

The Washington County Tres Trails chapter of the Old Spanish Trails Association invites all who are interested to participate with us in a car caravan field trip on Saturday, February 22, 2014, meeting at 9:00 AM in the southeast corner of the Walmart Parking lot in Bloomington (off at Brigham Street and right).

Because much of our study and visiting itinerary relates to historical items beyond the scope of official Old Spanish Trails subjects which mainly end at 1848, this is not an official OSTA field trip and there will be no liability coverage by any sponsoring organization, but each participant is on their own in this matter. Our first subject of examination and study will be the Arrowhead Trails Highway (first automobile highway from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles) we will have to skip the St. George aspects, which most know to an extent: the tunnel through the Black Ridge approaching the city from the north from Middleton, which can be seen up to the right as one approaches the cut in the highway for Interstate 15 (Scholzen Products Company property), then leaving the city on Diagonal Street (created as part of the Arrowhead). We will see several other traces of the highway, including in front of the Jacob Hamblin home in Santa Clara and just around the corner to the northwest from there; then as the highway turns away from the Shivwits Paiute Reservation residence area and heads down the grade toward the Santa Clara River, and again after the Old Highway 91 climbs southward up toward Utah Hill and again after it surmounts the summit of the mountain.

At about that point, we will also be able to see one of the few places where the Old Spanish Trail pack mule trail splits from the successor 1849 wagon road to California used by some gold miners and two years later, the Mormon pioneers who settled San Bernardino, California, who took a different route at a crucial spot there. Then, after we pass Castle Cliffs and leave the Beaver Dam Mountains, we will see Tabeau Peak, named by John C. Fremont honoring his just-killed longtime French-Canadian muleteer, who had returned alone to get a mule left behind that morning near the previous night's camp on the Beaver Dam wash. He had been killed by irate Paiutes who likely understood that other of Fremont's men, Kit Carson and Alex Godoy, had killed two Paiutes earlier on their journey while still in the California desert, near Bitter Springs and Death Valley. We will also stop to the side of Old 91 to look for traces of the old automobile and freight wagon routes south and west through the brush.

After turning west on Old Highway 91 at Littlefield, we will turn off to the south for a half mile to examine what both OSTA members and Bureau of Land Management personnel agree is the most likely place for most Old Spanish Trail travelers to cross the Virgin River in that area, which they did only once, compared to wagon drivers crossing up to a dozen times in that same vicinity.

Then after returning to Old 91 and descending into the first large wash, we will stop and look back at where the Arrowhead Trails Highway drops down from the same mesa on a still-visible grade. Then, after passing through Mesquite and traveling some six miles on Interstate 15 westward, we will turn off into Toquop Wash, likely named for a Paiute Indian cattle thief whom the Mormon pioneers on the Muddy River sentenced to death, then killed, probably at the wash while he was trying to escape. Then taking a dirt road in the same area, we will examine (but not climb) the most difficult obstacle hill on the entire 600 mile wagon road from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles, the Virgin Hill, where each wagon had to be pulled one at a time up the 200 yard incline with chains tied together by horses, mules and oxen placed on the top of the so-called Mormon Mesa. Several dozen pioneer diaries attest to this being the most difficult part of the entire journey. The Old Spanish Trail pack mule trains did not negotiate this hill, but continued on down the Virgin to Half-way Wash, from which they climbed up onto the mesa.

Then returning to the highway, we will climb up the grade onto the mesa and take the first side road north, to the vicinity of the Kern River Pipeline (natural gas) and a road back to the east to where three members of the Davidson family perished for lack of water, after their wagon wheel broke while they were returning alone on the freight wagon road from St. Thomas to their homes in Washington city, where the father, a Scottish machinist had led out in installing the cloth weaving machinery in the mill which is now Star Nursery. After seeking to find some traces of the old freight wagon road, almost forgotten, but somewhat photographed, we will retrace our route on I 15 to Littlefield, then take Old Highway 91 back toward the Beaver Dam Mountains.

As we approach those mountains, we will take a portion of the old freight wagon road up the grade toward Bulldog Pass. This is also the route taken by the first trader to travel over the Old Spanish Trail, original route heading from Santa Fe, New Mexico to Los Angeles partly by following the present Arizona-Utah border from present Lake Powell to the edge of Hurricane Mesa.

From the pass, we will probably be the first field trip-size group to ever follow what we now believe to be the Armijo trail from Bulldog Pass down the wash-grade to Bloomington (itself an historic occasion). When the next BLM map comes out on this region, it will be corrected regarding the Armijo route, which formerly was indicated to go through the Virgin River Narrows, which is incorrect.

This trip may be made in a vehicle with sufficient clearance even if it is not four wheel drive. It should be a most informative trip, estimated to last about four hours. There will be copies of the *Arduous Road* book, which traces and discusses the wagon road from Utah to California available for \$15.00, and some photo copies of history journal articles on the Arrowhead Trails Highway, for both Utah and Nevada for \$2.00 each.