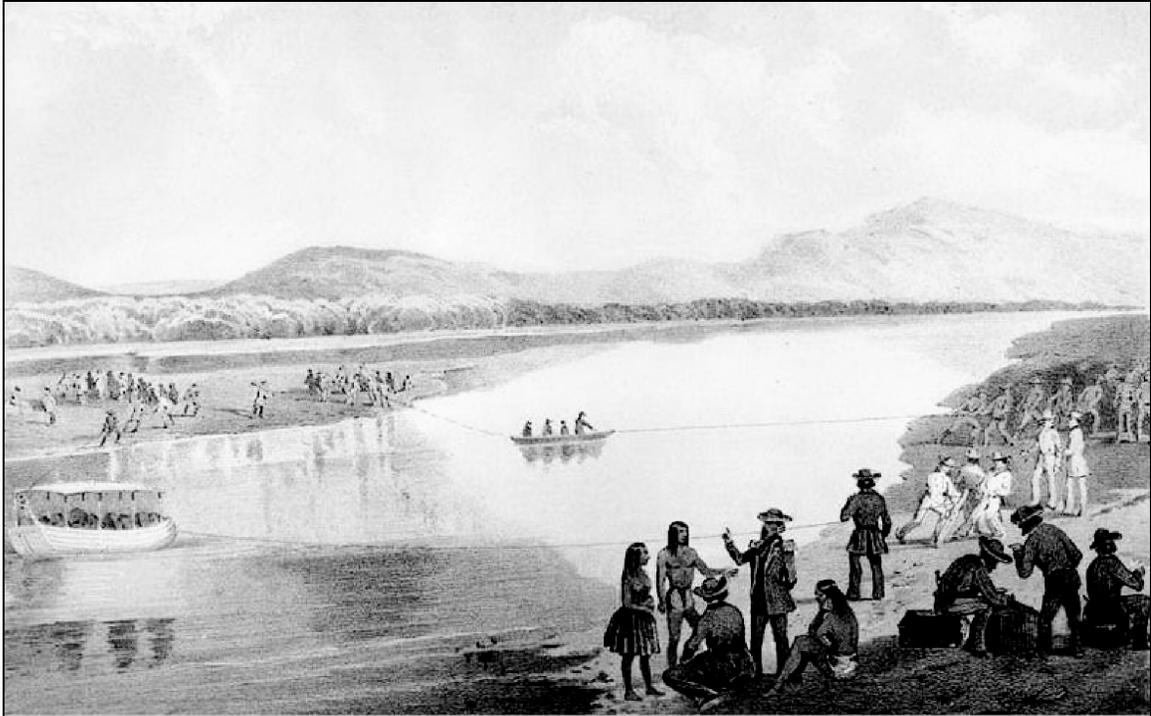


Lieutenant Coutts named Camp Salvation when he first saw the place in September when escorting Lt. Whipple with the Boundary Commission (Coutts 1849:9-24; Aldrich 1849:11-17). Whipple recorded, “The grass here is good, and so abundant that we will be enabled to wait here for our remaining teams and recreate the weary animals. We are now in the midst of the desert and at the recruiting place for all travelers. The white tents of the numerous emigrants gave the place quite the air of a village. The grass upon the plane is short, green and tender. Upon the banks of the stream it grows tall and thick” (Whipple 1849:9-24). Another six miles beyond Emigrant Camp was Big Lake, a body of water about half a mile in length and a half-mile wide (Evans 1849:9-16). The “miraculous” oasis of the New River lasted for two years. On June 10, 1851, Major Heintzelman noted at Big Lake that “the water is drying up so rapidly at all these Lagunas, and I fear in a few months there will be none” (White 1975). On June 6, 1852 James Bartlett recorded that he had found the New River a dry “ravine or arroyo some twenty or thirty feet wide, and about ten feet below the surface of the desert” (Bartlett 1854).

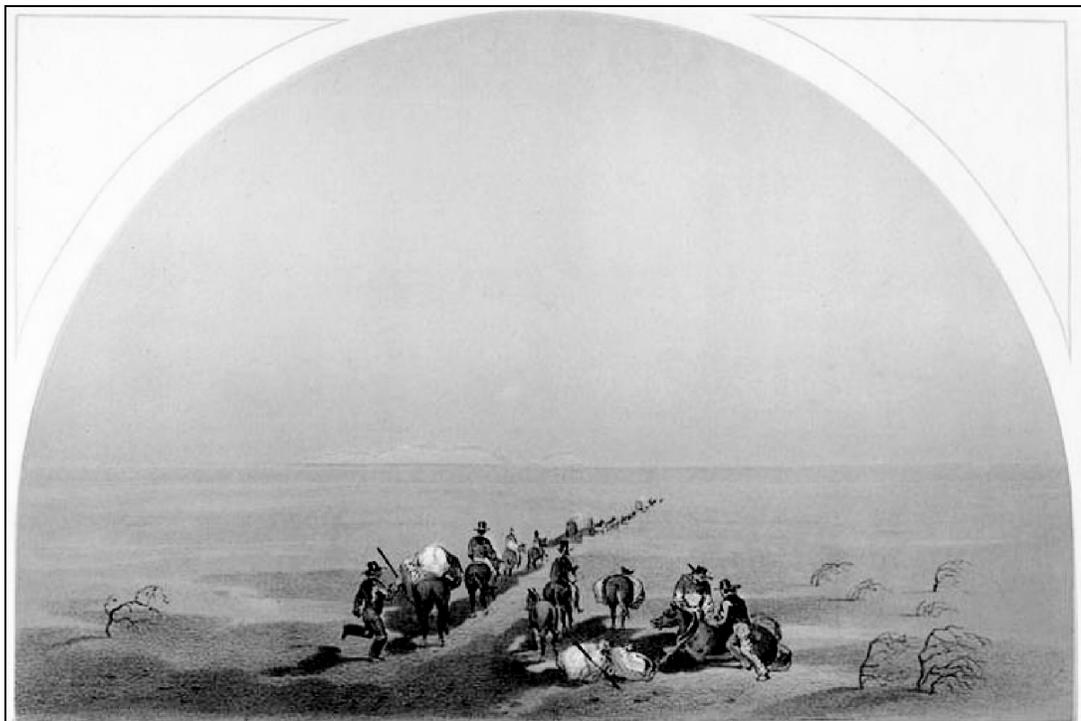
In spite of the appearance of the New River, the trail west of the Colorado remained overwhelming for the majority of emigrants from the United States, and the most difficult part of the journey. Strangers to the desert, and unaware of the needs of sustained travel for several months over unsettled wilderness, the overland trek had taxed nearly all to the extreme by the time they reached the Colorado River. Arriving physically exhausted, with supplies used up and livestock worn out, few were adequately prepared to face the difficult terrain that still lay between them and Warner’s Ranch (Figure 8).

By the late summer of 1849, a never-ending line of wagons, livestock, and pedestrians stretched westward from the Colorado River. On the 6th of September emigrant parties with over five hundred mules and horses camped at Vallecito “resting after the fatigues of the journey” (Evans 1849:9-6); an equal number could be found at San Felipe (Evans 1849:9-10). The large number of humans and livestock on the trail depleted all supplies of water, pasture, and food that the local environment could provide. William Chamberlain complained on August 15 at New River “Our entire stock of provisions is now reduced to about 3 days rations, and we have already felt the gnawing of hunger.” The party with Benjamin Hayes, traveling between Carrizo and Vallecito in January 1850, contemplated “starving” for “a day, perhaps two,” until they could get supplies (Hayes 1850:1-8).

In September 1849, the Boundary Commission survey party led by Lt. Amiel W. Whipple crossed from San Diego to the Colorado River to determine the exact point of the junction of the Colorado and Gila rivers. An escort of U.S. Army Dragoons under the command of Lt. Cave Coutts, who had crossed the previous year with Graham’s battalion, accompanied Whipple’s team. Upon their arrival at San Felipe, destitute emigrants besieged the company, saying that on the desert they would find “many in a condition bordering upon starvation” (Whipple 1849). They heard accounts of overland parties who had not yet reached the Colorado “without an animal of any kind, or morsel to eat.” Coutts estimated that “one fourth of the thousands who are behind will come to the Colorado in distress.” Before he could dismount “an old man by the name of Baker” accosted the Lieutenant for something to eat. He and his son had survived on nothing but coffee for three days. Coutts “gave them two days rations to get rid of them. In a few moments down came four more belonging to the same party. I gave them two days rations each” (Coutts 1849).



(a) "Rio Colorado near the Mojave Villages, from the left bank looking WNW," 1853-1855, U. S. Pacific Railroad Expedition and Surveys (reproduction courtesy of Melvin and Ellen Sweet).



(b) "Colorado Desert and Signal Mountain," 1853-1855, view to west, U.S. Pacific Railroad Expedition and Surveys (reproduction courtesy of Melvin and Ellen Sweet).

Figure 8. Rio Colorado, Colorado Desert, and Signal Mountain, 1853-1855.

Argonauts desperate for supplies continued to plague Coutts and Whipple all the way to the Colorado. Between San Felipe and Vallecito they encountered a “multitude of overland travelers all just gold sot.” Many had camped at El Puerto (Coutts 1849). At Vallecito the emigrants continued “flocking in.” One claimed that he and his brother were in “a terrible state, nearly starved to death, and without a morsel to eat.” The cook gave him four pounds of flour, “which he examined very closely,” and not thinking it good, “declined to accept it!” Others needed directions to Los Angeles and San Diego. Coutts complained “If I have made one I have made a hundred way-bills for them in the last three days. Left one stuck up on a board for their guidance” (Coutts 1849). Continuing their eastward journey that night the Whipple party found the road to Carrizo Creek “strewn with emigrants winding their way to the placers” (Whipple 1849).

At the New River throngs of needy travelers continued to overwhelm the party, badgering Lt. Coutts unceasingly:

The emigrants! Ah! “Still they come.” I never was in my life so annoyed. To sit and tell them of California, work on maps and way-bills for them, is only a pleasure. But then follows begging for sugar, flour, molasses, pork, a little fresh beef, rice, coffee, etc. and God only knows how they have the face to push such entreaties as they do. They have stopped on the route and kept me up at night listening to their stories of the Indian depredations on the Colorado, stealing their animals, etc., when they go up, and almost under my own eyes, steal my mules! [Coutts 1849]

The strain of the crossing forced many to discard all they had brought with them in order to lighten their loads. As animals failed and collapsed, entire wagons had to be abandoned. The trail became littered with refuse and dead animal remains. Between Alamo Mochó and El Pozo Hondo, Durivage encountered “two abandoned wagons; and literally covering the ground were dead mules, fragments of harness, gun barrels, trunks, wearing apparel, barrels, casks, saws, bottles, and quantities of articles too numerous to mention” (Durivage 1849:6-24). Crossing in June, A. B. Clarke noted “We saw more than a dozen dead animals with their trappings on the road today. When anyone saw a saddle better than his own, he made an exchange” (Clarke 1849). The Evans party crossing west of Cooke’s Well on September 4 encountered the bones of horses and cattle along the road, “and we not infrequently find saddles, harness, and wagons left by their owners.” The following day at Alamo Mochó they found the ground “covered with the remnants of property, and it is a perfect bone yard; everything but provisions and firearms can be picked up” (Evans 1849). A month later William Chamberlain found the same spot to be “a perfect Golgotha—the bones of thousands of animals lie strewn about in every direction; and a great number of carcasses of horses and mules that have died lately, pollute the atmosphere. Deserted wagons, harnesses, saddles, etc. add to this destructive and sickening scene” (Chamberlain 1849:8-14). As the months continued, thousands of dollars in abandoned equipment accumulated in the desert. By 1852 it was estimated that “more than a hundred good wagons, with harness, pack saddles, and a vast quantity of camp equipage, were scattered along the road.” During the cooler months parties from the coast drove fresh teams into the desert and salvaged many of the abandoned vehicles and accoutrements (Bartlett 1854, entry for 6-6-1852).

The 28 miles between New River and Carrizo Creek remained the hardest part of the trail, in spite of the respite provided by the New River oasis. The constant traffic had

churned up the already soft sand so that animals and wagons sank and could not gain a firm footing. This section became even more littered with dead animals than previous portions of the trail. At “every turn of the road” the 49ers found “the decayed and decaying remains of some horse or mule” (Evans 1849).

The great influx of abandoned livestock onto the desert provided a previously unknown source of food, in what seemed to be never ending quantities, for Native Americans. Benjamin Hayes saw an encampment at Big Lake in January 1850:

There were a good many of them altogether at this place—we could see their smoke among the mesquite from our camp. They call themselves San Diego’s. They seem to prowl about here, depending in a measure for subsistence on mules, oxen, &c., which give out on the road. They get the seeds of a large weed, which grows abundantly here, grind it & soft it, and make bread of it [amaranth]. There was a horse just killed and cut up at their camp. In the hollow at our camp at Camp Salvation we found some of them cutting up a mule which had mired. [Hayes 1850]

It is ironic that the Argonauts who so desperately needed food would not eat horse and mule meat, so plentifully available around them. They preferred to contemplate “starving ... for a day or two” rather than take advantage of an obvious source of protein that could relieve their dilemma.

Scavenging animals also feasted. Coyotes had always been present on the desert. They became abundant in 1849, and grew fat feeding on livestock remains. Turkey vultures also invaded the region and large flocks became a permanent feature for many years thereafter. A biologist with the Railroad Survey in 1853 reported that, although the turkey vulture ranged over the entire state, the birds could be found “in great numbers in the vicinity of Fort Yuma ... and more especially on the desert between the Colorado and Carrisa Creek” where they found an ample food supply from the numerous carcasses of animals that perished from fatigue or the want of water and grass and “whose whitened bones, strewn over the ground, mark both the road and the hardship of the western pioneer.” The birds seemed “to be on terms of amity with both the raven and California vulture whilst feeding, but upon the approach of the coyote or prairie wolf they all retire to a respectful distance until he has gorged himself on the dainty fare” (Hermann 1853).

While many emigrants suffered, some were able to cross the desert with little or no problems. Lewis B. Harris noted that by “taking a little trouble” to procure food for their animals and water containers for men and livestock, his party crossed the desert “without ever feeling the want for food” and after a short rest at Camp Salvation his animals were as good as ever (Harris 10-21-1849, quoted in Ellis 1995b:26, note 33).

