

LOUIS JOHN FREDERICK JAEGER: ENTREPRENEUR
AT YUMA CROSSING

by
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ABSTRACT

Louis John Frederick Jaeger, 1824-1892, was a pioneer businessman along the lower Colorado River near present-day Yuma, Arizona. He was born in Berks County, the center of the "Pennsylvania Dutch" region, in the southeastern part of the state. At the age of twenty-four, he left his native state to set sail for California aboard the Mason, which departed from Philadelphia on February 22, 1849. The following year, while working in San Francisco, he was invited to join a group planning to re-establish the recently discontinued commercial ferry service at the Colorado.

For twenty-seven years, 1850-1877, he was "Don Diego," the ferryman of the Colorado. In 1877, he was forced to sell his business when the Southern Pacific Railroad built a bridge across the river. He married Cleofe Sais in 1860, and became the father of two sons and a daughter. Jaeger not only operated a ferry but he was also involved in other business activities. He speculated in a number of Arizona mines, as well as investing in early irrigation attempts in Arizona and California. A mercantile business was managed in conjunction with the ferry, and numerous transactions were made with the Colorado Steam Navigation Company in which Jaeger was a stockholder.

Government contracting for beef, hay, wood, ferriage, and freighting contributed much to his income.

Although Jaeger was an experienced businessman, he did suffer losses, especially in his contracting during the Civil War and in his mining ventures. In addition to having all but one ferry boat destroyed as a result of the war, one was later burned by the Quechan (Yuma) Indians who lived nearby. As a result of these losses, Jaeger was obliged to devote his last years to pressing his claim against the United States government. He died on June 30, 1892, in Washington, D. C. His contribution was his active role in the development of business and the making of history in California and Arizona.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The location of a natural river crossing near the confluence of the Gila and Colorado rivers has contributed to the importance of that part of the lower Colorado. One of the few natural crossings in this desert region, the so-called Yuma Crossing became a focal point of history for both California and Arizona.

Hernando de Alarcón, en route to make contact with Francisco Vásquez de Coronado in August, 1540, was the first Spaniard to reach the junction of the rivers.¹ After having persevered through the formidable tidal bore at the mouth of the river, Alarcón's expedition of two boats became the first to successfully ascend the Colorado. In the autumn of 1540 Melchior Díaz and his men traversed the river on reed rafts with the aid of the Quechan Indians. Díaz noted that the Quechans were somewhat hesitant about

¹Principal sources used for the early history of this region were the following. Douglas D. Martin, Yuma Crossing (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1954). Herbert Eugene Bolton and Thomas Maitland Marshall, The Colonization of North America 1492-1783 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922). Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Arizona and New Mexico (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Company, Publishers, 1889).

permitting him to use their crossing. He could scarcely have realized the full significance of that observation.

Subsequent visitors to the region included Don Juan de Oñate, Father Eusebio Kino, Juan Bautista de Anza, and Father Francisco Garcés. Oñate arrived at the Colorado on a journey from New Mexico which had been started in 1604. He had set out to prove that California was an island, and at the end of his trip still maintained that it was so, even though he had hardly lingered long enough to really notice. Among Father Kino's numerous journeys was one made to the region of the junction of the Gila and Colorado rivers in 1701. At that time the famous padre concluded what Oñate should have noticed almost a century earlier, namely, that California was not an island. In 1774 Juan Bautista de Anza and Father Garcés were sent by orders of the Spanish crown to locate and open a route from Pimeria Alta (southern Arizona and northern Sonora) to Monterey, California. They accomplished the assignment, and Anza was ordered to lead a colonizing expedition to northern California. Garcés accompanied the group to the confluence of the Gila and Colorado rivers where he stopped to found a mission on the west bank of the Colorado. In 1781 an Indian uprising destroyed the mission and Garcés was killed. Anza, in the meantime, had proceeded on to establish a presidio in 1776 at present-day San Francisco.

