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A TRAIL GUIDE TO THE DOMINGUEZ - VELEZ

de ESCALANTE EXPEDITION 1776

by

Robert S. Russon

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

History

Approved:

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Logan, Utah

1973

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Investigation of the Dominguez - Velez de Escalante trail has left a second, residual trail in its path, one of names. There are many to thank who have left insight and the result of years of patient research upon which to base a beginning to this guide. Herbert E. Bolton, the giant, who went before; Eleanor B. Adams, who came later, and added so much knowledge and understanding to the problems of the Franciscan brothers and the New Mexican missions. To these two: deep thanks.

To Carl I. Wheat, who painstakingly collected, organized and annotated the work of Don Bernardo Miera, to David E. Miller, who gave access to an entire lifetime of thought and research and materials, to Melvin T. Smith, who from the first sensed the need for and stimulated the development of a trail guide, I acknowledge heartfelt thanks.

To those who have collected: the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the Bancroft Library, the Utah State Historical Society, the Libraries of Utah State University and the University of Utah - thanks.

However, nothing would have been done had it not been for the idea, the patience, the criticism of Charles S. Peterson. To him I owe this trail guide.

Robert S. Russon

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## ABSTRACT

A Trail Guide to the Dominguez - Velez  
de Escalante Expedition 1776

by

Robert S. Russon, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1973

Major Professor: Dr. Charles S. Peterson  
Department: History

In 1939, Herbert E. Bolton stated a need for a synthesizing map of the Dominguez - Velez de Escalante route through the four states of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. Dr. Bolton urged that a joint effort be undertaken between state and government agencies to establish an "Escalante Way" through the four states to commemorate the historic trek.

The "Trail Guide to the Dominguez - Velez de Escalante Expedition 1776" is an answer to the Challenge given by Herbert Bolton. It is essentially a set of maps, accurately drawn, simplified for lay reading and enlivened by supporting text.

This trail guide is separated into three main sections: 1) The Beginning, 2) The Ending, and 3) The Trail.

1) The Beginning. The Dominguez-Escalante expedition resulted as one of Spain's attempts to shore up her northwestern borders against foreign encroachment by the French, Russians and British. A route to Monterey from the northern Spanish stronghold, Santa Fe, would consolidate the Spanish domination of the Southwest and enhance commercial ties with

important sources of supply. For this attempt two Franciscan priests were selected to lead eight other adventurers over two thousand miles in an attempt to find a practicable route to the California coast.

2) The Ending. The results of what then was thought to be failure to secure a viable route west were important to subsequent exploration and administrative problems both to the crumbling Spanish colonies and to American expansion. Both the journal kept by Escalante and the map drawn by Don Bernardo Miera had influence beyond their time and intent.

3) The Trail. The last section of the Guide is a narrative of the trail keyed to accompanying detailed maps (24) of the route through the four states of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. The narrative blends the experience of both the Spanish party in 1776 and the author in 1973. The maps show the route taken by the Spaniards superimposed upon modern landmarks such as cities, highways and dams. Each campsite made by the party in 1776 is shown and names given prominent geographical features by the Spanish travelers at the time they passed through the country are also given. Where the modern place and feature names have changed in the ensuing period, both have been given on the maps.

## INTRODUCTION

### "A Rosary of ... Jewels"

In 1939 Herbert E. Bolton, then Chairman of the Department of History at the University of California at Berkeley and member of the Advisory Board of National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments, wrote an article for the American Planning and Civic Annual entitled "Escalante Way - An Opportunity for the National Park Service." In the article, Dr. Bolton presented an argument for historic background as a basis for enhanced understanding of the nation's parks and monuments, specifically in the Southwest.

To illustrate his point Dr. Bolton described the "remarkable adventure" Silvestre Velez de Escalante and the mixed party of Franciscans and American-born Spanish adventurers and their two thousand mile journey from Santa Fe to the Great Basin and back via Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico in 1776. At the time the article was written in 1939, the National Park Service was considering the establishment of an Escalante National Monument in Arizona and Dr. Bolton felt the need for establishing a historical basis for the chosen name. After a brief narrative of the exploration Dr. Bolton wrote:

This extraordinary feat of exploration through the Great West accomplished "without noise of arms" by Escalante and his little band, has tremendous historical value which can be utilized by the Park Service. Much of this value might be realized by designating an Escalante Way through the four states of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Arizona, and this without special expense for road building by the Park Service or by any other agency. A map of Escalante's route, projected on the road maps of these four states, shows that even now the motorist can follow exactly, or with surprisingly

close approximation, almost the entire Escalante itinerary of two thousand miles. The most inaccessible portion of the route is that between Lee's Ferry and Kaibito Springs. In other words, we have the constituent elements of an Escalante Way already built and they merely await synthesizing in a map and under a unifying name.<sup>1</sup>

What was true in 1939 is an even more compelling fact today. A synthesizing historical map of the Escalante Way would now show numerous paved roads and highways following closely the path taken by the Franciscans in 1776. With the exception of short stretches in Arizona and New Mexico, one can drive close to--if not right over--the original route.

A detailed map of the "Escalante Way" would automatically connect a great and comprehensive number of historical sites, National Parks, and National Monuments together; or as Dr. Bolton put it, "The Escalante Way would be a string on which a whole rosary of National Park jewels could be strung by the motorist in the West."<sup>2</sup> Listing just the most apparent names passed along the Dominguez - Escalante route reads like a travel guide to the West: Santa Fe, Bandelier National Monument, Capulin National Monument, Arches National Monument, Wheeler National Monument, Mesa Verde National Park, Aztec Ruins, Yucca House, Hovenweep National Monuments, Natural Bridges National Monument, Colorado National Monument, Dinosaur National Monument, Timpanogos Cave National Monument, Cedar Breaks National Monument, Bryce Canyon National Park, Zion National Park, Pipe Springs National Monument,

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert E. Bolton, "Escalante Way - An Opportunity for the National Park Service," American Planning and Civic Annual (1939), p. 272.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 272.



Grand Canyon National Park, Rainbow Bridge National Monument, Glen Canyon, Rainbow Lodge, Wupatki National Monument, Walnut Canyon National Monument, Montezuma's Castle, the Hopi Pueblos, Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Petrified Forest National Park, Zuni, Chaco Canyon National Monument, El Morro National Monument, Acoma Pueblo, Laguna, Isleta, and the Tiguex Pueblos.

The idea of an historical map for the tourist with an interest in history is, of course, not new. There have been many such attempts published by public and private interests ranging from state historical societies and tourist boards to the prestigious National Geographic Society and the more influential U.S. Geologic Survey. Historic trail maps are available in just about every state west of the hundredth meridian and the Dominguez - Escalante trail is included in at least two major full-color efforts produced by the Colorado Historical Society<sup>3</sup> and the Utah State Tourist Board.<sup>4</sup> Each of these maps, however, only show the portion of the trail that passes through the respective states mentioned above.

When Herbert Bolton made his translation of the journey and introduction which was to be published under the title Pageant in the Wilderness,<sup>5</sup> the only existing map of the total route was a very rudimentary one drawn earlier by Herbert Auerbach to accompany his own

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<sup>3</sup>C.W. Love, "A Historical Map of Early Colorado" (State Historical Society of Colorado, 1949).

<sup>4</sup>Dale L. Morgan, "Utah Historical Trails Map" (Utah Tourist and Publicity Council).

<sup>5</sup>Herbert E. Bolton, Pageant in the Wilderness (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, 1950).

translation of the journal published in the Utah Historical Quarterly.<sup>6</sup> There were mistakes in the route on the Auerbach map and the scale that the map had to be drawn in was not one that would allow much detail. What was needed was a definitive map to accompany the new translation, but this presented a problem. Herbert E. Bolton, like so many top-rate historians, was a perfectionist. He had a large map that he had used for his own field work but he had repeatedly resisted all efforts to use it as the basis for a published map, giving as his reason his feeling as to the unfinished nature of his work at that time.

Herbert Bolton was not one to rush into print. But some kind of a map was needed for the book and the problem was solved by enterprising editors who "borrowed" the Bolton map one night and took the information there as the basis for the map that was finally published with the book. Since this was a last minute project, the work was rushed and the result less than perfect.<sup>7</sup>

The map, drawn by C.E. Erickson, has a number of mistakes in the route that, while not totally unexpected considering the haste in which it was made, are inexcusable considering the source from which they came. For example, the crossing of the Green River is shown far to the south of the real location with the camp of that day which the Spanish called "La Vega de Santa Cruz" shown on the wrong side of the river.

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<sup>6</sup>Herbert Auerbach, "Father Escalante's Diary," Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol. 11, Nos. 1-4, Jan.-Oct., 1943.

<sup>7</sup>From a letter written by S. George Ellsworth to the author, October 22, 1973. George Hammond took the Bolton map to a draftsman who lived in Berkeley, C.E. Erickson, who copied the route overnight so that the map could be returned to Bolton's office the next morning. The finished product was never reprinted during Bolton's lifetime and so he never had a chance to correct the mistakes that were apparent.

The Erickson map shows the Franciscans crossing the Green River a total of seven times while, in fact, they crossed it only once. Throughout the map, haste in production is evident in misplaced campsites and even cities. For example, Levan in Utah is placed to the northwest of the Spanish camp of San Bernardino when, in fact, it was to the northeast; Jensen in northeast Utah is floating in no man's land on the wrong side of the Green River 30 miles east of where it should be. The list could go on but it is evident that even at a quick glance this is not the synthesizing map Bolton speaks of in the "Escalante Way."

The Bolton original--if it still exists--lies somewhere in the countless boxes of the Bolton papers resting uncataloged in the Bancroft Library. It would be interesting if the map were to be found to compare it with the Erickson copy. But this would not even then give the public an Escalante Way. The government maps that Bolton used as a basis for his route-finding in Pageant in the Wilderness bear little relation to the face of the land today with its Interstate highways, paved State highways, and myriad dirt roads pushed out of the back country for industry or private enterprise. The Escalante Way today would show features undreamed of in 1939: Lake Powell has covered in water any chance for appreciation today of the problems confronting the Spaniards at the crossing of the Colorado River; Strawberry Reservoir has covered the lush valley where the Spanish grazed their horses and mules two hundred years ago; National Monuments have been transformed into National Parks and scenic and historic sites have reached National Monument status.

Among other changes since Bolton wrote about the Escalante Way is the ever increasing public pressure on the country of the West, the same country through which the padres passed. This increase in visitors to the West has made the need for additional attractions to relieve the squeeze on existing National sites of historical value paramount. Even in the 1930's this great historian recognized the problem:

One of the increasing difficulties of National Park administration is that these areas are becoming over-crowded with visitors at the height of the seasons, and relief is being sought in supplementary attractions easily accessible from the park areas. Much relief of this kind could be found by utilizing to the full the historical assets of the regions within or adjacent to the parks and monuments.<sup>8</sup>

Since this was written, visitors to the National Parks and Monuments in just the four states traversed by the Dominguez - Escalante expedition have increased in number to an almost alarming degree. For example: in 1971 4,897,600 tourists visited the state of Utah. Of these, 26 percent visited Zion National Park, one of the closest to the Dominguez - Escalante route.<sup>9</sup> Of the thousands that visit Zion National Park each year there could be many who, if there were a facility for such, would prefer to camp at the October 14, 1776, campsite "San Hugolino" made by the Spaniards not much more than 20 miles from Zion Park. Added interest could be provided to this public campground with the addition of permanent displays which would explain and interpret the passage of these ten hardy men from another time in

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<sup>8</sup>Bolton, "Escalante Way," p. 272.

<sup>9</sup>Institute for the Study of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, Utah State University, 1971 Report.

relation to the country around them. In fact, this could be but one of many numbered sites along the "Escalante Way" telling the story of the great exploration and adventure to today's traveler.

With the added emphasis of observance of the nation's bicentennial, the Domínguez - Escalante expedition takes on added significance. The need for recognition established in 1939 by Herbert Bolton has not diminished with time but, rather, has been enhanced by the progress man has made on the land and the improvement in the quality of life in this decade.

This trail guide is intended as an answer to many of the needs raised by Dr. Bolton years ago. Those who read and use it, it is hoped, will be those touring Americans who are curious about the land around them, who want to know more about the past and how it relates to the land they see. The guide is designed also to be more than just a detailed marking of Bolton's "Escalante Way;" its purpose is to commemorate an unique western expression of the nation's bicentennial in which both the east and west of an emerging nation take on added meaning by the oneness of a single year: 1776.

The emphasis of the guide is on the land. The maps show the relationship of two hundred years of time to a route made initially through virgin wilderness. The features of today--the paved highways, the cities, the dams and reservoirs--shown as a base for the single line delineating the travels of ten men 200 years ago, accent, perhaps as no other way could, the harmony and discord of men and the land.

Literally following in the footsteps of an historian of the stature of Herbert E. Bolton is not an enviable task. It is no easy

task to improve on the work of one who, quite literally, left no stone unturned in search of knowledge. Time and time again original research turned up the inevitable footprints of Herbert Bolton who had passed that way before; most of the time quietly and some of the time quite unexpectedly. The only gap he left was a detailed guide to the actual trail. He had followed it; he knew where it went, for he had been there. But the knowledge stayed with him and only came out in small, terse statements made as one or two-word footnotes for a given point, such as: "Diamond Creek," or "Navajo Mountain." A complete, detailed trail guide showing exactly where the Spanish party of 1776 went and where they stopped did not exist before, during, and after Herbert Bolton wrote Pageant in the Wilderness.

A detailed trail guide, then, was new ground to cover and the research had to start at the beginning--with the Escalante diary and the map made by Don Bernardo Miera. The guide was based on the excellent United States Geological Survey maps of the scale of 250,000 to 1, which gave detail enough to recognize features described by Escalante with some degree of certainty. On these maps (some 20 of them) the initial route was laid out following the clear directions and distances given in the diary. Then, during two summers, the work was checked on the ground mile by mile. Mistakes were corrected (and there were many, for it is not easy to see what the Spaniards saw from the back of a horse with the same fidelity when one is riding an office chair); as the miles grew (in the end, some 2000), so grew respect for the small band of men who made the journey without the aid of maps. Respect for Miera's map came as the difficult terrain was traversed. Respect

for the magnificent diary came as it supplemented and sometimes even replaced the modern topographical maps carried along. It is not an exaggeration to proclaim that one could travel from Santa Fe to Santa Fe on a two thousand mile loop through four states on a horse this very day with nothing to guide him but the diary written by a twenty-six year old Spanish priest 200 years ago.

The organization of this trail guide is in three basic parts. The first two parts are intended to set the stage for the adventure that follows, and the third part is the guide itself, intended to rely on the graphic picture formed by cartography to carry its meaning but supplemented by written narrative closely keyed to each map.

In writing of events two hundred years ago against the background of contemporary landscape, certain problems evolve that make the task dichotomous by its very nature. The reader must jump those two hundred years that separate the present from the past many times in the trail narrative that follows, sometimes within the space of a paragraph, at times during the statement of a sentence. The complexities suggested by this compression of time have been simplified by the addition of a series of maps and an elaborating narrative. Within this narrative is interwoven an alternating mosaic of time expressing the experience of Dominguez and Velez de Escalante with their own landscape and the one we see today. Add to this the experience of travel over the same trail expressed as a personal modern narrative, and the demands made on the reader to understand and encompass these changing points of view suggest a formidable task.

But the difference is not as great as it appears. Though man has changed the land around him, surprisingly it is still very much the same as it was when the two Franciscans led their companions over it. The face may be changed, but it is merely a mask, thin in spots, totally missing in others. In those places time has never existed and the ten Spaniards could ride over the next hill at any moment.



## 1. THE BEGINNING

The morning of July 4, 1776, was to be an important one in Philadelphia. Influential men had gathered from the thirteen new world British colonies to sign a revolutionary document, one which would break apart the new fledged American states from an implacable Britain. At daybreak on this same morning, far to the west, the still streets of the Hopi Indian pueblo of Oriabe in what is today Arizona filled as richly dressed ceremonial dancers, bodies painted, dressed in bright dyed and decorated capes, shawls, and feathers; some wearing brightly painted wooden masks swarmed out of the adobe buildings. They beat upon shallow wooden basins with sticks as others played reed flutes that gave an eerie wailing sound which was punctuated by the steady beat of the basin drums. The sounds awoke a sleeping figure who was not of the pueblo or any part of the ceremonial dance. As he watched, a large body of Indians approached the spot where he had camped for the last two days. There were four obvious leaders in front; the tallest of the four demanded: "Why have you come here? Don't stay. Go back to your own land."<sup>10</sup>

The unwelcome visitor to the Hopis was Fray Francisco Garces, a priest of the Franciscan order, one of a hardy frontier brotherhood which spread their own religious zeal into the farthest corners of Spain's most northern new world holdings. He had just come from

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<sup>10</sup> John Galvin (Ed.), Record of Travels in Arizona and California-1775-1776 (San Francisco: John Howell, 1970), p. 75.

California and he had gained first-hand knowledge that the route he had taken was not practical because there was little food and less water for the horses that were the mainstay of transportation. He had also just discovered what others of his order in the gospel had found out not too long before: the Hopis, whose land lay along Garces' route to California, wanted only to be left entirely alone.

The night Garces arrived in the Hopi pueblo, July 2, 1776, he wrote to his Franciscan brother, the priest at Zuni pueblo, addressing it to "whoever he might be," urging that a more northerly route toward California and the Spanish commercial port of Monte Rey be considered. Little did brother Garces know that the priest at Zuni had already made plans to do that very thing.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, all along the northern border of New Spain there had been ever-increasing activity as the Spanish reacted to imperialistic pressure from France, Britain, and Russia. Garces had seen and heard of Russian penetration along the Pacific coast and French and British fur hunters had caused alarm to the Spanish Crown in the land to the north of the New Mexican missions.

Fray Francisco Garces was an active part and but a single example of the Spanish thrust into the west and the north of the new American continent. Ever since the Spanish Pope Alexander VI issued the far-reaching papal bull of May 4, 1493, announcing Spanish claim to all of what is today the American Southwest, soldier and priest had combined

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<sup>11</sup>An excerpt from Father Pedro Font's diary, April, 1776, quoted in Herbert E. Bolton, Outpost of Empire (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 1939), p. 269.

forces to penetrate and occupy new country for the Spanish Crown. As far north as Colorado today and as far west as the Pacific coast of California had, by 1775, seen the Spanish presidio and mission influence.

The consolidating and often punitive thrust from the missions of New Mexico was laid on a solid base of discovery on Spain's northern Pacific coast. Step by step, California was extended northward by earlier coastal counterparts to Spain's inland explorers. Juan Cabrillo and his successor, Bartolome Ferrelo, explored the entire coast by 1543 and in a justly famous voyage in 1602-1603, Sebastian Vizcaino discovered the important deep water bay of Monterey.

Following the footsteps of Father Junipero Serra, the prime mover of California settlement in the 1760's, the Franciscans who were in California moved north with the military expeditions to upper California in 1769, and it was a Franciscan brother to Fray Francisco Garces, Father Juan Crespi, who, in 1772, explored a new inland bay north of Monterey. Emptying into the perfect deep water port formed by the bay was a large river of which the unknown source we shall know much more of later. Fray Crespi named the river "El Rio Grande de Nuestro Seraficio Padre San Francisco" and it was the discovery of this river which led to much speculation on the part of the Spanish Crown as to just how far inland the river went. Efforts to unite this large and lazy river emptying into Fray Crespi's bay with other far more lively mountain streams inland to the east occupied the time of many explorers, a few of which we will meet in this introduction, for most of the next century.

The result of these far-reaching efforts to consolidate the northern borderlands of New Spain was an even sharper focus on the need for communication and support between the new western ports of the Pacific and the logistic line southeastward from the northern capital of Santa Fe to the central commercial and political center of Chihuahua. The California missions needed the dependability of an overland supply system. Only one galleon came with any regularity to the lower Spanish Pacific coast, and it only to carry away the accumulated riches in gold and silver of Spain's South American mines. Coastal shipping was irregular and those small and unsophisticated vessels that did penetrate as far north as Monterey did so only after braving uncertain weather that could sweep down upon the crude sailing vessels of the day with devastating effect.

It was no wonder the Viceroy of New Spain, Antonio Bucareli, sought more certain ways to link the two otherwise quite separate units of his huge territory. The Spanish colonizers had always felt that trade also fostered stability which led to the Spanish propensity to combine commerce with conversion. Spain's colonial fourfold purpose--conquer, convert, exploit, and incorporate--gave method to the need for increased control and communication between the New Mexican missions and the land between them and California. Juan de Solorzano Pereyra, writing in Madrid in 1776 expressed well this zeal for incorporation:

If, according to an opinion of Aristotle and of Cicero, only the finding or discovering of some art either liberal or of mechanical or of some stone, plant, or other thing which may be of service to men commands their praise ... of what glory are they not worthy who have discovered a

world in which are found such innumerable grandeurs and riches? ... nor is the benefit of this same discovery of less, but of much greater value to that same new world itself: for, in addition to the light of the faith which we gave to its inhabitants ... we have banished their barbarism, changed their wild customs into humane ones, and brought to them many useful and necessary things from our own land; we have taught them the real cultivation of the soil, how to build houses, to live in towns, to read and write, and many other arts to which they were formerly totally alien.<sup>12</sup>

Garces knew of reports that had been filtering back to Mexico City from the northern border outposts of New Spain of a great river to the north which perhaps emptied into the Pacific Ocean. He had heard, as others had, of the tales of inhabitants with beards living on the far bank of this great river. He had no doubt wondered, as others had before him, if these people could be from California, or if they were even, in fact, Spaniards.

By 1774 Viceroy Bucareli had requested information from the New Mexican missions about the regions beyond and thus it was that Fray Damian Martinez, the Franciscan assigned to the pueblo of Zuni in New Mexico, was asked by Inspector Don Hugo O'Connor to employ "every means his intelligence and prudence might dictate to learn of the flying reports picked up on this frontier about a settlement of Europeans on the opposite bank of the river called Tizon."<sup>13</sup>

Fray Martinez replied to Don Hugo on April 1, 1775, apologizing for his tardiness and using as his excuse poor health, frigid climate,

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<sup>12</sup>Herbert I. Priestly, The Coming of the White Man, 1492-1848 (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. V.

<sup>13</sup>Eleanor B. Adams, "Fray Silvestre and the Obstinate Hopi," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. 38 (April, 1963), p. 101.

lack of good food, risk of Indian attack and snowfall. The good brother wrote from the pueblo of Zuni, halfway from Santa Fe to the land of the Moqui (Hopi) where just over a year later Brother Garces was to appear from the west:

First, the account of a Navajo Indian who, after being baptized and acquiring some facility in our language, returned to his people. On one of his forays, he made with them they travelled between north and west ... as far as the river called El Tizon the Colorado on the shore of which he found a white man on horseback with clothing and armament of the type we use.<sup>14</sup>

Fray Martinez urged that an expedition go to the country to the north guided by the Yutas, "whose veracity and constant friendship with us is sufficiently proved." The fact that the Yutas agreed with the tale of Martinez's Navajo was also a factor. "No one can comprehend the importance of this discovery," he added, at the end of his letter, "Let your Lordship weigh my arguments."<sup>15</sup>

Here was news indeed! Could it be that these mystery men were from the California Presidios? It did not matter what wiser heads cautioned against early conclusions; instructions went out from the superiors--one specifically through the secretary of the Province, Fray Fernando Antonio Gomez, to one Fray Silvestre Velez de Escalante, also a Franciscan at Zuni--to find out what lay out beyond towards California. Provincial Secretary Gomez could not have selected a better man for the task.

Silvestre Velez de Escalante was a Montanes, born in the old village of Treceno Valle de Vandalgia in the "rainy green mountains"

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<sup>14</sup>Adams, Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

of Santader, Spain, about 1750. He came to Mexico City, where he took habit of the Franciscans in 1767 in the Covento Grande, headquarters of the Franciscan Province of the Holy Gospel. Escalante was first a student of philosophy, then theology, after which he was ordained a priest and sent to New Mexico, to Zuni Pueblo, sometime in 1774.<sup>16</sup>

Zuni Pueblo was remote and considered a "hardship station" by those at Santa Fe. Fray Martinez described it as "the end of Christendom in this new world," but Escalante, it seems, was not bothered by its distance from Santa Fe. For most of his stay, Fray Escalante was the only priest, and that did bother him. When the second Franciscan assigned to Zuni became ill and left soon after Silvestre's arrival, he wrote his superior to send him a companion. Said Escalante, "I am not resigned to living like a solitary anchorite."

