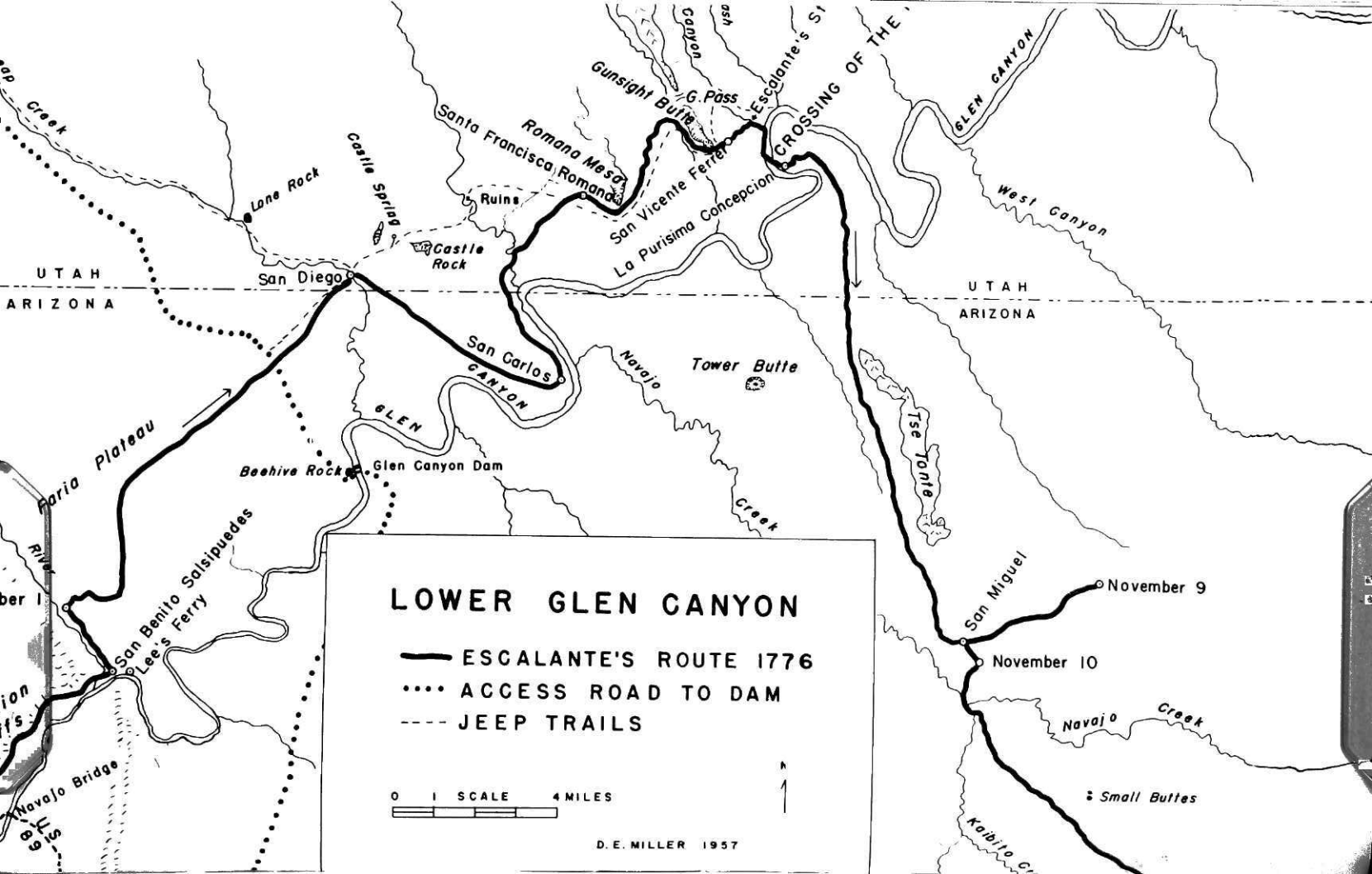




The map of lower Glen Canyon is by David E. Miller. On page 226 an aerial view looking southwest across the Colorado River at the site known as the "Crossing of the Fathers" is reproduced through the courtesy of W. C. Lee.

DISCOVERY OF GLEN CANYON, 1776

*By David E. Miller**



Activities associated with the building of Glen Canyon Dam are focusing nation-wide attention on the whole canyon country of southern Utah and northern Arizona, one of the most spectacular and unique regions in America. Here is a veritable scenic wonderland, rich in historic background and resplendent with local color. High on the list of its attractions is the deep straight-walled canyon gorge where the dam is being built. Adequate observation points afford opportunity for visitors to observe the actual progress of the construction program. A good access road extends eastward from Kanab to the damsite, seventy-five miles distant. This highway will soon bridge the Colorado gorge immediately downstream from the dam and rejoin U.S. Highway 89 a dozen miles south of Navajo Bridge. Other important attractions in the

* Dr. Miller was a member of an expedition, supported by a grant from the University of Utah Research Fund, which made a preliminary reconnaissance into the Glen Canyon area in 1956. In 1957 he was assigned to the history section of the Upper Colorado River Basin Archeological Salvage Project. He has conducted four more field trips for the purpose of checking numerous points along the Escalante trail, most of which he has covered either on foot or by jeep. Numerous people have aided with this field work, foremost among them being C. Gregory Crampton, professor of history at the University of Utah, who headed the 1956 reconnaissance. Others include: A. R. Mortensen, director of the Utah State Historical Society; Henry J. Webb and Kenneth E. Eble of the University of Utah English Department; W. H. Snell of Brigham Young University; Wendell E. Taylor of Salt Lake City; Fay Hamblin of Kanab, Utah, and Earl E. Olson, librarian, L.D.S. Church Historian's library. Numbered footnotes appear at the end of this article.

