

ROCK MARY REPORT

By the Committee

May 1, 1960

To Oklahoma Historical Society:

Pursuant to our instructions, this Committee has completed its investigation and determination of which of the buttes, or natural mounds, in northern Caddo County in the vicinity of Hinton, is the renowned Rock Mary. Since the days of the gold rush of 1849, Rock Mary has occupied a most interesting and romantic place¹ in Oklahoma history, and is of sufficient historical importance to warrant definite determination of its exact location and identity. There has been considerable confusion in modern times as to which of the buttes is in fact the one that the early emigrants named so euphoniouly and relied upon as a land mark on the long journey to the West.

The origin of the name and its first appearance in print is in the report² of Lieutenant James H. Simpson, of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, who was on the staff of Captain R. B. Marcy at the time he commanded an escort of an emigrant party from Fort Smith traveling in 1849 to the West. He wrote in his report:

Starting from Rock Mary, the road runs through a series of natural mounds, of which Rock Mary is one. These mounds, on account of their novelty and Indian-lodge shape, having already, some miles in rear, engaged the attention of the traveler. I extract from my journal as follows, in regard to these mounds:

"Camp No. 34, Wednesday, May 25.—Proceeding on about a mile, some hills of singular shape make their appearance, for the first time, bearing north 75° west; several have very much the appearance of immense Indian lodges. Nearing the first of these singularly formed hills, and it appearing more oddly shaped than any of the others, I started off alone to ascend it—reaching it just in time to scare up a wild turkey; and tying my horse to a black-jack tree at its base, I scrambled up to its summit. The novel character of the hill; its contorted appearance; its sudden emergence from the plain around it; my having reached its pinnacle; it being an object of interest to beholders in the distance;—all this had its complex influence upon me, and I felt correspondingly elated. Captain Marcy seeing me near the apex, suggested to me to unfurl (what I was about to do) a flag, and give it to the breeze. This I did, and soon I could see one person after

¹ Illustrative of the wide popular interest, see the entire column devoted to Rock Mary in *The Daily Oklahoman*, "The Smoking Room" Sunday Nov. 15, 1959.

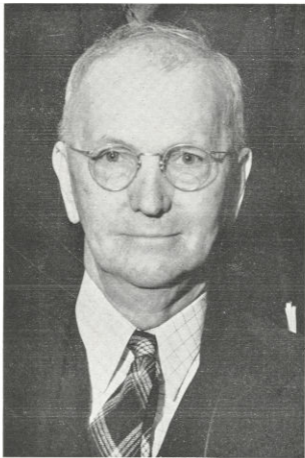
² *Executive Document No. 12, 31st Congress, 1st Session*, is the Report of the Secretary of War, Jan. 4, 1850, transmitting the Report and maps made by Lieut. J. H. Simpson.



Photo by Mrs. Jeanne Russell
June 1, 1961

ROCK MARY

West side view of Rock Mary. Visitors on the Annual Tour 1960, Oklahoma Historical Society



CHARLES NEWTON GOULD



Photo by C. N. Gould, 1903

"CADDO COUNTY BUTTES"
View from Camp of First Oklahoma Geological
Survey Party, 1903.



Photo by C. N. Gould, 1903

Mode of Travel on Oklahoma Geological
Survey, 1903.



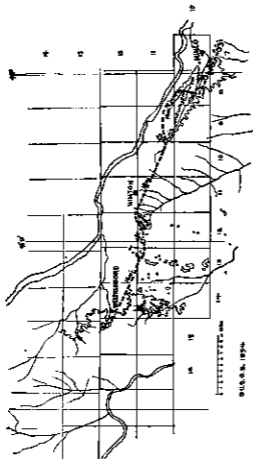
Photo, April, 1906.

HIGEST MOUND
One of the Natural Mounds, Cassia County



Photo, April, 1906.

In Red Rock State Park, South of Hinton, left to right: Mrs. Robert Dott, Muriel Wright, Mr. Dott, Michael Prizzell, John Prizzell, George J. Shirk, members of Rock Mery Committee, 1906.



Parts of Grady, Canadian, Cadiz and Carter counties, showing interpretation of route of Mercery Calliforah Road, and location of Rock Mary. Base and geology from *Geologic Map of Oklahoma*, U. S. Geological Survey, 1857. *Put*—Putnam formation; *Pec*—Rush Springs sandstone; *Cloud*—Cloud Chief formation. Figures 31, 32, etc., are camp sites. Scale 1 inch=12.6 miles.

another, Lieutenant Harrison and Dr. Rogers among them, leaving the train to get a look from its summit. A person present suggested that it be named after an Arkansas young lady, (as much esteemed by the emigrants with whom she is in company, as she is by the officers.) I immediately fell in with the suggestion, and thereupon, with waving flag, proclaimed it to all concerned, that thenceforth, in honor of the said lady, the rock should be known as Rock Mary. Rock Mary, then, is the name of this fantastic formation—at least until it can be authenticated that some prior explorer had assumed the prerogative to call it something else. The rock is situated solitary in a prairie plain; its height some sixty feet; its base some two hundred feet in diameter. In form it is like a pseud-cake well puffed up and partially broken at its centre. Two turret-like projections are seen protruding from its top. In substance it is an unstratified sandstone, of a red color. In surface it is spirally corrugated, and, in places, somewhat gnarled, owing to the degradation caused by atmospheric and aqueous agents. During the latter part of our journey, a number of these hills have been seen. Besides the one just mentioned I ascended two others, one of them being about one hundred feet high. These two last have calcareous rock in association with red sandstone. One of these, of obelisk shape, I noticed amorphous red sandstone to be the basis rock; next in the ascending series, 5 feet of red shale, finely shistose; next 3 feet of arenaceous limestone; and lastly, crowning the other formations, calcareous rock of massive character, containing crystals of carbonate of lime. I collected specimens of the lime formation."

With the Simpson report is an excellent map (for the time and circumstances) which will be referred to by this Committee as the "Simpson Map." In his report, Lieutenant Simpson makes frequent reference to his "Journal" and efforts of the Committee to locate the original of the journal in the National Archives have been unsuccessful.

