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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District

other names/site number 26CK3848

2. Location

street & number From California border to Arizona across southern Nevada, through Las Vegas

not for publication

city or town Las Vegas

vicinity X

state Nevada (NV) code 003 county Clark zip code N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

John J. Douglas 6/25/01
Signature of certifying official Date

Reservoir Officer, Bureau of Land Management
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald M. Gunn 13 April 2001
Signature of commenting or other official Date

Nevada SHPB
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Sarah D. Ripe 8/22/01
(6x) Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> 5 </u>	<u> 4 </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 5 </u>	<u> 4 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Transportation Sub: Pedestrian-related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Not in Use Sub: _____

 Recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 N/A

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____

roof _____

walls _____

other in steep terrain, some rock shoring on outer edge of road

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets).
See Continuation Sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- a** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b** removed from its original location.
- c** a birthplace or a grave.
- d** a cemetery.
- e** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f** a commemorative property.
- g** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

- Transportation
- Exploration/Settlement
- Archaeology/Historical

Period of Significance 1844-1857

Significant Dates _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above) _____

Cultural Affiliation Euroamerican

Architect/Builder _____

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation Sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)
See Continuation Sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Harry Reid Center for Environmental Studies (UNLV), Nevada State Library and Archives, Nevada State Historical Society, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 45.75 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Terri McBride, Historic Preservation Specialist/Archaeologist, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, in collaboration with Stanton D. Rolf, District Archaeologist, BLM, Las Vegas Field Office

organization Bureau of Land Management Las Vegas Field Office date April 2001

street & number 4765 Vegas Drive telephone 702-647-5000

city or town Las Vegas state NV zip code 89108

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Bureau of Land Management, Las Vegas District Office

street & number 4765 W. Vegas Drive telephone (702) 647-5000

city or town Las Vegas state NV zip code 89108

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District Clark County, Nevada

7. Narrative Description

The “Spanish Trail,” as named by explorer John C. Frémont in 1844, was rooted in the Spanish Empire’s interest in establishing an inland route between New Mexico and California, but ultimately it was used by a diverse group of people with varying interests. These individuals were European, Mexican, American, Mormon, and Native American. Commerce was the motivating force behind establishing the Spanish Trail. However, the original commerce activities developed and diversified, and through time, the trail functioned in additional capacities, later becoming known as the “Mormon Road,” due to the Mormon emigration along the route. It served as a route of communication, a “transmitter of culture, of language, of religion, of political ideas” (Sanchez 1999:12), as well as a corridor for the movement of people and livestock across the Greater American Southwest. Today, the route is popularly known as the “Old Spanish Trail,” as shown by the presence of Old Spanish Trail Association chapters in four western states. The road covered approximately 152 miles in southern Nevada and crossed 19 townships of land in the state. This nomination addresses the Nevada section of the historic route as mapped by Frémont.

Frémont’s 1844 journey along the Old Spanish Trail was the first one during which truly scientific observations were made of the environment and topography in the Great Basin (d’Azevedo 1986:1; Warren 1974:156-157). Frémont was also responsible for dubbing his trace across the southern region of the Far West the “Spanish Trail.” Before the distribution of his map, this route had been referred to as “El Camino de California” or “El Camino de Nuevo Mexico” depending on where an individual was based (NPS 2000:5). Because Frémont’s report to Congress was widely distributed, his route was the one that became the most popularly used and recognized as the “Spanish Trail.” Further, Frémont’s map was used to establish the route of the ensuing Mormon Road for wagon freight traffic and emigration between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles (Warren 1974:157).

From Littlefield, Arizona, the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road followed the Virgin River to Mesquite, Nevada (immediately west of the Arizona border), at 1610 feet above sea level. The route continued along the Virgin River corridor and over Mormon Mesa (highest point is 2200 feet in elevation) to the springs of the Muddy River, near the town of Moapa. The route stretched more than 50 miles west across a vast, waterless expanse (known as the “*jornada del muerte*,” or day’s journey of death) between the springs at the Muddy to Las Vegas, and from Las Vegas (the location of a spring and a naturally grassy floodplain), the Spanish Trail meandered southwest, passed by Cottonwood Spring (a resting area for thirsty travelers), ascended over Potosi Pass (5493 feet above sea level) in the Spring Mountains, and dropped down into Pahump Valley (2650 feet in elevation). The trail then entered California over Emigrant Pass and Bitter Springs, continuing on to San Bernardino and ultimately the former pueblo of Los Angeles.

Myhrer and Escobar (1992:2) note that the average distance between springs in southern Nevada along the trail is 22 miles. The greatest climb confronted by travelers moving west on the trail was the 2000-foot ascent from Cottonwood Spring to Mountain Spring, and the greatest descent was the 2500-foot drop from Mountain Springs to Stump Springs; most of the route stays within the 1610-2650-foot elevation range in southern Nevada. The *jornada del muerte* between Moapa and Las Vegas, the long waterless stretch of desert, was relatively level in elevation, but was cut with multitudes of small washes, probably making this leg of the journey even more excruciating. Summers in southern Nevada are long and hot, with an average temperature of 87° F, and the mild winters average 46.5° F. Average annual precipitation is four inches, occurring mostly in

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late summer cloudbursts.

Certain segments of Frémont's route of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road in Nevada still maintain historic integrity in terms of association, feeling, location, and setting. Other segments have been either totally disturbed due to urban development in the Las Vegas Valley, or partially disturbed due to linear construction projects (power transmission lines) and/or recreational driving activities. Historically-intact segments are included as contributing elements of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District. Due to the nature of the resource (a linear feature created by years of use, not a designed one), aspects of integrity such as design, workmanship, and materials generally do not apply.

Moving east-west along the trail corridor, the segment of the trail that travels up Virgin Hill to Mormon Mesa (near the Virgin River approximately 50 miles northeast of Las Vegas), and across the mesa itself maintains historic integrity. The portion of this Mormon Mesa segment that climbs up Virgin Hill, a rocky, sinuous, 360-foot vertical ascent for 0.6 miles, has integrity of materials, association, feeling, location, and setting. The wagon traces are intact and some historic artifacts probably lost off wagons bouncing their way up the steep incline, are found along this portion. Some rock shoring is still visible on the uppermost, steepest section of the wagon road. One small area of the Virgin Hill portion is in danger of eroding completely away.

The trail emerges onto the eastern edge of Mormon Mesa and continues generally west. Except for two 0.125-mile segments disturbed by modern vehicular traffic, the surveyed trail traces on Mormon Mesa maintain integrity in terms of association, feeling, location, and setting, for an additional 3.67 miles. Very few historic artifacts associated with the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road were noted on Mormon Mesa; however, linear abrasion marks were noted on a small exposed part of bedrock, indicating wear by metal wagon wheels. The total length of the Mormon Mesa segment is 4.25 miles.

Jumping west about 60 miles, to the base of the Spring Mountains and the western edge of Las Vegas Valley, the Blue Diamond segment of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road also maintains integrity in terms of association, feeling, and location. Integrity of setting has been somewhat compromised by the traffic on the two-lane highway (State Highway 160); however, it could be argued that this natural travel corridor, used since prehistoric times, is exactly where the modern highway should be located, and gives perhaps a modernized version of the same feeling of traffic "on the trail" during the nineteenth century. Two portions of the Blue Diamond segment were reevaluated (previously determined as eligible for inclusion to the NRHP in 1989 by the Nevada SHPO) for archaeological remains and NRHP eligibility. One historically-intact portion begins south of Cottonwood Spring, 0.4 miles from the concrete Old Spanish Trail commemorative marker (erected during Nevada's Centennial in 1964 by the Boy Scouts), and continues alongside Cottonwood Wash for 3.4 miles. A historic camp site was noted adjacent to the wagon traces. The second section that maintains integrity in association, feeling, and location, is reached by following a modern jeep road southwest for 1.2 miles (near the western endpoint of the first intact section). This section is 0.25 miles long and is at the foot of the Spring Mountains. The total length of the Blue Diamond segment is 5.25 miles.

In the Pahrump Valley, near the California state line, a short segment of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road was evaluated at Stump Spring. This was also a reevaluation of previously-surveyed road by Myhrer et al. (1990). Beginning on the two-track road near the now-dry Stump Spring, the relatively undisturbed road travels southeast for approximately 400 feet, then turns north up a small spring mound, meandering northeast across the

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spring mound formations before leveling out on the flat Pahrump Valley floor. The total length of surveyed road (relatively undisturbed) for this project is 0.55 mile; no historic artifacts were noted along this segment. This segment maintain integrity in relation to association, feeling, setting, and location.

Contributing elements, of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District, categorized by segments.

Segment Name	Length of Segment	USGS Topo Map	Description
Mormon Mesa	4.25 miles	Overton NW, and Overton NE, NV 7.5' Quads	2 contributing elements (0.6 mi. and 3.67 mi.); 2 non-contributing elements (both 0.125 mi. long)
Blue Diamond	5.25	Blue Diamond, and Cottonwood Pass, NV 7.5' Quads	2 contributing elements (3.4 mi. and 0.25 mi.); 2 non-contributing elements (0.4 mi. and 1.2 mi.)
Stump Spring	0.55	Stump Spring, NV-CA 7.5' Quads	1 contributing element, 0.55 mi.