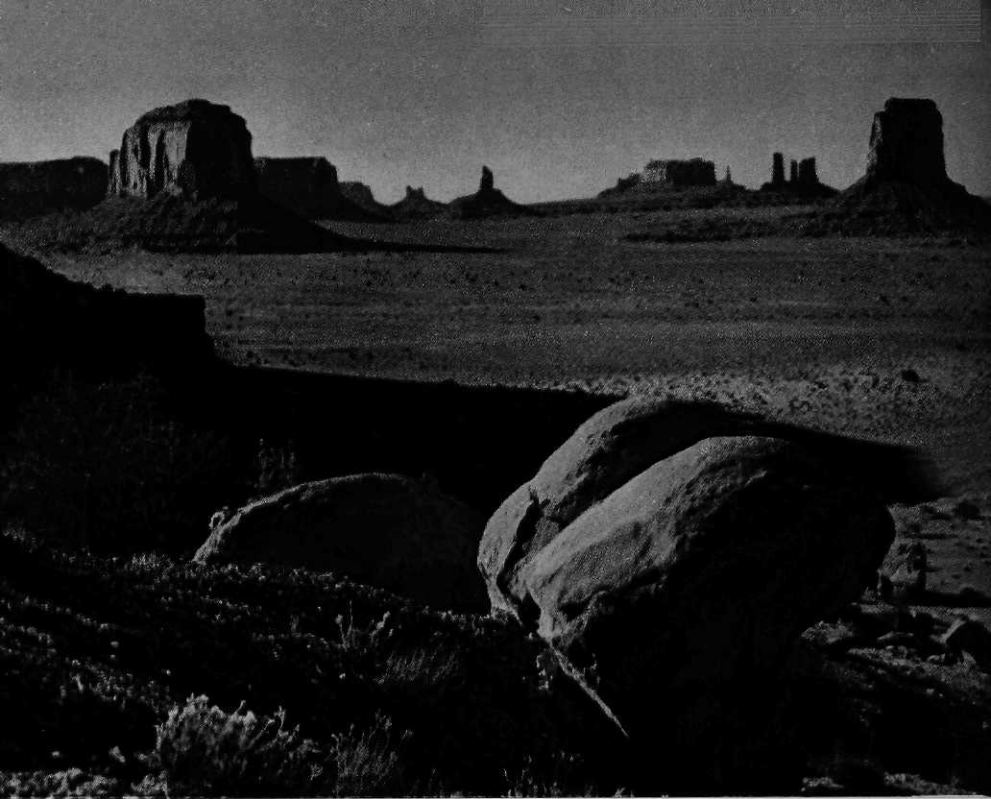


PHOTO COURTESY W. C. LEE

Monument Valley is in Navajo Reservation country. The awe-inspiring monoliths in this colorful land of isolation are scattered over a wide area which stretches across the Utah-Arizona line.

area are: Paria Canyon, one of the most colorful spots in the West and the site of a Mormon ghost town; The Crossing of the Fathers, where the discoverers of Glen Canyon forded the Colorado in 1776; Hole-in-the-Rock, site of the most spectacular pioneer road-building project in the West; Rainbow Bridge, whose majestic sweeping arch is high enough to clear the dome of our National Capitol; Navajo Mountain and Monument Valley farther to the east; the famous Bryce and Zion National Parks to the north and west. Countless other canyons, buttes, and mesas, too numerous for identification here, contain natural bridges, arches, balancing rocks, extensive sand dunes, petrified wood, and desert flowers — everything, in fact, which contributes to the solitude and charm of our southwest desert country. In addition to the natural splendor of the area, this is the home of the Navajo Indians, who have developed a unique and charming desert culture. Now that this region

is being opened and made accessible, it is bound to become one of the most attractive sections of America.

During the late summer of 1776, shortly after the thirteen English colonies on the east coast of North America had declared their independence and George Washington was making a desperate and heroic attempt to hold the American position in New York against superior British forces, another epic of American history was being enacted in a wild, desolate, unexplored region of the Far West. During that season the Domínguez-Escalante expedition discovered the Glen Canyon of the Colorado River, examined portions of it rather carefully, and eventually cut steps down the solid rock wall of one of its tributaries in order to ford the mighty stream at a spot now known as the Crossing of the Fathers. The following is an account of the activities of that Spanish party in the Glen Canyon area.¹

ORIGIN OF THE DOMÍNGUEZ-ESCALANTE EXPEDITION

For several years prior to 1776 the Spaniards had been pushing northward along the west coast of North America. Missions had been established at San Diego in 1769; Carmel, 1770; San Gabriel, 1771; San Luis Obispo, 1772; and the expansion was just getting started. San Francisco and San Juan Capistrano would be founded during the year of 1776, Santa Clara, 1777, with numerous new settlements in the following years.

