Chapter 9

California at Last

When Beale arrived back in Albuquerque on March 3, 1859, he was surprised to learn that several emigrant trains had attempted to travel his proposed wagon road. He never envisioned emigrants using the road until the government established a military post at the Colorado River (Beale’s Crossing) to protect them from the Mojave Indians. He also had planned to do a considerable amount of road work as no roadbed existed over much of the route, and in many places the route was almost impossible to find. While in Washington, D.C., he secured an appropriation to build bridges over the larger streams, and to construct dams on some of the seasonal watercourses to ensure a more reliable water supply.\(^1\) He felt compassion for the emigrants who suffered so severely in their attempt to travel this new route, but there was little he could do to help them.

Beale felt special pity for the Joel Hedgpeth and John Udell families due to their advanced ages and the fact that they had no means of leaving Albuquerque on their own. In conversations with army officers and local townspeople, he learned of the delicate health of both Mrs. Hedgpeth and Mrs. Udell. His sympathy for the two elderly couples was so aroused that he decided to take them with him on his road-building expedition from Albuquerque to California, although he had no authorization to do so and no allowance for their expenses. For these reasons neither couple is mentioned by name in his official journal. It is believed that he paid their expenses from his own pocket. He provided each family with a wagon and a team of mules so that they would not have to walk. The Hedgpeths had their four younger children, Lewis, William, Joel Jr., and Elizabeth traveling with them. Their
eldest son, Thomas Hedgpeth, and his family had returned to Nodaway County, Missouri, as previously noted.

From March 3–8, Beale was busy preparing for his road-building expedition. He replenished his supplies and hired additional men as teamsters and laborers. Among this group was at least one member of the Rose-Baley wagon train, William Garton, one of the young men who had accompanied the Baley company. There might have been others. Beale was delighted to learn that the Butterfield Overland Mail was now in full operation over the Southern Route, and it was now possible to travel by stage from Albuquerque to Los Angeles. He took advantage of this new mode of transportation by sending his chief clerk, Fred Kerlin, to California with a message for Beale’s business partner, Samuel A. Bishop, at their Tejon ranch. The message requested that Bishop meet him near the Colorado River with a load of provisions since Beale intended to carry only enough supplies to reach that point.

Beale left Albuquerque on March 8, 1859. Udell described the train as, “Consisting of nearly fifty men, fourteen wagons, and probably one hundred mules and horses. . . . We crossed the Rio Grande and proceeded the same route we traveled last year—Mr. Beale’s business being to improve that route, under the instruction, or employ of the United States government.”

Udell described the weather as sunny and windy with night time temperatures below freezing. For March 13, he recorded: “Ice one inch thick this morning, and freezing all day. Cold for old people camping out.” The expedition approached the Continental Divide over the Zuni Range of the Rocky Mountains at an elevation of approximately eight thousand feet.

At Agua Fria the expedition laid by a few days to let the men do some roadwork. “The road just as you ascend to the top of the Rocky Mountains wants some work which the hands have been doing,” wrote Dr. Floyd, the expedition physician in his journal. While encamped at this location Beale sent two wagons under the command of his brother, George Beale, ahead to Zuni to see if the Indians there had any spare corn to sell. “They either sell readily and for little or nothing, or not at all,” Beale wrote in his journal, “and are as capricious in their disposition as possible.”
After completing the roadwork over the Continental Divide, the expedition moved on to the famed Inscription Rock campsite. To the Hedgpeths and Udells, Inscription Rock was becoming a familiar sight, this being their third trip there in the last eight months. The rock was also an old friend to Beale, but to some members of the group, camping at the rock was a new experience. One of these first-time visitors was Dr. Floyd who was greatly impressed with the vista spread before his eyes. His journal entry for Monday, March 21, 1859, read:

We left camp this morning early and after a most windy, somewhat cold and very disagreeable day of it, we made the celebrated camping ground known as Inscription Rock. It has many names, some of them so early as 1639 and from that down to the present day. Those of the early Spaniards are mostly well done, those of the Americans mostly scrawl, many with very obscene remarks attached, thus perpetuating as far as they could their blackguardism.

Floyd might have been impressed with Inscription Rock, but as far as we know he did not leave his name on the monument; if he did it, was obliterated before it was recorded or photographed. Beale’s name appears on the rock but is undated. He probably carved it on his first trip in 1857. At least three members of Beale’s 1859 expedition carved their names on Inscription Rock. The names of E. P. Long, F. Engle Jr., and P. Gilmer Breckinridge, with the date 1859, appear in bold lettering on the south side of the rock. All three were members of Beale’s road-building expedition. Frederick Engle Jr. was Beale’s second in command on this expedition. E. P. Long’s name was written in flowing script, followed by the name of his hometown, Baltimore, Maryland. The names F. Engle Jr. and P. Gilmer Breckinridge, engraved in sharp square letters, appear to have been made using professional tools.

The expedition left Inscription Rock on March 20, and headed for Zuni, camping that night on a branch of the Zuni River. The next day they met Beale’s brother, George, whom Beale had sent ahead with two wagons to try to purchase corn from the Pueblo Indians at Zuni. George Beale brought good news: He found the Pueblo Indians in a trading mood and bought some corn from them. Later that day, the expedition was caught in a severe dust storm. “This
day was very disagreeable,” Beale wrote, “with a high wind blowing dust in every direction, reminding us of Washington City in a winter gale.”