Large numbers of Mexicans continued to travel the road without experiencing extreme hardship. Most Argonaut diaries and government reports mention Mexicans on the road traveling in both directions (Ellis 1995b). They are almost never described in distress. As already noted when the Graham battalion marched to San Diego in the winter of 1848-1849 they encountered hundreds of Sonorans heading for the gold fields. A few months later John C. Fremont arrived at the Colorado River and encountered a large group of men, women, and children from Sonora (Ellis 1995b:35, note 13). While camping at the New River in August 1849, William Chamberlain encountered “a company of Sonorans ... on their way home from the gold mines of California. We could talk but little Mexican, but

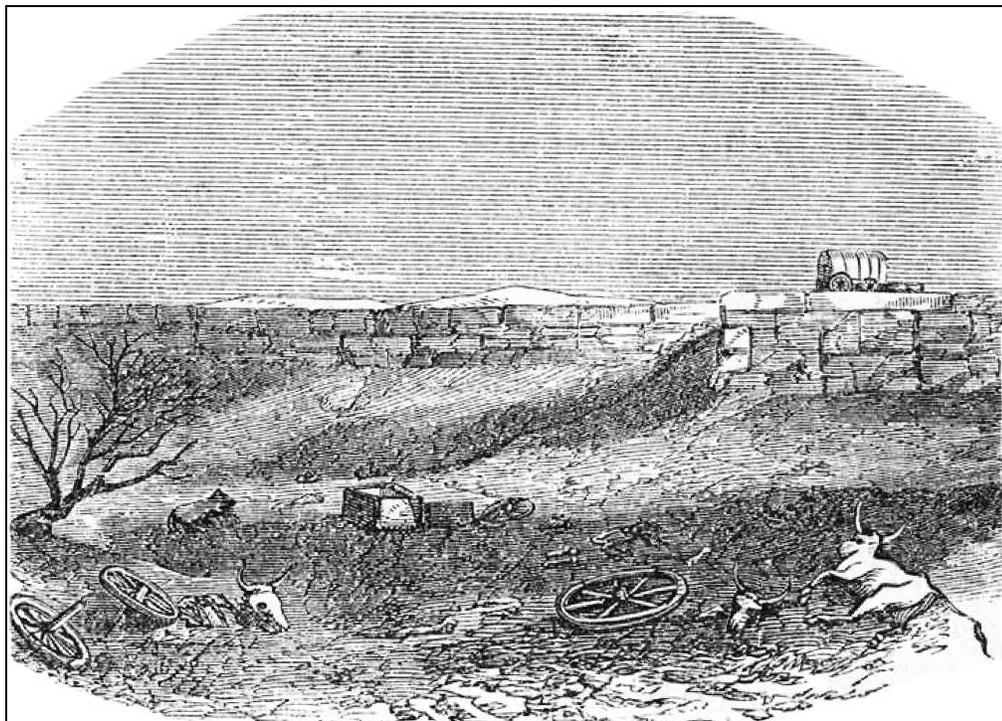
learned from them that there were a great many Americans in the mines; that mules were worth from \$100 to \$300, etc. They showed us a quantity of gold dust, and said it was very abundant out in the diggings” (Chamberlain 1849). As they journeyed northward they continued to meet “great numbers of returning Sonorans” (Chamberlain 1849). The Evans Party following a few weeks behind had similar experiences. At Alamo Mocho on September 5 “we met another troop of Mexicans returning from the gold region, having with them a large quantity of the gold. These men return with the intention of removing their families to the valley of the San Joacin (sic.) River and express themselves well pleased with the Americans at the mines” (Evans 1849). In the early 1850s Sonorans and natives of New Mexico began returning with herds of livestock. With the great increase in population, cattle and sheep now commanded top market prices in California (White 1975).⁸

Beginning in the fall of 1849, the Army began to actively aid overland travelers. This was provided, most importantly, through the distribution of food rations, although wells and sections of the road were improved. After the Whipple expedition reached the Colorado, Lt. Coats wrote to Colonel Emory in San Diego describing the need for aid to emigrants (Tamplin 1979:50). Emory organized relief trains and sent rations from existing military supplies to Camp Calhoun at the Colorado and Camp Salvation. On November 27, 1849, H.M.T. Powell met “a government train of mules with 3,000 rations, between Camp Salvation and Carrizo Creek (Ellis note 25 in Powell 1849). In December, D. D. Demarest procured three days’ rations at Camp Salvation (Demarest 1849). Two months later, in January 1850, Benjamin Hayes procured relief stores from officers of the Mexican Boundary Commission at Vallecito. He then met a government pack train at Vallecito with supplies to be distributed between San Felipe and Camp Salvation (Hayes 1850). In August of that year the Army established a “sub-depot” at Vallecito to aid in the supplying of Fort Yuma, which had been established that summer. This outpost operated intermittently until June 1853 (White 1975, entry of 8-19-1850; Tamplin 1979:54). Establishment of Fort Yuma also brought road improvements. The Army now needed to dispatch supply trains on a regular basis. Difficult passages and unreliable water holes could not be tolerated. Major Heintzelman, commander at the fort, dispatched work details to improve existing wells, establish additional water places, and work on the road (White 1975, entry of 11-4-1850).⁹ Additional aid was available for those who made it across the desert at Warner’s Ranch (Figure 9a).

The San José Valley, by this time more commonly known as “Warner’s” or “Warner’s Ranch,” was the first camping spot with unlimited pasture that the emigrants finally reached after weeks of crossing cactus- and creosote-covered desert sands. Both livestock and travelers needed rest and refurbishment. Many camped in the southern portion of the valley to let their animals graze and regain strength while they attempted to restock badly depleted supplies. Warner’s foreman, William Marshall, ran a store at the Agua Caliente Native American village. In order to better compete against Marshall and maximize the commercial opportunity the emigrants needs represented, Warner established a trading post on the main overland trail. He located his home and store in the southern part of the valley, near the western end of Cañada Buena Vista, precisely at the point where the San Diego road branched off from the main route (Wright 1961; Coats 1856; Hayes 1850; Aldrich 1851; Warner 1886:15-17). The trading post carried flour, liquor, arms and ammunition, and other supplies. Warner brought cattle from the Santa Margarita Rancho of his wife’s stepbrother Pio Pico, near present day Oceanside, in order to provide fresh beef (Aldrich 1851; Hayes 1850).¹⁰



(a) "Warner's Pass from San Felipe," 1853-1855, U.S. Pacific Railroad Expedition and Surveys (reproduction courtesy of Melvin and Ellen Sweet).



(b) "Well in the Desert – Alamo Mocho," 1853-1855, Lt. Robert S. Williamson (reproduction courtesy of San Diego Historical Society Archives).

Figure 9. Warners Pass and Well in the Desert, 1853-1855.

In January 1850, Benjamin Hayes arrived at Warner's, recording over a period of several days what is probably the most detailed account of the valley and trading post made by any Gold Rush emigrant. On January 13 he noted that other 49ers camped in the valley "have obtained good beef and salt—nothing else to be had they say. Some have been over to the Native American rancheria Agua Caliente getting flour at \$2.00 per almud from the store kept there [the trading post at the hot springs run by Marshall]. Warner's beef is disappearing by wholesale." The following day he went to the trading post at the fork in the road and saw Warner "A tall man—dressed a' la California—short blue jacket, trousers broad at the bottom of the legs—half Californian, half sailor I thought." When they entered, Jonathan Warner was seated at breakfast, "which probably had put him in his best humor. Quite talkative: said he would let us have milk tomorrow morning; and at some inconvenience to himself, sugar and salt. He examined Major Shepherd's gun and offered to mend it. His reception was very courteous: we formed a favorable impression of him." Warner commented that he had no more cattle "fit to be slaughtered" and could not go himself to Santa Margarita, for cattle as his "whites" were not yet "Californized" enough for California labor. He offered "to guarantee any man \$100 per thousand, who will stop and cut lumber! His house is upon one of the beautiful, high rolling hills, without other vegetation than bunch grass.... It is precisely at the point where the old main road branches, one fork to the town of San Diego, the other to Los Angeles—convenient for the supply of emigrants." Warner said that he would find something to trade with the emigrants as fast as they arrived. "None shall starve. Several sold their pistols to him for food, some of whom started with plenty of money." On January 17 Hayes and his companions dined with Warner, eating soup, corn-beef, pumpkins, coffee with milk and dried grapes. Two days later, on the 19th, both Marshall and Warner purchased some emigrant wagons. As a comment on the variety of items the desperate Argonauts traded for supplies, Hayes noted "In fact Warner's house is a perfect bazaar of emigration—almost every species of mechanics tools—and an armory in the way of everything except 24 pounders" (Hayes 1850 quoted in Hill 1927:120-129).¹¹ The trading posts in the San José Valley came to an abrupt and sudden end in November 1851, when Native Americans attacked and burned Warner's house and store during an uprising. William Marshall was accused of aiding in and instigating the attack and executed. Warner never returned to live in the valley.

Within a few years, travel on the trail became somewhat less insecure. When another expedition of the Boundary Commission under James Bartlett journeyed to the Colorado River in 1852, they found conditions to be more reliable than they had been two years earlier. Ironically, the vast wave of 49ers had passed, although there was still substantial traffic on the road, especially government pack trains (Bartlett 1854, entry of 6-3-1852).

In addition to the sub-depot at Vallecito, the party found a watering place at Sackett's Well, 15 miles south of Carrizo Creek, which had been established by the Army in 1850 (Cronise 1868:96).¹² When the Overland Railroad survey teams passed through between 1853 and 1855 additional improvements had been made. A water hole had been established at Indian Wells, 14.5 miles south of Sackett's near the former location of Camp Salvation (Poole 1855:23). This seems to have replaced the former unreliable water source at El Pozo Hondo. The other crude wells in the desert had also been improved by this time. At Alamo Mocho the well "was about 18 feet deep, and lined with boards, and protected by a low curb" (Blake 1857:109-110; see Figure 9b). In spite of these improvements the crossing still remained difficult. In June 1852, Bartlett found abandoned government supply

wagons between Alamo Mocho and Cooke's Wells (Bartlett 1854, entry of 6-7-1852). William Blake with the Railroad Survey noted that the air between Vallecito and Carrizo Creek was loaded with the effluvia rising from the numerous carcasses of cattle and sheep in an advanced state of decomposition (Blake 1857:105).

Descriptions of Carrizo Creek

Throughout this period, the springs and marsh at Carrizo Creek remained important as a reliable source of running water after what was consistently described as the hardest stretch of the trail. In spite of the appearance of the New River and its associated lakes, the emigrants still suffered from lack of water and extreme fatigue while crossing the sandy stretches before reaching Carrizo Creek. The truth is that by the time they reached the Colorado River, most were so exhausted and debilitated after their long journey that, as they continued westward, what may have been a monotonous march under normal circumstances became a taxing test of endurance. More livestock collapsed along this stretch of the trail than any other. Clarke recorded on June 30, 1849:

We arrived at Carrizo (Cane) Creek at noon; this is the first running water on this side of the desert. The whole distance we have passed carcasses of mules and horses, particularly at the end of the route; I should judge at least 30 or 40 a day.... The creek can be stepped over in many places and disappears in the sand a mile below. The last part of the journey on the desert is the most forlorn that can be imagined, consisting of immense sand-hills, worn into various singular shapes, outskirting the desert with mica, and layers of gypsum. As there is no grass here, we went on hoping to find some. [Clarke 1849]

A month later, the John S. Robb party had an equally difficult time, in spite of the presence of the New River. Having run out of water, and suffering from thirst, they rested a few hours and then tried to continue "but fainting with the hot air, hot sand, and want of water, we again lay down and in almost despair slept until night..." At sundown they continued, listening to the howls from a pack of coyotes. Then, suddenly, a joyful sound penetrated the desert air:

I heard the croaking of frogs! Their voices like the sweetest music to our ears, and lent vigor to our famishing bodies. We knew we were reaching the creek—presently we came in sight of the stream rippling along in the clear moonlight, and the mules and ourselves ran a race for the grateful beverage, and bent ourselves together in its flood. It took many draughts to satisfy our thirst, but we finally found it possible to get enough water. We had been fifteen hours beneath the burning sun without water, and forty two without food. [quoted in Ellis 1995b]

The Chamberlain party's experience was similar:

When the moon rose, about 4 o'clock in the morning, we packed up and started in a N. W. direction. About 9 o'clock a.m. we entered the mountains. Armstrong abandoned his riding horse this morning, and more of our stock show strong symptoms of "giving out." Our canteens are empty and we are obliged to push for water. After a hard struggle we reached Cariso creek, but found no water. The sight of the dry bed of a stream would not allay our thirst, and we made all haste up it until we reached the head, where a small

rivulet is formed by the water oozing out of the ground in several places, flowing a short distance, and then disappearing in the sand. In our eagerness to reach water, it was the best man, or rather, the best animal foremost. We were scattered all along the way, and the last of the company did not get up for two hours after the first. We reached this point at 11 a.m. The water, though clear as crystal, has a peculiar and unpleasant taste. We ate a piece, but we could find nothing for our animals to feed upon. [Chamberlain 1849]

Here again the Chamberlain party encountered “a large number of Sonorans ... resting their stock, before they undertake crossing the desert. This appears to be a general encamping place, but the stench arising from the number of dead animals strewn about is almost sickening” (Chamberlain 1849).

A few weeks later, as the Whipple expedition arrived at Carrizo, Cave Coutts was astonished “at not finding a particle of cane for the poor animals and more still at their not drinking the water. The little stream is running rather brisk, but not a horse or mule would put their nose to it. The water is the same as when we passed on 2nd of December last but I judge that the number of dead animals around and in the water, was the reason they would not use it” (Coutts 1856).

In November H.M.T. Powell found the creek to be a “mere thread,” three to nine inches wide. In contrast to when Coutts had passed, there was “cane and grass in plenty” (Powell 1849:11-27) probably as a result of winter rains (Ellis 1995b, note 119).

Benjamin Hayes reached the stream soon after sunrise on the 8th of January, 1850. He breakfasted on “a flapjack” with a party from Texas already camped there. “The boys have concluded to stop 2 or 3 hours. They are cooking beans...” The stream was “flowing over a broad sandy bed, but at present with a rapid current, though not more than a foot wide. We threw up the sand, which made convenient pools, soon becoming clear” (Hayes 1850).

Arriving in June 1852 in route to Fort Yuma, James Bartlett left the most detailed description of the creek during this period:

June 4th. Carrizo Creek is one of those remarkable streams which sometimes spring up in desert regions. It rises in the very center of barrenness, flows for about a mile, and is again absorbed by the desert. It has worn for itself a bed about fifteen feet below the plain. It is from three to nine inches in depth, and varies from six feet to as many yards in width. Where the banks have been washed away, it receives, in several places, accessions from springs; but when these cease, the stream grows less and less, until it is all absorbed by the sands. In the ravine or bed formed by this water, mesquite bushes grow to the height of ten or twelve feet, the deep green of their foliage presenting a pleasing contrast with the desolation around, and marking the course of the stream from its beginning to its end. The grass, which grows in a few patches, in little nooks, which receive their moisture from the creek, is very coarse and wiry; and of this there is not enough to supply the few passing trains that come this way. The heat here to-day was insupportable, the mercury ranging at 114° in the shade. The rays of the sun beat through our tents, so that we could not remain in them. Some retreated beneath the wagons; while myself and others found our way into little gullies or ravines

beneath the clay banks, where, partly sheltered by the banks and partly by bushes, we passed the day.

We had much trouble here with our mules, who did not like the coarse grass before them; so that while the herders thought that they were quietly trying to pick up a living on the margin of the stream, they were off at full speed for Vallecita, where they had recollection of better fare. Some were arrested in their flight within a few miles of camp, while others were not overtaken until they had reached the grassy patches they were in search of. This is a common habit with mules, and often impedes the progress of a train. I have known them, where the grass was poor, to retrace their steps twenty-five miles for the sake of finding better. Experience showed us that in such places as this the animals must be closely watched, and at night tied up to the wagons. We noticed a peculiarity in the water here, which was that, although sweet, it did not quench the thirst. We all drank incessantly without being satisfied. As we entered the great desert here, and expected to find no water, except by digging, until we reached the Colorado, one hundred miles distant, we filled all our kegs, canteens, empty bottles, and everything else that would hold water. I then directed the wagons to be loaded, the mules packed, and the train to move at sunset.

I have forgotten to mention that we saw along the banks of Carrizo Creek, near our camp, an innumerable quantity of the bones and dried carcasses of sheep, a rare occurrence in a region infested by hungry wolves; but numerous and hungry as the wolves are, there is such a thing as satiating their appetites, and of this we had an example before our eyes. Here were the bodies of many thousands of sheep lying in piles within the space of a hundred yards. This wholesale mortality is said to have been caused by their eating of a poisonous plant; but as we could find no specimens of such a plant, we believed that the poor creatures, after traversing the desert and being probably three or four days without water, had drunk themselves to death. Most of the bodies were in the immediate vicinity of the stream.
[Bartlett 1854]

A few years later, the Army appears to have established a station at Carrizo Creek. On June 3, 1855, Thomas Antisell, geologist with the Pacific Railroad Survey reported “the storekeeper inhabiting the adobe house, newly built at camp, informed us that; for the eight months previous to our visit, it had not rained but once, and then for eight hours heavily...” The temperature reached 100 degrees Fahrenheit at noon and reached 102 later in the day. “The effect of this heat was visible on the stream, which ceased to flow around 11 o’clock, and did not recommence until 4 p.m.” (Antisell 1856:121). This newly-built adobe house soon became more than just an isolated desert post. In a little over two years it would become an important station on the first overland transcontinental mail service to link the east and west coast.

THE OVERLAND MAIL

Mail had been carried overland to California since 1847 by military couriers. Prior to 1854, this occurred periodically according to the Army's needs and its consequent dispatches. There was no regular service. Joseph Swycaffer and Sam Warnock ran the first mail service between San Diego and Fort Yuma from 1854 to 1857. They used mules and followed the trail from Green Valley in the Cuyamaca Mountains down the old Indian and Fages trail in Oriflamme Canyon, intersecting the emigrant road between El Puerto and present-day Box Canyon (Lake 1957; Rensch 1957a, 1957b; Swycaffer 1938).