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8. Summary of Significance

The Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road property is regionally significant under National Register Criterion A, in the areas of Transportation and Exploration/Settlement. In terms of significance for the State of Nevada, the trail is significant under the Transportation Research Theme, and the Exploration and Settlement Sub-theme; see the *Nevada Comprehensive Preservation Plan* (White et. al 1991). The Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road was the first transportation corridor used by Euroamericans across the state of Nevada. Segments of the road which maintain historical integrity and show physical remains of the trail are significant under National Register Criterion D, for historical archaeology. Much of the history of settlement and early travel in southern Nevada can be directly tied to the Spanish Trail and the widespread publication of John C. Frémont's 1844 route (he was responsible for the term "Spanish Trail") across the region. The Mormon Battalion traveled over the route from Salt Lake City to San Bernardino and back in 1847-1848. Subsequently thousands of Mormons used the route to travel to the Mormon mission in San Bernardino (established in 1851) and missionary stations in the Pacific. Then in 1855, the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City decided to capitalize on the well-known rest stop of Las Vegas along Frémont's route, and establish a mission there. Thus, the "Mormon Road" as the trail came to be known, was established in 1847 through the initial expedition over the trail by the Mormon Battalion, and saw continual usage through the abandonment of the Mormon mission at Las Vegas in 1857, and afterward. The Mormon mission at Las Vegas was the first Euroamerican settlement in southern Nevada, thus making it a significant site in the early history of the southern Nevada region. The settlement at Las Vegas would not have materialized without the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road corridor adjacent to the natural springs there (listed in the National Register in 1978 as the Las Vegas Springs).

John C. Frémont's 1844 expedition over the Old Spanish Trail, which resulted in a widely distributed map of the route and much of the Great Basin, is significant. This expedition established Frémont's reputation as a nationally-known explorer. Because the map was available in 1845, that year was the beginning of steady wagon traffic. Although the route that is being nominated has its roots in a pack trail that traversed the Greater American Southwest nearly 20 years prior to Frémont's expedition and the establishment of the Mormon Road, wagon traces and associated artifacts from the post-1845 era are what remain of the trail today. Some segments of the property are significant under National Register Criterion D, in the area of historical archaeology, for the potential to yield further information important to the history of the region. Archaeological material such as wagon hardware, animal accoutrements including iron horseshoes, etc., and trash dumps exist along certain segments. The wagon traces themselves exist as linear features cut into the earth by the continual use by wagons, carrying mostly freight.

BACKGROUND

The Spanish Trail was one of the earliest routes between the interior of North American and the California coast to be used by Europeans and Americans (Hague 1978:139). Prior to the arrival of the Spanish colonists and missionaries, the trail was used by the Hopi, Mojave, and Chumash Indians of Santa Barbara, trading items between the Pacific coast and the Four Corners. In particular, the aboriginal knowledge of water sources along these ancient trade routes enabled trapper Jedediah Smith (Warren 1974:48) in 1826 and others to

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make the journey across the desert Southwest. Without the assistance of Native American guides, many of these first expeditions would not have been successful. Therefore the discovered routes naturally incorporated portions of ancient trade routes.

During the Spanish colonial period (1542-1821) in the American Southwest, the Spanish Empire was competing for control over resources with the British, French, and Russian monarchies. One strategy Spain attempted was to link its northernmost colonies, New Mexico and California, to assert the Spanish presence in the American West. In 1776, missionaries attempted to establish a route between Santa Fe and the mission at Monterey. Fathers Dominguez and Escalante left Santa Fe for the California coast, only to loop back to Santa Fe after meandering over the Colorado Plateau in Colorado and Utah for months. The same year, Father Francisco Garcés left the colony at Sonora (now in northern Mexico), to establish a route between Sonora and Los Angeles. He was successful in reaching the pueblo of Los Angeles. However, it was not until Antonio Armijo's trading expedition in 1829-1830 that the missionaries' routes were linked to form a passageway across the entire southwestern desert region.

After Mexico won its independence from Spain (1821), Gobernador Chavéz of New Mexico envisioned a profitable trade between Santa Fe and California (Lawrence 1931:27). The aim was to bring horses and mules overland from California to sell in the American market (often they were traded to Santa Fe Trail traders to sell back east). Chavéz' idea of a lucrative trade can be seen as a catalyst for the initial use of the Old Spanish Trail.

New Mexican Antonio Armijo is an important personage in the story of the Old Spanish Trail. He and his men constituted the first commercial caravan and the first Europeans to make the entire journey from Santa Fe to Los Angeles (Warren 1974:5). Antonio Armijo was also responsible for tying the Dominguez-Escalante route and Father Garcés' route of 1776 together, forming links of a 1,200-mile route between the two Mexican territories of New Mexico and California. The official report filed by Armijo, printed in the *Registro Oficial del Gobierno de Los Estado-Unidos Mexicanos* on June 19, 1830, states that the group of about sixty men left Abiquiu, New Mexico on November 8, 1829, arriving at the mission at San Gabriel, California on February 3, 1831.

Armijo's journey was the first commercial group excursion across the Southwest to the coast, but legitimate commerce in tradeable items was not the sole function of the trail (Warren 1974:86). Slave trading (by Utes and New Mexicans), emigration, horse thieving, and later, mail transport were also served by the route. The trading activities that were the major force behind travel during the early era of transportation on the Old Spanish Trail essentially ended in 1848 (Warren 1974:84) after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and cessation of Mexican lands.

In the Mojave desert region, American mountain men established their presence early on, between 1826 and 1831 (Casebier 1981:285). Mountain man Jedediah Smith was the first documented American to enter California overland from the east in 1826. He traveled along portions of the later-established Old Spanish Trail, and was also the first to chart a map of the geography of the Rocky Mountains and the Great Basin (Hafen and Hafen 1954:109). Kit Carson also traveled the Old Spanish Trail several times, and may have assisted in leading Frémont's 1844 expedition along the route.

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The mountain men moving through the region along the trail often traveled along the southern route, following the Virgin, Colorado, and Mojave river corridors to capitalize from the nearby water sources as they moved large caravans of pack animals back to the market in Santa Fe. However, several of these men also moved stolen horse herds from the California *ranchos* through the interior Nevada desert in efforts to thwart pursuing authorities. One of these routes, used by “some of the west’s most famous horse thieves, some of whom were also the west’s most famous mountain men,” (Warren 1974:173) was later traced by Frémont and thereafter named the Spanish Trail.

OLD SPANISH TRAIL/MORMON ROAD: 1844-1857

Frémont’s Expedition

Captain John C. Frémont first explored the Great Basin in 1843-1844 for the U.S. Topographic Engineers. This expedition established his reputation as an important American explorer (Elliot 1987:45). Not only was he the first to scientifically map and describe the Great Basin, but a greatly excited Congress printed 20,000 copies of his route map, many more than were usually printed of topographic survey maps (Warren, personal communication 2000). The period of significance for this nomination is 1844-1857, beginning with Frémont’s journey over the route, and ending with the abandonment of the Mormon mission at Las Vegas in 1857.

Frémont chose his guides well for his expedition. He hand-picked such experienced mountain men, scouts, and travelers as Thomas “Broken Hand” Fitzpatrick, Kit Carson, and Alex Goday, a Creole Frenchman from St. Louis who had trapped with many a mountain man, including Carson, Old Bill Williams, Isaac Slover, and others (see Hafen 1965:369; Warren 1974:footnote 78). Kit Carson’s prior experience on the Old Spanish Trail had perhaps enabled Frémont to predict “between us and the Colorado River we were aware that the country was extremely poor in grass, and scarce for water, there being many *jornadas*, or long stretches of forty to sixty miles, without water, where the road was marked by bones of animals” (Frémont 1966:259 [1845]). Frémont also alluded to interrogating people on the trail about the route they followed; he notes that he heard several conflicting accounts, naming landmarks that his party never did encounter, indicating that these travelers were using different routes from each other, and ultimately, different routes than the one Frémont used to travel to Salt Lake (Warren 1974:159). This suggests that travelers in the area used various routes to and from California; this nomination considers Frémont’s route.

On April 30, 1844, Frémont and his men entered southern Nevada along the Amargosa route of the Spanish Trail (close to Armijo’s route) and camped at Stump Spring. The expedition continued on to Mountain Springs and Cottonwood Springs in the Spring Mountains. Three days after leaving Stump Spring (May 3rd), Frémont’s groups arrived at the “camping ground” at Las Vegas (Frémont 1966:266 [1845]). Frémont noted the excellent quality of the springs there (“good, clean, deep”) and grazing opportunities. The following day, May 4th, the group began the long *jornada de muerte* walking for 16 hours across the 55-mile waterless stretch of desert to the Muddy River. Either Fuentes, a hapless traveler encountered near the Nevada border who had lost everything and everyone in his freight party to raiding Native Americans, or Kit Carson, had to inform Frémont

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of this in advance, for they were the only two who had previously traveled in this region. During the group’s stay at the Muddy, Frémont had several interchanges with Southern Paiutes, some confrontational (Frémont 1966:266 [1845]). They left the Muddy River May 6th, marched 20 miles across the Mormon Mesa to the Virgin River, and followed it to the present Arizona border, camping along its banks over the next three days. In his report to Congress, Frémont notes that the group lost the “caravan road” in the sandy alluvial floodplain of the Virgin River, having to instead follow a Native American foot trail along the river banks; the following day (May 9th) his scouts found “a convenient ford in the river, and discovered the Spanish trail on the other side” (Frémont 1966:268 [1845]). Again, this suggests that Frémont was following a pre-existing trace across the interior of Nevada. Frémont’s expedition left southern Nevada on May 10th, 1844.

