

SANTA FE TRADE



American Scene Magazine



Much has been written concerning the history of the Santa Fe trade and possibly even more about the Santa Fe trail, itself; for unlike the trappers who preceeded them, many of the traders were educated men who were fascinated by what they saw and experienced and wrote books and numerous accounts of their activities. Travel to and from Santa Fe in the 1800's furnished adventure of a unique sort, and many of these early journals and accounts have been collected and published, such as those of Josiah Gregg, who wrote a classic work on the subject of the trade entitled *COMMERCE OF THE PRAIRIES*. Gregg's notes and journals, edited by Max L. Moorehead, were recently published by the Oklahoma University Press and several of his diaries are included in the manuscript collection of the Gilcrease Library. Other men such as James Josiah Webb, Jacob Fowler and Lewis H. Gerrard also wrote of their personal experiences and Crane & Company publishers issued a comprehensive history of the Santa Fe trade compiled by Colonel Henry Inman in 1916.

Yet there is an important aspect of the trade only briefly touched upon in most of these accounts which concerns the variety and consequence of the items of trade which prompted these early commercial ventures; therefore the following article intends to direct the reader's attention to these items, and to take into account the methods of transportation used by those who engaged in commerce with New Mexico.

The Congressional report of Augustus Storrs entitled "Trade and Intercourse between Missouri and Mexico" accompanies this issue of the Gilcrease magazine, and is not to be found outside the rare book archives of the larger libraries in the United States today, unless in a very few private collections. First published in 1825, this report, so far as we know, has never before been reprinted in its entirety, and the Gilcrease Institute is pleased to present it as a bonus feature of this issue of the *AMERICAN SCENE*.



Leader of the Trail, William De La Montagne Cary.

AMERICAN SCENE

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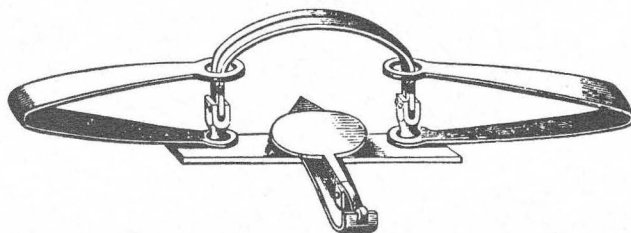
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Commerce is seldom given its deserved place of importance in accounts of the discovery and eventual settlement of the New World; yet it was trade with the East Indies that prompted Europeans to furnish the money which inadvertently led to the discovery of America. The search for new wealth and the fabled "Cities of Gold" brought the first Spaniards to this hemisphere, while an interest in furs claimed the attentions of the French, British, Dutch and later the Russians who explored and settled the new continent. Trade in furs preceeded the eventual settlement of most of the interior of North America, and this source of wealth, together with the agricultural products of the subsequent settlements in New France and New England, far exceeded in value the gold and other mineral treasure which the Spanish adventurers brought out of Central and South America.

The basic differences in the aims of the Spanish in North America and the other nations of Europe was clearly evidenced by the attitudes of the respective governments towards their colonies. Spain, on the decline as a Great Power, sought to extract riches from America but offered little in return. Her control over colonial outposts was severe; goods furnished to her colonies were inferior, as a rule, transport was slow and inefficient and graft raised prices to an intolerable level. With few exceptions the Spanish colonists were too poor to purchase much in the way of manufactured goods, and even then preferred to do business with the French, or in later years with the American traders, in order to obtain a better quality in exchange for their limited resources.

The Spanish government in Madrid did not look with favor upon trade with other nationals, unless of course a large share of the profits from such ventures went to the Crown or its representatives; but the New Mexicans were so eager for European manufacturers that they were known to have organized illegal expeditions to purchase merchandise from the French colony in Louisiana, despite the threat of the death penalty if they were caught. Thus, the French were the first to tap the Spanish colonial market in North America.

By the beginning of the 18th century Frenchmen had pushed westward from the Atlantic coast as far as Texas, and had traveled up and down the length of the Mississippi River. In 1728 Pierre Gaultier de Varenus de la Verendrye explored to a point within sight of the Rocky Mountains in a region that is now part of Canada or the northern United States; where he met Indians who traded with the Spaniards. Officially considered to be leading only an exploratory expedition, Verendrye nevertheless investigated the possibilities of trading for furs with the Indians, and was the first to make contact with the Mandans, Hidatias and Arikaras of the mound villages along the central Missouri River. However, Verendrye's reports misled other Frenchmen attempting to reach New Mexico into an unnecessarily circuitous route to the north.

Two brothers from Canada by the name of Mallet were the first Frenchmen to reach New Mexico from the East. Ascending the Missouri River in 1739 they encountered a group of Indians who directed them

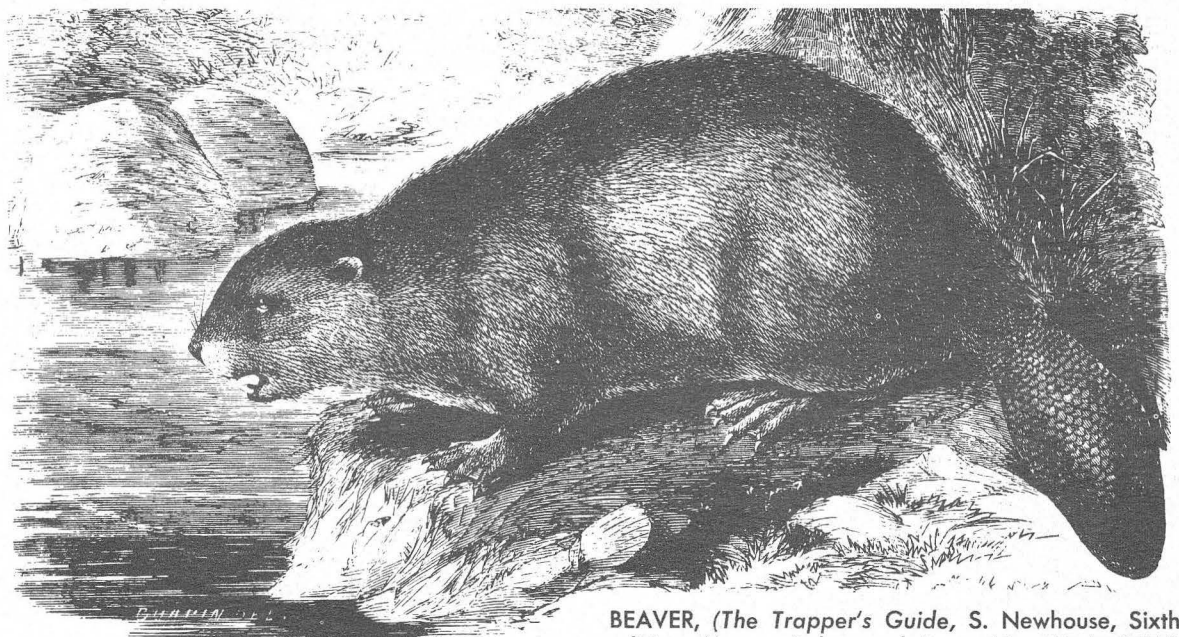


OTTER, (*The Trapper's Guide*, S. Newhouse, Sixth edition. Mason, Baker and Pratt, New York: 1874)

southward towards the Spanish settlements, followed the Platte River for 28 leagues before turning southwest to cross tributary after tributary of the Republican and the Arkansas rivers, and reached the mountains at a point somewhere in the vicinity of the present-day town of Mora, New Mexico. Meeting Spaniards at the mission of the Picuris Pueblo, they finally reached the city of Santa Fe on the 22nd of July, 1739, which was by their estimation 265 leagues from the Rio Paini Mahas, near the present site of

Omaha, Nebraska. They were treated well during their stay in Santa Fe, and one member of their party, named Moreau, married and remained in New Mexico.

On the first of May, 1740, the two brothers and their five remaining companions left for the East, probably following the Canadian River to the Arkansas on their way to New Orleans; they later attempted a second journey to Santa Fe by the more direct route up the Canadian, but did not reach



BEAVER, (*The Trapper's Guide*, S. Newhouse, Sixth edition. Mason, Baker and Pratt, New York: 1874)

Santa Fe and were never seen again. Thus ended the first of the trading ventures to Santa Fe.

The next group of Frenchmen to arrive in Santa Fe, ten years later, did not fare so well with the Spanish colonial government, but were arrested and sent to Mexico as a discouragement to other would-be commercial venturers. Two years later, in 1751, another French trading party met with a similar fate; for the Spanish government not only resented any attempts at trade with New Mexico, in general, but attempts on the part of Frenchmen, in particular, because the French readily did business with the war-like Comanches on the plains to the east, furnishing them with the weapons with which they raided the Spanish settlements and friendly pueblos in New Mexico and Texas.