Later, mountain men, troops, and surveying parties came to the Colorado. The mountain men included Kit Carson and James O. Pattie, whose life was chronicled by a Cincinnati man who had never been west of the Mississippi. During the Mexican War, the Army of the West led by General Stephen W. Kearney crossed the lower California on its way to California. (The Mormon Battalion was a part of this army.) It was not until the California gold rush, however, that great numbers of men saw the Colorado crossing. The first record of the use of the Gila Trail, which led to the river, was that of the United States First Dragoons who marched up from Chihuahua in November, 1848. Lieutenant Cave Couts, one of the soldiers, recorded the attempts to traverse the Colorado. After five days had elapsed, the entire group of five hundred men finally was able to construct a raft called the "Pawnee Dash" to carry them and their supplies across the river. Couts had not seen the last of the Colorado, for he was ordered in 1849 to command a detachment to escort the American and Mexican Boundary Commission. Evidently the young officer had learned something from his previous experience, for this time he built a ferry operated by the use of ropes. The soldiers set up a camp called Fort Calhoun near the site of what had been Garcés' mission. Couts established a regular ferry service for the boundary commission and for civilians if they paid a fee; thus he was the first to operate a commercial ferry

at Yuma Crossing. When his tour of duty was completed he departed, leaving the craft at the river. Subsequent use of it was made by emigrants, Mexican soldiers, and the Quechans.

The value of this crossing as a vital means of connection between California and Arizona was readily appreciated. The Quechan Indians inhabiting the area had early realized its significance. Control of such a strategic location provided those who possessed it with substantial influence over who could travel through the region. The best way to regulate the routes of potential travelers was to dominate the means by which they could cross the river; namely, by controlling and operating a ferry of some kind.

Managing a ferry service promised not only virtual authority over those needing to cross the Colorado, but it also provided an almost unexcelled opportunity for making money, especially after the gold rush to California had begun. It was not difficult to see the possibilities for wealth in such a venture, but like any other enterprise, this one required work to make it a success. The opportunity was there, and the aspirants came. Among the would-be ferrymen who appeared at the crossing on the Colorado was a young Pennsylvanian named Louis John Frederick Jaeger. Though he differed little from any of the other young men who had migrated west at the time, he possessed the spirit

and determination necessary to become an entrepreneur at Yuma Crossing. In fact, he became known to many as "Don Diego" the ferryman. As a prominent man at an important location, Louis Jaeger contributed to the development and history of the region of the lower Colorado.

Louis John Frederick Jaeger² was born on October 8, 1824, in a farmhouse in Greenwich township seven miles east of Hamburg in Berks County, Pennsylvania. He was the third of eleven children of the Reverend Gottlieb Jaeger and Mary Audenreid Jaeger. The family had been traditionally one of Lutheran ministers as far back as Louis' great-great grandfather. Louis' father had come to the United States in 1817 from Illingen, Wurtemberg, Germany.³ (In fact, most of the people of Berks County had come from the upper Rhine country.) Gottlieb had first been a teacher, but began to study for the ministry after he had settled in Pennsylvania. Having become a circuit rider of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1819, he was in charge of as many as fifteen congregations at one time, and had six in his service at the time of his death. Louis evidently

²The name is variously spelled Jaeger, Iaeger, Yager, and so on. He himself wrote it as both Jaeger and Iaeger. The spelling used here will be Jaeger, since that is the way it appears on his death certificate. The German form of the name is Iäger, meaning hunter.