From 1857 to 1861, the Gila trail was used by the overland mail service. First carried by the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line, from July 1857 through August 1858, and then the Butterfield Overland Mail Company, from September 1858 through June 1861, establishment of the Overland Mail constituted the first regular communication and transportation service across the continental United States, 12 years before completion of the transcontinental railroad. In the mid-1850s, creation of a transcontinental overland mail service became a priority of Congress. With such a large population now residing in California as a result of the Gold Rush, the long delays of several months to send mail by sea routes was unacceptable. During 1856, four overland mail bills were submitted and on August 18, Congress passed an amendment to the Post Office bill, authorizing establishment of an overland mail route between the Mississippi River and San Francisco. It also authorized the Postmaster General to immediately initiate an interim service to provide adequate mail connections between East and West until the route between the Mississippi and San Francisco could be established. James Birch, a successful California stage line entrepreneur, received a contract for the interim service and established the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line. He was to run stages twice monthly on a 30-day schedule between these two small frontier outposts for \$150,000 a year. From San Francisco, the traveler could proceed by steamer to San Diego, by stage to San Antonio, then by various means to New Orleans and the Atlantic Coast. There were also connections from El Paso or Fort Filmore, farther up the Rio Grande, with stagecoach lines to Independence, Missouri, by way of Santa Fe (Banning and Banning 1929, 1930; Johnson 1938). The first eastbound mail left San Diego on August 9, 1857, and followed the wagon road via Santa Ysabel, Warner's Ranch and San Felipe. The first west-bound mail, which left San Antonio on July 9, followed the same route across the mountains and arrived in San Diego on August 31 after a trip of 52 days (Johnson 1938; Pourade 1963:220-225).¹³

The San Antonio and San Diego Mail

Establishment of the Birch line was nothing less than remarkable. Only 27 days elapsed from the date he received the contract, on June 12, 1857, and the 9th of July when the first mule train carrying mail left San Antonio. Superintendent Isaiah C. Woods, in charge of laying out the line, set it up as the mule trains and coaches journeyed west across 1,450 miles of arid wilderness. Woods took charge on June 15, dispatching agents to San Antonio and San Diego to procure mules, employees, and supplies, and dispatch the first mails. The second westward-bound mail left San Antonio at 6 a.m. on July 24. Woods had prepared the self-contained "outfit" for a journey across unsettled country with almost no existing infrastructure. It included one coach and harness, six men—each well-armed with rifles and a Colt's pistol, four saddles and accoutrements, ropes, hobbles, shoeing tools,

shoes and nails, cooking utensils, numerous minor articles, 19 mules, provisions for 30 days, and six hundred dollars in cash to purchase supplies. An additional 27 mules and a coach had already been sent out to provide relays along the road. This party was subsequently attacked by Native Americans who killed one of the passengers, damaged the coach, and stole the livestock (Woods 1858:6). The third westward-bound mail left San Antonio on July 31. This train included three coaches and harnesses, 17 men armed with rifles and Colt's pistols, 38 mules, four thousand pounds of rations, ten saddles, and "the smaller articles usually sent." Woods left the next day to overtake and travel with this train to San Diego, setting up the line as he went (Woods 1858:3-4).

The party proceeded westward, camping out, fording flooded rivers, repairing coaches and wagons, procuring additional mules and vehicles, and avoiding hostile Native Americans. On the morning of August 3rd Isaiah recorded:

We cooked our breakfast this morning under the trees just outside of the tower of Uvalde. We have tin plates, tin cups, knives and forks, iron spoons, a gunny bag as a table cloth, and one seat in the shape of a water keg among eight of us. [Woods 1858:9]

On August 4th he continued:

In carrying the mail we do not drive all the time from our morning start to the night camp. We stop four times during the day; twice for our two meals of breakfast and dinner; breakfast after the morning drive, dinner about 4 o'clock. We also stop once for a nooning, and once about sunset to graze the mules, at which hour they seem to feed best. We stopped half an hour to-day at Camp Hudson, situated at the second crossing of the San Pedro, or the Devil's river; here I found the remnant of our coach, with the pole and ten spokes broken, the bars gone, the top all stripped, a bullet hole through the body from a gun, carbine, or some piece carrying a heavy ball, and fired by the Indians. [Woods 1858:9]

Five days later on August 9th, R. E. Doyle, the company's agent in San Diego, dispatched the first eastward-bound mail. Mule relays had already been sent ahead to Fort Yuma (Pourade 1963:220-225; Johnson 1938:56; *San Diego Herald* 8-15-1857).

By September 4th, Woods had reached the Colorado. They crossed the river shortly after sunrise of the fifth on "an excellent ferry, and continued across the desert, arriving at Indian Wells at sunset the following day." The wells had no water, "an encampment of Yuma Indians had used it nearly up." After eating, they continued to Carrizo Creek, arriving at dawn the next morning, September 7. In contrast to the agony most 49ers had experienced on this section, Woods commented "This portion of the road is by no means a bad one" (Woods 1858:21).

At this point the mules were exhausted. Most of the herd had made the journey from Tucson in less than eight days. They had not slept during the 48 hour crossing from Yuma, and had gone 24 hours without water. Upon reaching Carrizo, they "filled themselves at once with the medicated waters of the creek and thus destroyed their appetites, so that they would never eat a proper quantity of hay or grain." In order to get the mail over the mountains and into San Diego as quickly as possible, Woods selected nine of the best animals and pushed ahead, with one other companion, taking the Oriflamme Canyon cutoff to Lassitor's ranch at Green Valley in the Cuyamacas.¹⁴ The rest of the group followed at a

slower pace along the emigrant Wagon Road to Warner's and then took the cutoff to San Diego via Santa Ysabel. Woods' mule train reached San Diego at 10 p.m. on the night of September 8, "after a toilsome day's journey down the mountains." He had been on the trail for 38 days (Woods 1858:22; Rensch 1957a, 1957b).

Woods spent the next five weeks preparing the western end of the line, dispatching men, vehicles, and supplies to newly-established stations. On October 6th, a steamer arrived from San Francisco with supplies. On the 24th, a coach and wagon loaded with rations left for Maricopa Wells. A corral for livestock was established at Lassitor's ranch, where Woods also contracted to have hay and straw delivered to stations at Vallecito and Carrizo Creek. On October 17th, two coaches with "complete outfits" of animals and other necessities were sent over the mountains: "one is to run between Carissa Creek and Fort Yuma; the other . . . between Fort Yuma and Maricopa Wells." Two more coaches, and a pack train of fourteen animals "heavily laden with every description of supplies for the line" were sent to Carrizo Creek on October 22. Woods left two days later on mule back, with Mr. Doyle and a through passenger, taking the "shorter mountain trail" to Lassitor's where they spent a day branding a "mulada" of 75 animals." They reached Carrizo Creek with most of the herd the afternoon of October 27, where they found the party with the coaches that had come via the wagon road through Santa Ysabel and Warner's Ranch. The west-bound train now included 12 men, 3 coaches, 72 animals, "and everything necessary for staging purposes." They left Carrizo Creek Station on October 28th and proceeded eastward to supply the line (Woods 1858:23-24; Rensch 1957a).

The station at Carrizo Creek became an important link in the San Antonio—San Diego Mail line. It functioned as one of seven major stations west of the Rio Grande. Here passengers disembarked to change coaches. At Carrizo Creek they left the east-bound stage from San Diego and boarded another that ran between Carrizo and Fort Yuma (Woods 1858:23-24, 26-27). It is assumed that this stage remained at the station until the other returned with west-bound passengers that had boarded in Yuma. Watering stations were established at an average of 30 mile intervals (*Sacramento Union* 8-12-1857).

Woods reported that by November 27th:

The mail line had now nearly or quite two hundred head of mules west of the Rio Grande, stationed at San Diego, Carissa Creek, Fort Yuma, Petermans, Maricopa Wells, Tucson, and La Mesilla. At each of these places agencies or stations had been established with abundant supplies of grain everywhere. We feed corn to all our working mules. I had made contracts for hay wherever the grass was likely to be short the coming winter. We had thirty-five mail carriers and agents along this part of the line; well armed border men, carefully chosen for familiarity with this kind of service. We had seven coaches on the road, and three more building in San Diego, so that we could already take passengers through from ocean to ocean in stage coaches. [Woods 1858]

He also noted that "Our watering places in the desert west of Fort Yuma are by no means far apart, but the supply is limited at all times. It will be a matter of absolute necessity to enlarge them before the overland emigration of this spring reaches the desert. The improvement of those now used as well and the digging of others, will be easily accomplished" (Woods 1858:33).

Residents at the frontier pueblo of San Diego became extremely excited over the development of overland mail service from San Antonio. They felt it would assure the community's growth into a major urban transportation center. The local newspaper, the *San Diego Herald*, followed events closely and reported on Birch's reception of the contract on July 25, commenting that the event was more important to the region than passage of the transcontinental railroad bill. It insured the future coast-to-coast rail link would follow the southern route with San Diego as its western terminus (*San Diego Herald* 7-25-1857).

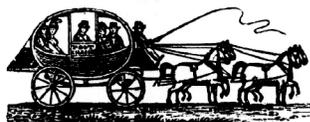
When the first mails arrived at noon on August 31st, celebration engulfed the town that included firing of fire crackers, a 100 anvil salute, "and the general congratulations of the citizens." The *San Diego Herald* proclaimed it "the most important event which has ever occurred in the annals of San Diego, and undoubtedly constitutes an epoch in the Pacific Coast of the Union, which will be recorded and remembered with just pride, long after the mails will have been transported on the great continental railroad, the first rail of which may be thus said to have been laid" (*San Diego Herald* 9-5-1857).

The mail dispatched from San Antonio on the 24th had overtaken the first mule train, which had left on the 9th, so that both arrived in San Diego on August 31st. It took 52 days for the first and 38 days for the second mail to complete the journey. Although not at the overwhelming numbers of 1848 through 1851, there were still many emigrants on the trail. The mail riders had passed "upwards of one hundred wagons, ... with considerable quantities of stock" (*San Diego Herald* 9-5-1857).

As Isaiah Woods continued to establish stations along the route, the carriers began to set new records for completing the journey. The third and fourth mails reached San Diego in just 30 days, arriving on September 8th and 23rd respectively. The fourth mail made the crossing from Fort Yuma to San Diego in two days and 14 hours, "the quickest time on record" (*San Diego Herald* 9-12-1857, 9-26-1857). The next trip proceeded even faster and arrived on October 5th, completing the 1,450 mile journey in 26 days and 12 hours. The pueblo once again celebrated with an anvil salute. These riders made the trip from Fort Yuma to San Diego in exactly two days, crossing the desert between the Colorado and Warner's in 29 hours. The *Herald* declared "The bugbear of the desert is knocked sky high" (*San Diego Herald* 10-5-1857). Throughout the rest of 1857 and the winter and spring of 1858, trips of less than 30 days became common. Then in May 1858, the mail carriers set a new record of 23 days, followed by a completed journey of 22 and a half days in early June. San Diego once again celebrated and 100 guns were fired in the plaza (*San Diego Herald* 5-22-1858, 6-5-1858). When compared to the hardships experienced by overland travelers on this same terrain just five years before, the record of the San Antonio to San Diego line was extraordinary.

By November 1857, overland mail departures had become routine (Figure 10a). On the arrival of each steamer from San Francisco a coach was dispatched with six through passengers (*San Diego Herald* 11-21-1857). The mail company used two routes to get to the desert. "Light covered coaches" followed the traditional wagon road through San Pasqual, Santa Ysabel, and Warner's Ranch (*Sacramento Union* 1-11-1858; Johnson 1938:64) (Figure 10a). Some passengers traveled in vehicles to Lassitor's ranch, then traveled 18 miles down Oriflamme Canyon to Vallecito on mule-back. The price of passage was \$35 to Fort Yuma, \$75 to Tucson, \$120 to El Paso, and \$150 to San Antonio (*San Diego Herald* 11-21-1857). On January 9, 1858, the *San Diego Herald* praised the line: "The overland

OVERLAND TO THE PACIFIC.



The San Antonio and San Diego Mail-Line.

This Line, which has been in successful operation since July 1857, is ticketing PASSENGERS through to San Diego and San Francisco, and also to all intermediate stations. Passengers and Express matter forwarded in NEW COACHES, drawn by six mules, over the entire length of our Line, excepting the Colorado Desert of one hundred miles, which we cross on mule-back. Passengers GUARANTEED in their tickets to ride in Coaches, excepting the one hundred miles above stated.

Passengers ticketed through, from NEW-ORLEANS, to the following points, via SAN ANTONIO:

To Fort Clark,.....	Fare, \$52.	To Fort Bliss.....	Fare, \$100.
" Hudson,.....	" 60.	" La Mesilla,.....	" 105.
" Port Lancaster, ..	" 70.	" Fort Willmore.....	" 105.
" Davis,.....	" 80.	" Tucson.....	" 135.
" Quitman,.....	" 100.	" Fort Yuma,.....	" 162.
" Birchville,.....	" 100.	" San Diego,.....	" 190.
" San Elizario,.....	" 100.	" Los Angeles,.....	" 190.
" El Paso,.....	" 100.	" San Francisco,.....	" 200.

The Coaches of our Line leave semi-monthly from each end, on the 9th and 24th of each month, at 6 o'clock A.M.

An armed escort travels through the Indian country with each mail train, for the protection of the mails and passengers.

Passengers are provided with provisions during the trip, except where the Coach stops at Public Houses along the Line, at which each Passenger will pay for his own meal.

Each Passenger is allowed thirty pounds of personal baggage, exclusive of blankets and arms.

Passengers coming to San Antonio can take the line of mail-steamers from New-Orleans five times a week to Indianola. From the latter place there is a daily line of four-horse mail-coaches direct to this place.

On the Pacific side, the California Steam Navigation Company are running a first-class steamer, semi-monthly, to and from San Francisco and San Diego.

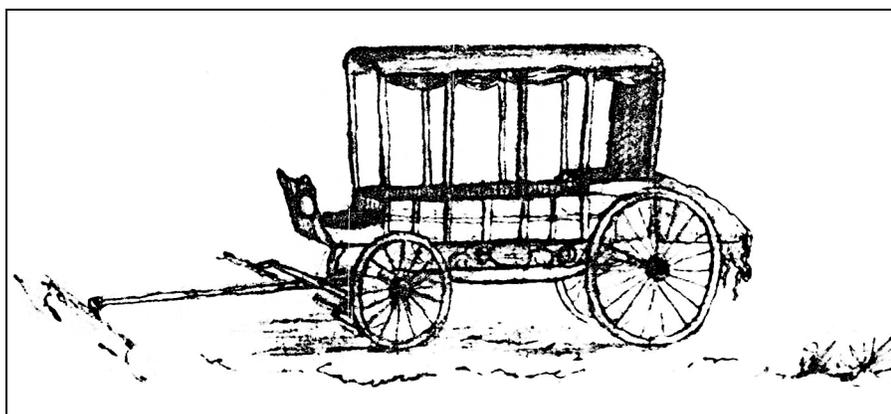
Extra Baggage, when carried, 40 cents per pound to El Paso, and \$1 per pound to San Diego.

Passengers can obtain all necessary outfits in San Antonio.

For further information, and for the purchase of tickets, apply at the office of C. G. WAYNE, 61 Camp Street, New-Orleans, or at the Company's Office, in San Antonio.

G. H. GIDDINGS, } Proprietors.
R. E. DOYLE, }

(a) San Antonio and San Diego Mail-Line billboard, 1860
(the Dr. Louis Strahlman Collection, courtesy of the San Diego Historical Society Archives).



(b) "Our Ambulance from Rio Grande to Tucson," 1858 (original drawing by Phocion Way, reproduction courtesy of the Journal of the Southwest, University of Arizona).

Figure 10. Billboard, 1860, and Coach, 1858.

mail from San Antonio arrived on the 8th inst., in 29 days. Considering the length of the route, the longest uninterrupted line in the U. States, if not in the world, it is worthy of remark that the contractors have never failed to make their schedule time since the second mail run. They have lost animals, wagons, and men, fought Indians, and conquered the desert, but they always bring their mails along inside of time. This shows the right kind of energy” (*San Diego Herald* 1-9-1858).

James Birch never saw the success of his pioneer overland mail. He was lost at sea on September 12th, 1857. The business continued to operate under the partnership of George H. Giddings of San Antonio, Texas, and R. E. Doyle of San Diego. Giddings was Superintendent of the eastern division and Doyle of the western division at the time of Birch’s death (Johnson 1938:20-24).