Frémont’s 1844 journey along the Old Spanish Trail was the first one during which truly scientific observations were made of the environment and topography; in fact, it was during this expedition that Frémont had the revelation that the interior deserts between the Rockies and the Sierra were part of a large, self-enclosed drainage unit thereafter named the Great Basin (d’Azevedo 1986:1; Warren 1974:156-157). Frémont was also responsible for dubbing his trace across the southern region of the Far West the “Spanish Trail.” Before the distribution of his map, this route had been referred to as “El Camino de California” or “El Camino de Nuevo Mexico” depending on where an individual was based (NPS 2000:5). Because Frémont’s report was widely distributed, his route was the one that became the most popularly used and recognized as the “Spanish Trail.” Today the route is popularly known as the Old Spanish Trail. Further, Frémont’s report greatly enhanced the American public’s understanding of the West, and established the route of the upcoming Mormon Road for wagon freight traffic and emigration between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles (Warren 1974:157).

Distances between camps in southern Nevada, according to Frémont (1966 [1845]).

Beginning Location	Destination	Mileage
Resting Spring, CA	Stump Spring, NV	24 miles
Stump Spring	Mountain Springs	15 miles
Mountain Springs	Cottonwood Springs	12 miles
Cottonwood Springs	Las Vegas	18 miles
Las Vegas	Muddy River “California Crossing”	57 miles (<i>jornada de muerte</i>)
Muddy River	Virgin River	18 miles
1st Virgin River camp	2nd Virgin River camp	28 miles
2nd Virgin River camp	Santa Clara River, Utah	25 miles

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During the years 1848-1850, the majority of the traffic on the Old Spanish Trail was directly or indirectly related to the Gold Rush to California (Warren 1974:176). The Spanish Trail was used as a winter route to California, as well as a freight road to get provisions from the coast to Salt Lake City, where forty-niners were stocking up on provisions before their journey across the Great American Desert. Again, Frémont's map was integral to the continued use of this trail—his maps were readily available before maps of the more northerly routes across Utah, Nevada, and northern California were available to eastern gold-seekers (Warren 1974:177).

The Mormon Road

No wagons were reported as ever getting through that way, but a trail had been traveled through that barren desert country for perhaps a hundred years and the same could be easily broadened into a wagon road.

--Death Valley forty-niner W. L. Manly, on the rumors of a little-known southern route to California (Koenig 1984:23)

The first Mormon excursion over the Old Spanish Trail included Porter Rockwell and Jefferson Hunt, who marched with the Mormon Battalion to San Diego in the fall of 1847. It took less than three months for the group and 135 horses and mules, along with a single wagon, to return to Salt Lake City from San Bernardino.

The Old Spanish Trail was desirable as an alternate route to the northern Emigrant Trail, made infamous by the Donner Party. The Old Spanish Trail was used by emigrants traveling in the winter months, when the Sierra Nevada was virtually impassable. In the fall of 1848, just months after the Battalion successfully brought a wagon along the route, forty-eight wagons traveled on the road, and one year later, over two hundred made it over the trail to California. Mormon leadership viewed the route as a freight corridor, within which people and supplies could move between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City. The Lower Colorado region in extreme southern Nevada also held potential for permanent settlement.

For the Mormons and others, this region generally held interest for several reasons: the potential navigation of the Colorado, the mild climate and irrigable lands, the minerals ranging in value from silver to salt, and its proximity to a year-round route between California and Utah. Mormons looked to this region for a seaport, as a freight and emigrant route, and for missions and settlements as part of their quest for political self-determination, isolation and protection, and economic independence and survival.

--Smith 1978:29

As early as 1850, Mormon leaders were eyeing San Bernardino as a possible mission, at a time when *Angelenos* were ready for anyone to establish an "outpost" on the fringes of their large center, in hopes of curtailing the frequent raids by thieves (Gough 1999:24). The main route to this burgeoning Mormon center became known as the "Mormon Corridor," or the "Mormon Road."

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The springs at Las Vegas were a well-known resource to anyone who traveled the route, as the oasis provided some of the best water along the long, dry route. In 1851, a Mormon named Mr. Chorpening received a contract with the U.S. government to transport U.S. mail between northern Utah and San Bernardino. Mail carriers stopped at the springs on their route. At the Las Vegas Springs, archaeological investigations show a small adobe structure that may have been built by Chorpening, although that fact has not been determined definitively.

Noting the significance of this transportation corridor, the U.S. Congress approved \$25,000 in 1854 to be spent on developing a military road from Salt Lake City to eastern California. This road utilized the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road route, with minor modifications. This marked the beginning of major freight traffic between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City.

In 1855, Deseret's (the name of the U.S. provisional state organized by Mormons in 1849) President Brigham Young announced that the Southern Indian Mission would be expanded, and William Bringhamurst and others were sent to establish a post at "Vegas Springs." They chose this location because Mormon leadership felt they could capitalize from travelers stopping at the springs as a resting area and water hole, in addition to the relatively large Native American population in place for religious conversion. On June 14, the brethren arrived at Las Vegas (Jensen 1926:131). Within four days of their arrival (after walking some 440-plus miles across desert terrain), the brothers were surveying for the location of their fort, laying out agricultural plots (2.5 acres each) and garden plots (0.25 acres each) designated for each member of the mission, planting seeds, and creating a "water sect" of men overseeing water control and usage, while five missionaries departed for the Colorado River to explore possibilities for navigation and to meet the Native American groups in the area (Jensen 1926:134).

The organized settlement at Las Vegas must have been a welcome sight for weary Euroamerican travelers on the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road. Not only did the mission provide some protection from hostile Native Americans, but the brethren would offer fields for grazing and provisions, in addition to horse-shoeing services (Jensen 1926:218). Many of these necessities cost money, and if the emigrés' animals got into the gardens at night, the travelers would be charged accordingly.

Many missionaries on their way to missions or returning homeward passed through Las Vegas during the occupation of the mission there. A group of missionaries from Pacific Islands, a single missionary from the Siam mission, many from the California missions (including the President of the San Bernardino mission, Amasa Lyman), a group of missionaries from Australia, and two groups of missionaries returning from mission in the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands were all documented as visiting the Las Vegas mission. Other noteworthy travelers documented as staying over at the mission included a herd of 500 cattle on its way to California, two scientists, one Englishman and a Frenchman (during their journey through the desert region, collecting plant and mineral specimens), and three "circus or showmen" (Jensen 1926). There were many other travelers through the area. An estimation of total visitors documented at the mission during the 21-month Mormon occupation shows 260-350 Native American visitors and 350-800 (conservatively) Euroamerican visitors. Out of the Euroamerican visitors, roughly a third (33-38%) of those were traveling east from California (most of these were Mormons returning to Utah). Thus, roughly 2/3 of the travelers that rested at the Las Vegas mission were making their way to California.

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Timidness and fear in the local Paiute bands caused by years of slave-capture and animosity by travelers emigrating through the area on the Old Spanish Trail are noted by brother John Steele in a letter to Elder George A. Smith. Steele writes, "There is a first-rate spirit among the Lamanites [Native Americans]... some of them have come into camp rather suspiciously, as they have been shot at and drove away from camps of the passing emigrants who have been on the road for years; they will show us the bullet holes and marks they have received from white men and tell us they will try and forget it, although their brothers have been killed, etc." This passage is telling in a few respects. First, it shows a willingness on the part of the Paiutes in the area to forge friendly relations with the resident Mormons, possibly driven by a perception on the Paiutes' behalf that the Mormons may protect them from further violence at the hands of other Euroamericans (see Kelly and Fowler 1986:386-387; Van Hoak 1998:18). This also shows compassion in the brethren at Las Vegas toward the Paiutes, a sentiment that was not shared by many contemporary Americans. Indeed, as late as 1855, the missionaries noted some uneasiness in the Paiutes due to accounts of slave capture of some Moapa Paiutes on the Muddy River "to sell to Mexican traders" (Jensen 1926:183). There was some interest expressed by the Moapa band to have missionaries come to their territory to settle because of the threat of raids on their women by Ute slavers; in September, 1856, some missionaries traveled to the Muddy River area to explore possible locations for settlements. The Las Vegas band told the Mormon brothers that they already lost many of their women to slavers, perhaps too many, "or they would have provided some of us with wives..." (Jensen 1926:188).

A steady stream of emigrants, mail carriers, wagon freight trains, and miners continued to use the springs and travel on the wagon road after the complete abandonment of the Mormon mission in 1857. In 1865, O. D. Gass and two partners re-settled the mission. They rebuilt the dilapidated mission buildings to use for a ranch, and plowed fields (Paher 1971:37).

The Mormon occupation of the region surrounding the Colorado River indirectly affected the U.S. involvement in exploring and settling the area. Reports of ambitious Mormons settling along the Colorado River and their interest in navigating the large river to the Gulf of California, led to increased federal activity toward the same goal. Thus the Army assigned a survey of the river to be completed in 1856 under the command of Lt. Joseph C. Ives (Smith 1978:33). But the impendent arrival of Johnston's Army and the Mountain Meadows Massacre in 1857 forced Mormon leadership to direct their priorities in the region differently. Thus, the Southern Indian missionaries were reassigned this time to protect Mormon wagon trains along the Mormon Road from Indian "harassments," and eventually were recalled to Salt Lake City.