Little time was spent in Zuni because there was no grass nearby for the animals. Camp had to be made some distance from the pueblo. Beale went into town to pay a courtesy call on the Zuni governor, Pedro Pino (Laiujitsailu). Pueblos were usually headed by governors rather than chiefs or alcaldes, a condition originally imposed upon them by the Spaniards. “The old Indian met me in town with many compliments and congratulations,” Beale wrote, “and bearing in his arms a box containing my ‘artificial horizons’ (instrument used in taking altitudes) that I had left with him in passing last winter. He told me the charge had been a great burden on his mind and he was glad to be rid of the responsibility.” They then went to the governor’s residence for further talks. The governor had a long list of grievances against the American government that he wanted to get off his chest. The United States, he told Beale, had persuaded him into an alliance against the Navajos. In that war his warriors fought side by side like brothers with the Americans, explained the governor. But then the American government had found it convenient to make peace with these longtime enemies of the Zunis, and he now feared retaliation from his old foes.

Beale’s advice was blunt and very unsympathetic, and not at all exemplary of a man who would one day become a U.S. diplomat. “I told the old fellow I thought it served him right for meddling in things which did not concern him, and warned him for the future to avoid all entangling alliances.” The old governor probably wished that he could take back some of the compliments and congratulations that he had so generously bestowed upon Beale at the beginning of their meeting. Before leaving Zuni, Beale gave some presents to the Indians and was successful in trading for some cornmeal. He then rode back to his camp with the dust storm still raging.

Because of the severe weather, the expedition remained in camp the following day, March 28. The next morning conditions weren’t much better except that snow had now replaced the dust. Udell reported, “Hard freeze again last night; snow fell about two inches deep, freezing all day; cold traveling for the women [Mrs. Hedgpeth and Mrs. Udell]; I walked; we came to Jacob’s Well—twenty-eight or thirty miles.”
They laid by the next day to do some roadwork, although the weather was still bad. The following morning, March 31, they left camp at 7:00 a.m., and traveled ten miles to Navajo Springs (also called Mud Springs). Dr. Floyd gave a good description of these springs in his journal:

We passed today 6 miles from Jacob’s Well the Navajo or Mud Springs as they are called. They are most curious, surrounded by a range of low hills or rather a basin in the great plain. They run all the year and several of them apparently force up mud along with water until their rims are several feet, from 3 or 4, above the level of the basin or the other and running springs. The mud is very deep, a camel was mired in one over his hump and had to be drawn out with ropes. This morning they were frozen over and Mr. Beale, in attempting to walk over one of them, broke in up to his waist. I was near and gave him a helping hand. He got out without difficulty but was very muddy. Scarcely half an hour afterwards, an old woman, Mrs. Hedgpeth, with the curiosity of a woman and the gawkyness of a green one, popped into the same place. She screamed painter and Tucker pulled her out. She never would have got out without help.¹⁰

This is almost the only reference to either emigrants or camels in Floyd’s journal. Beale, for obvious reasons, doesn’t mention emigrants, and by now, neither Beale nor Floyd thought that camels were oddities. They considered these humpbacked animals just as important and necessary as their horses and mules. At least twenty-five camels were sent to Beale from Camp Verde at the beginning of the roadbuilding expedition. The remainder of the camels used on the 1857 survey expedition had been left at Fort Tejon in California under the tender care of Hadji Ali (Hi Jolly), one of the Arab camel drivers who came over from Asia Minor with the camels. Among those camels left at Fort Tejon was Old Seid, Beale’s favorite riding camel. Udell seemed totally unimpressed by the camels, for he made only one unimportant reference to them in his journal.

On April 2, they reached the Little Colorado. The weather, Udell noted, was windy, cold and freezing. “We have to keep large fires to be comfortable all night.” The journals of both Beale and Dr. Floyd verify the inclement weather. For the Hedgpeths and the Udells, these discomforts were mild when compared to the hardships and suffering
the two elderly couples endured on their return trip to Albuquerque after the battle with the Mojave Indians. They now enjoyed the luxury of warm clothing and a sheltering wagon instead of sleeping on the frozen ground with only a thin blanket to cover them. The larder, too, was now much better stocked. Instead of meat from half-starved cattle served without the benefit of salt or bread, they now dined on fresh mutton from the large herd of fat sheep that the expedition was driving as a mobile commissary. There were now plenty of salt and other condiments to make the fare more palatable, as well as a good supply of corn and flour for bread. To vary the diet, Beale’s guides and hunters, Little Axe and Dick the Delaware, were able to supplement the menu with game, including such delicacies as beaver, duck, venison, antelope, and elk.

The expedition arrived in the vicinity of the San Francisco Peaks on April 12, 1859. The weather was still cold, Udell noted in his journal. On the night of April 15, they camped at Leroux Springs where the Rose-Baley wagon train had camped for several days the previous summer. Here, the expedition left the broken-down horses and mules along with some of the wagons and excess baggage. The animals would be recruited and picked up on the return trip. Two men were left to guard them. “Light frost last night, pleasant day,” Udell recorded. “We came seven or eight miles and camped near plenty of wood and water; no water here last summer.”

