

"CERAN ST. VRAIN",  
AND HIS MOLINO DE PIEDRA  
IN THE MORA VALLEY

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"CERAN ST. VRAIN AND HIS MOLINO DE PIEDRA  
IN THE MORA VALLEY."

1691-1704

WHEN GENERAL DON DIEGO DE VARGAS GOT HIS FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE BEAUTIFUL, UNSPOILED VIRGIN VALLEY OF MORA IT WAS ALREADY STARSLEY INHABITED BY INDIANS. SINCE SIGNS OF PERMANENT DWELLINGS HAVE NEVER BEEN FOUND, IT IS ASSUMED THAT THE VALLEY WAS USED BY THEM AS A SUMMER CAMP OR AS HUNTING GROUNDS. THERE WAS PLENTY OF GRASS IN ITS MEADOWS, PLENTY OF GAME IN ITS WILDERNESS, AND THERE WERE MANY CLEAR WATER SPRINGS AND RIVERS. POTTERY SHERDS FOUND AS MUCH AS FOUR FEET DEEP UNDER ITS BLACK TOPSOIL ATTEST TO A PEOPLE WHO WERE HERE CENTURIES BEFORE. DON JOSE CHACON MEDINA SALAZAR Y VILLASEÑOR, MARQUES DE LA PANUELA WAS APPOINTED GOVERNOR BY KING PHILLIP V IN 1705, AND SERVED FROM 1707-1712.

1707-1712

1724

WHEN VILLASUR'S EYES CARRESSED THE VALLEY IN 1724 HE JUST MAY HAVE FOUND A MAN NAMED MORA SETTLED BY THE HUGE BUBBLING SPRING IN THE LOWER EXTREMITIES OF THE VALLEY; LO DE MORA, (THAT WHICH BELONGS TO MORA,) OR "EL OJO DE MORA?", BECAUSE BY THE EARLY 1800'S, IT WAS

1739

ALREADY "EL VALLE DE MORA." BY THE YEAR 1739, MANY FRENCHMEN WERE KNOWN TO BE TRAPPING THE RIVERS IN THE TAOS VICINITY, AND SENDING THEIR PELTS BACK TO NEW ORLEANS. ANGERED BY THE CONTINUING AFFRONT,

1754

GOVERNOR TOMAS VELEZ GACHUPIN ISSUED A DECREE ORDERING THAT COMANCHE TRADE BE MAINTAINED OR ELSE IT WOULD BE LOST TO THE FRENCH OF NEW

1763

ORLEANS. AFTER THE CESSION OF LOUISIANA TO SPAIN, FRENCH ATTEMPTS TO PENETRATE THE SPANISH TRADE CAME TO AN END, BUT THE FRENCH INFLUENCE IN NEW MEXICO WAS ALREADY WIDESPREAD AND MANY OF THEM WOULD REMAIN: THEIR FRENCH NAMES SPANISHIZED, THEY SOON BLENDED INTO THE CULTURE

1778

WHEN SOLDIER, STATESMAN, JUAN BAUTISTA DE ANZA ARRIVED IN NEW MEXICO TO TAKE OVER THE GOVERNORSHIP FOR SPAIN IN THE SUMMER OF 1778, THE

THE FEW BRAVE SETTLERS WHO HAD TRIED TO SETTLE IN THE MORA VALLEY WERE VERY HAPPY TO SEE HIM. FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS, THEY HAD BEEN BESEIGED, RAVAGED AND PILLAGED BY THE COMANCHES UNDER CUERNO VERDE, THE INDIAN KING, EITHER WHEN ON THEIR WAY ACROSS THE SANGRE DE CRISTOS TO THE LUDICROUS TAOS AREA OR WHEN ON THEIR WAY BACK TO THE PLAINS.

1790

FINANCIALLY RUINED AFTER THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, 52 YEAR OLD CHEVALIER PIERRE DE HAULT DE LASSUS DE LUZIERE, A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE KING OF FRANCE, AND HIS WIFE DEMOISELLE DOMITILLE JOSEPH, DAUGHTER OF THE FORMER SEIGNEUR OF BEAUFORT AND ECHEVIN OF THE CITY OF BOUCHAIN, SAILED FOR AMERICA. HAVING PURCHASED LAND IN GALLIPOLIS, A WILDERNESS SURROUNDED HAMLET OF ABOUT 80 CRUDE CABINS IN SOUTHERN OHIO HOPED TO REBUILD THEIR DEVASTATED LIVES. WITH THEIR TWO YOUNGEST CHILDREN, THEY SOON BEGAN TO REALIZE THE HARDSHIPS AND STARVATIONS OF THEIR ILL-FATED MOVE. THE OHIO COMPANY REASSERTED TITLE TO THEIR LAND, SINCE BARLOWS SCIOTO COMPANY HAD SOLD THEM LAND FOR WHICH THEY ONLY HAD AN OPTION.

1793

THE FAMILY LEFT FOR NEW ORLEANS WHERE HE OBTAINED LAND GRANTS ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN SOUTHEASTERN MISSOURI. THESE HE OBTAINED THROUGH A BOYHOOD FRIEND, THE BARON DE CARONDELET, GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA. HE ATTEMPTED TO RESETTLE OLD FRIENDS, WHO HAD FARED AS BADLY IN GALLIPOLIS, BUT BY 1797 HIS DREAM "NOUVELLE BOURBON" WAS STILL A LITTLE SUGAR CAMP OF ABOUT 20 LEAN-TO SHACKS.

1797

THE CHEVALIERS ELDEST SONS ALSO CAME TO AMERICA. CHARLES AUGUSTE HAD FLED THE REVOLUTION TO MADRID WHERE HE SOON BECAME AN OFFICER OF THE GUARD OF THE KING OF SPAIN, AND TWO YEARS AFTER HIS ARRIVAL WAS APPOINTED LT. GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA.