Lieutenant Simpson explained the incompleteness of his map due to shortness of time available because of a change in his orders when he reached Santa Fe. He wrote:

The instructions having in view, upon the completion of the map and report, my entering upon a new expedition, which should be concluded before winter, I have been correspondingly hurried in their preparation, and this must be considered in connection with any defect that may be found to attach to them. The maps, however, I am inclined to believe, will be found full and complete in relation to every want which the emigrant or traveller might reasonably expect to have gratified.

In regard to the details of latitude and longitude, as well as the minute description of the route from day to day as we traveled it—all of which is necessary for a full expression of the country, physical and geographical, and as it affected the emigrants and the troops—this it is in my power to give; but, on account of the short notice at which I have been instructed to furnish the maps and report, they must necessarily be deferred till after I return from the new exploration upon which I am ordered.

The whole distance from Fort Smith to Santa Fe having been measured by a chain (Gunter's chain or surveyor's chain is 4 rods or 66 feet and each link is 7.92 inches) and the bearings taken as far as Topofil Creek, by Captain Dent, and under my direction, every mile

for the balance of the way, the data furnished by these means, in connection with a knowledge of the magnetic variation which my observations from time to time enabled me to obtain, have, with the occasional interpolation of an astronomical result, afforded me the means of getting up a series of maps which, I trust, will not be without their value to the emigrant and traveler.

The maps, four in number, have been plotted upon the large scale of ten miles to the inch. . . .

The Marcy Expedition also used a viameter, an instrument attached to the wheel of a wagon, and by counting the revolutions of the wheel and multiplying that sum by the circumference of the wheel the distance could be determined, though less accurately than the chain method.

INTRODUCTION

The appellation given this land feature on Wednesday, May 23, 1849, by Lieutenant Simpson and his friends became widespread in its use, and the name Rock Mary appears in a number of subsequent reports and writings. These were all examined by the Committee to obtain as much background information as possible, and were all searched for possible clues to aid in the identification.

Captain Marcy, Lieutenant Simpson's commanding officer, although present at the time, did not find it of sufficient interest to include the name in his own report³ and journal of the expedition. He wrote of the buttes in general:

Continuing on this "Divide" for thirteen miles we passed several high mounds of a very soft red sandstone, rising up almost perpendicularly out of the open table land, and can be seen for a long distance before reaching them. At the base of the southern mound, following an old Indian trail, it led us down into a deep ravine, where there is a fine spring of cool water, with wood and grass.

Notwithstanding the absence of any reference by Captain Marcy to the name Rock Mary, the Committee found it most important to turn to the Marcy report, as supplemented by Lieutenant Simpson, for the necessary preliminary information concerning the route prior to reaching Rock Mary, the camps, the character of the topography, and the other natural features needful as introductory to the location of the specific terrain feature in question.

The earliest sketch or drawing of the remarkable land features generally referred to as "the Natural Mounds" was done

³ *Executive Document No. 64, 31st Congress, 1st Session, is the Report of the Secretary of War, transmitting the Report of Captain E. B. Marcy, Nov. 20, 1849.*

on October 1, 1845, by Lieut. J. W. Abert, also of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, upon his journey from Bent's Fort, Colorado, to Fort Gibson. He sketched the buttes from a vantage point on the north side of the Canadian, and from some eight miles away, with such accuracy that, based upon the location of Rock Mary as determined by our field investigation this Committee is satisfied that Rock Mary was located too far to his left to have been included in Lieutenant Abert's drawing.⁴

The Committee examined the detailed reports of the explorations of Lieutenant A. W. Whipple and his party who in 1853 traversed Oklahoma surveying a possible railroad route to the Pacific. These reports,⁵ known generally as the *Pacific Railroad Reports*, are very complete and comprehensive. In the section captioned *Itinerary*, Whipple reports:

August 29—Camp 29. Have travelled to-day nineteen miles, passing "Rock Mary" and other mounds, accurately described by Simpson and others. The first part of the march was over a pleasant country, with occasional springs, and a view of the Cross Timbers to the left. But entering among the remnants of mesas called "natural mounds" we found ourselves in the midst of a desert of sand. The mounds looked like the evil geni of an evil place, and we became impatient to reach the end of this dreary waste. At length, after going about ten miles, grass began to appear, and a rivulet was found, affording a place for camp.

The "Itinerary" portion of the *Railroad Reports* was that used by Dr. Grant Foreman⁶ in editing his volume, *A Pathfinder in the Southwest*, and has been widely studied. At this page of the "Itinerary" appears the woodcut entitled "Rock Mary," which is the picture so often used. It should be noted that this woodcut has many differences from the original M llhausen drawing in the Oklahoma Historical Society's Whipple Collection.⁷ This circumstance will be alluded to later in this report.

The "Itinerary" is followed by a further report by Lieutenant Whipple, "Report on the Topographical Features and Character of the Country." In this section (at page 11) Lieutenant Whipple writes:

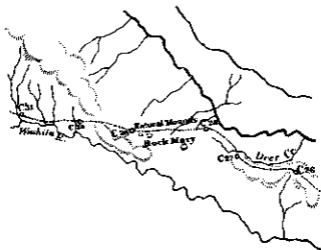
Leaving Deer Creek, we again crossed a series of plains intersected by small arroyos; the Cross Timbers being visible upon our left until we reached "Rock Mary", one of the so-called natural mounds.

⁴Executive Document No. 438, 29th Congress, 1st Session, in the Report of the Secretary of War, June 12, 1845, transmitting the Report and maps of Lieut. J. W. Abert, dated August 9, 1845.

⁵Executive Document No. 79, 33rd Congress, 2nd Session, Volume III of the series is Lieut. A. W. Whipple, *Report of Explorations for a Railway Route near of Thirty-Ninth Parallel of North Latitude, from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean*. Report dated June 30, 1855 (Washington, 1855).

⁶Grant Foreman, *A Pathfinder in the Southwest* (Norman, 1941).

⁷For details of the Whipple Collection, see "Itemized List of the Whipple Collection," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (Autumn, 1950) p. 291.



Diske's Map of Whipple's Route. Scale: 1 inch = 12.4 miles.

which are from seventy-five to one hundred feet in height. These are horizontally stratified, and appear to be isolated remnants of the mass formation which once covered this region. Beyond, the surface is level, sandy, and covered with extensive beds of gypsum of the best quality.