Slowly moving westward, the expedition camped at Hedgpeth (Bear) Spring on April 18. While digging a larger basin for the spring so that it could accommodate more animals drinking at one time, one of Beale’s men looked up and observed a strange sight. Looking down the valley in the far distance, he saw two men mounted on camels rapidly approaching the spring. Since the sight of two men racing across the Southwest desert on camels wasn’t exactly an everyday event, the man called Beale’s attention to the apparition. As the two figures came nearer, Beale recognized one of the riders as his business partner, Mr. Samuel A. Bishop, astride Old Seid. The other rider was Hadji Ali (Hi Jolly). Bishop brought forty men with him, along with the remainder of the camels and some provisions. He had received Beale’s message delivered by Fred Kerlin stating that Beale was bringing only enough provisions to last until he reached the Colorado River and asking that
Bishop meet Beale there with fresh supplies. There was great joy in camp with their arrival. Udell could not resist the temptation to take a parting shot at his former traveling companions for their timorous decision to turn back after the battle with the Mojave Indians. He recorded in his journal:

\[\ldots\] Our fears of the Indians were dispelled; Mr. Bishop, with forty men, had fought his way through the Mojave Indians, after being surrounded by them, and had effected his crossing of the main Colorado without the loss of a man. See what men of composure and courage can do! I wonder what our one hundred and eighteen men will think when they hear this?\[12\]

Udell was incorrect when he wrote that Bishop fought his way through the Mojave Indians. Bishop, with his forty men, attempted to force a crossing of the Colorado River at Beale’s Crossing, but found his way blocked by a large number of hostile Mojave warriors. Fearing to divide his small force, he wisely withdrew to Pah-Ute Creek where there was plenty of water and grass. He attempted to get help from the army post at Fort Yuma, but when this failed he took a route to the north of the Mojave Villages that had been used by Francois X. Aubry in 1853 and 1854. There, he was able to cross the Colorado River unmolested. This route, however, was too rocky and too rough to take wagons over. Bishop packed what provisions he could on the backs of his camels and mules and went on to a rendezvous with Beale. The supplies that he was unable to take with him he cached at Pah-Ute Creek for future use. He sent the wagons and remaining men back to civilization.\[13\]

When Udell saw Beale and Bishop riding camels, he decided that he, too, would like to add camel riding to his résumé. According to Joel Hedgpeth Jr., a lad of eighteen who witnessed the event, Udell communicated his wishes to Beale, who completed all the necessary arrangements to accommodate him.

“Certainly, certainly you shall ride a camel,” Beale then called to his Turkish camel driver, Hadji Ali. “Bring us Old Seid and let Mr. Udell have a ride.” The camel was brought and caused to kneel down and the old man vaulted into the saddle. When at the command of the Turk, Old Seid moved forward and backward and upward and the old man became alarmed
but Hadji Ali admonished him, “Hold on tight.” As the camel moved off in that long swing trot, the old man’s alarm became terror, as shown by his face, and he lustily calls out, “Stop the beast,” greatly to the amusement of the boys. When the camel had trotted off a hundred yards or so he came back and kneeled down. Mr. Udell was prompt to dismount, thankful that he was still alive.14

This frightening experience very likely had something to do with Udell’s lack of enthusiasm for camels and his failure to write anything about them in his journal.

With Bishop were several members of the Central Overland Mail Company which had a contract from the U.S. government to carry mail over Beale’s Wagon Road, but because of the hostile Mojave Indians, the mail company was unable to cross the Colorado River on their initial eastbound trip. With the union of Bishop and his crew plus the men from the Central Overland Mail Company, the expedition made good progress on its journey westward. By April 23, they reached Peach Springs. Udell reported weather conditions as “windy, cold, and uncomfortable.” Several new springs had been discovered, and new alignments were made to the road to take advantage of these new sources of water.

The expedition now entered the territory of the Hualapai Indians, and as with the Rose-Baley wagon train of the previous year, the Beale expedition began to suffer from Indian depredations. A mule was stolen at Truxton Springs; a short time later an arrow was shot at Mr. Carrington, one of Beale’s men. Fortunately, the arrow hit a rock before reaching its intended victim. The next day another mule was stolen and arrows were shot into camp during broad daylight. At Savedra Spring yet another mule was taken and another one shot, dying a short time later. Beale wondered if there might be some way of circumventing these malicious acts. He hit upon the same idea that the Baley company used the summer before. After supper was cooked and darkness descended, camp was silently moved some distance away. The mule that had died was left in plain view at the first camp. Several men concealed themselves behind rocks, knowing full well that the Indians would steal into camp to claim the carcass after the fires had died down.

Sure enough, just before daybreak, several Indians sneaked into camp to take the dead mule. The men concealed behind the rocks
opened fire on the intruders, killing four and driving off the others. The fallen warriors were relieved of their scalps, and the bloody trophies, along with some bows and arrows, were brought into camp the next morning as vouchers. Beale described the event as, “Altogether a pretty good practical joke—a merrie jester of ye white man and ye Indian.”

No more Indian depredations were reported.

On April 29, the expedition arrived at Mountain Spring at the eastern base of the Colorado (Black) Mountains. This was the same place where the Rose-Baley wagon train camped the previous year and where they met the Cave train on the retreat to Albuquerque. They camped here for several days while the construction crew did a considerable amount of work on the road to, and over, Sitgreaves Pass. While the road builders were busy, Udell, Joel Hedgpeth, and several others paid a visit to the mountain camp where the emigrants had cached their valuables the previous summer. To their great disappointment, they found that the property that they had so carefully buried had been dug up and carried away, presumably by the Mojaves. Even the wagons had been burned.

