

PIONEER DAYS. Soznyo  
to the OTHER side of mps. May 14  
1981

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Captions--Livestock Trails

1. Henry and Ethel Olivas and their grand daughter.

Adele Reed photo

2. A flock of 5000 sheep gathered at Monache Meadows in 1897.

Owner Pete Giraud , brother of Alfred R. Giraud.

Alfred J. Giraud Collection

3. Alfred R. Giraud, left, and a helper in southern Inyo in early years. The burro carried all the camp load.

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4. A herd of cattle just arriving at Big Pine from the desert in early years.

Forbes Photo

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No. 10 Trails other side of Mt. May 14 '81

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# Trails to 'the other side of the mountain'

by Adele Reed

The use of the Hockett Trail and the Walker Pass in early times meant that mining men, prospectors and settlers, with their herds of cattle left Tulare, Calif. for "the other side of the mountain." In Inyo the mining began to boom and the stock ranchers, in time, needed summer graze for their herds so they could raise winter feed on their land.

Rough trails were found up and over the Sierra to rich meadows where riders and cowboys trailed the herds. A line-cabin of logs was built here and there for the workers, one or two remain today. The trails or "ways" over the summits are becoming historical and need recording as well as the owners of the herds.

We were advised to go to Lone Pine and talk to Henry Olivas about trails. We found his ranch at the western edge of town, he and his wife, Ethel (Dearborn) were in charge of their small granddaughter. There were saddle horses munching in the corral and cow-dogs asleep in the warm sun, giving a feeling of peace and contentment. It was late fall and the towering splendor of Mount Whitney and the Sierra glistened with a mantle of white, seeming but a "skip and a jump" away. Henry, a native of Lone Pine, was brought up in the tradition of trails. His father, Carmen Olivas, and a brother left Sonora, Mexico, in the 1880's. With a grin Henry recalled; "In fact, they were chased all the way to the border by Apaches!"

Carmen rode trails after cattle, packed for the Forest Service and also had a mule pack string of his own, often conveying heavy equipment, pipe and supplies to mines. Henry worked with his father, becoming a true vaquero, and is still active. Years ago, when attending the rodeos at Lone Pine, we

"Monache once meant 'big gathering' to the Indians..."

noted how his riding thrilled the audience. He and Ethel now spend their summers at beautiful Monache Meadows in charge of cattle herds trailed from the Owens River Valley. It is a huge area of numerous green meadows far over the Sierra summit in Tulare county. Legend tells that the name Monache once meant "big gathering" to the Indians who came from east and west.

Flocks of sheep were trailed to Monache also. Henry once found a good sized cross cut and shaped in the heart of a tree, no doubt it marked a place of worship for the Basque herdsmen.

We list Henry's description and name of the most-used stock trails from south to north, all leading westerly from the Owens River Valley. Also the names of the men who used the "ways" for many years. Monache was reached by a trail up Olancho Canyon, by Sage Flat, over Olancho Pass and by Summit Meadows. Ethel tells that Monache is one area where the morning sun, not yet topping the Inyo's, sends a shaft of light to tip the tall pines. And the cool air is sweet with the scent of sage and pine.

The early cattlemen, Summers and Butler, brought a big herd up from the desert by way of Darwin, making headquarters near Owens Lake. They then trailed half the stock north by way of the Rickey Trail into Mono to the Rawson Meadows below Mammoth. The remainder of the cows were pushed up the trail to Monache. Both these men built log cabins there, still standing. There is now a road to the Meadows from the eastern side. From Little Lake a rough road leads to Kennedy Meadows, about nine miles, thence to Monache. Air travel is not recommended. Thus Monache remains more or less primitive and so beautiful. Other stockmen using Monache were; the Crocker of Big Pine, (as there was no trail west of town over the summit.) The Reynolds, Mairs, Lacey's Strohmeyers and Spainhower. The latter ranch was due south of Lone Pine having a superb background of the Sierra and famous for use by the movies. It is now known as the Spainhower-Anchor Ranch.

Next north was Cottonwood Pass, used by the people of Lone Pine, also Georges Creek, an early

The sturdy, humorous, braying burro was the burden bearer of most anything, including the camp gear and supplies. They moved along in the midst of a flock of sheep, grazing as they went. A leader of the sheep in awkward places was sometimes a goat. Long called the numbskull of animals, the sheep would follow a leader most anywhere.

The big flocks that once moved slowly north through Inyo were a superb sight to watch.

"The Long Trail...from the lower San Joaquin Valley ending in Upper Mono..."