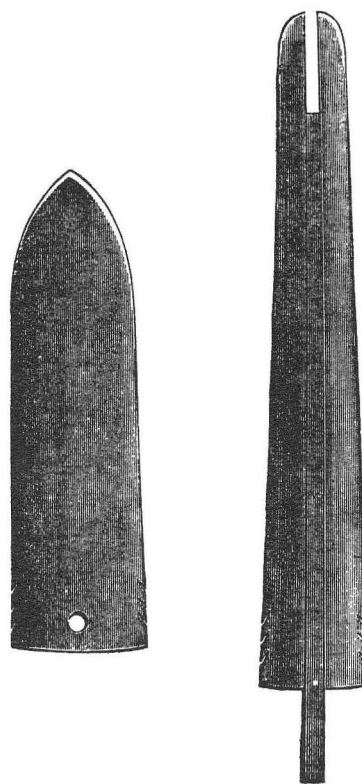
About this same time and in the same general area additional problems arose in connection with the Anglo-Americans. As early as 1770 the English were trading with the Indians who came in contact with the Spanish on their northern and eastern frontiers, and, like the French, had no reservations about trading firearms with the Indians. However, the Spanish government's policy against any and all outside trade with foreigners was frequently enforced, and Santa Fe seems not to have been visited by any but Spanish traders during the latter half of the 18th century.

One of the first visits to Santa Fe by a citizen of the United States occurred as the result of an unintentional violation of the Spanish territorial border by a U. S. military expedition under the command of Captain Zebulon Pike, in 1806. Pike was exploring the southern boundary of the Louisiana Purchase and was caught by a severe winter near the headwaters of the Arkansas River, at that time recognized as the northern boundary between the United States and Mexico. Captured after constructing a stockade on the Conejos river in Spanish Territory, Pike was held prisoner and later returned to U. S. Territory via the Gulf coast.

While he was in Santa Fe, Pike met another American, named Pursley, or Purcell, who had journeyed to New Mexico in search of trade in 1805 and had decided to settle there. Baptiste La Lande, also from the States, had preceeded Pursley to Santa Fe by only a year, but little is known of either man and neither did anything to encourage a permanent trade arrangement. Nor was it until after Pike's visit that commercially-minded Americans began to take a serious interest in the possibilities of trade with New Mexico, seeing Santa Fe as the terminus of a trade route across the plains from St. Louis, over which furs, hides and Spanish gold and silver could be carried in exchange for cheaply-manufactured American goods. Of course the possibility of trading with the Indians between Missouri and New Mexico was not overlooked, and an uncertain commerce developed with

those tribes or groups that could be met along the way who did not prove to be unfriendly.

It should be remembered that the city of Santa Fe at the beginning of the 19th century was the capitol of a very large province governed by a very few Spaniards and inhabited by a considerable number of Indians who were, as often as not, hostile. A thousand miles west of the Mississippi River, Santa Fe was an isolated spot, and with the exception of a few scattered settlements in Texas the closest Spanish

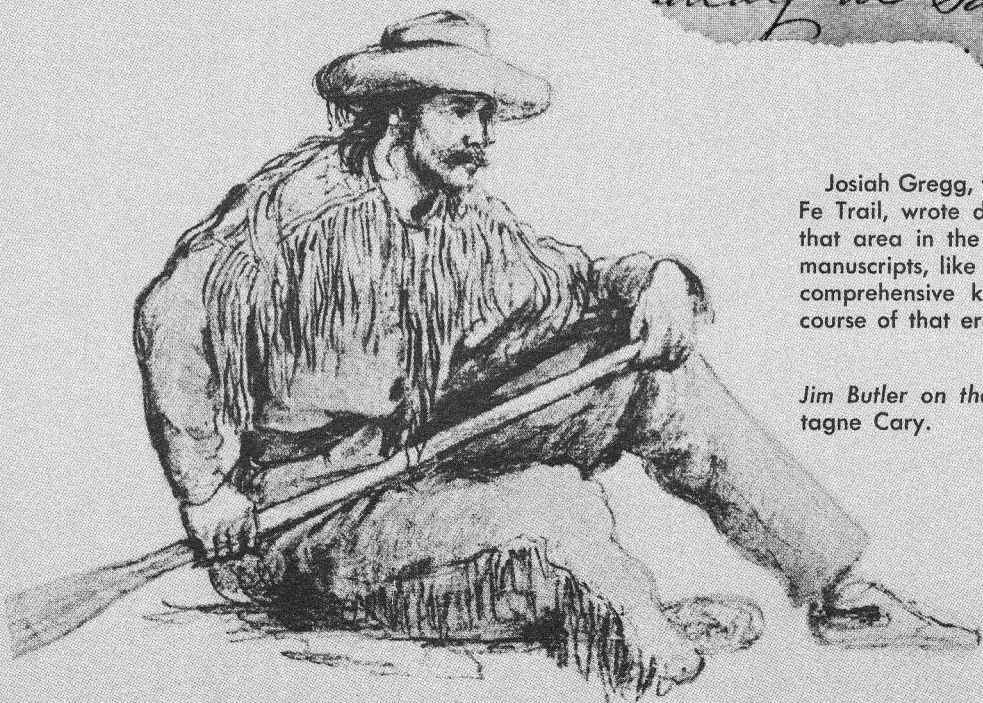


The use of board stretchers was the most popular method of drying small animal skins because they kept the proper shape of the skins and packed better than those stretched on bows or hoops. The mink or martin stretcher (right) was a piece of bass wood, two feet, three inches long. Larger sizes were required for larger animals such as the otter or wolf. A modification of this kind of stretcher was the muskrat stretcher (left). (*The Trapper's Guide*, S. Newhouse, Sixth edition. Mason, Baker and Pratt, New York: 1874)

Journal, &c. Continued.

Santa Fe, Feb. 25, 1840. — Having
adjusted my business in Santa Fe, our
wagons left today for the U.S. with
intention of returning down the Rio Col-
orado, or Canadian Fork of Arkansas,
in the vicinity of the route we came,
although we will no doubt frequently
be at some distance from our ^{former} trail,
as we will endeavour to straighten the
route.

I bought from Chihuahua 21 wagons,
arriving in Santa Fe, making
our weathered



Josiah Gregg, the most notable trader of the Santa Fe Trail, wrote descriptive journals and accounts of that area in the 1840's. Pages of his journals and manuscripts, like the excerpt above, have given us a comprehensive knowledge of the trade and inter-course of that era.

Jim Butler on the Arkansas,
William De La Montagne Cary.

William De La Montagne Cary.

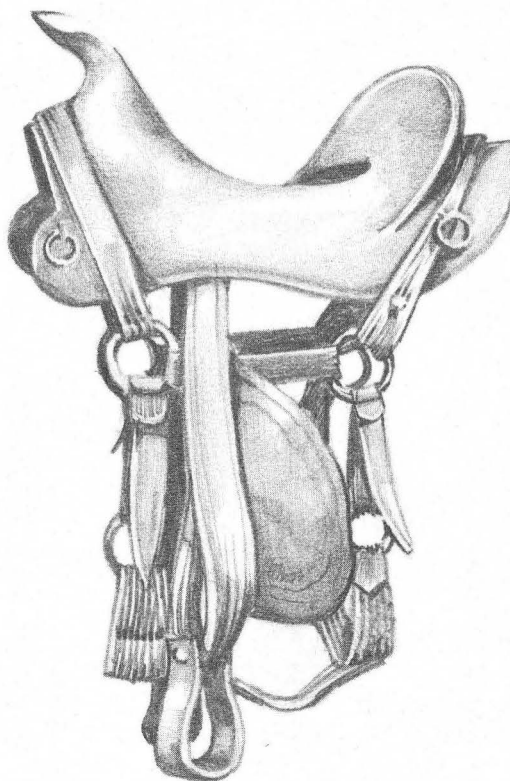
town of any consequence was El Paso, then called El Paso del Norte, 320 miles to the south. Most of the New Mexicans were farmers, sheep herders or soldiers, there were very few artisans among them, and they suffered from a shortage of manufactured goods. Even the best homes had little in the way of furniture, which continued to be too expensive an item to import even after trade with the United States was established. The most plentiful of the locally-manufactured items was home-spun woolen cloth, but it was not a desirable material. As a result manufactured textiles from the East came to be much in demand when trade with the Anglo-Americans was put into effect.

Typical of the rest of the Anglo-American West, the fur trappers and traders were the first to establish commercial contacts with this region, before the establishment of a regular trade was realized in 1821 following Mexican independence from Spain and the subsequent opening of Santa Fe to trade. There was some trouble at a later time with Mexicans who suspected the Santa Fe traders of being Texas spies, but most of the problems between 1821 and the beginning of the Mexican War in 1847 concerned tariff rates. Prior to 1821 Piere Chouteau and Jules DeMun had trapped over most of the region of Colorado including the Spanish portion of that territory, but their furs had been seized and they had been ordered out of Spanish country. Nevertheless, by 1830 the fur trade in the Southwest was established and several parties had made their way from New Mexico to the Colorado River, and even as far as California on trapping expeditions.

The man who is given the credit for being "the father of the Santa Fe Trail" is William Becknell, although he didn't make his first trip to Santa Fe until 1821 and soon after abandoned the trade for fur trapping. Yet his claim to the title rests with the fact that he was the first man to introduce wagons to the trail, which were used from that time until the coming of the railroad in 1880 to haul merchandise and freight from Kansas City to Santa Fe.