A natural outgrowth of this Spanish expansion into California was the desirability of establishing a line of communication between the older settlements of New Mexico and the new ones on the Pacific. Three Franciscan fathers, Francisco Garcés, Silvestre Vélez de Escalante, and Francisco Antanasio Domínguez, had, all acting under similar instructions from their superiors, spent considerable time and energy on this project prior to the great exploration of 1776.

In 1775 Escalante was stationed at the Zuñi villages where he was busily engaged in missionary work among the natives. During July of that year, under authorization from the governor of New Mexico, he led a small expedition to the Hopi villages for the purpose of investigating the feasibility of opening a route to Monterey by way of the Colorado River and the land of the Cosninas, now known as the Havasupais. Although the Spaniards were given a cool reception by the Hopis, who had demonstrated no interest in the Christian God, Escalante had the good fortune of meeting a young Cosnina who happened at that time

to be at the village of Walpi. The two men seem to have gained each other's confidence at once, and in the course of the conversation the priest was able to gather considerable information concerning the country and people to be found along the proposed route to California. Armed with this new mass of information plus a rapidly growing enthusiasm for the project ahead, Escalante hurried back to make his recommendations for an expedition of reconnaissance.

Meanwhile Father Garcés, operating out of San Xavier del Bac (near Tucson, Arizona), had been exploring the possibilities of opening a route from that mission to Santa Fé. During the spring of 1776 he pushed eastward as far as the Hopi villages.

While Escalante and Garcés were busy conducting these preliminary reconnaissances in the west and attempting to gain favor with the Indians of the region, the third man of the trio was eagerly promoting the same project. Early in 1775 Father Domínguez was sent to inspect the Christian progress in New Mexico and report the condition of the missions there. He was further instructed to attempt to open a route to the California coast and soon began laying plans for the inauguration of that project. Since Domínguez was well acquainted with the activities of Escalante in the area, it was quite natural that he should have summoned the Zuñi missionary to Santa Fé for consultation. The meeting of these two took place early in June, 1776, and culminated in the organization and launching of the now famous Domínguez-Escalante expedition, one of the greatest explorations in Western history.

Because the Spaniards had received cold treatment at the hands of the Hopis, who resisted Spanish expansion, and since the Apaches along the Gila River were known to be hostile toward the white man's advances, a direct route westward from Santa Fé seemed impracticable at that time. However, during the preceding decade numerous Spanish explorers and traders had pushed northward from New Mexico, and by 1776 the area comprising southwestern Colorado as far north as the junction of the Uncompahgre and Gunnison rivers was fairly well known. It is very likely that the region north of the latter stream had likewise undergone considerable examination. As a result, leaders of the proposed expedition decided to follow a northern course as far as the country was known and eventually swing to the west in a circuitous route to Monterey. Although the primary purpose of the undertaking was that of a line of communication, its leaders also hoped to bring Christianity to the natives who would be encountered en route and ultimately establish missions among them.

COMPANY PERSONNEL AND GENERAL ROUTE

Departure from Santa Fé had been set for July 4, 1776, but unforeseen events necessitated a delay of almost a month, and the expedition finally set out on July 29. Father Domínguez was official head of the enterprise, but since Escalante wrote a superb daily record of the company's progress, his name is more often associated with the expedition than that of his superior officer.² Indeed, the trek is usually referred to as the Escalante expedition. A third major member of the company was Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, a retired army captain then living at Santa Fé. As cartographer of the expedition, Miera prepared some outstanding maps of the area traversed and also presented the King of Spain with a glowing written account of the reconnaissance.³ In addition to the three men listed above, the following seven names appear on the official list of the expedition's personnel: Don Juan Pedro Cisneros, alcalde mayor of the pueblo of Zuñi; Don Joaquín Láin, citizen of Zuñi; Lorenzo Olivares, El Paso; Andrés Muñis, interpreter of the Yutas language, and his brother Lucrecio; Juan de Aguilar; Simón Lucero, servant of Cisneros.⁴

Although the expedition consisted of only ten persons at the beginning of the trek, two "genízaros" (friendly Indians of mixed blood) joined the company August 14 on the Dolores River near Cahone, Colorado. Escalante usually refers to these men as Felipe and Juan Domingo. Near the present town of Austin, Colorado, the company encountered and hired as guide a Laguna Indian to whom the padres gave the name of Silvestre. This man accompanied the party as far as Utah Lake, performing valuable service. A few days later, September 2, along the route between the Gunnison and Colorado rivers, a second Laguna Indian was added to the company. He was given the name of Joaquín and accompanied the explorers all the way back to Santa Fé. At Utah Lake a third Laguna Indian, given the name of José María by the priests, joined the company as guide, but he deserted on October 5 as the expedition was passing through the west side of Pavant Valley, south of Delta, Utah. Other Indians traveled briefly with the company from time to time but not long enough to give them official status as part of it. An examination of these names and dates will show that during most of the trek the expedition consisted of from twelve to fourteen persons. Plenty of horses and mules for riding and packing were supplied; how many is not known. A small herd of cattle was driven along to help supply food on the early part of the trek.