It was from Zuni that the first tentative Spanish feelers were put out to re-establish contact with the pueblos to the northwest. Since the successful Pueblo Rebellion of August, 1680, Spanish influence in the Hopi pueblos was non-existent. Velez de Escalante journeyed from Zuni to the Hopi the year after he arrived but met with hostility and indifference. The young Franciscan was also "profoundly shocked" by what he saw of the "idolatrous abominations associated with their most solemn dances."<sup>17</sup>

In a letter to Governor Captain Don Pedro Fermin de Mendinueta dated October 28, 1775, Escalante gives the reason for the journey to

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

the Hopi Indians. They are so similar to the ones stated for his later trip north that they could be interchangeable: (1) to establish "certain presidios," (2) to establish missions, (3) to determine an overland route to Monterey, (4) to convert the Indians, and (5) to develop commerce of those provinces with Sonora and California.<sup>18</sup> It was the Moqui expedition which achieved the first leg of the connection with California, which was completed less than a year later when Fray Garces arrived there from Monterey on the evening of July 2nd.

With the arrival of Garces at Oriabe, a tentative link had been made between the western missions of New Mexico--and thus Santa Fe--and the missions of California. But the problem of greedy neighbors--Russia, France, and Britain--nibbling with imperialistic fervor at the fringe of New Spain, and the problem of the mystery river reported by Fray Crespi which still was believed to run from the interior to the western sea, still remained to be solved. If found, this river might well be a ready-made route to the great bay of San Francisco. Escalante had talked to a Cosnina Indian during the Hopi trip who told him of the high Sierra nine days from Oriabe, beyond which ran the "river of mysteries."

Father Pedro Font, who drew the maps for the Anza expedition to California in 1774 by way of Sonora, felt upon reading Escalante's Hopi diary that the river described by the Cosnina would have to run into the sea since it ran west. He knew that the Anza Expedition did

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<sup>18</sup>Silvestre Velez de Escalante, "Letter to Mendinueta, Oct. 28, 1775," found in Alfred B. Thomas (trans.), Forgotten Frontiers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), p. 150.



not cross this river during its journey west. Could the "river of mysteries" be a huge lake, wondered Font; one so large that it would prevent those opposite sides from communicating with each other?<sup>19</sup>

In June of 1776, while Fray Garces was still on the deserts to the west of Oriabe, Fray Escalante had been summoned to Santa Fe by the Superior of the Franciscan Missions in New Mexico, Fray Francisco Antanasio Dominguez. It was Brother Dominguez who had been charged with the task of finding a route to California by his superiors in Mexico, a task he intended to carry out himself with perhaps the able help of the Franciscan at Zuni.

Fray Francisco Antanasio Dominguez was a "Criollo," a true Spanish-American, born in Mexico City about 1740. He was commissary of the Third Order at the convent of Veracruz at the age of thirty-two and was sent to New Mexico three years later as canonical visitor of the mission there. Dominguez arrived at Santa Fe early in the year 1776 which he was to make his headquarters for the visit to the surrounding missions and to complete his plans for the second of his tasks, finding all he could about a route to Monterey.

To be given the office of canonical visitor at the age of thirty-five speaks highly of the esteem Fray Dominguez commanded of his superiors. His instructions, however, left no doubt that his was not a pleasure junket. Fray Dominguez was instructed to proceed with his visitation "avoiding extraordinary expenditures in his transportation from one mission to another and contenting himself with the frugal

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<sup>19</sup> Herbert E. Bolton, Anza's California Expeditions (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), Vol. 3, p. 277.

sustenance of those regions." It seems that even the 18th century Spanish had expense account problems.<sup>20</sup>

It is the last paragraph of the instructions that catches the eye and makes the meeting of Fray Silvestre Velez de Escalante and Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez in Santa Fe only a matter of time:

Finally, our visitor shall undertake to find out whether the Father Custos, or any of our missionaries, received a letter from the Reverend Father Garces, apostolic missionary, written from the junction of the Gila and Colorado Rivers ... If it has been received, he shall notify us at once so that the information may be transmitted to the Most Excellent Lord Viceroy, to whom this news will be most welcome in the view of the project to open communications, not only with the provinces of Sonora but with the new establishments at Monterey ...<sup>21</sup>

In a letter written to his Provincial from Santa Fe, June 10, 1776, Fray Dominguez writes of the exchange of information between Velez de Escalante and the Lord Governor in which Escalante promised to discover the route to Monterey with twenty men:

His Excellency the Viceroy has written to the lord governor asking for information concerning what Father Escalante wrote. The latter (says the Viceroy) promised to discover the route to Monterey with twenty men. I am expecting him hourly and also hoping to see what comes of this.<sup>22</sup>

It seems that the priest at Zuni had been working on the route to Monterey even before the arrival of Fray Dominguez at Santa Fe with instructions to do the same thing. Father Velez de Escalante was

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<sup>20</sup>Eleanor B. Adams and Fray Angelico Chavez, The Missions of New Mexico (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1956), p. XX.

<sup>21</sup>Found in Bibliographic Nationale Mexico, Leg. 10, No. 86. Undated. Quoted in Adams, Missions, p. XXI.

<sup>22</sup>Adams, Missions, p. 280.

ordered in mid April to join his superior in Santa Fe and he arrived on the night of June 7, 1776, with ideas of immediate action. Fray Escalante's earlier trip west to the obstinate Hopi had but whetted his desire for a solution to the problem of a California route.

When the two Franciscans met in Santa Fe, they wasted no time in putting desire into action. They made plans to gather a party and supplies at the same time that Fray Francisco Garces was crossing the Colorado River on his way east to Oriabe. The two hoped to leave Santa Fe on July 4, the same day that Garces met the four angry and hostile dancers in the streets of the mesa-perched pueblo, and were somewhat disappointed when circumstances prevented it.

By the time the expedition did leave, July 29, 1776, the letter from Garces sent from Oriabe to the "priest at Zuni" finally caught up with Velez de Escalante in Santa Fe after a twenty-seven day journey. The report of the Garces trail to California via the Hopi pueblos very likely put the final hesitation--if there were any--to rest about a southern route to Monterey. From the alacrity in the manner in which the two Franciscans made plans to journey to Monterey it seems evident that a mutual trust and respect had developed rapidly after they met; qualities that would stand them in good stead during the months ahead.

Of Escalante, Fray Dominguez later wrote: "He is the only person who can carry out my just plans and decisions."<sup>23</sup> A letter from the governor dated November 9, 1775, described Escalante as a "... religious

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

of exemplary life and unusual talent."<sup>24</sup> Fray Silvestre was a natural choice to help Dominguez. He was held in esteem by all who had contact with him; he had the fervor of the true Spanish "religious" which carried him through trips of unimagined hardship, although being almost constantly plagued with sickness (before being summoned to Santa Fe to confer with Dominguez, Escalante had suffered recurring urinary problems).

Of the two Franciscans and their relationship, we have only their written records before, during, and after the epic journey to go by. Velez de Escalante was a young man of about twenty-six when he set out for Monterey; Dominguez was ten years older.

Velez de Escalante had frontier experience in the outposts of the New Mexican Mission. His trip to the Moqui Indians and sojourn at Zuni had given him first-hand knowledge of wilderness travel and living. He was known and respected by the hardy "Criollos" living at Zuni and Santa Fe for, it seems, they thought enough of him that he had little trouble recruiting them for a two thousand mile round trip into the mostly unknown lands to the north and west of New Mexico. Velez de Escalante had also, perhaps a bit of the "love of novelty common to all which is much increased by the pursuit of its gratification" found in the wandering Jedediah Smith and his fur trapping contemporaries who roamed much of the same country half a century later.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Archivo Geographic Mexico Provincias Internas Vol. 196, exp. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Maurice S. Sullivan (Ed.), The Travels of Jedediah Smith (Santa Ana, 1934), pp. 26-27.

This love of new places and unknown lands was a common bond to the restless adventurers that gravitated to the frontiers of the west and it could have been the yearning of the young Spanish priest from the upland, the high green hills of Spain, for new untouched land that brought Escalante to the "Outpost of Empire" of New Mexico in the first place.

Of Domínguez we can gain a fairly accurate picture by the reaction of the Franciscan brothers to his visit of the New Mexican Missions. His brethren in the Franciscan Order resented greatly the intrusion of this perceptive young brother into their sometimes slack and lazy lives. We gain a picture of Domínguez through his written report of his visit to the New Mexican Missions of a somewhat dedicated, conscientious young priest who filled his assignments with unbending high standard. Domínguez, unhesitantly critical, made some enemies on the frontier. In fact, so high were his standards and so perceptive his observations that Domínguez had a minor revolt on his hands when he returned from his trek with Escalante. The disgruntled brethren had sent charges against his zeal to Mexico City. Domínguez could not and would not compromise his standards and he had nothing but a frustrating, bitter struggle ahead of him in his attempt to remedy the conditions in New Mexico that so shocked him. His was the fate as we shall see, of a reformer caught between a high personal sense of duty and the relaxed ecclesiastical discipline of the eighteenth century New Mexican Frontier.

The trip north with Escalante that was decided on with such seeming haste can be seen as still another unbending reaction to duty on the part of Domínguez. He carried out his instructions to the very letter

in every instance that we know of and he probably viewed the arduous survey of a route to Monterey as another task to be completed with dispatch.

The two Franciscan brothers we see as almost perfect foils. On one hand a young, idealistic adventurer ready to broaden the frontier and gain new souls appeared and on the other hand a dedicated, honest and conscientious, and seasoned leader who saw his duty and carried it out existed.

The warning dispatched by Fray Garces from Oriabe added yet another brick to the already strong wall of reasons the two Franciscans had built against a route through the land of the Hopis and across the desert wastes Garces had encountered. The singular way with which a 35th parallel route was avoided by the two planners hints at other, unknown reasons why this more logical and now much-used route was avoided. It is speculative and unprofitable to wonder, however, since there is no known evidence to support this suspicion. The country to the north of Santa Fe was known to the Spanish through trading activities as far as the Gunnison River and the pair decided this would be the first leg of the journey which would place them on the latitude of Monterey. They would then only have to strike west to the Pacific.

A northern route had been taking shape in Escalante's mind even before Garces wrote of his hardships. Escalante described in a letter in October, 1775, the arid land between Sonora and Monterey as an "impassable road" and a route which contained warlike nations "savegly unhuman."<sup>26</sup> Dominguez and Escalante also knew of the Vavas report,

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<sup>26</sup>Escalante, loc. cit., p. 157.

published in Manila in 1776, which fixed the port of Monterey at 37 degrees latitude. Santa Fe was given as 36 degrees, 11 minutes, according to the map of Don Nicolas de la Fora that Escalante had examined.<sup>27</sup> For this reason, and the fact that the friendly Payachis Utes were felt to be situated along the same latitude as Monterey, Escalante had written Mendinueta in October, 1775, that a route north through the land of the Utes rather than the Cosinas would be preferable.<sup>28</sup>

In the same letter, Escalante offered his services, not mentioning a sickness that had plagued him, it seems, for some time. This sickness was to give him more trouble later and would finally become dominant in a body weakened by hard travel, a condition of which we shall hear more. This report, however, as much as any other reason, influenced Dominguez to ask Escalante to accompany him, for it was in that letter that Escalante offered to "aid in matters spiritual and keep a diary with the greatest exactness."<sup>29</sup>

Next to the two padres themselves, the most important figure in the little party of explorers recruited by Dominguez and Escalante at Santa Fe was Captain Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco. A veteran of five campaigns against hostile Indians and one time alcalde and captain of the Pecos and Galisteo frontier, Don Bernardo was no stranger to the rough frontier conditions of the time. The captain had seen much of

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<sup>27</sup>The Marquis de Rubi traveled on an "inspection tour" from Texas to Sonora in 1766-68 with the purpose of examining frontier conditions. With him went Don Nicolas de la Fora who later made a map of the country traversed.

<sup>28</sup>Escalante, loc. cit., p. 157

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

New Spain. Las Mimbres villa in Sonora was settled by Miera, who earlier had travelled through the region from Las Mimbres to the Gila River, the Rio de San Francisco, the Salines of Zuni and the pueblo of Acoma.

As an officer in the Engineering Corps of the Spanish Army, Miera had come to El Paso de Rio del Norte (the present city of Juarez, Mexico) in 1743 from Spain. He was an accomplished cartographer and had been with Escalante on his trip to the Hopi Indians in 1775. The map Miera had drawn of this expedition had not gone unnoticed, and it was probably due to this skill and his useful experience as a soldier that Miera was included in the Dominguez expedition.

Escalante wrote to the Provincial Officer at Santa Fe on July 29, 1776, the day the expedition departed, explaining clearly the reason Miera was included in the party:

With regard to Don Bernardo de Miera, I state that if I am not mistaken, I merely said in my letter that he would be useful as one of those who were to go, not to command the expedition, but to make a map of the terrain explored. And I state that only for this do I consider him useful.<sup>30</sup>

Miera was a man of strong opinion and, judging from what he left behind, a kind of Spanish "universal man." In San Felipe Mission there stands today a crudely carved statue of a saint produced and sold (at a high price we are told) to the mission by Don Bernardo. This man of many talents even tried his hand at casting some ordinance at Santa Fe. It was a dismal failure.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Adams, Missions, p. 307.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 160-161.



The remainder of the expedition was made up of hardy local Spanish inhabitants, each with previous experience in the land to the north or an associate of Escalante on previous journeys. Don Juan Pedro Cisneros, Alcalde of Zuni, was with Escalante on his trip to the Hopis. Don Joaquin Lain was also a citizen of Zuni and had been with Juan Maria de Rivera in 1765, when he opened the Spanish fur trade to the north of New Mexico in what is today Colorado. Lorenzo Olivares of El Paso, Lucrecio and Andres Muniz, brothers, one of whom--Andres--had accompanied Rivera to the Gunnison River in present day Colorado on two earlier expeditions, one in 1765 and the other in 1775; and was also a member of Rivera's 1765 expedition (Andres also knew the Yuta language). Simon Lucero, the servant of Don Pedro, and Juan de Aguilar, a native of Rio Arriba, completed the group.

The party, one half of Escalante's original estimate of twenty men, was probably well mounted on horseback and undoubtedly took the hardy Spanish mule to carry supplies. Since Coronado's expedition, the horse had been the mainstay of Spanish transportation in the southwest, having proven its viability and practicality for travel in that arid land.<sup>32</sup> The Spanish preferred stallions, and it must be assumed that Dominguez and Escalante were so mounted. The old soldier Miera, as cartographer and keeper of the none-too-accurate astrolabe, probably was well mounted on a stallion also, as befitted his semi-official status.

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<sup>32</sup>Max Moorhead, "Spanish Transportation in the Southwest, 1540-1846," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. 32 (April, 1957), pp. 107-122.

The poor in the Spanish Americas of that time rode burros and even though there was a shortage of horses in eighteenth century New Mexico, the Dominguez - Escalante expedition was of such importance to the Crown that Governor Mendinueta outfitted the party himself. Because of this, the other members of the party, of lower official status, were probably mounted on horses also rather than burros.

## 2. THE ENDING

Soon after the return of the expedition to Santa Fe on January 2, 1777, Don Bernardo drew a map of the country covered. It was not the first map he had drawn; in 1773 he had made a map of the Rio del Norte from San Elzeario to San Pasqual (the Rio Grande River just north of El Paso) for the purpose of establishing a site for a proposed presidio. Miera very probably also drew a map of the trip Velez de Escalante made to the Hopi Indians in 1775, and, though it is not signed, the map of Anza's Commanche expedition is very likely from Miera's pen.

The map Miera made of the Dominguez - Escalante expedition will always be one of the prime documents of early western history and the influence it had on later cartographers gives it solid position as one of the most copied maps of the period. Parts of Miera's geography appear on maps produced into the nineteenth century.

The Miera map is known to exist in at least seven copies comprising four types. The first type could be designated "undecorated" and is very likely the original map made by Miera to accompany the diary which was sent to the Viceroy by Governor Mendinueta in May, 1777. The map, now held by the British Museum, contains numerous evidences of the authorship of Don Bernardo: in the map title the lands newly mapped are proclaimed to be "discovered and surveyed" by the engineer soldier himself.<sup>33</sup> This is typical of Miera who never let a chance

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<sup>33</sup>Carl I. Wheat, Mapping the Transmississippi West (San Francisco: The Institute of Historical Cartography, 1957), Vol. 1, p. 100

go by to clothe himself in glory as the letter he wrote to the King of Spain on his return in presumptive innocence of hope for royal favor demonstrates.<sup>34</sup>

Other features on the "undecorated" version give testimony to its originality. Under the title appear two legends; one exposes the Sea of the West as a myth, the other mentions the Commanche Indians found in the present state of Colorado as being a warlike cruel people. This information could have come through prior experience or from expedition member Andres Muniz who had first-hand dealings with the warlike Commanches. Next to the Commanche note, however, appears an interesting river that is not found on any of the other versions. The river is named "Puede ser el Misuri" and, though probably the South Fork of the Platte, it indicates Spanish knowledge of the Missouri River drainage east from the Rocky Mountains.<sup>35</sup>

In what is today southern Utah, Miera drew today's Virgin River. He labeled it on the undecorated version "R. de los Piramides" and the tall peaks next to the river were "Piramides Suleuros." All later versions of the map combined these separate features into a confusing "R. de los Piramides Sulfureos" or the equally mistaken "Rio Sulfereo do la Piramides." What was correctly placed on the undecorated version was hastily copied on the others by those who were not there.

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<sup>34</sup>Soon after returning from the epic trek, Don Bernardo wrote a letter to the King of Spain outlining his own views as to the significance of what he saw. It seems apparent that Miera was seeking Royal favor for both himself and future patronage for his son through this letter, but in spite of the reasons for it, the observations he made were perceptive and clearly written. The letter can be found in Herbert E. Bolton, Pageant in the Wilderness (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, 1950).

<sup>35</sup>Wheat, op cit., p. 105.

Finally, perhaps the most cogent reason to suppose the undecorated version is the Miera original is the close similarity of the style between the 1779 map of New Mexico known to be drawn by Miera and the style of Version One of the Escalante map although the title is written in a different hand.

The second type of Miera map known to exist could be designated the "Tree and Serpent" version. The single copy of this version is found in the Ministry of War in Madrid and shows in one corner a drawing of a tree down which slides a coiling snake. This map is dedicated to "Comandanted Geral de Lao Provincias Ynternas el Sor Brigadier de los Rs. Exercitos Cavallero Croix" rather than Viceroy Bucareli which dates the copy after the appearance of the Cavellero at Mexico City. The map is mostly similar to the undecorated version and the hand that drew it is one of an obvious professional.<sup>36</sup>

The third type is the famous "Bearded Indian Map" of which four copies exist. This is the version that Herbert Bolton chose to illustrate his translation of the diary and is a good example of the Spanish propensity to embellish needlessly an otherwise straight-forward document; in the upper right hand corner is drawn an ornate papal chariot, in the middle center, east of Laguna de Miera (Sevier Lake) are drawn four Indians, two of which (the males) exhibit what seem to be carefully trimmed beards. One copy of this map is held by the British Museum, two copies (tracings) repose in the Library of Congress in the Kohl Collection and the fourth is at Mexico City. The Mexico

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

City copy was the one used by Bolton as the basis of a hand-drawn copy which was printed with Pageant in the Wilderness, the standard account of the journey.

The fourth type and the seventh and last copy known to exist has recently come to light and is owned by the Yale Library. It is not as detailed as the other versions and shows the unmistakable signs of the professional copiest.

The Miera map is a catalog of "firsts" in the discovery of the west: the Green, White, and Duchesne Rivers, the Uinta and Wasatch Mountains, Utah Lake, Sevier Lake, the La Sal and Abajo Mountains were all firsts recorded by civilized man in the Miera map.

The map was the first detailed drawing of what is now the state of Utah. The map shows Lake Timpanogos (Utah Lake) joining the Great Salt Lake by a thin neck at the north. The party travelled almost to the far northern shores of Utah Lake when they visited the Indian villages along the Provo River, and it seems strange that they failed to observe that Utah Lake did not, in fact, directly connect with the larger lake to the north (Great Salt Lake), described to the Spaniards by the local Indians. Miera does show the long-sought river that reputedly emptied to the west. One again wonders why the explorers did not travel the few extra miles north to confirm the existence of this river and follow it to California.

Miera might have been influenced by the surmise of Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, who travelled through the eastern part of America in 1688. Lahontan learned from the Indians of a "long river" that emptied into a salt lake, which, in turn, emptied into the

west ocean. Don Bernardo certainly had seen the map drawn by Joseph Altonio Alzate y Ramierez in 1768 showing the river "Tizon" at about 41°; he must have used Ramierez as a model since Miera also records information on his map made on the Ramierez map, e.g., a report of the then popular theory that the inhabitants of Lake Tegwayo (Great Salt Lake) were Aztec wanderers from the south.<sup>37</sup>

The newly discovered river, San Buenaventura (Green River) is shown emptying into Laguan de Miera (Sevier Lake), and it seems the cautious cartographer Miera, prudently leaves out the western shore toward California to cover the possibility of yet another river draining its western shore toward California. Aside from Miera's uncertainty regarding lakes and rivers, the map he drew is remarkably accurate. Mountain ranges and most of the drainage areas are shown in correct relationship, and, if the "bearded Indian" form is the original, then Miera has provided us with an additional embellishment consisting of a sketch of the Piute Indians, whom they met in Central Utah and who gave the map its name.

Miera used other sources than Ramierez in making his map. Indians gave him valuable, if sometimes misleading or difficult to understand, information about the country he did not visit, and he had access to documents at Chihuahua, the capital of Spain's internal provinces. It is possible that Miera made use of the information on California of Posadas, Zarate Salmeron and Venegas as a basis for his own contribution. Andres Marcos Burriel published in 1757 the works of Miguel

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<sup>37</sup> Gloria G. Cline, Exploring the Great Basin (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 50-55.

Venegas, in which Venegas was critical of the then popular "Sea of the West" fantasy which appeared as early as 1705, creating a gulf extending inland to the foot of the Rocky Mountains. Miera could have had this in mind when he left the western shore of Sevier Lake open to conjecture.<sup>38</sup>

Of the role played by Dominguez and Velez de Escalante in making the map we can only guess. It would seem logical that the opinion of the two Franciscans would be sought by Don Bernardo during the journey for he certainly must have been involved in taking cartographic notes along the way with his map in mind. Just what data the two contributed to the final version will probably never be known but most likely any help Miera gained from them was in the field and not during the period that he was actually drawing. Although we can assume that the brother Franciscans were very interested in the final product, they certainly were involved deeply in reports of their own when they returned to Santa Fe and from what we know of Don Bernardo's character, he probably wished to have the final product as much Don Bernardo Miera's as possible.

The model Miera left of western geography served as the basis for many later cartographers, who incorporated into their own work many of the features described by the Spanish map. The 1783 map of the American continent from the Mississippi to the Pacific dedicated to La Paz shows Miera's Buenaventura River flowing into San Francisco Bay. In addition to the La Paz map, two other contemporaries were

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 50.



using information from Miera's map of the Anza expedition and the Dominguez - Escalante Expedition into their own maps of the Spanish Americas.

Upon inclusion within the work of these cartographers, Miera's geography of Utah became a permanent entity, mistakes and all, projecting its influence well into the nineteenth century. Baron Alexander von Humbolt included Miera's Buenaventura River and Rio de las Piramides Sulfureas (Virgin River) in his map "Kingdom of New Spain" dated 1811. The upper Colorado Basin and the entire northern third of Humbolt's map were exactly as represented by Miera.<sup>39</sup> In the same year Humbolt published "New Spain," a Mexican priest, Padre Don Jose Pichardo, drew a map to accompany his report on the boundary between Louisiana and Texas. Again, the Pichardo map for the area north of Arizona and New Mexico was an exact copy of Miera. In 1823, A New American Atlas Containing Maps of the Several States of the North American Union was published, and in it appeared a map of the west showing the "River S. Buenaventura" flowing west to the Pacific.<sup>40</sup>

The myth of the Buenaventura River persisted up until 1826, when the newly formed fur trading and trapping firm of Smith, Jackson and Sublette went south from Cache Valley in what is today northern Utah in search of it. If found, the river was to take the mountain men and their catch of beaver to the Pacific coast. The party, led by the

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<sup>39</sup>Wheat, op cit., Vol. 1, p. 97.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 80.

able Jedediah Smith, ended up in Southern California without finding the elusive Buenaventura and still Jedediah refused to believe the river was a myth. If he couldn't find the source, he would find the mouth; and he set out north to San Francisco Bay to follow the river upstream back to the Rocky Mountains. Almost a year to the day a much battered and worn Smith returned to Cache Valley in northern Utah after a circuitous route that led through desert, plain and mountains and through what are today the states of Nevada and California; to the end unsuccessful in his quest for the great river Miera had drawn so many years ago.<sup>41</sup>

With the Miera map stands the carefully written, observant diary constructed by Fray Escalante: a fitting and influential companion to Miera's magnificent map. As long as men are interested in the past, the diary that resulted from the Dominguez - Velez de Escalante expedition will remain one of the treasures of western history and literature. Its weight of influence cannot be measured, if, indeed, this were ever necessary, for the clarity of prose, the exactness of observation give the work a place among the few documents of western exploration that have intrinsic merit beyond the content. Just what influence Dominguez had over the actual wording will probably have to remain unanswered, but it must be assumed that as the superior of the two Franciscans in rank, Dominguez was consulted by Velez de Escalante on just what was to be included on the official record.