³B. A. Stephens, "A Biographical Sketch of L. J. F. Iaeger," Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California, I, Part 4 (1888-89), 37. This article is based upon a personal interview of Jaeger in 1888.

was not interested in keeping the tradition going, but his brother Thomas became a minister.⁴

The background for Jaeger's success as a ferryman perhaps came from his boyhood experiences, for Louis was not new to life near a river. The town of Hamburg, the main settlement in the area, was situated on the Schuylkill River. Although present-day Hamburg no longer emphasizes its river connection, the town in the years of Jaeger's youth was the headquarters of a boatmen's association. Young Jaeger had no doubt also been familiar with the ferry at Hamburg run by Martin Kercher.⁵

At the age of sixteen Louis Jaeger became an apprentice at the Baldwin Machine Shops in Philadelphia. Then, in 1846 and 1847 he and others sent from the shops worked with ordnance material at the Navy Yard in Washington, D. C.⁶ News of the discovery of gold in California soon reached the East. How Jaeger found out about California is not known for certain, though his own account, simple and laconic, states that he purchased

⁴Morton L. Montgomery, Historical and Biographical Annals of Berks County Pennsylvania, Vol. I (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1909), pp. 401, 402.

⁵J. Bennett Nolan, The Schuylkill (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1951), pp. 65-67.

⁶James H. McClintock, Arizona the Youngest State, Vol. III (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916), pp. 396-398.

enough clothing for a year and set out.⁷ No doubt the love of wealth and adventure caused the young Pennsylvanian to give up the security of his Atlantic seaboard job and to head for California.

At any rate, the twenty-five-year-old Jaeger was aboard the Mason when it set sail for San Francisco from Philadelphia on February 22, 1849. On this long trip he kept a diary. When the Mason stopped at Rio de Janeiro the passengers saw more than 12,000 other Americans who were also bound for California on other ships. The harbor must have been a busy one for Jaeger noted, "some 20 vessels went out the harbor to sea."⁸ As the ship proceeded through the Straits of Magellan the diarist noted that another vessel, one from Baltimore, had failed to get through without running into the rocks. The vessel also stopped at Valparaiso, Chile. The trip was not wholly uneventful, for the captain, William Bell, died at sea on September 3, 1849. His body was preserved in a barrel of whiskey, and when the ship reached San Francisco a funeral was held with over 200 people in attendance.

⁷Stephens, 38.

⁸Entry of April 30, 1849, L. J. F. Jaeger MS Diary, University of Arizona Special Collections, Tucson, Arizona. This diary exists in three fragments: February 22, 1849 to December 31, 1849; March 1, 1875 to April 7, 1880; and February 11, 1892 to March 25, 1892. In quotations from his diary the spelling has been corrected by the author. The actual entry in this case reads, "some 20 odd wesal whant out the harper out to Seay."

The Mason had reached Yerba Buena, as San Francisco was then known, in October, 1849. Evidently San Francisco did not make the best impression on the young Pennsylvanian, for he noted in his diary,

San Francisco

And it was awful to see
the people and the gold diggers.
There are about 50,000 people
here. And there were three
sailors hanged on the frigate
Savannah.⁹

Even so, Jaeger remained in San Francisco and worked at various types of jobs. He hauled sand to build brick buildings including the Montgomery Bank, did carpentry work, was employed as an engineer on a bay steamer, and even ran a boarding house for sailors for three weeks. While in the city he witnessed a fire which destroyed a number of buildings including the well-known landmark, the Parker House.¹⁰

Meanwhile, many miles away at the junction of the Gila and Colorado rivers a ferry had been set up by Dr. Abel Lincoln who had been financed by J. P. Brodie, an administrator of a cotton factory in Sonora. The understanding had been that Brodie would get one-half of the net

⁹Ibid., October 13, 1849.