The expedition camped here while Beale and twenty men went ahead to the Colorado River to ascertain whether they could cross peaceably. To their great surprise, five white men met them on the trail. These men were American soldiers belonging to the command of Lieutenant Colonel William Hoffman. They informed Beale that Hoffman had arrived at the Mojave Villages on April 20 with a force of nearly six hundred men and had forced the Mojaves to sign a peace treaty. Beale and the members of his expedition were happy to meet fellow Americans, but they were disappointed in not getting a chance to battle the Mojaves. “We were all disappointed,” Udell wrote, “for we were prepared and willing to punish these savages for their outrages upon us emigrants last summer.”

When he heard the news that a peace treaty had been signed, Beale called in all of his advance scouts, “much to their disappointment and intense disgust,” he wrote.

After concluding a peace treaty with the Mojaves, Hoffman returned to Los Angeles for supplies. He left Major Armistead, two companies of infantry, and a detachment of artillery at Beale’s Crossing for the purpose of establishing a permanent post to protect other emigrant
parties as per his instructions from the War Department. Hoffman called the post Camp Colorado, but Armistead changed the name to Camp Mojave and later to Fort Mojave. The fort was built on high ground on the Arizona side of the Colorado River within a few hundred yards of the site where the Mojaves had launched their surprise attack on the emigrants the previous August. Iron axletrees, burned wagons, broken boxes and kegs, torn books blood stained and scorched, were still found on the battlefield when the fort was established.

The resolutions that the emigrants had drawn up back in Albuquerque in November of 1858 had borne fruit. They were published in the Santa Fe Gazette on December 4, 1858, and in the Daily Missouri Republican on December 29. Copies also had been sent to prominent military and civil authorities, both in the East and in the West. News of the Mojave attack on the Rose-Baley wagon train had been published in the Santa Fe Gazette as early as October 16, 1858, and reprinted in other newspapers, including the Los Angeles Star on November 18, 1858. There was no way that the U.S. government could ignore the attack on the emigrants. When the War Department learned of the battle with the Mojave Indians, Secretary of War Floyd ordered Brigadier General Newman S. Clarke, in charge of the Military Department of California, to mount a punitive expedition against the Mojaves.

General Clarke wasted no time in dispatching a sufficient force under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William Hoffman to chastise the Mojaves and establish a permanent military presence in Mojave territory at Beale’s Crossing. Hoffman carried out his orders (halfheartedly, some thought), concluded a treaty with the Mojave nation, and established a military post at Beale’s Crossing. Seeing that resistance would be futile, the Mojaves submitted to the rule of the American government and ceased to be a major problem.

Maps printed after 1859 no longer showed the place name of Mojave Villages at Beale’s Crossing, instead showing the name Fort Mojave. Fort Mojave was deactivated at the beginning of the Civil War because its soldiers were needed for the battlefields in the East. However, in 1863 it was reactivated and manned by units of the California Volunteers. After the Civil War it was again manned by the regular army. It remained in service until 1890 when it was deactivated and turned
over to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for use as a Mojave Indian school. It was used for this purpose until its final closure in 1930. Today, only a few foundation stones mark the spot where the fort once stood.21

When Beale reached the Colorado River, he learned that the large supply of provisions that Bishop had cached for him on the California side of the river had been dug up and stolen, allegedly by some of Hoffman’s soldiers.22 Beale had counted heavily on these supplies. Without them, he was faced with a food shortage. There was only one thing he could do—go to Los Angeles, the nearest source of supply, and bring back fresh provisions. Beale, his brother George, Samuel Bishop, and some of their key men set out for Los Angeles immediately. All of the workers left behind, except for a few men employed as herders, were sent back to do construction work on the road from Sitgreaves Pass to the Colorado River.

Since he was in a hurry to get supplies back to his men, Beale could not take the Udells and Hedgpeths with him to Los Angeles. He left them camped near Major Armistead’s troops at Fort Mojave where they were well protected from any possible Indian raids. Udell wasn’t pleased at being left behind. The weather was hot and oppressive, and the air was filled with dust that made his eyes sore. “To add to our troubles,” he wrote, “our camp was in sight of our last year’s battleground, and the Indians were visiting us in large numbers every day and annoying us. To remain thirty days in such circumstances, anxiously longing to get home, was not very pleasant.” However, Udell reported that they were well treated by the army. “I would here note,” he recorded, “that the officers at this post have shown us much kindness. From Major Armstead [Armistead], the commander, I received good reading material; the soldiers were also very kind.”

Beale arrived in Los Angeles on May 12, where he wasted no time in purchasing the necessary provisions for his work crew and the emigrants waiting at the Colorado River. He was thoughtful enough to purchase two ladies’ saddles, one for Mrs. Udell and one for Mrs. Hedgpeth, knowing that they would be riding pack mules back to Los Angeles. Udell in his journal acknowledges the thoughtfulness of Beale in providing for the comfort of the women.

Beale assembled a pack train of forty mules, loaded them with supplies and sent them back to the Colorado River. He obtained the
animals from Phineas Banning, the owner of a large transportation company in southern California. The pack train was driven by Mexicans, probably Banning’s employees. Neither Beale nor Bishop accompanied the pack train back to the Colorado, but went instead to Fort Tejon. They also visited their ranch while in the area.

The pack train arrived back at the Colorado River on June 1 with its welcome load of provisions. It had been only twenty-eight days since Beale left for Los Angeles, but to those waiting at the Colorado it must have seemed like an eternity, as they had been on short rations all the while. The very next day, the pack train headed back to Los Angeles under the supervision of William Tucker, one of Beale’s most trusted assistants. With it went the Udells and the Hedgpeths—for them, it was California at last!