In the establishment of any trade over a long distance, there are four essential requirements that must be met: a marketable product, a desirable medium of exchange, the equipment involved in the transportation of the product to the purchaser, and finally, the necessary men willing and able to undergo the dangers and hardships of a long and difficult trail across foreign territory.

At the outset of trade with New Mexico the precise conditions of trade in North America had not been met before. The goods transported along the Santa Fe Trail were not altogether the same as those which Europeans previously had been accustomed to carry over vast land distances, and new means of transportation had to be devised or developed to fit



A properly organized and equipped train of pack animals could move over mountains and broken terrain in a reasonable amount of comfort, whereas cumbersome wagons could not. The driver's saddle above was especially designed to be used with mule trains and was the standard stock type with a horn and a rawhide covering applied while wet and drawn tight by contraction when dried.

the special conditions of the Santa Fe traffic. With regard to trade items, the Indians desired hard goods such as weapons, powder, lead, beads, knives mirrors and serviceable textiles in one form or another which they exchanged for furs, hides, and occasionally jerked meat or bison tongues or other such items requiring more care and experience in handling. Articles of primary interest to the Spaniards were such things as cloth, iron utensils and any trinkets that they might

be able to afford; and the chance for a rapid and profitable transaction in these articles occurred when the quantity of goods was limited and no traders had arrived for some time. Much of the American merchandise went south into Old Mexico, for the New Mexicans had little with which to trade except horses, mules and hides; most of the gold and silver brought back to Missouri by the traders came from the interior of Old Mexico.

As this Santa Fe commerce developed, more adaptable breeds of pack animals had to be found, animals selected primarily for their stamina or qualities of endurance. The animal which finally met all the rigorous requirements of the trail was the common pack mule, which soon became as important an item of trade as anything which it carried. Many a "Missouri Mule" originated in the Spanish Southwest, and Josiah Gregg, most well-known of the Santa Fe traders, had much to say about mules in his accounts speaking in the light of long familiarity and experience:

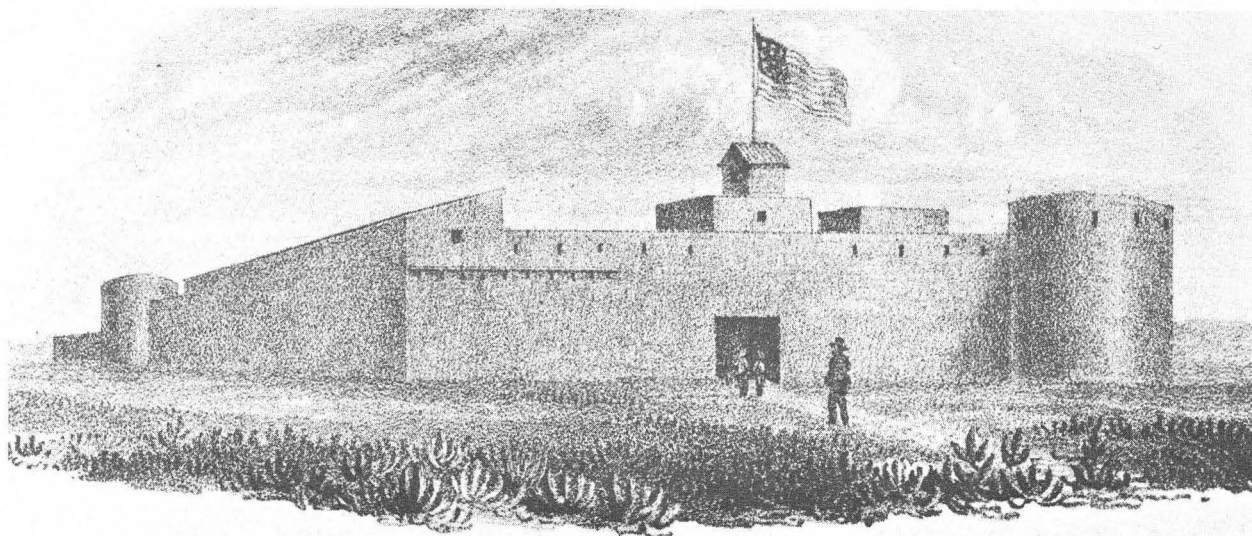
"The little attention paid to the breeding of horses in New Mexico may perhaps be accounted for from the fact that, until lately, when the continued depredations of the hostile Indians discouraged them from their favorite pursuit, the people of the country had bestowed all their care in the raising of *mules*. This animal is in fact to the Mexican, what the camel has always been to the Arab—invaluable for the transportation of freight over sandy deserts and mountainous roads, where no other means of conveyance could be used to such advantage. These mules will travel for hundreds of miles with a load of the most bulky and unwieldy articles, weighing frequently three or four hundred pounds.

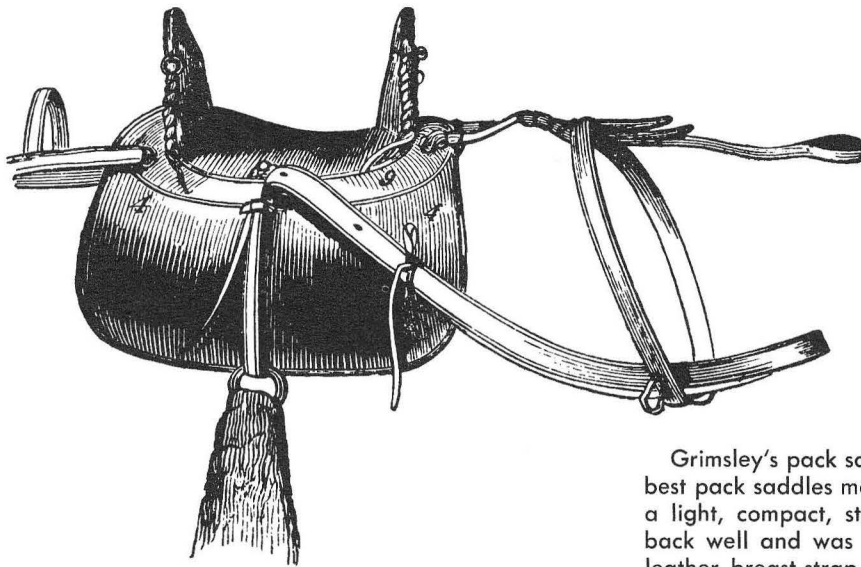
"The *Aparejo* (or pack-saddle, if it can be so styled), is a large pad, consisting of a leathern case stuffed with hay, which covers the back of the mule

and extends half way down on both sides. This is secured with a wide sea-grass bandage, with which the poor brute is so tightly laced as to reduce the middle of its body to half its natural size. During the operation of lacing, the corseted quadruped stands trembling in perfect agony, not an inapt emblem of some fashionable exquisites who are to be met with lounging on tip-toe, in all the principal thoroughfares of large cities.

"The muleteers contend that a tightly laced beast, will travel, or at least support burdens with greater ease; and though they carry this to an extreme, still we can hardly doubt that a reasonable tension supports and braces the muscles. It is necessary too for the *aparejo* to be firmly bound on to prevent its slipping and chafing the mule's back; indeed, with all these precautions, the back, withers and sides of the poor brutes are often horribly mangled—so much so that I have seen the rib-bones bare, from day to day, while carrying a usual load of three hundred pounds! The *aparejo* is also furnished with a huge crupper, which often lacerates the tail most shockingly. It is this packing that leaves most of the lasting cicatrices and marks so common upon Mexican mules.

Bent's Old Fort on the north bank of the Arkansas was built about the same time Captain Becknell was opening the Santa Fe Trail. Charles and William Bent and their two younger brothers had built the fort in order to trade with the Indians and Mexicans. This became the most famous trading post of the southwest and for a long time was the only building on the trail from Missouri to the mountains. Lithograph by Lt. J. J. Abert, from Message From The President of the United States to the 29th Congress, 1846.





Grimsley's pack saddle was regarded as one of the best pack saddles made. It was open at the top, with a light, compact, strong tree, which fit the animal's back well and was covered with rawhide. It had a leather breast-strap, breeching, and lash-strap, with a broad hair girth fastened in the Mexican fashion. (*The Prairie Traveler, A Hand-Book for Overland Expeditions*, by Randolph B. Marcy, edited by Richard F. Burton, F. R. G. S. Trubner and Co., London: 1863)

"The *carga*, if a single package, is laid across the mule's back, but when composed of two, they are placed lengthwise, side by side; and being coupled with a cord they are bound upon the *aparejo* with a long rope of sea-grass or raw-hide, which is so skillfully and tensely twined about the packages as effectually to secure them upon the animal. The mule is at first so tightly bound that it seems scarcely able to move; but the weight of the pack soon settles the *aparejo*, and so loosens the girths and cords as frequently to render it necessary to tighten them again soon after getting under way. It keeps most of the muleteers actively employed during the day, to maintain the packs in condition; for they often lose their balance and sometimes fall off. This is done without detaining the *atajo* (drove of packmules), the rest of which travels on while one is stopped to adjust its disordered pack. Indeed it is apt to occasion much trouble to stop a heavily laden *atajo*; for, if allowed a moment's rest, the mules are inclined to lie down, when it is with much difficulty they can rise again with their loads. In their efforts to do so they sometimes so strain their loins as to injure them ever after.