The stream referred to by Lieut. Whipple as Deer Creek is identified as Spring Creek in Captain Marcy's report, and is today known as Boggy Creek.⁸

⁸This stream appears as Spring Creek in Marcy's Report and as Deer Creek in Whipple's Report. At present it is known both as "Boggy Creek" and "Buggy Creek." Remarkably, on State Highway 37, both names are used by the Highway Department at different crossings. The U.S. Geological Survey (1898-99) Map shows this creek as "Boggy Creek." There is a tradition that the creek was named for one "Boggy" Johnson whose family had cattle ranches in this area after the period of the Civil War. Montford Johnson, a prominent Chickasaw rancher and stockman, bought out an old ranch at Silver City (2 miles north of Tuttle) in 1878 and another, 5 miles west, near Minco, in 1883, both in this "Boggy Creek" region. His father, Charles Johnson, better known as "Boggy Johnson," has been reported living in this region before his son, Montford, operated his ranches here.

Charles Johnson, an Englishman, was appointed U. S. Agent to the Chickasaws and came with them from Mississippi to serve as their first agency in the Indian Territory (1838), referred to as the Depot on the Boggy. This place became noted as Boggy Depot, located on Clear Boggy Creek in Atoka County. Because of his work at Boggy Depot, Charles Johnson was called "Boggy" Johnson. He married a Chickasaw, and his son, Montford, was born at Boggy

This "topographical features" section is followed by a report by William P. Blake, a geologist of the office of the U. S. Pacific Railroad Survey, captioned "Report on the Geology of the Route." Mr. Blake (page 17) refers to Rock Mary: "Rock Mary is of similar origin. This is a well-known land mark, and is a striking and interesting object to the traveller on the monotonous plains. Rock Mary owes its name to Lieutenant Simpson, who described it in his report of 1850." Blake then quotes the portion of Simpson's report on the naming of Rock Mary.

With the Blake report is an excellent map of the route showing some pertinent geology. This map gives the location of Rock Mary and an enlarged portion of the map is attached. The Committee will hereafter refer to this as the "Blake Map."

As Section Two of the Blake portion of the *Railroad Reports* is a report by Jules Marcou, a noted geologist who accompanied Lieutenant Whipple. The text is in French, with the editorial note: "This paper is a copy of Mr. Marcou's field-book, and is an exact transcript of the original rough notes as they were taken on the road or in camp." Jules Marcou (p. 130) wrote:

We followed the same very fine, red, argillaceous sandstone. The strata are horizontal, and beautiful exhibitions of denudations by water are seen. The first example near Spring Creek is composed of from eight to ten cones, having a height of about ten feet, of which Mr. Campbell made me a drawing. Afterwards, at Rock Mary, we saw eight or ten great cones truncated at the summit, and being from slaty to one hundred feet in elevation. The strata are horizontal, and thick strata of red sandstone predominate with alterations of red shales, more argillaceous and separating thin leaves. Two or three beds of siliceous limestones occur at the upper part, of a white gray color, very hard, and which have preserved the lower strata from denudation; forming natural mounds.

The Quartermaster of the Whipple Expedition was Lieutenant David S. Stanley. In his personal diary,⁸ not intended by him as a formal or official report, he wrote:

Monday 25th. Left the head of Deer Creek and marched twenty miles on the slope of the Canadian. The first part of the road hilly and the last few miles of the march level. We passed today the natural mounds of Marcy and the Rock Mary. These mounds are very curious in their appearance, some of them presenting the shapes of sugar loaves and others pyramidal shapes as you approach them. They are made up of fragments of sandstone and must at one time have been a high range which the action of the elements has worn down in parts, leaving these natural mounds, which appear more strange, rising as they do from the level surface of the prairie.

Deges. The Chickasaw agency was moved to near Fort Washita in 1844, and the agents were changed but Charles "Boggy" Johnson remained a well known figure and inter-married citizen of the Chickasaw Nation for many years. He moved over to the western part of the Nation about the time of the founding of Fort Arbuckle (1852).

⁸ Lona Sawyer, "Stanley Explores Oklahoma", *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXII, No. 3 (Autumn, 1941) p. 266.

In addition to the foregoing formal reports of Lieut. Whipple, and his staff, his long hand field notes are extant, and form the basis of the Whipple collection of the Oklahoma Historical Society. In his original notebook,¹⁰ prepared no doubt on the spot and at the time of his visit, he wrote: "*Monday Aug. 29th.* Got a late start but traveled 19 miles to Camp 29. Passed today Rock Mary and other hills similar to Simpsons description. Water courses frequent to the right and left. Encamped on fine spring flowing rapidly toward the Canadian. Water and grass yet abundant."

With the Whipple Expedition as botanist and artist was Baldwin Millhausen. His own published account¹¹ of his famous journey to the Pacific makes these references to Rock Mary:

Where heavy rains have laid bare the ground, you see a reddish loam, crossed by white streaks of gypsum, which broaden as they proceed westward, until they reach the enormous bed of gypsum that begins at Fort Mary (*etc.*) and the Natural Mounds (p. 133).

We made a good day's march from the point where Deer Creek is crossed, to the spot where you first catch sight of Rock Mary and the Natural Mounds, a group of bold steep hills in the thenceforward treeless plain. Up to this point no particular change in the character of the scenery is perceptible; there is the same juicy green in the prairie, the same low gnarled oaks in the woods, the same level road over which waggons and horses proceed at the same steady pace (p. 141).

Mile after mile was passed, and the sun was sinking in the west when our train of waggons passed Rock Mary to the northward, winding among the hills, westward of which our camp was to be pitched for the night, near a brook whose vicinity had long been manifested by the presence of cotton-wood trees. The Natural Mounds, the chief of which bears the name of Rock Mary, are a chain of conical hills, lying separate, but scattered in a direction from north-west to south-east; they are all about equal in height, namely, about eighty feet, and covered with a horizontal stratum of red sandstone. They appear to be the remains of a former elevated plain, which has been preserved from complete destruction by the upright masses of rock contained in it; and this seems the more probable, because on the flat plains to the west, you find what looks like a range of columns; consisting of blocks of sandstone lying so regularly one upon another, that it is not easy at first to be convinced that these—not perhaps imposing, but certainly surprising structures, have been formed solely by the hand of nature, or left thus after a comparatively recent convulsion (p. 153).