The expedition headed northwestward from Santa Fé, through northern New Mexico and western Colorado, on a meandering course that eventually took them to the Green River in northeastern Utah. They forded this stream on September 16 just south of the present entrance to Dinosaur National Monument, immediately north of Jensen, Utah.⁵ Their march then took the party westward along the Duchesne River to the rim of the Great Basin where Strawberry Reservoir is located today, just south of U.S. 40. From that point the company made its way over the divide and down Spanish Fork Canyon to Utah Lake, which the Spaniards named Lake Timpanogos for the friendly Indians of the area. After a few days in the Utah Lake vicinity, the expedition turned to the south, struck Sevier River a short distance southwest of Nephi, Utah, and followed it most of the way to Sevier Lake. From the Pavant Valley the route again turned to the south.

On October 8, in the vicinity of present-day Milford, Utah, the padres determined that since the season was already so far advanced and there seemed to be no trail to the west, it would be well-nigh impossible to continue toward the Pacific Coast. They decided to return to Santa Fé. As a result, the party continued southward through Utah, and made a long difficult circuit into northern Arizona before eventually arriving, on October 26, at the mouth of the Paria River on the Colorado. Camp was pitched just west of the present buildings of Lee's Ferry and named San Benito Salsipuedes.

EXPERIENCES AT LEE'S FERRY

Expedition leaders realized that the major obstacle blocking their route back to Santa Fé was the mighty Colorado which must be crossed somewhere. Natives encountered along the way told vague stories of a satisfactory shallow ford which must be located before the company could proceed very far. Hunting for this place where the river could be successfully crossed developed into a desperate search which led to the discovery and exploration of the lower portion of Glen Canyon.

The Spaniards' first attempt at a crossing was made at the present site of Lee's Ferry, some six miles upstream from the present Navajo Bridge at Marble Canyon and right at the lower end of Glen Canyon. Here expedition leaders sent two expert swimmers⁶ into the stream in an endeavor to cross and explore southward for the purpose of determining whether or not a suitable route out of the river gorge could be found at that point. There would be no advantage in gaining the south bank

only to be hemmed in by impassable terrain. Carrying their clothes in bundles on their heads, the two men plunged into the current. Finding it much swifter and wider than it had appeared from the bank, they felt lucky to be able to reach the south side alive, having lost their clothing in the turbulent river water. Naked and exhausted, the men had no stomach for an exploration southward, especially without shoes. After a brief rest they again struck into the swirling waters and managed to return to the north shore in safety. Obviously, this was not the easy shallow ford described by the Indians.

The next day (October 27) Don Juan Pedro Cisneros was dispatched on an exploration of the Paria River in an attempt to find a way out of the Glen Canyon gorge. "He traveled all day and part of the night without finding a way out. He saw an acclivity very near here by which it would be possible to cross the mesa but it appeared to him to be very difficult. Others went to reconnoiter in different directions but found only insuperable obstacles in the way of reaching the ford without going back a long distance."⁷

With no other apparent avenue of escape from their predicament, the padres decided to make another desperate attempt to cross the Colorado, and devoted the major part of October 28 to this undertaking. Since swimming or fording seemed out of the question, expedition personnel constructed a raft of driftwood logs found along the river bank in an attempt to float across. Father Escalante, assisted by two or three others, led this second assault on the mighty Colorado. However, a short distance from shore the twelve-foot-long poles used to propel the raft failed to touch bottom, and the craft drifted helplessly. Adverse winds, eddies, and whirlpools prevented the party from reaching mid-stream, and after three unsuccessful attempts the enterprise was abandoned. Although the padres were extremely disappointed at their apparent failure, they were probably very fortunate not to have been able to propel their raft into the middle of the stream. Had they reached the center of the channel, the swift current undoubtedly would have swept the party rapidly downstream into Marble Canyon and almost certain destruction.⁸

Completely convinced that there was no possibility of crossing the Colorado at that point and that this was certainly not the ford described by the Indians, the leaders now dispatched Andrés and Lucrecio Muñis on a second reconnaissance of the Paria with instructions to find a way out of the canyon gorge and explore upstream along the Colorado until they found a satisfactory ford.

In the meantime, not knowing how long the wait would be, the padres ordered a horse slaughtered to replenish the exhausted food supply. This was the second horse to become part of the rations, the first having been killed on October 23. The fact that the company had to resort to slaughtering their horses in order to sustain life is a good indication of the deplorable situation in which they found themselves.

At one o'clock on November 1 the two explorers returned with the report that they had not only found a pass by which the company could climb out of the Paria but also had located the long sought ford of the Colorado. The pass seemed to be the one Cisneros had sighted on October 27, and since it was very steep and difficult, the padres decided to march up the Paria one league to its base and camp for the night in order to be able to make the ascent early the next morning. Escalante notes in his journal that the night was very cold, resulting in much suffering among the personnel. This was a sort of forecast of cold stormy weather that could be expected at that season of the year.

