

FIRST DRAFT

Routes, trails crisscrossed area long before Europeans arrived

On August 26, 1776, after descending the eastern side of the Uncompahgre Plateau to the Uncompahgre River Valley, Father Francisco Silvestre Vélaz de Escalante wrote, "In the meadow of this river ... there is a very wide and well-beaten trail."

Similarly, on Sept. 9, when the expedition he led with Father Francisco Atanasio Dominguez descended the north side of Douglas Pass, Escalante wrote that the group traveled nearly 30 miles "over a very well-beaten trail with only one bad stretch."

Since very few Europeans had traveled this region prior to Dominguez and Escalante, it's clear that these "well-beaten trails"



BOB SILBERNAGEL

were established by the natives who lived there. In 1776, that meant the Utes. But the trails were likely used by a variety of native people over the ages.

"Lots of people used these areas," said Carl Conner, owner of Grand River Institute, an archaeological consulting firm in Grand Junction. He is also founder of the Dominguez Archaeological Research Group, or DARG, an associated nonprofit organization.

In the Piceance Basin of western Colorado, there is plenty of proof the Utes once lived here.

But Conner and his team have also found evidence in the area for members of the Fremont Culture, as well as Shoshones, Navajos and early ancestors of the Navajos. And there are traces of Dismal River culture, believed to be ancestors to the Apaches.

Additionally, archaeologists have found in western Colorado shell beads that originated on the Pacific Coast and obsidian from Wyoming, New Mexico and other parts of Colorado.

Clearly, many people moved through this region, whether trading, traveling or relocating. They almost certainly had a number of long-established routes.

Through DARG, Conner and Project Coordinator Richard Ott have undertaken the Ute Trails Project, attempting to trace major trails or routes in western Colorado. The project grew out of DARG's Wickiup Project, which has recorded and examined old Ute habitation sites in Colorado.

"We wanted to take more of a landscape approach rather than just a site-by-site look," Conner explained. "We wanted to try to discern how these sites relate to each other, with trails."

One such trail is the path taken by Dominguez and Escalante in 1776, when they were led by Ute guides over long-used paths. On another route, from Wyoming south past Browns Canyon in Colorado and on toward the Piceance Basin, the researchers found water holes roughly every 25 miles, Ott said. That makes sense for people traveling on horseback, he added. The route may have been used by Utes who traveled north to raid for horses, then returned to their own territory with the stolen animals.

Water also was key to another route they investigated, on the advice of modern Ute leaders, from the Dolores River south of Gateway, over the Uncompahgre Plateau to the Gunnison River near Big Dominguez Canyon.

It's not just rivers. Mountain passes, many of which today accommodate modern highways, were also used long ago by



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Utes ride on a well-used trail in the Garden of the Gods near Colorado Springs in 1913. The trail led west to the mountains, over Ute Pass and into South Park. It was recorded as a major travel route for various American Indian tribes as early as the 1820s.

Utes and others.

"Every mountain pass that's worth a hill of beans has (an archaeological) site of some sort on it," said John Goodwin, who spent much of his career doing archaeological work for highway projects in Colorado. He is now retired and lives in California.

On some passes, artifacts dating back thousands of years have been discovered. Others show only more recent inhabitation or visitation.

The mountain passes where evidence of early visitation has been found include Vail Pass, Cerro Summit, Cottonwood Pass near Glenwood Springs, Cochetopa Pass near the San Luis Valley and Ute Pass, which connected Colorado Springs and South Park.

Perhaps no prehistoric trail in the Southwest is as famous as the Chaco Meridian, which runs almost arrow straight from Aztec, New Mexico, through the Chaco Canyon complex and south to a prehistoric site in Sonora, Mexico.

University of Colorado archaeologist and author Stephen H. Lekson has detailed how the people of the Chacoan culture could have surveyed the roads, built roughly a thousand years ago, with only a few degrees of error. Archaeologists have long known there was trade between southern parts of Mexico and places like Chaco. Macaw and parrot feathers, copper and beads from far to the south have been found at Chaco and related sites.

Although many ancient routes became horse trails, wagon roads, and eventually highways, many more did not. People on foot could go up and over obstacles far easier than those pulling wagons or even riding horseback.

As Lekson put it: "Pueblo trails and Chaco roads, whether symbolic or function-

al, were not bridle paths ... Wagon roads, developed for new transportation technologies, may not represent the most important ancient routes."

With that in mind, we know there are well-used old trails, such as the Navajo-Uncompahgre Trail, which ran north out of New Mexico and onto the Uncompahgre Plateau, which never became major routes for wagons or autos.

Another well-documented route across the Flat Tops from the Colorado River near Dotsero to the White River, used by the Utes and others, never developed beyond a horse trail. Similarly, the majority of a 19th century route from the Los Piños Indian Agency in the Uncompahgre River Valley to the White River Agency near present-day Meeker, highlighted on Hayden Survey maps from 1877, remained only a horse trail. The trail crossed Grand Mesa, and a portion of it was followed by Dominguez and Escalante a century earlier.

Even with the work of Conner, Ott and others, it's impossible to identify all of the ancient pathways.

But there is a growing understanding that, whether riding horses or trekking on foot, the early inhabitants of this region had their own network of long-used routes and "well-beaten trails" as intricate as any modern highway system.

Information for this column came from interviews with archaeologists named in it, from "The Chaco Meridian," by Stephen H. Lekson, and "Juan Rivera's Colorado, 1765," by Steven G. Baker, and "Pageant in the Wilderness," by Herbert E. Bolton.

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REGION SENTINEL WIRE SERVICES

Gov. Hickenlooper not sure feds could shut down pot industry in state

Days after the Trump administration said the Department of Justice was going to step up enforcement of laws prohibiting the recreational use of marijuana, Gov. John Hickenlooper said he wasn't sure the federal government could take such action in Colorado.