¹⁰The original Whipple Journals were edited and published by Muriel H. Wright and George H. Shirk, "The Journal of Lieutenant A. W. Whipple," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (Autumn, 1950) p. 276.

¹¹Heinrich Baldwin Millhausen, *Diary of a Journey from Mississippi to the Coasts of the Pacific*, translated by Mrs. Percy Sinnett (London, 1858) 2 vols. The Oklahoma portion of the *Diary* has been edited by Muriel H. Wright and George H. Shirk, "Artist Millhausen in Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4 (Winter 1953-54) p. 392.

It is important to understand that M llhausen was writing in German, and the translation into English was done in England by a translator unfamiliar with the local situation or physical facts.

In the fall of 1856 Lieutenant Edward F. Beale was directed to survey a route from Fort Smith along the Canadian River to the Colorado. He passed along by Rock Mary, and reports:¹²

Nov. 29—Travelling over a magnificent prairie nine miles, with abundant timber in sight and occasional herds of buffalo, we passed the Rock Mary, a singular sandstone butte with forked summit, about two miles to our left, and soon after encamped near some curious sandstone buttes, which I called after the commander of my escort, "Steen's Buttes." From the one nearest us, which I ascended, the view was magnificent. Off to the south sixty or seventy miles the Wichita Mountains were in plain sight, and also many wooded lines marking water-courses and ravines leading to the Washita. To the west the boundless prairie spread out before us, and to the north the timber of the Clear Creek could be traced to its mouth in the Canadian, the line of which latter stream was well defined by its timber and banks.

The name Enoch Steen is important in the history of Oklahoma, and the Committee feels it most appropriate that his name survives in our state in this manner.

In 1860 the Abb  Em. Domenech published in London¹³ a report on his experiences during seven years of missionary and religious work in the Southwestern United States. He writes of Rock Mary (Vol. I, p. 159) either from personal observation or from a careful reference to Lieutenant Simpson:

On the right bank of the Canadian, and at a short distance from the river, is to be seen a series of natural tumuli, and of columns of sandstone, varying from sixty to ninety feet in height, which resemble the gigantic pillars of a colossal temple. Among the most curious of the tumuli we must cite the Rock Mary, which looks like an observatory, similar in form to a sugar-loaf, and is surmounted by two turrets of singularly graceful effect. These earthly masses appear to be the remnants of a geological formation, superior to the actual soil and decidedly more ancient. In all probability they were caused by the powerful action of the great inundations of the deluvian epoch, rather than by the slow effects of rain and time. Be this as it may, it is evident that an upper crust, composed principally of red sandstone, covered all this country many centuries ago; this crust has been ploughed up and almost entirely carried off by the floods; there now only remain a few vestiges of it scattered over the surface of the ground, but still erect, as if to invite science to penetrate the secrets of the wilderness.

¹² *Executive Document No. 62, 35th Congress, 1st Session, Lieut. E. F. Beale's Report of a wagon road from Fort Smith to the Colorado River.* The Oklahoma portion has been reprinted in *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XII, No. 1, (March, 1934) p. 89.

¹³ The Abb  Em. Domenech, *Seven Years' Residence in the Great Deserts of North America*, London, 1860 (2 vols.).

Facing this page in his narrative, the Abbé has inserted a colored lithograph of a mound with two turrets and appearing somewhat like the Müllhansen drawing. This picture is captioned "Natural Hill" and it may be that the Abbé intended this to be a representation of Rock Mary. However, after careful study and comparison, this Committee believes that it is more likely a copy of a colored lithograph captioned, "A Conical Hill, 500 Feet High, Standing in the Valley of Laguna Colorado," appearing in the Blake portion of Volume III of the *Sciencod Reports* (p. 25).

With these citations to the historical references to this land feature, the Committee then turned its attention to a preliminary investigation, prior to the trip to the field, of the possible locations of Rock Mary and means for its identification.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

The conspicuous buttes pictured by Abert, and referred to in all the reports, are composed of shale and capped by the resistant Weatherford dolomite, which occur in the lower part of the Cloud Chief formation in this area, and are underlain by the Rush Springs sandstone. All these rocks are of Permian age. Mareon described the rock now called Weatherford dolomite as "beds of siliceous limestone . . . of a white gray color, very hard, and which have preserved the lower strata from denudation; forming natural mounds."

The Rush Springs sandstone in this area is of fairly uniform character and thickness, and is one of the principal sources of ground water in western central Oklahoma. Consequently, the area of its outcrop abounds with springs and constant-flow streams, and is further characterized by a dense growth of black-jack oak—the "Upper Cross Timbers" of Marey and others. Perhaps the most conspicuous character of the Rush Springs sandstone is the large-scale cross-bedding or false-bedding, in which laminations inclined 20° to 30° from the horizontal extend through a thickness of five to forty feet, separated by horizontal strata six inches to two feet thick. The surface of the Rush Springs sandstone has been extensively dissected by erosion into a rough terrain, with numerous small, and a few moderately large, buttes rising above the general surface.

The Committee is indebted to Dr. Carl C. Branson, Director of the Oklahoma Geological Survey, for making available the aerial photographs of the area. With the help of Dr. William Ham and Mrs. Mildred Reeds of the Survey, the Committee was afforded a close and excellent examination of the region, and the viewing of each of the terrain features with the stereoscopic aids was most valuable.

It was at once apparent to the Committee that the first step should be a correlation and adjustment between the Simpson and Blake maps and, in turn, both to modern maps of the area. The U. S. Geological Survey geologic map of 1954 and the Binger Quadrangle (15" series) topographic sheet were utilized. By photographic reproduction the Simpson, Blake and geologic maps were rendered to the same scale and compared by over-lays.