Especially interesting were the hard-working dogs, who with one or two herders had control of two to five thousand animals. They could be spotted from afar in the sagebrush, a cloud of dust followed them. Along in the mid-1900's mechanized vehicles carried the big flocks swiftly to summer meadows and a

colorful tradition was lost. Small bands are yet seen here and there.

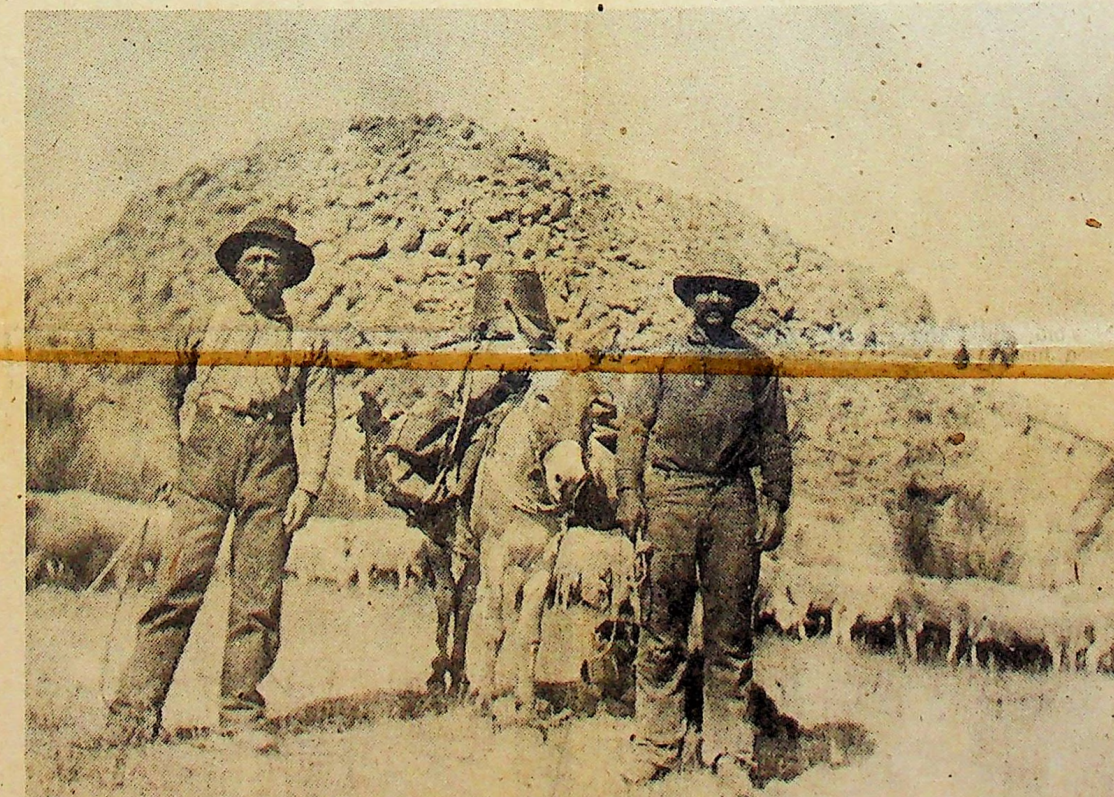
Alfred R. Giraud was a well known and prominent sheepman in Inyo, settling on acreage near Bishop. Alfred was born in France and in 1966 wrote a booklet about his first winter in California as a lad of 19. It was in 1901 that he and a helper trailed sheep from Delano and spent the winter in lower Inyo. The way of life, the customs and the freedom of herders is detailed and of interest. They moved often, to take advantage of water and feed, to Little Lake, Hawaii Spring, Coso Hot Springs, Cactus Flat, Sacator Canyon and Mountain Springs Canyon.

A visit recently with Alfred's son, Alfred J., of Bishop, recalls interest of trails and drives from

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A herd of cattle just arriving at Big Pine from the desert in early years. Forbes Photo U.S. Forest Service collection