Hickenlooper, in an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press," told moderator Chuck Todd on Sunday that Colorado's regulations allowing the personal use of marijuana are part of the state's Constitution.

Hickenlooper says Republican U.S. Sen. Cory Gardner spoke with Sen. Jeff Sessions before he was confirmed as attorney general and that he was led to believe marijuana enforcement wasn't going to be a priority, but things might have changed with Thursday's announcement by White House spokesman Sean Spicer.

Hickenlooper was in Washington, D.C., for the National Governors Association winter meeting.



GOV. JOHN HICKENLOOPER

New Mexico woman crashes into tree, dies while skiing at Purgatory Resort

DURANGO — A 34-year-old New Mexico woman has died after crashing into a tree while skiing at Purgatory Resort near Durango in southwestern Colorado.

La Plata County Coroner Jann Smith said Kressyda Ming of Farmington died Saturday afternoon. Smith said the accident was reported at 3:15 p.m., a medical helicopter arrived at 4 p.m. and Ming was pronounced dead at 4:30 p.m.

Smith said Ming had been skiing with friends. An autopsy is scheduled for today. Resort general manager Colin McBeath expressed sympathy to the woman's family and friends.

2017 THIS WEEK IN THE LEGISLATURE

DENVER — This week, a House committee will take up two bills designed to help the state's nascent hemp industry. Under Amendment 64 approved by voters in 2012, Colorado didn't just legalize recreational marijuana, but also the hemp industry.

But hemp can only be grown if it contains no more than 0.3 percent in dry weight of delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol, the psychoactive ingredient in pot. One measure, SB90, establishes new means to test hemp's THC level, and the other, SB109, would allow hemp to be used as animal feed. Both already have cleared the Senate.

■ **Today:** The House Finance Committee is to debate HB1187, Rep. Dan Thurlow's bill to alter how the revenue cap under the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights is determined.

■ **Tuesday:** The House Public Health Care & Human Services Committee is to hear HB1156, a measure that would prevent mental health care providers from using conversion therapy, the controversial practice of trying to change one's sexual orientation.

■ **Wednesday:** The Senate Business, Labor & Technology Committee is to discuss SB63, a measure that would allow for the creation of marijuana clubs.

■ **Thursday:** The House Judiciary Committee is to take testimony on SB8, a measure that would legalize certain switchblades.

■ **Next week:** While a Senate committee is to discuss two elections-related measures — one that would eliminate some vote centers in early voting, and another that would make changes to election judges laws — the House is to hear a bill that would allow certain retirees who are receiving public employee retirement benefits to go back to work as teachers.

Scheduled committee hearings are subject to change. All floor action and committees can be watched or heard on the Legislature's website, leg.colorado.gov.

Check that website to see which measures are available for remote testimony, and how to register to speak.

— Charles Ashby

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BLOTTER COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF

Stolen credit card used

Crime Stoppers of Mesa County is seeking the public's help to locate the suspect who used a lost credit card to make purchases.

On Feb. 2, a person lost a pink wallet containing personal information and credit cards. Later that day, a woman used a credit card from the lost wallet to purchase items at Teller Arms Liquor, Domino's Pizza and Smoker Friendly.

Security cameras captured video of a woman, shown at right, with dark hair wearing a beige scarf over an army green jacket, blue jeans and a turquoise baseball cap with a skull emblem. Photos of the woman can be seen at 241.stop.com.

Anyone with information about the crime is encouraged to call Crime Stoppers at 241-7867.

Anyone with information leading to an arrest can earn up to \$1,000. People can give information anonymously.

According to the Grand Junction Police Department:

■ A juvenile was arrested on suspicion of assaulting another juvenile at Grand Junction High School on Feb. 13.



■ Jay Burkhart, 49, was arrested on suspicion of theft of more than \$4,000 in property and providing false information on a pawn slip. Burkhart was arrested in the 400 block

of Sherman Drive on Wednesday.

■ Michelle Smith, 23, was arrested after being contacted on a welfare check and allegedly found to be in possession of a controlled substance and paraphernalia on Wednesday.

■ Brianna Garcia, 23, was arrested after allegedly taking property valued at less than \$300 from Walmart, 2881 North Ave. Garcia was arrested Wednesday after being contacted in the area of the 500 block of 28 3/4 Road and having warrants for her arrest.

■ Sage Perry, 20, received a summons for theft on suspicion of failing to pay the costs of repairing a phone at a business in the 1200 block of North Avenue on Wednesday.

■ A burglar entered a home in the 900 block of North 12th Street and stole items valued at more than \$500 overnight Wednesday.

■ Jamie Fouche, 46, was arrested Friday on suspicion of assaulting and strangling a man at 661 U.S. Highway 50.

■ Shannon Castaneda, 55, was arrested on suspicion of drunken-driving with a suspended license in the 600 block of Rood Avenue on Friday.

■ A vehicle was stolen Friday from a business at 755 Horizon Drive.

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We're wearing
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The employees of *The Daily Sentinel* have joined together to adopt a local non-profit organization/charity of the month. We want to help raise awareness and badly needed funds for these organizations that are dedicated to helping people in our community.

FEBRUARY JEANS FOR CHARITY ORGANIZATION:
Western Slope Center for Children

The **Western Slope Center for Children (WSCC)** is a Child Advocacy Center, providing services to abused children and their families. In Mesa County, more than 500 children are subjected to sexual or physical abuse each year. WSCC combines law enforcement, health professionals, counselors and long-term help for children and their families. This unique combination protects traumatized victims from an overwhelming system and its regulations. Please join with us and send your tax deductible donation to:

Western Slope Center for Children
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