The trip across the California desert was no picnic. This section of the journey was over desert more arid and with fewer water holes than any of those in New Mexico or Arizona. But now they were traveling with a well-organized pack train with experienced and competent men in charge. What a difference that made! Because of the high temperatures, between 100 and 130 degrees, much of the traveling was done at night. Udell’s journal entry for June 6 read, “Remained in camp to rest, our old ladies much fatigued, having rode nearly all night.” Udell doesn’t say so, but it is a safe bet that the “old men” were fatigued too. The route taken was what later became known as the Mojave Road by way of Pah-Ute Creek, Marl Springs, Soda Spring and over Cajon Pass to San Bernardino and then on to Los Angeles.

On June 11, they arrived at Mr. Highman’s ranch, meeting the first white settler they had encountered since leaving Albuquerque. “Mr. Highman has an excellent stock ranch here,” Udell wrote. “Fine large springs of good water. He gave us a good supper and breakfast, gratis.”

On June 14, they traveled thirty-five miles, “a fatiguing journey for aged ladies under a hot sun,” wrote Udell. “We are now in the white settlements of California [San Bernardino].”

Shortly before reaching Los Angeles they were met by Bishop, Beale’s partner, who was on his way back to the Colorado River to supervise the road building. Bishop, on behalf of Beale, presented Udell with a check for fifty dollars, “…which paid expenses of my wife and myself to the end of our journey,” Udell recorded. Beale also included
letters of introduction to some of the most influential people in Los Angeles. Udell would put this windfall to good use. Whether these same considerations were extended to the Hedgpeths is unknown, but Beale, being a fair-minded gentleman, probably did so.

The weary travelers entered Los Angeles on June 15 and camped near the plaza. Udell was quick to take advantage of his letters of introduction. The first person he presented one of them to was Phineas Banning, the transportation king of southern California. He met with instant success. “. . . Mr. Banning furnished us a room and provisions for eight days, while we were awaiting the arrival of a steamship to convey us to San Francisco, and he conveyed us twenty-five miles to the ship, [at San Pedro] free of charge,” Udell recorded. The name of their ship was the SS Senator. The price of the fare to San Francisco for the two of them was sixty dollars, but Udell was able to get the fare reduced to just forty dollars. After a two-day voyage up the coast of California, during which they both suffered from seasickness, the Udells arrived in San Francisco on June 26, 1859. It being a Sunday, there was no steamer service to Sacramento until Monday evening. Again Udell called forth his power of persuasion and obtained free lodging for himself and Emily. “Mr. Weygant not only kept us free of costs,” Udell wrote, “but he came down to the office of the steamship ‘Eclipse,’ and we related our misfortunes. They gave us free passage to Sacramento, a stateroom and our meals.” Udell certainly knew how to evoke the sympathy of strangers.

The destination of the Udells was Silveyville, a small farming community near Sacramento where their sons Henry and Oliver lived. Udell and his wife arrived at the end of their long, perilous journey on June 30, 1859, after being fourteen months and twenty-one days on the road. Udell wrote of the event: “We hope to spend the few remaining days of our pilgrimage on earth in the society of our children and Christian friends in this country, where health, and peace, and plenty reign.” Udell ended his journal with a note of high praise for Beale’s Wagon Road as a potential railroad route. With the exit of Udell the narrative loses its diarist, but the drama continued to unfold.

The Udells and the Hedgpeths parted company in Los Angeles at the plaza, where they had camped together. The Hedgpeths were headed for Visalia, an inland settlement in the San Joaquin Valley; they
might have had friends or relatives living there. In his recollections, Joel Hedgpeth Jr. was silent on this point and he didn’t reveal what route they traveled to reached their destination. Most likely they traveled by way of the Butterfield Overland Mail Route past Fort Tejon and over Tejon Pass, as this was the most direct route between Los Angeles and Visalia. The Butterfield Overland Mail also carried passengers over this route, but it is unlikely that the Hedgpeths, a family of six, could have afforded to travel in this manner. Probably they joined a pack train and all walked except those too ill or too infirm.

After arriving back in Albuquerque, many of the young men employed as teamsters or herders gave up hope of ever getting to California and returned to their former homes in Iowa and Missouri. It is uncertain what happened to some of the members of the Cave company after their return to Albuquerque, but we do know that James H. Jordan returned to Iowa where he became a prosperous and well-respected citizen. 23 In an Indian depredation suit that he filed in 1891 (U.S. Court of Claims, Suit No. 3487), John Bradford Cave gave his address as Sacramento, California. Calvin “Cal” Davis settled in Sebastopol, California. It is unknown what happened to Robert Perkins or to Udell’s friend, John Hamilton.

One company of the returned emigrants, the Smiths, did not wait for Beale’s return to Albuquerque or the coming of spring to continue their westward journey. They grew restless during the winter and decided to continue to California at the earliest possible moment. They persuaded four of their former employees to go along and help drive what was left of their once vast herd of livestock. They set out from Albuquerque for California in late January of 1859. To avoid the cold and the heavy snows of the San Francisco Mountains, as well as the treacherous Mojave Indians, they chose to travel the Southern Route.

