

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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2 Trails

We are still fascinated with the many worthwhile books produced during the latter part of 1956 - the quality of printing, bindings and above all the excellence of the reading material within the covers - are all intriguing to a student of either Americana or Californiana.

"Old Spanish Trail, Santa Fe to Los Angeles," contains extracts from contemporary records and including diaries of Antonio Armijo and Orville Pratt, by Leroy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen. The old Spanish Trail was the longest, crookedest, most arduous pack mule route in the history of America.

Blazed in the late 1700s to serve as a connecting link between two of Spain's colonial outposts, the trail reached its short-lived heyday in the 1830s and '40s when annual caravans packed woolen blankets from New Mexico to trade for California horses and mules.

Here, probably for the first time, is the story of this 1200-mile course over which passed Spanish padres, Mexican traders, prospectors, Indians and American mountain men. This trail symbolizes the larger drama of the great Southwest.

Heading northwest from Santa Fe, this almost forgotten trail eased over the continental divide in northern New Mexico, cut through a spur of the Rocky Mountains into Colorado, forded two swift rivers (the Colorado and the Green, above their junction), circled northward to avoid the "Grand Canyon's sculptured country, dipped over the rim of the Great Basin into Utah and crept southwest through desert stretches of Nevada and California to Los Angeles.

There is a folding, colored map of the trail especially prepared from source material, portraits and other illustrations in the publication which is a limited edition selling for \$9.50. The Arthur H Clark Co. of Glendale are the publishers. Another interesting and historically valuable book by the same editors, Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy R. Hafen, printed by the same publishers, and selling for the same price, is "Journals of Forty-Niners, Salt Lake to Los Angeles," with diaries and contemporary records of Sheldon Young, James S Brown, Jacob Y. Stover, Charles C. Rich, Addison Pratt, Howard Egen, Henry W. Bigler and others. Hafen a professor of history at Brigham Young University.

The story tells us that the route of the gold seeking Forty-Niners from Salt Lake to Los Angeles approximates the modern highway U. S. 91. This trail has had a long and interesting history. Its southern half was identical with the western end of the Old Spanish Trail that extended from Santa Fe to Los Angeles.

Its northern end was blazed principally by the Mormons. The entire route from Salt Lake to Los Angeles being known as the Mormon Trail with the abandonment of the Old Spanish Trail.

In the autumn of 1819 several companies of **(much garbled text here)** Most of the gold seekers turned from the know Old Spanish Trail to take the so called 'Walker Cutoff' to the California mines. Rugged terrain turned back most of these, the foolhardy ones who persisted became the famous Death Valley Party.

The Arthur H. Clark Co. has also published an extensive bibliography of "The Army of the Pacific" operations in California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and the plains region of Mexico, etc., 1860-1866.

Hitherto practically unknown, and virtually ignored by many historians, this volume deals with the Army of the Pacific composed entirely of volunteers which did full duty in the defense of the nation during the Civil War years. Exceeding in numbers the pre-war federal army, the specific duty assigned the Army of the Pacific was to replace federal troops serving in the West

Here probably for the first time, is an accurate account of this defense. The material for this volume was prepared almost entirely from documents in the various departments of the federal government, manuscript journals and contemporary newspapers. From the latter a large collection of letters from the personnel of the Army of the Pacific have been utilized to present an intimate picture of frontier army service

The author Aurora Hunt spent almost 15 years in assembling and collecting of the vast material in this volume. She is descendant of an early California family who received her training in research and historical writing at the University of California, Berkely.