

# SOUTHERN UTAH CHAPTER OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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Old Spanish Trail Discussion Group: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/old\\_spanish\\_trail](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/old_spanish_trail)



## President's Message

By Rob Dotson

It is a pleasure to once again greet you. The weather is changing and the daylight is fading earlier on these cooler days. Now is the perfect time of year to step outside our warm homes and see the signs left by brave and hardened souls who walked the wide and fenceless paths of our great Utah valleys. Some of us were able to venture to a couple of locations within walking distance of Cedar City residents and see some things of interest within a stones' throw of finished roads. Col. Leon (Al) Matheson met with us at the Old Rock Church and read some excerpts from Hafen's book on the Old Spanish Trail -- stories of slavery, Christianity, and death. We eventually hiked to "Squaw's Cave" and made a short trek to see the "American Man". Historical marks in time can be located all around us and we don't even see them until we are directed by someone with vision and desire to see. Then, it is as if we are plunged into a new world. The excitement to see more and understand the heritage people left behind is almost palpable. We need more of you to enjoy this history with us. Invite your friends and family members. We will be planning our next historical fieldtrip in our next meeting and other steps we can take to preserve, protect, and enjoy the signs and symbols left all around us. Please join us.

Your Servant,  
Rob Dotson  
President, Southern Utah Chapter

## Meeting Schedule

Meetings are generally held at 7PM on the second Wednesday of each month in the Enoch City Office Building, 900 East Midvalley Road, Enoch, UT. The next meeting will be on 11 October.

In addition, the chapter plans regular fieldtrips to Old Spanish Trail sites. These filed trips will be announced at the chapter meetings, local newspapers, and this website. See the chapter website for dates and times.

## September Meeting Report

The agenda included planning the field trip mentioned in the president's message and a demonstration of the chapter website. President Dotson described the Boy Scouts' Spanish Trail Historical Award. Leon Matheson showed us the new signs that will be used to mark the Old Spanish Trail.

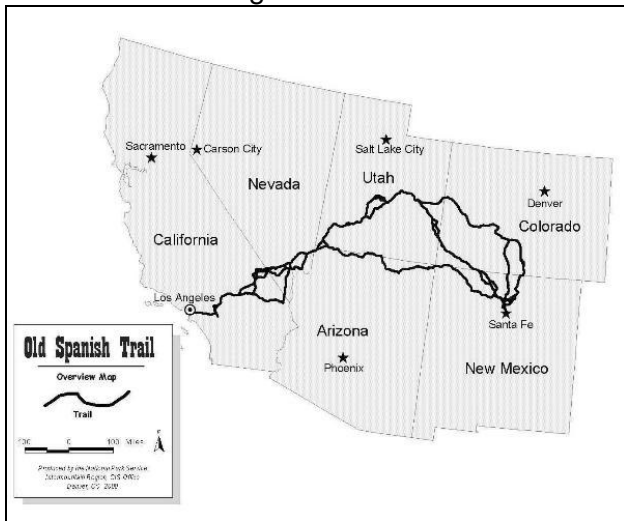
## Trail History

By Blaine Nay

As they searched for a route to California in October 1776, a Spanish exploration party led by Franciscan priests Francisco Domingues and Velez de Escalante explored the area, traveling as far north as Utah Lake. Parts of their trail are now marked as the Old Spanish Trail. Escalante reported finding rocks in the Cedar Valley with a very high iron content.

Much of the Old Spanish trail was first established as trade and migration routes by Native Americans long before the arrival of Europeans. It was later heavily traveled in the 1830s and 1840s by hundreds of trappers, soldiers, and traders. Fur trapper Jedediah S. Smith was the first Anglo-American to visit

present Iron County during his amazing journey of 1826. About a third of the 1,200-mile trail lies in Southern Utah with over 100 miles in Iron and Washington Counties.



This trail is now marked in many areas by modern highways. The trail was a multithreaded trail akin to a braided stream.

The trail split into two basic routes between Santa Fe, New Mexico and Los Angeles, California. It had north and south branches in the eastern end and other branches in the western, Mojave Desert, section. It saw New Mexican goods carried west for sale in Los Angeles. The reverse flow to Santa Fe included mules and horses that were purchased, or stolen, in southern California. Emigrants from New Mexico and points east also moved westward over the trail. Although most trail travel was by mule pack train, some portions of the trail eventually saw some wagon traffic. The first wagons to follow the trail were discharged members of the Mormon Battalion after the Mexican War, traveling from San Diego to Salt Lake City in 1847.

A major goal of the Old Spanish Trail Association and the Utah Chapter is to identify and preserve, where possible, this historic trail.