The Smiths had always shown much compassion for Mrs. Brown and her fatherless children. They resolved to take the widow and her family to California with them. Little Sallie Fox’s wounds had healed sufficiently for her to travel. Thanks to the Smiths, Mary Brown and her four surviving children became the first members of the Rose-Baley wagon train to reach California, arriving in Los Angeles in the spring of 1859 (the Hedgpeths and Udells didn’t arrive until June 16, 1859). Mrs. Brown had a brother, George Baldwin, living in Placerville.
was single and had written to his sister inviting her to come to Placerville and keep house for him. He also promised to pay for their passage. E. O. Smith agreed to accept two hundred dollars to cover his expenses in bringing Mary Brown and her children to California; it would be payable at the end of the journey. Mary Brown also had a sister, Lavinia De Golia, living in Placerville, and another sister, Julia Allison, living near Vacaville, California.

Although the Southern Route avoided the hostile Navajo, Hualapai, and Mojave Indians, it passed through territory inhabited by a tribe of Indians considered even more fierce and warlike—the dreaded Apaches. This route went through an area controlled by the Chiricahua tribe of the Apaches who were led by their great chief, Cochise. From his stronghold at Apache Pass, Cochise and his warriors kept a close watch on all traffic that passed their way; no one, not even the Butterfield Overland Mail, passed through Chiricahua country without his knowledge and approval. Because E. O. Smith and his small train were traveling without a military escort, they must have felt some trepidation as they approached Apache Pass. According to Edith Allen Milner (Sallie Fox Allen’s daughter), they didn’t have to wait long.

Sure enough, one afternoon—I think near “Apache Pass”—Cochise and his warriors suddenly appeared in Camp as if they had sprung out of the ground. But Mr. Smith and his bald head seemed to hit their fancy and they started to get acquainted instead of “Shooting them up” as the Mojaves had done. They thought Mr. Smith had been scalped and had survived. He gave them beads and trinkets and Cochise was delighted. He said he was “Wayno (Bueno) Indian” and told his horsemen to “Vamoos” but he was going to stay all night in camp. His warriors disappeared as suddenly as they came. They were just “swallowed up,” and Cochise stayed on to the consternation of Mama [Sallie Fox] and her family. Mama was sure they would all “wake up dead” and wished that the bear which had come into camp some time previously and had bitten off the ear of the “Iron Gray Mare” would come again that night and bite off all their heads so that the Indians would not get them. But Mr. Smith tried to be hospitable and made such a hit with Cochise that that Indian really was as “Bueno” as he said he was, and let them go through undisturbed in his territory, and they had no trouble with the Apaches.24
Fortunately for the Smith train, Cochise had not yet declared war on the Americans; he did so in 1861 as the result of the Bascom Affair.25

One evening while playing along the edge of the Gila River, Sallie picked up three or four black walnuts that had been washed up on the bank of the river. She wondered where they came from because she could see no walnut trees growing along the river. Perhaps, she thought, the walnuts had been washed down during high water from some place farther upstream. They reminded her of the walnut trees she had seen growing back home in Iowa. She put them in her apron pocket where they remained until she arrived in California. She knew her Aunt Julia and Uncle Josiah Allison lived on a ranch near Vacaville. Upon arrival there, she would ask her Uncle “Si” to plant them for her. Maybe one of them would sprout and someday grow into a big walnut tree just like those back home in Iowa.26

On the trail one day, a few miles west of the present Painted Rock State Park between Tucson and Fort Yuma, the little emigrant party came upon a grave site marked by a headstone. Upon it were engraved the words, “Sacred to the Oatman family,” which little Sallie misread as “Scared to the Oatman family.” There were still some of the hubs and other remnants of the Oatman wagons lying about. The tragic story of the Oatman family had been told and retold around emigrant campfires at night. The graves contained the bodies of Royce Oatman, his wife Mary Ann, and four of their seven children. The discovery of these graves must have brought back to Mrs. Brown and her family painful memories of the Bentner family. There were several similarities between the fate of the Oatman family and that of the Bentners. Both were attacked by hostile Indians while traveling alone across the desert. Both families had been warned that such solitary travel in Indian country was dangerous. Both ignored the advice and paid with their lives.

The Royce Oatman family had been members of an emigrant party headed for California in 1851 by way of the Southern Route. The other members decided to spend more time at a Pima Indian village before continuing their journey. The Oatmans, in a hurry to reach California, decided to push on for Fort Yuma on their own. One evening while camped on a bluff overlooking the Gila River, they were attacked by a group of Yavapais warriors. Both parents and four of their children
were brutally murdered by the Indians. Their fourteen-year-old son, Lorenzo, was repeatedly clubbed over the head and left for dead. Two of the daughters, sixteen-year-old Olive and eight-year-old Mary Ann, were taken captive by the Yavapai and later sold to the Mojaves as slaves. Lorenzo, despite the severity of his wounds, managed to find his way to a friendly Pima Indian village where he told his ghastly story. Mary Ann died while in captivity, but Olive was eventually ransomed from the Mojaves and reunited with Lorenzo. While a captive, Olive’s face was permanently tattooed by the Mojaves. The town of Oatman, Arizona is believed to be named for his hapless family.27

In later years both Olive Oatman and Mary Brown lived in San Jose, California. Olive sent word to Mary that she would like to meet her, but according to Edith Allen Milner, Mary’s granddaughter, Mary refused the invitation because she feared she could not stand the ordeal of talking about both of their harrowing experiences. The two never met.28

After crossing the Colorado River on a ferry at Fort Yuma, Mary Brown and her children set foot on California soil at last. They must have presented quite a bedraggled appearance, because, according to Edith Allen Milner, the storekeepers at Fort Yuma took pity on them and outfitted them from head to foot with new clothes at no cost.29 Sallie’s older sister, Sophia Frances (Franc) Fox, was about fifteen at the time and very pretty. All the merchants in Yuma wanted to marry her. Mary Brown had her hands full in getting Franc out of Yuma still unwed.