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<sup>41</sup>Dale L. Morgan, Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953), pp. 206-215.

That the diary was a joint effort seems probable. The young Velez de Escalante would listen to his superior in years and rank and it would defy logic that Dominguez would forebear contributing to the only official record made of an expedition that he himself led.

Don Bernardo included reference to a collaboration between the two Franciscans in what is felt to be the original map of the expedition held by the British Museum. In the title of the map Miera, after mentioning his own somewhat exaggerated role in discovery of new lands, refers to the material "set forth in the journal they kept" having reference to the two priests [*italics mine*].<sup>42</sup> It would seem that if Velez de Escalante was the sole author of the journal, Miera would have said so.

The style of writing, however, must be attributed to Escalante. It is crisp and factual and a testimony to the education the young Velez de Escalante had received at the hands of the Franciscan Order. In the letter written to Mendinueta on October 28, 1775, Escalante mentions his desire to report always with "neat clarity."<sup>43</sup> By the end of his career, Escalante had gained an enviable reputation for just this. His writings were widely circulated and were influential in the solution of certain administrative problems in New Spain.<sup>44</sup>

The diary was just as influential as a source of information to later travelers in the west. In the nineteenth century, the United

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<sup>42</sup>Wheat, op cit., Vol. 1, p. 100.

<sup>43</sup>Escalante, loc. cit., p. 150.

<sup>44</sup>Eleanor B. Adams (Ed.), "Letter to the Missionaries of New Mexico," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XXXX (October, 1965), p. 319.

States Government found the report useful in the search for a route for the transcontinental railroad. Almost certainly the diary was read closely by Alexander von Humbolt and was used to back up information he inserted in his map of "New Spain" which relied almost totally on Miera's map of the expedition. When Lieutenant William H. Emory assembled his master map of the Southwest in 1844, he had access to only written records and word of mouth reports to guide him beyond what he himself could observe and it seems likely that he would seek out all available written records of the country through which he traveled, among them perhaps, a copy of the Escalante diary in Santa Fe.<sup>45</sup>

The diary was even influential in North American diplomacy. Pichardo wrote an official treatise for the Spanish to accompany his map covering the famous Louisiana Boundary Question and he cites the diary at numerous points as it bore on the watershed of the Mississippi River, the main issue in the dispute.<sup>46</sup> A brief portion of the diary covering the Utah Lake region of the journey appeared in the U.S. Army report of the Simpson expedition into the Great Basin in 1876, probably the first English translation made.<sup>47</sup>

The diary has since been translated into English by four scholars. The first complete translation was by W.R. Harris who included it in

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<sup>45</sup> William H. Goetzman, Exploration and Empire (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), pp. 312-314.

<sup>46</sup> Bolton, Pageant, p. 127.

<sup>47</sup> Philip Harry, "Journeyings of Father Escalante from Santa Fe to Utah and the Moqui Villages in 1776," Explorations Across the Great Basin of the Territory of Utah (Washington: U.S. Government, 1876).

his work The Catholic Church in Utah 1776-1909, published in 1909.

Hazel Power, a graduate student of Herbert Bolton at the University of California at Berkeley, made a translation as part of a Master's thesis in 1920. In 1943, Herbert S. Auerbach made a translation of the diary published as the Utah Historical Quarterly Vol. XI, and in 1950

Herbert Bolton, as part of his monograph on the expedition Pageant in the Wilderness, translated the journal himself.

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Now imagine it is 1776 and summer is beginning to be felt in the desert land of New Mexico as word is sent to Silvestre Velez de Escalante at Zuni to come to Santa Fe and meet with the young canonical visitor, Fray Dominguez. The time is right, the stage is set, the actors of the wilderness drama to unfold begin to gather.

### 3. THE TRAIL

#### MAP NO. 1 - NEW MEXICO MAY - JUNE 1776

For Silvestre Velez de Escalante the journey to Monterey and the missions of California began as he faced east toward Santa Fe rather than west. The young priest was summoned to Santa Fe by his superior in the spring of 1776. Zuni pueblo is a hard place to leave at any time of the year and particularly in the spring when it is the most green and pleasant. For someone to visualize that remote section of New Mexico after reading the opinions of the 18th century dwellers who lived in the very center of political and economic New Mexico and after examining Don Bernardo Miera's later map of the area drawn in 1779 showing the western pueblos out in a no-man's-land of steep mesas at the very edge of Christendom, one is prompted to think of Velez de Escalante's Zuni pueblo as a grim desert-like place of sand and rock mesas and little else. But it was not so. The modern pueblo of Zuni is basically little changed from the one in which Escalante lived. It is situated in a broad valley surrounded on three sides by high mesas and the red adobe dwellings that have been unchanged in design and materials for uncounted centuries and still take up most of the space within the confines of the pueblo today.

For anyone going to Albuquerque or Santa Fe from Zuni, the route is obvious. Most of what is state highway 53 was, in Escalante's time, the well-established Zuni-Cibola Trail. Escalante's path to Santa Fe was the same as that used by countless others both before and since

and was so well known to contemporary readers of his diary that he gave no details of the route when the party of ten passed that way again over six months later. The trail then was the main east-west highway of its day. Later, this pleasant and interesting route was abandoned with the arrival of the railroad and the subsequent highways which passed north of the Zuni mountains.

That spring of 1776 Velez de Escalante passed out of the natural gate of mesas leading out of the eastern half of the valley toward Santa Fe. To the left stand the Zuni Buttes green fringed and pinkish red. To the right are the sacred mountains of the Zuni Indians, above which Taaiyalone (corn) Mesa rises in massive, commanding presence. Escalante rode east along the bank of the Rio Pescado and his trail rises slowly winding through pinion, sagebrush, juniper, cholla cactus, mesquite, and creosote. Red and white banded sandstone is characteristic here but farther east the red changes to a dusky yellow caused by variations in the amount of iron bearing minerals in the stone.

MAP NO. 2 - NEW MEXICO - JUNE 1776

Highway 53 follows the Pescado River toward the farming and ranching town of Ramah. Ramah was settled in 1876 by Mormon colonizers in connection with settlement of the Little Colorado River in Arizona. Farming is made possible here by the dam and reservoir just north of the town where a narrow canyon cuts through the buff yellow Zuni sandstone.

Escalante stopped at a massive mesa point of yellow and cream sandstone that jutted some 200 feet into the sky named by the Spanish

Conquistadors "El Morro" ("headland, bluff"). This natural landmark was a resting place for travelers in the region due to its natural pool of cool rainwater which collected at its base and was used also for a quite unique purpose which gives it enduring historical value beyond the natural function of its rain and snow-melt water storage. The soft cream colored sandstone, it was soon discovered, carved easily with the point of a knife.

Consequently those who stopped there had for decades recorded their passage by carving in the soft rock. For Escalante and for the modern traveler to read on the walls of the cliff, there developed an almost "Who's Who" of Spanish exploration. Carved into the wall was the message of Juan Onate who stopped on his return from discovery of the Gulf of California in 1605. Or the reader can choose to read a poem carved in praise of the strength and courage of Governor Don Francisco Manuel de Silva Nieto who, in 1629, made it possible to carry the Catholic faith to Escalante's Zuni pueblos. Enscribed too was the record of the punitive expedition sent from Santa Fe in 1632 to avenge the deaths by the Zunis of the priests sent by the Franciscan mission.

The violent history of the mission period is echoed on the walls of El Morro. When native rebellion against the Spanish required Governor Don Diego de Vargas to travel to the cities of Cibola in 1692 to exact from the inhabitants of those pueblos their submission, he recorded on his return his triumph on El Morro's sandstone: "Here was the General Don Diego de Vargas who conquered for our Holy Faith and for the Royal Crown all of New Mexico at his own expense, year of 1692."



As the internal violence subsided toward the end of the seventeenth century, so, it seems, did the desire of the Spanish to leave record on the cliff walls decrease. The Bishop of Durango on his way to Zuni in 1737 left his name but the last Spanish inscription on the rock is dated 1774. Velez de Escalante did not leave carved evidence of his visit to El Morro, but then, he didn't participate either in any of the instances of carving names into trees later on during the northern part of his journey. Escalante had other things on his mind.

MAP NO. 3 - NEW MEXICO - JUNE, 1776

The highway and the Zuni-Cibola Trail part company at the southeastern tip of the Zuni range. The trail toward Acoma Pueblo passes over the extensive lava beds and passes north of Mesa Negra and Cebollita Mesa then southeast again to the site of the mesa-top pueblo. The country at this point is more like the desert one expects from a glance at Miera's map of 1779. The dash from the Zuni mountain highlands to Acoma's relative comforts could only have been an intense one for there is nothing but lava wastes, sand, and sage to relieve the eye from huge desert expanse.

Acoma Pueblo could be considered perhaps the farthest west point of "civilization" as it was known to the Spanish settlers of the Rio Grande valley and from this point to Santa Fe, the route is easily traced from mission pueblo to mission pueblo northward. From Acoma Pueblo eastward to Isleta pueblo the country changes from the pleasant pine and juniper forests of the Zuni mountains to the true desert and mesa environment so well known to the hardy Spanish colonists who lived along the Rio Grande valley.

MAP NO. 4 - NEW MEXICO - JUNE, 1776

From Isleta pueblo Escalante's route toward Santa Fe followed the Rio Grande as it cut its path toward the Gulf of Mexico in its own timeless glide of centuries. From Isleta north lay the mission beads on the string of the Rio Grande: Albuquerque, Sandia, Santo Domingo. From the rolling plains between the Santo Domingo pueblo and Santa Fe, Escalante could see the deep greenish-blue of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the northern distance and just at their base the farmland making jumbled yet somehow neat patterns of cultivation surrounding the capitol of the New Mexican Missions: Santa Fe.

Today, as one travels the interstate between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, much is lost in the blue haze that hangs heavy in the populated valley and at certain times all but hides completely the city of Santa Fe. The capital city of New Mexico is still, in a sense, the crossroads of the southwest as it was in 1776 when Dominguez and Escalante plotted together their route to California there. The Palace of the Governors still stands in the middle of downtown Santa Fe, housing a museum which pays tribute to the decades of Spanish influence in New Mexico and still imparts today the flavor of a grand era long past. The important Santa Fe trail ended at this point; the northern trade began here and it was from this now famous, historic city that the two intrepid Franciscans and their eight companions pushed north.

MAP NO. 5 - NEW MEXICO - JULY, AUGUST, 1776

Escalante arrived in Santa Fe in early June and by the first of July the party had been selected and all had arrived from their own

various habitations. Word had to be sent to Zuni from the Fathers requesting the Alcalde Don Juan Pedro Cisneros and citizen Don Joaquin Lain to accompany them. It would take a messenger at least six days to ride to Zuni from Santa Fe and probably a little longer for the return trip. Add to that figure sufficient time for the residents of the pueblo to arrange their affairs and most of June was consumed. Other matters interfered with an early starting date in July (the Fathers had hoped to be away on the 4th) and so it was that with preparations at long last completed, the group left Santa Fe on the twenty-ninth day of July, 1776.

It is not hard at this point to establish accurately the route they took north from Santa Fe for it was over ground long known to the Spanish who had penetrated into the state of modern Colorado as early as the first part of the seventeenth century. The long-established trade route to the north followed natural river bottoms and U.S. Highway 84 echos this natural route north so that the traveler today can follow at this point almost exactly the first steps of Dominguez and Velez de Escalante and the steps of uncounted traders, trappers, and gold seekers who followed.

Santa Clara pueblo furnished the first night's lodging on that important July 29th, and the next night was also spent in relative comfort at another mission pueblo, Santa Rosa de Abiquiu, located a day's ride north along the Rio Chama. Abiquiu was first established as a Spanish settlement in 1747 and was built over a Tewa ruin of the fifteen hundreds. The Spanish Governor granted grazing and farming rights to the Indians and others in 1754 and soon the lands surrounding

the rebuilt pueblo were cultivated and started to yield crops from the rich river deposited soil.

From Abiquiu the established Spanish trade route led northwest along the Rio Chama valley, leaving that river at its junction with the Arroyo Seco. At this point, on August first, the travelers penetrated the narrow canyon formed by the Arroyo Seco and spent the night along its banks. Those who drive U.S. Highway 84 can duplicate the ride of August 2nd in comfort as it follows the Spaniard's route north into the rich green park-like valley of Terra Amarilla and climbs to over seven thousand feet elevation.

MAP NO. 6 - NEW MEXICO - COLORADO - AUGUST 1776

Near the small highland ranching town of Terra Amarilla state highway 112 branches off to the southwest and at that point the Spanish party left their northern route and the lush wide valley formed by the Rio Chama and struck northwest along a steep escarpment which led them to a narrow canyon formed by the drainage of Horse Lake. This day (August 4th) was to be a long one for the riders for, along with a respectful distance, they were climbing to the continental divide which they crossed on the same day and camped for well earned rest along a small river west of Lumberton, New Mexico, on that night. On the next day, they would cross into Colorado.

The entire distance through New Mexico by both Fray Velez de Escalante from Zuni and by the party of ten from Santa Fe to the border of Colorado had been over ground well known to the Spanish inhabitants. The ten companions had begun to know each other by now, had taken out

the kinks of travel, and had settled into a travel routine; nothing was new or unknown to their guides, the Muniz brothers. The grass was plentiful as was the water. The surroundings were indeed extremely pleasant and green in the high mountain valleys in which they camped and they still had bread baked in Santa Fe and small delicacies stuffed into saddle bags to make life easy. This was a land of pines and high, green grass and crystal streams of water. On August 5th the explorers crossed into the state of Colorado near the northeastern tip of Navajo Reservoir which has now hidden most of the section of the San Juan River by which the Spaniards camped on the fifth and sixth of August waiting for Don Bernardo Miera to recover from an unidentified stomach complaint. Could Miera have had ulcers? Sickness, in fact, plagued the three principle members of the group. We hear of problems later endured by both Dominguez and Velez de Escalante and Don Bernardo's stomach is not the only part of his body to feel the result of hard and long riding as the pace of travel picks up later when the comforts of Zuni are again within reach. Poor health in the Spaniards of that time is not surprising. Most of the missionaries in the New Mexican missions wrote of some kind of suffering in almost every report they made to their superiors. To anyone in anything but top physical condition the hard rides, exposure, poor food, even lack of food at times, stress, and lack of trained medical attention would be bound to take its toll.

MAP NO. 7 - COLORADO - AUGUST - 1776

On the seventh of August, passing near the site of the modern town of Arboles, Colorado, the group headed west into the lush, rolling valley of the Florida River. They named the valley "Vega de San Cayetano" and as they faced northwest, the high peaks of Silver Mountain, Deadwood Mountain, and Baldy Peak thrust over ten thousand feet into the sky. Toward them the party set course.

Here water was plentiful and the grass formed a thick carpet for the horses that endured for almost four days. Reports of ore deposits at the base of the mountains which dominated the scene to the north and west are mentioned in the diary and, even though the Spanish did not investigate the area as they passed through, there are today numerous mines surrounding the town of Hesperus, Colorado, that bear testimony to the accuracy of the early reports.

MAP NO. 8 - COLORADO - AUGUST - 1776

On August tenth, more physical illness troubled the camp. This time it was Fray Dominguez who suffered from what is described as rheumatic fever in the face and head. For two days they waited in camp, which was located just to the east of today's Mancos, Colorado, in cold and rain. They had no tents to make their stay bearable and the unfortunate Dominguez must have spent the two days huddled under a sodden blanket. It was no wonder that even though Fray Dominguez was not altogether better on the morning of the twelfth of August, the party set out again to the northwest in an attempt to ride out of

the rain and cold. The camp they left was at almost eight thousand feet elevation and was no place for a sick man to be, even in August.

On August 12 they dropped a thousand feet to the Dolores River and stayed another two days for Fray Dominguez to recover sufficiently to resume the journey. Crossing the Dolores River the party pushed west. They rode over a drier and less pleasant terrain traversed today by U.S. Highway 160 between the cities of Cortez and Dove Creek. The Spaniards were following known trails during this period. Looking at their route on August 14th, however, it seems that the Muniz brothers had a slight lapse of memory since it is evident that the short acquaintance with the Dolores River on that day was not a pleasant one nor was it intended that they end up deep in the river canyon at that point. The next day (August 15) they extracted themselves from the steep river cut and the day was spent riding over a rolling, scrub pine, brush-covered plain that left little for the eye to rest on and yielded even less in the way of water for the hot and thirsty men and animals.

The traveler today may approximate the route taken by the Franciscans and their companions by following U.S. Highway 666 to its junction with state highway 141, and then travel north on that highway. Even this highway, however, as close as it comes to the original route, does not convey the trouble and hardship that confronted the party as they reached on August 17th a rocky and tortuous canyon cut into the shale and sandstone of the mountains to the west of the Dolores. They called this devil's landscape "Miera's Labyrinth" since he was the first to reach it and the name hints at the forms the canyon took

as it wound its way down to the winding Dolores River. Had the party followed the path of highway 141, or, in other words, gone just a little bit more to the east as they approached the river, they would have had an easy descent. But hindsight is an inexcusable luxury from a vantage point of two hundred years.

This non-typical mistake in routefinding was the first and what came to be a major error in what up to this point was a prime example of exploration and organization at its very best.

Whoever, or whatever was to blame, the party found itself in wild and twisting canyons where the Dolores River cut through deeply as it forced its way through a series of closely rising mesas. They were where they had no business being. The country had changed now from the lush green valleys of Vega de San Cayetano and the wooded plateaus between the towns of Durango and Dolores, Colorado, to arid land more like the parts of the desert west of Albuquerque. Water was less frequent.

On August 19th the high mesas and deep canyons gave them pause to consider and in some confusion as to which way to go, they resorted to the first of two incidents on the journey where they determined their path by chance. The choices they had before them were either to attempt to negotiate the tortuous canyon and mesa Labyrinth to the northwest or to turn eastward to the known trail leading to the Uta Sabuaganas Indians in the vicinity of the Gunnison River. Undoubtedly the second choice was recommended by Andres Muniz who knew of the Indians from his explorations with Rivera. Probably Andres felt they



could gain a guide from the Utes who would help them through the unknown country north of the Gunnison.

As luck, or ill luck, would have it, the casting of lots determined that they would seek the Ute tribe to the east and north in central Colorado and on August 20th they set out on a detour that would take them into some of Colorado's most rugged and high mountains. The later commercial route that came to be known as the Spanish Trail branches west from this area and cuts out much of the extra miles imposed on the party by this detour. Perhaps, in all fairness, a second incident involving the casting of lots some two months later could be considered an evening of the first; for, as we shall see later, that time it very probably proved their salvation. From August 21st to the 25th, the trail took the Spaniards over the hump of the Uncompahgre Plateau where grass and water were again in abundance.

MAP NO. 9 - COLORADO - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1776

August 25th found the party overlooking the broad river valley formed by the Uncompahgre River and the 26th of that month found them camped just south of today's city of Montrose, Colorado. They followed this river north to the Gunnison River which had been given the name San Javier and here the first-hand knowledge of the country possessed by Andres Muniz ended. The Rivera expedition of 1775 had only penetrated this far north before it returned to Santa Fe. Here the Spaniards made a second detour to the east into the blue-green, pine-covered high mountains that could be seen from the Gunnison. They were looking for a guide among the Utes who lived and hunted there in the summer months. As it turned out, the Spaniards would have been

better advised to continue north and west from the present day city of Delta, Colorado. Following the Gunnison River north from that point would have made the trip shorter and much easier for the high mountain passes through which they had to pass could have been left to the Ute Indians who had reason to be there.

The last two days of August saw them high into the summer hunting grounds of the Utes. This country is a true high alpine environment and it must have been a tiring time for the horses who had to climb from the river plains at Delta, Colorado, to the high, rough places of Colorado that have changed very little since Dominguez and Velez de Escalante gazed at the pine-covered slopes and grassy alpine valleys as their horses snatched mouthfuls of high plentiful grass and drank out of clear, icy streams. Perhaps it was all the more delightful to those of the party who had known nothing but the hot dryness of the Rio Grande valley.

Still, it prolonged their way. As one stands at the crossroads at Delta, a broad plain stretches northwest through which the Gunnison winds directly toward the land where the Spaniards knew they must go, while the high and forbidding mountains of Grand Mesa rose eleven thousand feet to the east in which lived the Indians they were seeking. Had they followed the Gunnison, they would have eventually emerged in Grand Valley where Grand Junction is located and then could have turned north penetrating the Roan Cliffs (see map no. 11, highway 139), which would have taken them by a much shorter and easier route to Douglas Creek Canyon and thence the Green River. As it was, the party spent

ten days, much of it in the rugged high elevations of the Grand Mesa country east of Grand Junction, Colorado.

MAP NO. 10 - COLORADO - SEPTEMBER 1776

On September 5th the Spaniards reached the upper Colorado River where it cuts through the mountains northeast of Grand Junction. They called it the San Rafael. For the last three days the route had wound around huge mountains and steep stream-cut canyons full of the thick brush and downed timber so characteristic of the pine forest zone. They crossed a smaller mountain on the far side of the river on September sixth and camped in a small stream-cut canyon that night on the far side away from the river. It is interesting and somehow sobering to note that throughout the week's wanderings at the base of the huge upthrust mass of rock and vegetation known as Grand Mesa, a far better route lay just to the west. The traveler today can test the relative merits of the two routes by merely following U.S. highway 50 north from Delta, Colorado, to Grand Junction. The highway glides in almost a straight line from these two cities, following the path of the Gunnison River to where it empties into the Colorado River at the city of Grand Junction (see map no. 9 and no. 10). Then to get the feel of the high country around Grand Mesa drive over state highway 65 back to Delta (this highway is not shown on the trail guide maps since it lies beyond their boundaries, but a good road map will show its location). The contrast and almost polar opposites of the two routes in type of country will become awesomely clear to the motorist who has traveled both routes.

The loss of time due to this great swing to the east was never recovered and when one month later to the day the Spaniards suffered through a harsh pre-winter snowstorm (see map no. 16), it is tempting to speculate just what would have happened if they had been at the same place one week earlier when there was no snow to lower morale and influence judgment at a crucial period.

MAP NO. 11 - COLORADO - UTAH - SEPTEMBER 1776

September 6th and 7th were spent in climbing yet another mountain range as the party closely followed Roan Creek. River valleys and steep canyons determined the way and, on September 8th, the summit of what is today the East Tavaputs Plateau was reached. On that one day (the 9th) the party lost all of the three thousand feet so laboriously won on a three-day climb from September 6th to the night of September 8th and found themselves at the end of a particularly long and tiring ride at the White River at almost the same elevation as that of the Colorado River back four days on the other side of the plateau. They named the White River the "San Clemente." Their camp was just a mile upstream from Rangely, Colorado, an oil and gas-pumping town in the middle of nowhere.

The ride of September 9th is interesting in a number of respects. For most of the day, the party rode through the canyon cut by Douglas Creek which winds in a gentle decline draining the north slope of the Tavaputs Plateau. They named it "Canyon Pintado" and found in its walls of yellow slate both signs of Indians and signs of gold. The Indians left drawings on the slate slabs which were discovered as the party rode down the canyon; the gold vein was discovered near the

canyon's mouth. But Escalante was careful to say that it was only a suspected vein of the precious metal and today it is not gold that gives the canyon value but rather the natural gas deposits.

From the camp of September 9th, the Spaniard's route was dominated and guided by an upthrust ridge, the base of which points directly toward Vernal, Utah, and the Green River. Here the land is desert flat punctuated by ridges through which a traveler threads as he heads west toward the Green River. On September 11 this was the situation of the Spanish party and they followed closely the route of U.S. highway 40 toward Jensen, Utah, always keeping a slight dip in the low mountainous ridges to the west in front of them. This break in the mountains that protect the Green River valley to the east is a natural landmark to anyone looking at it from the direction of the Utah-Colorado border, much more so than the pass taken by U.S. 40 four miles to the south. This break in the ridges and mountains east of the Green led the party directly into a broad, grassy valley circumerenced by the slow-moving Green River on three sides where it makes a horseshoe bend as it exits from the spectacular water eroded cut of Split Mountain. The party followed the base of this ridge northwest and, as they followed it, passed into what is today the state of Utah.