"The day's travel is made without a nooning respite; for the consequent unloading and reloading would consume too much time; and as a heavily-packed *atajo* should rarely continue *enroute* more than five or six hours, the *jornada de recua* (day's journey of a pack-drove) is usually but twelve or fifteen miles.

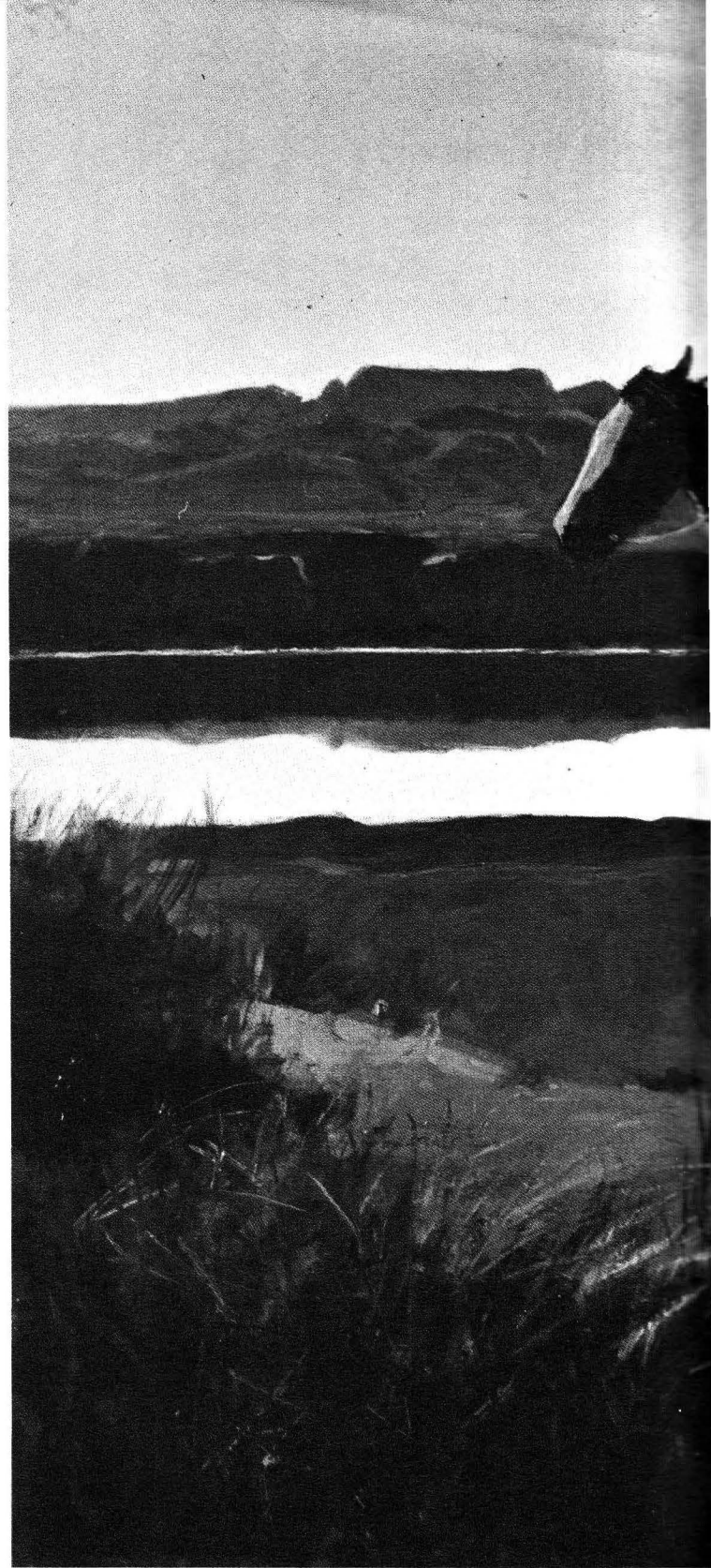
"It is truly remarkable to observe with what dexterity and skills the *Arrieros*, or muleteers, harness and adjust the packs of merchandise upon their beasts. Half a dozen usually suffice for forty or fifty miles.

Two men are always engaged at a time in the dispatch of each animal, and rarely occupy five minutes in the complete adjustment of his *aparejo* and *carga*. In this operation they frequently demonstrate a wonderful degree of skill in the application of their strength. A single man will often seize a package, which, on a 'dead lift,' he could hardly have raised from the ground, and making a fulcrum of his knees and a lever of his arms and body, throw it upon the mule's back with as much apparent ease as if the effort cost him but little exertion. At stopping-places the task of unpacking is executed with still greater expedition. The packages are piled in a row upon the ground, and in case of rain the *aparejos* are laid upon them, over which is stretched a covering of *mantas de guangoche* (sheets of sea-grass texture), which protects the goods against the severest storms; a ditch also being cut around the pile, to prevent the water from running underneath. In this way, freights are carried from point to point, and over the most rugged mountain passes at a much cheaper rate than foreigners can transport their merchandise in wagons, even through a level country. The cheapness of this mode of transportation arises from the very low wages paid to the *arrieros*, and the little expense incurred to feed both them and the mules. The salary of the muleteer ranges from two to five dollars per month; and as their food seldom consists of anything else except corn and *frijoles*, it can be procured at very little cost. When the *arrieros* get any meat at all, it is generally at their own expense.

"An *atajo* is conducted in a very systematic manner, each *arriero* having his appropriate sphere of action

allotted to him. They have also their regulations and technicalities, which, if not as numerous, are about as unintelligible to the uninitiated as sailors' terms. One person, called the *savanero*, has the charge of the mules at night, which are all turned loose without tether or hopple, with the *mulera* or bell-mare, to prevent them from straying abroad. Although the attachment of the mules to *mulera* appears very great, it seems to be about as much for the bell as for the animal. What the queen-bee is to a hive, so is the *mulera* to an *atajo*. No matter what may be the temper of a mule, it can seldom be driven away from her; and if she happen to be taken from among her associates, the latter immediately become depressed and melancholy, and ramble and whinny in every direction, as if they were completely lost. In addition to preparing food for the party, it is the office of the *madre* (or mother, as the cook of the company is facetiously called) to lead the *mulera* ahead, during the journey, after which the whole pack follows in orderly procession.

"The muleteers as well as the *vaqueros* (cow-herds), are generally mounted upon swift and well-trained horses, and in their management of the animals will often perform many surprising feats, which would grace an equestrian circus in any country, such, for instance, as picking up a dollar from the ground at every pass with the horse at full gallop. But the



Black Squirrel, William De La Montagne Cary.



Kit Carson, frontiersman, trapper, scout, guide and Indian fighter, joined his first caravan across the plains at the age of 17. Known for his coolness and exhibition of nerve in the presence of danger and for his ability with a rifle, he was named "Nestor of the

Rocky Mountains." Since he was matchless as an Indian fighter, President Polk appointed him Colonel in the Army where he held council with many Indian Tribes which helped to keep peace on the Santa Fe Trail. "Carson's Men" above is by Charles Russell.

greatest display of skill and agility consists of their dextrous use of the *lazo* or *lareat*, which is usually made of horse-hair, or sea-grass tightly twisted together, with a convenient noose at one end. Their aim is always more sure when the animal to be caught is running at full speed, for then it has not time to dodge the *lareat*. As soon as the noose is cast, the *lazador* fetches the end of his *lazo* a turn round the high pommel of his saddle, and by a quick manoeuvre the wildest horse is brought up to a stand or topsy-turvy at his pleasure. By this process, the head of the animal is turned toward his subduer, who, in order to obtain the mastery over him more completely, seldom fails to throw a bozal (or half-hitch, as boatmen would say) around the nose, though at full rope's length." (from *Commerce of the Prairies* by Johiah Gregg, 1844, Vol. I, pp 180-84).

There is no existing record to show how the Mallet brothers transported their trade goods to New Mexico in the 18th century, nor even what those goods were; but from a single mention in their brief accounts it is known that on their way back to Louisiana they traded for horses with the Indians.