¹⁰Ibid., December 24, 1849.

profit.¹¹ It is quite possible that Lincoln merely took over the use of the ferry built by Coutts. Lincoln was soon joined by the notorious scalp-hunter John Glanton and his men. Glanton appointed himself partner in the business, and for all practical purposes took over the ferry business. Lincoln was little more than a silent partner. Glanton was an unscrupulous murderer who had been chased out of Texas. His latest activity had been scalp-hunting for Apaches in Chihuahua for bounties from the Mexican government. He found his job much easier after he had discovered that the Mexican government would pay for any scalp with dark colored hair, for Mexicans were more available than Apaches. When the Mexican government discovered that it had been paying Glanton bounty money for scalps of its own citizens, it placed an \$8000 bounty on Glanton's head. Glanton had then wisely decided to move on.¹²

The Glanton-Lincoln ferry charged exorbitant rates. In protest one Tennessee emigrant, a general by the name of Patterson (or Anderson as he is sometimes called), built a ferry boat to cross his party. He then donated the ferry to the Quechans to use at Algodones, a short distance below the location of the other ferry, with the provision that they charge no more than one dollar for each person or pack

¹¹Alta California (San Francisco), January 8, 1851, p. 2.

¹²Ibid.

animal. The Indians hired an Irishman named Callaghan to operate their ferry for them. When Glanton noticed that he was losing business to this opposition ferry, he destroyed their boat. In addition, Callaghan was bound hand and foot, shot, and thrown into the river. Next, Glanton had the audacity to demand that even the Indians use his ferry and pay for crossing the river.¹³ Of course, the natural result of this policy was strained relations. The Indians decided that these men would have to go. On April 21, 1850, after Glanton had returned from San Diego with supplies he made the mistake of letting his guard down. The men went on a drinking spree and then took siestas. The Quechans had bided their time until the men were drunk or asleep. Then the massacre began. Only three of Glanton's men who had been cutting poles escaped. They hastened to San Diego where they told their story, reporting that \$60,000 had been made running the ferry for about three months.¹⁴ Though this amount was never verified, the mere mention of such a sum was enough to interest many in the Colorado.

Although Glanton and his men had really brought about their own misfortune, the governor of the proclaimed

¹³Jeremiah Hill, Deposition entitled "Origin of the Trouble Between the Yumas and Glanton," Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly, VI, part 1 (1903), 57, 58.

¹⁴Arthur Woodward, "When Scalp Hunters Ran the Yuma Ferryboat," The Desert Magazine, VI (April, 1943), 4-9.

state of California, Peter H. Burnett, ordered General Joshua H. Bean of the state militia to put together a force to bring about order on the Colorado. General Bean selected Joseph C. Morehead to be the commander. The expedition finally started out in July, 1850, but in the meantime other events had taken place.

CHAPTER II

"DON DIEGO" THE FERRYMAN

Word spread quickly about the fabulous wealth garnered by the Lincoln-Glanton ferry. In San Francisco a young stevedore named George Alonzo Johnson chanced to read about it in the Los Angeles Star, and promptly decided to organize a company to re-establish the Colorado ferry. This group was to be formed in an atmosphere of complete secrecy, since the organizer did not want others to hear of "the opportunity to make a pile."¹ Louis Jaeger, an acquaintance who had been working on a bay steamer, was one of the first few men chosen by Johnson for membership in the ferry company--a rather unpretentious start for the man destined to become the best known ferryman of the Colorado. Eventually a party of twelve members and five employees emerged.² It was one of varied backgrounds and occupations

¹George A. Johnson, "Life of Captain George A. Johnson" (Manuscript donated to California State Library at Sacramento; typed copy at Arizona Pioneers Historical Society, Tucson, Arizona. Hereinafter referred to as Johnson, "Life").

²Jaeger claims that there were twelve stockholders and seven employees; whereas Johnson lists twelve members and five sailors. The sailors were former employees of Johnson in San Francisco. B. A. Stephens, "A Biographical Sketch of L. J. F. Jaeger," Annual Publication of Historical Society of Southern California, I, Part 4 (1888-89), 38. Johnson, "Life."

including men from the Atlantic seaboard and a doctor just back from studies in Paris.