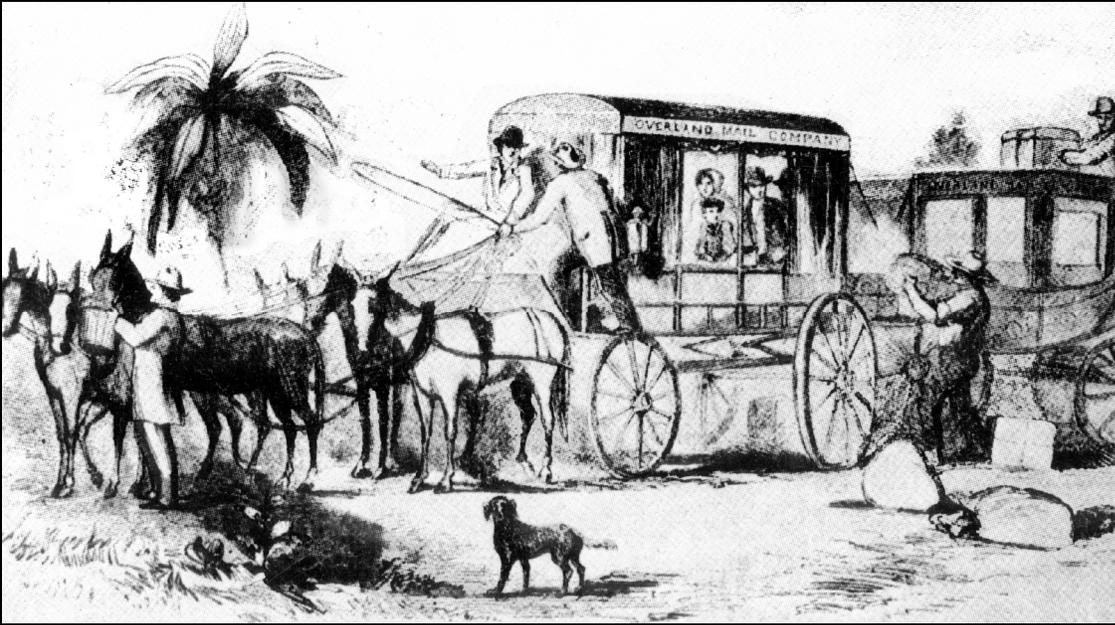
In spite of the regularity of arrivals and departures, a journey on the San Antonio to San Diego Line was an adventurous passage through an unsettled and dangerous frontier. The company recommended that each passenger:

...should provide himself with a Sharp’s rifle, (not carbine,) with accoutrements and one hundred cartridges, a navy sized Colts revolver and two pounds of balls, a belt and holster, knife and sheath; a pair of thick boots and woolen pants; half a dozen pairs thick cotton socks; three under (sic) shirts, three (sic) brown linen do (sic); three woolen over shirts, a wide awake hat, a cheap sack coat, a soldiers over (sic) coat, one pair of blankets in summer and two in winter; a piece of India rubber cloth for blankets; a pair of gauntlets; a small bag with needles, thread & c., in an oil silk bag; two pair of thick drawers, and three or four towels. Such money as he takes should be in silver or small gold. A person thus fitted out has no extra baggage (which indeed, cannot be taken), and can travel comfortably at any season of the year. [*San Diego Herald* 11-21-1857]

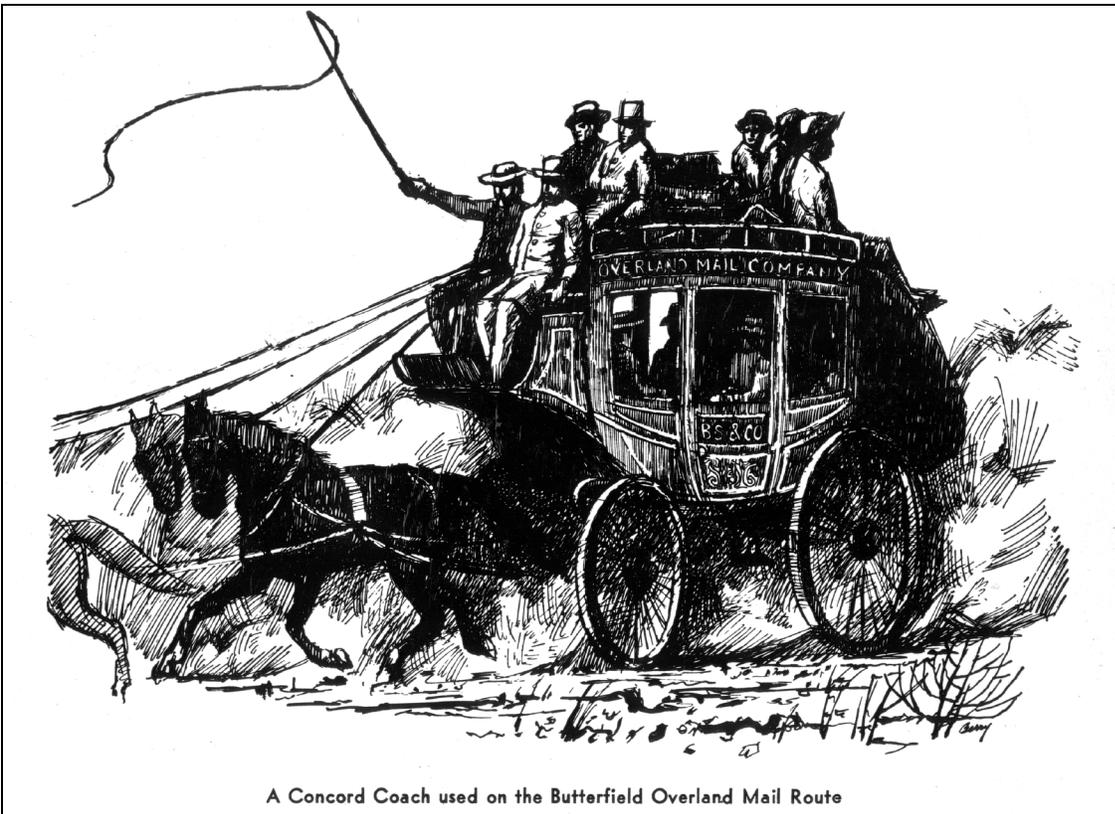
Although advertisement and reports mentioned coaches, actual accounts of travel on the San Antonio and San Diego line describe travel in celerity or mud wagons, also called ambulances (Figure 10b), the common military use for the same type of vehicle, rather than the better known Concord stagecoach of twentieth century western movies. More adept for travel over rough undeveloped terrain than the Concord, these stages were lower to the ground, lighter, and often open on the sides, or enclosed only with canvas curtains (Figure 11a). Like the Concord, the body of the celerity was suspended over the undercarriage by large leather straps called a through-brace.

Travel continued to be conducted in trains of coaches and mules even after the line became well established. Water holes may have been set up at 30 mile intervals. Many, however, remained unmanned, and actual stations could be separated by 100 miles. Traveling eastward from San Antonio in May 1858, Phocion R. Way described his outfit:

Our train presents a singular appearance: two ambulances loaded down with baggage and the mail. Every part of the stage where an article of luggage can be stored is filled. We can hardly find room to sit down. Our caravan is led by a drove of about 30 mules. These are guarded and driven by 4 men mounted on mules—two Mexicans—two Americans. They carry rifles strapped across the pommel [sic.] of their saddles, and large six shooters in



(a) "Mud Wagon" (courtesy of the San Diego Historical Society, Booth Photographic Collection).



A Concord Coach used on the Butterfield Overland Mail Route

(b) "Concord Coach" (courtesy of the San Diego Historical Society, Booth Photographic Collection).

Figure 11. Mud Wagon and Concord Coach.

their belts. Wed (sic) have large fierce looking fellows for drivers, who have been accustomed to frontier life and Indian fighting. They are armed the same as the guards. We have four passengers to each carriage, all of them well armed. We have forty-four shots in our carriage without reloading.

I neglected to state why we drove so many mules with us. They are called relays—that is, we drove one set of mules until dinner time and while we dine, turn them loose with the others to grass (they never fed them). After dinner we catch a new set and drive the rest before us, and so on until they have all seen service. It is a singular thing how these animals will either follow or lead the train—they are perfectly free but do not attempt to leave us. They are trained to it, and will follow us like dogs from San Antonio to San Diego. [Way 1858:44-45]

On parts of the road, the ambulances were changed for “a rickety carriage” and later “a heavy wagon, strong and would do but we should have another” (Way 1858:53). In places, passengers had to walk in order to relieve the fatigued mules (Way 1858:147). The mail usually moved ahead of the coaches by mule train, traveling night and day (*Sacramento Union* 1-11-1858; Way 1858:151; Johnson 1938:64). When Phocion’s party reached Tucson, those going to the Pacific Coast continued on muleback with the mail (Way 1858:151). The passenger stages traveled slower than the mule trains. In October 1857, it took the coaches from San Diego 23 days to arrive at Tucson, while the mule train with the mail made the same journey in seven. Phocion R. Way recorded the pace of his journey:

We stopped a few hours last night for rest. We started about two hours before day this morning and traveled until the sun was about an hour high, when we stopped to prepare our first meal. We have our provisions with us and we do our own cooking. We have good wholesome fare; and although we cook it in a primitive way it is very good, especially to appetites sharpened by travel and exercise. We all sit in the ground in a circle and eat our provender out of pewter plates.

We only cook two meals a day. We are very fashionable in our hours; we breakfast at 8 or 9 and have supper at 5 or 6 o’clock. We generally stop in the heat of the day to rest our mules, and then indulge in a cold snack or lunch of bread and dried beef. [Way 1858:45]

They slept on the ground every night and meals were almost always prepared in the open. The food varied slightly. At times described as “miserable—bad beans and bad bacon poorly cooked,” on other occasions the fare included beefsteak or mutton with breakfast of fresh eggs. All meals appeared to have included beans (Mexican *frijoles*) and coffee as consistent staples (Way 1858:53, 155). After several weeks of the outdoor life, stage travelers developed a wild and unkempt appearance. “We all wear nothing in this warm weather but a check shirt and pants and a belt around the waists where we can carry our revolvers and knives. We have not changed our clothes since we started, nor shaved our faces. And the hot sun has made us almost as dark as Indians” (Way 1858:48).

The few actual manned stations on the route consisted of Mexican native adobe, stone, or wattle and daub buildings—usually windowless—with thatched roofs and packed earthen floors. The latter were constructed of small woven branches, generally willow or ocotillo. At times they were left uncovered and on other occasions plastered with mud (Fay

1955, 1956, 1958, 1969; Lopez Morales 1987). Described as “a hard looking tavern,” “a primitive looking place,” a “regular backwoods establishment” or “odd looking” these stations often had one or two dwellings and a corral for horses and mules. The cramped quarters seldom provided sleeping space for stage passengers, who spread their blankets outside on the ground (Way 1858:43, 51, 53, 160) (Figure 12).

Passing through “a wild uninhabited” country, the journey was dangerous. Native American raids were not unknown and bandits attacked stations. These conditions affected the manner, attitude, and appearance of the local inhabitants:¹⁵

There are a good many border men living here and they are decidedly a hard looking set. They are generally fine specimens of the physical man but the life they lead is of constant danger and makes them bold and reckless. They seem to place no value on human life, and apparently think no more of shooting a man that offends them than they would of shooting a horse or dog.... Every man, no matter what his business goes well armed at all times. [Way 1858:44]

Everybody goes armed here. If a man has no shirt to his back he will have his knife in his belt. [Way 1858:159]

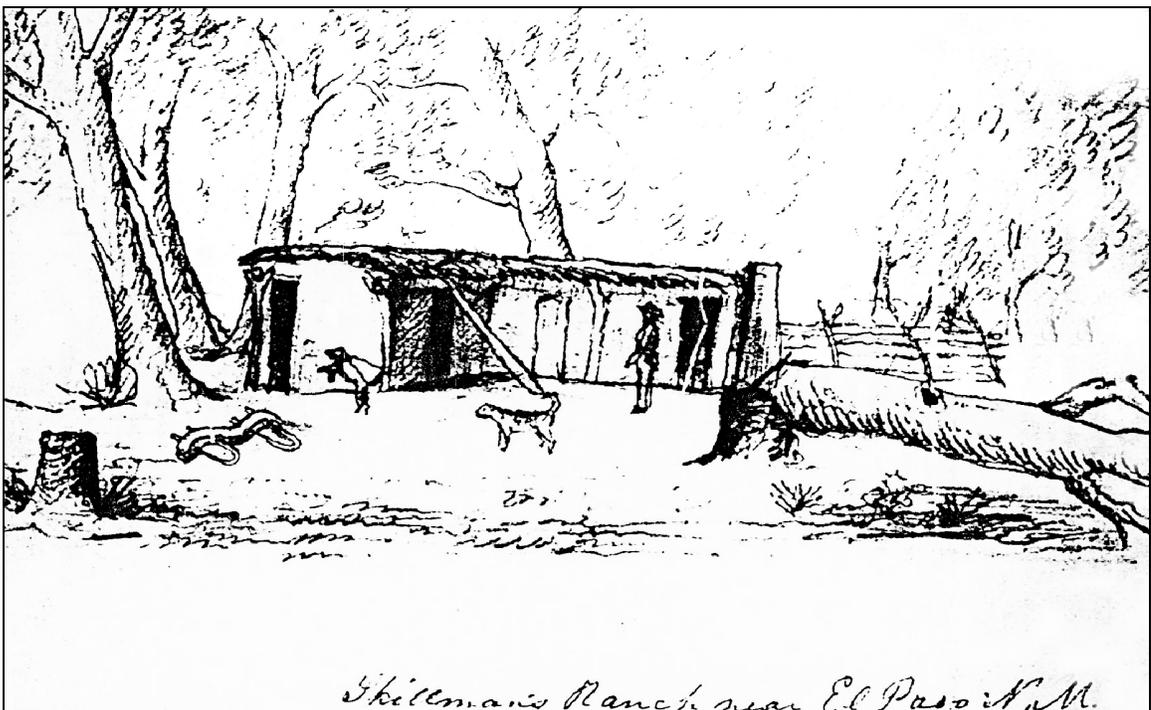
Two recent innovations in weapons—the Colt revolver and Sharps rifle—provided overland mail parties with exceptional firepower when compared to muzzle loading arms still commonly in use at the time. When Phocion Way left San Antonio, his group could muster 44 shots without reloading (Way 1858:44). By the time they neared Tucson their fire power had increased to 95 shots. “All our guards have Sharps rifles—the best most efficient gun ever invented. You can load them 5 or 6 times a minute” (Way 1858:47). As the stage traveled, passengers were compelled to be continually on their guard, to have their revolvers in their belts, and rifles where they could lay hands on them in a moment. “We walk about with our arms, we sit down with them by our sides, and we sleep with them” (Way 1858:51). At night they placed a guard over the mules, spread blankets on the ground “and lay down with our rifles and revolvers by our sides for instant use” (Way 1858:47).

Eastbound travelers found the same primitive frontier conditions after leaving San Diego. Through the mountains the coaches stopped at local ranches. The only actual company station in the desert appears to have been the one at Carrizo Creek. Watering holes located at Indian Wells, Alamo Mocho, and Cooke’s Wells were unmanned.

Charles F. Running, correspondent for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, rode the stage to Lassitor’s Ranch at Green Valley and then traveled by mule down Oriflamme Canyon to Vallecito on the desert.¹⁶ The first day “We made twenty-one miles that p.m. and stopped at Ames Ranch. For supper we had jerked beef, tea, and *algunas tortillas mal hechas* (some badly made tortillas). Our landlady was an Indian woman.” The next day they journeyed another 27 miles to Lassitor’s, where they arrived late at night and “slept in low hut with fire in the middle, Indian fashion. Had a good supper and breakfast—fresh butter, bread, mutton, coffee” (Running 1858).



(a) Thatch Roof Wattle and Daub House with Wood Stockade Corral, Fort Davis, 1858 (original drawing by Phocion Way, reproduction courtesy of the *Journal of the Southwest*, University of Arizona).



Skillman's Ranch near El Paso N.M.
(b) Wattle and Daub House with Thatch Roof, El Paso, New Mexico, 1858 (original drawing by Phocion Way, reproduction courtesy of the *Journal of the Southwest*, University of Arizona).

Figure 12. Thatch Roof Wattle, Daub House, and Wood Stockade Corral, 1858.

Here they left the stages and “rode on horseback” for 18 miles, “three of which were over snow, and we had a very steep hill to go down. The country is very hilly and almost destitute of vegetation...” Upon reaching Vallecito in the evening they slept in a sod house built there by James Lassitor in 1854, “on a hard dirt floor and had a tolerably good supper in the shape of ‘ragout,’ good coffee and butter. Here we met passengers coming from the other end of the route, five in number; they complained very much and had had a very hard time of it. I thought it a pity for one was a newly-married lady, and I thought it must have been a rather dangerous honeymoon. However, she was fat and hearty and had got along better than any of the men” (Running 1858).

Those who took coaches through Santa Ysabel and Warner’s Ranch found similar frontier conditions. After stopping at the Alvarado adobe in Peñasquitos Canyon, the stage continued to Santa Ysabel and then to the Carrillo ranch house at Warner’s.¹⁷ On the desert at San Felipe, passengers found “an adobe house, brackish water, and poor grass, like that usually growing in salty land.” The proprietor, a German called Dutch Bill, “occupied the aforesaid adobe house and supports himself by selling necessities to travelers” (*San Francisco Herald* 12-27-1857; *San Diego Herald* 5-29-1858).

