gannon, who makes a serious effort to restore law and order and who represents the principle point of view of the novel. The diaries of Goodpasture, a local merchant, provide commentary on the action. Blaisedell's best friend Tom Morgan (Doc Holliday), as well as Kate Dollar, an angry woman from Morgan's past, play key roles. The novel includes the rebellion of proto-Wobbly miners, who are nursed and defended by the saintly Miss Jessie. Gunfighting, mob violence, and the intervention of the army under the alcoholic General Peach form much of the action. A killing spree perpetrated by Tom Morgan and an impending miners' strike set up the final confrontations. In *Warlock*, Hall explores the ambiguity of evil and the reality behind the Tombstone myth.

Set in the polite society of nineteenth-century San Francisco and along the Colorado River, ***Separations*** involves the conflict between land developers and preservationists, Mormons and Gentiles, and between Indians and whites. When the pompous owner of a California literary magazine proposes a trip down the Grand Canyon to discredit the earlier fieldwork of John Wesley Powell, one of his editors (Mary Temple, the "Poetess of Russian Hill," who has many similarities to Ina Coolbrith) encourages the expedition to rescue her sister (based on Olive Oatman) from the Hoya Indians. The company of explorers includes Asa Haden, a young intellectual who provides the principal point of view, and Jake Buchanan, a tough outdoorsman who is foreman. The Mountain Meadows massacre plays a part of the background. A conflict arises between railroad developers and those who seek to preserve the Grand Canyon.

***Bad Lands*** is about the Johnson County War of 1892. Scottish cattlement Lord Machray (based on the historical Marquis de Morés) wants to create a cattle empire in the Bad Lands of North Dakota. His adversaries are rancher Yule Harder and hunter Bill Driggs. Hall's protagonist Andrew Livingston, a New Yorker who comes to the Dakota Territory in 1883 after the death of his wife and daughter, is caught in the middle. *Bad Lands* includes all the trappings of a Western: lynchings, vigilantes, cattle drives, saloons, and brothels.

***Apaches*** combines the Lincoln County War and the efforts to bring the Apaches Victorio and Geronimo to bay. Key characters are Patrick Cutler, a calvary officer (based on Lt. Britton Davis and Lt. Charles Gatewood); Johnny Angell (Billy the Kid), a young gunman who finds himself on the wrong side of the law; and Jack Grant (Pat Garrett), the gunman turned lawman who has sworn to hunt down a man he once rode with. Governor Underwood (Lew Wallace) and General Yaeger (Crook) play significant roles. The Cibique incident and the final annihilation of Victorio form part of the plot.

***The Children of the Sun*** is based loosely on the story of Cabeza de Vaca and Andrés Dorantes and two others who survived a shipwreck off the Texas coast in the years after the Conquest. They are enslaved by a tribe of Indians for awhile, but later become known to other tribes as healers and are cared for as they walk to Mexico, a journey of more than 1600 miles across the Southwest. On arriving in Mexico, they speak against enslaving Indians.

***The Adelita*** involves the Mexican Revolution and its aftermath. The son of a wealthy American oil tycoon, Robert MacBean, joins his late mother's rebellious vaqueros fighting against the Federal Troops. With them is the beautiful *soldadera* Adelita, a young woman of revolutionary fervor.

***The Civil War in Arizona: The Story of the California Volunteers, 1861-1865.***
Andrew E. Masich. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006.
ISBN: 9780806137476. 368 pages, illustrations, maps. Hardcover, $33.95.
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The American Civil War is popularly remembered through such battles as Gettysburg, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. Popular narratives of the war also mythologize such personages as Confederate General Robert E. Lee, Union General Ulysses S. Grant and the "common" soldiers who served in the eastern and southern states. Little is known or discussed about the soldiers who served in the far West, in states such as California, Arizona, and New Mexico. For this reason, *The Civil War in Arizona* is a refreshing change from the traditional Civil War texts that have graced bookshelves across the nation. Masich allows the reader a glimpse of military life during the Civil War in the far West – an unforgiving, unpredictable territory at the time the war was fought. Andrew Masich also gives the reader a sense of what the soldiers thought and how they dealt with the ever-present threat of confrontations by hostile Native Americans and western Confederates.

