

NEWSLETTER

Descendants and Travelers of the Trail Chapter

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WOLFSKILL BOULDER WITH 1831 INSCRIPTION WITH CONCHITA MARUSICH (PHOTO BY RICHARD MARUSICH)

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

I want to wish you all a very Happy New Year and wonderful new decade as we enter into 2020. Last year turned out to be a very busy year because of the “Travelers Along the Old Spanish Trail” conference that took place in Cedar City, Utah. I was very involved in the planning of the conference but was unable to attend because of an unanticipated surgery that came up shortly before Rich and I were heading out to Utah.

CONTACT US!

Questions, comments, suggestions, corrections, written contributions, contact us at

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Published By:

Jennifer Marusich Kennedy

I especially want to give my deep appreciation to Elaine Martinez who took my place in helping with the conference and the Silent Auction. Elaine also led our Descendants Chapter’s Power Point presentation, “In Our Own Words” at the conference along with chapter members Mary Anne Pentis, Lisa Valdez Bonney and Nancy Melendez. A big thank you goes to all of them for sharing their research and stories at the presentation. Our PowerPoint presentation is based on the profiles written by our members about their ancestors who traveled the Old Spanish Trail and are currently shown on the OSTA website. If you haven’t seen them, here is the link to these very interesting profiles: <https://oldspanishtrail.org/profiles>

Rich and I were very sad that we missed the conference because there were so many wonderful speakers that we wanted to hear.

But the biggest disappointment was missing the field trip to the Old Spanish Trail historical sites led by Al Matheson. Elaine gives a wonderful description of that field trip in her article in this newsletter. Rich and I were looking forward to again visiting the Wolfskill Boulder located a mile off a dirt road up in the forest north of Cedar City, Utah. The numbers 1831 are inscribed on the boulder which sits hidden among bushes and near a hillside covered with lava rocks and petroglyphs. It is believed that the large rock dates from the trail-blazing expedition over the Old Spanish Trail led by William Wolfskill, my great-great-grandfather in 1830-1831.

Rich and I first saw the boulder in 2007 when Al Matheson and his wife, Barbara, took us into the forest and showed us this artifact from long ago. It was such a thrill to see the old boulder that was like a message from my great-great-grandfather.

It was during this trip to Cedar City that Rich and I fell in love with the Old Spanish Trail and I decided to write a book about William Wolfskill. I know that so many of us have had similar experiences that draw us into researching our ancestors and learning about genealogy.

I hope that many of you will be inspired to share stories about your ancestors in future Descendants & Travelers of the Trail newsletters. Please email me at conrik1@aol.com if you would like to submit a story for our next newsletter.

Here’s wishing you and your family a happy and healthy 2020.

See you on the Trail,

Conchita Marusich

President, Descendants & Travelers of the Trail Chapter

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE “TRAVELERS ALONG THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL” CONFERENCE IN CEDAR CITY, UTAH

By Elaine Martinez, Ventura California

In October of 2019, I had the opportunity to attend the Old Spanish Trail Association National Conference in Cedar City, Utah. For all of us who are OSTA - Descendants & Travelers of the Trail Chapter members, we are bound by a love of history, genealogy and the dedication to preserving the trail. I can only imagine how our ancestors would be in awe of today’s interest in keeping their memories alive and their contributions recorded for future generations. Throughout the conference, there were many interesting sessions and field trips scheduled. I wish I could have attended them all. Following are a few my own highlights:

DISCOVERING THE DESCENDANTS AND TRAVELERS OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL PRESENTATION

The theme of this year’s conference was “*Travelers Along the Old Spanish Trail*”. Our Descendants & Travelers of the Trail, Chapter President, Conchita Marusich, took advantage of the perfect opportunity to pull together a presentation highlighting some of our own ancestors who traveled the trail during the historic period between 1829 and 1848. The presentation, “Discovering the Descendants and Travelers of the Old Spanish Trail” covered the lives of 12 people who made the arduous journey between New Mexico and California. The following is a list of ancestor names along with the descendant names who worked with Conchita to pull together the presentation.