At Carrizo Creek, the mail company used the adobe constructed by the military in June 1855 as a station building. J. J. Thomas saw the place in the fall of 1857 as an “old adobe house,” occupied by William Mailland. The thatch roof had been burned off (*Sacramento Union* 12-24-1857). The unmanned water holes in the desert continued to be unreliable. Thomas found Indian Wells to be “small holes 20 feet underground where some water is obtained.” He described the smell to be “about as delicate ... as e’er rose from a barnyard. Here we feed animals with barley carried with us and refresh ourselves as circumstances permit” (*Sacramento Union* 12-24-1857). A few months later overland mail passengers camped overnight at Indian Wells, and had sufficient water for themselves and the animals, and enough wood for a fire. From this point they made the crossing to Fort Yuma without water, finding the wells at Alamo Mocho caved in, and Cooke’s Wells dry (*Sacramento Union* 3-12-1858).

The undercurrent of violence that permeated life along the eastern parts of the line also existed here. In May 1858 William Mailland, the station keeper at Carrizo, killed his Native American wife. The *San Diego Herald* reported on May 29, 1858:

MURDER at CARRISO

We have been furnished with the following facts in reference to the murder of the Indian Squaw at Carriso by William Mailland. Mailland occupied the adobe house at the creek, the squaw living with him. A deserter apprehended on the evening of the 12th inst., at San Felipe, stated that he had been in the house with Mailland the day before and that a party of 10 Indians armed with rifles had surrounded the house and were trying to get in and put Mailland to death. The deserter stated that he had escaped, but supposed that the Indians had, by that time, succeeded in achieving their purpose.

Maj. Riggold, U.S.A., en route to Fort Yuma, reached Carriso next afternoon and found two Indians at the door, which was barricaded, one of them being armed with a rifle. They both left soon after Major R’s arrival. Mailland was found to be in a state of delirium tremors - did not seem to have any clear idea of what had occurred—but admitted that possibly he may have killed

the squaw, but if he did he was drunk at the time and did not know anything about it. Major R. thought proper to get him away from present danger, there seeming great doubt as to the man's being in a sane state of mind, and he, therefore, had him placed in the ambulance and carried to Indian Wells, 30 miles into the desert, with the view of sending him back by some one of the wagons of the command then en route from Fort Yuma across the desert. He was accordingly carried back to Carriso, where he appeared perfectly recovered and sane, but indifferent and apparently insensible to the crime he had committed. The room where he had shut himself in had blood all over the floor, the bed was saturated with blood, and subsequently the body of the squaw was found buried behind the house. That night Mailland took himself off—was met by the mail riders and turned back with them, riding a spare horse some distance, but fearing the civil authorities, he concluded again to go into the direction of Fort Yuma. He accordingly got into Ingall's wagon and went with him as far as Indian Wells, where, taking the Paymaster's party again, he took to the bushes. It was supposed that he had perished on the desert. Then a traveler who stopped at Dutch Bill's at San Felipe, told Bill that he had seen Mailland across the Colorado, making tracks for Sonora.

Following Mailland's departure, Hamilton Breeze became station keeper at Carrizo Creek. The company paid him \$75 a month (San Diego District Court 1860). In addition to tending to the livestock and equipment of the stage line he ran a "public house" that provided meals, drinks, livestock feed, and other limited services for travelers on the road. Stage driver George E. Freeman remembered Breeze as "...chief cook and bottle washer. (He) cooked, tended the bar, and took care of some animals belonging to the S.A. & S.D. Mail Co." Merchandise and goods on hand included tea, coffee, sugar, hard bread, and whisky. Hay and barley were kept for the animals. The scale of this business was small. With the exception of the livestock feed, all the other merchandise could have been packed out on two horses. R. E. Doyle sent supplies from San Diego and Hamilton often obtained additional provisions from Vallecito and San Felipe (Freeman 1860). Hamilton Breeze left Carrizo Creek in October 1859 (San Diego District Court 1860). By this time the desert outpost had also become a station on the overland mail line headed by John Butterfield.

The Butterfield Overland Mail Company

On July 7, 1857, the Postmaster General awarded the contract to provide overland mail service between San Francisco and the Mississippi to a combine headed by John Butterfield of New York. This group collectively controlled the most powerful express companies on the East Coast. They were to provide a semi-weekly service from two eastern termini at Saint Louis, Missouri and Memphis, Tennessee to San Francisco (Richardson 1925). The Missouri and Tennessee lines converged at Fort Smith, Arkansas. In Missouri, trains would carry the mail between the railheads at Tipton and the Mississippi River at St. Louis. In Arkansas, local stages were used to travel the route between Fort Smith and Memphis, Tennessee. The San Antonio to San Diego line continued to operate along its entire length through August 1858, while the newly formed Overland Mail Company, popularly known as the Butterfield Line, established a 3,000-mile stage route. Most of the road followed the Gila overland trail through the desert wilderness of the southwest. Tasks

for the new company included building and stocking 139 stations, along with associated corrals, wells, and cisterns, and assembling 1,200 horses, 600 mules, and 100 coaches. The company hired 750 employees to run the stations. Stages were expected to complete a one-way trip between the two termini in 25 days. The first stage left Tipton, Missouri, on September 16, 1858. The route now passed through Warner's Ranch and Temecula to Los Angeles rather than taking the Warner's-Santa Ysabel cutoff to San Diego (Richardson 1925; Pourade 1963:224-225).

The Overland Mail line developed a much larger and more complex infrastructure than the San Antonio and San Diego Mail. The company had manned stations every 10 to 15 miles, and occasionally 20 to 25 miles apart (Barrows 1896). These were grouped into nine divisions, each one under the direction of a superintendent. An agent served under the superintendent and had charge of a number of stations. The road between the Colorado River and Warner's Ranch was part of Division # 2, which included all stops between Fort Yuma and Los Angeles. Twelve stations, under the direction of Agent Warren G. Hall, spanned the route from Yuma through Warner's Pass and included Fort Yuma, Pilot Knob, Cooke's Wells, Gardener's Wells, Alamo Mocho, Indian Wells, Sackett's Wells, Carrizo Creek, Palm Springs, Vallecito, San Felipe, and Warner's Ranch. The stations within the United States, their personnel, available livestock, and feed on hand, taken from the 1860 Federal census, are listed in Table 1 and Table 2 (US Census Bureau 1860a, 1860b). The Federal Census did not include Pilot Knob, Alamo Mocho, Gardener's Wells, and Cooke's Wells since these stations were located in Mexico.

Table 1. 1860 Federal Census Listings for Butterfield Stage Stations.

INDIVIDUAL	AGE	SEX	RACE	PROFESSION	REAL ESTATE	PERSONAL ESTATE	PLACE OF BIRTH
<i>Warner's Ranch Station</i>							
Alexander Vance	28	M	-	Hostler	-	-	Ohio
<i>San Felipe Station</i>							
Warren Hall	40	M	-	Mail Agent	2000	4000	New York
Margaret Hall	34	F	-	-	-	-	New York
Anita Hall	2	F	-	-	-	-	California
Margaret Cook	69	F	-	-	-	-	New York
Oliver P. Cook	31	M	-	Hotel Keeper	-	500	New York
Joseph Lober	18	M	-	Cook	-	-	Germany
Hiram P. Huntington	37	M	-	Harness Maker	-	-	New York
Solmen T. Wormsley	31	M	-	Stage Driver	-	-	New York
George Freeman	43	M	-	-	-	300	Virginia
<i>Vallecito Station</i>							
Andrew Mulkins	26	M	-	Merchant	500	2000	New York
John Meir	37	M	-	Cook	-	300	Germany

Table 1. 1860 Federal Census Listings for Butterfield Stage Stations *continued.*

INDIVIDUAL	AGE	SEX	RACE	PROFESSION	REAL ESTATE	PERSONAL ESTATE	PLACE OF BIRTH
<i>2nd Household</i>							
Wm. Johnson	39	M	-	Hostler	-	-	Pennsylvania
John McClintock	36	M	-	Hostler	-	-	-
Numerous Native American Households Also Listed							
<i>Palm Springs Station</i>							
John White	30	M	-	Hostler	-	200	New York
<i>Carriso Station</i>							
William H. Yates	21	M	-	Hostler	-	200	New York
<i>Sackett's Station</i>							
George Taylor	30	M	-	Hostler	-	100	Pennsylvania
Maria Taylor	25	F	Ind.	-	-	-	California
<i>2nd House</i>							
Henry McClaghen	35	M	-	Station Keeper	400	200	Scotland
Edward Oathemer	30	M	-	Blacksmith	500	500	Pennsylvania
<i>Indian Wells</i>							
William Holmes	30	M	-	Hotel Keeper	-	500	Missouri
John Pete	30	M	-	Hostler	-	-	Tennessee
Thomas McWilliams	24	M	-	Hostler	-	100	Ireland
Maria Romero	22	F	-	Cook	-	-	California
Ysabel Romero	1	F	-	-	-	-	California
<i>Colorado, Station (Ft. Yuma)</i>							
Edward G. Stevens	32	M	-	O' Mail Agent	1200	6000	New York
George W. Jacobs	38	M	-	O' Mail Agent	-	-	New York
Henry W. Tibbetts	40	M	-	Clerk	-	-	New York
Garrett-Garretsy	46	M	-	Carpenter	-	-	New York
<i>(Ft. Yuma)</i>							
Arvin Harper	34	M	-	Blacksmith	-	-	Pennsylvania
Chauncey Jewett	36	M	-	Harness Maker	-	-	New York
Oliver M. Parks	40	M	-	Stage Driver	-	-	New York
Henry Stafford	33	M	-	Stage Driver	-	-	Pennsylvania
Andrew Baker	32	M	-	Stage Driver	-	-	New York
Newell Hosner	30	M	-	Stage Driver	-	-	New York
Hugh Doran	28	M	-	Mail Conductor	-	-	New York
Smite Tyler	32	M	-	Mail Conductor	-	-	New York

Table 1. 1860 Federal Census Listings for Butterfield Stage Stations *continued*.

INDIVIDUAL	AGE	SEX	RACE	PROFESSION	REAL ESTATE	PERSONAL ESTATE	PLACE OF BIRTH
<i>(Ft. Yuma) continued</i>							
George Andrews	26	M	-	Mail Conductor	-	-	New York
John McTusk	35	M	-	Mail Conductor	-	-	New York
John Loyd	37	M	-	Mail Conductor	-	-	New York
Louis Brewer	35	M	-	Mail Conductor	-	-	Maryland
Matthea Webber	42	M	-	Teamster	-	-	Virginia
Joe E. West	40	M	-	Teamster	-	-	Missouri
Dennis Tiemays	35	M	-	Teamster	-	-	Ireland
Henry Gilbert	34	M	-	Cook	-	-	Louisiana
Patrick Table	32	M	-	Hostler	-	-	Ireland

Table 2. 1860 Federal Census Economic Data for Butterfield Stage Stations.

STATION	REPRESENTATIVE	CAPITAL INVESTED	BARLEY	HAY	STOCK
Warner's Ranch	Alex Vance, Keeper	\$1000	12 ton	12 ton	4 horses
San Felipe	W. (Warren) F. Hall, Agent	\$5000	48 ton	36 ton	19 horses, 2 coaches
Vallecito	Wm. Johnson, Keeper	\$1500	12 ton	12 ton	6 horses
Palm Springs	J. White Keeper	\$1200	12 ton	12 ton	5 horses
Carrizo	Wm. Yates Keeper	\$1200	12 ton	12 ton	5 horses
Sackett's Well	George Taylor Keeper	\$1200	12 ton	12 ton	5 horses
Indian Wells	John Pettes Keeper	\$1200	12 ton	12 ton	1 coach, 5 horses
Colorado (Fort Yuma)	Edwin G. Stevens, Agent	\$10,000	12 ton	12 ton	5 horses

Carrizo Creek appears to have been occupied by employees of both the San Antonio and San Diego and the Overland Mail Companies, during the first year of the Butterfield Line's operation. George Freeman, a driver for that firm, was headquartered at Carrizo Creek, at the same time Hamilton Breeze ran the station for Giddings and Doyle (Freeman 1860). Following Breeze's departure in October 1859, the station seems to have been occupied exclusively by Overland Mail Company personnel (US Census Bureau 1860a, 1860b).

Yuma and San Felipe became the Overland Mail Company's two most important stations between the Colorado River and Warner's Ranch. The company had a major maintenance facility at Fort Yuma, with an investment of \$10,000. Twenty-one employees resided there including two agents, a clerk, carpenter, blacksmith, harness maker, four drivers, six conductors, three teamsters, a cook, and a hostler. Twelve tons of hay and barley were on hand although only five horses were kept there (US Census Bureau 1860a, 1860b).

San Felipe now served as the major change station west of Fort Yuma. The division agent, Warren G. Hall, resided there as well as five other employees: the station keeper (also

called an agent), a hotel keeper, a cook, a harness maker, a stage driver, and their families. The company had invested \$5,000 in the station. The post had 48 tons of barley, 36 tons of hay, 19 horses, and 2 coaches. The remaining stops, including Carrizo Creek, functioned as changing or “swing” stations to replace worn out teams with fresh horses. Most had a single keeper, identified as a hostler, who took care of the livestock and helped change the teams. Exceptions were at Vallecito, where two hostlers, a cook, and a merchant resided; Sackett’s Station (Wells) with a hostler, station keeper, and blacksmith; and Indian Wells, with a hotelkeeper, two hostlers, and a cook. The swing stations kept 4 to 5 horses and 12 tons each of barley and hay. Company investment in each station ranged between \$1,000 and \$1,500 (US Census Bureau 1860a, 1860b). Based on traveler’s descriptions, some also served as meal stops. The presence of employed cooks listed on the 1860 census, as well as descriptions, indicate Yuma, Cooke’s Wells, Indian Wells, Vallecito, and San Felipe provided food (Ormsby 1858; Tallack 1860; Farwell 1858).

A through trip between San Francisco and Saint Louis on the Butterfield line generally took between 23 and 25 days (Richardson 1925). Stages traveled day and night, stopping only briefly for meals and to change horses. H. D. Barrow, who traveled from Los Angeles to Missouri, remembered, “We traveled day and night by stage for about eighteen days and five hours.... Of course the journey was somewhat tedious, but this was more than compensated for by the incidents and variety of scenery ... and really, the weariness of stage travel was less disagreeable than sea sickness, etc., by water.... At first it was not easy to get much sleep, but after a couple of days out we could sleep without difficulty, either day or night” (Barrows 1896).

On the eastern portions of the route, where roads were improved, Butterfield’s company used Concord Coaches. On the west coast the Overland Mail Company, like the San Antonio—San Diego line, used celerity or mud wagons (see Figure 11). H. D. Barrows recalled that on his journey from Los Angeles they rode in “through-brace mud wagons” until reaching the neighborhood of Springfield, Missouri (Barrows 1896). A driver and conductor accompanied each stage; both went armed. Unlike the small arsenal of weaponry and large list of supplies and equipment required on the San Antonio—San Diego crossing, all the Overland Mail passenger needed “to tender himself comfortable is a pair of blankets, a revolver or knife (just as he fancies), and an overcoat, some wine to mix with water (which is not the sweetest quality) and three or four dollars worth of provisions, purchased in Los Angeles, to last him over the desert” (Farwell 1858). In addition, an ounce of tartic acid to relieve the diuretic effects of the desert water was recommended “as it has an admirable effect in relieving disagreeable sensations” (Farwell 1858).

Since the stage stopped only briefly at each station, passengers recorded few details. J. M. Farwell, correspondent for the *Daily Alta California*, arrived at Palm Springs on a bright moonlit night. “While we remained here the beauty and singularity of the scene will not soon fade from my memory. I was not long permitted to enjoy this, for the coach was ready and we were off again” (Farwell 1858). At Carrizo Creek they found “water still more sulphurous in its taste. We were, however obliged to fill some bottles with it for our own use, though the driver carries a supply, and so long as it lasts passengers are allowed free use of it. As the trip we now had to make was 32 miles in extent, we thought our course a proper one” (Farwell 1858).

William Tallack, traveling in 1860 reached Carrizo Creek Station at day break and found it “a solitary station in a scene of desolation not to be surpassed in the Arabian deserts.” Upon their arrival the driver lay down “to snatch ten minutes sleep after the night’s exertion ... and was instantly unconscious in profound slumber, from which he has speedily to be roused again.” After passing a party of “forty United States soldiers, covered with dust and tattered clothes,” they continued “driving for hours through a wind as hot as from a furnace,” and reached Indian Wells “-a miserable adobe with walls black inside with clustering flies, but where we were refreshed with coffee” (Tallack 1860).

Meals could be had along the route for 75 cents. They included “Beef, dried apples, beans, potatoes, and frequently pies and venison. “Hot rolls occasionally, like meeting a long absent friend, make their appearance and as suddenly disappear.” At Alamo Mocho, Lang breakfasted on “tough steaks at four a.m. in another dirty dusty adobe” (Farwell 1858).

The harsh desert elements did take their toll. Riding hour after hour the stage became “enveloped in clouds of fine clayey dust... What with the hot wind, the dust, and the perspiration, our faces and hands became covered with a thin mud, only removed to be speedily renewed as we proceeded” (Farwell 1858).