FROM LEE'S FERRY TO THE CROSSING OF THE FATHERS

After this cold uncomfortable night, Escalante recorded the following:

November 2. We set out from Río de Santa Teresa [Paria River] and climbed the acclivity, which we called Cuesta de las Ánimas and which must be a half a league long. We spent more than three hours in climbing it because at the beginning it is very rugged and sandy and afterward has very difficult stretches and extremely perilous ledges of rock, and finally it becomes impassable. Having finished the ascent toward the east, we descended the other side through rocky gorges with extreme difficulty. Swinging north, and having gone a league, we turned northeast for half a league through a stretch of red sand which was very troublesome for the animals. We ascended a little elevation, and having traveled two and a half leagues also to the northeast, we descended to an arroyo which in places had running water which although saline was fit to drink. There was pasturage also, so we camped here, naming the place San Diego. — Today four and a half leagues.

Today we camped . . . near a multitude of narrow valleys, little mesas and peaks of red earth which at first sight look like the ruins of a fortress.⁹

This day's march had brought the company to Wahweap Creek where camp was pitched on the relatively smooth bottomlands just north of the Utah-Arizona boundary, slightly upstream from the upper end of the narrows whose precipitous walls make it impossible to cross Wahweap Canyon below that point. In clear view to the northeast and east of this spot are some outstanding rock formations, one of which bears the name of "Castle Rock," doubtless the same formations which reminded Escalante of fortress ruins.

From the east bank of the Wahweap the expedition struck a southeasterly course toward the Colorado. This time they reached the sheer north rim of the river gorge opposite the mouth of Navajo Creek, which comes into the Colorado from the southeast. One glance convinced Escalante that the two scouts "had neither found the ford, nor in so many days even made the necessary reconnaissance of such a short stretch of country, because they spent the time seeking some of the Indians who live hereabouts, and accomplished nothing."¹⁰

Here the precipitous walls of Glen Canyon were found to be almost impassable for man or beast, but Juan Domingo and Lucrecio Muñis were sent across the river in search of a possible way out via Navajo Creek Canyon—should the Colorado prove fordable. Lucrecio was equipped with a horse but no saddle or other gear and virtually no clothing, having stripped off all but his shirt in order to lighten the load. He did carry fire-making materials so that he could send back smoke signals in case an exit via Navajo Creek should be found. Escalante noted that the horse had a difficult time crossing the river at that point, having to swim "for a long stretch and where it faltered the water reached almost to its shoulders."

In the meantime the remainder of the company endured an uncomfortable dry camp on the canyon rim, "not being able to water the animals although the river was so close by. We named the campsite El Vado de los Cosninas, or San Carlos." The following day Escalante, discouraged but far from defeated, made the following journal entry:

November 4. Day broke without our getting news of the two we sent yesterday to make the reconnaissance. We had used up the flesh of the second horse, and today we had not taken any nourishment whatsoever, so we broke our fast with toasted leaves of small cactus plants and a sauce made of a berry¹¹ they brought from the banks of the river. This berry is by itself very pleasant to taste, but crushed and boiled in water as we ate it today it is very insipid. Since it was already

late, and the two emissaries had not appeared, we ordered that an attempt should be made to get the animals down to the river, and that on its banks another horse should be killed. With great difficulty they got the animals down, some of them being injured because, losing their footing on the rocks, they rolled down long distances. Shortly before nightfall the genízaro, Juan Domingo, returned, declaring that he had not found an exit, and that the other emissary, leaving his horse in the middle of the [Navajo Creek] canyon, had followed some fresh Indian tracks.¹²

To anyone who has visited this portion of Glen Canyon, it seems almost impossible that the Spanish expedition was able to maneuver their horses from the canyon rim down to the river water opposite the mouth of Navajo Creek. Yet they did it without loss or serious accident. It likewise seems incredible that Lucrecio should have failed in his attempt to negotiate that canyon on horseback, especially at the low water season. Hikers cover that stretch with relative ease nowadays.

Early the following morning the search for the ford was pursued; the only feasible thing to do was to continue upstream in search of it. After a league and a half of very difficult traveling almost due north, the expedition found itself on the west bank of Warm Creek which flows into the Colorado just north of the Utah-Arizona boundary. Warm Creek cuts through a narrow, winding, steep-walled gorge in its lower reaches; it is not surprising that the Spanish party experienced some hardship in getting across it. However, they located the only practical access route into it from the west by way of a long sandy slope, over which the party managed to approach the canyon rim. Already used to mastering steep walls, they soon worked their way down to the floor of this new gorge, almost a mile above its confluence with the Colorado.

In this canyon "there was a great deal of copperas. In it we found a little-used trail, followed it, and by it left the canyon, passing a small bench of white rock, difficult but capable of being made passable."¹³ Isolated outcroppings of green and white rock add interesting color contrast to the reds, browns, and grays of that region today. Escalante's mention of such details lends considerable assistance to historians attempting to retrace his route.

Once across Warm Creek Canyon the expedition found relatively flat terrain and soon arrived at the southwest base of a high mesa where limited water and sufficient pasturage were found. This camp was

located in one of the upper branches of Cottonwood Wash (a tributary of Warm Creek) and immediately west of a huge mesa.¹⁴ A small seepage at that site still supports cottonwood trees and supplies limited water for animals. Escalante named the campsite Santa Francisca Romana. During the night a heavy rainstorm drenched the camp and did not cease until "several hours" after daybreak, November 6.