The Committee agreed upon the following ties between the three maps:

1. Near Minceo (Township 10 North, Range 7 West):
 - a. All three maps are in close agreement on the big bend of Boggy Creek. Correlation was assumed by the Committee.
 - b. Marcy's Camp 31 is two miles south of this big bend.
 - c. Whipple's Camp 36 is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles southeast of the big bend (Blake map) and would be about at the northwest corner of Section 13.
 - d. The Marlow formation contains some gypsum and crops out in this vicinity. This would correlate with "Gypsum begins" of the Simpson map and "We have seen detached pieces of gypsum today" of Marcy.
 - e. The Canadian River on Blake map is in fair agreement with modern maps from Township 12 North, Range 10 West all the way to Township 10 North, Range 8 West.
 - f. Southward flowing streams south of Camp 36 (Blake map) could be forks of Salt Creek south of Minceo in northern Grady County.
2. Near Weatherford:
 - a. From Camp 34 to Camp 35 (May 24), along a road on the divide between the Canadian and Washita Rivers, Marcy reported: "We are now passing through a country where gypsum is found in great quantities . . . at our encampment tonight we have water that is bitter and unpalatable." This is the first mention of gypsum since Camp 31; and Marcy reports Gypsum in the next four day's travel. They are thus traveling on the outcrop of Cloud Chief formation.
 - b. At Camp 36, Simpson map shows small streams flowing north and south from the divide, which have resemblance to drainage on modern maps in Weatherford area.
 - c. The hachures on Blake map between Whipple's Camps 29 and 30 must represent the escarpment of Cloud Chief gypsum. The position is in close agreement with outcrops and outliers in Townships 11 and 12 North, Ranges 13 to 15 West on modern maps. Whipple reports an abundance of gypsum. The gap in escarpment through which Whipple passed (Blake map) is certainly near Weatherford; and seems close to Marcy's Camp 36. Correlation was assumed by the Committee.
 - d. The Washita River and its north tributaries shown on Blake map in Townships 12 and 13 North, Ranges 17 and 18 West match quite well with modern maps.

The Committee made every effort to correlate the route of Simpson and Marcy and the route of Whipple with modern maps. The following correlations were deemed important:

1. Location of Camp 33:

- a. Marcy on May 22 continued up the south side of Boggy Creek three miles (from Camp 32), crossed to the divide between Spring (Boggy) Creek and the Canadian River one mile from the latter; continued same distance from the river to the head of Spring (Boggy) Creek to Camp 33. Simpson map shows Camp 33 six or seven miles from the Canadian River. It is necessary to locate this camp about four miles from the river to fit all subsequent ties.
- b. Marcy on May 23 turned slightly to left and after two miles struck the main divide between the Canadian and Washita Rivers. This divide is narrow and may be precisely located on modern maps, and the Committee believes that the route for May 23 may thus be determined exactly.
- c. Simpson wrote that from Camp 33 the party proceeded about a mile and saw hills of singular shape North 70° West. If his bearing was correct and at the time he was located on the main divide, his bearing was from a point of observation somewhere near the center of Township 11 North, Range 10 West. The Committee determined to survey this area in the field and try and locate a vantage point for an observation as described by Simpson.

2. Location of the mounds:

- a. Leaving Camp 33, Marcy turned left and after two miles struck the main divide; and then continued on the divide for thirteen miles and passed several mounds. At the base of the southern mound he reported an Indian trail leading to deep ravine and spring. This could be either the hill in Sections 8 and 9, Twp. 11 North, Range 12 West; or the "Lone Mound" in Section 2; or the easternmost mound located in Section 1. The Committee was unable to determine which mound Marcy called the southern mound.
- b. Simpson's map shows Camp 34 southeast of a stylized group of six mounds, four miles west of another mound north of the road, and about seven miles northwest of Rock Mary, which is shown south of the route. Rock Mary is shown on the Simpson map as eleven miles west of Camp 33.
- c. The route may be plotted on modern maps, but the distances from Camp 33 to the mounds are about three miles too great when compared with Simpson's map and Marcy's journal.
- d. The mounds shown on the Simpson Map do not fit the modern geologic map. The Committee assumed that the group of six are those prominent mounds in the southeast portion of Township 13 North, Range 13 West, but if so they are shown by Simpson about six miles too far northeast. Also they fail to correlate with the Blake map by about the same distance.

- e. On the Blake Map the eastern mound fits with the mounds in the southeast portion of Township 12 North, Range 13 East.

After the completion of the foregoing preliminary correlation of the three maps, the Committee met for the evening of Friday, March 25, 1960, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Frizzell, and entered upon a study of the material and the initial correlation of the maps in order to adopt the tenets, limiting factors and other principles required before any given mound meets the tests required for Rock Mary:

After a discussion of all of the foregoing, the following were considered by the Committee, and became a part of the necessary tests required for Rock Mary.

1. Simpson wrote, "Nearing the first of these singularly formed hills, and it appearing more oddly shaped than the others." This establishes Rock Mary as (a) the easternmost, and (b) most oddly shaped.
2. Simpson wrote Rock Mary is "situated solitary in a prairie plain." This establishes that Rock Mary is by itself and not in a group of other mounds.
3. The dimensions are given by Simpson as 60 feet in height and 200 feet in diameter.
4. To qualify the rock must at least resemble the woodcut in Whipple's report and the Möllhausen drawing.
5. Both the Simpson and Blake maps agree essentially on the general position of Rock Mary, but place its location in about the center of Township 11 North, Range 11 West, in Sugar Creek Valley and five miles south of the divide between the Canadas and the Washita.

As any location such as in Sugar Creek Valley (necessary if the maps are to be relied upon literally) would require rejection because that would not be in a prairie plain, and furthermore, anything in such a location would be difficult or impossible to be seen by a stranger travelling for the first time along the divide between the two rivers. In view of this the Committee agreed to place the map locations as shown by Simpson and Blake secondary to the written descriptions, but also agreed that the maps would be of primary use in locating the general area of investigation.

Comparison of the maps of Simpson and Blake with modern maps shows a fair general agreement, and thus locates Rock Mary within a four mile circle immediately southwest of Hinton. Considering the quality of their mapping, together with the probability that features not in immediate and close proximity to their routes were sketched in, rather than measured and plotted, perhaps no closer exact ties could be expected now, over 100 years later. The stylized mapping by hachures of the six mounds northwest of Camp 34 on Simpson's map indicates by way of example the degree of sketching and improvisation.