Other national events that affected the traffic along the Mormon Road in the mid-1860s were the Civil War and Indian attacks on travelers on the eastern freight and emigration routes leading into Utah (Smith 1978:34), instilling fear and hesitation in prospective travelers. Therefore, most emigrants used the heavily-traveled northern routes as a measure of security when traveling west from Salt Lake City.

Due to such forces as the Civil War, an increase in agitation on the part of the region's Native American groups, and a recall of missionaries stationed at Las Vegas less than two years after initiating the mission project, the development of a Mormon-controlled freight moving operation never got off the ground (Smith 1978:40). However, the inland corridor left its lasting mark on the region, especially as a driving force behind the eventual settlement of Las Vegas.

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Settlement of Las Vegas

By the time Mexican traders entered the Las Vegas Valley during the first part of the nineteenth century, the region had for over 600 years been the home of the Southern Paiute Indians, and various archaeological studies detail an extended trail traveling southwest through the region to the Pacific coast.
--Gough 1999:21

There is a connection between the Old Spanish Trail and urban developments in its vicinity. Early settlements in the East were almost invariably along water courses, to facilitate the gathering of necessary resources as well as communication and transportation. In a similar fashion, the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road served the same purpose: "it facilitated town growth." As Gough (1999:22) writes:

The development of the neon metropolis of Las Vegas during the twentieth century unquestionably finds its origin as an early stopping area along the Spanish Trail. Rails and highways eventually traced the Trail, and the first survey of Las Vegas was laid out precisely along the route. Though the Spanish Trail was originally but one of several paths through the region, its eventual recognition as the primary course directly influenced both the location and growth of Nevada's largest city. Modern-day visitors to and from Las Vegas still follow much the same route as Charles [*sic*] Frémont's eventual course through this once inhospitable desert region.

As traffic needs in and out of southern California grew with the advent of automobiles, the second decade of the twentieth century saw the development of the Arrowhead Trails Highway. The automobile route was generally aligned along the Spanish Trail/Mormon Road. This, and the construction of the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake railroad line across southern Nevada in 1905 contributed to the demise of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road as a regional transportation route (Myhrer et al. 1990:13). Local use of the route continued through the 1940s. Today, modern travelers arriving in Las Vegas from the west and east on Interstate 15 follow Frémont's basic route to the former location of one of the best springs in the region.

ARCHAEOLOGY

This section discusses the archaeological and trail remains as they pertain to significance under Criterion D. At least two previous archaeological surveys have documented portions of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road in Nevada. In 1987-1989, Keith Myhrer and Stanton Rolf, BLM archaeologists, surveyed the portion of the road between the outer limits of urban development in Las Vegas to the Nevada-California border. This segment is 48.3 miles long. Portions of this section of the trail were reevaluated during this project to ascertain whether sections that were determined eligible (see Myhrer et al. 1990) for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) still maintained historical integrity. The relatively-undisturbed portions included a 4.1-mile segment and a 5.7-mile segment, both determined eligible to the NRHP. The results of the reevaluation are provided below. In 1993, archaeologists from the Harry Reid Center for Environmental Studies, University of

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Nevada Las Vegas, documented a 1.5-mile section of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road on the western edge of Mormon Mesa; they recommended that the eastern 1-mile portion of this segment, in Sections 22 and 27, T 14S, R 67E (Overton NW, NV 7.5 Minute USGS quadrangle) was relatively undisturbed and eligible for inclusion to the NRHP. Other surveys were completed for the Apex Industrial Park and the Chemical Lime Apex Mine Land Sale that documented Frémont's route of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road on the northwestern boundary of Las Vegas' urban development; however those segments lacked historical integrity and were not recommended as eligible to the NRHP.

Description of Wagon Traces

Wagon traces, the most common feature along the road route, are typically in the form of parallel wagon tracks aligned side by side. These parallel traces, or in places, ruts, are generally in a narrower alignment than if created by automobile traffic.

Historic Artifact Concentrations: roadside camps, trash dumps, "pitch zone"

Roadside camps, trash dumps and the "pitch zone" are artifactual manifestations of historic travelers on the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road. These are features of the overall site; without the historic travel corridor these accompanying features would not exist. Small roadside camps and trash dumps are types of artifact concentrations that are self-explanatory; the "pitch zone" refers to the linear areas alongside either edge of the travel corridor (as denoted by wagon traces) where travelers tossed extraneous items from the wagon in efforts to lighten the wagon load, or discard broken or spent items.

Research Methods

In December, 2000, a field survey was conducted in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management, Las Vegas District Office, and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office. The study was undertaken in order to research, evaluate and survey for sites along and relatively undisturbed portions of the transportation route identified by John C. Frémont in 1844, referred to in this document as the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road. The resource is regarded by historians as the most important transportation route in southern Nevada to move travelers and supplies between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles between 1844 and 1905 (the date of arrival of the railroad to southern Nevada).

The pedestrian survey involved Nevada State Historic Preservation Office archaeologist Terri McBride and 1-5 volunteers, walking zig-zag or parallel transects along the historic road bed, covering a 50-foot corridor centered on the center of the road. The records search included a site file search at the Harry Reid Center for Environmental Studies at the University of Nevada Las Vegas Campus, archival research at the Nevada Historical Society and the Nevada State Archives and Library, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Nevada State Office in Reno. Copies of Frémont's map that accompanied his 1845 report to Congress and Lt. George M. Wheeler's 1869 map produced for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were located at the Nevada

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Historical Society (copies attached). A review of the 1881 Government Land Office Survey plats at the BLM State Office that pertained to the Mormon Mesa area of the survey revealed that the surveyors plotted a road labeled "Old Mormon Wagon Road" nearly 2.5 miles south of the actual location of the wagon road trace; in addition, the topographic features on the map do not correspond with the natural topography of the plat (T 14S, R 68E, Mount Diablo Meridian). BLM staff (Dave Morland, personal communication 2000) provided information regarding "fictitious surveys," an unfortunate result of surveyors in remote areas being paid for every *mile* of drafted survey maps.

Evaluation of Integrity

It is important to establish guidelines for evaluating the resource for integrity, as defined in NR Bulletin Number 16a. Besides meeting significance criteria, a property must possess historical integrity, as "evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's prehistoric or historic period," including *location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association* qualities. Following Myhrer et al. (1990), in order to evaluate the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road, the following criteria should be met:

- 1) The Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road must be part of the mapped route by Frémont and other early cartographers.
- 2) Evaluated sections must be part of the entire road route.
- 3) Road segments that have been totally or partially disturbed are not eligible because they have lost integrity in workmanship, design, feeling, association, and materials.
- 4) Very short, pristine segments (shorter than 0.125 mile) have lost integrity due to close proximity to disturbed portions (in the qualities of association and feeling), are considered non-contributing elements, and are not eligible.
- 5) Long sections (more than 0.125 mile) of the road showing wagon traces and at times associated artifacts, are considered to be eligible, contributing elements of the property.

Due to the nature of the resource (a linear feature created by years of use, not a designed one), aspects of integrity such as *design, workmanship, and materials* generally do not apply. One notable exception is the Mormon Mesa Segment, where at the steepest climb up Virgin Hill, past travelers used small boulders to shore up the outer edge of the road. This segment thus shows integrity in materials, in addition to location, setting, feeling, and association. Historical integrity was the main factor in the designation of segments to be nominated to the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District.

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Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road: Mormon Mesa Segment

This 4.25-mile segment of the wagon road leading to San Bernardino, California, through Las Vegas is relatively undisturbed. The two exceptions are: at the point where the trail emerges onto the Mormon Mesa top on its eastern edge, there has been a visible amount of vehicular traffic and parking (undoubtedly to get out and view the Old Spanish Trail marker placed there by the Boy Scouts in 1964); and where the former wagon road briefly joins a ranch road that generally parallels it to the north, 1.6 miles west of the marker on the mesa edge. The Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road converges with the two-track ranch road for 0.125 mile before veering southwest.

Starting in Halfway Wash, which feeds into the Virgin River at its southern end, the traveler begins at the base of the mesa, at the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road leading up to Mormon Mesa, roughly a 360-foot vertical ascent for nearly 0.6 mile (this climb has been called Virgin Hill by travelers). The narrow route is very rocky and follows ridge lines up to the mesa top, with a width of approximately 9-10 feet. Following the natural contours makes this section sinuous. One broken nineteenth-century jar, a possible wagon part, hole-in-top cans, tobacco tins and other metal fragments were noted at the base of Virgin Hill (in the wash). Pieces of a broken mustard-colored glazed mixing bowl, probably dating to the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was noted down slope from the trail climbing up the mesa. Within the top 0.3 mile, the road grade transforms from an approximate 8° slope to a 15° slope as the natural topography steepens. Down slope from the trail at the top and steepest portion, the natural slope is approximately a 30-40° angle. Notably, the top 525 feet of the road to the mesa top have been shored up by past travelers along the outer edge with medium-sized limestone boulders (see sketch map). Other portions of this steep incline have been apparently cleared of boulders (the terrain is extremely rocky); along short segments, boulders have been rolled to the edge of the route, creating a sort of embankment along the sides. Two fragmented railroad ties were noted in the road bed in the steeper, top portion of the road leading up Virgin Hill. The trail is experiencing severe water erosion, which may eventually cut the trail into small sections.