HIS YOUNGER BROTHER JACQUES HAD ARRIVED AT NOUVELLE BOURBON IN 1795, AFTER HAVING SERVED AS AN OFFICER OF THE FRENCH NAVY. HE SETTLED IN ST. LOUIS WHERE THROUGH HIS BROTHER'S INFLUENCE WAS APPOINTED TO

VARIOUS PUBLIC OFFICES, AND AT ONE POINT, WAS COMMANDER OF A LONG, SLEEK ROYAL GALLIOT ON THE MISSISSIPPI. HE ACQUIRED THREE LAND GRANTS IN MISSOURI, AND PROCEEDED TO BUILD HIS HOME AT SPANISH LAKE IN THE NORTHEASTERN PART OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY. HE HAD MARRIED THE FORMER MARIE FELICITE DUBREUIL. HE ADDED DE ST. VRAIN TO HIS FORMER LONG NAME OF JACQUES MARCELLIN CERAN DE HAULT DE LASSUS, BUT ITS ORIGIN OR LEGITIMACY IS NOT KNOWN. IT IS BELIEVED THAT IT DERIVED FROM SOME TITLE DURING HIS YEARS AS AN OFFICER OF THE FRENCH NAVY. FOUR OF THEIR CHILDREN WERE BORN AT SPANISH LAKE, THE FOURTH BEING CERAN ST. VRAIN.

1802 CERAN ST. VRAIN WAS BORN TO JACQUES MARCELLIN CERAN DE HAULT DE LASSUS DE ST. VRAIN AND MARIE FELICITE DUBREUIL.

1804 THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE WAS SIGNED. THE FAMILY'S FINANCIAL PROBLEMS BEGAN AGAIN. WITH THE RAISING OF THE STARS AND STRIPES, CHARLES LOST HIS GOVERNORSHIP, THE CHEVALIER LOST HIS NOUVELLE BOURBON. JACQUES, LUCKILY, HAD OPENED UP A BREWERY, AND IT NOW BECAME THEIR SOLE SUPPORT.

1806 THE CHEVALIER DIED A BROKEN MAN.

1813 JACQUES'S BREWERY BURNED DOWN, LEAVING THE FAMILY PENNILESS.

1815 MARCELLIN WAS BORN TO JACQUES AND MARIE FELICITE.

1818 AFTER THE BREWERY BURNED DOWN, JACQUES HAD STARTED TO SPECULATE AND BY THIS YEAR, HE HAD LOST CONTROLLING INTEREST IN THE LAND GRANTS. AFTER HIS DEATH, HIS BROTHER CHARLES OFFERED MARIE AND HER DESTITUTE FAMILY OF TEN CHILDREN A HOME FOR AS LONG AS THEY NEEDED IT, HOWEVER, UNABLE TO COPE WITH SUCH A LARGE BROOD SHE STARTED TO FARM THEM OUT TO FOSTER HOMES.

1820 18 YEAR OLD CERAN ST. VRAIN, HAVING HELPED HIS FATHER IN THE BREWERY, NOW MOVED IN WITH GENERAL BERNARD PRATTE IN ST. LOUIS, AND MADE HIMSELF

USEFUL IN HIS EXPORTING AND IMPORTING COMPANY.

1821 MEXICO RECEIVED ITS INDEPENDENCE FROM SPAIN AND NEW MEXICO FELL UNDER MEXICAN RULE.

1822 HAVING ACHIEVED PRATTE'S CONFIDENCE AND TRUST, ST. VRAIN WAS NOW PUT ON THE PAYROLL AT \$20.00 A MONTH.

1824 NOVEMBER 2, 1824 GENERAL BERNARD PRATTE APPOINTED ST. VRAIN TO LEAD A VENTURE INTO NEW MEXICO. TOGETHER WITH FRANCOISE GUERIN, HE PROCEEDED TO FORM A PARTNERSHIP WITH ONE THIRD OF THE STOCK BELONGING TO PRATTE AND COMPANY.

1825 IN JULY OF THIS YEAR ST. VRAIN STAKED A GROUP OF TEN TO TRAP THE AREAS OF THE SAN JUAN, THE GRAND RIVER (RIO GRANDE), THE DOLORES AND THE SAN MIGUEL. LATER IN THE FALL HE HIMSELF LED A PARTY UP THE SAN JUAN TO THE AREA OF THE UTAH LAKE, NOT RETURNING UNTIL JULY OF 1826. BEFORE THIS LONG TRIP, HOWEVER, IN AUGUST OF 1825, CERAN ST. VRAIN, ALEXANDER K. BRANCH ( WHO HAD COME WITH HIM FROM ST. LOUIS), AND FOUR OTHER TRAPPERS, CROSSED OVER THE 12,000 FOOT JICARITAS AND CAUGHT THEIR FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE BEAUTIFUL GREEN VALLEY OF MORA. ALL VOWED THAT THEY WOULD SOMEDAY RETURN. ( IN 1855, ST. VRAIN AND HIS WIFE LOUISA BRANCH, ALEXANDER'S DAUGHTER, WOULD MOVE DOWN FROM TAOS AND CONSTRUCT A TWO FOOT THICK ADOBE HOME RIGHT IN THE VILLAGE. BRANCH ALSO WOULD HOME-STEAD IN THE LOS ALAMITOS CANYON, THE SAME AREA WHERE THE TRAPPERS HAD FOUND AN ABUNDANCE OF BEAVER DAMS INHABITED BY ENORMOUS COLONIES OF BEAVER. (BRANCH WOULD ALSO BUILD A HOME IN THE VALLEY AND RAISE A FAMILY THERE).