Johnson's group was not the only one casting eyes toward the prize. Moreover, it seems that not everyone in the company could be trusted. George Hyde, their secretary, made a secret agreement with a Colonel Hays concerning the ferry. Hyde then intimated to Johnson that he was going to Stockton, but instead boarded a steamer bound for San Diego where he apparently planned to claim the ferry for Colonel Hays and himself. Johnson, however, had somehow learned of Hyde's duplicity and boarded the vessel before it had left the San Francisco harbor to confront the astonished culprit.³ Johnson then thought it wise to proceed to San Diego ahead of the others to prevent any more mishaps. The rest of the party chartered a sailing vessel and left in June, 1850. Meanwhile their organizer was busily procuring tools, a wagon, and two yoke of oxen.

The party then set out from San Diego for the Colorado with most of the men on foot. In six days they reached Warner's Ranch about forty miles northeast, where the road from San Diego intersected with the emigrant road to Los Angeles. They camped five or six days there and during that time were met by a group of discouraged

³Benjamin Hayes, "Emigrant Notes," MSS, p. 745
(photocopy from Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California).

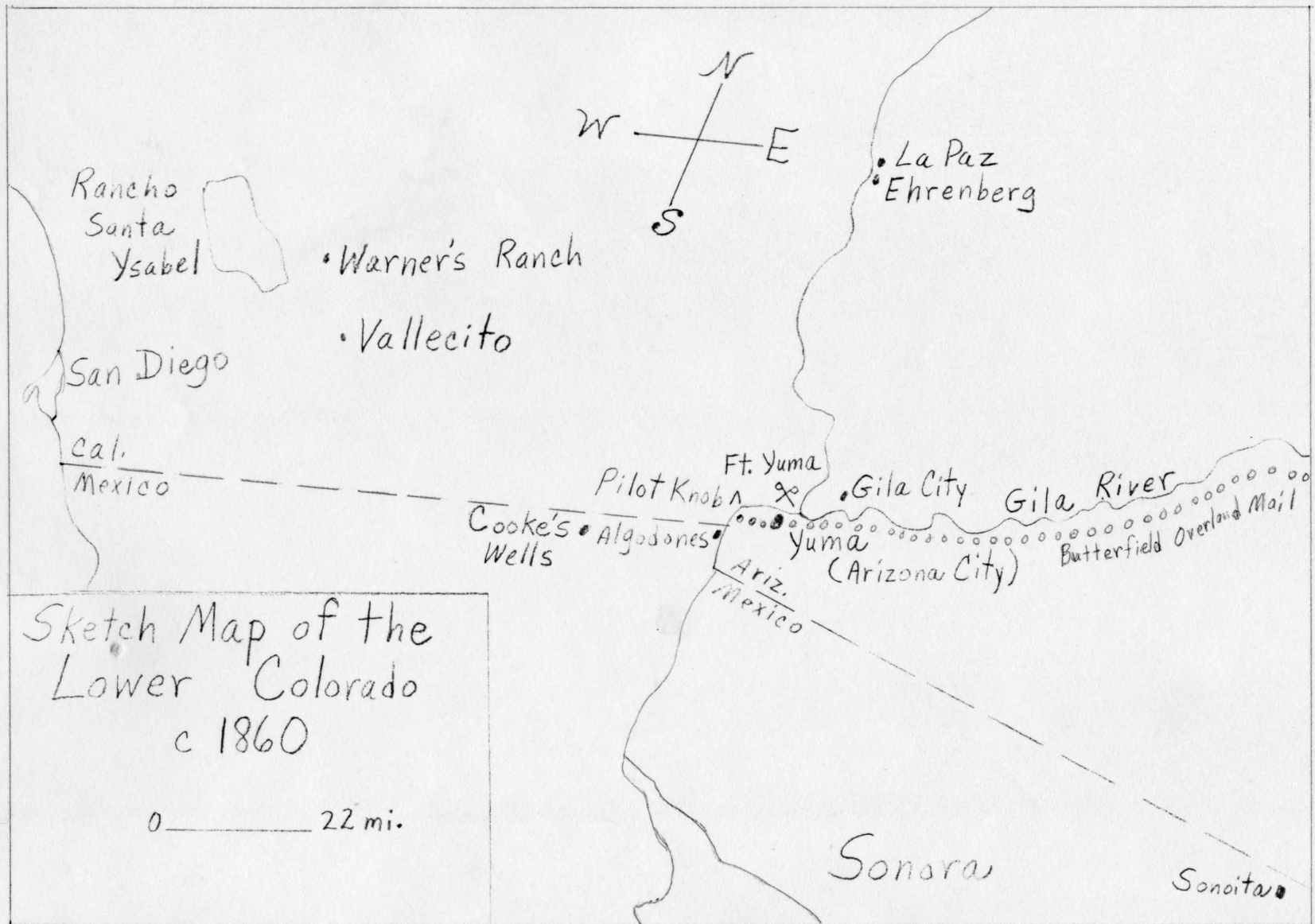


Figure 1

potential ferrymen.⁴ This was the Russell Sackett party which had left Los Angeles in May, 1850, and now tried to dissuade the Johnson group. Sackett related the dangers of crossing the desert, the probability that there would be no emigrants before fall, and that the Quechans were opposed to any ferry operation by white men.⁵

At this point, members of the Johnson ferry company began to have some misgivings, and a vote was taken to decide if they should go on or turn back. The result was a tie between the stockholders. There is no record of how Jaeger voted, but he most likely would have voted to go on. After some deliberation, the company decided to allow the five sailors to have their say. Their reply was "Go on, to H--- with the bloody Indians."⁶ Apparently inspired by the sailors' determination, the group pushed on. They arrived in the heat of summer at the Colorado lowlands July 10, 1850. About 250 Indians soon appeared at the men's camp to try to discourage them from staying. The chief, Santiago, delivered an eloquent speech concerning the inability of the Indians and the white man to live happily together. Having come that far, however, Johnson and his men were not

⁴Arthur Woodward, Feud on the Colorado (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1955), p. 33.