The stage frequently passed Native Americans. Not only in their villages at San Felipe, Vallecito, and Fort Yuma, but also along the road “crossing the desert on foot, carrying their water gourds ... these did us no more harm than to make faces at us and grin as our horses shied from them. I found the journey quite unpleasant in the wagon; but they seemed to enjoy the walk, as if used to it.” Emigrant trains were also a common sight with “many cattle and oxen dying on the desert from want of water,” as they had in 1849 and 1850 (Ormsby 1858:90).

With inauguration of Overland Mail Company service, the San Antonio and San Diego became two short branch lines at either end of the nation’s southwest border. On October 22, 1858, the Postmaster General discontinued service between El Paso and Fort Yuma where it overlapped the Missouri to San Francisco route. The stages of the San Antonio and San Diego now provided connections from these two cities to the transcontinental Overland Mail. In compensation, the Post Office Department upgraded operations on the two branches to a weekly service (Tamplin 1979:88; Johnson 1938:27). In 1859 the San Antonio—San Diego had “50 fine new coaches, 400 mules, and 64 men.” Drivers maintained an average speed of six miles an hour (Banning 1928).¹⁸ Newspapers in San Francisco and Sacramento, both connected to the Overland Mail, resented continuation of the San Antonio—San Diego in even this limited form, dubbing it the “San Antonio & San Diego Jackass Overland Mail Route” and demanding that Congress “lop off this useless mail” (*Sacramento Union* 11-15-1859; Banning 1928). It was this attack that gave the line its nickname, “Jackass Mail.” On April 1, 1860 the Post Office Department reduced the line even further and discontinued service between Fort Yuma and San Diego (Tamplin 1979:89).

Within a year, overland mail service over the Southern Route ceased. With the outbreak of the Civil War in the spring of 1861, almost half the route lay in Confederate States. On March 2, 1861, the Post Master General stopped mail delivery on the Southern Route and implemented a six-times-a-week service on the Central Route along the Platte River and through the Rocky and Sierra Nevada mountains between Saint Joseph, Missouri

and Placerville, California. Butterfield ceased operations in April and Wells Fargo and Company began service along the new route in July (Tamplin 1979:91).

THE CIVIL WAR

Once again, national affairs changed the dynamics of travel across the Colorado Desert. Although emigrants and livestock herds still continued to move westward toward the California Coast, now large groups began to move eastward across the trail. First came southern sympathizers returning home to fight for the Confederate States, followed by U.S. Army troops intent on securing the southwest for the Union.

In October 1861, the First Infantry of California Volunteers received orders to relieve the regular troops at Fort Yuma. They left Camp Wright near Warner's Ranch and made the crossing to Yuma the last week of October. The next four years saw a constant stream of men and supplies, dispatched from Drum Barracks in Wilmington, near Los Angeles, moving across the desert. They supported Union military actions in Arizona and New Mexico (Tamplin 1979:94).

When the first detachments of California Volunteers marched eastward to replace regular troops at Fort Yuma, they found the former Overland Mail stations along the road abandoned. Many still had stored forage left by the Butterfield Company (Davis et. al. 1897). By December the stations had been manned by the Army, as supply depots to support troops and wagon trains en route to Fort Yuma. John Warner, former owner of Warner's Ranch, stopped at Carrizo Creek on the evening of December 1, 1861, and "had dinner with Sergeant McCalaggan, an old soldier and a good true man" (Davis et. al. 1897).

In February 1862, Confederate Captain Sherrod Hunter occupied Tucson. In response, U.S. Army Colonel James H. Carleton mounted an expedition against the Confederates in Arizona. Fort Yuma served as the "jumping off point" for the expedition. Here the force of 2,500 men along with the arms, supplies, wagons, and animals required to keep them in the field was assembled.

With hundreds of troops and large wagon trains of supplies moving from the coast to the Colorado River, maintenance of the road and the establishment of supply lines became imperative. Stores of hay and barley were kept at all the former overland stage stations between San Felipe and Fort Yuma. Special detachments were sent to clean out and repair all the wells between Carrizo Creek and the fort. Water barrels were put into the ground at many of these locations. Troops and wagon trains crossing the desert were ordered to send an advance party one day ahead to fill the barrels so that the water would be available upon arrival of the main force. Upon leaving, enough water was to be left in the barrels so that they would not dry out and fall apart (Davis et. al. 1897).

In the spring of 1862, the garrison at Fort Yuma was increased in preparation for the Arizona campaigns against the Confederates occupying Tucson. As the weather warmed up, detachments crossing the desert received specific orders to assure the safe arrival of troops and animals. On April 17, Lt. Cutler wrote to Captain Shirland of the First Cavalry of California Volunteers:

Captain: The colonel commanding the district directs that you march your company without delay to Fort Yuma. You will have ten days rations of subsistence, 100 rounds per man for the Sharps carbine, and fifty rounds per man for the navy revolver. Your transportation will be three wagons from

McDonalds train. Each wagon will have two or three water kegs for use on the desert. You will be careful to send a small party a day in advance with buckets to fill barrels at the different wells, and leave a small party a day behind with orders to leave all the barrels full of water for the next company which follows you. You will start from your present camp, from camp Wright, and from Carriso Creek with your wagons laden to 3,000 pounds each, made up of forage. Mr. Beard has doubtless made arrangements for beef to be driven on the hoof for your use. If the days are hot you must travel by night. Your men must walk at least half the time by the watch. Practice as you march along, one hour each day, the saber exercise. It will require great judgment to get your horses across the desert in as good a trim as they are now. [Davis et. al. 1897]

Colonel Carleton directed similar orders to Cavalry Captain Shinn on April 26:

Captain: I presume you will arrive at San Felipe to-day. Stay at that point the whole of the 27th instant; leave for Vallecito on the 28th; leave Vallecito for Carriso Creek on the 29th; leave Carriso Creek for Indian Well at 4 p.m. on the 30th. I shall cause all the water at Sackett's Wells to be saved for you; but these wells are drying up so you must not count on even one gallon per animal. Have all your kegs filled at Carriso Creek. Have your barley soaked, so as to feed of soaked barley at Sackett's Wells, five quarts per animal. At Sackett's well you will find a feed of hay. Thus you will arrive quite fresh at Indian Well early on May 1. Start again at 4 p.m. with soaked barley for the nights feed... [Davis et. al. 1897]

The next day Colonel Carleton issued Special Order No. 51 stating that after that date, troops and wagon trains would cross the "Yuma Desert in the night starting from Carriso Creek at 4 p.m. going eastward." Cavalry and quartermaster's supply trains had to be broken up so "as to not have over eighty animals leave Carriso Creek twenty-four hours in advance of the next eighty. Thus the supply at Indian Well, the Alamo, Cooke's Wells will each afford a supply for eighty animals" (Davis et. al. 1897:1033).

The following day Colonel Carlton sent detailed instructions to Colonel Bowie at Camp Wright near Oak Grove describing how the above orders were to be carried out:

Colonel: About the time this reaches you, say the 30th instant, some trains will be near your post en route from San Pedro to Fort Yuma. These trains must be so divided at your camp that not over eighty animals, whether horses or mules, be at any one point on the desert on any one day. This precaution is rendered necessary from the failing of the water at Sackett's Wells. All the marches from Vallecito across the desert must be made at night, starting from each point at 5:30 p.m. The increasing heat of the weather renders this absolutely necessary. You will arrange the program of the movement of the trains accordingly, giving to each conductor a written report of the hour and day when he is to leave for the following places, viz: Vallecito (water plenty, perhaps some hay, hardly any grass here to be obtained). Carriso Creek (water plenty but bad; no grass, no hay). Indian Well (water to be drawn up by buckets; more can be gotten by having a man descend the well there to dip the water into the buckets by a cup as fast as it runs in; this will take all

day steady work to water the animals, no grass, no hay). Norton's Wells (water abundant to be drawn up in buckets; no hay, no grass). Cooke's Wells (water abundant possibly no hay, no grass). Pilot Knob (on the river probably no hay). Fort Yuma.—Send forward by the different divisions of the trains thus marching a day apart (omitting to send any of the infantry with one with which Lt. Hammond is to come on without delay, with a half company of cavalry)... You will find barley at San Felipe, Carrizo Creek, Indian Well and at Norton's Wells. If you cannot make arrangements to have fresh beef delivered to each train, each detachment or each company thus leaving Camp Wright on its march across the desert, you must be sure to cause your commissary to issue pork if necessary the whole distance. The teams must not be overloaded as the weather is getting hot. Have the teams load mostly with subsistence stores, being sure to have barley enough on to last, say, eighty miles, in case of accident or failure of supply at any one station. Each company will bring its quota of the rifled musket ammunition... This letter places you in control of all trains passing your post eastward until you yourself leave, and enjoins upon you the care that they shall be so instructed that not over eighty horses or mules aggregately, be at any one of the points before mentioned at the same time. Each wagon should, if possible, have two water kegs. Marching by night the men and animals will suffer but little for want of water... [Davis et. al. 1897]

Colonel Carleton and the California Volunteers waged an effective campaign against the small Confederate forces operating in Arizona and reclaimed the southwest for the Union. As historian Clifford Trafzer has noted, the "Yuma Crossing was significant to Carleton and the California Column, for it was there that they ferried their food, mounts, arms, and supplies across from California and into Arizona. It was from Fort Yuma that they launched their small but decisive campaigns against the Rebels" (Trafzer 1980:68). Carrizo Creek and the other overland stage stations played a vital role in these operations as supply depots and watering places for the thousands of troops and animals that crossed the desert in support of Carleton's forces.

POST CIVIL WAR THROUGH THE 20TH CENTURY

Following the Civil War, travel on the trail between Yuma and Warner's Ranch declined somewhat compared to former decades. Stages from San Diego to Yuma followed a more direct road opened in the late 1860s that came through the mountains via Jacumba and Mountain Springs, passed by Carrizo Creek and other stations to the north, and intersected the traditional overland trail south of Sackett's Wells. The route through the Carrizo Corridor and Warner's Pass did continue to be used by overland stage lines running between Los Angeles and Arizona (Wright 1961). Stage service between Los Angeles and Yuma had evidently been intermittent at least since the middle of the decade. In February 1867, General James S. Russling, on a military tour, left Drum Barracks for Fort Yuma in an ambulance provided by the Quartermaster. He had intended to go by overland stage "but the route to Yuma had just been changed from Los Angeles to San Diego" (Russling 1877:339). By 1869, however, two lines had resumed operations along this road: Barlow and Sanderson as well as Tomlinsong and Griffen, both running between Los Angeles and Tucson. The Tomlinsong line stopped at San Bernardino (Telfer 1951).

Information on travel through this part of San Diego County for the period is scanty. Russling recorded one of the best accounts and found the country occupied by:

...only a scattered ranch here and there, every ten or twelve miles apart, of the rudest character - sometimes not even these - where coarse groceries, canned fruits and vegetables, and whiskey and mescal, were kept for sale to Indians and passing travelers. These had mostly been stage stations on the great Butterfield Overland Route before the war, and when this broke that up, these ranchmen still remained, hoping something would "turn up." The station at Carissa Creek was a good representative of this, and likewise of many others.

"Carissa Creek" itself is one of southern California's "blind" streams, like so many in Arizona, beginning and ending nowhere in particular - without either source or mouth apparently. Issuing from a sand-heap, it terminates in another a few miles away; but just here at the station is a shallow creek - a few yards wide, by six inches deep - tainted, of course with alkali. The station itself is the adobe remains of an old stage station, whose roof was all gone, and as a substitute the enterprising proprietor had thrown some poles across, and covered them with willows and coarse grass. This turned the sun somewhat, and the easy-going proprietor said, "'Twern't no use, no how, to roof agin rain; 'cause, you bet, stranger, no rain ever gits yer!" His forlorn structure, part of which was used for a chicken-roost, also served its owner as bar-room, grocery, kitchen, parlor, bed-room, etc., and yet contained only one rude apartment, altogether. "Mine host" here was a Texan, who somehow had strayed away out here, and dropped down at Carissa Creek - he hardly knew how. He "didn't think it much of a place, that's a fact; no how, stranger! But then, you see, I'm yer; and it's a heap of trouble to move elsewhar! Besides, yer know, I couldn't recommend nobody else to buy me out, no how! Somebody has got to live at Carissa Creek, anyhow; and why not me?" His philosophy, under the circumstances, seemed delicious, worthy of Mr. Mark Tapley himself; and, of course, we had not the heart to disturb it.

For meals and lodgings en route, we did indeed have to "rough it" pretty generally, nearly everywhere especially after passing Vallecito. Salt pork fried, saleratus biscuit hot, and coffee plain, came again into vogue. [Russling 1877:348, 349]

Russling did not meet many emigrants on the road from the eastern United States. There were groups of Mexicans, Imperialists who had supported Maximilian, fleeing the forces of Benito Juarez who had occupied Sonora. At Carrizo Creek he encountered "a party of these, resting there during the heat of the day. The men were lounging about the station, or sleeping in the sand; the women, washing clothes in the little creek. Their animals - a heterogeneous herd of horses, mules, and broncos - were browsing by the roadside, on chemisal, mescal, or whatever they could pick up." The resident "keeper" at the station stated that in the previous four months about 1200 Imperialists had passed northward, fleeing Mexico, "while during the same period only about 200 Liberals had returned to Sonora" (Russling 1877:353).

The San Diego County Register of Voters lists 28-year-old Henry Wilson from Pennsylvania as “station keeper” at Carrizo in April 1867. He undoubtedly is the “mine host” referred to by Russling. In 1869, Henry Bascar Spratt, age 32, is listed as a merchant at “Carrisa Creek.” An 1869 tax record for Henry Spratt lists him as owner of a ranch at “Carissita Creek,” with \$300 on hand. He is also listed at Carrizo in the Register in 1871 and 1875 (San Diego County Register of Voters 1869, 1871, 1875; Tax Record 1869; Strahlmann Notes n.d.; Brigandi 1995).

The 1875 Register listing for Henry Spratt is the last documented record of occupation for the Carrizo Stage Station that has come to light. In 1877, the Southern Pacific Railroad completed the Yuma to Los Angeles link of its transcontinental line and overland travel along the Carrizo Corridor and through Warner’s Pass became a trickle of what it had formerly been. The adobe at Carrizo Creek, protected only by a thatch roof, quickly fell into ruin in spite of the arid desert climate. The earliest known photographs of the building, dating from the 1890s, show only melted wall stumps and a fireplace remaining (Figure 13). When avocational ethnographer, collector and photographer Edward Davis passed the station site in 1896 he found the ruins so deteriorated he did not feel they merited a photograph (Davis 1935).

END OF THE LIVESTOCK TRAIL

Travel on the overland route between Warner’s Ranch and Carrizo Creek ended the way it had begun, as a livestock trail. This is not surprising, for in actuality, herds of animals had always been the major users of the route during all periods of its development. Mexican horse traders had opened the trail. Following the American conquest, herds of cattle and sheep were constantly driven westward. Historian Phil Brigandi has done an excellent job documenting the hundreds of individual drives that are recorded along this route. The following information is taken from his report on *The Livestock Industry on the Anza-Borrego Desert* (Brigandi 1995). In 1848, T. J. Trimmer drove 500 head of cattle from Texas to California. The gold rush opened new markets in Northern California and livestock herds continued to be driven down the trail after the main surge of immigration had subsided. During 1854 more than 61,000 cattle crossed the Colorado River into California. Herds ranged in size from 600 to around 1,000 head. Traffic declined in the late 1850s due to a drop in prices. Following the Civil War, the market returned and in 1868 an estimated 50- to 55 thousand head of cattle were on the trail from Texas to California. With the completion of the Southern Pacific railroad, the major cross-country cattle drives ceased, but local livestock raisers continued to cross the desert with their herds (Vail 1974). As late as 1919, cattle were still being driven across the desert between Carrizo Creek and Yuma (Brigandi 1995; Figure 14).



(a) "Carrizo Stage Station Ruins," circa 1880s, view to northwest (courtesy of the San Diego Historical Society, Booth Photographic Collection).