1826 IN JULY 1826, AFTER RETURNING FROM THE LONG TREK TO THE UTAH LAKES ALEXANDER K. BRANCH, MILTON SUBLETTE, TOM SMITH (LATER TO BE KNOWN AS PEGLEG SMITH), MAURICE LE DUC, LOUIS DOLTON, BILL POPE, SOLOMON STONE, GEORGE C. YOUNG, RICHARD CAMPBELL, AND E. BURE JOINED A HUNT ORGANIZED



BY EWING YOUNG AND BILL WOLFSKILL, RECENTLY ARRIVED FROM ST. LOUIS. THEY TRAVELED UP THE GILA, PAST THE SANTA RITA MINES, AND TO THE MOUTH OF THE SALT RIVER IN ARIZONA WHERE THEY ENCOUNTERED A BAND OF "FRIENDLY" (ACCORDING TO SMITH) APACHE INDIANS, AND THEY WERE FRIENDLY UNTIL ONE OF THEM SHOT AN ARROW THROUGH ONE OF THEIR PACK MULES. A LIVELY BATTLE FOLLOWED DURING WHICH SUBLETTE WAS WOUNDED IN THE LEG AND ALEXANDER BRANCH BECOMING THE HERO OF THE DAY, KILLING TWO INDIANS WITH ONE LUCKY SHOT. OUTNUMBERED, THEY WERE LUCKY TO GET OUT OF IT WITH THEIR SCALPS INTACT, AND RETURNED TO NEW MEXICO. SOME WENT UP THE RIO GRANDE TO TAOS WHILE OTHERS STAYED AT SENOR CHAVEZ'S RANCH ON THE RIVER.

1828 ON APRIL 28, 1828, AN AVENUE WAS OPENED TO ALL FOREIGN TRADERS WHO WANTED TO DO BUSINESS IN NEW MEXICO. THE CONGRESS OF MEXICO CITY PRESENTED A CONDITION UNDER WHICH THEY COULD BECOME MEXICAN CITIZENS: THE APPLICANT HAD TO BE BAPTIZED IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, BE EMPLOYED, OF GOOD CHARACTER, AND HAVE LIVED IN NEW MEXICO TWO YEARS. ALMOST ALL OF THEM FILLED ALL THE REQUIREMENTS EXCEPT THAT OF BEING ~~of~~ GOOD CHARACTER, SO ONE BY ONE THEY APPLIED. ST. VRAIN, NEVER KNOWN TO LET A GOOD OPPORTUNITY PASS BY, WAS ONE OF THE FIRST. EVEN THOUGH IT WASN'T A REQUIREMENT HE BEGAN USING THE NAME "SEVERANO SANVRANO", AND APPLIED FOR MEXICAN CITIZENSHIP. IT WOULD GIVE HIM THE NECESSARY FREEDOM TO TRAP AND TRADE IN THE MEXICAN TERRITORY. ON JUNE 8, 1828, BRANCH WAS BAPTIZED INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN TAOS, HIS BAPTISMAL NAME BECOMING JOSE DE JESUS BRANCH. ON DECEMBER 31, 1829, HE WAS ACCEPTED AS A MEXICAN CITIZEN.

1829 ON JANUARY 14, 1829, BRANCH MARRIED PAULA LUNA, DAUGHTER OF RAFAEL LUNA, CUSTOMS INSPECTOR OF TAOS.

1830 BRANCH WENT INTO BUSINESS WITH STEVEN LEE AS "LA COMPANIA DE BRANCH Y LEE", AND UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1841 WAS OFTEN SEEN ON THE CHIHUAHUA

TRAIL OR ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL BRINGING GOODS FROM ST. LOUIS TO  
TAOS AND SANTA FE.

1834 IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHARLES AND WILLIAM BENT, ST. VRAIN HELPED  
ESTABLISH BENT'S FORT ON THE ARKANSAS RIVER. FROM THIS YEAR UNTIL  
1838 HE ALSO SERVED OCCASIONALLY AS UNITED STATES COMMERCIAL AGENT  
IN SANTA FE.

ANOTHER PERSON WHO WOULD INDIRECTLY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE  
ST. VRAIN MILL WAS BORN THIS YEAR. PIERRE DENNIS TRAMBLEY WAS BORN  
IN ST. CYPRIEN, CANADA, DISTRICT OF MONTREAL.

1835 MARIA LUISA BRANCH WAS BORN IN TAOS TO ALEXANDER K. AND MARIA PAULA  
LUNA BRANCH AND BAPTIZED THERE ON JUNE 4.

JOSE TAPIA AND HIS DAUGHTER CARMEN ARCE, AND SEVENTY FOUR OTHER  
SETTLERS TO BE OF THE VALLEY ARRIVED WITH WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE  
EARLIEST PAPER RELATING TO THE MORA LAND GRANT. IT WAS A REPORT  
OF MANUEL ANTONIO SANCHEZ, CONSTITUTIONAL JUSTICE, DATED OCTOBER  
20, 1835, RECITING THE JURIDICIAL POSSESSION OF THE GRANT GIVEN TO  
HIM, WHICH HE SAID WAS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE SUPERIOR DECREE OF  
DON ALBINO PEREZ, POLITICAL CHIEF OF THE TERRITORY, DATED THE 28TH  
DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1825. THE GENERAL BOUNDARIES OF THE TRACT AS  
DEFINED, WERE:

ON THE NORTH, THE OCATE RIVER.

ON THE SOUTH TO WHERE THE SAPELLO EMPTIES.

ON THE EAST THE "AGUAJE DE LA LLECUA."