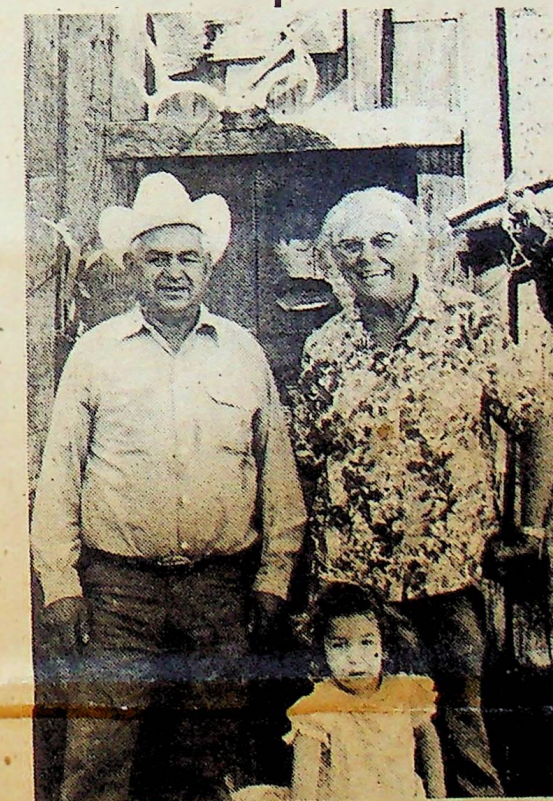
their ranch. "My father trailed large flocks north from winter pasture near Bakersfield each spring and back in late fall. The route was over Greenhorn Mountain area, through Isabella and the Kern River and out to the desert around Red Mountain, Randsborg and north. Many summer trails from the Bishop headquarters were: to Fish Creek by Duck Pass above Mammoth, McGee Mountain where he had a grazing permit, French Lakes near Pine Creek Canyon, the Coyote country west of Bishop, Black Canyon west of Benton Hot Springs near Clover Patch and he also trailed over Sawmill Pass west of Fort Independence. Every year in June he'd take a flock up Silver Canyon in the Whites to feed north of Cottonwood Creek and on Tresplumas Flat, ("three feathers in Spanish.")

We name several of the early Postmasters and Postoffices in southern Inyo as recorded in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

LONE PINE. R. A. Loomis, 15 Apr 70, Mrs. Maggie Eames 17 Apr 70, John Stewart 22 Feb 77.

OLANCHA. M. Allison Wheeler 23 Sept 70, Bassman 12 Sept 71, William Walker 28 Jan 75.

HAIWEE. PO open Feb 7, 1906. Located in NW 1/4 Sec 22, T 20 S, R 37 E. Stage passes door. Harry C. Skinner proposed PM. Attested by Mary S. Dearborn PM at Lone Pine. Village of Cactus Flat 8 miles east and Loco 3 miles west. Total of 50 to be served. Apr 20, 1910 John L. Robinson made application to move PO to SE 1/4, Sec 33, T 20 S, R 37 E, on the east side of siding 25 of the Nevada-California Ry, 100 feet from track. PO moved 1 1/2 miles SW.



Henry and Ethel Olivas and their grand daughter. Adele Reed photo



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Next north was Cottonwood Pass, used by the people of Lone Pine, also Georges Creek, an early settlement later called Manzanar, and herds were also trailed from Independence. The cattle of Johnson brothers, Willie Miller, Abernathy, Jess Chance, Mrs. Edwards, the Hunters and the Schabells were trailed to meadows over the Pass. Names of the meadows, Big and Little Whitney Meadows and Templeton, Ramshaw and Mulky Meadows, all in Tulare county.

A very early trail lead from Lone Pine by way of Carrol Creek and Pocket Corral to the splendor of Horseshoe Meadows, located on the eastern slope of the Sierras. Joe Lopez, Manwell Silvas and a man named Turner trailed their stock to Horseshoe.