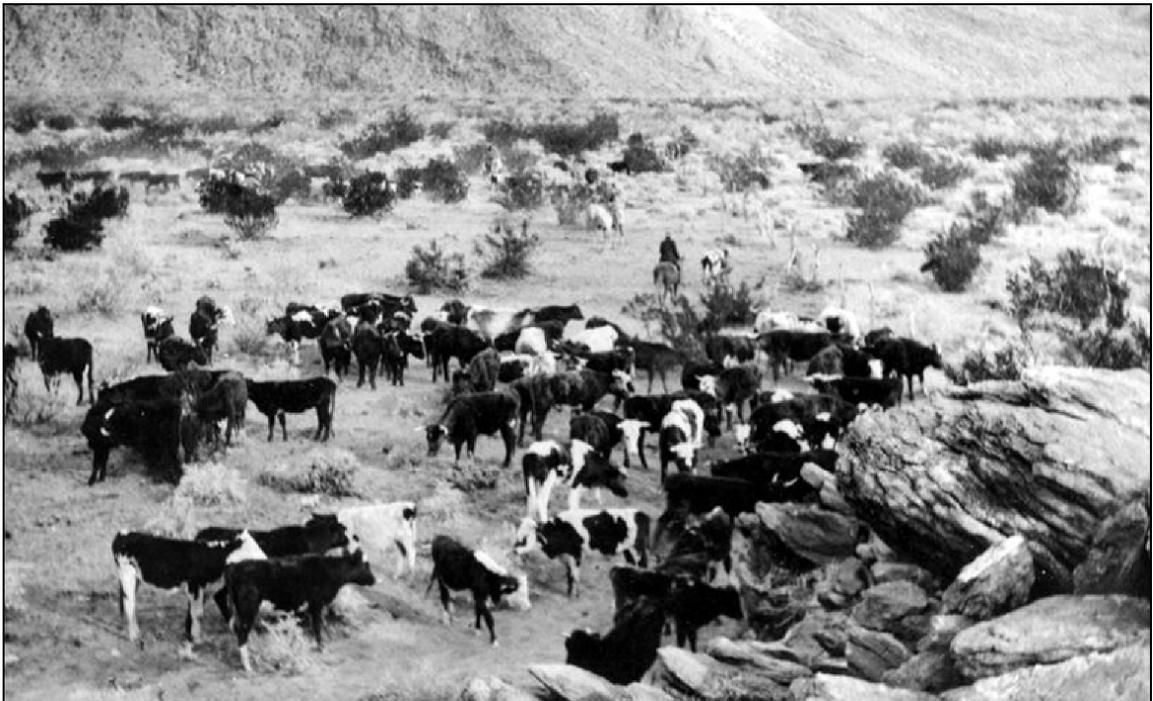


(b) Carrizo Stage Station Site, 2001, view to northwest (by California State Parks).

Figure 13. Carrizo Stage Station Ruins, 1880s, and Site, 2001.



(a) "Box Canyon," early 20th century
(courtesy of the San Diego Historical Society, Booth Photographic Collection).



(b) "Driving Cattle up the Trail," 1910
(Edward H. Davis Photographs, California State Parks, Colorado Desert District).

Figure 14. Box Canyon and Driving Cattle up the Trail, Early 20th Century.

ENDNOTES

¹ Vallecito appears to refer to the valley and Ojo Grande to the springs as per Emory 1848 and Clarke 1849.

² A native of Connecticut, Warner first journeyed west to Saint Louis in 1830 and became a clerk on a trading expedition to Santa Fe, New Mexico for the famous mountain man Jedediah Smith. He married Anita Gale, a daughter of sea captain William Gale. Anita had been raised by the mother of Pio and Andres Pico. The request included the entire valley which he described as vacant and “surrounded by the mountain with entrances from San Felipe on the east, from Temecula on the north, from Pala on the west and from Santa Ysabel on the south” (Petition 1844). The governor granted his request on November 28, 1844 (Grant 1844). By the late 1820s, cattle were raised specifically for their hides, and approximately 40,000 were exported annually (Bandini 1828). English and Boston ships carried an estimated 6 million hides and 7 thousand tons of tallow out of California between 1826 and 1848 (Weber 1982:138). Warner grazed herds of cattle, horses, and some sheep in the valley and grew corn and beans on a small plot of land near the hot springs (Warner 1886:106).

³ At San Pasqual Kearney’s Dragoons were routed by the Mexican forces with a significant loss of life. For details of the battle see Richard Pourade 1964, *The Silver Dons*.

⁴ Cooke followed the road north from Warner’s Ranch to Temecula before turning south to San Diego. The trail from Valle de San José to San Diego via Santa Ysabel did not become a wagon road until 1849 (Bibb 1995).

⁵ Journals of the Army of the West and the Mormon Battalion do not use the name Rajadura to identify this water source. It is simply referred to as First Well. The Gold Rush Argonauts of 1849 began to call it Cooke’s Well. Major Heintzelman continued to call it by its Spanish name La Rajadura.

⁶ Although coming out of El Puerto, the trail across this ridge was later referred to as Vallecito Grade. It is now called Campbell Grade.

⁷ A journey of the San Antonio and San Diego Mail coaches over the San Pasqual route was described by the *San Francisco Herald’s* correspondent in November 1857 (*San Francisco Herald* 11-25-1857).

⁸ Major Heintzelman made the following journal entries documenting emigrants from Sonora and New Mexico on the road with herds of livestock (White 1975):

Saturday August 7, 1852

Danson Lopez, the owner of a flock of sheep, called to see me. He comes from Santa Fé with a passport signed by Gov. Calhoun. The bill for ferrying 4,856 sheep comes to \$1000. Mr. Iager accompanies Lopez to collect the ferriage at Los Angeles.

Wednesday August 18, 1852

Quite a number more emigrants have arrived. The owner of some sheep talked about buying Johnson’s boats, ferrying himself across, and then selling to a man behind, who they say has 27,000. . . .

Saturday February 28, 1852

When we got to the Rakadura (Rajadura), we met some Sonorans who had been robbed.

⁹ Major Heintzelman noted the following road work and well improvement details in his journal (White 1975):

Monday November 4, 1850

The train got in about 9 AM. I immediately commenced unloading and reloading so as to take 4,000 rations. The other train of eight wagons, is at Warner’s. I will send a party back in the morning to improve the road between here and San Felipe (Box Canyon).

Sunday February 29, 1852

The party I left to dig out Cooke's Wells report two and half feet of water. I must dig wells at the pond beyond Alamo Mocho, and then beyond Cooke's in the Big Mesquite.

Saturday May 22, 1852

Davidson started in this morning with fifteen men to dig wells near the Alamo Mocho.

¹⁰ Overland journals indicate Warner built the trading post sometime between September and November of 1849. When the parties of William H. Chamberlain, L. N. Weed, and a group of unidentified travelers interviewed by Cave J. Coutts passed through the valley on August 18, September 9, and September 16 of that year no structures existed at the fork in the road leading to San Diego (Chamberlain 1849; Weed 1849; Coutts 1849). By November 28, 1849, however, he had completed the building and was open for business when Lorenzo Aldrich stopped there, noting in his journal that "Provisions could be obtained at high rates" (Aldrich 1851). Another traveler who felt Warner's prices were high was Cornelius C. Cox who noted on December 28, 1849: "Arrived at Warner's Ranch and finding good grass, lay by one day. The road here forks, one leading to San Diego, the other to Los Angeles. Warner has established a grocery and butchery for the accommodation of the emigrants - and this being the first place at which supplies can be obtained, the emigrant has been subjected to the severest extortion . . ." (quoted in Wright 1961:22, ft 1). The trading post consisted of a rectangular adobe building with a thatched roof divided into two rooms. A thatched ramada (described as a shed by Benjamin Hayes in 1850) on the front covered an exterior patio and work area. When Benjamin Hayes visited the building in December 1850 he saw several partially cured hides pinned down in front of the patio. Freshly butchered beef hung on a pole in the shade under the ramada near the building's front door (Hayes 1850). Additional outbuildings were located around the structure but details of their function and location have not been recorded (Sacket 1856). According to the 1850 census the house and store were occupied by Warner, his wife and three children and several hired help including Joseph Manning, an overseer from Missouri, laborers José Urbano de Jesus, Francisco Verdugo, and Ignacio Chapa, and three male and three female Native Americans (Roth 1981). The number of hired help as well as resident Native Americans, who were probably additional hired laborers or servants, also suggests outbuildings existed for their quarters which passing emigrants failed to note.

¹¹ The overland emigrant trade began to make Warner quite prosperous. Research by historian Linda Roth concluded that in 1850 he was one of wealthiest land owners in San Diego County. In early 1851 the county tax assessor valued Warner's Ranch at over \$30,000. This made him the second wealthiest man in the county, surpassed only by Pio Pico's Santa Margarita Rancho at \$84,990. Since Warner's beef came from Santa Margarita the emigrant trade undoubtedly made a substantial contribution to Pico's affluence (Roth 1981:204) Warner's assessment included:

Rancho Containing 10 Leagues	\$30,000
Houses and Improvements	500
35 team horses at \$30	1,050
193 mares and colts at \$7	1,351
5-1/2 yoke of oxen at \$50	275
20 milch cows at \$20	400
160 wild cattle at \$8	1,280
75 sheep at \$3	225
7 hogs at \$8	56
Farming utensils	200
Total	\$35,337

Warner's prosperous trading post would come to a sudden and abrupt end as a result of an Native American uprising. Beginning in November 1851 and continuing through mid-January of the following year, Antonio Gara, chief of the village at Agua Caliente Hot Springs, organized local tribes in an unsuccessful revolt to oust American settlers from the land (Carrico 1985:67; Phillips 1975:71-94; Roth 1981:205-209). On the night of November 21 Gara's followers at Agua Caliente murdered four Americans who had gone to the Hot Springs to rest. Early the next morning they attacked Warner's trading post (Bibb 1976; Moyer 1969:13). The pueblo of San Diego was alerted on the morning of November 27, when the *San Diego Herald* reported "Our city was thrown into a high state of excitement, on Sunday afternoon last, by the arrival of an express from Agua Caliente, the residence of Hon. J. Warner, State Senator, conveying the intelligence that Native Americans, who are numerous in that vicinity, had risen and attacked his ranch, destroying all his household property, and running away his stock, consisting of large and valuable bands of cattle and horses" (11-27-1851). Rumors of an uprising had been prevalent for weeks and on November 20th, 1851 Mrs. Warner had been warned by a "friendly Indian" that members of his village intended to attack their residence and store. Warner sent his wife and children to San Diego and began to "place his house in a state of defense." The cattle were corralled and four horses saddled and tied next to the door. At approximately 2 a. m. on the morning of November 22, an estimated 100 Native Americans surrounded the house and drove off the cattle. Warner and two "employees" opened fire. Four natives and one of Warner's party were killed. Warner and the remaining survivor fled on horseback. The Native Americans "rifled" the house of everything it contained (*San Diego Herald* 11-27-1851). They then set it on fire. Warner managed to run off his herd of brood mares before the natives could capture them. He lost everything in the house and an estimated 400 cattle (District Court, Case 56, Statement of Case; Sacket 1856; Ortego, J. 1856; Ortego, A. 1856; Warner 1886:45-46). By January the rebellion had been put down and the instigators arrested. Antonio Gara, Warner's former overseer at the hot springs, William Marshall, and several others were executed the following December (Roth 1981:209; Bibb 1976).

Juan José Warner never returned to live permanently at the ranch. His family remained in San Diego. Warner had been elected to the State Senate and spent most of his time in Sacramento and San Francisco (Couts 1856; Witherby 1856). In addition, he served on the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. During his tenure as Supervisor of Highways in 1853, the overland trail from San José Valley to Yuma was declared a public road (Roth 1981:211; Morrison 1962:50).

In February 1852, Russell Sacket passed through Warner's Ranch and saw the former trading post and store "destroyed and in ruins, and not occupied" (Sacket 1856). The following year, other visitors noted the abandoned ruins of Warner's former store. During the early 1850s the United States government commissioned several railroad surveys in order to find suitable passes through the California mountains from the desert to the coast. An expedition led by Lt. R.S. Williamson examined the Gila trail through Warner's pass and San José Valley. On December 17, 1853 Lt. Williamson passed through the valley and recorded: "We descended the western side of the mountain and passed the ruins of Warner's adobe house, but instead of turning north to our former encampment in the valley, turned off to the south on the road to Santa Isabel" (Williamson 1856:125). On another trip along the emigrant trail a member of Williamson's expedition noted: "We passed the ruins of Warner's adobe house, which it is said was burned by the Native Americans, and soon reached the camp of the main party" (Blake 1857:109). The overland trail through the valley continued to be an important corridor. In the mid 1850s it became the route for transporting thousands of sheep and cattle into California (Roth 1981:213; Bell 1932).

¹² The following history of Sackett's Wells was recorded by Titus Fey Cronise (1868:96):

From Warner's Ranch, a town located on the eastern side of the Coast Range, near Warner's pass, on the Fort Yuma road, at the western edge of this desert, for about thirty miles south to Vallacito, the country has a less desolate appearance. The coast mountains, covered with timber and chaparral, skirt the desert on its western side, and take from it the monotonous and dreary character which marks the broad, sandy plains beyond this point, where the country is indeed a desert, without a sign of animal or vegetable life, or a drop of water, for nearly sixty miles. This long stretch of hot, shifting, alkaline sand, was

a terror to travelers until the Government, in 1850, caused several wells to be sunk at a place since known as Sackett's wells, about forty miles from Vallecito, which furnished a fair supply of water, such as it was, till June, 1867, when a terrible sand-storm covered the whole country in that vicinity with a bed of sand several inches deep, obliterating the wells and all the landmarks around them.

¹³ On October 18, 1856 the *San Diego Herald* ran the following article describing some of the preliminary meetings held to establish the overland mail route (W. Davidson's 1931 notes).

NEW PROPOSED STAGE ROUTE

The Austin Texas State Gazette publishes the report of a public meeting of the citizens of El Paso County, held for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of a tri monthly mail coach line from San Antonio, by way of El Paso to San Diego, in California. A committee was appointed to draft resolutions and make a report. The following is a portion of the report, in which the advantages of the route are spoken of.

“That they are deeply sensible to the great importance of calling public attention to the necessity and propriety of establishing a tri-monthly line of mail coaches, from some point on the Gulf of Mexico, by way of San Antonio and El Paso to San Diego, in California. This route is eminently the best and most practical; free from the snows of winter and the withering heat of summer, passing through a climate salubrious and delightful, tracking fertile and beautiful valleys, and not endless treeless parries and scorching deserts of sand; encountering abundance of wood, water and grass, and not thirsty desert plains, and bleak, barren mountainous, burning as a furnace in summer, and frozen and ice cold in winter, open and passable at all seasons, with everything to cheer the emigrant and traveler, in rich soil and varied landscape, with no mountain barriers, - no natural wall across the pathway, the route contemplated is superior for a great mail route and emigrant road across the continent, to any other north of it and this can be born out passing through our own territory.

The establishment of a tri monthly mail line, on coaches, by this route, would tend greatly not only to develop the resources of Northwestern Texas, but would be the first active, progressive step in the establishment of the great Southern Pacific Railroad. It would direct public opinion to defiantly settle down on the route which is marked by nature as the nearest, cheapest, and best. It would form an active stream of travel across the continent, and unfold to light not only our great resources, but the practicability of the railway. It would be the cheapest and best means of transporting the mails, and we believe that a contract could be reached for carrying them tri monthly at less than one-half what is paid by the Government to the Panama mail steamer.”

The resolution after expressing faith in the practicability of the proposed enterprise, reads as follows:

Resolved, that regarding the road by this route as a national military and mail road conducive to the interest of the whole country, we believe that the Government possess the constitutional power to improve it.

Resolved, That our Senators and Representatives in the Congress of the United States be requested to use their utmost endeavors to establish the said tri-monthly mail coach line, and to procure an appropriation to improve said road.”

¹⁴ James Lassitor owned a ranch at Green Valley in the Cuyamaca Mountains and operated a store and hay station for military trains and immigrants at Vallecito. He grew hay and cut wild oats in Green Valley which he hauled to Vallecito down the Oriflamme canyon trail (Porade 1963; Wray 2000).

¹⁵ One of the better documented attacks on a stage station occurred at Dragoon Springs on September 8, 1858, when Silas St. John and two or three other employees were attacked by Mexican Bandits who had also been working on construction of the stage station. St. John's companions were killed. His arm was badly cut and he lay for several days until help arrived. His wounded arm had to be amputated. St. John had been an early employee of the San Antonio and San Diego line, and carried the first mail between Carrizo and Fort Yuma in 32 hours (Conkling and Conkling 1947:145-147).

¹⁶ At first Isaiah Woods hoped that the Oriflamme Canyon trail could be improved so that coaches could travel this way and bypass Warner's Ranch. An article in the San Diego Herald of September 19, 1857 noted:

The New Road to the Desert

The stage conductor of the overland mail train, on this end of the route, left here on Sunday afternoon, accompanied by Judge Morse and several other citizens to examine the new route to the Desert, with a view to take their coach train over that road on the 9th of next month. As this road cuts off one day travel between this place and Carrizo Creek, we suppose it will be for the interest of the Stage Company to join with the citizens and complete the improvements already projected, when it will be one of the finest roads in the county. . . when this is done, we may confidently expect a through mail, (in coaches) regularly in 28 days.