ON THE WEST THE "ESTILLERO",

A TOTAL OF 827,621.01 ACRES. THE ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR MAKING THE  
GRANT WAS LOST AND IT HAS BEEN SPECULATED THAT IT WAS PROBABLY DE-  
STROYED IN 1843 BY THE TEXAN INVADERS OR IN 1847 WHEN THE VILLAGE OF  
MORA WAS SACKED AND LEVELED BY THE U.S. ARMY IN RETALIATION FOR THE

UPRISALS AND THE ASSASSINATION OF GOVERNOR BENT IN TAOS. IF IT SURVIVED THE TWO ATTACKS ON MORA, IT MAY HAVE BEEN CONFISCATED YEARS LATER WHEN MEMBERS OF THE SANTA FE RING MANAGED TO GET THEIR HANDS ON PORTIONS OF THE GRANT.

1837 CERAN ST. VRAIN BUILT FORT ST. VRAIN AND THE ST. VRAIN TRADING POST ON A FORK OF THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER.

1838 IN 1838, HE BOUGHT FORT JACKSON HIS NEAREST COMPETITOR, WHILE FORT LUPTOM AND FORT VASQUEZ WENT INTO DISREPAIR.

1841 ALEXANDER K. BRANCH PASSED AWAY.

1844 ST. VRAIN AND CORNELIO VIGIL CLAIMED TITLE THIS YEAR TO THE 4,000,000 ACRE LAS ANIMAS LAND GRANT IN SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO.

1846 ON MY 10, 1846 THE UNITED STATES DECLARED WAR ON MEXICO, AND ON AUGUST 18TH BRIGADIER GENERAL STEVEN WATTS KEARNEY OFFICIALLY TOOK POSSESSION OF NEW MEXICO, AND RAISED THE AMERICAN FLAG IN THE PLAZA IN SANTA FE.

1847 ON JANUARY 19, 1847, A BAND OF INDIANS ATTACKED THE BENT HOME IN TAOS, KILLING THE GOVERNOR. SHORTLY AFTER, STEVEN LEE, BRANCH'S FORMER BUSINESS PARTNER, SIMEON TURLEY, THE DISTILLER FROM ARROYO HONDO, AND NARCISO BEUBIEN, SON OF CHARLES BEUBIEN ALSO DIED AS A RESULT OF THE INSURRECTION.

ON JANUARY 20TH, THE NEWS OF THE GOVERNOR'S SCALPING AND KILLING REACHED MORA, PRECIPITATING A SIMILAR UPRISING. UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF A MAN NAMED CORTEZ, A MOB OF THE VILLAGERS ATTACKED A GROUP OF AMERICAN TRADERS AND VENTED THEIR LONG SUPPRESSED RAGE ON THEM.

DEAD WERE LEWIS CABANNE, M.L. NOYES, ROMULUS CULVER, LAWRENCE WALDO, AND A MR. PREWITT. COLONEL STERLING PRICE OF TAOS IMMEDIATELY SENT A TROOP DETAIL TO ATTACK THE VILLAGE. AFTER DOOR TO DOOR COMBAT THE SOLDIERS FOUND THAT THEY WERE LOSING AND RETREATED. SOON AFTER, RE-GROUPING, THEY RETURNED, PUSHING A HUGE CANON BETWEEN THEM, AND



PROCEEDED TO LEVEL THE VILLAGE. BEFORE THIS, THE BEAUTIFUL VALLEY HAD OFTEN HEARD THE BLOOD CURDLING WAR SCREAMS OF ATTACKING INDIANS AND THE CRACKLING SOUND OF RIFLE FIRE, BUT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IN ITS HISTORY THAT THE VALLEY HAD REVERBERATED TO THE DEAFENING BOOM OF CANON FIRE.

ST. VRAIN, MEANWHILE, HAD BEEN BUSY IN SANTA FE ALL DAY. THE SHORT, STOLID FRENCHMAN HAD SCURRIED THROUGH THE PLAZA RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS TO GO HELP PUT DOWN THE UPRISALS IN TAOS AND MORA, IN SUPPORT OF COLONEL STERLING W. PRICE. HE SOON LEFT WITH A FORCE OF ABOUT 75 MEN, MADE UP MOSTLY OF HIS OLD MOUNTAIN MEN FRIENDS. THEY MARCHED UP THE RIVER TO TAOS, AND FROM THERE WENT DIRECTLY TO THE PUEBLO, AND ATTACKED. THE OLD ADOBE CHURCH WAS VIRTUALLY LEVELLED AS WERE MANY OF THE INDIAN HOMES. THE NEXT DAY THE INDIANS SURRENDERED. HAVING RECEIVED WORD OF THE COMPLETE RAZING OF THE MORA VILLAGE AND THE KILLING OF MANY MEXICANS, THE ST. VRAIN FORCE RETURNED TO SANTA FE.

1848 THIS YEAR ST. VRAIN DISSOLVED HIS PARTNERSHIP WITH WILLIAM BENT, AND HE TRAVELED TO ST. LOUIS TO PAY THE COMPANY'S CREDITORS. THE SITUATION NOW HAVING QUIETED DOWN IN TAOS AND MORA, ST. VRAIN, STILL FEARING REPERCUSSIONS STARTED TO BUILD HIS HOUSE IN SANTA FE: A THICK WALLED ADOBE FORTRESS SURROUNDED BY HIGH WALLS FAR UP AT THE END OF THE CANYON.

1849 ST. VRAIN WAS ONE OF THREE REPRESENTATIVES FROM TAOS COUNTY TO THE NEW MEXICO TERRITORIAL CONVENTION IN SANTA FE. HE ALSO FORMED A PARTNERSHIP WITH ISAAC MCCARTY TO DELIVER U.S. MAIL BETWEEN SANTA FE AND FORT LEAVENWORTH.

