

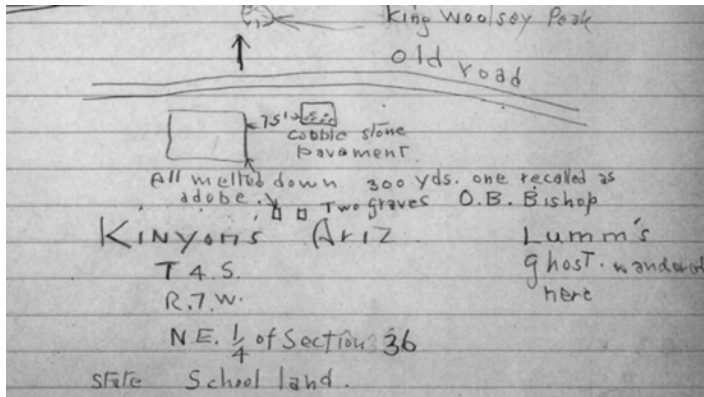
COLORADO-CHEROKEE

Prior to the shutdown we had been planning an event to be held on July 18 at the Loveland Museum, for a presentation by Bruce Watson on the history and mapping of the Cherokee Trail, with particular emphasis on its route through Larimer County. The Museum remains closed as of the end of May and we will reschedule this event later in the year.

Our Mapping Committee remains active in its work

Mapping with the Southern Trails Chapter

Spending our winters in Arizona presents the opportunity to interface with the Southern Trails Chapter of OCTA. In February I was invited to accompany mapping members Tracy DeVault from Prescott, AZ, Mike Volberg from Ramona, CA, Greg McEachron from Seminole, FL, and Dan Talbot from Queen Creek, AZ. This mapping trip was an attempt to locate the Kinyon Butterfield Stage Station along the Gila River. The site is northwest of the town of Gila Bend, in the floodplain behind the Painted Rock Dam. The location was determined by careful research, including diaries and specific measurements from the General Land Office surveyors. These GPS coordinates narrowly defined its probable location.



Sketch from the Conklings' research papers at the Seaver Center for Western History Research in Los Angeles. The Conklings visited the site in the 1930s.

In 1858 the Butterfield Overland Mail selected the Southern Emigrant Trail for its route through much of New Mexico, Arizona and California. In 1849 and the early 1850s the Southern Emigrant Trail saw much emigrant traffic as gold seekers used it to reach the California gold fields.

On February 23 we drove to a spot overlooking the floodplain and prepared to hike the approximate 1.5 miles to the suspected site. It had rained considerably the day before, and the area proved to be quite muddy, a definite drawback. As we descended into the

in Larimer County, and ongoing negotiations continue with the City of Colorado Springs for Cherokee Trail signage.

Bruce Watson, Co-chair of the Mapping Committee, is a winter resident of Arizona and describes a recent mapping trip with the Southern Trails Chapter in the following article. *Camille Bradford*

floodplain every step we took on the muddy ground accumulated heavily on our boots, which made the hike all the more difficult. The floodplain was densely covered with mostly dead brush and stunted trees, which required forcibly pushing our way through almost impenetrable walls of vegetation. It was exhausting and required determination to persist. My biggest fear was becoming a drag on the others, as my stamina didn't match theirs.

We finally arrived at the approximate location of the station, but were unable to locate any discernable evidence of eroded walls, etc. Tracy DeVault had a small foldable shovel and dug a hole about three feet deep. Several metal probes were also carried and inserted into the hole in an attempt to discover the depth of the silt. We hoped the silt might only be a narrow layer and by probing we might discover evidence of the site. Sadly, it appeared the silt was at least four feet deep, and probably deeper. Consequently, we could only approximate the site without further excavation, an impossible task due to the inaccessibility.



Part of mapping group after returning from the floodplain. L-R: Bruce Watson, Greg McEachron, Tracy DeVault

The next day we drove over 240 miles to a site southeast of Bowie, Arizona to extend the previous

mapping of a trail between Fort Bowie/Apache Pass and Rattlesnake Point. It is not uncommon for Southern Trails Chapter mappers to travel hundreds of miles during a mapping trip. They might start out mapping in Central Arizona and a few days later be mapping in New Mexico.

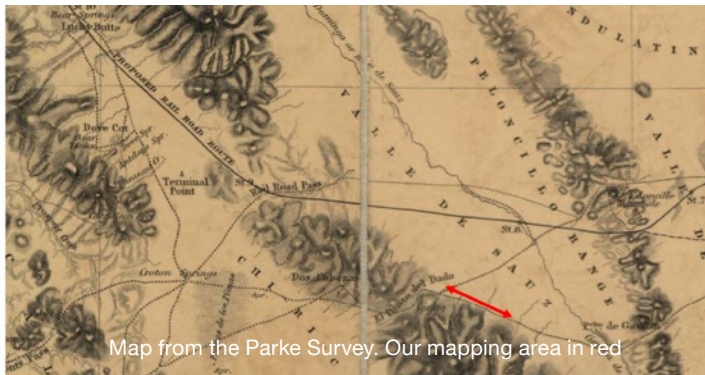
This location was traversed by Lieutenant John Parke of the topographical corps in 1854. His instructions from the Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, was to explore a possible railroad route between Dona Ana on the Rio Grande and the Pima villages on the Gila River.

The trail that Parke opened was later extensively used by military patrols traveling east from Fort Bowie and probably some emigrants.



One of many horse/mule/oxen shoes found

Axle skein



Map from the Parke Survey. Our mapping area in red

At this site I was allowed to use one of the three metal detectors and we quickly discovered many artifacts, including mule, horse and oxen shoes, different calibers

of cartridges, and even an axle skein and bushing, either from a wagon or a buggy. Each artifact was documented, GPS coordinates recorded, and then reburied. These mappers are experts at spotting rust on rocks, something I've yet to perfect. At each artifact location, a piece of bright tape was tied onto adjacent vegetation, and soon the location of the trail was obvious. In a day and a half the mapped portion of this trail was considerably extended, a worthwhile effort.

I learned a great deal accompanying these experts and hope to share my new experience and knowledge with our fellow Colorado mappers.

Tracy and Greg documenting an artifact. Rattlesnake Point in the distance.