MAP NO. 12 - COLORADO - UTAH - SEPTEMBER 1776

The explorers entered Utah on September 11th. The point of entry was about five miles south of the intersection of U.S. Highway 40 with the Utah-Colorado border, southeast of Jensen, Utah. With the crossing into Utah, the discoveries made by the Spanish explorers from then on

would be unique. Before this point the country was fairly well known due to earlier Spanish trading, trapping and exploring contacts made by such Spanish pathfinders as Rivera and Anza to which could be added the reports of the Ute Indians made to the Spanish contacts.

With entry into Utah, the Spaniards penetrated the first of three definite landform segments of the state through which they would pass. A landform map of the state of Utah shows clearly these divisions and they define and, to a great extent, determine the route the party will take. The three are: the Uinta Basin, the Wasatch Range, and the Great Basin.

The first of these divisions, the Uinta Basin, is bisected by the Green River and it was on the banks of this fabled and misunderstood river that the party camped on the night of September 13. They named the new river the "San Buenaventura" after Giovanni de Fidanza, a thirteenth century theologian, teacher and cardinal, cannonized San Bonaventura [sic] in 1432. Miera drew the river on his map emptying not into the mighty Tizon (Colorado) but into Sevier Lake. It took a little over fifty years to dispel the effects of this bad guess about the course of the Green River. As we have seen, as late as 1824, Jed Smith and his mountain-men companions sought the river to take them and their furs west to the great San Francisco Bay.

The party spent the 14th and 15th of September in a camp on the banks of the San Buenaventura at a spot approximately three and a half miles north of the bridge at Jensen, Utah. There are cottonwoods on the east bank of the river here and they must have looked just as inviting to the Spanish with their dark green leaves starting

to turn gold and yellow as they look today. These, of course, are not the same trees under which the party camped on the night of September 13-- those have long since fallen from age--but the image is still there, perpetuated by succeeding generations of cottonwoods in much the same place on the river bottom lands north of Jensen, Utah. Unaware that they were in the watershed of the main tributary of the Colorado, the Spaniards were confused as to the course of the streams they had previously crossed and were not sure they emptied into their new river. Influenced by an erroneous report made by Alonso de Posadas in 1686 (who, incidently, had never seen the country he wrote about), Velez de Escalante guessed the Buenaventura was the main stream of an unrelated river system.

They crossed the river on September 16th at a ford known to the Indian guides and then followed the west bank south to what is known today as "Horseshoe Bend," where they turned toward the west and the promised lake and valley of the Timpanogos Indians.

MAP NO. 13 - UTAH - SEPTEMBER 1776

For the most part the journey across the Uinta Basin was made following the Duchesne River (which the Spaniards named the "Santa Catarina de Sena") to the city of Dushesne and thence close to the route followed by U.S. Highway 40. This is rolling, open land with vistas to meet the eye to the north of high mountain peaks and to the south of rugged, stream-cut slopes whose small seasonal water flows fed the Duchesne and Strawberry Rivers. The riding was again easy and the party dipped in and out of countless gentle canyons gorged

with pinion pine and the reddish earth yielded bunch grass for the horses in always plentiful abundance.

MAP NO. 14 - UTAH - SEPTEMBER 1776

The night of September 20th found the party on the eastern side of a pleasant valley they named "la Purisma." The valley today encloses the huge Strawberry Reservoir and fishing boats dot the surface while trucks and campers line its shores. Then it was a pleasant grass-covered valley which supplied tall stream-fed bunch grass for the horses. The valley marked the western end of the Uinta Basin and the beginning of the second major geographical segment of Utah: the Wasatch Range.

The Wasatch Range, the last obstacle between the Spaniards and Utah Valley which held Lake Timpanogos (Utah Lake), separates the Uinta Basin and the eastern side of the Great Basin. The party climbed through thickets of chokecherry and scrub oak up the canyon formed by what is known today as Fifth Water Creek. From the summit of the Wasatch they observed smoke from the fires of the Indians who inhabited the valley to the west. The explorers followed Diamond Fork down to where it merged with Spanish Fork Canyon, and from there entered Utah Valley and the Great Basin. Utah Valley was described by Fray Dominguez in a letter he wrote to Provincial Fray Isidor Murillo from Zuni just after his return, November 25, 1776:

The said valley is on the west side of an extensive sierra that comes from the northeast and the land of the Yamparicas and in the latitude 40 degrees 49 minutes. Fine rivers, which enter a great lake abounding in fish which is in the center of the valley, water it. Around it dwell the Tynpanocuitzis and another nation whom we were unable to



see. This valley is so spacious, with such good land and beautiful proportions, that in it alone a province like New Mexico can be established and can be maintained there well supplied with every kind of grain and cattle ...<sup>48</sup>

Dominguez and Escalante named the valley "Nuestra Senora de la Merced" and mention in the diary the wildlife and Indians that lived around the shores of the lake. The Yutas called the valley dwellers "come pescados" or fish eaters. The Spaniards heard also from the Indians about another "noxious and extremely salty" lake to the north that was connected to the one they could see but they evidently felt there was no need to travel out of their way to see it. It is interesting that they did not make the effort to see the lake. Miera drew on his map a great river running from the "noxious" lake westward presumably to the sea. He was to treat a second lake in the same hypothetical manner (Sevier Lake), leaving the western shore outside of his map boundary and the lake unvisited. The Franciscans, after all, were more interested in saving souls than surveying.

Even the old soldier Miera was charmed with the valley. In his independent report to the king of Spain dated October 26, 1777 (by which the wiley veteran attempted to further his own cause), he wrote of the Spanish settlement he envisioned on the shores of the lake, proposing it as the chief colony of a "new empire" and calling the valley "the most pleasing, beautiful, and fertile site in all New Spain. It alone is capable of maintaining a settlement with as many

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<sup>48</sup> Adams, Missions, p. 287.

people as Mexico City ... for it has everything necessary for the support of human life."<sup>49</sup>

The natural contours of Utah Valley are hidden today by a vast carpet of brick and steel. The numerous streams and creeks that criss-crossed the valley floor are mostly gone--piped over or diverted--as is all evidence of the Indian occupation along the shores of Utah Lake. The Franciscans explored north only as far as Orem, Utah, but did report of Great Salt Lake which lay 40 miles to the north. The trail, of course, lay west but the immediate thoughts of the Spanish were pointed towards the south where an obvious break in the mountains surrounding Utah Valley beckoned in promise of a more gentle route. The range to the west of Utah hid only harsh desert, as the Indians quite naturally already knew.

MAP NO. 15 - UTAH - SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1776

The party spent three days in the valley visiting the Indians who lived along the eastern shore of the lake and then pushed south through Santaquin, Nephi, and Levan; through Salinas Valley; and then as the valley began to close upon them, west to the Sevier River which they reached on September 29th. They decided this river was the lower course of their old friend the San Buenaventura. At least Miera chose to portray on his later map this river as the same one they had crossed in northeastern Utah. Here also, another valley opens to the south and is bordered on the west by a high and forbidding range of mountains

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<sup>49</sup>Bolton, Pageant, p. 243.

which perhaps had something to say about continuing a southern route. At any rate, the Spaniards traveled south and on the afternoon of September 30th penetrated Round Valley south of Scipio, Utah, where they entered what they thought was a valley going in the direction they wanted to take. As it turned out, the valley did not cooperate; instead, it bore southeast, away from the route they wanted. The party spent the night of September 30th at a charming little spring that they named "Ojo de Cisneros" after Don Juan Pedro. The spring now supplies the town of Scipio with its water. The group retraced its steps to the head of their uncooperative valley, just south of the town the next morning and crossed the mountains to the southwest along highway 91. At last it was west again toward Monterey.<sup>50</sup>

But this was not to be. Extensive marshes stopped the westering on October 1st and it was clear that no further progress could be made west until this bog was circumvented. Sevier Lake was just ahead and considerably wetter than it is today and very probably there were extensive marsh lands leading out from its northern shores mixing with the Sevier River delta at that point. Once again a significant lake

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<sup>50</sup>This detour into Round valley has caused much speculation. Escalante's journal at this point is somewhat vague and does not give the detail that one would like concerning the reason the party went into the valley in the first place. However, as one stands at the foot of the low range of hills just north of the town of Scipio, the choice of route is apparent. Round Valley looks at this point to be the logical choice since it is open and looks as if it heads to the west. When the traveler rounds the small hill that is placed at the valley entrance at just the exact spot to block further view into Round Valley, it is very clear that there is no more westward travel here. There is a charming spring at this spot and the day's journey must have made it look all the more enticing. Here camp was made. The mountains to the west of Round Valley are steep, high and a formidable barrier so the only logical choice would be for the party to retrace their steps for a mile or two and cross the mountains at a point where they are not quite as steep.

was placed on Miera's map sight unseen. The southern detour avoided this body of water and, as leagues south were made, a mountain range cut it off altogether.

MAP NO. 16 - UTAH - OCTOBER 1776

The next five days were spent traversing the Black Rock Desert. By this time (October), snow was beginning to appear on the peaks to the west and the weather turned cold and stormy. On October 6th snow fell for a whole day and into the night, further demoralizing the Spaniards. Though the party had no way of knowing their longitude exactly, they knew that they had not traveled far to the west from Santa Fe (they estimated 136 leagues), and the lateness of the season only emphasized the distance remaining.

Just two days before, their Laguna guide had deserted due to a misunderstanding. In view of these factors, the two Franciscans decided against further penetration to the west. This responsible decision met with much complaint from Don Bernardo, who saw glory slip further from his grasp with each step made to the south. Miera had planned to parlay his role in the discovery of a new route to Monterey into a higher administrative position for himself and a guarantee of a future position for his son. The "Report to the King" Miera wrote independently on his return was his attempt to salvage what he could from what he felt were marginal results.

From October 3rd to October 8th the trail follows almost exactly the route of State Highway 257. The significance of the recurring coincidence of duplication in state and federal highway systems with the route taken by the Dominguez - Velez de Escalante expedition is

hard to overlook. The shape of the land has for centuries dictated the flow-lines of American expansion. It is no accident that time and time again travelers have duplicated routes of travel unknowingly which have in turn been duplicated by subsequent pathfinders. So it is with initial survey of highway systems today; so it was with the first travelers in a region then. Water was a key then; water and feed for horses. For those who followed, it was sign of previous travel, the little indicators read by the trained eye that told of good passage.

The horizon was another key, particularly so for the Dominguez - Escalante expedition. Each time a geographical section was traversed, such as the Salinas Valley, all eyes went to the far lines of distant mountain ranges, reading what they could of the land to come. Where there was a natural break or cut in the obstacle before them, the path would lead onward; where there was no horizon to read, such as on August 19th in the deep cut of the Dolores River (see map no. 8), confusion and uncertainty followed.

Such was the case on October 8th. The horizon to the west was eclipsed by a high and forbidding snow-covered range of mountains. The horizon to the south was open and easy to read far ahead. Monterey and California lay to the west, but who could say what lay beyond the mountains that blocked all view in that direction? Once again, as on August 19th when confusion reigned, the Spaniards resorted to casting lots to determine their destiny. The outcome this time very probably was their salvation. Before, the drawing of lots had led them eastward into the high rugged Colorado mountains; this time it led them home. It is probable that had the decision gone the other

way, that is, to continue toward the west, that the party would have found themselves caught in winter storms in the middle of what is today Nevada without food or shelter. Already their food was low, they had already suffered from the cold and snow, and their morale was at low ebb. Eighty years later Mark Twain had traveled through the same Nevada landscape that lay to the west and had remarked that even the birds who flew over it had to take their provisions with them.

The fortuitous result of the casting of lots led the party once again to the south. Significantly the horizon in this direction lay open and clear. In fact, the route lay before them so naturally that it would be a wonder if they went anywhere else but where they did. Valley opened up into valley and vista into vista, each one leading to the other until they were committed to the deep slash formed by Ash Creek leading directly south from Cedar City, Utah, down into the hot, dry, red sand of the Virgin River drainage.

MAP NO. 17 - UTAH - OCTOBER 1776

North of the contemporary population center of Cedar City, Utah, is a wide, rising plain covered in sage and bunch grass. There are no homes or ranches to break the broad sweep and vastness of this plain and it looks today probably much like it looked when on October 11th, the Spaniards emerged onto it on the second day of their return trip. From the floor of the plain looking south there are mountain ranges stretching from one side to the other except for one dip in the solid wall indicating to the observer a canyon, a weakness in the chain of rock spread from one horizon to the other.

This dip or cut was the magnet that drew the party toward the deep canyon that has at its bottom the tiny Ash Creek that forms just south of Cedar City today. It was, in effect, a funnel drawing all who wanted to travel south into its narrow neck and it was also a form of transition between the relative high elevations surrounding Cedar City and the hot, sandy desert surrounding the Virgin River. The explorers spent the nights of October 12th and 13th within the narrow, deep canyon on the bank of Ash Creek which they named "Rio del Pilar."

October 15th found them at the Virgin River at the point where Ash Creek, La Verkin Creek, and the Virgin meet. This point, they found after some exploration, was the only crossing. Today the meeting point for the three waters is farmland for the inhabitants of the small Utah town of La Verkin.

MAP NO. 18 - UTAH - ARIZONA - OCTOBER 1776

The trail from the crossing of the Virgin River south into Arizona can be once again followed easily and can be understood by just searching the horizon to the south from the town of Hurricane. To the left are the Hurricane Cliffs, to the right a broken and wild desert, mountain vastness of crumbled sandstone mesas and deep cut washes. The route described by Velez de Escalante at this point is logical. Instead of losing themselves in the tumbled canyons to their right, they made for the only high ground in the vicinity, a gently sloping mesa which rose to the south exactly between the cliffs to the left and the canyons on the right.

At that point they couldn't see the soft red sand at its summit nor could they guess that a high and dangerous vertical cliff ended their intended lookout point in a series of very steep drops. However, the object of the height they sought was realized when on October 15th, they stood to survey the wild and jumbled land which lay between the Virgin Mountains to the west and Hurricane Cliffs to the east. What they saw from the summit of what is now called Sand Mountain was a natural path south along the Hurricane Cliffs bisected regularly by steep and narrow canyons, one of which it would seem could lead them out of the rough confusion of what they could see before them to the south.

The Arizona strip section from the crossing of the border on October 16th to the meeting of the Colorado River covered ground that is even today far from paved roads. There are many dirt roads in the area but most of them are not marked on even the most detailed maps of the country. Sheep and cattle men of the area who have lived in the desert and mesa and canyon country all their life know how rough it is on the Uinkaret Plateau, in Antelope Valley, along Kanab Creek. They'll tell you it's broken ground, rough on horses, low on water.

Now the land was again dry and the hot red sand and cream colored bluffs, the mesquite and low lying cactus brought to the Spanish a picture of their own land to the south. As the party entered the modern state of Arizona their route was molded by the massive Hurricane Cliffs. They stood as a wall to the east and ran north and south from the "Rio Sulfureo" acting much as Ash Creek Canyon had done previously as both as guiding influence and as obstacle. The natural course



south would be along the base of these cliffs and so it was that the Spanish were led by their Indian guide along them until they reached a deep cut in the wall formed by the eroding waters of Short Creek. From the mouth of this canyon it appeared that the cut would reach the top of the cliffs and perhaps the Indians of the region did at times use it for foot traffic but for the mounted Spanish it was virtually impassible and in its labyrinthine turnings they lost a day before they were required to retrace their steps back to the base of the Hurricane Cliffs.

The next day, October 17th, they climbed the cliffs farther south where almost vertical walls opened up in a gradual slope. That night the travelers camped at the top of the Unikaret Plateau. The route lay east again across the flat expanse of Antelope Valley ever toward the objective: the Colorado River. They passed south of what is today Pipe Spring National Monument too far away to discern the welcome spring but they could have seen the sandstone cliffs that surrounded it from their camp of October 20 which was about fifteen miles south.

MAP NO. 19 - ARIZONA - OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1776

Now the trail led east across a wide and sweeping plain, reddish in hue from the predominant sandstone, and the rolling expanse was punctuated by an occasional wash where spring rains had cut deep as they gathered and ran toward the Colorado River to the south. Down and up through the myriad canyons, the party bisected each as they made their way east until the solid mass of the forbidding Paria Plateau running north and south formed a geological frame for the next three

days of travel, forcing the Spaniards south along its base. From October 23rd when they met it to October 26th, the plateau towered above, a constant reminder to the pathfinder that they were as it was; their path was its path. As it turned out, the mass of sandstone was their gate to the Colorado and they met the mighty river again--their objective for so many days--much changed from the tiny river they had crossed in Colorado on September 5th, 51 days before (see map no. 10).

Their horses drank from the river at last at the point where the Paria River meets the Colorado--today known as Lees Ferry. It is a place of opposites: the river is deep and slow and looks almost gentle but it is framed by some of the most rugged, steep sharp sandstone imaginable. The way out is not visible. Unless one wants to return the way he came, the crossing for men on horses at Lees Ferry does not exist. Across the river high sandstone blocks any view to the south and the slowness of the river seems only to mock a crossing here where the far shore looks to be impassible. Paria Canyon was the same. The Paria River had cut deeply into the Paria Plateau on its way to meet the Colorado and the steep red wall of sandstone looks here to be as impregnable as its neighbors. Once again the horizon was blocked from view; once again confusion seemed certain. It must have been a heartbreaking sight to see these barriers on the far side of the river and then turn and contemplate the solid, high rock walls which surrounded the Paria River at its mouth. As far as they could see downriver the cliffs rose steep where the river had cut deep into the pink and maroon sandstone and those of the party sent upstream for a look reported the same of the river there.

Much has been written of the next twelve days spent in overcoming the Colorado barrier and justly so for it was a dramatic period. Surrounded by sandstone cliffs and vertical canyons that would give pause to the most hardened mountain climber, the Spaniards carefully sought a route that would lead them home. This, they knew, was the last significant barrier they would meet before they would be in known country.

MAP NO. 20 - ARIZONA - NOVEMBER 1776

It was a frustrating period for them all. The nights were by this time bitterly cold and food for the animals was scarce. Food for the men was almost non-obtainable in this barren land and the Spaniards were reduced to eating their own horses. Their clothing, worn from almost six months of hard travel could give them little protection from the cold nights, cold rain and even snow which fell on the fifth.

But at last the Colorado yielded to the teamwork and organization of the numerous reconnaissances sent out and after one final and seemingly symbolic attack on the sandstone itself in which they cut steps to facilitate their passage, it was done. It is ironic that at this one crucial point they lacked a guide, when we consider the trouble and extra time taken earlier in Colorado to secure the same which were little, if any, use. The days lost seeking guides could have been used to better purpose and could have made history-changing difference to a wet and cold party of Spaniards in central Utah caught in the weather and forced to cast lots to determine their course. As it was, the route finding of the Spaniards was every bit as good as most of that of the Indian guides who, at best, were giving second-hand information

and, at worst, were trying only to get the travelers out of their country as fast as possible. Escalante felt the lack of a guide at this point was perhaps a punishment for their sins, but if some of the guiding were to be taken in account, it perhaps should be the other way around.

The crossing was made opposite of what is known today as Rainbow Plateau. The actual route across the river bottom is today deep under the waters of Lake Powell and the sense of vertical, the up and down of the crossing is lost, shrouded in the pent-up waters of the river that gave them so much resistance. Today the camp of San Vincente Ferrer of November 6th and the camp of the 7th of November, Concepcion Valley, are gone from the sight of man. One can stand on the cliff top anywhere along the north shore of the huge lake and see only the far side at equal height where the Spaniards emerged and none of the vertical and rugged terrain in between that took so much effort and planning.

From Rainbow Plateau the trail led south onto the huge Kaibito Plateau, a great swell of sand and mesas that had been protected from entry where it met the Colorado at Lees Ferry by the steep Echo Cliffs. It had taken twelve days for the Spanish party to find its way onto this plateau which is dotted with sand dunes and sprinkled with mesas and they weaved their way through them almost due south now toward the Indian pueblo of Moenkopi sixty miles away. The plateau falls off at its southern edge where highway 160 cuts through to the northeast and the Spaniards crossed this modern route almost directly at the

point of Navajo Tuba City, Arizona. Moenkopi was two miles further south and the party crossed the small river at the base of this old hillside pueblo on November 14th. There they saw the first running water they had seen since the Colorado.

MAP NO. 21 - ARIZONA - NOVEMBER 1776

Now they were in the country of the Hopi and Oraibe was close by. Escalante and his two companions of an earlier visit to this pueblo must have wondered at this point what their reception would be at the hilltop pueblo. Their fear of the adverse reaction of these Indians was so real that they killed a valuable horse for food rather than take any of the Hopi cattle they now found grazing in the vicinity. Their fears were groundless, as it turned out, for it seems that the Hopi had mellowed in the year since Escalante's visit for they received the travelers, if not with open arms, at least with some kindness toward travel-weary fellow humans.

MAP NO. 22 - ARIZONA - NOVEMBER 1776

From Oraibe the route was known well. It was ground familiar to Velez de Escalante, Don Bernardo, and Don Juan Cisneros. As noted before, Don Bernardo Miera had drawn a map of the country between Zuni Pueblo and Oraibe in 1775 and though the map he drew was rudimentary and did not show much detail between the more populous pueblos, at least they now were on what they could call home ground. It was but a matter of spending the time to cover the miles. And the miles were covered. The tempo of travel picks up at this point and we see the

two Franciscan brothers logging rides of thirty miles a day on at least three of the seven days it took to reach Zuni.

MAP NO. 23 - ARIZONA - NEW MEXICO - NOVEMBER 1776

Velez de Escalante returned to his Zuni after six months of travel and hardship in an effort to find and convert the native dwellers of the lands to the north. It must have been painful to both the Franciscans--and it certainly was ironical--to arrive at Zuni in time to witness the annual Shalako ceremony held in the pueblo each year in late November and early December. They--the Franciscans--had endured unimaginable hardship to further the Catholic faith in the unexplored north only to come "home" again to witness what they certainly regarded as pagan ceremony. From the beginning there was but one predominant purpose before the two Franciscan brothers. The commercial ends that would accrue from a successful route to the ports of California were important even to the Franciscan order, but to convert souls was always in the minds of the Fathers as they traversed untrod ground.

It is ironical again that neither Dominguez nor Escalante returned to the Indians they had met on their journey. For most of the original inhabitants of what is today northern Colorado and Utah, the Franciscan message was never repeated in their lifetime, and the ceremonies Velez de Escalante witnessed that November and December by the members of what he must have considered his personal flock could only have but emphasized the overwhelming task the Franciscans had assumed when they attempted conversion of the Spanish northern borderlands.

### The Trail's End - Epilogue

And so it went. The journey from Zuni to Santa Fe was but a repetition of the one made by Velez de Escalante six months before, and the party rode into the square in front of the governor's palace in Santa Fe on January 2nd, 1777. The Franciscans made their report to the governor and the companions of six hard months and over two thousand wilderness miles each went their way. Miera turned to his map, Don Juan Cisneros and Don Joaquin Lain probably went back to Zuni, if, indeed, they had not stayed there already rather than make the extra miles to Santa Fe. Fray Dominguez left for El Paso four months later, leaving his trusted friend and companion Fray Silvestre as vice-custos in the New Mexican Missions. From El Paso, Dominguez was then shunted back and forth over his remaining years among the Provincial Missions and presidios. His reward for dedicated service and too-honest criticism of the slackness he found in the missions of New Mexico was exile to the most northern edge of the Spanish New World in remote military forts, and loss of any chance for further advancement.

The two Franciscan brothers did not meet again after their return from the north. Francisco Atanasio Dominguez died in the early years of the nineteenth century without ever again seeing Mexico City, the center of the new world that he had left so many years before as the trusted custos of the New Mexican Missions.

Silvestre Velez de Escalante lived for only three years after his return from the land of the Yutas and Lagunas. His health was not good

to begin with and the arduous journey did little to make it better. He died in Parral, April, 1780. Father Juan Morfi, a Franciscan brother wrote an epitaph to Fray Silvestre. It summarizes well the spirit of the man who helped cause that day in July the spirit and zeal of the Franciscan order to glow a little more brightly:

Father Fray Silvestre Velez de Escalante, a friar, despite his youth, among the most meritorius of the custody because of his talent, his erudition, his hard labors, and above all because of his virtues, which led him to sacrifice his hopes, health, and life for the conversion of these souls, for, going back to the Province to recover his health, he died at Parral in April, 1780.<sup>51</sup>

The political objective of the expedition, that of reaching Monterey, had not been achieved by the ten travelers, but the waning glory of Spanish exploration lived just a little bit longer because of them. As a symbol of what Fray Francisco Garces called "that ancient Spanish enthusiasm for discovering and taking possession of new lands, sacrificing lives and fortunes in this enterprise ... ," the expedition will be held a success.