In *The Civil War in Arizona*, Masich describes the occupational duty, campaigning, and mustering out (chapters four and five, respectively). These chapters provide a vivid description of military life and what it must have been like for the soldiers who occupied the military posts in Arizona. The reader can almost feel the disappointment some soldiers felt with their lack of interaction with the Confederates and what it must have been like to make the decisions to either leave the military behind or to continue with military life.

Masich also examines the differences between the regular Union army and the men of the California Column, the name given to the soldiers who marched from California to begin military occupation in Arizona for the duration of the war. The soldiers of the California Column are described as being hardier and more adaptable to the unrelenting heat and unforgiving terrain of the vast Mojave Desert. Furthermore, according to Masich, the soldiers of the California Column seem to have been least likely to desert the ranks, and more likely to be overall better soldiers than those in the regular army. What is important to remember, however, is that the soldiers of the California Column were not subjected to the harshness of army life in the east, nor did they fight battles on the same scale as Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, and Fredericksburg. It is interesting to think how the soldiers of the California Column would have fared if they had faced the same circumstances as the regulars.

If a reader is looking for climactic and bloody confrontations between Confederate and Union soldiers in the far west, then *The Civil War in Arizona* is a book that will clearly set the reader straight. By reading this text, one can understand that while the Civil War did stretch as far west as California (Confederate sympathizers in Southern California tried to march east, but were quickly captured by soldiers who were patrolling the territory), the soldiers did not experience the mythologized battles as their eastern counterparts did. Instead, the majority of the war consisted of confrontations with Native American tribes who were either helpful or unfriendly, and Masich's text reveals how the military responded to these tribes, and vice versa.

While many soldiers felt "cheated" out of their chance to fight Confederates, they also felt that what they did do was not fully appreciated. Although the Union soldiers in the far West did fight Confederates, their most important contributions to the war effort (and the expanding Union) existed in border patrol, territorial occupation and development, and the protection of the inhabitants of cities like Tucson. Masich makes an effort to point this out, to let the reader know that while the soldiers in Arizona do not fit traditional images of Civil War soldiers, they helped to open the gateways to the far West, to allow future inhabitants to live in an alien and unforgivable territory.

Although *The Civil War in Arizona* is well written, some facts – e.g. about rations, uniforms, and military accoutrements – are repeated too often. This is especially problematic in chapters one and two, which deal with the march from California and the beginning of military occupation in Arizona. However, Masich

does redeem himself throughout the rest of the book with his easy-to-read writing style and attention to detail.

Overall, *The Civil War in Arizona* provides a vivid depiction of what it was like to live and fight in the West during the mid-nineteenth century. At the end of the book, Masich includes first-hand accounts of the goings-on of military life in Arizona from the soldiers themselves. Revealing fascinating details of the war and Arizona occupation, these accounts enable the reader to understand the saga of the Civil War in Arizona from the perspective of the men who fought and lived the campaign.

No understanding of the Civil War is complete without an appreciation for the war in the western territories. *The Civil War in Arizona* helps fill this gap. It will be of interest to Civil War buffs and students of the Southwest.

***Kristin Miyagishima***

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***Billy The Kid: The Endless Ride***
Michael Wallis. New York: Norton, 2007.
ISBN: 0393060683. 288 pages, cloth, $25.95.

Billy the Kid has captured the imagination of many of our leading authors, including Larry McMurtry, Michael Ondaatje, N. Scott Momaday, and Oakley Hall. Numerous historians – William Kelleher, Maurice Garland Fulton, Frederick Nolan, Robert Utley, Paul Andrew Hutton, and Jon Tuska – have also fallen under his spell. When we first learned that Michael Wallis had written a book on Billy the Kid, we asked ourselves: "What can Wallis have to say that's new?"

No question about it – Billy the Kid has been one of the most discussed characters in American history. His image has been distorted by tabloids, dime-store romances, sensationalist journalism, countless songs, television shows, and over sixty films. But not much of what has been said about him is truthful. Consequently, Billy the Kid has become one of the American West's most misrepresented characters. In *Billy The Kid: The Endless Ride*, the award-winning historian Michael Wallis has attempted to sift through the fact and fiction and explain why Billy has remained one of our most popular and most mythologized folk heroes. And separating the reality from the myth couldn't have been easy for him.