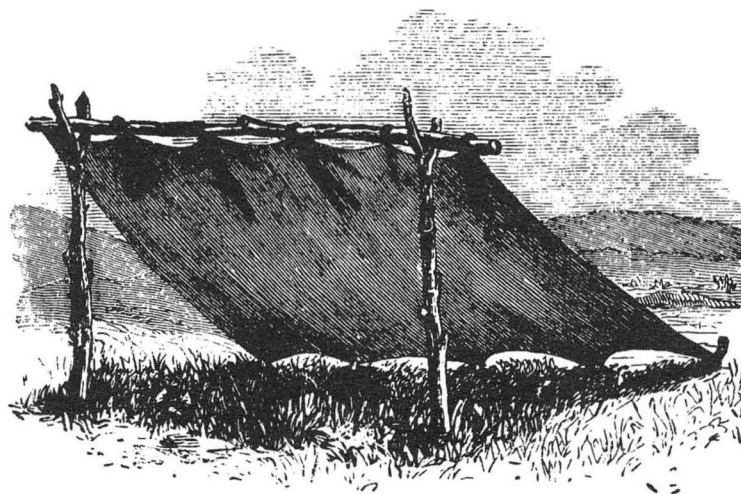
However the type of trade goods brought to New Mexico by Jean Chaperio and Luis Foissy from Canada in 1752 is known, for they were arrested at the Pueblo de los Pecos, sent to Chihuahua and thence to Madrid to stand trial, and all their goods were con-

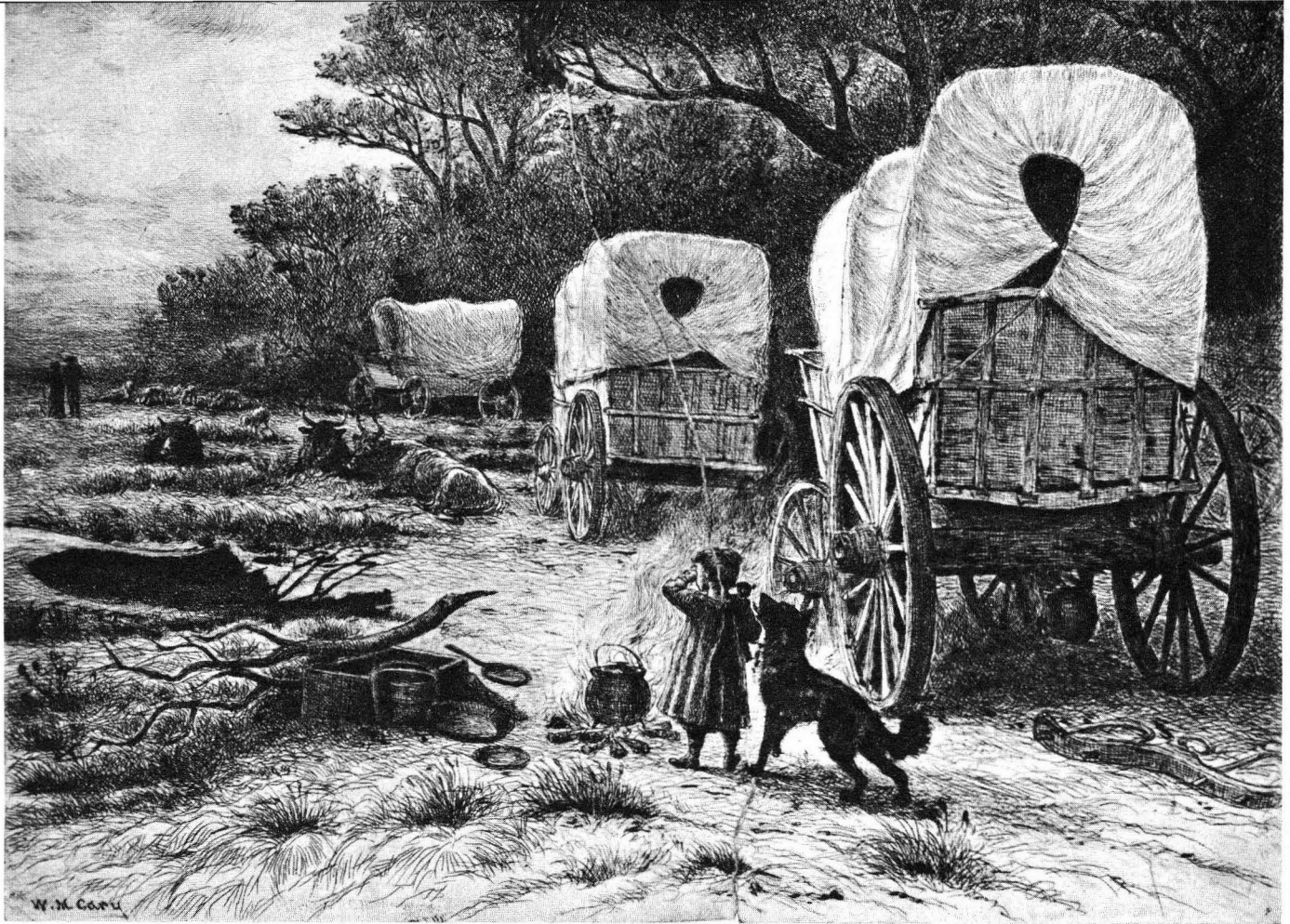
Since it was not practical or convenient to transport tents when traveling with pack animals, shelter had to be made with as much of nature's materials as possible. A half-faced camp, below, was relatively simple to erect (made of rawhide, sticks, and tied with buckskin strings) and provided ample protection for 4 or 5 men.

fiscated and sold at auction to pay the expense of their unwilling trip to Spain. The following is a partial list of these items, taken from A. B. Thomas' *The Plains Indians and New Mexico*, Vol. XI, of a series of Coronado Cuarto Centennial publications from the University of New Mexico Press:

"List of goods which I wish to take to Spain

No. 1		
1	blanket	10
1	piece of linen	120
12	shirts of cambric at 9 lbs.	108
10	linen shirts at 6 lbs.	60
3	pairs of damask shoes at 12	36
4	pairs of the same of beaver at 12 lbs.	48
12	pairs of fine stockings, three thread, 6 lbs. 10	78
24	caps of wool, 5 lbs., 10	132
4	pairs of large stockings of material resembling wool, 6 lbs.	34
6	of the same, medium quality, at 5 lbs.	30
45½	ells of linen cloth at 40 lbs.	91
No. 2		
1	blanket	10
1	piece of linen	120
14	heavy silk, medium-grade handkerchiefs at 4 lbs.	56
4	of the same, light, light weight, at 4 lbs.	16
18	of the same, medium, at 3 lbs.	54
45	of the same, small, at 40 lbs.	90
4	pairs of women's gloves at 40 lbs.	8
5	pairs of silk stockings for women at 12 lbs.	
5	pairs of silk stockings for women at 12 lbs.	60
3	pairs of stockings, women's material resembling wool, at 5 lbs.	15
8	of the same, four thread, for women, at 5 lbs.	40





Pen and ink studies by William De La Montagne Cary.

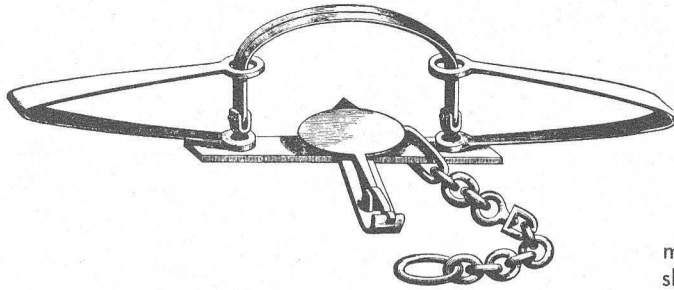
18	of the same, three thread,	
	for men, at 6 lbs.	108
1	pound of silk for sewing	48
1/2	pound of cotton for candle wicks	
	at 7 lbs.	10
2	pieces of narrow ribbon at 20 lbs.	40
1	pair of beaver shoes	12
12	fine thimbles	2
2	pairs of silk stockings for men	40
12	thimbles, common grade	2

744"

(Coronado Cuarto Centennial publications, 1940, Vol. XI, P. 91)

Of the several accounts of the early history of New Mexico written by Spaniards in the 19th century, that of Don Jose Augustin de Esendero, which itself includes the earlier accounts of Antonio Barreiro and Don Bantista Pino, has been translated by H. B. Carroll and J. Villasana Haggart for publication in Volume XI of the Quivera Society's series of New Mexican history. Pino's account, written in 1821, is too early to mention the Anglo-American caravans which began crossing the plains from Missouri a decade later, and he writes of the trade goods and the transportation problems involved in the journey from Chihuahua to Santa Fe:



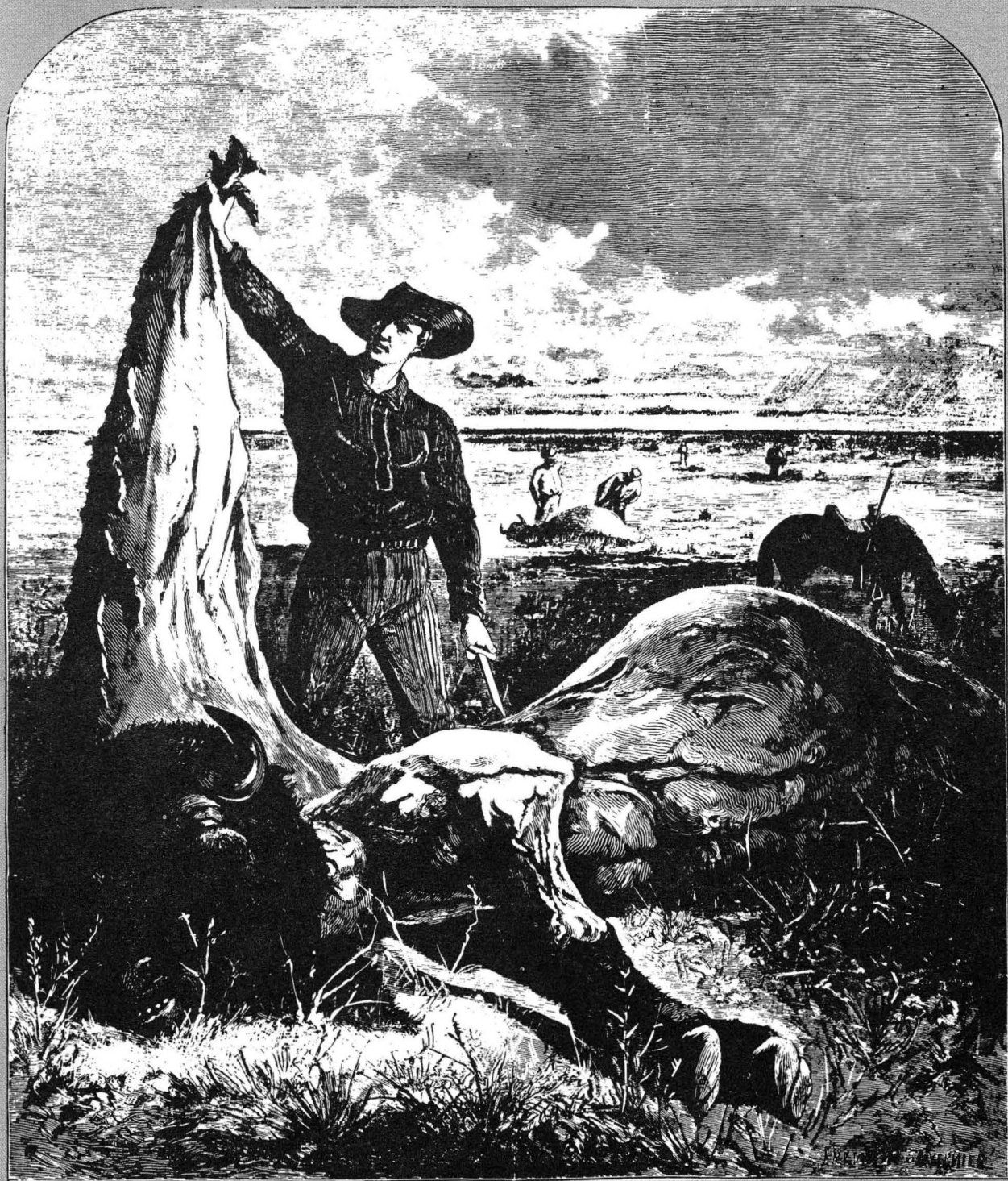


The steel trap is the surest and most economical method of capturing fur-bearing animals. A trap should have a strong tempered spring, rounded jaws, and the pan should not be too large nor the teeth too sharp. This bear trap made by Newhouse has jaws that spread sixteen inches. Each spring weighs six pounds and the total weight of the trap is 42 pounds. It was also used for moose or grizzly bear. (*The Trapper's Guide*, S. Newhouse, Sixth edition. Mason, Baker and Pratt, New York: 1874)



Experienced trappers would often make temporary or permanent shanties in the region of their operations. The home shanty, above, is made of logs joined by notches and the crevices are filled with moss or

clay. A crude fire place of stone was made at one end. (*The Trapper's Guide*, S. Newhouse, Sixth edition. Mason, Baker and Pratt, New York: 1874)



SLAUGHTERED FOR THE HIDE, Jules Tavernier.

"Experience has taught the traders and merchants of New Mexico that ordinary precautions are not sufficient to enable them to cross without danger the distance of forty days' journey over a wilderness to the nearest province, that of Chihuahua. It has been necessary to arrange this extremely perilous trip in the following manner: at a distance of forty-three leagues from the capital, at a place known as Joya de Sevilla, the interested parties have to assemble by the latter part of November with their merchandise, firearms, munitions, arrows, shields, horses, etc. When a number of 500 or more are ready, everything is inspected, and assignments are made for alternating center, vanguard, and rear guards for the trip; assignments are also made for those who are to take care of the *caballada*, those who must serve as sentries (usually over 100), and those who, on dark nights, are to listen for footsteps by putting their ear to the ground and thus to prevent the surprise attacks which have often occurred. As to the supplies, they need more than 600 fanegas of wheat flour made into bread, which they call biscuits. They take more than 100 beeves made into *gigote* (ground meat), 150 fanegas of corn (which they call pinole), a corresponding amount of beans, chick-peas, some mutton; also a large number of barrels of water to use in the desert, such as in the one known as the Jornada del Muerto, which extends more than thirty leagues without water. Some years all of these preparations have not been sufficient to insure safety from the craftiness of the wild Indians." (Quivera Soc., 1942, Vol. XI, p. 106-107)

In Baneiro's account, taken from the same volume, he comments that by 1839, New Mexico was in a better position to receive needed trade items, and mentions trade as existing with the interior of Mexico, with neighboring states and with "Anglo-America," which by this time consisted of regularly scheduled caravans of about 100 wagons leaving Missouri in the spring and arriving in Santa Fe in July.

"In July, as I said before, these caravans arrive in Santa Fe. At this time of year the capitol presents an interesting and agreeable aspect. Clothing stores are open everywhere. A large number of persons can be seen who have come to this fair from El Paso del Norte, from Sonora, and from all the settlements of the territory. The Anglo-American merchants, scattered throughout the neighboring states during the year, return at this time to the capital, and one may see flourishing a truly exciting trade. Merchandise becomes extremely cheap. Many of the traders, in order to return to the United States in August, burn their merchandise, and one can purchase it at a bargain. Merchandise is sold wholesale at an increase of barely eighty, ninety, or one hundred per cent over Philadelphia or Saint Louis prices. Sometimes it is even sold at only a fifty per cent increase. These senseless sales have ruined many merchants. The

company which came out in 1830 sustained an estimated loss of thirty to forty thousand pesos.

"In the month of August, the caravans set out on their return trip; only those merchants remain who are interested in hunting beaver, great numbers of which are exported.

"Since exports of beaver are not taxed by the national government, American merchants try to take back on their return trip, instead of money, beaver skins. Thus they gain two advantages: that of not having to pay duty on the export of money, and that of taking back to their country an article which is of great value there, and on which there is no duty in Mexico.

"These caravans originated in the year 1821 when a few adventurers first began to come in. Gradually, regular companies of men began to be organized, and, recently, rich and powerful merchants have come in with large-scale enterprises, bringing with them a new order of things. To gauge the development of this type of commerce, one may examine the enclosed report (in supplement to chapter IX). The considerable annual increase of *alcabala* will serve to measure this branch of commerce.

"Commerce carried on by New Mexico with neighboring states also deserves attention. Sonora and Chihuahua are well supplied with foreign articles re-exported from New Mexico. From this commerce arises the beneficial result of a considerable circulation of money drawn from large amounts paid in by Anglo-American merchants in the form of *alcabala* and spent in the purchase of the necessities of life.

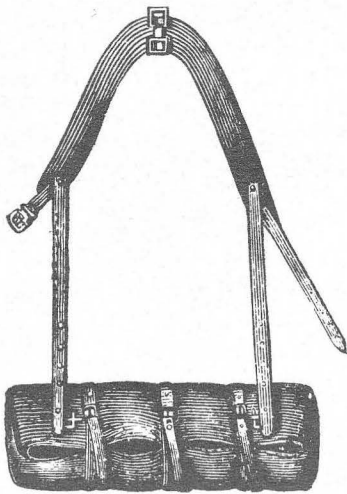
"New Mexicans also carry on a brisk commerce with neighboring states. Annually they take out large numbers of sheep, hides, piñones, coarse woolen cloth, tobacco, and other articles which they sell at good prices. There are some men who have contracts in Durango to deliver annually fifteen thousand sheep which, delivered, bring nine reales or more each. Sheep trading is monopolized by a small number of men. Consequently, it must not be considered as beneficial as commerce in hides, coarse woolen cloth, etc. The latter type of commerce is distributed among all classes of society of New Mexico, especially among the middle and lowest classes. The eagerness displayed by New Mexicans to carry on trade with neighboring states is truly surprising. In October, especially, one may see a multitude of people going out for that purpose, scattering in all directions: some go to Chihuahua; some go to Pitec or Guaymas; some even go to the fairs of Aguascalientes or San Juan; some go to Durango; and some even go to California.