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<sup>51</sup>Juan Agustin de Morfi, "Description Geographica de Huevo Mexico," A.G.M. Historia, Vol. 25, translated in Thomas, Forgotten Frontiers.



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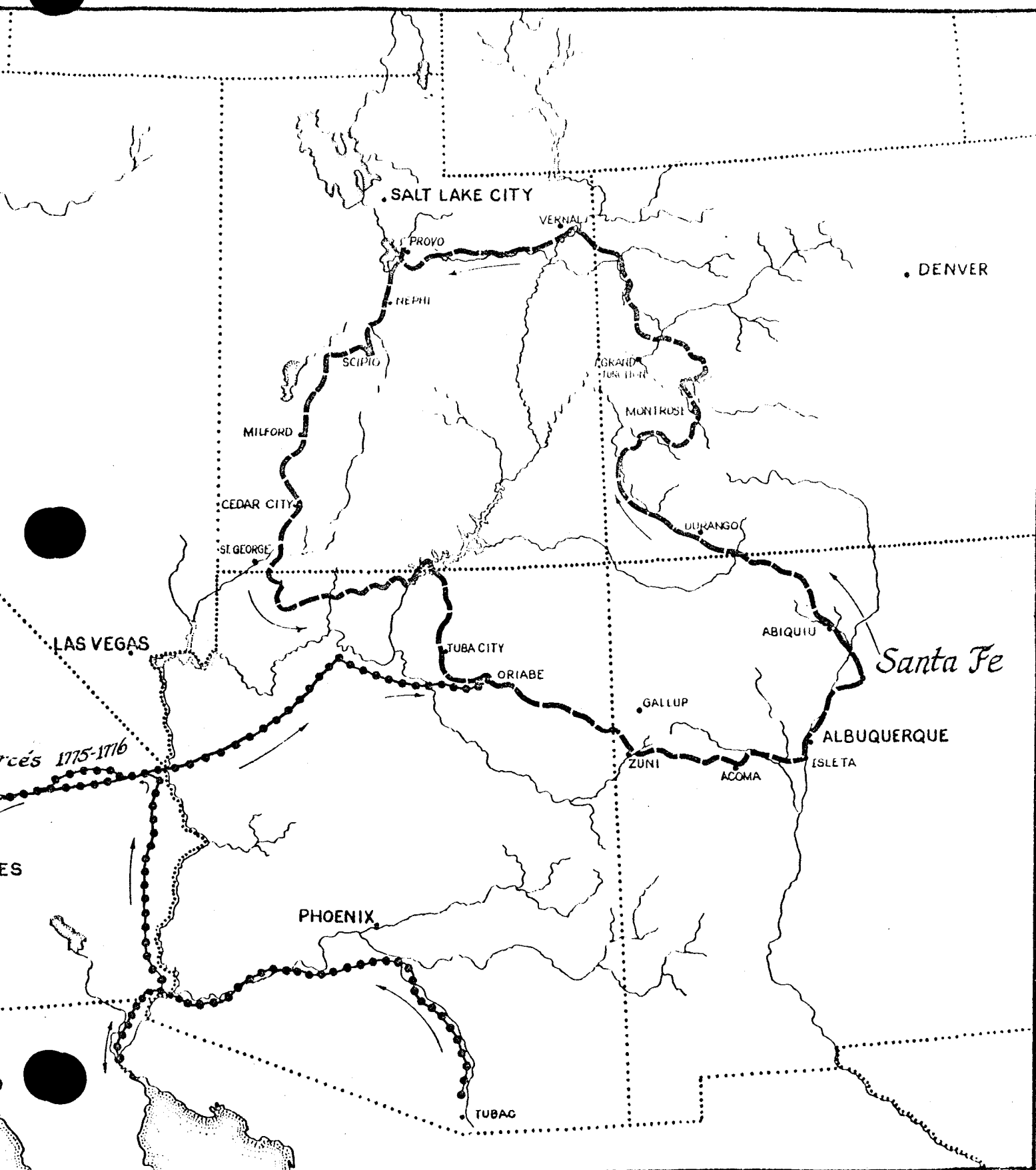
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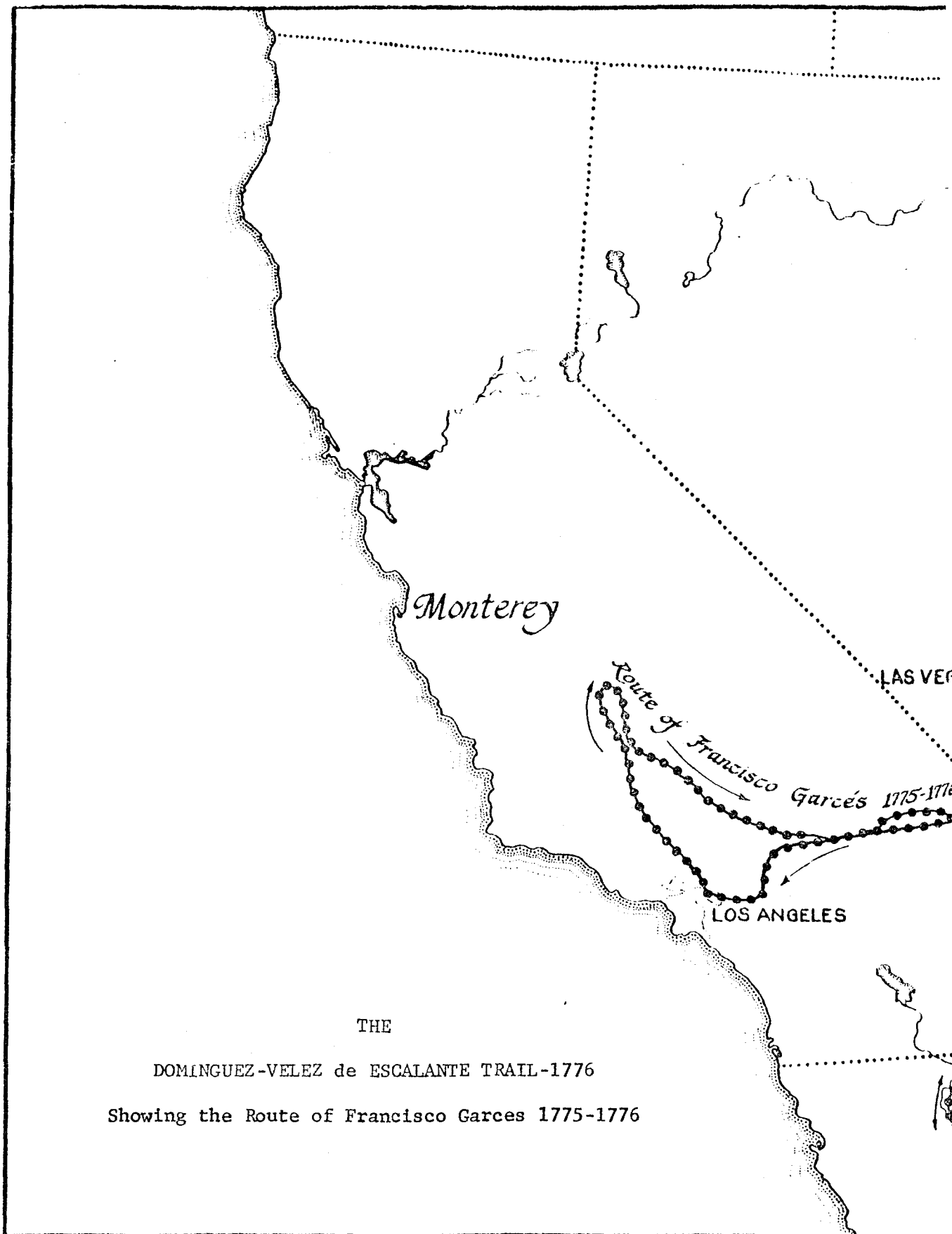
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MAPS





Monterey

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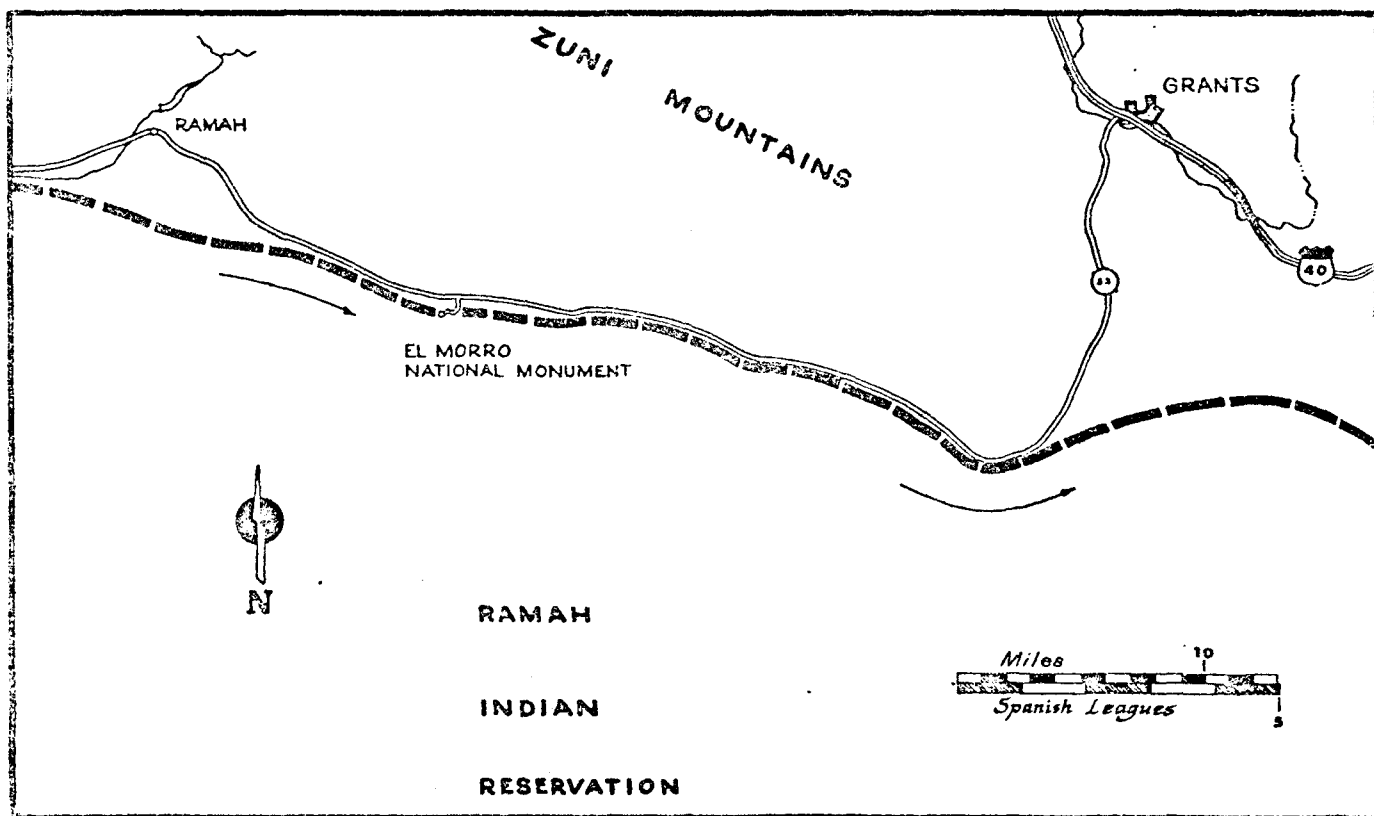
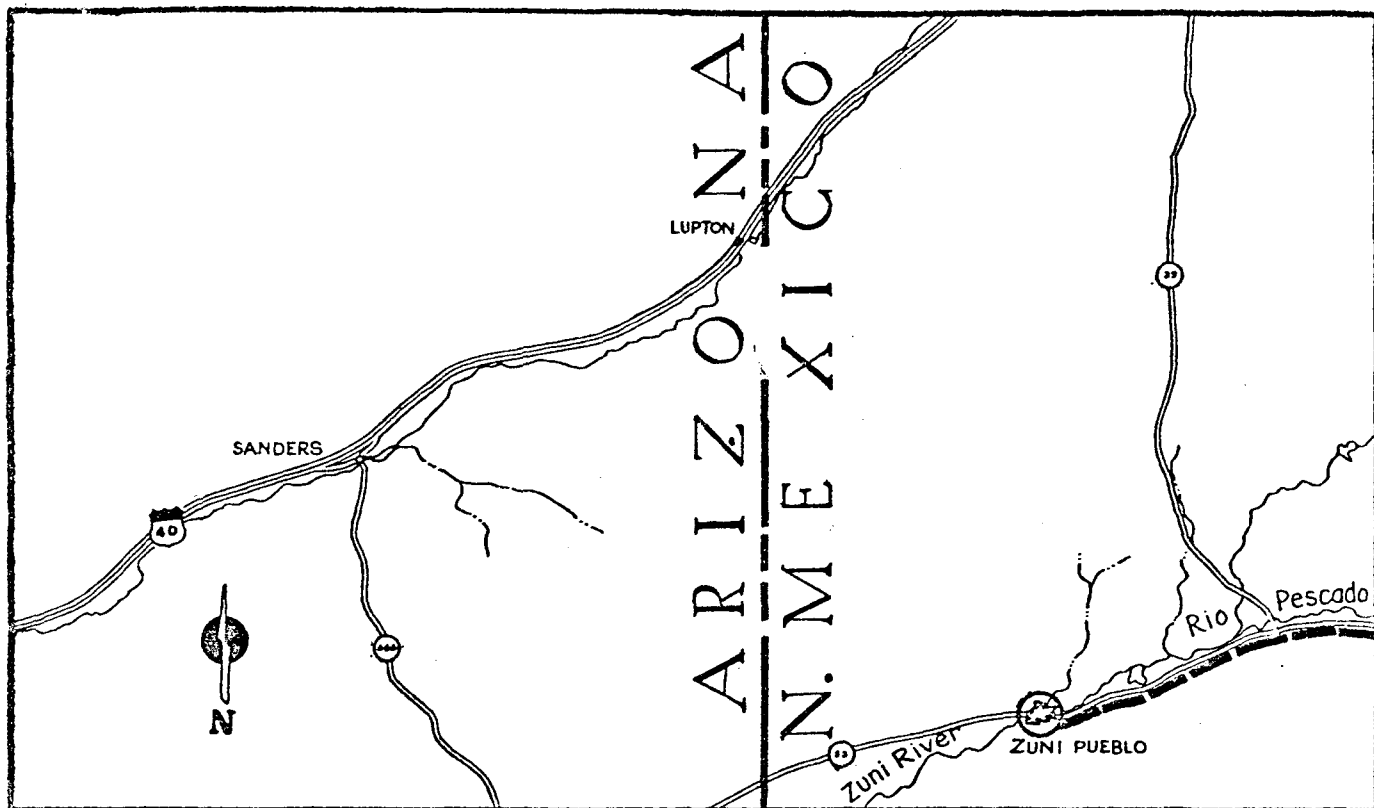
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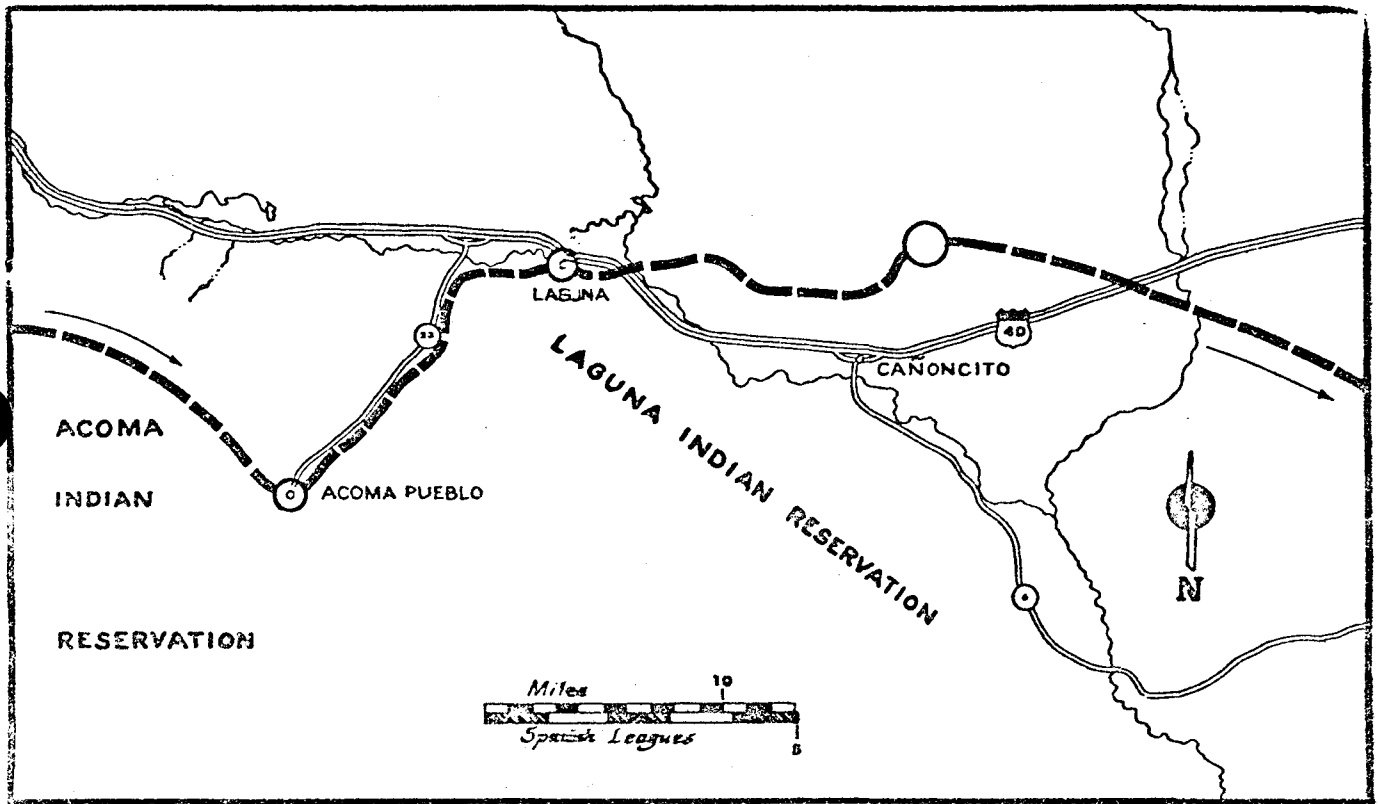
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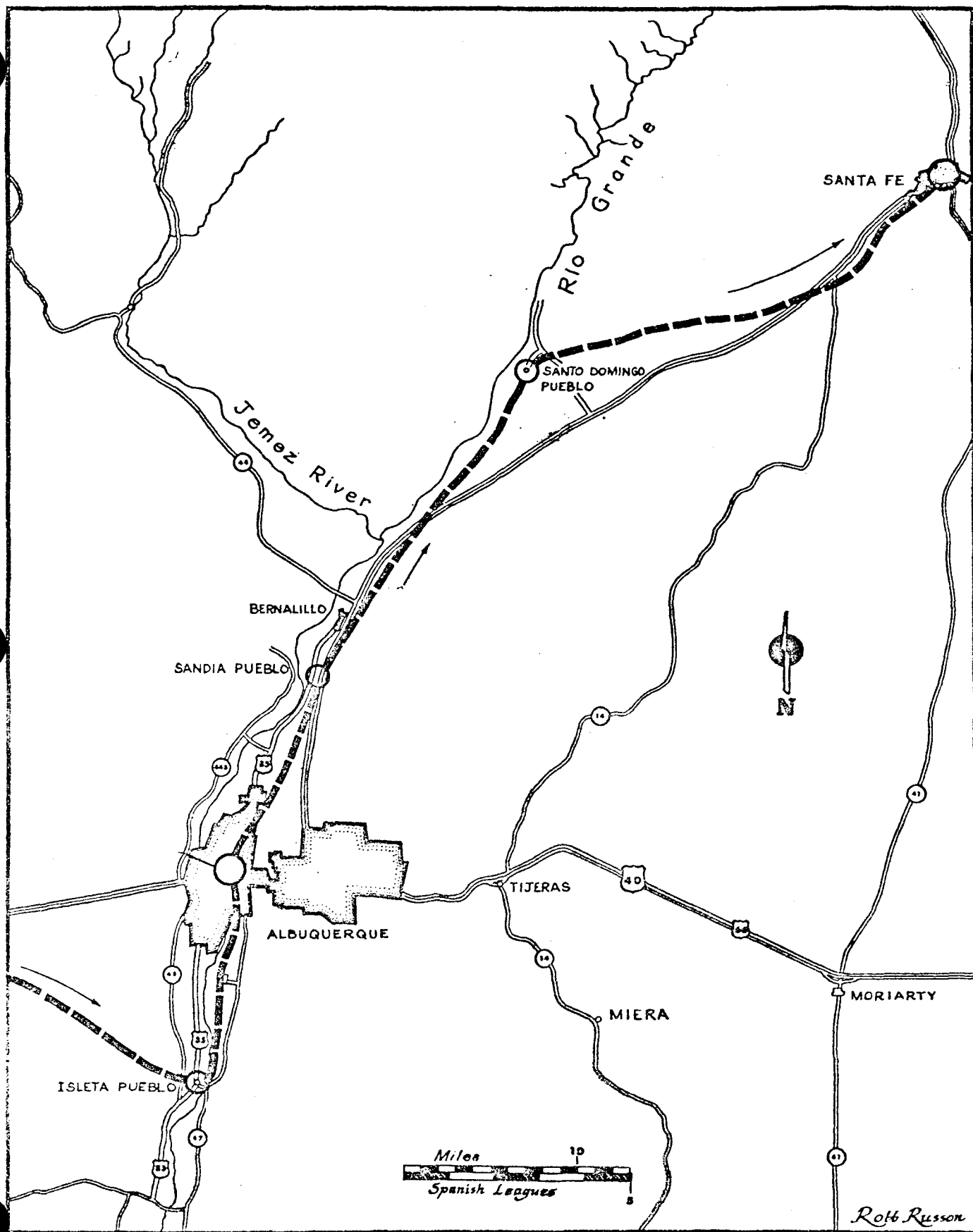
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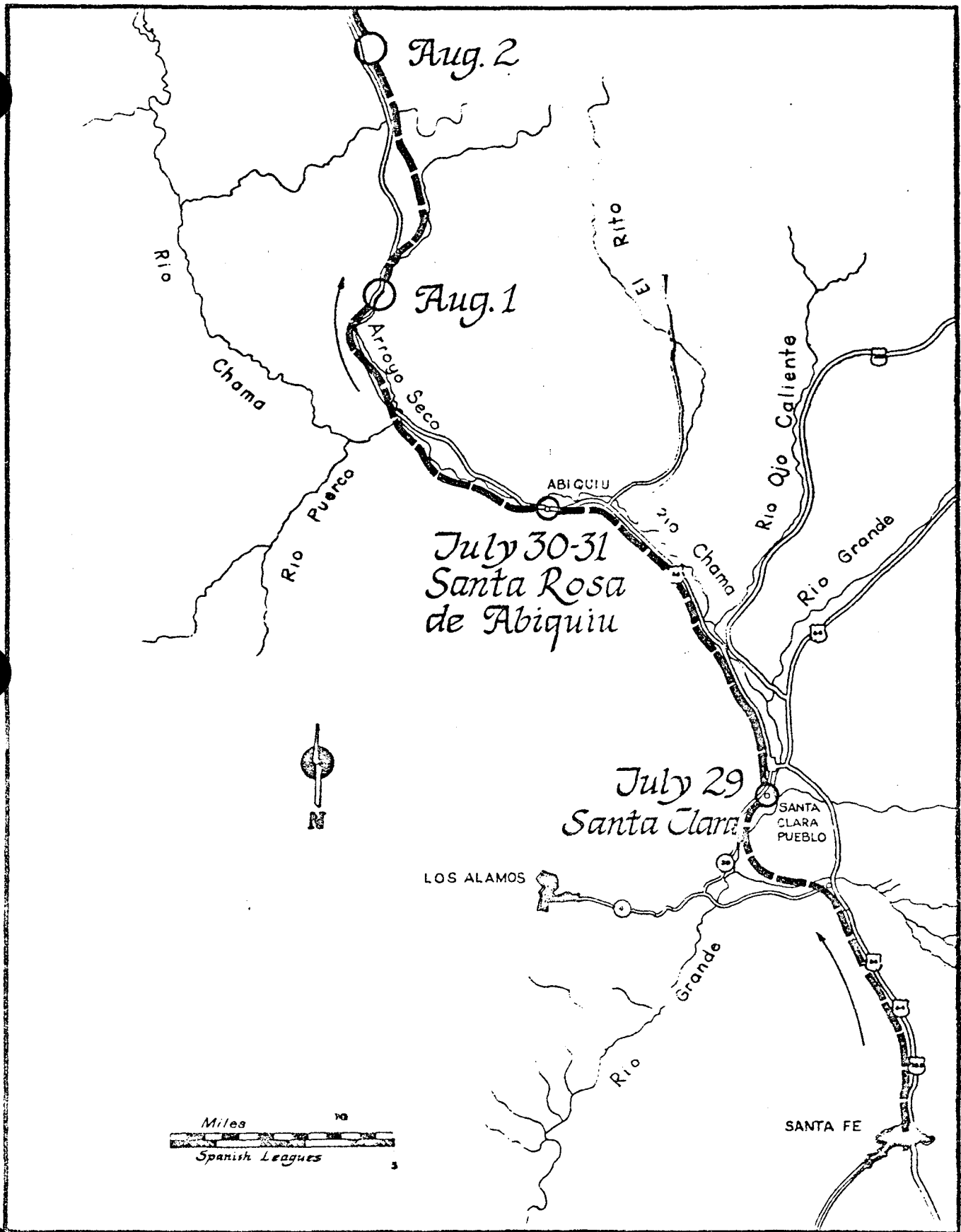