Having confirmed the location of Rock Mary in the area southwest of Hinton, the identity of the particular hill sought to be established as Rock Mary would be established to the satisfaction of the Committee if it (1) is easternmost of the conspicuous mounds; (2) stands by itself and can be seen from the divide between the Canadian and Washita Rivers; (3) at least resembles the woodcut in the Whipple's report and the original Møllhausen drawing; and (4) answers Simpson's vivid and detailed description.

With an agreement on the essential tests required for the rock to qualify as Rock Mary, the Committee agreed to depart for the field the following morning and to check carefully each and every mound and terrain feature in the area, and upon application of the above tenets, to determine if the true Rock Mary is capable of identification.

Other spots of historic interest along the necessary route were not to be overlooked, and thus the itinerary of the Committee included places of historical interest not related to the subject at hand, but which will be included in the Committee report in the cause of completeness.

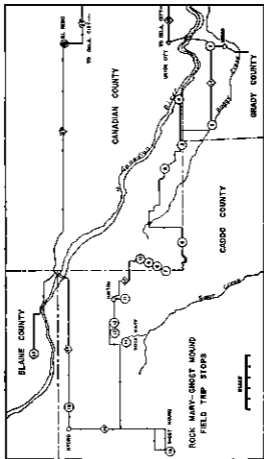
ITINERARY 1960

Stop 1. The Committee made its first stop about two miles south of the Canadian River, at the intersection of highways U.S. 81 and State 37, in northwestern Grady County. From this point the approximate location of Marey's Camp 31 (Sec. 10, Twp. 9 N., R. 7 W.) could be seen, located south of Minco and south of Boggy Creek. This is near the big bend of Boggy Creek where it changes the direction of its course from the southeast to northeast, flowing into the Canadian River.

Stop 2. Taking Highway 37 west from Stop 1, the Committee stopped briefly at the crossing of Boggy Creek. The Committee believes that Marey and his emigrant train crossed Boggy Creek within a few hundred yards of the present highway bridge in Section 20, Twp. 10 N, R. 8 W.

Stop 3. To follow Marey's route, the Committee turned north on the section line road west of the Boggy Creek bridge and proceeded north and west up onto the divide, with a stop on the township line along Section 6. From this point there is a beautiful view of the Canadian River and the site of the ford on the old military road from Darlington to Fort Sill.

Stop 4. The Committee retraced the route a few miles east, down to the south bank of the Canadian River to visit the site of the home of Major George Washington, a prosperous Caddo Indian who owned a large ranch on the south bank of



Itinerary of the Rock Mary Committee, Field Trip 1960

the river at the time of the Civil War. George Washington, Caddo Chief, was made commander of the frontier guard, "Caddo Battalion," with the rank of Major. The Guard was organized during the summer of 1864 by the Confederate military authorities to prevent raids by the Comanches and other western tribes on the frontier settlements of the more civilized Indians to the east. He accepted this responsibility with the understanding that under no condition was he to lead his band in combat against the white man. Nothing today remains of "Caddo" George Washington's once pretentious home place.

Stop 5. The Committee proceeded west past the three county (Grady, Caddo and Canadian) corner and turned north-west onto State Highway 37. At this point the highway follows closely the divide between the Washita and the Canadian watersheds. The divide is but a few feet wider than the right-of-way. Here at Stop 5, the Committee noted with great interest the extreme narrowness of the divide and that today's Highway 37 is certainly on the exact trace used by the early wagon trains.

Stop 6. After crossing Boggy Creek near its head in Canadian County the Committee turned south on the section line road past Highland School (NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 29, Twp. 11 N., R. 10 W.) to the Caddo County line and there turned west. Following it west as the road dips south into Caddo County and climbs up onto a divide, the Committee made Stop 6. It was from this location (NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 5, Twp. 10 N., R. 10 W.) that the Committee had the first glimpse of the Natural Mounds, some twelve miles to the northwest. A few feet south of the road at this point is a U.S.G.S. bench mark, giving the elevation as 1,631 feet. The Committee was searching the area for a view of the mounds that would comply with Simpson's bearing of "N. 70° W." although it was recognized that Stop 6 was located too far to the south.

Stop 7. The route took the Committee through Kickapoo Creek canyon, where the route turned north on the Caddo-Canadian County line. Stop 7 was on the range line between Sections 25 and 30, Twp. 11 N., and Ranges 10 and 11 West. From this divide the Lone Mound in Section 3 was clearly visible and possibly the top of the lower mound in Section 1 (Twp. 11 N., R. 12 W.).

Stop 8. Following the dirt county road with its turn to the east, after a short distance the Committee stopped for another view of the mounds, halting on the section line between Sections 19 and 30.

Stop 9. The Committee turned north across Section 19, Twp. 11 N., R. 10 W. and followed the county road north and east to the point where it again joins Highway 37. This loop drive afforded a number of views of the mounds, but was too far

west to encircle the location of Marcy's Camp 33, believed to be somewhere in Section 30, Twp. 11 N., R. 9 W. A short distance north (between Sections 18 and 17) from the highway intersection, the Committee stopped at the 1,700 foot elevation contour for a further view of the mounds. From Stops 6 to 9 the Committee was endeavoring to find where Simpson could have been on Wednesday, May 23, 1849, when he recorded: "Proceeding on (from Camp 33) about a mile, some hills of singular shape made their appearance, for the first time, bearing north 70 degrees west; several have very much the appearance of immense Indian lodges." It is recognized that Stop 9 is more than "about a mile" from the suggested location of Camp 33, but the exact locations given by Marcy and Simpson may not today be precisely resolved.

Stop 10. Continuing farther north of Highway 37, the Committee stopped for another view from the 1,720 foot contour. Here again the divide between the two rivers narrows to approximately 100 feet, so it was evident that the point of Stop 10 was on the trace of the Marcy Expedition.

Stop 11. Noon came in the vicinity of Hinton, a modern town on the route along which the early emigrants passed. Although the day started cold, damp and overcast, by noon the sun was bright. A picnic lunch was enjoyed with the beauty of the canyon of Red Rock State Park and the protection it afforded from the north wind.