When the route emerges onto the top of Mormon Mesa, a faint trace extends in a westerly direction, at a 255° angle. The point where the wagon road and the eastern edge of the mesa meet has been partially disturbed. Because the concrete Old Spanish Trail marker erected by Scoop Garside and the Boy Scouts in 1964 is located here, it has experienced some vehicular traffic and has been used as a parking area by curious onlookers. This disturbance extends for approximately 0.125 mile west of the trail marker until one discerns the faint trace leading west across Mormon Mesa. A few artifacts were noted in this partially disturbed portion of the road: sun-colored amethyst glass shards, indeterminate whiteware, and an early "Levi Strauss & Co., S.F. Cal." copper button. The artifacts generally fall within a 1860s-1920 period, suggesting usage of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road extended into the early twentieth century. This 0.125-mile disturbed portion is a non-contributing element of the Mormon Mesa segment.

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Once on the faint trace near the mesa edge, the trail meanders slightly for the first 1.5 miles. At this point, the trail briefly converges with a well-established ranch road for 0.125 mile, then begins to deviate from the ranch road in a southwesterly direction. The 0.125-mile portion of the historic trail that is overlain by the modern ranch road is considered to be a non-contributing element of the Mormon Mesa segment of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road. Beyond this point, the trail continues west in a straight linear fashion at 255°. One area where the road crosses over bedrock shows evidence of linear abrasion from metal wagon wheels. Otherwise, there is very little artifactual evidence of historic users along the route on the mesa. The surveyed portion of this relatively undisturbed portion of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road ends 3.67 miles from the eastern edge of Mormon Mesa. The contributing elements of the Mormon Mesa segment are 0.6 miles, 1.53 miles, and 1.88 miles respectively (totaling 4.01 miles). The two short non-contributing elements are both 0.125 mile in length.

Blue Diamond Segment

This was a reevaluation of a previously-surveyed portion of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road, conducted by Keith Myhrer and Stanton Rolf, BLM, Las Vegas District between 1987 and 1989. The northeastern-most portion of this segment of road, which was recommended as eligible for inclusion to the NRHP, has been disturbed since the initial survey. Beginning at the Old Spanish Trail marker erected by the Boy Scouts in 1964 south of Cottonwood Springs, and following the two-track Spanish Trail/Mormon Road, partial disturbance of the route due to dirt bike trails winding across and next to the route, extends for approximately 0.4 miles. The relatively undisturbed portion of this segment of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road commences after the disturbed area, approximately 0.125 mile north of the second Old Spanish Trail concrete marker along this segment. The marker is located where the wagon road turns west along Cottonwood Wash; the route follows the wash along the north bank, and traverses the wash, following the base of three hills. The relatively undisturbed portion extends southwest for a total of 3.4 miles, at which point the historic road terminates at the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) easement fence line (the route appears to converge with the modern Highway 160 here).

The trail crosses the wash 4-5 times along this portion, and in those areas, there is no trace of the two-track wagon road. The wagon road intersects with jeep roads twice along this portion. Just west of the last wash crossing, an artifact concentration representing a historic campsite is located just north of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road, measuring approximately 25 × 25 feet. Noted artifacts include: a lime-green bottle base, reading "Duroglas," a 3/4-inch diameter steel bolt, approximately 10 tin cans, including 2 key-opened types, one hinged tobacco tin, a porcelain button, melted bottle glass, fragments of stamped tin, wood lumber fragments, indeterminate whiteware, a decorated dinnerware fragment with orange, blue, yellow, and green glaze, metal strapping, pieces of tabular sandstone with burn marks, various metal fragments, a beer bottle fragment, and baling wire. Some of these artifacts date to ca. 1900, although more research is warranted. Beyond the historic camp site, the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road continues southwest for an additional 0.93 mile before terminating at the NDOT easement fence line. Located roughly 160 feet north of the western termination point for this section of relatively undisturbed road bed, is a recent jeep road that connects this portion and a short undisturbed portion of the road further west along the wash. One could follow the recent jeep road for

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approximately 1.2 miles to reach the relatively undisturbed 0.25-mile section of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road that runs immediately south of Cottonwood Wash at the base of the Spring Mountains. There is a short foot path that connects this relatively undisturbed portion and the Highway 160 corridor; an Old Spanish Trail marker erected in 1964 marks the general vicinity of the trail and this end point of the Blue Diamond portion of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road. The total length of the Blue Diamond portion of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District is 5.25 miles, with two contributing elements 3.41 miles and 0.25 miles in length, and two non-contributing segments, 1.18 and 0.4 miles in length, respectively.

Stumps Spring Segment

This was also a reevaluation of previously-surveyed road by Myhrer et al. (1990). Beginning on the two-track road near the now-dry Stump Spring, the relatively undisturbed road travels southeast for 390 feet, then turns north up a small spring mound, meandering northeast across the spring mound formations before leveling out on the flat Pahrupm Valley floor. The total length of surveyed road (relatively undisturbed) for this segment is 0.55 miles and is a contributing element of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District; no historic artifacts were noted along this segment.

Summary and Management Recommendations/Future Research

In terms of significance under Criterion D, there are some pertinent research questions which could be applied to the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District. After Myhrer et al. (1990),

- What is the nature of the surface of pristine road portions and the environmental impact of historic wagon traffic?
- What do the wagon traces tell us about topographic or other environmental factors that affected the choice of route and early settlement patterns in the region?
- Were dry camps present between water resources?
- What do the artifacts associated with wagon road use tell us about the chronology of usage; and, how do the artifacts inform us on the subsistence and lifestyle of travelers on the route? As Myhrer et al. (1990:14) point out, a lack of early-era artifacts due to a low volume of users, with relatively few "disposable" artifacts discarded or lost, does not nullify the presence of people using the trail during the period of significance, or earlier (back to 1829, the advent of the route).

In sum, three portions of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road were evaluated and determined as eligible for inclusion to the NRHP; the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District includes one segment that falls near the Arizona-Nevada border and two others are west of Las Vegas, near the California state line. The Mormon Mesa segment would most likely be extended with additional pedestrian survey to verify the historic integrity of the wagon route on the mesa. Due to a lack of development in that area, the district could be expanded to include most of the route as it traverses the mesa formation. Additional reevaluation of the 1987-1989 BLM survey in the Stump Spring area would most likely show that the historically-intact segment surveyed for this project could be extended for several miles east of the segment currently determined as eligible for inclusion to the NRHP.

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Further research on the role that John C. Frémont's journey had on his career may show that this property is also eligible under Criterion B. As noted above, this expedition is considered by historians to be a pivotal event in John C. Frémont's career and notoriety in American culture. However, further study in contemporary writings about Frémont that include popular perceptions of the importance of his expedition across southern Nevada and the Great Basin is warranted for a strong argument of significance in this area. A quick review of his biography shows that he eventually attained some political prominence; he was elected as one of the two first senators of California in 1850, a candidate in the 1856 presidential election, and appointed territorial governor of the Territory of Arizona in 1878.

The Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District is an ideal resource for interpretation. Because of its linear nature, pedestrians and bicyclists would greatly benefit from appropriately-placed information kiosks, interpretive signage, historical markers, etc. Because the district is in rural, mostly undeveloped areas outside of Las Vegas, the potential to enhance certain recreational activities is nearly unsurpassable.

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Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District Clark County, Nevada

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Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District Clark County, Nevada

10. Geographical Data

Boundary Description

The following description of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District begins with the easternmost segment, progressing west across southern Nevada to the California state border. Legal coordinates are provided below of the contributing and non-contributing elements, as well as a list of UTM coordinates of endpoints and points of significant directional change.

The historic district boundary is defined by the extant wagon traces and a 20-foot corridor on either side of the tracks described as the "pitch zone," where unnecessary wagon contents and trash were pitched to the side of the road. This pitch zone will mostly encompass the single historic campsite that was noted during field survey. The length of the district will be the lengths of discreet sections of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road that are "relatively undisturbed" as defined by Myhrer et al. (1990). The Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District is bounded in general, by the road corridor itself (approximately 6-7 feet) and 20 feet on either side to encompass historic features associated with use of the transportation corridor. Therefore the width of the district is roughly 46 feet, and the length of the district includes those sections that are relatively undisturbed and at a minimum, maintain integrity in terms of location, association, and feeling.