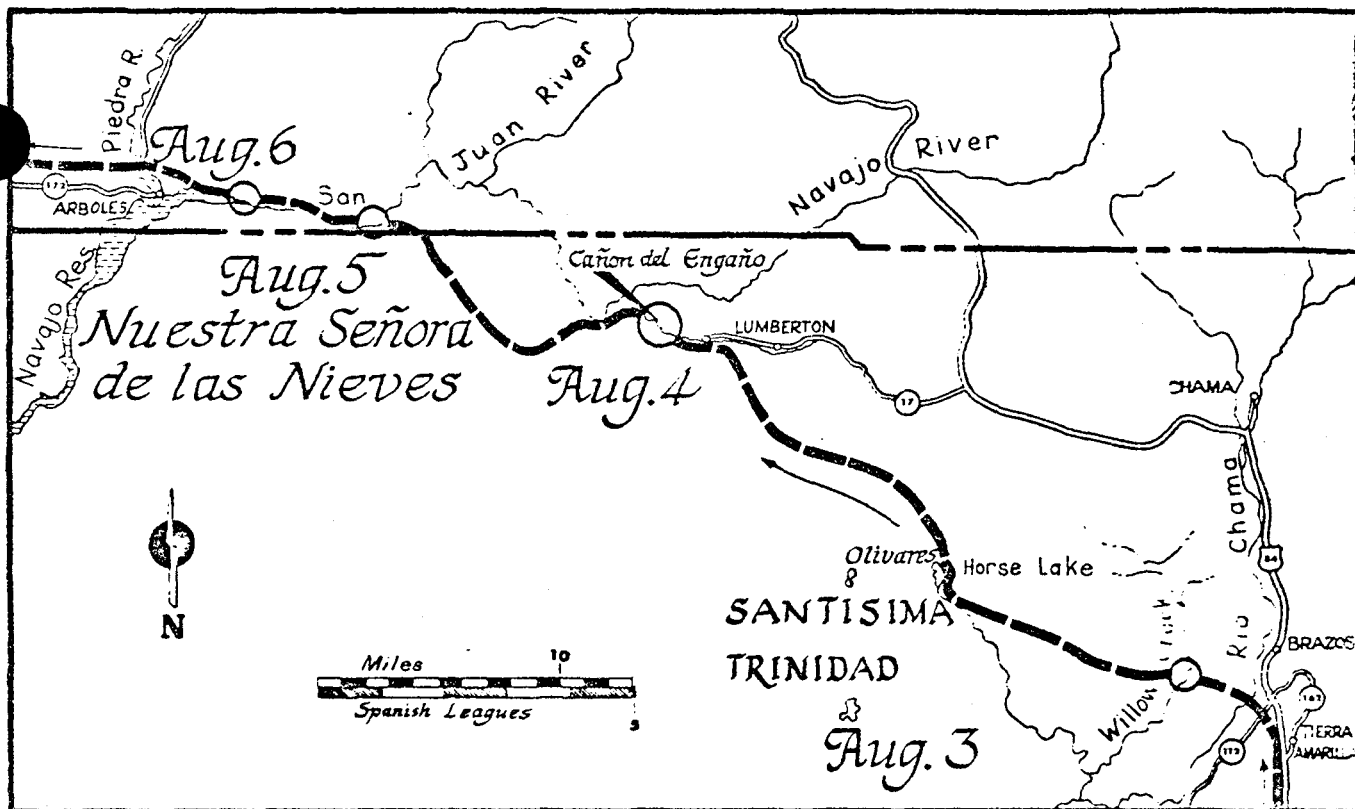
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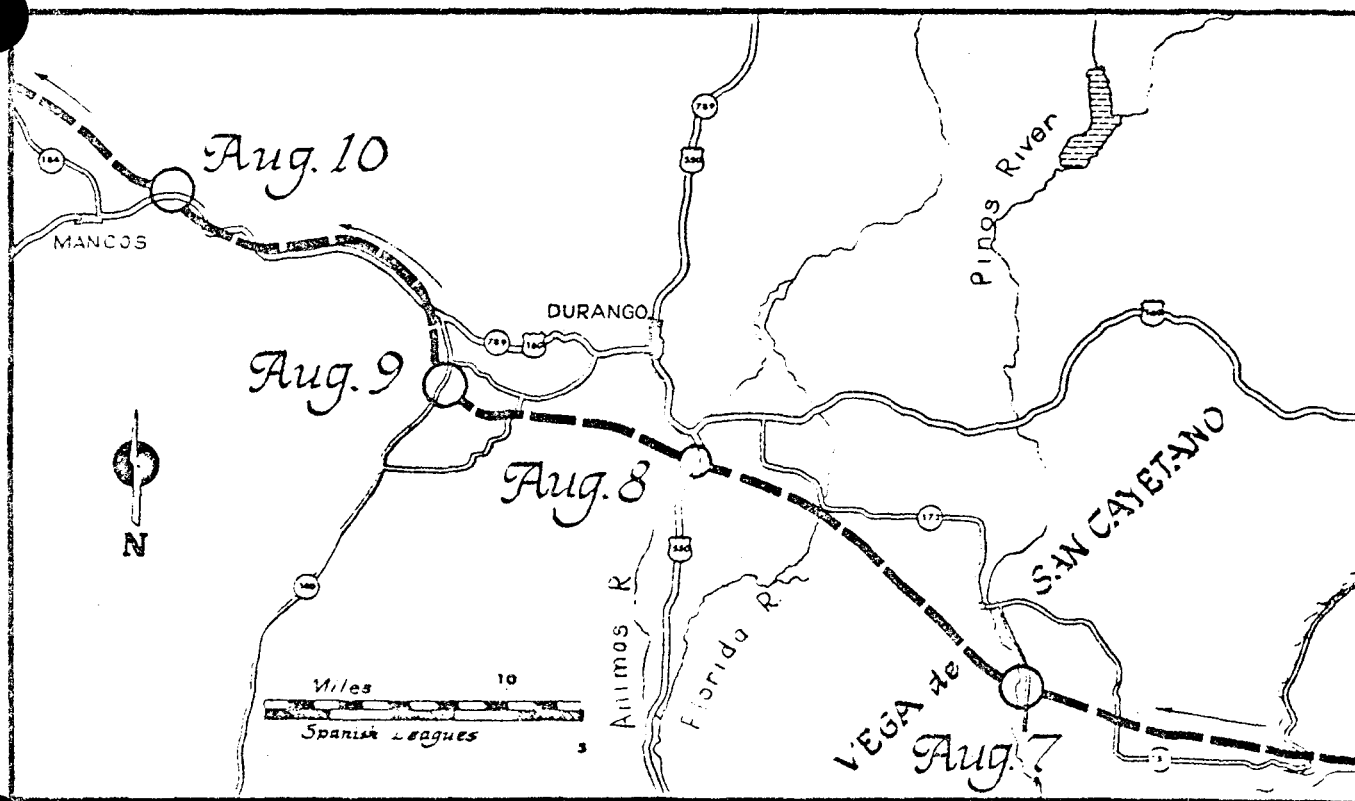
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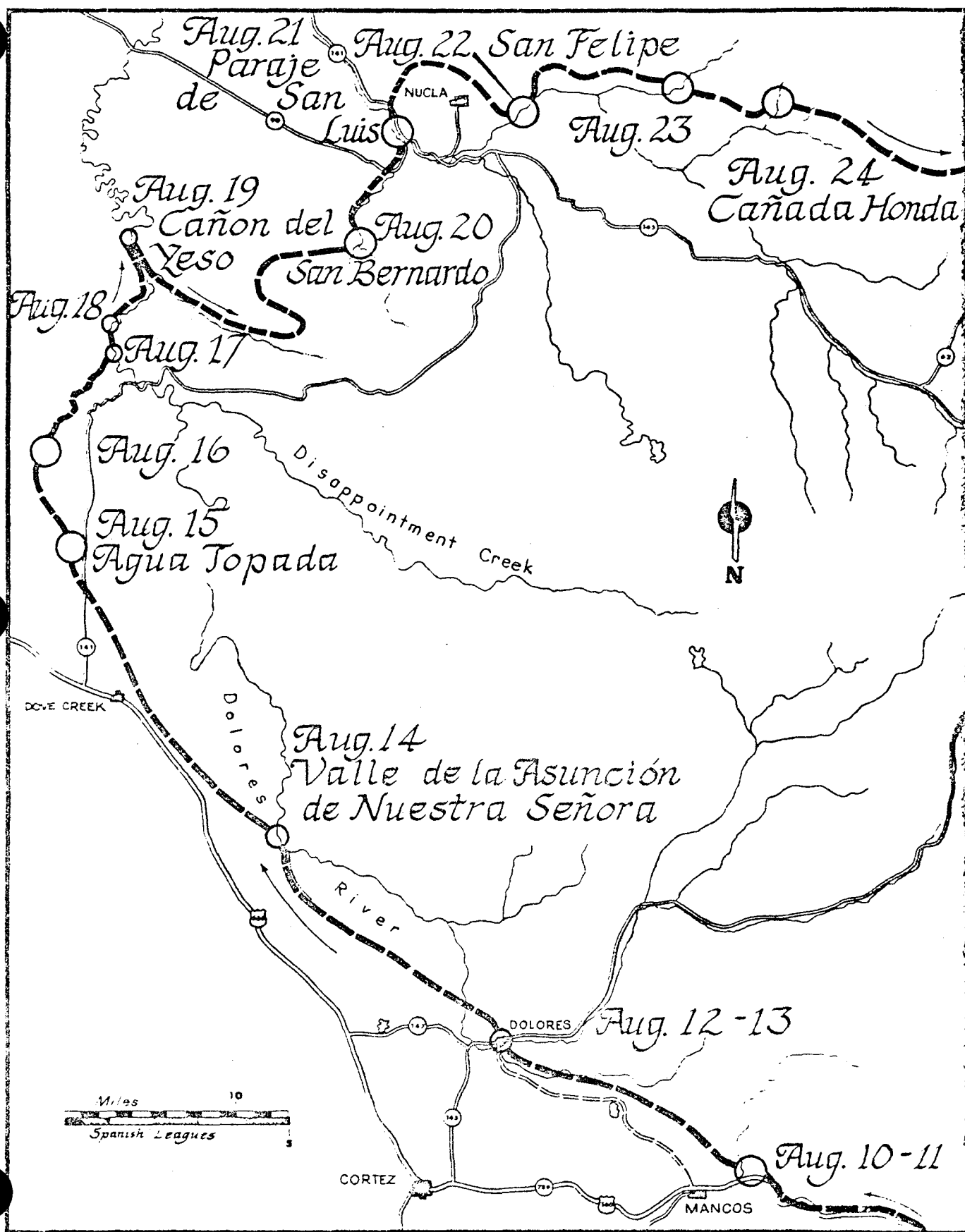
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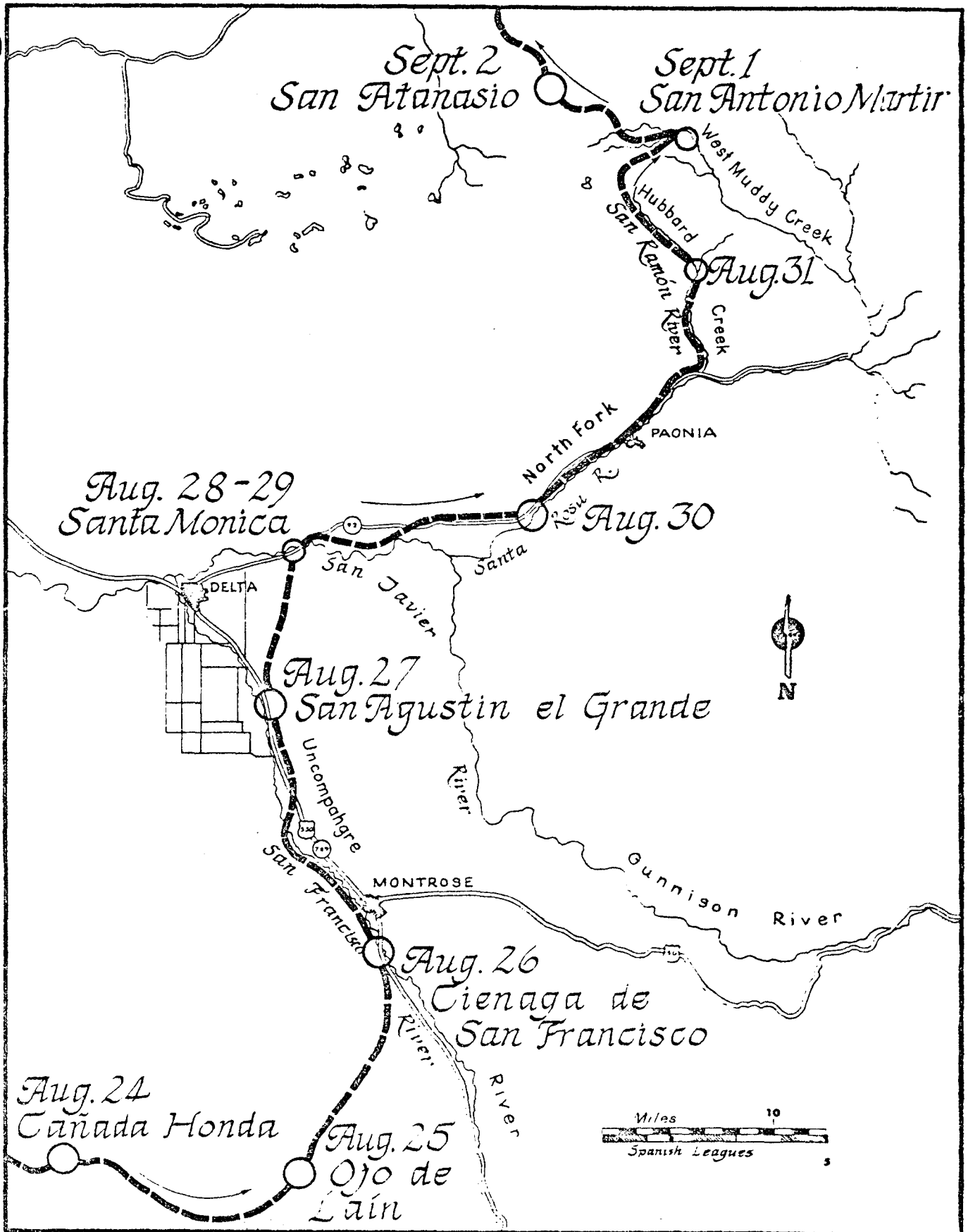
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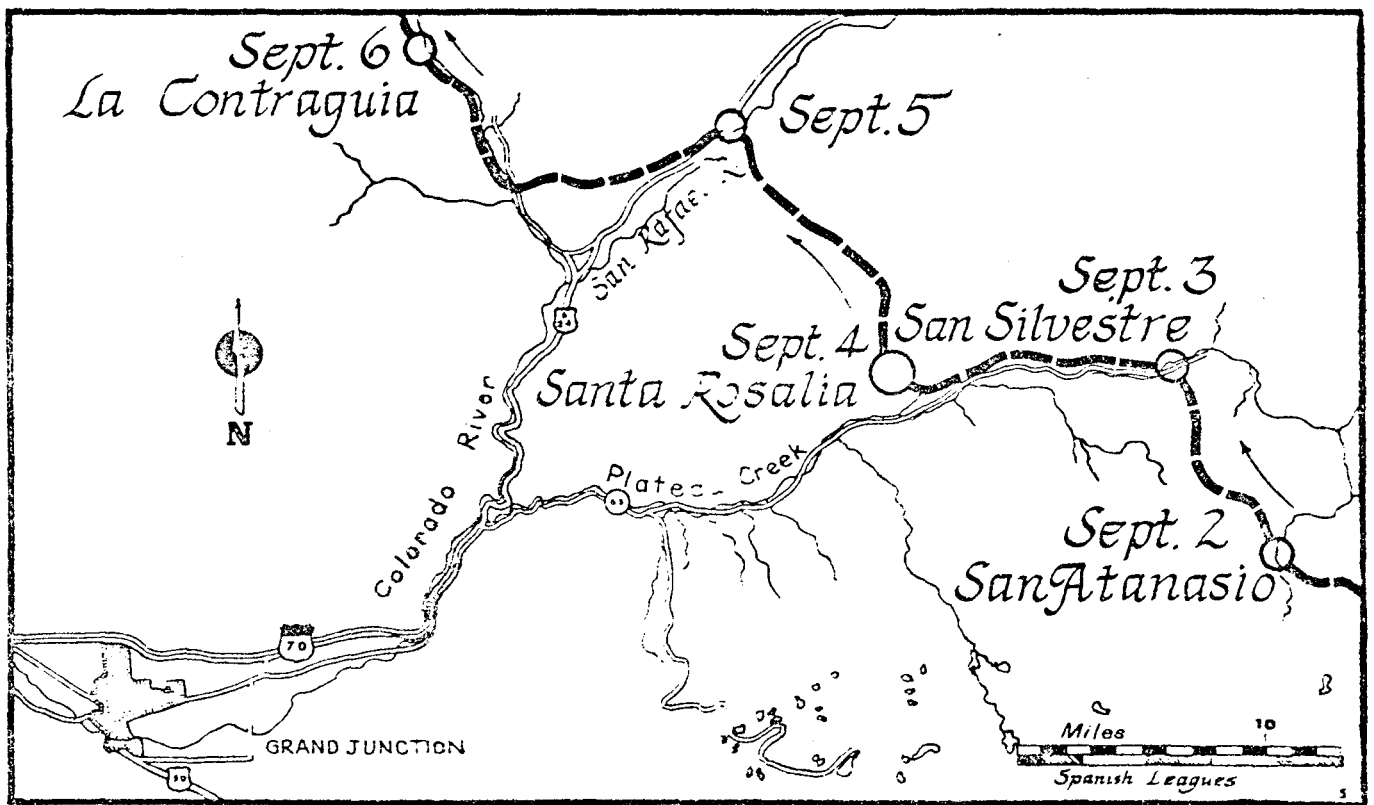
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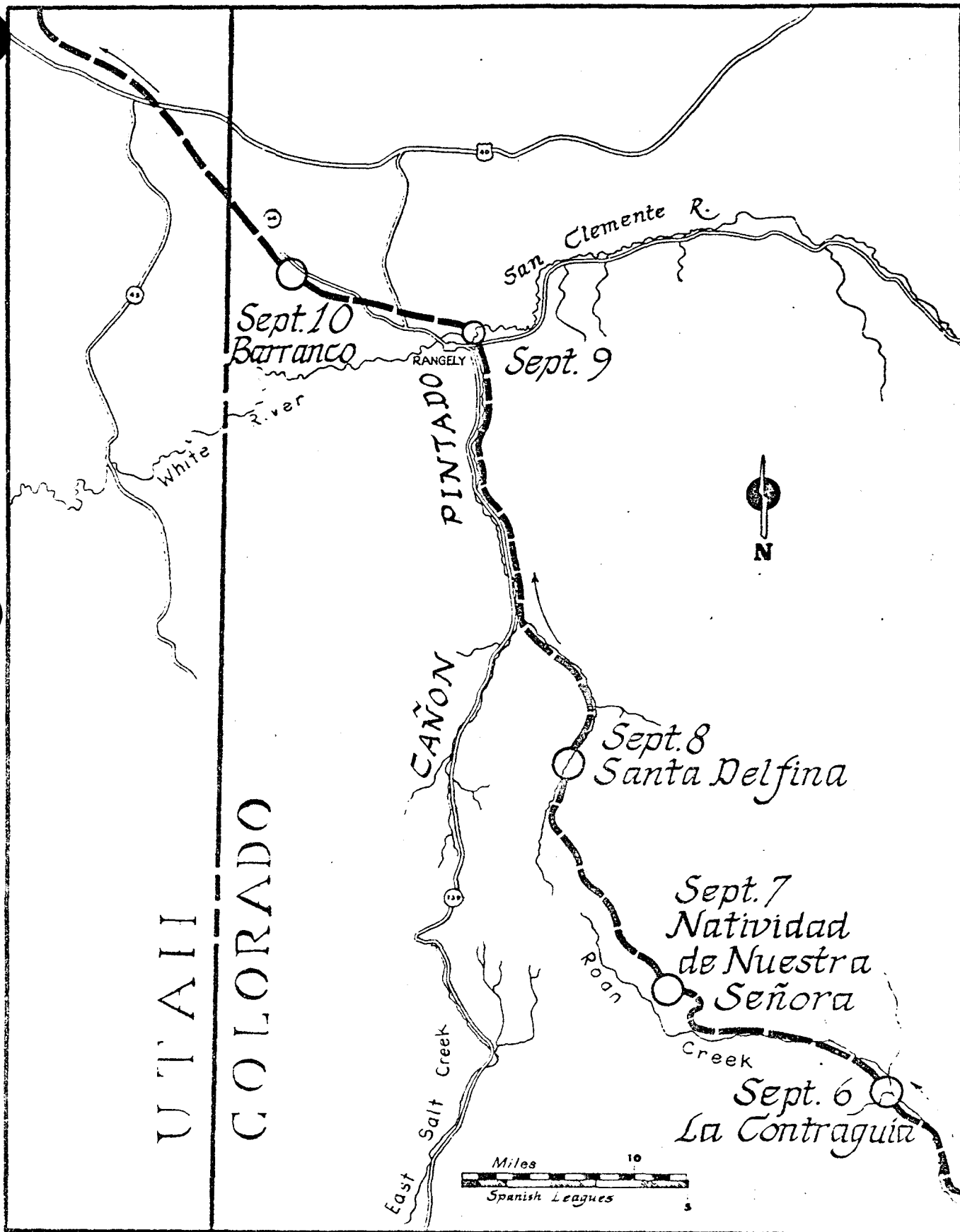
MAP NO. 8