"Interior commerce of the country is regular, and the means most generally used to carry it on is that of exchange. Sheep are extremely valuable, even more so than money, for with them one may purchase whatever one may wish. This type of trade is generally carried on by credit extended from one year



Camp furniture was of a portable nature like these chairs. The bottom chair is made of sticks fastened by buckskin or rawhide. The other is a very comfortable seat made from a barrel, and filled with grass. (*The Prairie Traveler, A Hand-Book for Overland Expeditions*, by Randolph B. Marcy, edited by Richard F. Burton, F. R. G. S., Trubner and Co., London: 1863)

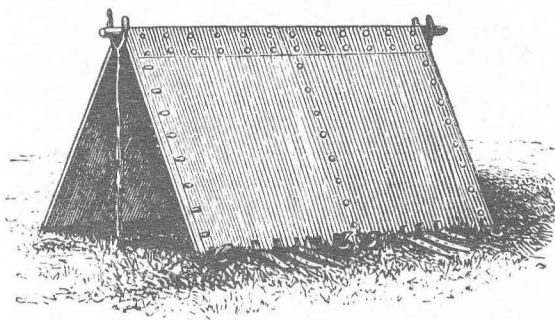
The tent knapsack, below, had the dual purpose of a tent and a waterproof knapsack in which clothing could be kept. The tent was three and one-half feet tall and weighed three pounds. Two or more of these could be fastened together to form a larger tent. (*The Prairie Traveler, A Hand-Book for Overland Expeditions*, by Randolph B. Marcy, edited by Richard F. Burton, F. R. G. S., Trubner and Co., London: 1863)

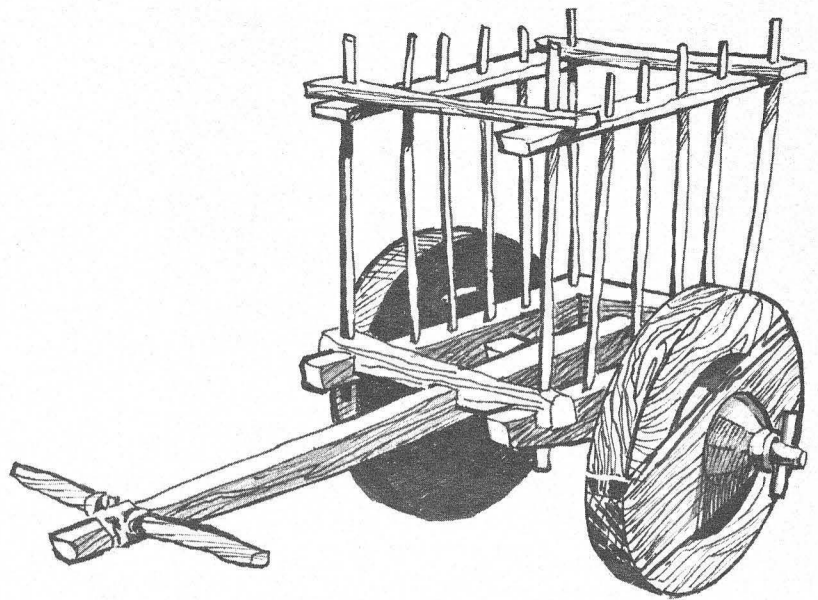


to the next and even over a longer period of time. I have already mentioned the low price on foreign articles, but domestic articles, such as chocolate, rice, sugar, almond oil, and others of this nature, are extremely high; frequently they are scarce. One must add also that articles brought to this territory are of the lowest quality."

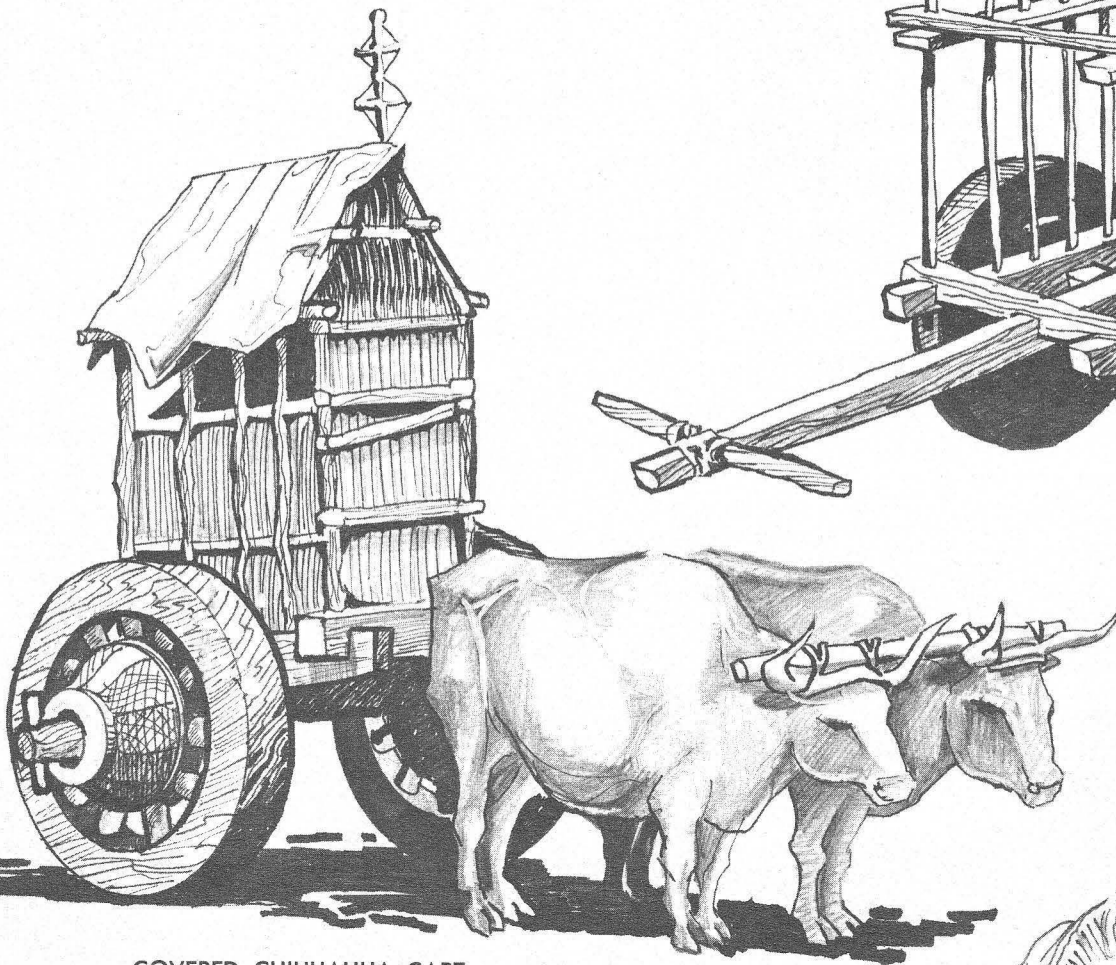
Regarding trade with the Indians, he says:

"It is to be noted that vermilion, knives, biscuit, bread baked in ovens, gunpowder, awls, and other trifles purchase most valuable furs which may be sold at great profit, and from which great benefits might be derived if the country were more enlightened. If there were sufficient demand for exportation of these valuable and abundant pelts, which can be secured at very little cost, enough of them could be obtained to load entire mule trains. What a wide field is open to industry in Mexico! What germs of prosperity are seen everywhere! Even those remote places occupied by wild Indians offer us rich products with which we are as yet unfamiliar. Those rivers within its territory which are overpopulated with valuable beaver!