Moving east-west, the Mormon Mesa Segment commences in Halfway Wash, which feeds into the Virgin River at its southern end, in the SW of the NE 1/4 of the SE 1/4, Section 25, T 14S, R 68W (Overton NE, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad). The traveler begins at the base of the mesa, at the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road leading up to Mormon Mesa, roughly a 360-foot vertical ascent for nearly 0.6 mile (this climb has been called Virgin Hill by travelers). The narrow route is very rocky and follows ridge lines up to the mesa top, ending in the NE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Section 25, T 14S, R 68W (Overton NE, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad). The endpoint of this contributing element is near a concrete Old Spanish Trail marker erected in 1964 by the Boy Scouts. This is a contributing element of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District. When the route emerges onto the top of Mormon Mesa, a faint trace extends in a westerly direction, at a 255° angle. There is some disturbance from vehicular traffic near the marker, making the historic wagon traces nearly indecipherable for a short distance. This non-contributing portion extends for 0.125 miles, ending in the SW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Section 25, T 14S, R 68W (Overton NE, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad). This is the eastern endpoint of the second contributing element, extending for 1.5 miles to the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4, Section 27, T 14S, R 68W (Overton NE, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad). At this point, the trail briefly converges with a well-established ranch road for 0.125 mile, then begins to deviate from the ranch road in a southwesterly direction. The 0.125-mile portion of the historic trail that is overlain by the modern ranch road is considered to be a non-contributing element of the Mormon Mesa segment of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District. The second contributing element of the Mormon Mesa Segment begins in NE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of the SE 1/4, Section 27, T 14S, R 68W (Overton NE, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad). The road continues west in a straight linear fashion at 255°. The recordation of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road for this project terminated in the SE 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of the NE 1/4, Section 32, T 14S, R 68W (Overton NW, NV 7.5 Minute USGS quad). One area where the road crosses over bedrock shows evidence of linear abrasion from metal wagon wheels. Otherwise, there is very little artifactual evidence of historic users along the route on the mesa. The surveyed portion of this contributing element of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic

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Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District Clark County, Nevada

District ends 3.67 miles from the eastern edge of Mormon Mesa. The contributing elements of the Mormon Mesa segment are 0.6 mile, 1.53 miles and 1.88 miles respectively (totaling 4.01 miles). The two short non-contributing elements are both 0.125 mile in length.

The Blue Diamond Segment begins south of Cottonwood Springs (west of Las Vegas) in the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4, Section 17, T 22S, R 59E (Blue Diamond, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad), and follows the two-track Spanish Trail/Mormon Road. Partial disturbance of the route due to dirt bike trails winds across and next to the route, extending for approximately 0.4 miles. This is a non-contributing element. The relatively undisturbed portion of this segment of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road, a contributing element to the district, commences in the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4, Section 17, T 22S, R 59E (Blue Diamond, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad). The route follows the wash along the north bank, and traverses the wash, following the base of three hills. The relatively undisturbed portion extends southwest for a total of 3.4 miles, at which point the historic road terminates at the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) easement fence line (the route appears to converge with the modern Highway 160 here). This endpoint is located in the NE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4, Section 26, T 22S, R 58 E (Blue Diamond, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad).

The trail crosses the wash 4-5 times along this portion, and in those areas, there is no trace of the two-track wagon road. Just west of the last wash crossing in the SW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Section 24, T 22S, R 58E (Blue Diamond, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad), an artifact concentration representing a historic campsite is located immediately north of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road, measuring approximately 25 × 25 feet. This falls within the contributing element described above.

Located roughly 160 feet north of the western termination point for the contributing element of the historic district, is a recent jeep road that connects this portion and a short contributing element of the road further west along the wash. One could follow the recent jeep road for approximately 1.2 miles to reach the relatively undisturbed 0.25-mile section of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road that runs immediately south of Cottonwood Wash at the base of the Spring Mountains. The jeep road is considered as a non-contributing element of the district, beginning in the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of the NE 1/4, Section 24, T 22S, R 58E (Blue Diamond, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad), and ending in the SW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of the NE 1/4, Section 34, T 22S, R 58E (Cottonwood Pass, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad). The eastern endpoint of the contributing element is in the SW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of the NE 1/4, Section 34, T 22S, R 58E, and the western terminus is in the SE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the NE 1/4, Section 34, T 22S, R 58E (Cottonwood Pass, NV, 7.5 Minute USGS quad). A concrete Old Spanish Trail marker erected in 1964 marks the general vicinity of the trail and this end point of the Blue Diamond portion of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road. The total length of the Blue Diamond portion of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District is 5.25 miles, with two contributing elements 3.41 miles and 0.25 mile in length, and two non-contributing segments, 1.18 and 0.4 miles in length, respectively.

The Stump Spring Segment of the historic district begins on the two-track road near the now-dry Stump Spring in the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the NW 1/4, Section 5, T 22N, R 55E (Stump Spring, NV-CA, USGS 7.5 Minute Quad), the relatively undisturbed road travels southeast for 390 feet, then turns north up a small spring mound, meandering northeast across the spring mound formations before leveling out on the flat Pahrump Valley floor. The total length of the contributing element is 0.55 mile, ending in the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the NE 1/4, Section 5, T 22N, R 55E.

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UTM COORDINATES

Mormon Mesa Segment (from east to west)

MM1	Zone 11	e 738325	N 4063080	(base of trail leading into wash)
MM2	Zone 11	e 738210	N 4063075	
MM3	Zone 11	e 738115	N 4063180	
MM4	Zone 11	e 738018	N 4063407	
MM5	Zone 11	e 737840	N 4063045	
MM6	Zone 11	e 737790	N 4063110	
MM7	Zone 11	e 737689	N 4063019	(edge of mesa, 1964 Old Spanish Trail concrete marker; beginning of non-contributing segment)
MM8	Zone 11	e 737521	N 4063057	(end of non-contributing segment)
MM9	Zone 11	e 735063	N 4062945	(intersects with ranch road; beginning of 2nd non- contributing segment)
MM10	Zone 11	e 734880	N 4062895	(end of 2nd non-contributing segment)
MM11	Zone 11	e 733139	N 4062419	
MM12	Zone 11	e 731960	N 4062055	(western endpoint)

Blue Diamond Segment (from east to west)

BD1	Zone 11	e 644530	N 3988840	(beginning of undisturbed segment)
BD2	Zone 11	e 644550	N 3988700	
BD3	Zone 11	e 644360	N 3988570	(where road enters wash)
BD4	Zone 11	e 644200	N 3988320	(where road exits wash)

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BD5	Zone 11	e 643725	N 3987750	
BD6	Zone 11	e 641640	N 3986370	(where road intersects jeep trail)
BD7	Zone 11	e 641570	N 3986320	(historic campsite next to road)
BD8	Zone 11	e 640545	N 3985390	(where road ends at NDOT fenceline; beginning of non-contributing segment)
BD9	Zone 11	e 639070	N 3984370	(east end of 0.25-mile undisturbed segment)
BD10	Zone 11	e 638725	N 3984290	(western terminus of Blue Diamond segment)

Stump Spring Segment (from east to west)

SS1	Zone 11	e 606305	N 3982670	
SS2	Zone 11	e 606110	N 3982500	
SS3	Zone 11	e 605960	N 3982380	
SS4	Zone 11	e 605960	N 3982150	
SS5	Zone 11	e 605870	N 3982225	

Choice of Routes

One of the reasons behind choosing Frémont’s route, besides the importance of Frémont’s journey to the development of settlements in the region (and the argument that Frémont was the first American to travel west-east across the Las Vegas Valley), is that the route incorporates more than half of the alignment of the former, “popular” Spanish Trail (Myhrer et al. 1990:12). Because Frémont’s route was along a pre-existing pack trail, one of several “popular” Spanish Trail routes, the map that was published as a result of his expedition is worthy of examination. After publication (approximately 20,000 copies) of his map showing what he termed the “Spanish Trail” in 1845, this became the main route for the Mormon Road (and a “well-used one” of the Spanish Trail; see Myhrer et al. 1990:16). Therefore, because the Mormon Road usage of the trail immediately followed the Spanish Trail usage of the route, discerning between material culture associated with the two uses of the trail—one as a pack trail, one as a wagon road—is very difficult. There is almost no likelihood of material remains existing from Frémont’s journey across the route. As Warren (1974) and Myhrer et al. (1990) argue, Frémont’s route, misnamed (by Frémont himself) as the “Spanish Trail,” is in fact one of the routes used until 1848 by New Mexican traders, and the main route for the emigrés who subsequently traveled the route after 1845. Most likely, no authentic Spaniard ever traveled the corridor.

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Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District Clark County, Nevada

Boundary Justification

The entire route recognized as the Old Spanish Trail originated in Santa Fe, New Mexico, proceeded northwest into Utah, traversed the Green River near the present day town of Moab, turned east briefly and then south, following the eastern slope of the Wasatch Range. The trail paralleled the Sevier River in central Utah until it reached to present day town of Cedar City and Littlefield, Arizona. It then followed the Virgin River near Mesquite, Nevada (near the Arizona border). The route continued to the springs of the Muddy River from the Virgin River corridor, near the town of Moapa. The route then stretched 50 miles across a vast, waterless expanse between the springs at the Muddy to Las Vegas (known as the "*jornada del muerte*," or day's journey of death), and from Las Vegas (the location of a spring and a naturally grassy floodplain), the Spanish Trail meandered southwest, over Potosi Pass in the Spring Mountains, through Pahrump Valley, and into California over Emigrant Pass and Bitter Springs. The trail continued on to the mission at San Bernardino, over Cajon Pass and into the former pueblo of Los Angeles. The total length is approximately 1,200 miles. The Nevada portion of the transportation corridor is 152 miles.

The Mormon Road originated at Great Salt Lake City and joined the Old Spanish Trail route along the Sevier River. It continued along the identical corridor of the Old Spanish Trail, with minor alternates to accommodate the wagon traffic identified with the Mormon road usage of the trail. Prior to 1845, the year that Frémont's map had been published, almost all of the traffic on the Old Spanish Trail had been by horse and mule, or foot.

The nominated segments of the discontinuous historic district were chosen for their historic integrity in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association. Other areas were looked at but they lacked integrity. The width of the corridor was established to encompass the road bed itself and roadside features (campsites), as well as the "pitch zone" (see Section 8). Therefore, the width of the district is roughly 46 feet, and the length of the district includes each of these sections that are relatively undisturbed and at a minimum, maintain integrity in terms of location, association, and feeling.