P. S. The expedition sent out by the Stage Company to examine the various trails in the immediate neighborhood of Cariso Creek, returned last night, they report passing over and returning by an excellent trail following which a road can be made at a very moderate expense in a distance of seventy five miles from San Diego to the Desert at Cariso.

In the present state of this trail, the Stage Company estimate that they can take the mail from here to Fort Yuma in 2 1/2 days, by crossing the mountains at the point examined, which is nearly due east of San Diego. A glance at the map will show the cut off which this makes when compared with the old road via "Warner's Ranch."

¹⁷ The Carrillo family lived in the presently existing adobe ranch house at Warner's ranch from 1857 to around 1868 (Van Wormer 1998, Flanigan 1996).

¹⁸ Strahlmann collection quoted from Texas Almanac of 1860).

Chapter 4:

Archaeological Field Methods

After the turn of the century, the site of the Carrizo Stage Station became a historic curiosity occasionally visited by backcountry tourists, cattle drovers, and history buffs. Although several visitors photographed the adobe site in the late nineteenth century and early 1900s, the ruin was virtually unrecognizable by the mid-twentieth century (Figure 15 and Figure 16; also see Figure 1a and Figure 13a). Grading of the area for a pasture in the 1950s finally removed all above-ground vestiges of the former structure with the exception of a low mound on the creek terrace. The stage station was reduced to a memory recalled by a small California State Parks sign identifying the location. In the mid-1970s, Hurricane Kathleen cut a new creek channel along the east side of the low mound, exposing what appeared to be foundation stones. In the early 1980s, water also cut through a dirt berm on the west side of the mound, creating an east-flowing erosional gully through the site. While water damage continued to expose unidentified remains, it wasn't until 20 years later that State Parks was successful in funding an archaeological exploration and subsequent data recovery effort. That archaeological investigation is documented in the remainder of this report.

Archaeological excavation occurred in several field sessions conducted in the spring, fall, and winter months between April, 2001, and March, 2002. An initial test program, guided by a research design, was undertaken to determine what remains existed at the site and how they could most appropriately be protected from future damage. The test program excavations discovered that indeed approximately fifty percent of the structure's footprint remained as subsurface archaeological remains. The test program also concluded that a data recovery program would be the only way to preserve the site materials from destruction by natural and human damages (Wade et al. 2001). This data recovery program was implemented six months later and resulted in the complete excavation of the stage station structure, excavations on the structure exterior, and excavation of a trash pit.

To begin, a site datum was established at the northeast corner of what appeared to be a cobble foundation alignment, where it had been exposed by water erosion, along the eastern edge of the adobe mound. All unit and trench locations were measured according to the distance of the unit northeast corner from this datum on a 40-degree axis. To ease excavation



(a) "Carrizo Stage Station Ruins," 1928, view to northeast
(by W.O. Garner, courtesy of the Garner family).



(b) Carrizo Stage Station Site, 2001, view to northeast (by California State Parks).

Figure 15. Carrizo Stage Station Ruins, 1928, and Site, 2001.

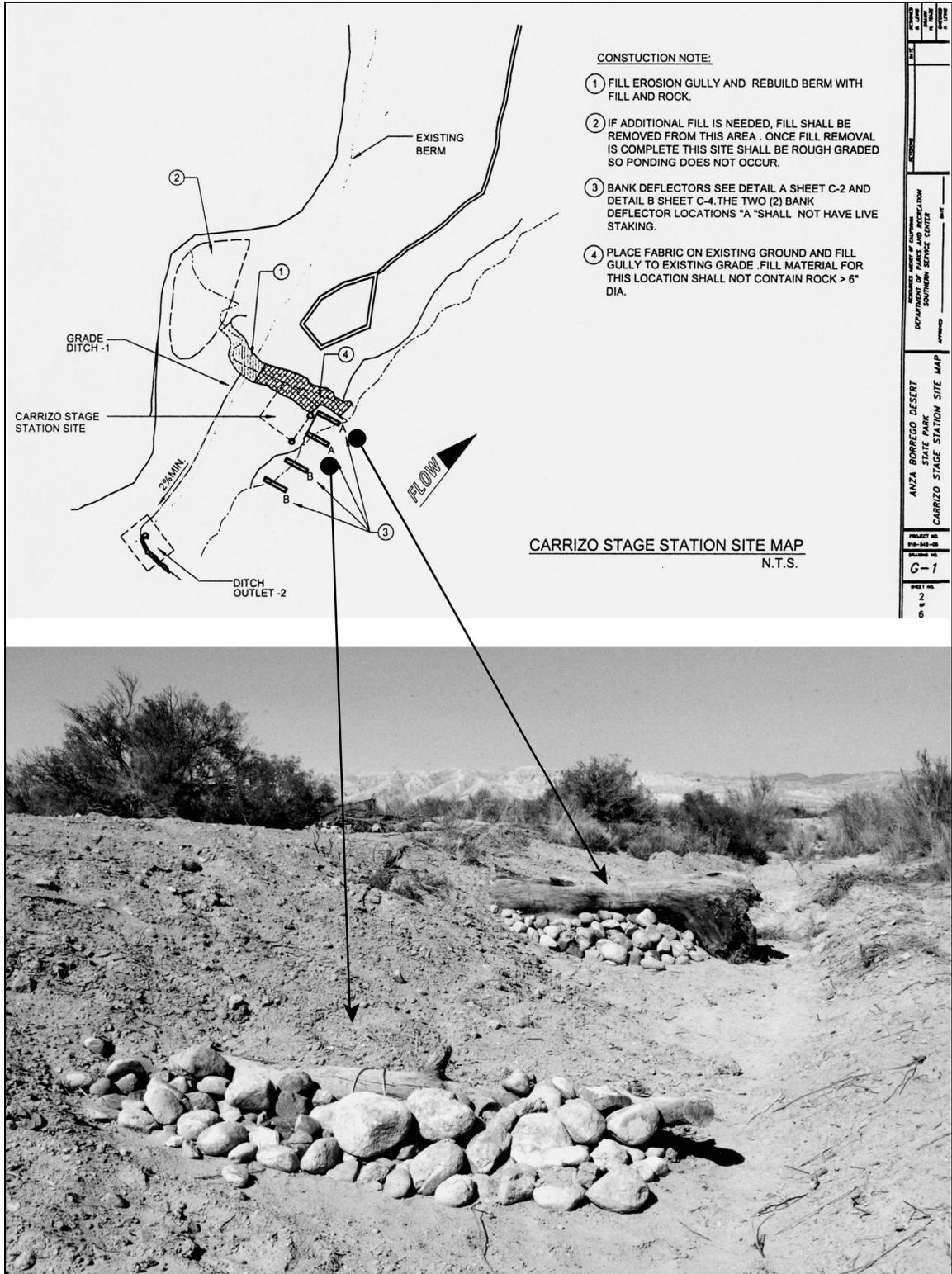


*(a) "Carrizo Stage Station Ruins," 1928, view to southeast
(by W.O. Garner, courtesy of the Garner family).*



(b) Carrizo Stage Station Site, 2002, view to southeast (by California State Parks).

Figure 16. Carrizo Stage Station Ruins, 1928, and Site, 2002.



Carrizo Stage Station Site (a) Erosion Control Plan, 2002, and (b) Erosion Control Features, 2002 (both by California State Parks).

Figure 17. Carrizo Stage Station Site Erosion Control Plan and Features, 2002.

descriptions, the 40-degree axis of the excavation grid was called “project north.” The excavation grid was divided in three-foot increments for the test excavations and six-foot increments for the data recovery excavations. All excavation was conducted in stratigraphic levels. The soil was passed through 1/8-inch mesh wire screens to retrieve artifacts.

In order to gain an understanding of the extent and nature of features and resources in the site, the initial test excavation work began with the excavation of 18-inch-wide exploratory trenches excavated in three-foot-long increments. These revealed the presence of adobe wall remnants, cobble foundations, and cobble and packed earthen floors within the mound on the south side of the erosional gully, and under the level graded area on the north side of the erosion gully. Once the extent of these features was determined, excavation continued utilizing six-foot square units. The work ultimately revealed the remains of three main structures designated A, B, and C, in the order that they were discovered, and an associated outbuilding and remains of a reuse pit.

At the completion of the data recovery program, the structural remains were covered with loose-weave geo-textile fabric. The remains were then back filled by hand. An approximately three-to-five-foot-deep soil cap was deposited across the site using a rubber tired mechanical loader. Erosion control structures and re-contouring of the surrounding topography (designed for the site by a State Parks engineer) were implemented to drain future storm water away from the mound (see Figure 17).

Chapter 5: Research Design and Artifact Analysis Methods

RESEARCH ISSUES

The archaeological research program was directed at characterizing and recovering the remains at the Carrizo Creek Stage Station site in order to preserve the information contained at the site and to acquire essential information for developing preservation and interpretation plans. Specifically, the excavation and analysis program focused on the following research issues:

Structure Remains and Features

- What archaeological features remain at each structure?
- Can their original use be determined?
- Can their period of construction and use be identified?

Artifact Deposits

- What artifacts remain at each feature?
- Can their period of deposition/use be identified?
- What can the resources tell us about domestic lifestyles in terms of economic and social activities?
- What comparative relationships between other archaeological collections in Southern California can be demonstrated for the middle of the 19th century?

Site Significance and Preservation

- Do any identified remaining features represent significant archaeological resources?
- Do any identified artifact deposits represent significant archaeological resources?
- What impacts have occurred to significant archaeological deposits?
- What recurring or new impacts to significant resources are likely to occur in the future?
- What are appropriate preservation and interpretation strategies for identified significant archaeological features?
- What measures can be taken to protect the sites or to mitigate these impacts?

The data recovered as directed by the above research goals was combined with the archival research data to identify and describe 1) site function and evolution, 2) architectural methods and traditions, and 3) ethnic, social, and economic influences at the Carrizo Stage Station site.

ARTIFACT ANALYSIS THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The research objectives and analyses for the artifacts recovered from the Carrizo Stage Station site are framed within a theoretical context of functional pattern definition and studies of consumerism. Functional pattern recognition and consumerism studies provide a background appropriate for the analysis of various aspects of human behavior during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These approaches are particularly well suited to large collections and to the analysis of dump materials. Essentially both orientations rely on a systematic approach to material culture studies as opposed to a particularistic one.

The purpose of historic artifact analysis is not to reconstruct the past through detailed artifact descriptions or to pay tribute to some notable historic event or person, but to reveal broad trends and patterns that can expand our understanding of the cultural processes that affected the lives of people during earlier times. The focus is on identifying and explaining the differences in the relationships between groups of people and the larger culture.

Based on methods developed by Stanley South and others, one of the ways that this type of understanding can be accomplished is through pattern analysis, which allows the historical archaeologist to develop functional artifact patterns or profiles (South 1977). To develop a site activity profile, artifacts are divided into functional categories or groups. Articles in each group are next quantified by estimated minimum number, and the amount converted into a percent of the total minimum number of items for each deposit. The resulting percentages for each group define relationships between activities that occurred on the site and allow the detection of broad patterned regularities related to site function. Bulk items such as concrete, building items, brick fragments, window glass, and tile are generally too fragmented to allow for an accurate estimate of the minimum numbers. These artifact types are quantified by weight only (Van Wormer 1996).

This type of analysis allows for the detection of relationships between functionally defined artifact groups at a generalized level, allowing for the definition of broad patterns. Analysis at this level is intended to define functional patterned regularities before variation in the norm can be detected through cross-site comparison regularities (South 1977:110). South's classification system relies on eight artifact groups. However, an expanded system of 20 activity groups has proven more successful for various sites in Southern California and was used for this study (Van Wormer 1991, 1996; Van Wormer and Schaefer 1991; Phillips and Van Wormer 1991; Van Wormer and Gross 2006). These are listed and defined in Table 3.

Studies in consumer behavior indicate that people buy things for their cultural meaning, as well as for their functional purposes. Consumption is one of the important ways of signifying membership in a community unit, particularly in class, status, and ethnic groups, and therefore is an important reflection of lifestyle. Some units, known as reference groups, exert a greater dominance on an individual's values. Since individuals are influenced by the groups to which they belong, people can follow a group lifestyle. There will be variability in

the group lifestyle as practiced by its individual members, but there will be more similarity among individuals within a reference group than between groups (Henry 1991).

Table 3. Activity Groups Used in Artifact Pattern Analysis.

CONSUMER ITEMS GROUP	PERSONAL ITEMS GROUP
<i>Items containing products purchased and consumed on a regular basis</i>	<i>Belonging to a single individual</i>
Bottles	Eye glasses
Bottle caps, can lids, and related items	Jewelry
Jars	Musical instruments
Tin cans and other tins	Smoking pipes
KITCHEN GROUP	Toiletry items (comb, hairbrush, razor, toothbrush, etc.)
<i>Food preparation and serving</i>	Toys and gaming items
Butchered bone	Watches
Canning jars	FURNITURE PARTS GROUP
Canning jar lids and related items	<i>All furniture parts</i>
Ceramic kitchen and tableware	Bed and other furniture frames and springs
Cooking items	Cabinet hinges
Flatware	Drawer pulls
Glass tableware	Scroll trim
Jelly tumblers	Springs
Seeds	Trunk parts
Shellfish	Upholstery tacks
Stove parts	HARDWARE GROUP
HOUSEHOLD ITEMS GROUP	<i>Miscellaneous hardware not included in a specific group</i>
<i>Daily household maintenance</i>	Baling wire
Batteries	Bolts and nuts
Household ceramics	Chain links
Household glassware	Cotter pins
Lamp parts	Metal bands and strapping
Light bulbs	Rivets
Medical items	Screws
Miscellaneous household items	Washers
GARMENT ITEMS GROUP	Wire fencing
<i>All clothing items</i>	TOOLS GROUP
Buckles	<i>All hand tools</i>
Buttons	Artist's tools
Clothing rivets	Carpenter's tools
Collar stays	Gardener's tools
Corset Hardware	Jeweler's tools
Garter clasps	Mason's tools
Hook and eyes	Mechanic's tools
Shoe parts	Other miscellaneous hand tools
Snaps	COINS GROUP
Straight pins	All coinage and tokens
Strap slides	
Suspender clasps	

Table 3. Activity Groups Used in Artifact Pattern Analysis *continued*.

LIVERY ITEMS GROUP	OTHER OCCUPATIONS GROUP
<i>Horse and horse-drawn vehicle items</i>	<i>Specialized occupation items</i>
Bridle parts	Factory items
Buggy parts	Farmstead items
Harness parts	Mining items
Horse shoes and nails	UNIQUE ITEMS GROUP
Saddle parts	<i>Items not included in other groups</i>
Wagon parts	UNIDENTIFIED ITEMS GROUP
MUNITIONS ITEMS GROUP	<i>Items that cannot be identified</i>
<i>All firearms and related items</i>	INTRUSIVE ITEMS GROUP
Bullets, cartridges, musket balls, and gun parts	<i>Items intrusive to a discrete dated deposit</i>
BUILDING MATERIALS AND ARCHITECTURE GROUP	MACHINERY ITEMS GROUP
Asphalt	<i>All machine parts except agricultural implements</i>
Ceramic drain pipe	FORGE MATERIALS GROUP
Ceramic flue lining	<i>All forge, furnace, and stove wastes</i>
Concrete	Coal, clinkers, and slag
Construction hardware	AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS GROUP
Construction materials	<i>All farm machinery</i>
Counter glass	Chain belting
Door locks and parts	Cultivator parts
Electrical hardware	Harrow parts
Nails and spikes	Hay rake parts
Plaster	Manure spreader parts
Window glass	Mower parts
	Plow parts
	Threshing machine parts

With this approach, archaeological refuse deposits provide information regarding the definition of specific behavior patterns; what has been defined as consumerism. Trash-filled privies, wells, and pits often contain artifact assemblages representing small, temporally and spatially distinct patterns of specific households. A neighborhood dump should define a somewhat larger pattern, and a municipal dump, a still larger unit of comparison (Dickens and Crimmins 1982:106).

Archaeological studies of consumerism attempt to define pattern differences that may be the result of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, household structure and lifestyle, and market access, as well as demonstrating the biases that may be present in the archaeological and documentary records. Archaeological research on consumer behavior has demonstrated a strong relationship between economic roles, social stratification, and the types of material culture owned by households as these social phenomena are represented by the artifacts and ecofacts excavated from sites (Spencer-Wood 1987a:1-3). This means that certain items will be found in an assemblage because the existing cultural patterns have determined that they are meaningful or important. For example, the presence of both every day and special occasion dishes, utensils and serving pieces occurs in many households. Consumerism is one of the important ways that people signify their membership in a group, in particular how they see themselves within a class, their status ranking, or their ethnic group identification. For this reason consumerism is a meaningful reflection of lifestyle.