As soon as the rain stopped, the party continued its march, skirting the south end of Romana Mesa and then proceeding in a northeasterly direction. After traveling three leagues they were forced to stop "for a long time by a heavy storm and a torrent of rain and large hail, with horrible thunder and lightning. We chanted the Litany of the Virgin in order that She might ask some relief for us and God was pleased that the storm should cease."¹⁵

Since they were now in the drainage of Gunsight Canyon, it seems safe to assume that the cloudburst had sent a flash flood booming down that wash, forcing the expedition to halt while the water subsided. As soon as conditions permitted (although the rain did not cease) travel was resumed. The company now skirted the south end of Gunsight Butte, continued a short distance to the east, and, finding the way "blocked by some boulders," camped for the night.¹⁶ This camp, called San Vicente Ferrer, was located on the south side of Navajo Canyon (locally known as Padre Creek) less than a half-mile straight east from the south tip of Gunsight Butte and about the same distance from the Colorado River rim.¹⁷

Anxious to learn if there was a possibility of crossing the river at this point, the fathers sent Cisneros to make a reconnaissance. He soon:

... returned with the report that he had seen that here the river was very wide, and judging from the current it did not appear to him to be deep, but that we would be able to reach it only through a nearby canyon.¹⁸ We sent two other persons to examine the canyon and ford the river, and they returned saying that it was very difficult. But we did not give much credence to their report and decided to examine everything ourselves next day in company with Don Juan Pedro Cisneros. Before nightfall the genízaro arrived with Lucrecio.¹⁹

THE CROSSING OF THE FATHERS

Early on November 7 Escalante, Domínguez, Cisneros, Felipe, and Juan Domingo set out to examine the canyon and ford. They found access to Navajo Canyon (Padre Creek) very steep and difficult, necessi-

tating the cutting of steps "with axes for a distance of three varas or a little less" down its south slope in order that the horses might obtain secure footing.²⁰ In this way the animals made the descent safely, although without packs. Once in the bottom of the Navajo, an easy walk of approximately a quarter of a mile brought the men to the river proper.²¹ From this point they turned downstream (to the south) and traveled "about two musket shots sometimes in the water, sometimes on the bank, until we reached the widest part of its current where the ford appeared to be. One of the men waded in and found it good, not having to swim at any place."²²

Actually, they had not gone more than a hundred yards downstream from the mouth of Navajo Canyon before arriving at a fine sandbar several yards wide, which extends some three hundred yards beneath the sheer cliffs of the Colorado's west wall, and were thus enabled to examine the area before attempting to cross. After selecting the most likely spot, one of the men waded in, found the river bed solid, and crossed to the east bank without having to swim. The padres immediately:

. . . followed him on horseback a little lower down, and when half way across, the two horses which went ahead lost their footing and swam a short distance. We waited, although in some peril, until the first wader returned from the other side to guide us and then we crossed with ease, the horses not having to swim at all. We notified the rest of our companions, who had remained at San Vicente, that with lassoes and ropes they should let the pack saddles and other effects, down a not very high cliff to the bend of the ford, and that they should bring the animals by the route over which we had come.²³

At a point immediately west of the west end of the ford, there is a depression or low spot in the perpendicular cliffs of the canyon wall. At one point in the low spot a person can easily reach a position not more than fifty or sixty feet above the sandbar below. It was evidently from this point that the camp gear was lowered over the cliff to the sandbar. When this task had been accomplished, the animals were brought to the base of the cliff by way of the route the advance group had pioneered. There the packs were again loaded and all made the crossing without incident, accomplishing the feat by five o'clock in the afternoon. After such a long and difficult search for the ford, it is understandable that the company should have held a mild celebration on the east bank of the Colorado by:

. . . praising God our Lord and firing off a few muskets as a sign of the great joy which we all felt at having overcome so great a difficulty and which had cost us so much labor and delay. . . . But doubtless God disposed that we should not obtain a guide, perhaps as a benign punishment for our sins, or perhaps in order that we might acquire some knowledge of the people who live in these parts. May His holy will be done in all things and His holy name glorified.

The ford of the river is very good and here it must be a mile wide, or a little more.²⁴ Before reaching this place the Navajo²⁵ and Dolores rivers have united, together with all those which we have mentioned in this diary as entering one or the other. And in no place which we have seen along here is it possible to establish on the banks any settlement whatsoever, or even to travel on either bank a good day's journey either downstream or upstream with the hope that its water might serve for men and animals, because, aside from the bad terrain, the river runs in a very deep gorge. All the region nearest to the ford has very high cliffs and peaks. Eight or ten leagues to the northeast of the ford there is a high, rounded peak which the Payuchis, whose country begins here, call Tucané, which means Black Peak,²⁶ and it is the only one hereabouts which can be seen close at hand from the river crossing.