1850 ST. VRAIN ACQUIRED A GOVERNMENT CONTRACT TO SUPPLY FLOUR TO ARMY POSTS IN SOCORRO, RAYADO, AND CANTONMENT BURGUIN IN TAOS, AND TOGETHER WITH MCCARTY OPENED TWO STORES IN THE SANTA FE AREA. HE TRAVELED TO

WESTPORT, MISSOURI, WHERE HE HIRED FIVE EXPERT MILLERS AND AT THEIR RECOMMENDATION PURCHASED FIVE FRENCH BUHR MILLS, AND HAD THEM SHIPPED BACK TO THE TERRITORY. THE SILICEOUS BUHRSTONES WITH THEIR QUARTZ-LIMESTONE COMPONENTS HAD BEEN PROVEN TO BE THE LONGEST LASTING, SOFT-HARD MILLSTONES. HE BUILT HIS FIRST MORA MILL AT THIS TIME, INSTALLING ONE OF HIS BUHR MILLS IN THE LONG FRAME BUILDING, AND LEAVING JACOB BEARD, MILL-WRIGHT, TO OPERATE IT FOR HIM. HE THEN TRAVELED TO TAOS AND PERALTA ALSO INSTALLING THE BUHR MILLS AT HIS OTHER TWO LOCATIONS, AND STARTED WORK ON HIS SANTA FE MILL. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THIS ONE WAS ON THE SANTA FE RIVER CLOSE TO HIS HOME. THE FIFTH BUHRSTONE HE SOLD. AFTER THE DEATH OF MCCARTY IN OCTOBER, 1850, ST. VRAIN MOVED TO TAOS TO OPERATE HIS MILL IN THAT REGION.

1852 IN 1852 ST. VRAIN WAS LIVING MOST OF THE TIME IN HIS TAOS HOME WHILE STILL MAINTAINING HIS SANTA FE CANYON HOME!

1855 JANUARY 27, ONE HUNDRED AND ONE MEN FROM MORA AND THE SURROUNDING VILLAGES ORGANIZED AND JOINED THE MORA MOUNTED VOLUNTEERS, A CAVALRY UNIT EQUIPPED WITH GOOD HORSES AND GOOD RIGGING, AND ELECTED FROM AMONG THEMSELVES, JOSE MARIA VALDEZ AS 1ST CAPTAIN, JOSE DOLORES ROMERO AS 2ND CAPTAIN, AND JOSE FRANCISCO RAEI AS 3RD CAPTAIN. THEY OFFERED THEIR SERVICES TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. GOVERNOR MERRIWEATHER APPOINTED CAPTAIN CERAN ST. VRAIN AS COMMANDER OF THE VOLUNTEERS. DURING THE MID 1850'S, ST VRAIN HELD THE SUTTERSHIPS OF FORT MASSACHUSETTS, FORT CERLAND AND FORT UNION.

1855 ST. VRAIN AND HIS WIFE MOVED TO MORA FROM TAOS. (SINCE HIS VIOLENT DISAGREEMENT WITH PADRE MARTINEZ, ST. VRAIN HAD LEFT THE CHURCH, SO THE COUPLE WERE NOT MARRIED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. THE CEREMONY USED IT NOT KNOWN, BUT WHATEVER IT WAS, HER FAMILY accepted him HEARTEDLY.)

- 1857 TWENTY-THREE YEAR OLD PIERRE DENNIS TRAMBLEY, HAVING ARRIVED IN THE LAS VEGAS AREA A FEW MONTHS BEFORE FROM ST. CYPRIEN, CANADA, MARRIED ERNESTINE PINARD FROM SAN ~~S~~ESAUCON AND PARIS, FRANCE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AT LA CUEVA; A MILLWRIGHT BY TRADE, TRAMBLEY BUILT A MILL IN LAS VEGAS (WHERE THE STADIUM NOW STANDS), AND OPERATED IT FOR MANY YEARS.
- 1858 AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD ALONG CHERRY CREEK IN COLORADO ST. VRAIN SENT WAGONS TO THE GOLD CAMP AND ESTABLISHED STORES IN DENVER, PUEBLO, AND TARRYALL. HE ALSO OPERATED ANOTHER FLOUR MILL ON CULEBRA CREEK IN SAN LOUIS IN ADDITION TO HIS OTHER MILLS.
- 1860 MORA COUNTY WAS CREATED BY AN ACT OF THE NEW MEXICO TERRITORIAL LEGISLATURE, (CHAPTER 42, SECTION 18, OF THE LAWS OF THE TENTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE TERRITORY), ON FEBURARY 1, 1860.
- ON JUNE 21, A DECREE OF CONGRESS OFFICIALLY CONFIRMED THE MORA LAND GRANT AS #32 OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
- THE ST. VRAIN MERCANTILE COMPANY NEXT TO THE WALTON HOTEL IN MAIN STREET MORA WAS DOING A THRIVING BUSINESS AS WAS HIS WOODEN MILL.
- 1861 APRIL 12, THE CIVIL WAR BEGAN.
- 1863 JANUARY 29. ST. VRAIN, LEVI SPEIGELBER, JOSE MANUEL GALLEGOS, AND SIGMUN SELIGMAN ORGANIZED THE BANK OF NEW MEXICO. ST. VRAIN'S DAUGHTER FELICITAS ST. VRAIN WAS BORN. HE WAS OPERATING HIS SAN LUIS MILL AND
- 1864 LIVING THERE AT THE TIME. DISTRAUGHT OVER HIS BUSINES ABSENCES, LOUISA LEFT ST. VRAIN AND RETURNED TO TAOS WITH FELICITAS, A BABY, AND RESUMED HER MAIDEN NAME. HE RETURNED FROM SAN LUIS AND MOVED IN WITH HIS OLDEST SON VICENTE. HE RESIGNED HIS MEMBERSHIP AT THE ~~B~~ENT MASONIC LODGE #205 IN TAOS AND TRANSFERRED TO THE LAS VEGAS, LA JUNTA LODGE ON MARCH 5, 1864.