DISCOVERING THE DESCENDANTS AND TRAVELERS OF THE TRAIL

(As told by the members of the Descendants & Travelers of the Trail Chapter)

ANCESTOR	DESCENDANT	RELATIONSHIP
Ruperta Martinez	Elaine Martinez	Great-Great-Grandmother
Antonio Maria “Chonito” Atencio	Leonard F. Trujillo	Great-Great-Grandfather
Juan Felipe and Ysabel Peña/Armijo	Cecelia Peña	Great-Great-Grandparents
Juan Felipe and Ysabel Peña/Armijo Maria Anastasia Baca	Richard Lyon	Great-Great-Grandparents
William Workman	David Fallowfield	1 st Cousin 5x Removed
William Wolfskill	Conchita Marusich	Great-Great-Grandfather
Jose Antonio Rafael Garcia de Noriega	Don Garcia	Great Great Grandfather
Hipolito de Jesus Espinosa	Mary Anne Pentis	Great-Great-Grandfather
Lorenzo Truillo	Nancy Melendez	Desc. of Gertrudes Peña, Lorenzo Trujillo’s 2 nd wife
Santiago Chacon	Lisa Valdez Bonney	Great-Great-Grandfather



SHANANDOAH ANDERSON FROM THE SHIVWITS BAND OF SOUTHERN PAIUTE, UTAH

OLD SPANISH TRAIL SEEN THROUGH NATIVE SOUTHERN PAIUTE EYES PRESENTATION

Shanandoah Anderson, a Cultural Consultant on Native American arts, crafts, people, places and culture from the Shivwits Band of Southern Paiute, Utah, presented the “Old Spanish Trail Seen Through Native Southern Paiute Eyes.” Ms. Anderson’s presentation was interesting, poignant, and educational for those of us who have not yet heard from the many voices of descendants of Native Americans using sections of the Old Spanish Trail. Shanandoah discussed how the influx of travelers from Spain/New Mexico brought significant impacts that forever altered where and how the Southern Paiutes live today. She is dedicated to ensuring that future generations of her people keep their cultural traditions alive.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE “TRAVELERS ALONG THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL” CONFERENCE IN CEDAR CITY, UTAH (CONTINUED)

SATURDAY EVENING DINNER, FLAUTIST, AND SILENT AUCTION

Sometimes the best laid plans have a way of getting turned upside down. Hats off to the OSTA Conference Committee members who were able to find a way to cater dinner, locate an alternative site, and provide entertainment due to a last-minute change. The food was delicious, and we were thoroughly entertained by Gary Tom, of the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, and who came dressed in his extraordinary, handmade Native American attire. Not only was he quite the comedian too, he brought with him a selection of flutes and played beautiful melodies for us. I was mesmerized as he explained the differences of each instrument in terms of sound and technique. After dinner was over, Nelson Miller and Lynn Brittner launched the final moments of the successful silent (not-so-silent) auction. Nearly \$1,000 was raised for OSTA. I was the lucky winner of four bottles of Twisted Cedar wine, produced and bottled by the Cedar Band of Paiutes. Only one bottle remains, but now I know where to find replenishments the next time I travel to the beautiful state of Utah!

SUNDAY FIELD TRIP WITH AL MATHESON TO OST SILHOUETTES, OST LOCATIONS AND WOLFSKILL BOULDER

On a brisk and early Sunday morning, Al Matheson led a group of folks on a caravan field trip to view the black silhouettes of mules and travelers that he artfully created and worked to have installed along portions of the trail. They are visible from the highway and quite impressive, especially during the autumn season when the black silhouettes are underscored by the golden grass. We stopped at a spring located in Parowan, a central OST resting stop between Santa Fe and San Bernardino where a park exists today with signage describing the history of the area. We continued our way in carpools up to a canyon area where OST travelers and horses funneled through that point. Farther up the road, we piled in 4WD's to an OST campsite and did more exploring. Al, who I was dependent upon to find my way back to civilization, took us on treks hopping over cold water streams, hacking through brittle bushes, and climbing up boulder falls over unmarked trails known only to Al, it seemed. We were rewarded with incredible petroglyphs, and the most amazing very large, 5-toed dinosaur footprint I've ever seen. Farther down one of the boulder fields that we had been exploring, there were more petroglyphs, and finally, the Wolfskill Boulder named after William Wolfskill, Conchita's ancestor, with the date 1831 inscribed among other markings. Al's followers that day all agreed that it was an incredible outing!



**PETROGLYPH ON LAVA ROCK
FROM AL MATHESON FIELD
TRIP**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Elaine Martinez's great-great-grandmother was born in Plaza Blanca, New Mexico, located north of Abiquiu. Her story is featured in one of the profiles on the Old Spanish Trail Association website at <https://oldspanishtrail.org/ruperta-martinez>

DISPATCH FROM THE FIELD, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO TRIP, 12-19-2019

Sent by Don Garcia from his iPad en route to Santa Fe, New Mexico



OLD SPANISH TRAIL SIGN LOCATED ON SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO STREET

(PHOTO BY CECELIA PEÑA)

The sun is out, the sky is so clear, everything you look at and observe has a magical glow about it. In reality this is the Land of Enchantment! The sharp tinge to the early morning air as reminds one that you are over a mile in altitude and it is December. A short walk outside brings a sense of reality. The smell of piñon smoke, from folks heating their homes by burning wood for home heat or cooking morning breakfast! It is a wonderful feeling to just be alive! As you might imagine I am experiencing a feeling of a "native Boy, home to find and my roots and ancestors".