On this eastern bank, at the very ford which we called La Purísima Concepción de la Virgen Santísima, there is a fair-sized valley of good pasturage.²⁷ In it we spent the night and observed its latitude by the north star, and it is 36° and 55'.²⁸

No time could be lost now that the Colorado had been crossed. It was late in the year, the weather was getting progressively colder, and many miles of unknown trail still separated the company from Santa Fé. Early the following morning the journey was resumed. A well-worn Indian trail led up the slope eastward from the campsite to the base of some cliffs about halfway between the river and the top of the ridge. From that point it turned to the south over rough but passable terrain, enabling the party to cover six leagues before evening, the longest day's march since their arrival at Glen Canyon.²⁹ The route took them southward along the west base of Tse Tonte toward the confluence of Navajo and Kaibito creeks; Tower Butte was in clear view to the west.

As the expedition approached the brink of Navajo Creek they lost the trail in the rocks and were forced to pitch camp, naming the site

San Miguel. Unable to locate the trail the following morning, the party turned to the east and wandered approximately six miles into some very rough country north of Navajo Creek, where they were again halted by impassable terrain. Indians encountered there told the Spaniards that they were going in the wrong direction and would have to backtrack to the previous night's camp and then follow a southwesterly course that would lead down into Navajo Creek Canyon. Two days were lost in this detour, and on November 10 camp was pitched in rough terrain just above the beginning of the descent, not more than a mile southeast of San Miguel.

Early on November 11 the expedition worked its way down the difficult and dangerous trail to the bottom of Navajo Creek, then headed upstream to the forks and followed Kaibito Creek for a short distance before climbing out on the east side.³⁰ The route led southward along the east side of Kaibito Creek Canyon where the company camped, some six miles north of Kaibito Spring. Next day they passed the spring (the present site of the Indian school and trading post of Kaibito) and continued on their journey to the south.

There is no place in this report for a complete account of the expedition's return to Santa Fé. Suffice it to say that eventually they arrived at their destination, January 2, 1777, having given more than five months to one of the most remarkable explorations in the history of the Great American West and having discovered Glen Canyon en route.

NOTES

¹ Herbert E. Bolton's *Pageant in the Wilderness*, which was published as volume XVIII of the *Utah Historical Quarterly* (1950), has been relied upon for the text of Escalante's journal and for a general account of the incidents leading to the Domínguez-Escalante expedition. Dr. Bolton traversed most of the route in connection with the editing of the journal, but that portion lying between Lee's Ferry and the San Miguel campsite was neglected, primarily because of the remoteness of the area and the lack of passable roads into it. As a result, the current study required considerable field work, for it is necessary to see the country in order to identify the places described by Escalante and to appreciate the problems encountered and the achievements of that Spanish party in 1776. Of course, the padres did not realize that the portion of the mighty Colorado which they had discovered and explored was the lower part of what is now known as Glen Canyon. Almost a century later, the John Wesley Powell Colorado River expeditions of 1869 and 1871, working their way slowly downstream, gave appropriate names to various segments of the river gorge. After battling the numerous rapids of Cataract Canyon, the party was pleasantly surprised to find a stretch of smooth calm water, where they floated without danger and with little effort through the heart of a scenic wonderland. So impressed were members of the 1871 expedition that they named this beautiful portion of the river "Glen Canyon." It extends from the mouth of Frémont River to the Paria at Lee's Ferry, a distance of 170 miles.

² The journal was written in the first person plural, and was signed by both leaders. Whenever decisions were arrived at or record made in the journal, it was most often stated that "we" decided or "we" crossed in safety, etc. There seems to have been very close harmony between the two leaders.

³ Miera's report is included in Bolton's *Pageant in the Wilderness*, 243-50.

⁴ The Escalante journal entry of October 5 notes that Cisneros had to punish his servant Lucero. Reference is made to "the servants" in the entry of October 26, but they are not identified.

⁵ C. Gregory Crampton, "The Discovery of the Green River," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XX (October, 1952), 300-12, is an excellent account of that part of the Domínguez-Escalante expedition.

⁶ On November 7 Escalante records that they took with them the two genízaros, Felipe and Juan Domingo, to examine the ford at the Crossing of the Fathers because they were good swimmers. These were probably the two who swam the river at the site of Lee's Ferry on October 26.

⁷ Bolton, *op. cit.*, 219, 220.

⁸ Almost a century after the Spanish failure to cross the Colorado at this point, John D. Lee built a ferry there which provided the only satisfactory river crossing for vehicles between that point and Moab. Until the Navajo Bridge replaced it in 1929, the ferry at that site was a vital link in the transportation and communication between Utah and Arizona settlements.

⁹ Bolton, *op. cit.*, 221.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 222.

¹¹ According to Dr. Walter P. Cottam, professor and head of the Department of Botany, University of Utah, this fruit was probably hackberries, which are found in abundance along the Colorado.

¹² Bolton, *op. cit.*, 222, 223.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁴ This huge mesa, heretofore unnamed, is one of the outstanding landmarks of the area. The name which has been given it was suggested by Escalante's designation of the campsite near its base. See accompanying map.

¹⁵ Bolton, *op. cit.*, 224.