⁵Jack D. Forbes, Warriors of the Colorado (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 317.

⁶Johnson, "Life."

to be frightened off easily. Through the interpreter, Johnson, the only one in the group who could speak Spanish, made it clear to the chief that if the chief or his men advanced, they would be shot. To illustrate his point Johnson raised his rifle, and aimed it at the chief. The other ferry members then cocked their guns. Undoubtedly a little surprised at the resistance offered, the Indians dispersed and disappeared.⁷ It might be added that Johnson and his men were apparently the first to offer any sort of resistance. A group led by Theodore Parker had arrived at the Colorado at about the same time but having been intimidated by the Quechans had decided to run a trading post instead of a ferry. This group left in September, 1850.⁸

The ferrymen next addressed themselves to the task of setting up their business. They decided upon a site about one and one-half miles below the site of what would later be Fort Yuma.⁹ The first item constructed was a stockade for protection from the Indians. They also dug a trench sixty-four feet square and set up a howitzer. Next, the men rigged up a saw pit inside the stockade so that they could utilize the cottonwoods nearby to make the boat.

⁷Hayes, 745.

⁸Forbes, 318.

⁹Woodward, Feud on the Colorado, 37.

It was not easy to get any work done, for one section of the crew had to remain on guard duty to protect the men who were working.¹⁰

Besides troublesome Indians to hamper progress, there was Morehead's "Gila Expedition" which had finally arrived to chastise the Quechans for their wrongdoing three months earlier. Apparently all that the expedition accomplished was to destroy the Indians' pumpkin patch and to make themselves a general nuisance to the ferrymen with whom they had taken refuge from the enraged Quechans.¹¹ In addition, Morehead had his own ideas of how the ferry should be operated. Instead of protecting the emigrants who came to the crossing, the illustrious general mistreated them. Mexican emigrants were searched when they reached the California side, and any weapons being carried by them were confiscated. The justification given by Morehead for this action was that the Indians would take the arms away from the Mexicans.¹² Finally, to the ferrymen's relief, the expedition left the Colorado after having received the second notice of recall. As the "victorious" militiamen returned to California they were met by a detachment of

¹⁰Johnson, "Life."