ON JULY 29, ST. VRAIN'S MILL BURNED IN TAOS. HIS NEXT ONE HE DECIDED TO BUILD OF STONE. THIS SAME YEAR HE BEGAN WORK ON HIS THREE STOREY RECTANGULAR SHAPED STONE MILL IN MORA, THE LARGEST AND BEST BUILT OF ALL HIS MILLS. THAT YEAR HE OBTAINED A GOVERNMENT CONTRACT TO PROVIDE FLOUR FOR THE 6,000 NAVAJOS HELD PRISONERS AT BOSQUE REDONDO NEAR FORT SUMNER. THROUGH THE SUMMER HIS MILLS PROVIDED THE GOVERNMENT WITH \$41,000 IN FLOUR AND WHEAT MEAL.

1865 ST. VRAIN WAS ACCEPTED INTO THE SANTA FE LODGE ON JANUARY 1, 1865. ON APRIL 4, PRESIDENT LINCOLN WAS ASSASSINATED. FEELING THE PRESSURE OF HIS GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, ST. VRAIN RUSHED CONSTRUCTION AND STARTED MILLING IN HIS MORA MILL.

1866 HE PREPARED AND FILED HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT IN THE RECORDS OF MORA COUNTY.

Ceran StVrain

Kind of Instrument, Will.

Date of Instrument, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1866

Filed, - - - - -

Consideration, Shown.

Recorded in Volume "A" Page 54.

Will Rec'd in Mora County, N.M.

Public.

Will of Ceran StVrain. (Copy)

As man life is uncertain and as I am about taking a trip of some risk across the plains, should I be so unfortunate as to be killed or die on my transit, it is my best wish that my son Vicente St. Vrain, and my nephew J. M. St. Vrain and T. Mignault take charge of all my property in the Territory of New Mexico, and Territory of Colorado and State of Missouri.

1st. It is my wish that after all my just debts are duly paid out of my Estate that the sum of Five Thousand Dollars, be at once sett apart for the education of my daughter Felicitas and out of the Las Animas Grant, when it is sold and everything settled, that there be paid to J. M. St. Vrain Five thousand Dollars, and also to T. Mignault Five thousand Dollars.

My Farm what is in the State of Missouri to be sold and the proceeds to be divided, say one-half of proceeds to go to the heirs of my two brothers (deceased) Charles & Felix St. Vrain, and the other half to be divided equally with my sons Vicente St. Vrain & Felix St. Vrain and my daughter Felicitas St. Vrain and the balance of my property to be equally divided among say one third to each, Vicente, Felix and Felicitas St. Vrain.

It is also my wish to be paid yearly to the Mother of my daughter Felicitas as long as her good behavior three hundred dollars, it is my urgent wish that my (child) Felicitas be sent immediately to Vicente St. Vrain and for him and his wife Amelia to take care of her and raise and educate her as if she was their own child.

It is my most urgent wish and I command it, that she be sent to school in this country until she is eleven years old, then I wish her sent to the States to the Convent, (Catholic) until her education is complete.

And in testimony whereof, I have this April the 2nd in the year of A. D. One thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-six set my hand and seal in presence of:

(Signed) Ceran St. Vrain.

Witnessed:

"Signed" Alfred A. Crane M.D.  
Alexander Jurell  
W. R. Shoemaker  
M. Ashart



- 1866 EVEN THOUGH ST. VRAIN'S PERPETUAL BUSINESS TRIPS AND SIDE AMOURS HAD CAUSED LUISA TO LEAVE HIM AND RETURN TO TAOS, HE NOW DEMANDED HER GOOD BEHAVIOUR.
- MAY 26, THE CIVIL WAR ENDED.
- 1868 JULY 28, FRANK LEON TRAMBLEY, WHO WOULD ONE DAY OWN AND OPERATE THE STONE MILL, WAS BORN TO PIERRE DENNIE TRAMBLEY & ERNESTINE PINARD.
- 1870 OCTOBER 21, ST. VRAIN HAD BEEN ILL MOST OF THE YEAR, AND ON THIS DATE HE PASSED AWAY. LUISA AND FELICITAS, NOW 7 YEARS OLD HAD BEEN WITH HIM THE LAST DAYS OF HIS LIFE. HE WAS BURRIED IN HIS FAMILY PLOT IN MORA, WITH FULL MILITARY HONORS. A CORTEGE OF OVER 2,000 PERSONS, INCLUDING THE WHOLE CONTINGENT FROM FORT UNION AND HIS BROTHERS FROM EVERY MASONIC LODGE IN THE TERRITORY WERE IN ATTENDANCE (PRESENT CLAIMS THAT HE MAY NOT BE BURIED THERE ARE NOT BASED ON FACT.)
- IN NOVEMBER, VICENTE ST. VRAIN, B.M. ST. VRAIN AND T.MIG-NAULT WERE APPOINTED ADMINISTRATORS TO HIS ESTATE BY THE PROBATE COURT.
- 1871 B.M. ST. VRAIN RESIGNED AS ADMINISTRATOR. MACARIO GALLEGOS, A YOUNG MAN OF 18 WHO HAD HELPED ST. VRAIN OPERATE THE MILL NOW TOOK OVER ITS OPERATION FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS.
- 1876 VICENTE ST. VRAIN PASSED AWAY. IN THE NOVEMBER TERM OF PROBATE COURT, ALEJANDRO L. BRANCH, LUISA'S BROTHER, AND AMELIA ST. VRAIN, VICENTES WIDOW, WERE APPOINTED ADMINISTRATORS OF THE ESTATE.
- 1880 FELICITAS ST. VRAIN AND MACARIO GALLEGOS WERE MARRIED. HE REPLACED ALEJANDRO BRANCH WHO HAD RESIGNED, AS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ESTATE.
- 1881 PRESIDENT GARFIELD WAS ASSASINATED. ON JULY 16, Milnor RUDULPH, SR. ACTED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CORONERS JURY WHICH RULED ON BILLY THE KIDS DEATH. HIS SON MILNOR WOULD ONE DAY OWN AND OPERATE THE MILL.
- 1882 RUDULPH AND HIS FAMILY RETURNED TO ROCIADA, (EL RINCON DEL TECOLOTE) AFTER THE DISCOURAGEMENTS OF THE LINCOLN COUNTY WAR. ON SEPTEMBER 18, AS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ST. VRAIN ESTATE, MACARIO GALLEGOS LEASED THE "STONE MILL, MILL RACE AND WATER PRIVILEGES TO THOMAS J. WALTON FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR AT \$100.00 PER MONTH.
- 1883 THIS YEAR GALLEGOS LEASED THE MILL UNDER THE SAME CONDITIONS TO H.E. FRALEY.
- 1884 NOW MENTIONING THAT "IF THE SAID MILL OR PREMISES IS DAMAGED IN ANY WAY BY THE USE OF THE STEAM ENGINE NOW ATTACHED TO SAID MILL, THE PARTY OF THE SECONDD PART WILL PAY FOR SAID DAMAGES," ETC. IT APPEARS THAT FRALEY HAD INSTALLED THE STEAM ENGINE, BECAUSE ANOTHER CLAUSE IN THE LEASE STATES THAT AT THE TIME OF EXPIRATION OF THE LEASE, FRALEY