MAP NO. 9

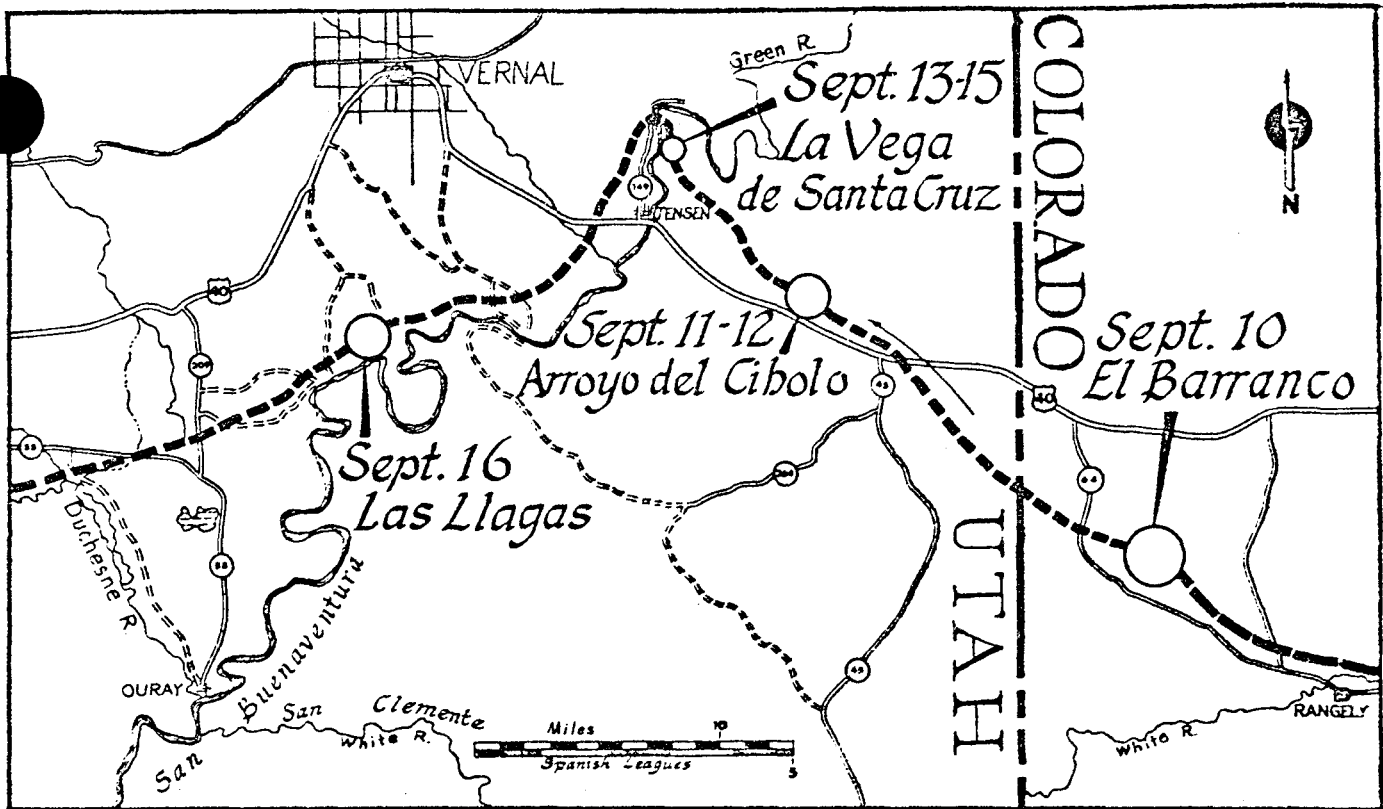


MAP NO. 10

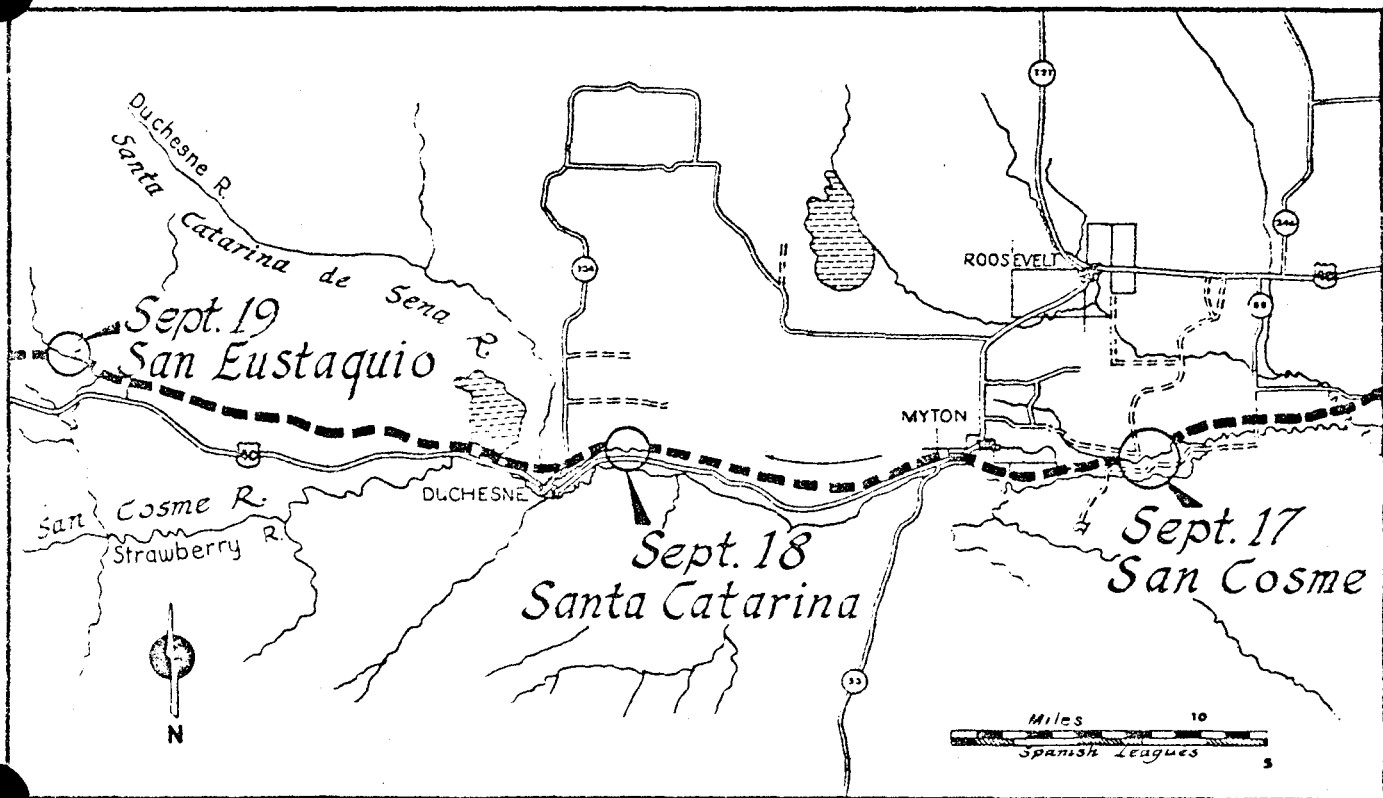


MAP NO. 11

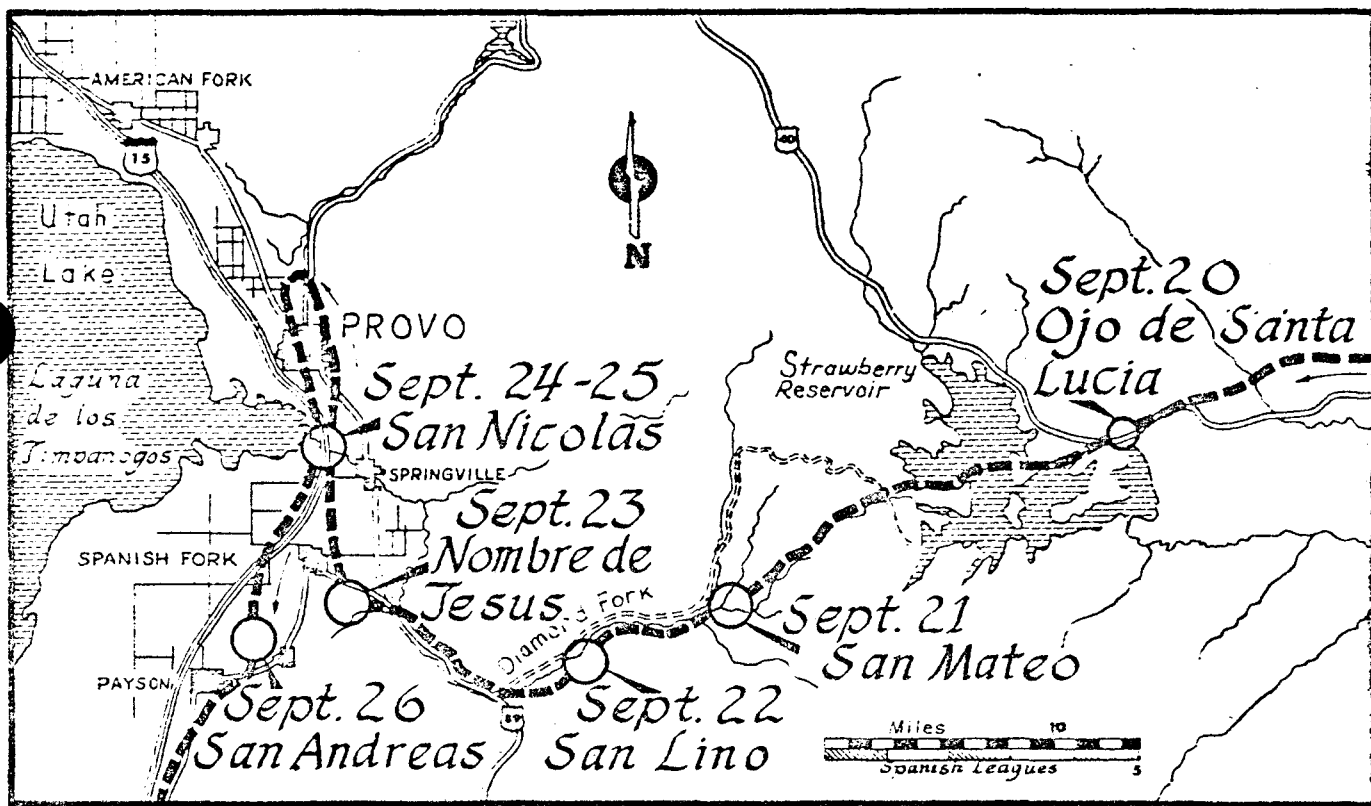




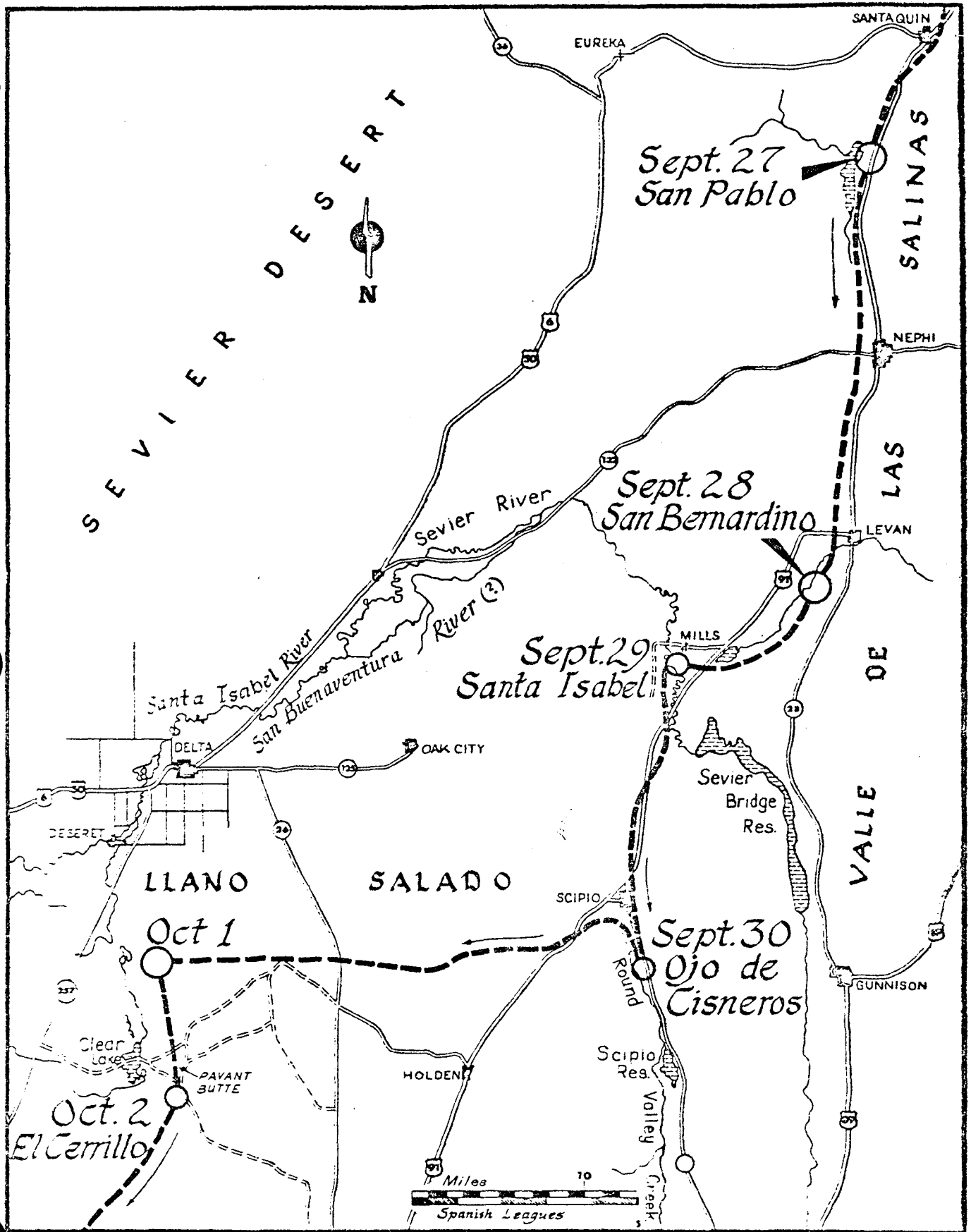
MAP NO. 12



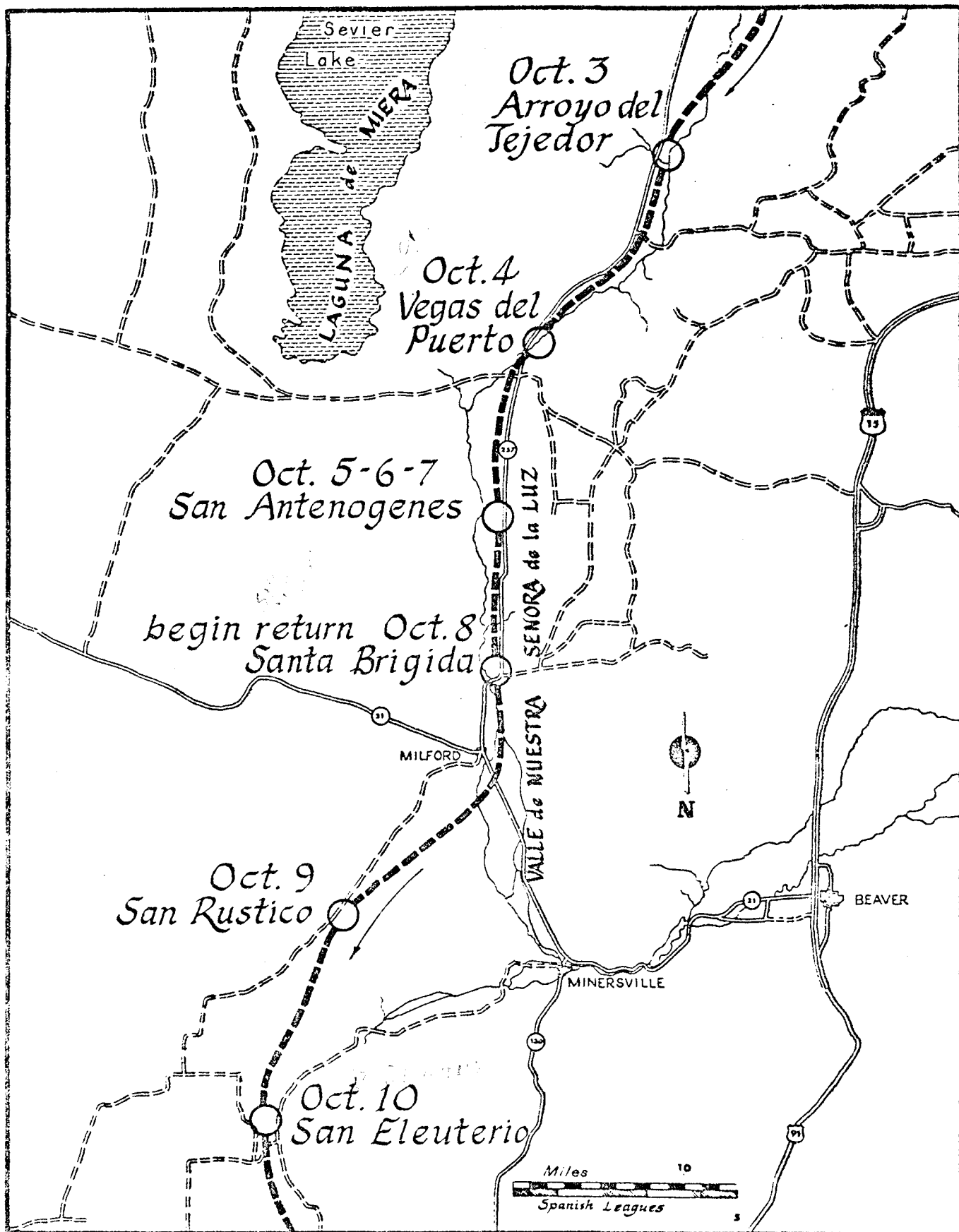
MAP NO. 13



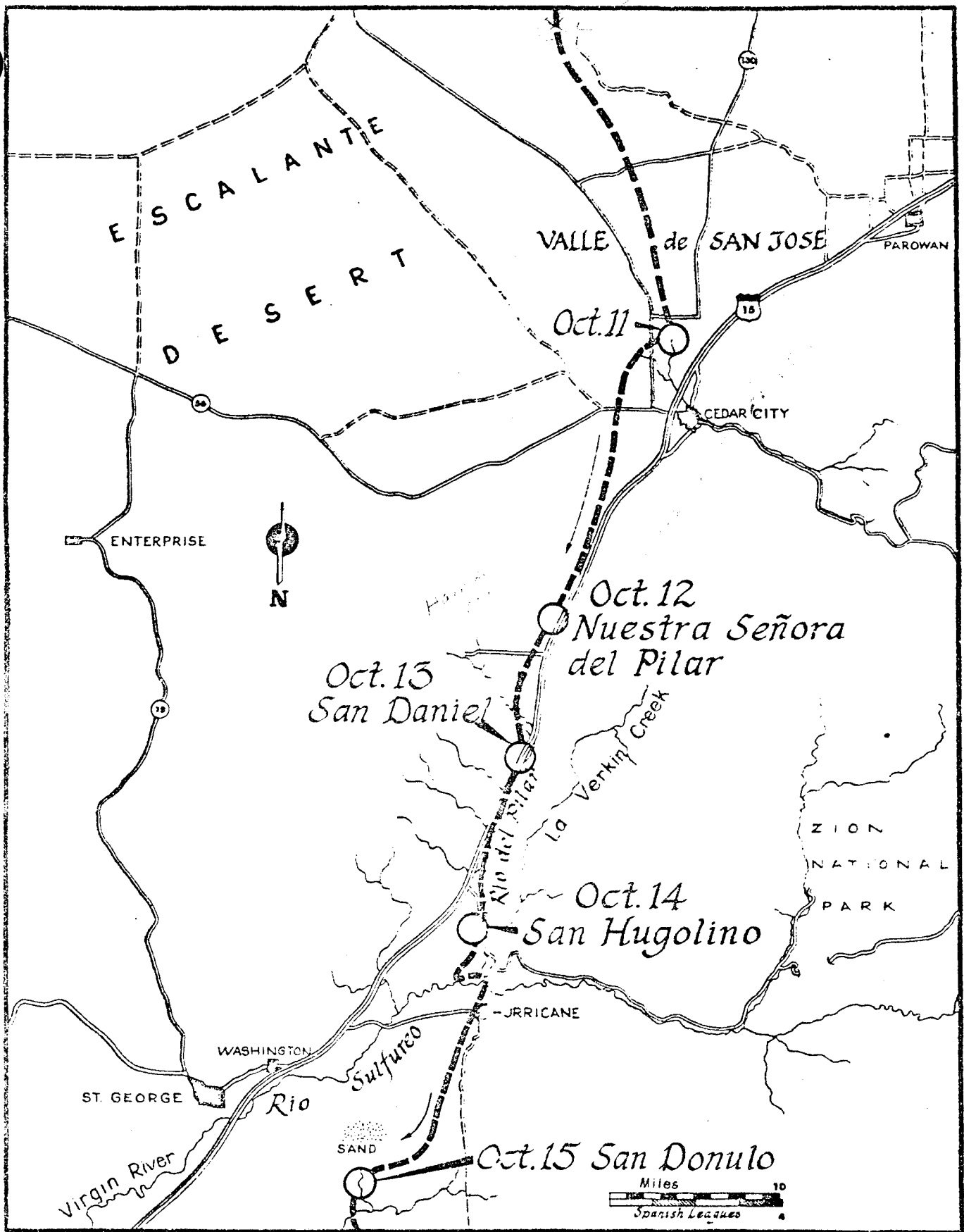
MAP NO. 14



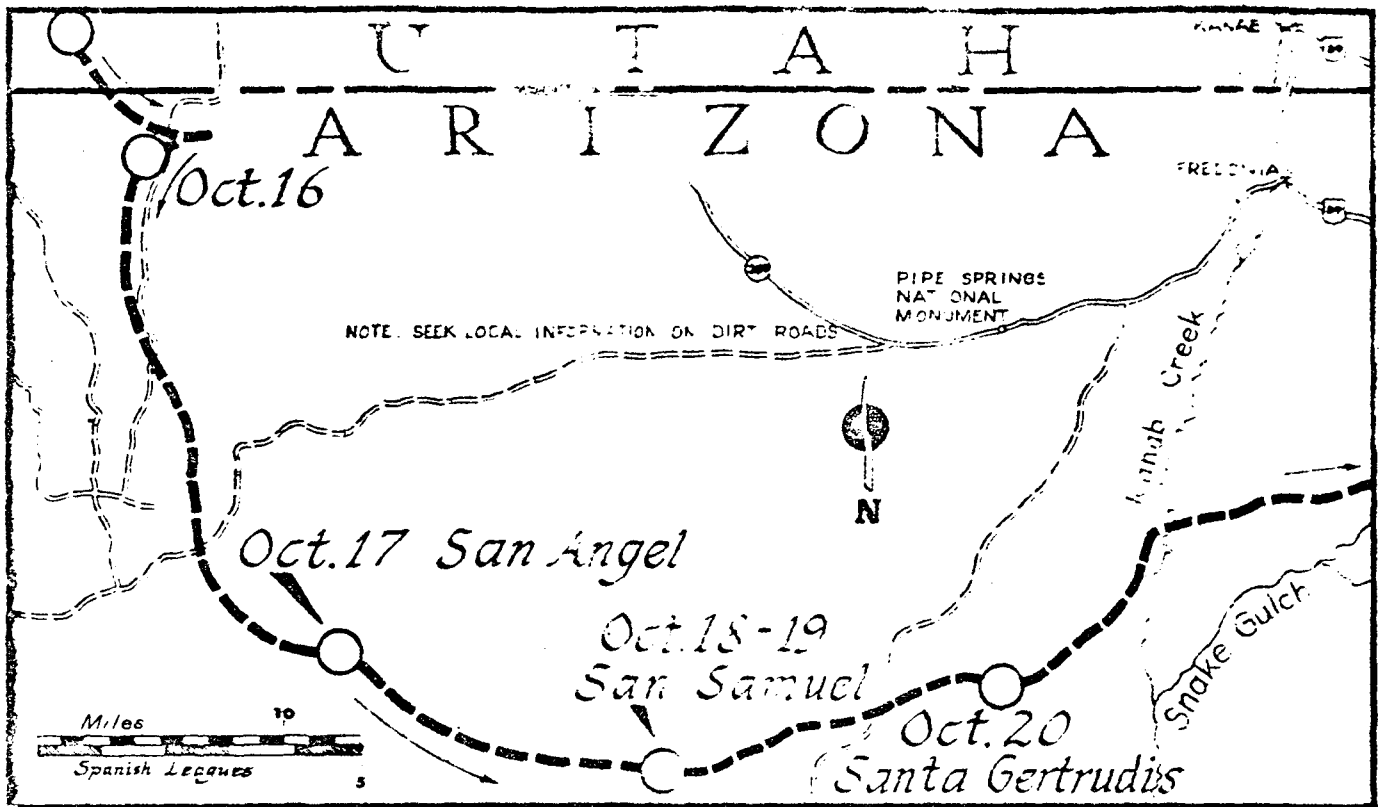
MAP NO. 15