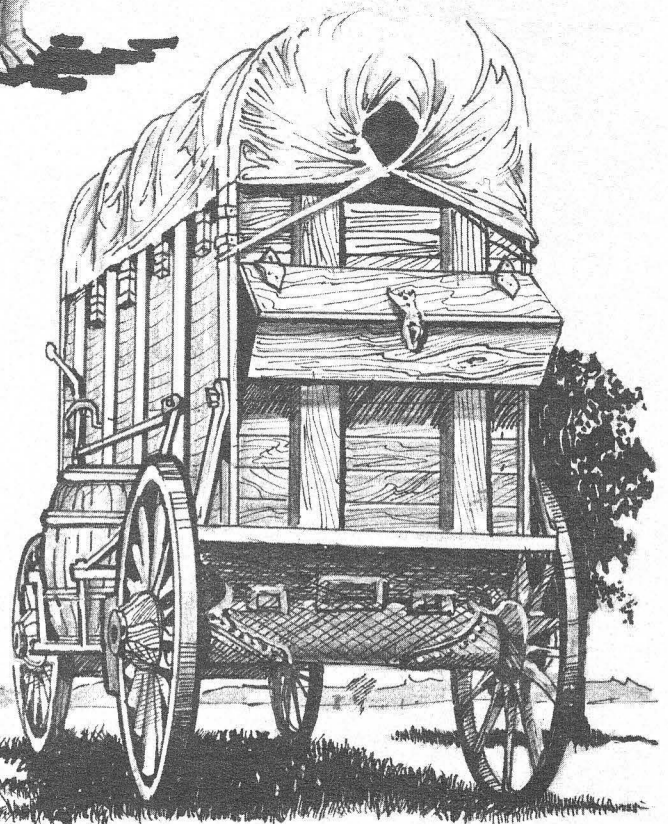


MEXICAN OX CART

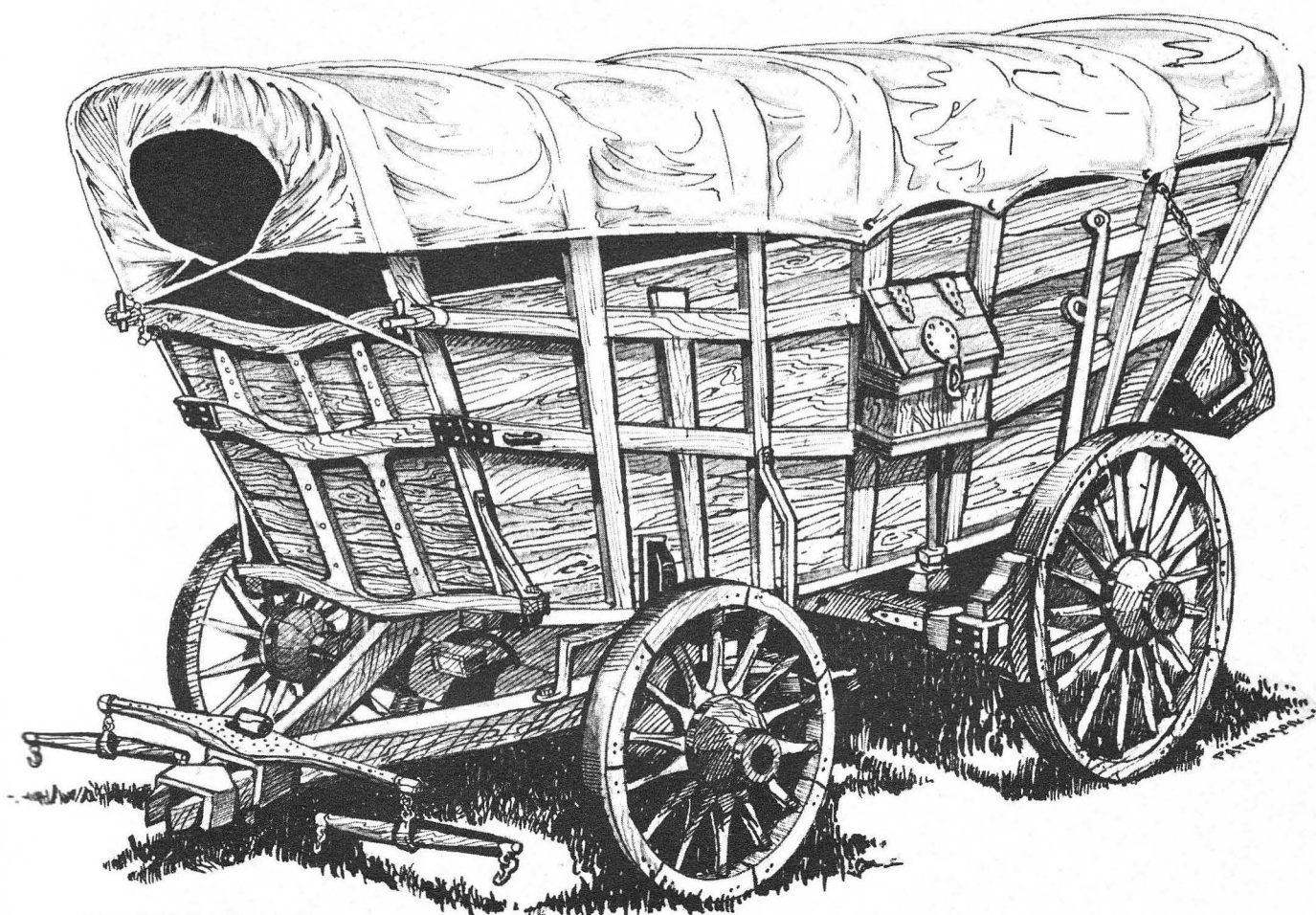


COVERED CHIHUAHUA CART

William Becknell introduced wheeled vehicles on the Santa Fe Trail but not to the Santa Fe trade. For hundreds of years goods had been brought from Old Mexico in carretas two-wheeled, ox-drawn vehicles made almost entirely of wood—wheels and all. The wagons which were brought from Missouri and used on the trail were sometimes purchased by the Mexicans and the Santa Fe traders themselves who frequently carried their trade on into Old Mexico. The designs changed over the years through innovation or necessity. The giant freight wagons for instance, were designed to overcome duty charges on the number of wagons rather than quantity of goods.



HEAVY FREIGHT WAGON

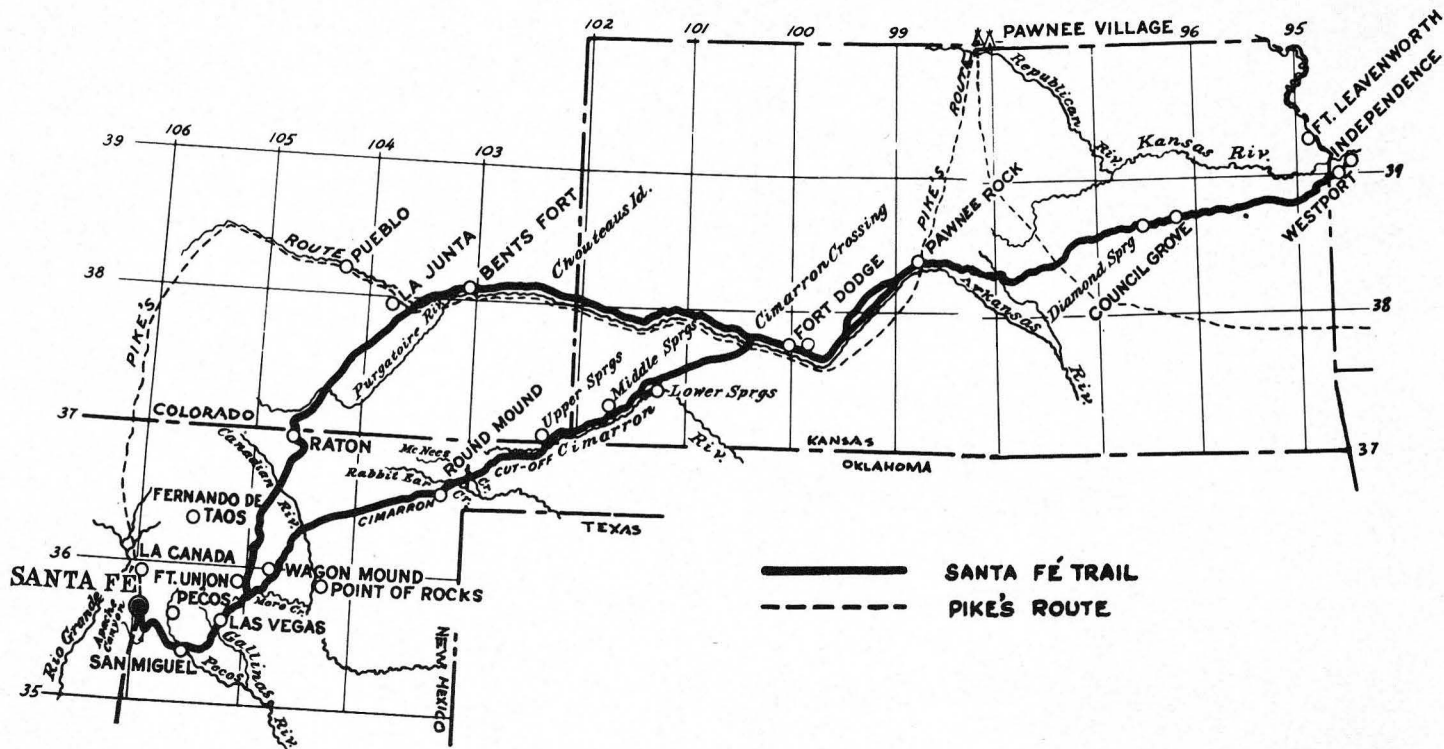


CONESTOGA WAGON

... The moderate climate which offers its powerful influence to vegetation and to the raising of stock! Those luxuriant sierras and those bright blocks of marble which seem to be outlining sketches of magnificent cities are certainly powerful stimuli that should make us think seriously of developing the elements of true happiness which we have at hand! Ambitious revolutionary men, infernal genii of discord, cast your eyes but once over your country, and, impelled by the force of furious remorse, you will run and bury yourselves forever in hell! You shall see that this soil, generously endowed by the loving hand of Providence, is inviting Mexicans with its riches and variety of products which are not enjoyed nor even known because of your criminal and perverse designs!" (Quivera Society, 1942, Vol IX, pp 108-111)

De Escudera, writing his account in 1849, could look reflectively upon the more romantic, past era of the Santa Fe trade, and mentions Josiah Gregg and other later and more familiar aspects of commerce: for by 1849 the Mexican War had been fought and won by the Anglo-Americans, New Mexico was a newly-annexed territory of the United States, and the Santa Fe Trail had become a much traveled highway connecting the Mississippi Valley with the American Southwest. ■

Materials for this issue of *American Scene* compiled, written and prepared by Daniel M. McPike and David C. Hunt.



In preparing this brief review of the history of the Santa Fe trade the Gilcrease Institute is indebted to the many journalists, writers and later collectors and editors of the several manuscripts and publications contained in its historical archives. The following is a list of credits to the more recent published sources from which much of the foregoing material contained in this article was derived, and a special word of appreciation is due to Mr. Maurice de Vinna, who translated from the French the accounts of the Mallet brothers contained in The Works of Pierre Margry.

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