LOCATING ROCK MARY

Hinton, in Section 34, Twp. 12 N., R. 11 W., is situated exactly on the divide between the Canadian and the Washita Rivers. So located, the trace of the Marcy route passed over the present townsite. The Committee determined to depart from Hinton, keeping by the use of country roads on the crest of the divide, and to determine in this manner the most easterly of the mounds. If such a mound met the other tests, and none of the other mounds offered possibilities by reason of one or more similarities, then the Committee could materially narrow its search.

The road on the half-section line due west from Hinton follows quite well the divide in question; and upon reaching its termination at the section line between Sections 31 and 32, it was realized that the divide was moving to the north due to the northward-reaching fingers of the branches of Sugar Creek. From the highest ground in the Northeast Quarter of Section 31, there suddenly loomed into view approximately two miles to the southwest a most singular feature, resembling on the horizon a barn or other farm structure, with two projections on the top

somewhat like modern ventilators often seen on better type barns.

As the Committee proceeded west along the north line of the Section, the view became more startling; and after making the comparison to the farm building, the Committee reflected that now, one hundred years later, we were making the same comparison as did Lieutenant Simpson, each referring to a man-made structure in common understanding at the time.

Without doubt the location of the Marcy route would follow very closely to the north section line of Section 31, probably through north half of the section. In the east half of Section 36 (Twp. 12 N., R. 12 W.) is an area of high ground rising above the 1,700 contour ring; and from such a vantage point the natural feature first sighted more than a mile to the east, appeared most prominent.

Inspection revealed that the mound in question is located in The Northwest Quarter of Section 1, Twp. 11 N., R. 12 W., and it was this mound that the Committee finally determined to be the renowned Rock Mary. A deep and wooded ravine runs due north from the main thread of Sugar Creek across the center of Section 1 and north into Section 36; and so, if in fact Lieutenant Simpson caught his first glimpse from a point on or near the divide, he most certainly was in Section 36 at the moment.

The Rock is located upon the farm of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Ballou (Box 152, Hinton). They came to the region in 1901, and their son, Frank, who now farms the place, was born on the farm in 1905. Having lived there all of his life, Frank Ballou talked with much interest of the earlier history of the area. As far as he knew, although he had long heard of "Rock Mary," no one locally had assumed that the feature on his parent's farm was Rock Mary. It has always been assumed, he reported, without localizing the rock in question, that Rock Mary was one of the more prominent land features farther to the west.

Rock Mary is located in an amphitheater shaped depression, on a slight divide formed by two small tributaries of Sugar Creek, but the base of the rock is lower than the surrounding terrain on the north and west. This circumstance makes the visibility from the north and east rather tricky, and it would have been possible for Lieut. Simpson or the others to have passed nearby and missed the view entirely. The fact that it was seen as described by Simpson makes it inescapable that the Marcy route was across Sections 31 and 36, as mentioned above.

The rim of the depression is larned close down to the base of the rock. To reach the location, one is required to walk down across the slope of the amphitheater for a distance of several hundred yards from the Ballou barnyard. Upon reaching the site, the Committee was impressed by the accuracy of Lieutenant

Simpson's description, which is as apt and fitting today as though it had been recently penned. The size, area, character of rock, even to being "spirally corrugated" (cross-bedded) and other features were carefully checked by the Committee, and no inconsistencies were evident. A comparison of the woodcut appearing in the *Railroad Reports* and the original Möllhausen drawing of the Historical Society indicates that the Möllhausen drawing is the more accurate and probably was sketched, if made on the location, from the northwest. The delineator preparing the Whipple woodcut (it is signed "Roberts SC'") in using the customary license, worked changes that are evident when both are compared on the site with the original subject.

The surface of the rock is deceptive, appearing easy of ascent, when in fact the opposite is true. The sandstone is spalling badly; and the rock is steep, with almost sheer faces 10 to twenty feet high. Actually, the ascent is quite dangerous. George Shirk and Minette Pritzell made the climb to the "two turret like projections . . . protruding from the top." For want of a flag to unfurl, they removed their coats, which while wildly whipped about by the wind became the subject of photographs from below. The south turret is higher and larger, with a flat top of several square feet, and it is not without interest to assume that it was from that perch of the two that Lieutenant J. W. Simpson proclaimed his elation. As there is not space on the south turret for two people, perhaps the second arrival found the north turret for his perch.

The use of soft soled shoes is urged for anyone wishing to make the climb, and the Committee urges that the ascent is harder than it looks. On the north turret, in a protected place, is a well defined and wind eroded carving reading *J. T. Johnson 1865*. Mr. Frank Ballou reported remembering without question seeing the carving as a boy, and there appears no reason why it should not be taken at its face value. The rock contains many other initials and names, carved here and there, but none appeared noteworthy.

After an investigation of the other candidates for Rock Mary, it was realized that all must be eliminated. Were it to be assumed that Lieutenant Simpson could have missed completely the feature in Section 1, then the very prominent Lone Mound in Section 3, which could not have been missed under any circumstance, would have been the "first of these singularly shaped hills" that he saw, and so the possibility that any other of the buttes to the west could be Rock Mary is thus eliminated. Lone Mound can be excluded because it is more than 100 feet high, compared with Simpson's figure of 60 feet, it is flat-topped and without turrets, and in all other particulars fails to answer Simpson's detailed description.

The Committee reached a final determination that the unusual land feature on the Ballou farm in the Northwest Quarter of Section 1, Twp. 11 N., R. 12 W. is in fact the celebrated and famous Rock Mary. All of the tests or requirements laid out previously by the Committee had been met, and the feature fits in every detail.

The Committee gave attention to locating some spot or place on the surrounding terrain from which a view identical to that of the Whipple woodcut or the original Möllhausen drawing (Oklahoma Historical Society) would be possible. There appears to be no such location. The Möllhausen drawing does not bear the caption Rock Mary, which title has been added in the printed Whipple report. To this there appears little significance. The Committee concluded that as the original Möllhausen drawing in the Society's collection is on clean, unworn and unsoiled paper, it must have been made by the artist at a studio or similar location, using perhaps rough sketches made at the time of his visit and later lost. At such time, Möllhausen no doubt exercised the artist's prerogative of adding features for the sake of a pleasing design. The delineator Roberts when he prepared the drawing for the woodcut in the Whipple Report, never having seen Rock Mary personally, used farther and additional license, even to the extent of adding a third Indian rider in the foreground.