Eventually the little band of emigrants arrived safely in Los Angeles, which they thought was the fairest city in all the land. The exact date of their arrival is not recorded, but it must have been late March or early April, 1859, since they reported the hills around Los Angeles “green with spring.” Sallie always remembered the lovely rose geranium in the garden at San Gabriel Mission.30 In Los Angeles Mary Brown was met by her brother, George Baldwin, who had come to take the family to his home in Placerville. George then tendered to E. O. Smith the two hundred dollars that Smith had agreed to accept for bringing Mrs. Brown and her children to California, but Smith is said to have responded, “Oh no, I never intended to take any pay. I only made that arrangement so that Mrs. Brown might be easy in her mind on the way.” This was the kind of man that E. O. Smith was.31
It is not known how or by what route George Baldwin transported his sister and her family to his home. They might have gone up the coast by ship as far as San Francisco as John and Emily Udell had done. Edith Allen Milner in her manuscript stated that when her grandmother, Mary Brown, caught her first view of the Pacific Ocean after many months of privation, her only comment was, “Thank God, there’s enough of it!”

Before going on to Placerville, Baldwin took Mary Brown and her family to visit their sister, Julia, and her husband, Josiah Allison, in Vacaville. When they arrived, Sallie presented the walnuts that she had picked up on the banks of the Gila River to her Uncle “Si” for him to plant for her. She went with him and helped him plant the walnuts. Sure enough, one of them did sprout and it eventually grew into a huge tree. It fronted the main road between Sacramento and San Francisco and afforded shade to passing travelers.

One summer the Allisons grew a surplus of black figs and decided to put a small fruit stand under this black walnut tree. The figs sold quickly and soon other fruits were added to the list. Ice water and lemonade were also provided. The venture proved so successful that a restaurant was soon added. The Allisons decided to call their restaurant and fruit stand the Nut Tree since Sallie’s black walnut tree dominated the site. The business grew and grew. Today, the Nut Tree is one of the largest amusement parks in California, complete with its own airport, post office, bakery, and other amenities.

Sallie’s walnut tree survived until it was toppled by a storm in 1952. Before it expired, a walnut from the grand old monarch was planted near the plaza of the amusement park by Josiah Allison’s great-great-granddaughter.

The Baleys and the Daly and Holland families also reached California in 1859. Since they left no diaries or other written accounts, not a lot is known about their journeys. What little is known comes from recollections of family members, oral histories, vital statistics extracted from family Bibles, biographical sketches from county histories, church records, obituaries, newspaper accounts, and interviews with descendants.

It is not known if these families traveled together in the same wagon train to California, but the few facts available and the time frame of their journeys suggest that possibility. Evidence indicates that
these families also chose the Southern Route to California. Not even the knowledge that an army post (Fort Mojave) had been established at Beale’s Crossing on the Colorado River could convince these emigrants to travel Beale’s Wagon Road a second time. Fear of the Mojave Indians and the painful memories of Beale’s route from the year before were still vividly etched in their minds.

According to Paul Vandor’s History of Fresno County, the Baley families made two separate attempts to reach California from Albuquerque in 1859:

A search there [Albuquerque] for new equipment was almost a failure, but they finally secured a few thin cattle and started again for the West. Soon the cattle gave out and were killed and eaten by the little band of almost starved emigrants. Again they were forced to return to Albuquerque, this time driven by pangs of keenest hunger. Their condition was pitiable in the extreme. Footsore and starving, they finally landed in the town where comforts were procured for the suffering crowd. It was remarked by all that the women of the party had endured all of the hardships of this memorable journey without uttering a word of complaint; the frightful sufferings were endured with a patience born of true heroism, nor did they give up in despair although it became necessary for them to walk the entire distance to California.34

A few provisions were obtained and a small number of animals procured for a third attempt to reach California. This time they were successful, but not without great hardship. One story which has been handed down by family tradition is that Sarah Margaret Baley, the seventeen-year-old daughter of William Right and Nancy Baley, carried her little one-year-old sister, Mary Patience, on her back until relieved of her burden by the death of the little child at the Gila River. This little girl was born at the mountain camp shortly before the battle with the Mojave Indians. The cause of death is not recorded, but there can be little doubt that malnutrition played its part. The tiny body was buried by the side of the road, family tradition says, and the site was obliterated by running wagons back and forth over the grave so that it would not be found and disturbed by Indians. The William Right Baley family Bible gives her date of death as 12 October 1859.

All was not hardship and suffering on the road to California. Two of the girls in the wagon train brightened things up a bit, at least
for themselves, by discovering romance during the 1859 attempt. Twenty-year-old Amelia Catherine and eighteen-year-old America Frances, daughters of Gillum and Permelia Baley, fell in love with two employees of the wagon train. These were the same two girls who had left their names on Inscription Rock the year before. Amelia Catherine fell in love with William Krug, while her sister, America Frances, chose August Block. The long winter of forced idleness in Albuquerque afforded the young people ample opportunity to get better acquainted with each other. There was just one problem standing in the way of marriage for the love-smitten foursome, but it was a formidable one—the girls’ father objected to the marriages and refused to give his consent. Gillum’s blessings were not forthcoming because both prospective bridegrooms were recent German immigrants and worst of all, he suspected that one or both might be Catholic! Being a lay Southern Methodist minister, Gillum was in no way going to allow his daughters to marry German papists. Never!