Henry McCarty was perhaps born in the Irish immigrant wards of New York City. Not much is known about his parents, and it's hard to trace his childhood until his family turned up in Silver City in the early 1870s. Both the documented facts and the myth begin in 1877, when Henry shot Francis P. Cahill, a man who was bullying him. Consequently Billy began a life on the run, and he eventually got mixed up in the Lincoln County War, a bloody battle that involved crooked politicians, ruthless cattle lords, and hired outlaws. This war, according to Wallis, "spawns the myth." But for it to develop, Billy would have to die. Gunned down by Sheriff Pat Garrett in the New Mexico Territory at the age of twenty-one, "the Kid" became a mythologized outlaw, sensationalized beyond recognition.

In his attempt to set the Kid's historical record straight, Wallis provides readers with a convincing and sympathetic narrative of Billy's life. Drawing on local histories and biographies and the work of Billy the Kid historians (especially Robert Utley and Frederick Nolan), Wallis carefully establishes what the Kid did and when. He weighs the evidence and where there are uncertainties, he discusses his reasons for embracing one version over the other. The result is a balanced narrative, enhanced by photographs, map, and comprehensive endnotes. And in his attempt to cut through the obscurities that surround the Kid, Wallis does not simply reconstruct his exploits. What he does that sets his biography apart from the others is to put Billy's story in context. Wallis concern is with the life and times of Billy the Kid, not just the Kid himself. Billy is Wallis' vehicle to tell the story of how the Kid is influenced by living in the southwestern frontier during the Gilded Age.

Wallis, the author of *Route 66* and *Pretty Boy* and the host of the new PBS series *American Roads*, has

produced a biography that provides readers with not only an unforgettable portrait of the famous outlaw, but a fascinating look at the frontier Southwest. Because *Billy The Kid: The Endless Ride*'s scope is vaster than Billy, this biography will appeal to readers interested in western history, as well as in the life of Billy the Kid.

***Deborah and Jon Lawrence***

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***Dreamscape Desperado:***
***Billy the Kid and the Outlaw in America***
**An exhibit at the Albuquerque Museum of Art & History, May 13-July 22, 2007**

The *Dreamscape Desperado* exhibition examines the life and death of Billy the Kid, as well as the Lincoln County War. It also explores the ways in which the Kid has become a popular icon of the American West by highlighting the sheer number of films, newspaper stories, dime novels, comic books, songs, and collectibles for the tourist industry that he has inspired.

Paul Hutton, a professor of history at the University of New Mexico, is the guest curator of the exhibition. The show is built around the manuscript and photograph collection of Robert McCubbin of Santa Fe, as well as Hutton's popular culture collection. Billy's story is told through tangible artifacts from the past, including the spectacles belonging to Governor Lew Wallace, Pat Garrett's watch and badge, the butcher knife Billy was carrying when Sheriff Pat Garrett gunned him down, and the pistol Garrett used to do so, as well as the furniture believed to have been in Pete Maxwell's bedroom when Billy was killed there and the bench where Billy's body was deposited after he was shot – complete with his bloodstains. There is also a bloodstained photo of the Kid's cohort Charlie Bowdre and Bowdre's wife, Manuela. Bowdre had the photo in his pocket when Garrett's posse cut him down in December 1880 at Stinking Springs, near Fort Sumner.

The curators have set up a listening station that plays music from entertainers like Marty Robbins and Bob Dylan, as well as film stations that show clips from Paul Hutton's History Channel series on the subject, featuring interviews with Robert Utley, N. Scott Momaday, and Drew Gomber. The exhibit also showcases the paintings and sketches of the legendary gunman by artists like Bob Boze Bell, Thom Ross, and Buckeye Blake. According to Deb Slaney, history curator at the Albuquerque Museum, this is the largest collection of Billy the Kid artifacts and artwork ever to be assembled in any one exhibit anywhere in the world.