GHOST MOUND

While in the region, the Committee wished to locate Ghost Mound, a terrain feature of importance in Indian lore like Lover's Leap (Medicine Bluff No. 3) of the Medicine Creek locality. The section line road just north of the Ballou quarter-section is open to the west, passing to the north of Lone Mound (Section 8) and to the south of the six buttes in Twp. 12 N., R. 13 W., to its junction with State Highway 58. Four miles south of the junction, the Committee turned west and located Ghost Mound in the Northwest Quarter of Section 30, Twp. 11 N., R. 13 W., just east of the Washita County line. The feature is quite interesting in appearance, and presents a difficult climb for the hearty. There is much local legend and lore connected with Ghost Mound, and the Committee hopes that its exact location will continue a matter of permanent record and that it becomes more widely known.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS¹⁴

The Committee concludes and recommends:

1. That the natural feature in the Northwest Quarter of Section 1, Twp. 11 N., R. 12 W. is Rock Mary. This is not subject to serious challenge when the facts are analyzed in detail and with care.

2. That the Möllhausen drawing of the Society is more accurate than the woodcut in the *Railroad Reports*, and was apparently sketched from a point northwest of the mound, although there may be some point east of Rock Mary, from which a view could be secured resembling the background of the Möllhausen drawing.

3. That the foreground appearing in both drawings is inaccurate, and was added for artistic effect without regard for literal accuracy.

4. That two on-site (Type B) markers be placed at Rock Mary. One should be at the base, facing west, telling of the Rock; and the other, without concrete pedestal, placed directly on the north face of the south turret, giving recognition to Lieutenant Simpson's romantic exploit on Wednesday, May 23, 1849.

5. That the present road side (Type A) marker now on U. S. Highway 66 be moved to a location on the south edge of the town of Hinton, and no change in text or directional wording would be required; and that an additional Type A marker, devoted to Rock Mary, be placed south of Hinton in connection with Red Rock State Park. It is realized that Rock Mary may not be seen from such location, but as State Parks always contain sight-seers and others with leisure time, such a location would reach the greatest number of people.

6. That a new Type A marker to be denominated "Steen's Buttes" be prepared for a suitable location along U. S. Highway 66 near the Hinton junction.

7. That a Type B marker be placed north of the Canadian River, at a suitable location on high ground, to indicate the site from which Lieut. Abert paused on October 1, 1845, to sketch the buttes to the south.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert H. Dott, Chairman
Mildred Armer Frizzell
John D. Frizzell
R. G. Miller
George H. Shirk
Muriel H. Wright

¹⁴ Enclosures: The Committee adds as Annexes which are found here in this report:

- a. Map of Committee's itinerary.
- b. Simpson map enlarged to 1:300,000 scale.
- c. Blake map enlarged to 1:500,000 scale.
- d. U.S.G.S. Binger Quadrangle (15' series) 1951.
- e. Overlay of U.S.G.S. geologic map, 1954.
- f. Collection of photographs taken by the Committee March 28, 1960.

APPENDIX**AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS**

Aerial photographs (taken from airplanes at high altitudes) of the earth's surface are beneficial to the historians as well as the geologists and countless other sciences.

The exact culture of an area may be seen on an aerial photograph. A geologic map shows only those landmarks considered essential by the maker of the map.

The relief of the surface as seen on aerial photographs is in complete detail. This is most helpful in locating old trails and natural landmarks.

Aerial photographs are completely objective. This is a quality essential to all fields of research.

The photos (stereo pair) reproduced here are from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Commodity Stabilization Service, Western division, Salt Lake City, Utah. A set covering the entire state of Oklahoma is available and would be a great asset to the Oklahoma Historical Society Library.

The relief of the surface appears flat on these aerial photographs, therefore it is necessary to use some means of bringing out the relief to get the full benefit of these photos. This can be accomplished by viewing the pictures through a stereoscope which is an optical apparatus that gives relief to the aerial photographs.

This same stereoscopic effect can be obtained by viewing simultaneously a pair of overlapping aerial photographs which present different viewpoints of the same area, in such a manner that the view of each eye is restricted to a single photograph.

We have reproduced for study, the stereo pair of Rock Mary and vicinity. Rock Mary is the small light colored dot seen in the west or top half of each photograph.

A conscientious study of these photos will bring out two conditions necessary for the formation of natural erosional remnants similar to the natural mounds. First, soft easily eroded formations capped with a more resistive rock; and second, rapidly eroding streams such as Sugar Creek and its tributaries, seen in the foreground of these photos.

By placing a hand lens over Rock Mary after it is in stereoscopic focus, one can see the two mounds on top that are composed of a more resistive rock which has helped to form this natural

South

meet line ↓

fold over to
(top)

↓ meet line



cut line
.....
(white dot = Junk Mary)

West

East



South

mound. It is evident from this aerial photograph that Rock Mary is in the edge of the original Cross Timber region. Near the turn of the century, the land was cleared for cultivation. The aerial photograph reveals these facts and considerable subsequent erosion of high land around Rock Mary.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STEREOSCOPIC EFFECT

1. Cut the page free along the dotted line.
2. Fold free part of page along fold line.
3. Make a pleat in the page by bringing the arrow point on the fold line (left or south photo) over (on top) to meet arrow point on top of right photo. This will bring the fold line to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch of Rock Mary on the right or north photo.
4. Hold the page (west side at top) about six inches from your eyes. Fix your eyes on this page as if you were staring into infinity.
5. *Relax and Slowly* extend your arms to your normal reading position. The relief will jump out at you when the proper distance has been reached for your vision. Unless you are skilled in the study of stereoscopic pairs it will be necessary to repeat this procedure many times before your eyes adjust to this technique. Here patience, practice and perseverance will pay off in a thrilling experience when the photos go into focus and reveal the relief of Rock Mary and vicinity.
6. After the photos are in perfect stereoscopic focus, slowly open out the pleat of the page and widen your vision to cover an area approximately one mile square.

(M. A. F.)