CAN REMOVE SAID STEAM ENGINE PROVIDING THAT NO RENTS ARE DUE.

1884

ON DECEMBER 2, MACARIO GALLEGOS NOW LEASED "A STONE GRIST MILL" TO M.G. GORDON OF THE TOWN OF HOT SPRINGS, COUNTY OF SAN MIGUEL, ACCEPTING AS BOND OR COLLATERAL HIS HORSE, KNOWN AS MAJOR ALLMAN. THE MILL WAS RETURNED TO WATER POWER AS PER THE NEXT SENTENCE.

"IT IS ALSO MUTUALLY AND EXPRESSLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS LEASE AND AGREEMENT COVERS AND INCLUDES ALL WATER RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES BELONGING TO SAID MILL FOR ITS USE AND BENEFITS, BUT IT DOES NOT INCLUDE A CERTAIN STEAM ENGINE AT PRESENT ATTACHED TO SAID MILL OR ANY PART OR PARCELL THEREOFF, BUT ONLY SUCH MACHINERY USED IN RUNNING SAID MILL BY WATER POWER."

THE RENT WAS DROPPED TO \$700.00 PER YEAR.

1885

ON AUGUST 1, THE MILL WAS LEASED TO J. OLIVER SMITH OF MORA ALSO FOR \$700.00, WITH THE FOLLOWING EXPENDITURES TO BE ALLOWED OR DEDUCTED FROM THE FIRST YEARS LEASE:

1 Becker Brush Machine	\$122.00
Trught on same	38.40
1 Stouning case & shoe for smulter	19.00
Amount carried over	182.40
Freight on same	4.56
1 Bolting cloth for 18 ft roll	35.00
1 Mill Spindle & Froos for Bulen	52.47
Freight on same	10.65
1 pinion & stand for water wheel	2.10
Express charge on same	2.00
Blacksmithing	20.00
Lumber 2500 ft at \$12 per M	30.00
Amount paid to Carpenters	240.00
Amount for cleaning Tail Race	34.00
60 ft of rubber belting at 48¢	28.80
	<hr/> 641.98

being for improvements placed and to be placed on said mill being necessary to the management and running of said mill, the said amount to be deducted from the said rents until the same shall be fully paid and the rest of the rent to be paid at the expiration of the year. It is also mutually agreed that the said party of the first part assumes no personal risk or liability in the premises and that said party of the second part will at the expiration of said term of lease surrender up the said premises in good order and complete running condition and that all betterments and improvements which the said mill and premises shall be and remain upon the proper for the uses and benefit of said estate of Ceran St. Vrain, deceased

1886, September 27: Oliver Smiths lease was renewed for a period of ten months, the rent dropping to \$40.00 per month. The steam engine still remained on the premises, and probably by now belonged to Macario Gallegos, however its use was still prohibited in this lease.

1889, A suit filed by William B. Rohman against Macario Gallegos and

Felicitas St. Vrain Gallegos in the April term of the District Court included the mill and said in part:

"ALSO THREE HUNDRED VARAS IN SAID VALLEY AND TOWN OF MORA BEGINNING AT OR NEAR THE ST. VRAIN STONE MILL ON THE EAST THERE- OF AND MEASURING ALONG THE MORA RIVER WEST ON THE NORTH SIDE OF SAID RIVER TO THE LANDS OF FRANK METZGER THREE HUNDRED VARAS FROM THE STARTING POINT AND RUNNING BACK NORTH TO THE FENCE DIVIDING SAID LAND FROM THE LANDS OF REYES LUCERO, SAID TRACT IS BOUNDED ON THE EAST BY THE COMMON VEGA OF THE TOWN OF MORA AND ON THE WEST BY LANDS (FORMERLY) OF FRANK METZGER AND CON- TAINS THEREON (IE DID AT THE TIME OF FILING THIS BRIEF.) A NUMBER OF DWELLING HOUSES, OUTHOUSES, A STONE MILL HOUSE, DES- TILLERY AND BREWERY AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.

1890, A Survey of the mill site by F.G. Davis in November 1890 fails to show a sketch of the mill, but shows one of a long house approximately left of where the mill should be. The sketch how- ever does show the flume easement which was behind the mill and the acequia which still exists. A small sketch of St. Vrain's Brewery is shown a few feet directly north of the flume as is a corral.

1896, Frank Leon Trambly, Miller and Millwright was at this time working with John Pendaries at his Pendaries Mill in Rociada, (El Rincon del Tecolote.)