Our flight from Seattle to Albuquerque had us up at 0300 hours with a 0700 hours departure. Us consisted of Lolita, my wife and myself. Our flight plan took us by way of Oakland California. We experienced a four-hour layover which gave us time to stretch our legs. Is my perception, but both the airplane seats have shrunk and the person sitting next to you has become your new Siamese twin. It's like we were tied together at the hips, an experience that is either good or ill, depending on your newly formed partner!

The purpose of this trip is for Lolita and myself to get out of Dodge (this meaning Seattle, WA, in the winter season)". The dark and cloudy skies have an effect on my poor Dear! So here we are, ready to soak up sunshine, food, historical culture and reestablish old friendships.

The possibility of plenty of sunshine, looks like a given, with predictions of perfect weather in the foreseeable future. I could not have planned this trip better!

As for food, we will head for the Atrisco Cafe, located in the De Vargas Mall in Santa Fe. An eating experience everyone should partake when in this area. One could not go wrong on anyone of the items featured on their menu. The only drawback is that you have to watch the time of day you dine out there, if you are looking for quick service. But whatever the wait, if it happens, is well worth the time spent. It might even turn into a double vodka daiquiri afternoon. Something my "dear wife" would be there to curb my passions.

The cultural historical trail will lead me to various Genealogical libraries and associates, that over time I have become obsessed in digging up both truth and fictional events on the lives and struggles of the once, locally semi-prominent Garcia de Noriega family line. * Never dull, and it keeps me from sleeping in the afternoons and you meet a panorama of local characters.

Those of you who are former New Mexicans will relate to my emotions when it involves returning home and a possible encounter with old classmates, family members, and friends. One has to take time to realize that time really has moved on, the events and situations of all those you are concerned with.

I will close, with this prayer for you: Keep well, keep the faith and keep in touch.

Don Perfecto. aka. Don Garcia

***EDITOR'S NOTE:** Don Garcia's great-great-grandfather was Jose Antonio Rafael Garcia de Noriega who was born in the Rio Arriba area of New Mexico. His story is featured in one of the profiles on the Old Spanish Trail Association website at <https://oldspanishtrail.org/jose-antonio-rafael-garcia-de-noriega>

THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL: TALES OF ITS NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TRAVELERS

By Cecelia Peña, Oakland, California

The Descendants Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail, in partnership with the Peña Adobe Historical Society, is presenting “The Old Spanish Trail: Tales of its Northern California Travelers.”

Please join us at our Open House, Saturday, March 7, from 11am-1pm at the Peña Adobe, Peña Adobe Rd., Vacaville, CA, <http://www.penaadobe.org>

Come as a guest, or if you would like to participate, please let Cecelia Peña know: ceceliapena@hotmail.com

We are in the beginning stages of creating our program.



NESTORA PEÑA AND APOLONIA VACA ON THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL, 1841

(ILLUSTRATION BY ANN KING)



THE PEÑA ADOBE, WITH JOHN REID WOLFSKILL VALENCIA ORANGE IN FOREGROUND

(PHOTO BY CECELIA PEÑA)

Cecelia Peña and Darlene Coombs-Stewart, both 5th generation descendants of 1841 travelers, Juan Felipe and Ysabel Peña, will be sharing their family stories and those of Peña’s partner, Juan Manuel Vaca (Vacaville, California’s namesake). Conchita and Rich Marusich will be discussing Conchita’s book, *In Search of William Wolfskill, Journey to Find the Legacy*, which describes Wolfskill’s trail-blazing expedition over the Old Spanish Trail in 1830-31.

The Marusich’s will also be sharing about Conchita’s great-great uncle, John Reid Wolfskill and his contribution to the agriculture of Solano County. In fact, you can see in person the Valencia orange tree he gave to the Peñas in the 1860s. It is still producing!

The mission of the Peña Adobe Historical Society, a (501)(c)(3) corporation, is to preserve the history of the Peña Adobe and provide educational and cultural services to the community. The Peña Adobe, California Historical Landmark #534, is the oldest restored structure in Solano County.

EDITOR’S NOTES:

Cecelia Peña’s great-great-aunt, Maria Nestora (Peña) Rivera, came over the Trail in 1841 as a small child. Her story is featured in one of the profiles on the Old Spanish Trail Association website at <https://oldspanishtrail.org/maria-nestora-pena-rivera>

Conchita Marusich’s great-great-grandfather, William Wolfskill left Abiquiu, New Mexico in 1830 and arrived in El Pueblo de Los Angeles in 1831. His story is also featured in one of the profiles on the Old Spanish Trail Association website at <https://oldspanishtrail.org/william-wolfskill>