Diaz Pass was directly west of Lone Pine. As

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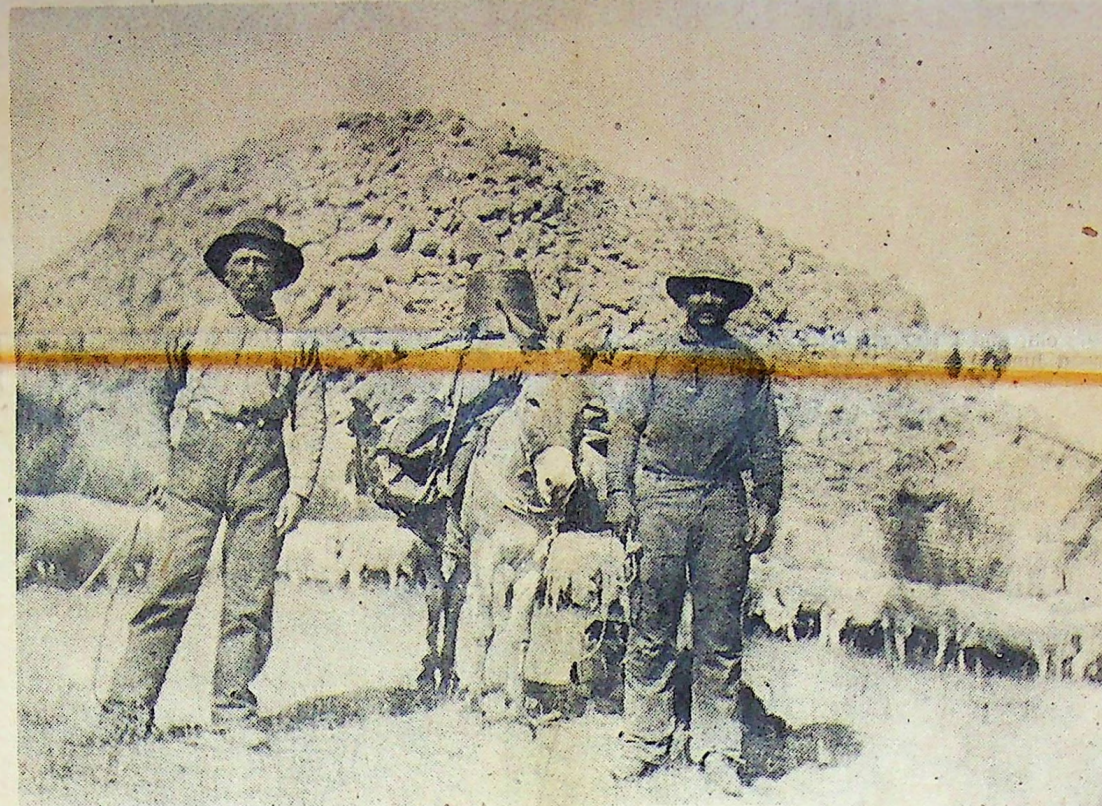
Henry pointed it to us while standing in his yard, it hardly seems possible cattle and also sheep could negotiate the rough country between two tall, jagged and rocky peaks. Interesting history of this trail as told by Olivas; "The sheep belonging to Henry Blank were trailed over Diaz to graze in the South American Lake areas and other meadows. My father once packed in 15 mule loads of salt for the sheep up by Tyndall Creek. The winter of 1916 the snow came early and the sheep were caught in snowdrifts at Rock Creek Lakes. Word was sent out and 30 packers were rounded up to pack in baled hay by mules over Diaz Pass. After the sheep and mules were fed, the mules were used to break the trail ahead of the sheep in 16 to 18 inches of snow in order to get them out." Shepherd Pass was often used by the cattle herds of Russell Spainhower, the Baxters and Gormans to reach Guyot, Crabtree and Tyndall Meadows. Horses also were trailed over this Pass for summer graze.

Farther north there was a Pass named Baxter which was popular to take herds of horses to graze the Kings River Meadows. Other passes over the Sierra were mentioned however they were not as popular for live stock, although they had some use.

Sheep trails were many in the southern end of Inyo and on north. The herders . . . usually Basques from the Pyrenees Mountains of France and Spain . . . had the ability and patience to trail their flocks across long miles of sandy, hot desert to high country and green meadows. Certain water springs and green growth made this possible. Their seemingly endless walk was known as "The Long Trail." That it was, as most came from the lower Sari Joaquin Valley and ending in Upper Mono for the season. Their amazing helpers and guardians, the sheep dogs, were carefully changed at intervals due to the heat, they rated the best of care. Sometimes a lamb was born and it's first day on the trail was spent lashed aboard a burro.

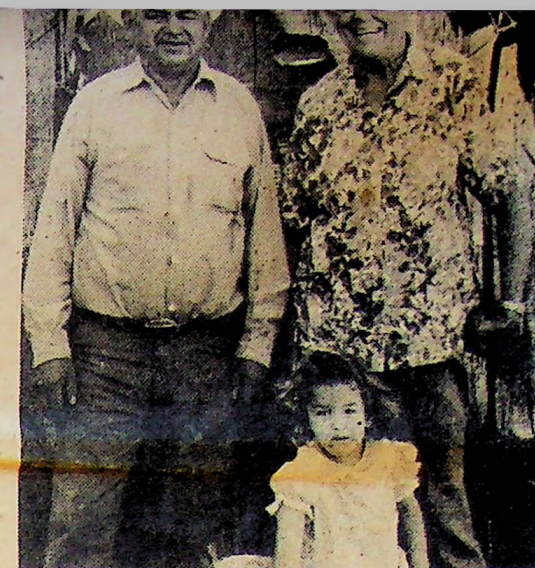
A herd of cattle just arriving at Big Pine from the desert in early years.

Forbes Photo  
U.S. Forest Service collection



Alfred R. Giraud, left, and a helper in southern Inyo in early years. The burro carried all the camp load.

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Henry and Ethel Olivas and their grand daughter.

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A flock of 5000 sheep gathered at Monache Meadows in 1897. Owner Pete Giraud, brother of Alfred R. Giraud.

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