Cupid, however, is not easily deterred, as Gillum Baley soon discovered. The lovers eloped by walking twenty miles to a Presbyterian mission (probably Laguna) where they were married without Gillum’s consent. When presented with the fait accompli, Gillum Baley bowed to fate and accepted the two Germans as sons-in-law, if not with joy, at least with civility. As far as it is known, they got along all right.

The little train of weary emigrants arrived at Fort Yuma in late October of 1859. Here they could at least replenish a few of their supplies. With several eligible young ladies in the party, they were probably well treated by the merchants there. However, they managed to escape without losing any of the young ladies to the wife-seeking businessmen. After crossing the Colorado River at Fort Yuma, the Baleys were at last in the Promised Land of California. But they still had a distance of over two hundred miles to travel, much of it over a burning desert, before reaching Los Angeles, a thriving metropolis of five thousand people. Most emigrants traveling between Fort Yuma and Los Angeles during this time followed the road used by the Butterfield Overland Mail. A favorite stopping place on this route was Warner’s Ranch. That was most likely the way the Baleys came.

The immediate destination of the Baleys was Visalia, a settlement in the San Joaquin Valley where their friends and fellow wagon train
travelers, the Hedgpeths, were living. Whether or not this was their original destination is unknown. They might have had relatives living in Visalia. In his Indian depredation suit against the U.S. government, Gillum Baley based the value of his livestock lost to the Mojave Indians on what they would have been worth on the California market. In his deposition he stated he was familiar with livestock prices in California during that period because he had a brother and a brother-in-law living in California with whom he had regular correspondence. The 1860 U.S. Census reveals the name of a Burchard Baley living in Visalia. Since Baley spelled without the letter i is a rather uncommon way of spelling the name, it is quite possible that this might have been the brother in California that Gillum made reference to in his deposition.

The Baleys arrived in Visalia in early December of 1859, badly in need of rest and sustenance. Two members of the company, William Right Baley and the newlywed August Block, obtained employment as teamsters and settled there with their families temporarily.

The other Baley brother, Gillum, hearing stories about recent gold mining successes on the San Joaquin River above Millerton, decided to go there and again try his luck as an argonaut. In Millerton he was unable to find a house for his large family, which included his newlywed daughter, Amelia Catherine, and her husband William Krug. Gillum went a short distance up the river to Fort Miller, where he moved his family into the commissary rooms of the old abandoned fort. The Krugs settled themselves next door in the headquarters building. Squatting in abandoned buildings was a common practice in those days.

Like the Baleys, not much is known about the 1859 journey of the Daly and Holland families from Albuquerque to California. The only documentation that has come to light is a short, unpublished autobiography by Edward Warren Holland, the second child of Isaac Taylor Holland and Amanda Melvina Daly Holland. Since he was only three years old in 1858, it is unlikely that he would have retained much personal knowledge of the trip. Any information in his autobiography about the emigrant journey of 1858–59 would have had to come from what he heard from his parents and others. The autobiography deals mostly with his later life. Holland states that his family and the Dalys lost all of their livestock in the battle with the Mojave Indians. This forced them to abandon both their wagons (the Daly wagon and the
Holland wagon) and destroy all of their personal belongings except what they could carry on their backs, a small quantity of flour, and some bedding that could be loaded into the one remaining wagon (the Rose wagon) that had to serve the needs of all the emigrants.

According to Holland, his two-year-old twin brothers, Tom and John, both died of starvation on the same day during the 1859 trip. They were buried together in a common grave. After arriving back in Albuquerque, Holland’s father (Isaac Taylor Holland) obtained work as a blacksmith at the government post, where they remained for eight months before resuming their journey to California. Edward didn’t mention any other families in the train, but he did present the general route that they followed:

This time we traveled the Southern Route by way of Tucson, Maricopa Wells, Gila Bend, and Fort Yuma. We arrived in San Bernardino, Calif., about the first of October, 1859, and late in December we resumed our journey to Tuolumne County, Calif., which was our original destination. We arrived there, at Sawmill Flat on Jan. 3, 1860.39

L. J. Rose and his family (including his in-laws, the Joneses) were the last members of the Rose-Baley wagon train to arrive in California. Rose remained in Santa Fe operating his hotel, La Fonda, until he sold the business for a good profit in late 1860. In addition to having a keen business mind, Rose also possessed an excellent sense of timing; just a few months later the Civil War broke out, greatly reducing the amount of trade passing through the area and reducing the need for hotels.

According to his deposition in his Indian depredation suit, Rose and his family arrived in Los Angeles County in late November of 1860. They came by way of the Southern Route and crossed the Colorado River at Fort Yuma. From Fort Yuma they traveled the Butterfield Overland Mail Route by way of Warner’s Ranch. Despite it being winter when Rose arrived in the San Gabriel Valley, he was so impressed with its beauty and serenity that he decided to pause there for a while.

With the arrival of the Roses in California, all the families of the Rose-Baley wagon train except for the Bentner family, massacred by the Mojaves, and the Thomas Hedgpeth family, which returned to Missouri, were now in the Promised Land. It was nearly two and one-half years after they started their journey in April of 1858.