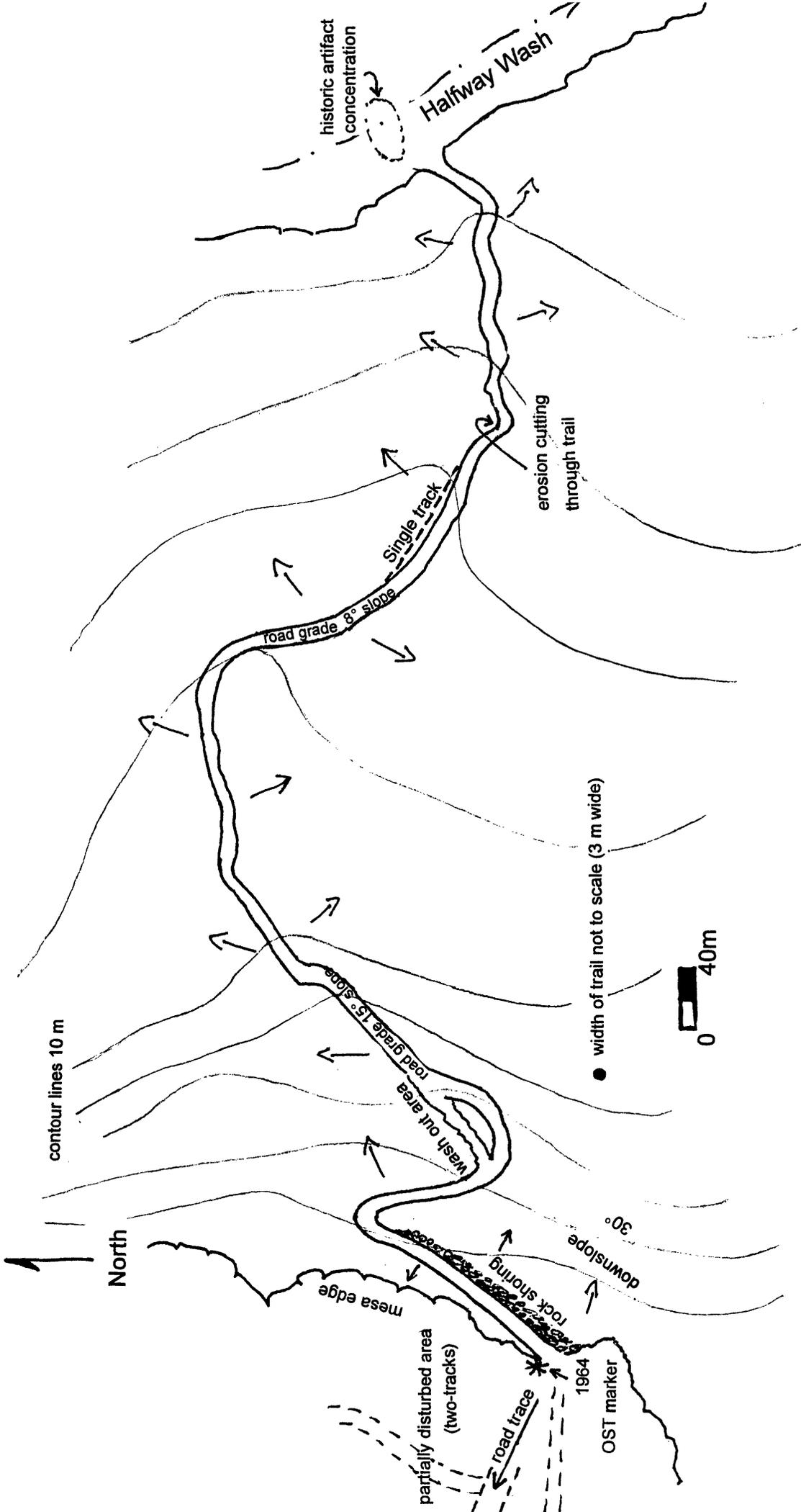
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Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District Clark County, Nevada

Attachment: Photo Log

<u>Roll-Exp. #</u>	<u>Description</u>
OST-3	Looking down Mormon Mesa segment of Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District from mesa top leading down to Halfway Wash, facing northeast (12-05-00, T. McBride). Note rock shoring at top of hill. Clark County, Nevada.
OST-2	Mormon Mesa segment of Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District down Mormon Mesa, facing east (12-05-00, T. McBride). Clark County, Nevada.
OST-7	Blue Diamond segment of Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District, view of Spring Mountains, facing south/southwest (12-08-00, T. McBride). Clark County, Nevada.
OST-8	Dinnerware fragment at historic campsite along Blue Diamond segment of Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District (12-08-00, T. McBride). Clark County, Nevada.
OST-9	Blue Diamond segment of Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District, facing south/southwest (12-08-00, T. McBride). Clark County, Nevada.
OST-10	Short undisturbed segment of Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District, Blue Diamond segment, at base of Spring Mountains, facing west/southwest (12-08-00, T. McBride). Clark County, Nevada.
OST-11	Stump Spring segment of Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road Historic District, facing east on top of spring mounds (12-08-00, T. McBride). Clark County, Nevada.



**Portion of Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road (26 CK3848)
 from Mormon Mesa top to Halfway Wash bottom**

RECONNAISSANCE EXPEDITION

through

SOUTHERN & SOUTHEASTERN

NEVADA

in charge of

LIEUT. GEO. M. WHEELER

U. S. ENGINEERS

Assisted by

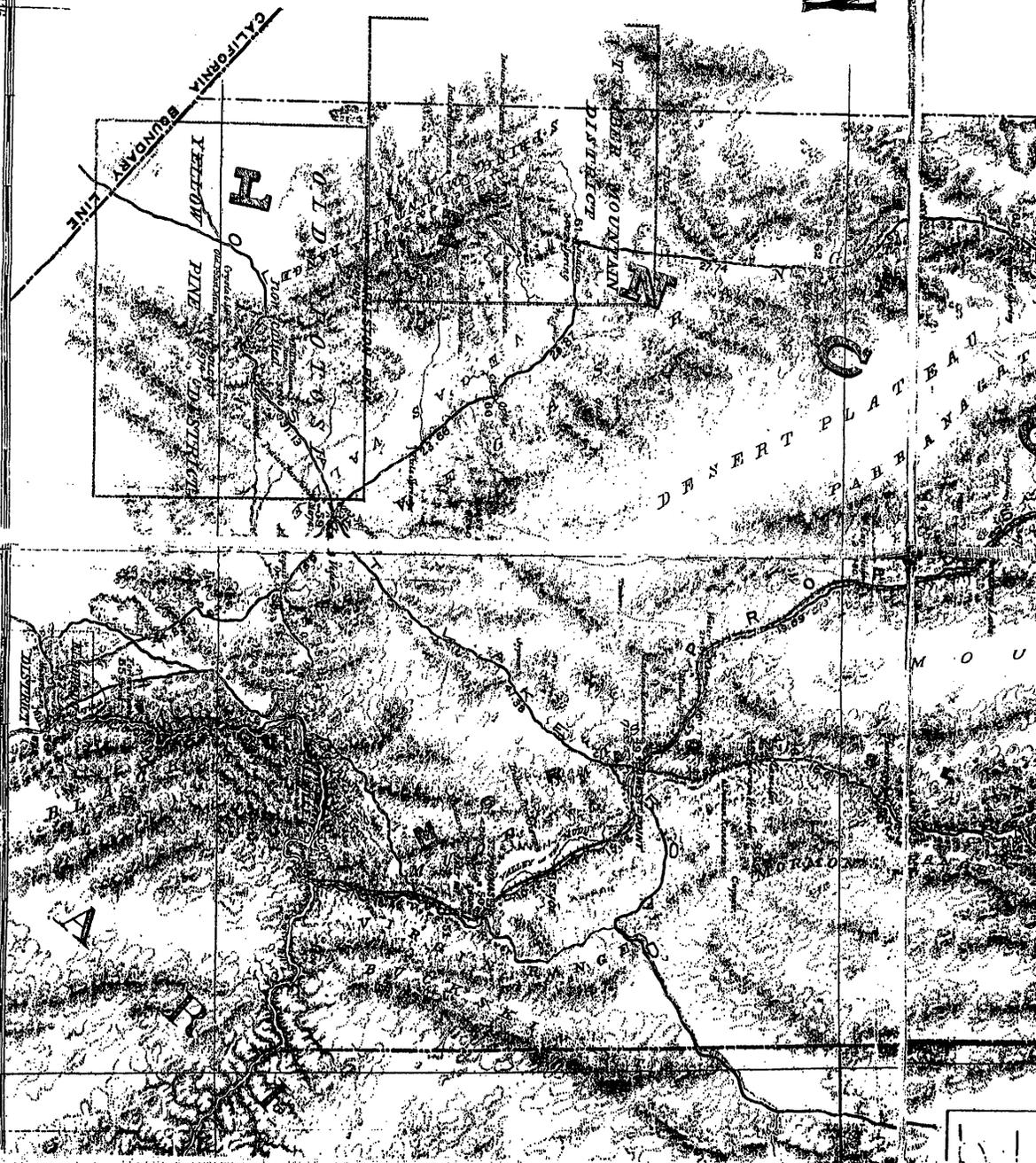
LIEUT. B. W. LOCKWOOD

CORPS OF ENGINEERS U. S. A.