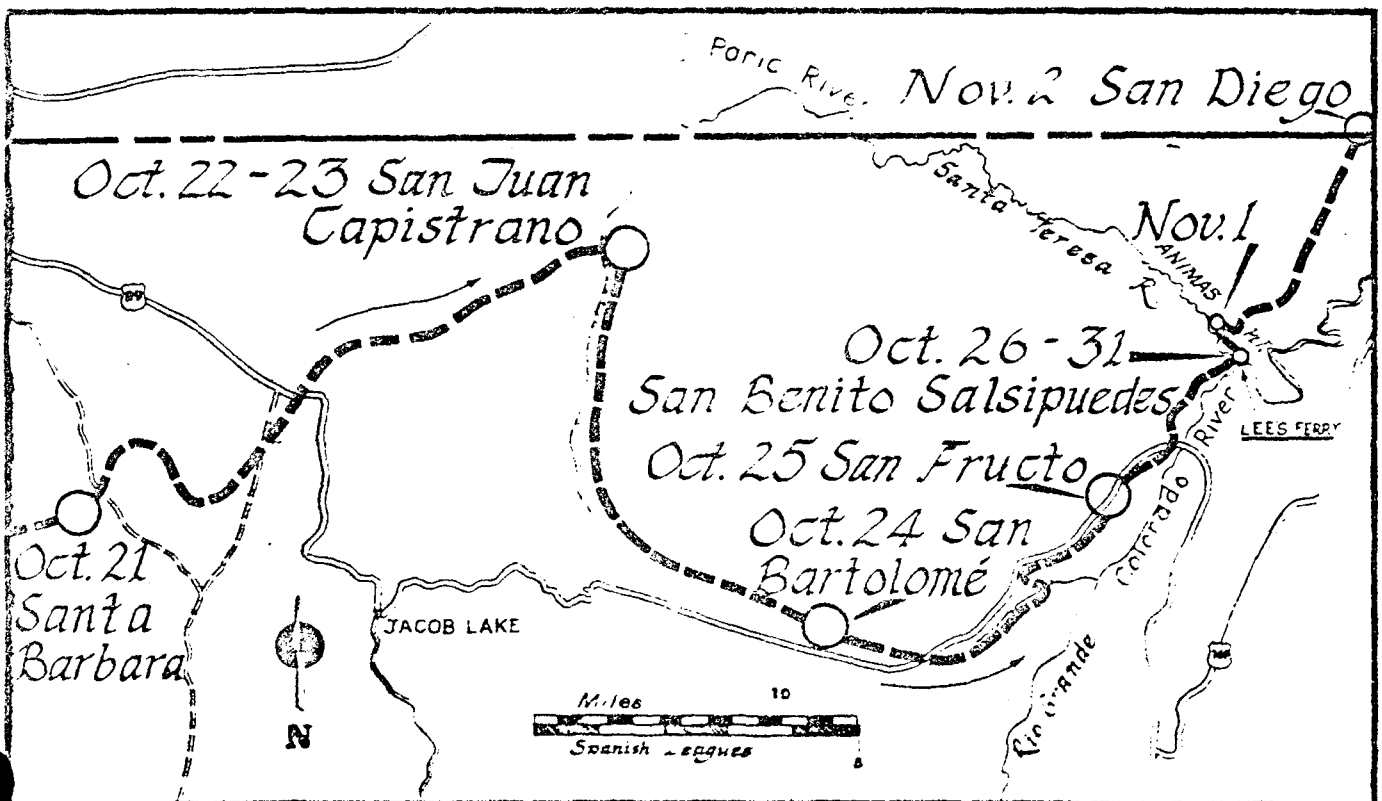
MAP NO. 16



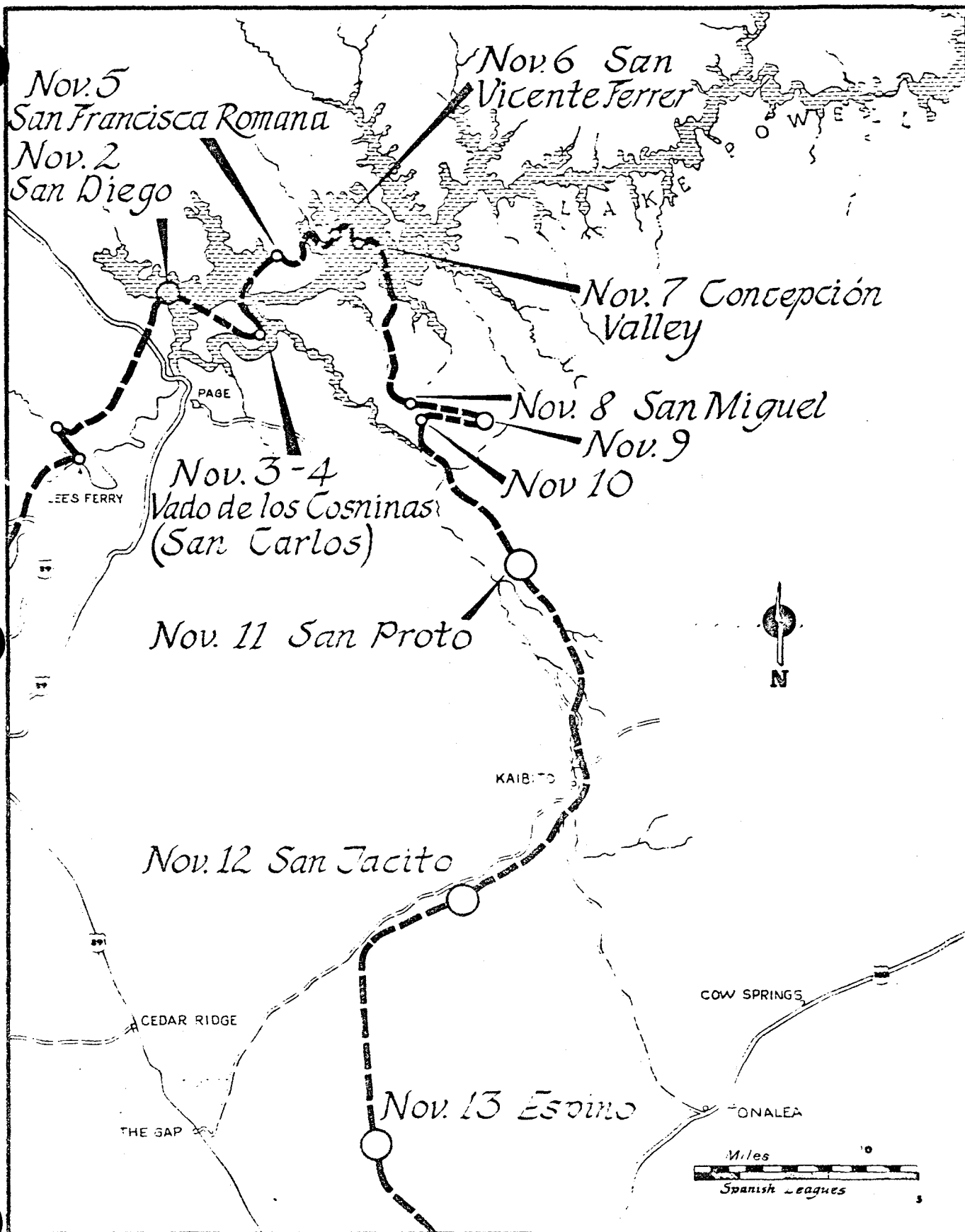
MAP NO. 17

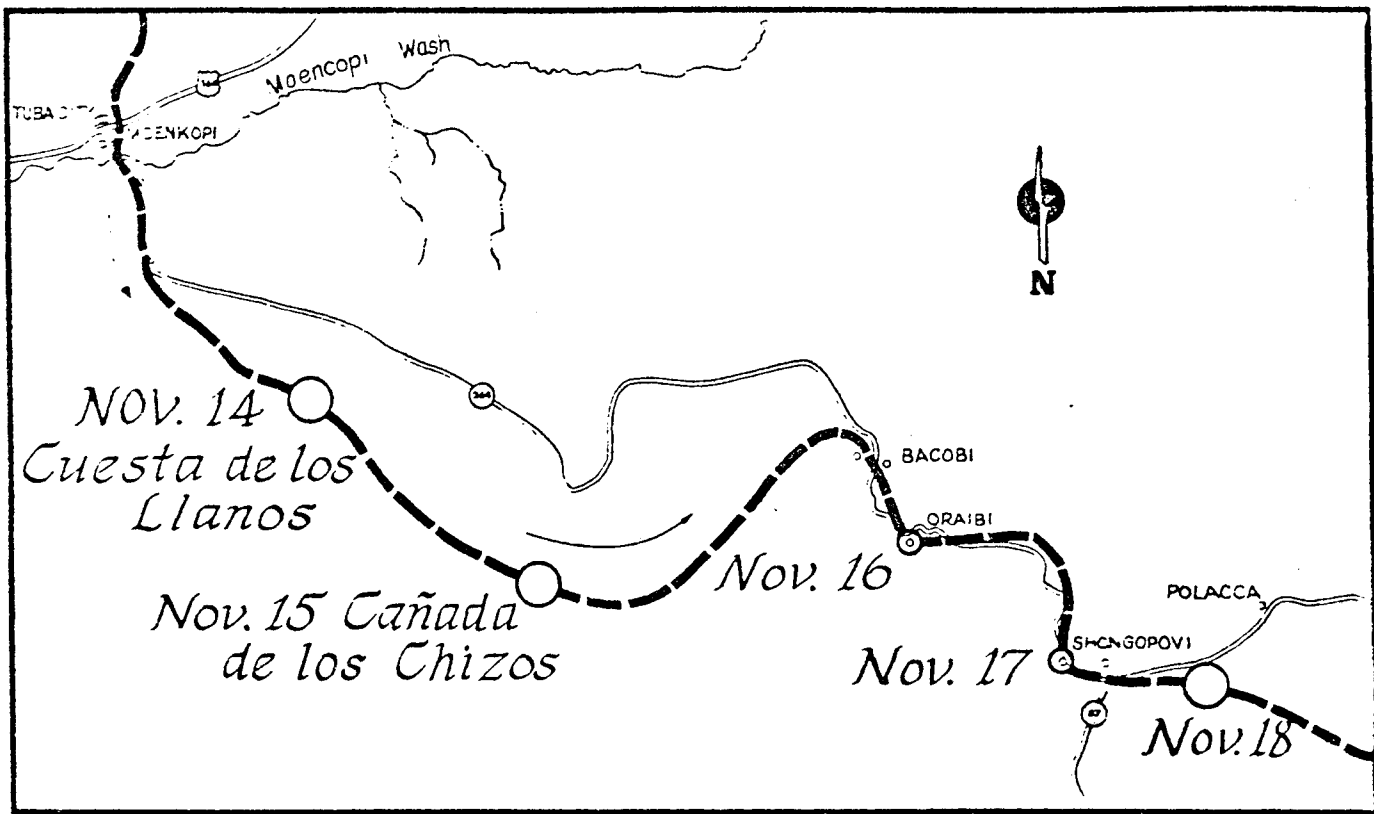


MAP NO. 18

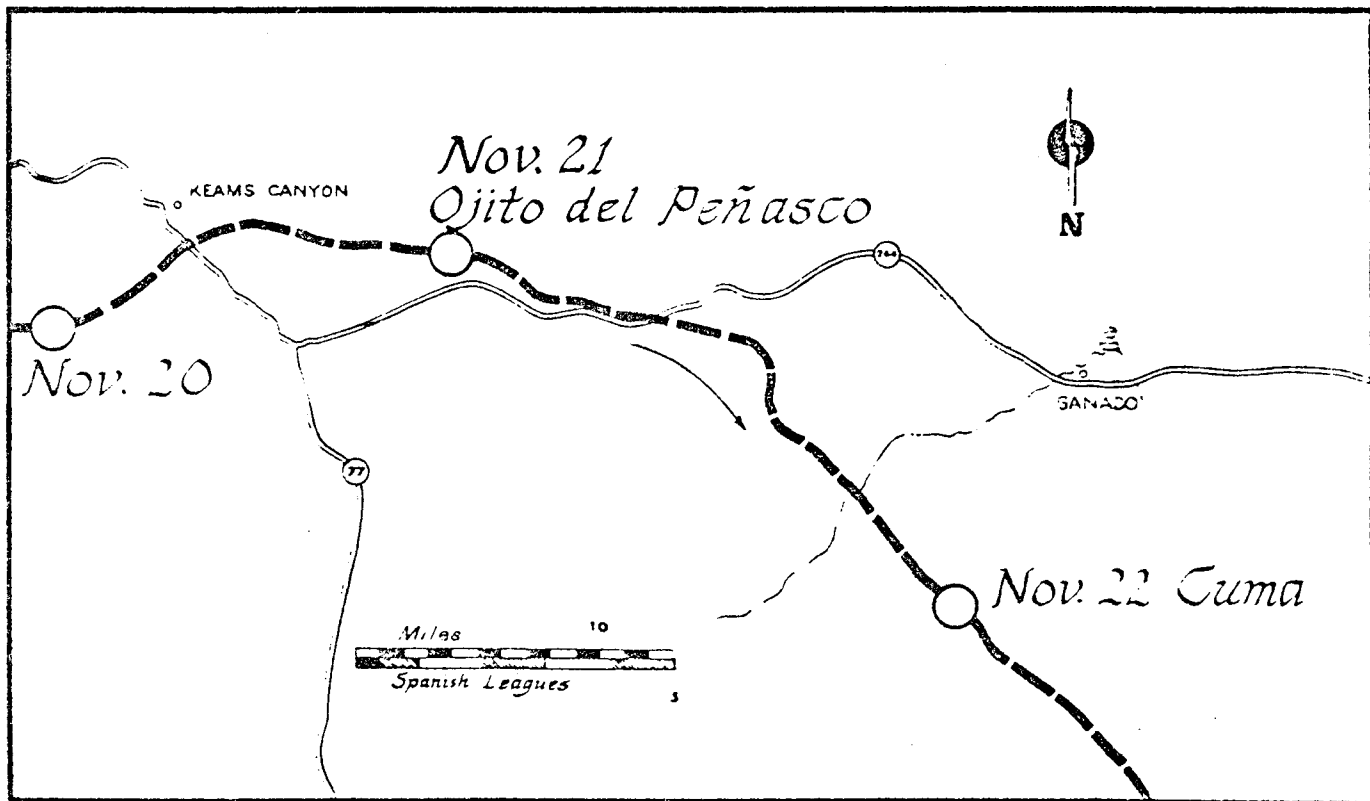


MAP NO. 19



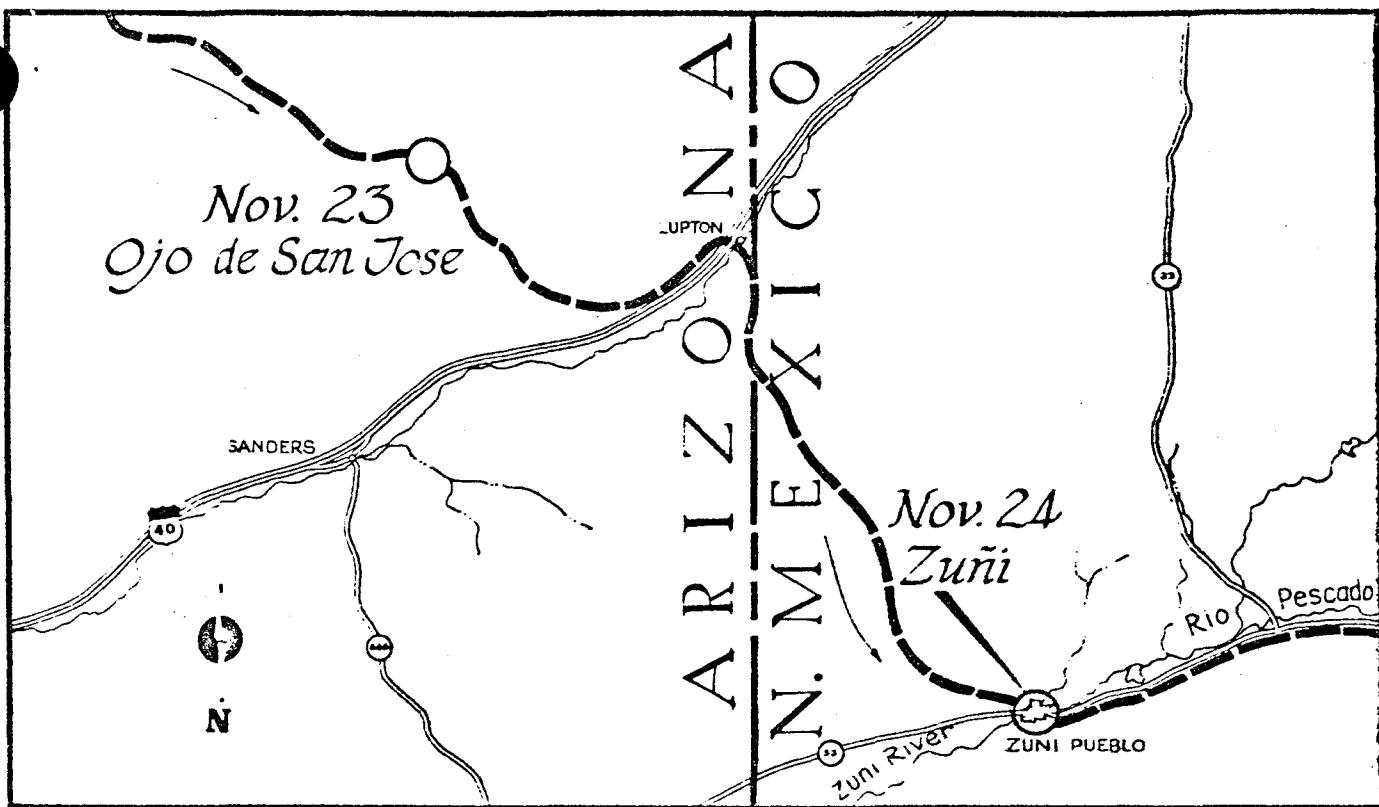


MAP NO. 21

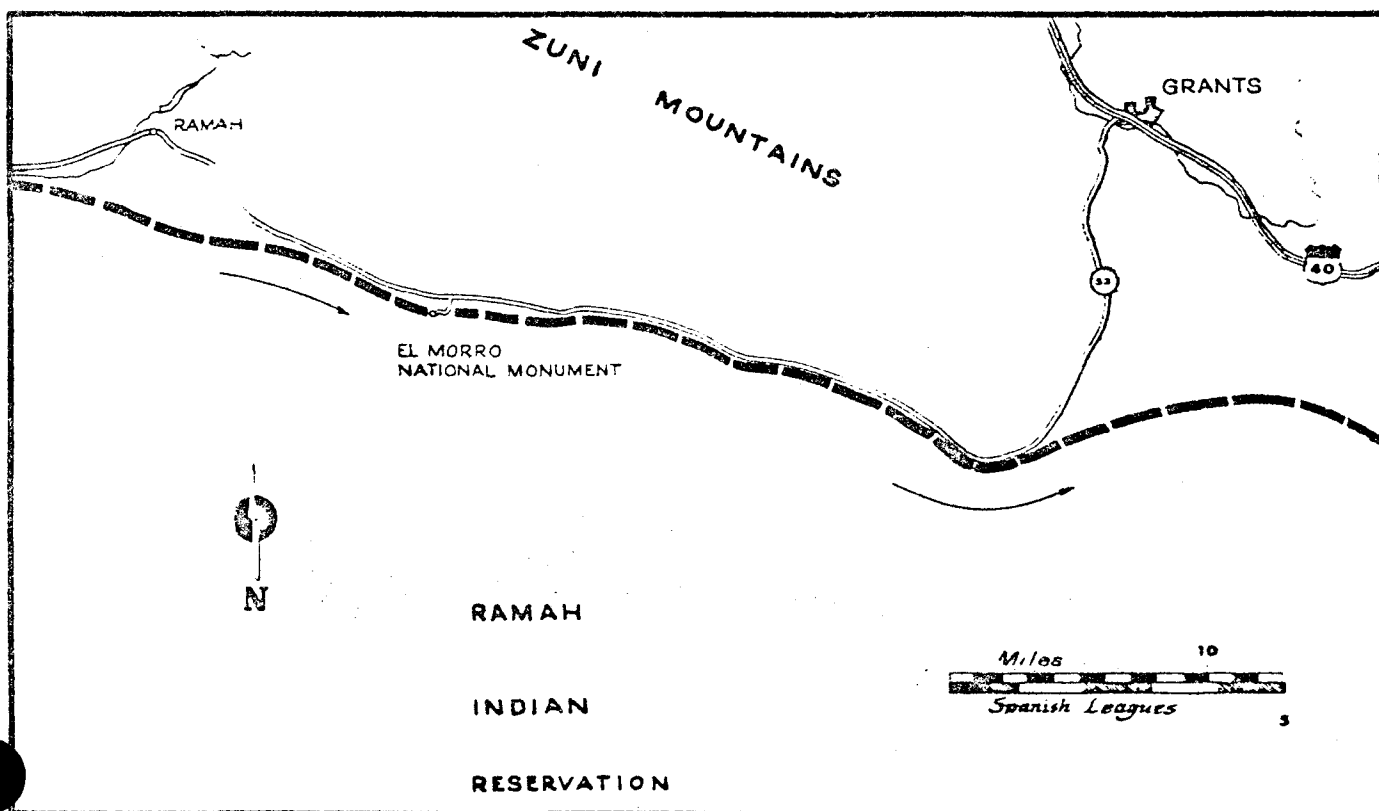


MAP NO. 22

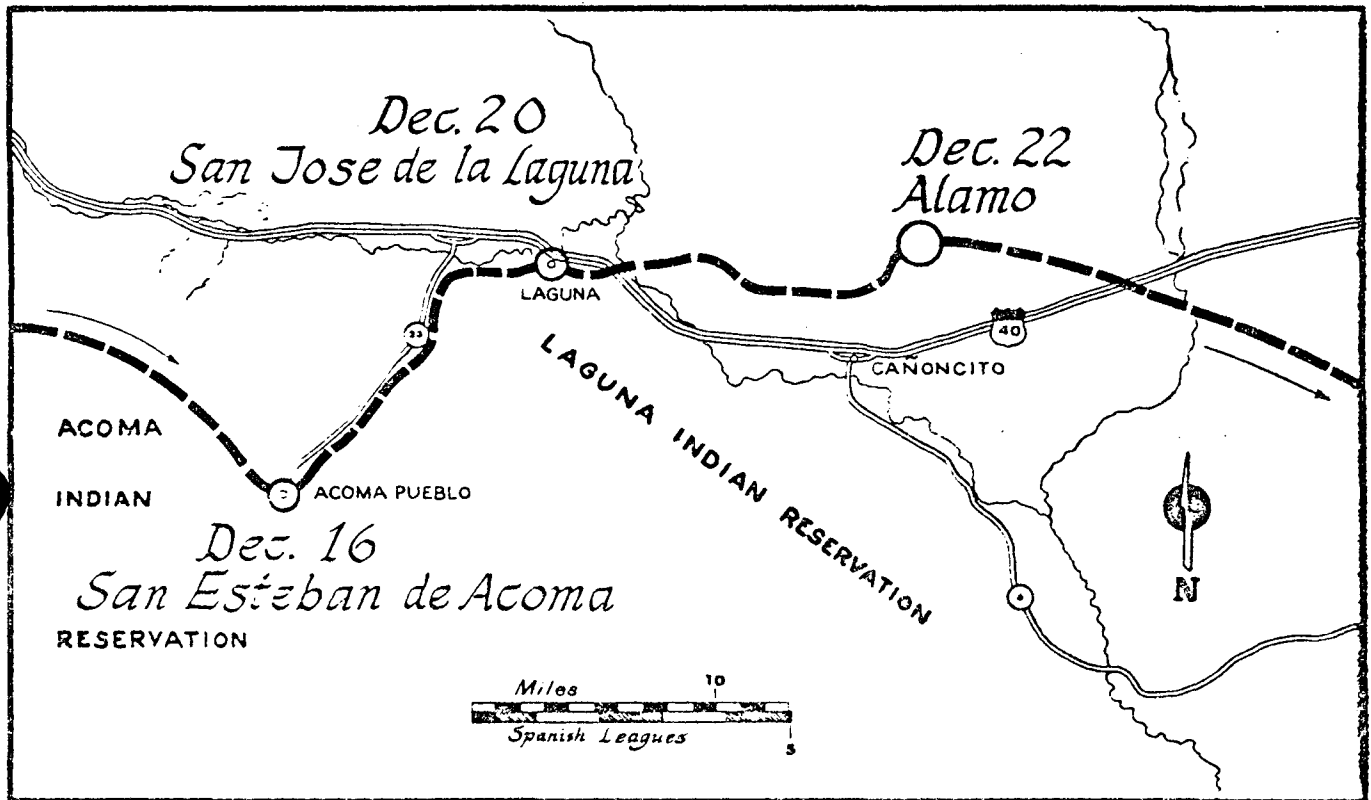




MAP NO. 23



MAP NO. 24



MAP NO. 25