On Saturday, June 30, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., there will be a Billy the Kid symposium. The participants will be Michael Wallis (historian and author of *Billy the Kid: The Endless Ride*), Johnny Boggs (author of *Law of the Land: The Trial of Billy the Kid*), Frederick Nolan (historian and author of numerous books on the Lincoln County War and Billy the Kid), and Robert McCubbin (collector of Billy the Kid historical items). The moderator will be Paul Hutton.

The *Dreamscape Desperado* exhibition takes its name from some lines Hutton wrote about the Kid in a 1990 article for *New Mexico Magazine*. "Billy the Kid just keeps riding across the dreamscape of our minds – silhouetted against a starlit Western sky, handsome, laughing deadly. Shrewd as the coyote. Free as the hawk. The outlaw of our dreams – forever free, forever young, forever riding."

For more information, contact the museum at 505-243-7255 or visit www.albuquerquemuseum.com.

## Destination Sherman, Texas

***by Deborah and Jon Lawrence***

For the past few years, we have been on the trail of Olive Oatman. We have visited La Harpe, Illinois, where Roys Oatman's parents owned a hotel and Roys ran a store, and we visited the family homesite at the Abbott farm in nearby Morrison. We saw the Royal Hotel that Olive's brother Lorenzo Oatman started in Red Cloud, Nebraska, as well as Lorenzo's gravesite. We drove to the Oatman massacre site near Yuma, Arizona. At the Huntington Library we checked out *The Olive Branch*, the Brewsterite publication that contains letters back to Ohio concerning the wagon train's journey to New Mexico, and we saw the Oatman file from the historical society in El Monte, California, where Olive first went after leaving the Mohaves. A few weeks ago, we finally made it to the final resting place of Olive Oatman in Sherman, Texas, seventy-five miles north of Dallas and close to the Red River.

Olive Oatman (1837-1903) married John Brant Fairchild (1830-1907) in the First Baptist Church of Rochester, New York, on November 9, 1865. The Fairchilds lived in Detroit, Michigan, for seven years and then relocated to Sherman, Texas, where John Fairchild was president of City Bank. We contacted Light Townsend Cummins,[1] the Bryan Professor of History at Sherman's Austin College, for information regarding Sherman's City Bank. Although Professor Cummins did not know anything specific about the existence of the City Bank, it is his "undocumented impression that it was joined by consolidation with several others into what eventually became the Merchants and Planters National Bank." According to Cummins, "the modern location of the M&P Bank is at the corner of Travis and Wall Streets and it is still a bank location for a holding company successor to the M&P."

In an attempt to uncover more information regarding the bank, we contacted Donna Hunt,[2] former editor of *The Denison Herald*. According to Hunt, the following excerpt appeared in an article by R. C. Vaughan in the Sherman-Denison *Herald Democrat* on January 14, 2002. Quoting from an interivew[3] with Joe B. Thorn of Whitesboro, Texas, Vaughan wrote:

> [Joe B. Thorn's] grandfather was president of the old Sherman City Bank in 1872 and as he recalled Fairchild must have been chairman of the board of City Bank. He said the bank opened two months before the M&P Bank and was organized with capital of $200,000. It was the first bank established in Sherman.

Next, we set out for the location of the Fairchilds' two-story colonial home at 826 S. Travis Street,[4] on the northwest corner of Travis and Moore Streets. The house is no longer there, and in its place is an apartment building with a shabby exterior. However, the cast-iron fence that borders the sidewalk appears to be very old and resembles the fence that fronts the Fairchild residence in an old photograph of the home that we would see later at the Sherman Public

The Fairchild residence. *courtesy Sherman Public Library*

Current fence at Travis and Moore. *photo by Jon Lawrence*

Library. We wondered whether the current fence and the Fairchild fence are one and the same. We stood on the curb and tried to imagine what Olive's life would have been like here in Sherman. According to Brian McGinty, Olive lived in seclusion: "On her rare trips from her house, Olive wore a hat and a dark veil in an attempt to conceal her tattoos." She also attempted to cover them with powders and cosmetics.[5]