1869

SCALE 1 INCH TO 12 MILES.

P. W. HAMELL
CHIEF TOPOGRAPHER
AND
DRAWN BY
DRAUGHTSMAN



RECONNAISSANCE EXPEDITION

through

SOUTHERN & SOUTHEASTERN

NEVADA

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Assisted by

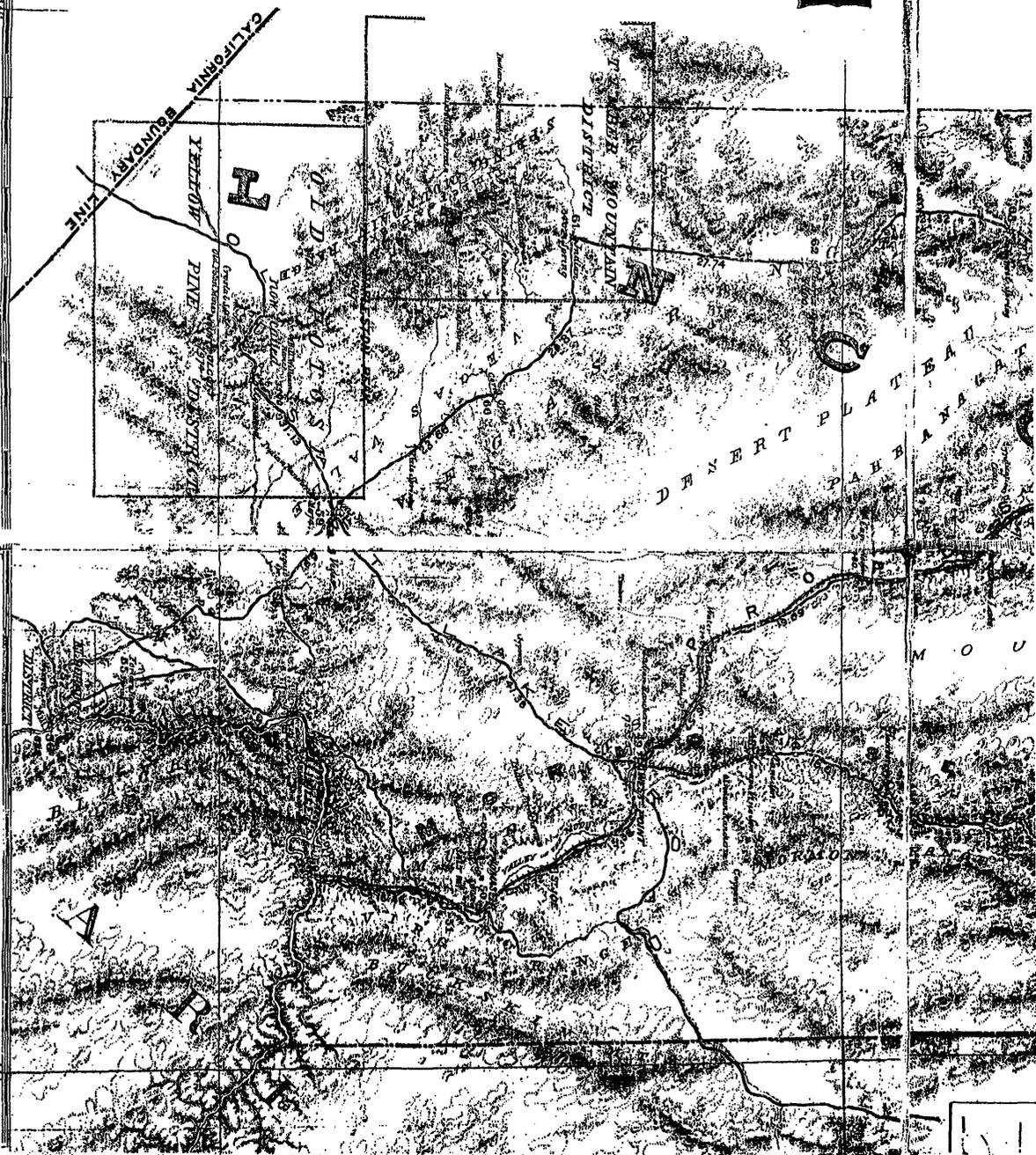
LIEUT. B. W. LOCKWOOD

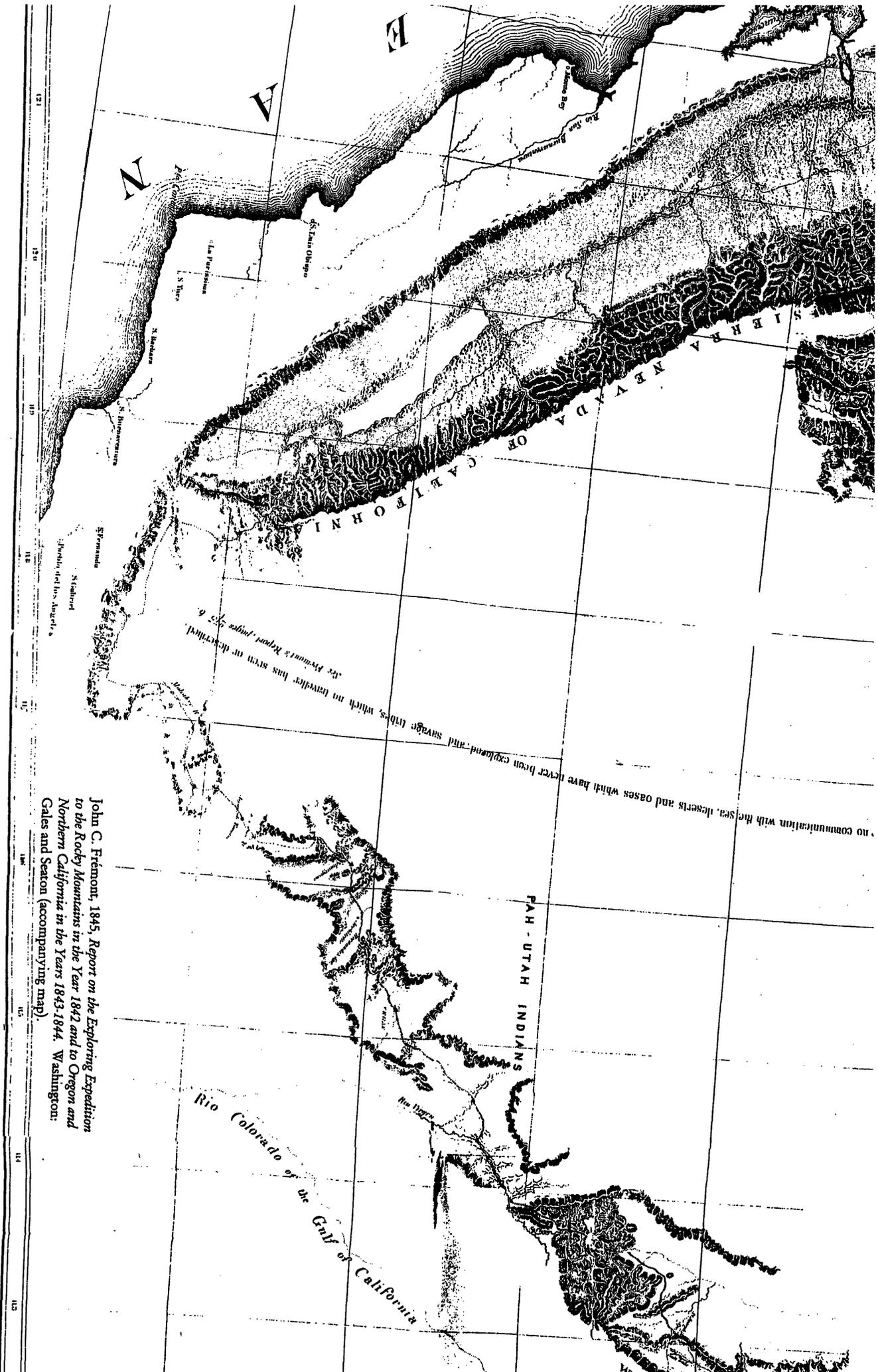
CORPS OF ENGINEERS U. S. A.

1869

SCALE 1 INCH TO 12 MILES.

P. W. HAMEL
CHIEF TOPOGRAPHER
AND
DRAWN BY
DRAUGHTSMAN





John C. Fremont, 1845, Report on the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842 and to Oregon and Northern California in the Years 1843-1844. Washington: Gales and Seaton (accompanying map).

no communication with the sea, deserts and oases which have never been explored and savage tribes which no traveler has seen or described. See Fremont's Report, pages 575 & 6.

PAH-UTAH INDIANS

Rio Colorado of the Gulf of California

CALIFORNIA

SIERRA NEVADA

San Joaquin
Sacramento
San Francisco Bay

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 01000863

Date Listed: 08/22/01

Property Name: Spanish Trail, Old,--Mormon Historic District

County: Clark

State: NV

Multiple Name: N/A

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Amended Items in Nomination:

A more appropriate end date for the Period of Significance is 1905. 1905 essentially marks the end of the Old Spanish Trail as a major regional transportation route across southern Nevada when the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake railroad line was constructed. An amendment is hereby made to change the period of significance to **1844--1905**.

This amendment was confirmed with Terry McBride of the NV SHPO.

Sarah D. Pope
(for) **Signature of the Keeper**

8/22/01
Date of Action

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)