

## Slover was at home wherever he roamed

To put it briefly, Isaac Slover, born in Pennsylvania (1776 or 77), lived a long, eventful life. Farming in Kentucky and Oklahoma prepared him for western excitement. He roamed the Arkansas, Rio Grande, San Juan, Colorado, and Gila Rivers. He enjoyed his last 17 years in a gentle California valley near the Old Spanish Trail.



Slover loved to hunt. He hunted for trapping parties and for fun. He trapped and tramped over a vast expanse from Colorado to Baja California, between 1821 and the mid 1830s.

As a trapper, Slover worked with an efficient team: *Within less than two years, trappers such as Ewing Young, William Wolfskill, Joe Walker, Antoine Rubidoux, Slover, and...others cleaned out the streams of the southern Rockies...* (Batman, 1986).

In 1837, Slover, Doña Bárbara, Mr. and Mrs. William Pope and maybe John Wolfskill left Taos for California on the Old Spanish Trail, apparently the first to move their goods by two-wheeled wagon over the North Branch. Finally, in 1842, he settled on a hillside above the Santa Ana River in southern California.

At Agua Mansa (now in Colton, CA), Slover lived quietly. He shared stories with his neighbors and kept on hunting grizzly bears until past 75 years of age.

## Isaac Slover–family man

Slover and his first wife, Peggy Louder, had seven children who survived infancy: Clarissa, John, James, Samuel, Margaret, Enos, and Enoch. Peggy died while they lived in Kentucky.

Second wife Maria Bárbara Aragón, a widow, had two or three children by the time of her marriage to Isaac, in Taos in the mid-1930s.



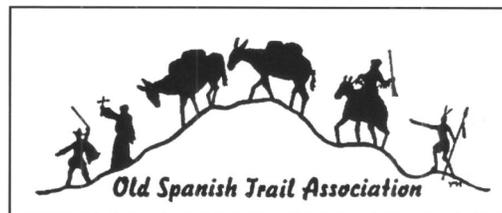
## More Information

Batman, R. 1986. *James Pattie's West; the dream and the reality*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press.

Craver, R.M. 1982. *The impact of intimacy*. El Paso: Texas Western Press, Southwestern Studies, Monograph No. 66.

Harley, R.B. 2001. Agua Mansa: first settlement on the Old Spanish Trail. *Spanish Traces* 7(3):28-33.

Smith, I.A. 1981. *Isaac Slover–free hunter 1777-1854*. In: Heritage Tales, San Bernardino Historical Society, V 4.

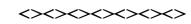


*The Old Spanish Trail Association  
researches, protects and interprets.  
<>See [www.oldsouthspanishtrail.org](http://www.oldsouthspanishtrail.org).<>*

Wayne A. Smyer of Pueblo, CO, and Don Cooper of Tacoma, WA, descendants of Isaac Slover, contributed research, family data, and review. Both are members of the Old Spanish Trail Association. –D.M. Knudson

## Isaac Slover–farmer

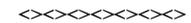
In Kentucky, Slover reared a family with his wife Peggy. When she died, Isaac took the older children to farm near today's Saline, Oklahoma. In 1819, botanist and guest Thomas Nuttall wrote of Slover's "good farm at a fine elevation."



## Isaac Slover–adventurer

He left the farm to his nearly adult sons and hiked or rode 1500 miles to Colorado in 1821, following the Arkansas River. He trapped and hunted for a newly built adobe fort named "Pueblo". It protected them from the winter and Indians.

In 1825/6, nearing age 50, he went trapping with the S. & J. Pattie group out of Taos, gathering many pelts along the Gila and Colorado drainages. Thirsty and hungry, they cached the pelts and sought relief in Mexican communities in Baja California. Here Mexican police arrested them as spies and marched them to jail in San Diego, even though they had a certificate from the Governor at Santa Fé. Slover returned to NM later.



## Isaac Slover–aging groom

Widower Slover found new love in Taos, where he married widow Maria Bárbara Aragón. He became a Catholic and a Mexican citizen in the process, as well as a doting husband. When they moved to California, in 1837, Isaac and Bárbara found friends from Taos and Santa Fé. They lived near Los Angeles for a few years, then moved and became pillars of the rural Agua Mansa settlement.

## Isaac's father, John

John set a precedent for adventure. When the Ohio River was still a major frontier, Ohio Indians wiped out 8-year-old John's family and kept him captive. At age 16 he finally escaped. He then served in the Pennsylvania Militia from 1777-82. Later, Indians nearly burned him at the stake; he escaped again and swam across the Ohio River to relative safety in Pennsylvania.

John soon moved his growing family down the Ohio from Pittsburgh to Henderson, KY. Later, he joined a Shaker community in nearby Busseron, IN. Son Isaac stayed in Henderson, rearing his young family.



## Man of several names

**Isaac Slover** (*Selovier* in French, *Sloover* in Dutch, of Huguenot religion) had an adaptable nature. His name seemed to change depending upon his environment.

Illiterate, he was recorded as:

**Cristóbal Poba** -in Taos registry at time of his wedding and his Mexican citizenship.

**Juan Cristobal (Loba)**-occasional.

**Christobal Slover** -recorded by Mormon pioneer and friend, John Brown, Sr.

**Louis Loa**-a business signature.

**Luis Slover** -Cemetery marker in San Bernardino County.

**Isaac Slover's** will, marked with his *X*, bequeathed all his property to his wife, "Maria Barbery" [Maria Barbara].

## Hospitality knows no age

The Slovers hosted many travelers in their home at the base of Cajon Pass. Judge Benjamin Hayes stopped in while on his regular rounds. He described them as *two old people who lived very independently and were most happy...*

The judge even waxed poetic:

*Doña Bárbara,  
whose house one never leaves  
without regret,  
who makes the lightest tortillas,  
wheat or corn,  
ever cheerful Doña Bárbara,  
from year to year unchanged.  
How different from many I have known.*

John Brown, Sr., a trapping friend and later a Mormon leader whom the Slovers welcomed into the L.A. basin, wrote:

*Slover was a quiet man, peaceable,  
very reserved. He would heed no  
warning nor accept any advice as to his  
[solitary] hunting methods.  
His great ambition was to kill grizzlies.*



## Age finds a terminator

Isaac Slover shot his last grizzly in October 1854 near the Old Spanish Trail, West of Cajon Pass. The seemingly dead bear revived to slap and claw him before expiring. Friends took the wounded old man down the mountain, where he died several hours later.

They buried him between his house and the limestone mountain named for him. Bárbara had the body re-buried in Agua Mansa Cemetery. (Slover Mountain has since been pulverized to make concrete for buildings and sidewalks.)

*Old Spanish Trail Profile*

# ISAAC SLOVER

**He lived on the edge as he farmed, hunted, trapped, and traveled the Old Spanish Trail.**



(José Cisneros, courtesy of Adair Margo Gallery, El Paso)

**Slover's full life took him from Pennsylvania to Henderson, KY. He farmed in Oklahoma and trekked up the Arkansas to Pueblo, CO, then to Taos, NM, and along most rivers of the Southwest. Then, via the OST, N. Branch, he moved to California for peaceful years with Doña Bárbara.**



*Old Spanish Trail Association*