¹⁶ From their campsite of Santa Francisca Romana to the crossing of Gunsight Canyon, they should have been on the main-traveled trail to the ford, for it followed that exact route. Yet Escalante makes no mention of it. Instead of turning to the right (south) from the Gunsight Canyon crossing in order to skirt the south end of Gunsight Butte, as the padres had done, the main trail took a left course—upstream—for nearly a mile, then turned almost due east through Gunsight Pass. Once through the pass a rough but passable trail led to the north brink of Navajo Canyon (Padre Creek) directly opposite the point on the south bank reached by the Spanish party. A series of rough-hewn steps and fills still mark the trail down to the canyon floor from the north rim. The padres probably missed the main-traveled trail through Gunsight Pass because the pass is not visible from the point where the expedition turned south after having crossed Gunsight Canyon. Although the main trail may have been visible, even in a heavy rain storm, expedition leaders would logically have been reluctant to follow it, for it seemed to lead only into the high mesas to the north, not to the river.

¹⁷ This camp was not right on the Glen Canyon rim as has been assumed by some people. The fact that the reports of Cisneros and two others sent to explore the area seem to have been received by the padres as new information would indicate that the camp was not located in view of the Colorado waters. It was situated a half-mile or more to the west, on a rough rocky plain.

¹⁸ This is Escalante's first reference to Navajo Canyon (Padre Creek), by which the expedition gained access to the Colorado the following day. Although the ford used by the Spaniards in 1776 saw spasmodic use for more than a century, it ultimately fell into disuse before 1900. Even the exact location of the Crossing was lost for several decades—although it may have been known to some ranchers and river explorers—and was not definitely relocated and the location made known to the public until 1937, as a result of intensive field work under the direction of Dr. Russell G. Frazier, Charles Kelly, and Byron Davies. The following year members of the Julius F. Stone expedition named the access canyon "Padre Creek" in honor of its discoverers and placed a plaque there to

mark the spot. See Russell G. Frazier, "El Vado de los Padres," *Desert Magazine* (July, 1940), 3-5.

"Padre Creek" should become the official title, since we now know that it was there and not at Kane Wash that the Spanish party approached the Colorado and forded it at the Crossing of the Fathers. In retaining the present designation of "Navajo Canyon" there is danger that "Padre Creek" will be confused with Navajo Creek, already identified, which enters the Colorado from the opposite side, fifteen miles downstream. But this is a matter for the United States Board on Geographic Names. Only recently (1957) has the Crossing of the Fathers been identified correctly on official government maps.

¹⁹ Lucrecio, equipped with one horse, had been sent across the Colorado from camp San Carlos to examine the canyon of Navajo Creek in search of a possible trail out toward the east and south. Two days later Andrés Muñis had left the Santa Francisca camp in search of Lucrecio. It is assumed that the two men in rejoining the main company had followed the tracks of the Escalante party, bringing the horse with them. The expedition was at full strength again, thirteen men.

²⁰ Three varas would be somewhat under nine feet. Since the Spaniards passed that way on November 7, 1776, other travelers using the ford found it desirable to cut additional steps or notches in the solid sandstone as a means of securing better footing for their animals and probably for themselves. Today there is no unanimity of opinion as to which of these various cuttings was the work of the original explorers.

²¹ Escalante states: "We went down the canyon and having traveled a mile we descended to the river. . . ." Yet the location of the steps is less than a quarter-mile above the mouth of Navajo Canyon [Padre Creek]. Escalante's "mile" might be the estimated distance from camp San Vicente Ferrer to the Colorado. Moreover, he also estimates the width of the river at the ford as a "mile or a little more." Both of these might be simple overestimates of the distance covered, but this does not seem quite likely. Escalante usually recorded distances in leagues, and his use of the term "mile" may have been to indicate a unit much shorter than is generally believed. The two distances — from the steps to the mouth of "Padre Creek" and from the west side of the Colorado to the east side *via* the ford — are about the same.

²² Bolton, *op. cit.*, 224, 225. On April 1, 1957, a group found it impossible to go downstream from the mouth of Navajo Canyon because of deep water flowing at the base of a perpendicular wall. But conditions change from season to season and from year to year, and although the padres passed in safety, the route would never be safe except under the most favorable circumstances.

²³ Bolton, *loc. cit.*

²⁴ See note 21 above.

²⁵ The San Juan River.

²⁶ This is Navajo Mountain, which juts more than 10,000 feet into the sky approximately twenty-five miles east of the Crossing of the Fathers.

²⁷ Just below the ford at the Crossing, the Colorado makes a sharp turn to the left. As a result the main current sweeps against the right (west) rim immediately below the sandbar from which the Spaniards had entered the river at the west side of the ford. This river bend and resulting current pattern have resulted in the creation of a sandbar on the east side opposite the bend. (This condition is repeated in many places inside Glen Canyon.) On this bar the padres found good pasturage for their animals and were happy to camp there for the night.

²⁸ Actually the southern boundary of Utah is the thirty-seventh parallel. Camp Concepción was located almost exactly three miles north of that line.

²⁹ In 1957 a party crossed the Colorado at the mouth of Kane Wash, picked up the well-worn trail used by the Spanish party and followed it for some distance to the south. Herbert E. Bolton covered the region south of camp San Miguel, and A. R. Mortensen confirmed his findings as a result of two field trips into the area during 1955 and 1956.

³⁰ The old trail, still in use, leads down into Navajo Creek about a quarter of a mile below its confluence with Kaibito Creek. Once in the bottom, the expedition followed this trail upstream some three hundred yards into Kaibito Canyon before climbing out to the east, still on the old trail.