1900, June. William Freseniers from San Pedro, New Mexico was con- tracted by Macario Gallegos and Felicitas to remodel the mill equipment and machinery. He completed the job on March 27, 1901.

1901, June 18, Freseniers filed a lien against Felicitas, the Mill and property. His claim was that he had performed labor on the Mill, the flume, and had constructed a new flume and penstock, and had done a thorough repair and general overhauling of the mill having placed it "good running order, but had not recieved recompense.

This same year, Saturnino Pinard, Ernestina Pinard Trambly's nephew built the old French Provincial Church of Santa Getrudis in Mora, under the directions of Father Claude Balland. (Three Pinard sisters, and three Pinard brothers, one of them a priest, had come to America from Paris, France in the early 1850's.

1902, Frank Leon Trambly left Rociada, and built and operated a mill at Rio Grande de Taos for many years.

1906, MARCH 10, HE WROTE FROM RIO GRANDE DE TAOS, TO HIS SON PETE TRAMBLEY AND HIS DAUGHTER CANDELARIA; "I HAVEN'T GOT VERY MUCH WHEAT, THIS IS SATURDAY NIGHT AND I AM GRINDING ON MY LAST GRIST, BUT I HOPE TO GET ENOUGH TO KEEP ME BUSY A GOOD WHILE. THE SALE FOR FLOUR IS AWFUL SLOW. I'VE ONLY MADE ABOUT \$20.00 THIS SPRING. THE RIO DEL PUEBLO MILL HAS GROUND THREE HUNDRED FANEGAS OR OVER THIS SPRING. YOUR UNCLE CASIMIRO (TRAMBLEY) WANTS TO TAKE THE RIO HONDO MILL ON HALFS- THE OWNER IS FIXING IT WITH ROLLS."

- 1908 Louisa Branch St. Vrain passed away.
- 1909 Trambley built the Vadito Mill then left it to Valentin Valdez whos family still own it, and went to Albuquerque to work in the "shops". (railroad.)
- 1911 TRAMBLEY AND RUDULPH RENTED THE FUSS MILL IN CLEVELAND.
- 1911 Casimiro Trambley, brother to Frank Leon, now leased the St. Vrain Mill. He was the last person to operate it as a stone mill, it would soon be converted to a roller mill.
- 1912 Milnor Rudulph, Jr., son of Milnor of Billy The Kid days, and Frank Leon Trambley, his brother-in-law leased the mill and started its conversion to a roller mill.
- 1913 November 1, The two purchased the mill from Dona Felicitas St. Vrain Gallegos. They took out the grindstones, the turbine and "carcamo", so as to install the wooden wheel. It, however, started to give them trouble immediately; the vibration would loosen the nails which held it together and it was constantly in disrepair. The overhead conduit or sluice, (canova) used to bring water from the Mora River to the wheel, was built at this time, as was the drainage ditch, (el desagadero) on the north side. Easement for the sluice to the wheel was granted through the Rudulph property west of the mill.
- 1914 Manuel Romo started to work at the mill, known at this time as the Rudulph and Trambley Roller Mill. He remembers helping to remove and cart away to the dump hundreds of Civil War rifles which had been stored there for years.
- 1915 Manuel Romo, Johnny Strong, Pepe Gallegos and others helped now to install the new iron wheel.
- 1921 Milnor Rudulph died and his widow Carolina Branch Rudulph inherited his share of the mill.
- 1923 July 6, she sold her share of the mill to Frank Leon Trambley. Therafter, until 1926, it would be known as Trambley Roller Mill.
- 1926 Frank Sr. died on March 18, 1926 after a fatal accident at the age of 58.
- 1927 His widow Matilde Rudulph Trambley inherited the mill, and her son Francisco Xavier Leon, Jr. and Manuel Romo started to operate it. She passed away in July of that year at the age of 54. Francisco Leon, after winning for County Clerk left the business to his brother Guadalupe (Lupe) Trambley and Manuel Romo, Sr.
- 1930 The Mill now became "Romo Brothers Roller Mill", operated by Manuel and Ricardo Romo. On September 10, Louis Leon Branch was born.
- 1933 The overhead sluice fell into disrepair and collapsed. After ~~they were~~ torn down the easement which Milnor Rudulph had granted over his land was released and milling stopped.
- 1934 For the next four years the mill became a family type warehouse, and in
- 1938 it became a warehouse for the Strong and Trambley Merchantile and used as such for the next 38 years.
- 1944 This year all metal parts, wheels, gears and bearings were dismantled from the walls and donated to Uncle Sam for the war effort.
- 1966 April 25, Francisco X. Leon Trambley died leaving the mill to his widow Josephine Strong Trambley, and their three children, Jeannine T. Martinez, Margaret T. Lester, and Frank C. Trambley. On August 9
- 1967 Her children quitclaimed title to the land transferring all to their mother, Josephine.



1972

On February 9, Josephine Trambley transferred title to the mill and land to her son Frank C. Trambley.

1976

On July 4, Frank C. Trambley and his wife Delicia transferred title to the St. Vrain-Trambley Mill Historical Foundation, Inc., a non-profit foundation organized and dedicated to its historical preservation.

The story of the trials and tribulations suffered by its chairman, Louie L. Branch in his attempts to preserve and salvage the Old mill, are filed with the Archives and Record Center of the State of New Mexico under the title:

"ST. VRAIN MILL RESTORATION PROJECT, JANUARY 1, 1976./  
JULY 4, 1981."

1981

On July 4, 1981, Louis L. Branch, Administrative Assistant to Lieutenant Governor Roberto A. Mondragon, and Chairman of the St. Vrain-Trambley Mill Historical Foundation, Inc. reluctantly gave up his efforts at further restoration and transferred title to the mill to Frank C. Trambley.


Researched and

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CC: 1981

Any and all materials contained herein may be used by any researchers or writers providing that just credit be accorded.

  
July 4, 1981