In 1876 the Fairchilds adopted a daughter, Mary Elizabeth "Mamie," who was born Sarah Catherine Leonard. We knew from reading Doris Clark's book that Mamie had been educated at St. Joseph's Academy, which we had heard was right across the street from the Fairchild residence. We crossed Travis Street to St. Mary's Catholic Church. A priest stood in the doorway. We asked him about St. Joseph's Academy, and he told us that what was St. Joseph's is now the St. Mary's Catholic School, just next door to the church. It was founded by the Sisters of St. Mary of Numur and offered both an elementary and secondary education for its students. We walked over and saw a foundation stone on the wall that said: "St. Joseph's Academy. Founded 1874, Erected 1950 A.D."[6]

We then drove to 401 S. Crockett Street to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. The Fairchilds were active members of this parish, which was founded in 1874. However, the present church was built in 1910. an active member of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Professor Cummins said that "nothing remains on the property from the 1874 construction. The last part of the 1874 physical plant was destroyed in the early 1970s to erect an education building."

We drove to the Red River Historical Museum, located at 301 S. Walnut. The museum's exhibit on Oatman was disappointing: it consisted of a bulletin board containing an assortment of excerpts and pictures from


Fairchild grave site, West Hill Cemetery, Sherman, TX. *photo by Jon Lawrence*

Royal B. Stratton's *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* and Doris and Hal Clark's *The Oatman Story*. The Sherman Public Library's Oatman file was similar to those we had seen in La Harpe, Red Cloud, and El Monte, with articles from twentieth-century magazines and journals and a few newspaper clippings, some of which were not included in Hal and Doris Clark's book. It did have several items of interest, including a thesis[7] on Oatman from a local college and Oatman-related genealogies.

Olive Oatman Fairchild died of a heart attack on March 20, 1903, at the age of sixty five. We drove out to the West Hill Cemetery where she is buried. The cemetery is small and picturesque. We parked the car and for about an hour, we walked up and down the rows of graves, obelisks, and columns until we finally located the Fairchild plot. Two graves, John's and Olive's, and a concrete slab with the inscription OATMAN lay inside a low border of stones. A Texas historical marker is placed beside Olive's modest tombstone.

**OLIVE** ANN **OATMAN** FAIRCHILD
(West Hill Cemetery, Sherman) (1837- 1903)
Captured in Arizona at age 13 (1851) by Yavapai Indians,
who massacred six members of family.
Sold to Mojave Indians. She was treated kindly but bore
mark of a slave—
blue cactus needle tattoo on chin—for rest of life.

According to Brian McGinty, John Fairchild had Olive's coffin enclosed in iron to prevent the Mohaves from "reclaiming" her body. In the quiet atmosphere of the cemetery, we felt that Olive was finally resting in peace.

**End Notes**

1. An historian of the Spanish Borderlands, Light Townsend Cummins has written or edited seven books and numerous articles on the history of Texas, Louisiana, and the Southwest.
2. One of Grayson County's leading historians, Donna Hunt was named the first female editor of the *Denison Herald* in 1984 and held that position for 10 years. Hunt acted as manager of Eisenhower State Historical Park for several years.
3. See article by R.C. Vaughan in the *Herald Democrat*. (January 14, 2002). The uncle of Donna Hunt, Judge Vaughan writes a weekly historical column in the Sherman-Denison *Herald Democrat*.
4. The address numbers have changed since the time when the Fairchilds lived in Sherman, when the address was 570 S. Travis.
5. "The Oatman Story: A Talk by Brian McGinty." *Desert Tracks*, December 2006.
6. According to Professor Cummins the original St. Joseph's was located in a different part of Sherman than the current St. Mary's School, and nothing remains of the building today.
7. Rachel Broussard, "Torture, Tears and Triumph: The Life of Olive Oatman, A Sherman Resident." Grayson County College, 1990.

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***Desert Tracks:*** *Newsletter of the Southwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association*

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# Upcoming Conferences

Oregon California Trails Association Convention
August 7-11, 2007
Gering-Scotts Bluff, Nebraska
www.octa-trails.org

Santa Fe Trail Symposium
September 27-39, 2007
Trinidad, Colorado

DESERT TRACKS

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Oregon-California Trails Association
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