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WEEKLY STORE NEWS

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To do this requires the confidence of the people. And to get this confidence, truth is an essential.

I believe that every article I sell, whether it be a collar button or a suit of clothes, is worth every cent I ask for it--sometimes more. I want you to feel the same way after you buy a thing.

If you should not feel that way, the greatest favor you can do yourself and me is to bring it back and give me your reasons. I'm open to argument and you to be, too.

Come in and pass judgement on my Spring stock of men's wear.



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There are probably few residents of Clayton or the county who know anything at all of the first observed Fourth of July anniversary ever observed in Northern New Mexico, and on Union county soil. Of course other observances may have been no properly chronicled account of, one prior to that of which I write. And as it is 85 years since the boom of canon, whistle of fife, and beat of drum ushered in the dawn of the 4th. of July (1831) it is both proper and benefiting that some notice should be taken of this occurrence, even if it is nothing more than a short newspaper article thereon.

At that time and until 1846-8, Union county, and all New Mexico in fact was a part and portion of the Imperial Republic of Mexico, and ruled or misruled by a representative of that Republic, the Governor at Santa Fe. The celebration therefore, occurred on foreign soil, the participants were American Citizens.

Some 8 or 9 years before the theme of our story was enacted, or in 1822 or 1823, the first wheeled vehicle had crossed Union county, enroute from Independence Missouri to Santa Fe by way of the Cimarron cut-off of the Santa Fe trail. In this connection it is interesting to observe, that this original Santa Fe highway, for a number of years traversed the country south of the Rabbit Ear mountains, and from probably 1824 to 1827, leaving the present old trail at Cold Springs, fifty miles north-east of Clayton in Oklahoma, it crossed the Corruppa at or near the present May ranch, where there is a perennial spring, persisting a southwesterly course to the next watering place on the Perico, possibly at the now Pitchfork ranch. From this we may assume that the first wheeled vehicles traveling westward, for wagons were first used along this trail in the years

FIRST FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION IN UNION CO. 85 YRS. AGO

above, likely enough passed thru the very streets of Clayton, as they descended to the water three miles to the west, they must have been very near to them.

This route had been abandoned in 1831 for the line north of the Rabbit Ears and which was commonly used by the freight caravans and stages until 1870.

In the year 1831 a caravan of merchants' vehicles left Independence, Missouri, for Santa Fe. The date of their departure from the former point was May 15th, and their wagons numbered 30, well filled with dry-goods, provisions and other articles of merchandise. With these adventurous spirits, whom neither fear of Indians nor the terrors of the desert could baffle or fright, was one Josiah Gregg, a Yankee lad from the State of Connecticut, seeking health, and who accompanied the party in the capacity of a sightseer, though in strenuous times he performed well his part in the defense of the expedition. Subsequently he published a book, "Commerce of the Prairies," which has immortalized his name, an authority on New Mexico, next prior to the American occupation, as well as a graphic portrayal of the incidents of frontier life.

Things went well with this caravan, one of the many going over the trail through Union County that year, for Gregg elsewhere records that in 1831 no less than \$250,000 worth of merchandise was transported from Independence to Santa Fe over this very road in 130 wagons; and with these caravans, were 320 men, 80 of whom were traders.

There was then a strip of unmarked country some 68 miles long, that stretched between the Arkansas and Cimarron rivers, and without water except in the rainy season. But the rain fell on the Gregg party, and they got over it with few mishaps, though they missed their direction once when nearing the Cimarron Valley, whither they finally descended on the morning of June 19th. Following this up to "Willow Bar", even then so named, there they had a skirmish with Indians, in which one of their party was injured, and on the 30th of June the caravan camped at Cold Springs, now the ranch of Henry Hood, where they halted about noon and partook of the refreshing water of this delightful spot, about which, to quote from Gregg, "grape, wild currant, and the plums abounded, all bending under their unripe fruit."

In 1831, the Corruppa crossing of the old trail, was where it may be seen today, over a rocky bottom some 20 miles northeast of Clayton, and near the Moses, N. M., post office. This stream was then known as McNee's creek, from a sad accident that occurred in the fall of 1828 when two young men one by the name of McNee, on their return from Santa Fe, were murdered by Indians as they lay asleep on the banks near the old crossing, within sight of the caravan and in open day. This stream the Gregg party reached on the night of the 3rd of July, a distance from their point of departure, Independence, of 553 miles. In all probability the 30 wagons with their complement of horses, mules and oxen, crossed to the south side,

as the site there is better adapted for camping, and according to their daily custom, drew up in circular order, the wagons being so arranged as to form a corral in which the animals were enclosed for the night. Supper was cooked, the watch was assigned, the camp put in order for the night and its darkness, and the guards entered their silent duties on the outpost, and serenely, in a foreign country, with 500 miles separating them from civilization, and thrice that number from home, for some at least, this party lay down to sleep in the quiet of the Corruppa Valley. Quiet? Not that night. Patriotism never slumbers nor did it there in 1831, and the spirit of Concord and Lexington awoke very early next morning. There were no neighboring citizens there then to join these Argonauts in their uproarious proclamation of another American birthday, nor even Indians to wonder at the unusual din; and the Mexican authorities at Santa Fe cared little if the American flag flew to the breeze, back on McNee creek. But listen to what Gregg, the caravan's Xenophon rather poetically writes happens there. His account is not long, but exceedingly impressive.

"As we lay camped on McNee's creek" says he, "the Fourth of July dawned upon us. Scarcely had the gray twilight brushed his dusky brow, when our patriotic camp gave lively demonstrations of the joy that plays around the heart of every American on the anniversary of this triumphant day. The roar of our artillery and rifle platoons resounded from every hill, while the rumb-

ing of the drum, and the shrill whistle of fife imparted a degree of martial interest to the scene which was well calculated to stir the souls of men. There was no limit to the huzzars and enthusiastic ejaculations of our people, and at every new shout the vales around sent forth a gladsome response. This anniversary is always hailed with heartfelt joy by the wayfarer in the remote desert; for here the strife and intrigues of party spirit are unknown; nothing intrudes in these solitary wilds to mar the harmony of feeling and almost pious exultation, which every true hearted American experiences on this day."

That was all. Then the mules and oxen, we may suppose, took up their work, and the outriders preceding them, these patriotic voyagers 85 years since, went on their way toward Rabbit Ear creek, finally to reach Santa Fe, and later chronicling their fitting observance of July 4th. Proper indeed does it seem to me, that Union county and Clayton this very year, should take up the neglected work of recognizing and marking appropriately some of the nearby historic points. The old Santa Fe trail, one of its heritages, is fast losing its identity and soon its winding track will disappear forever. The spirit of Gregg's party might well be emulated now by us in the preservation of almost forgotten sites. Among others there should be a substantial marker placed with befitting ceremonies, at the "old crossing on the Corruppa" where Union county's first observance of American Independence was commemorated.

Albert W. Thompson.

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