¹¹Arthur Woodward, ed., Journal of Lt. Thomas W. Sweeny 1849-1853 (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1956), p. 230. (Hereinafter referred to as Woodward, Sweeny.)

¹²Johnson, "Life."

soldiers under the command of Major Samuel Peter Heintzelman. Lieutenant Thomas W. Sweeny remarked, "The speed at which he [Morehead] traveled seemed hardly consistent with the dignified march of a conqueror."¹³

Despite the obstacles confronting them, the ferrymen completed construction of their first boat on August 10, 1850, one month after their arrival. Jaeger described it as a common flat-bottom scow measuring 35 feet long by 12 feet wide by 2 feet deep, held together with wooden pegs. Soon afterwards there was a second ferry 60 feet long by 12 feet wide. Emigrants paid \$10 per wagon and team and 50¢ for each individual animal.¹⁴

Major Heintzelman and his command arrived to establish a military post in the last week of November, 1850. Accompanying the group was the ex-secretary of the Johnson company, George Hyde. Heintzelman immediately set out to arrange everything as he thought was best. One may imagine that the ferrymen were quite weary of being told how to do their job. As Heintzelman laid out the boundaries for the military reserve, he included the ferry company's corral in the reserve area. When Johnson and the others objected, the good major remarked, "Hyde here

¹³Woodward, Sweeny, 121.

¹⁴Stephens, 38.

will buy your boats--what are they worth?"¹⁵ The ferry company members undoubtedly displayed some unfavorable reaction to this. Heintzelman, who may not have known about Hyde's previous scheme, could not understand why the men disliked Hyde.

At this point men began to sell their shares in the ferry. Heintzelman was offered nine shares at \$500 each, but declined the offer because he was still insulted by the ferrymen's behavior concerning Hyde and the corral.¹⁶ Finally, even Johnson and Hartshorne sold out their interests, leaving the ferry to Jaeger and William Ankrim. Johnson estimated that he and Benjamin Hartshorne had sold their shares for between \$2700 and \$3000 and a mule apiece.¹⁷ Another member of the company, Ogden, reported that he and the others had sold out for \$600 and a mule apiece.¹⁸ As Johnson departed, he remarked that Jaeger and Ankrim could run the ferry business "under arrangements satisfactory to the interests of Major Heintzelman."¹⁹ Johnson and Hartshorne then went to San Francisco, but they would return to the Colorado later. Louis Jaeger had come

¹⁵Hayes, 745.

¹⁶Entry of December 8, 1850, "Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman," MS, Library of Congress.

¹⁷Hayes, 745.

¹⁸Heintzelman, December 10, 1850.

¹⁹Hayes, 745.

a long way from working at odd jobs in San Francisco to being half-owner in a ferry business on the Colorado.

Major Heintzelman accepted an invitation by Jaeger and Ankrim to become a partner in the business. He was offered interest for \$600 but the share was in the ferry only and not in the company animals and buildings.²⁰ With the major's entry into the ferry business, the affairs of the ferry and fort became even more closely related. Heintzelman's partnership in the ferry did not help his relationship with the other officers. There were remarks about his using his military position to cover up his other activities, notably the ferry business.

The other officers at the fort were interested in organizing a ferry of their own, but Heintzelman naturally did not encourage it as it would be competition for the one in which he held stock. In addition, Heintzelman feared that his previous interest in the prospective ferry of Hyde and Hays might cause difficulties for him now that he was a partner in Jaeger's ferry. Lieutenant Edward Murray threatened to report Heintzelman's involvement. Dr. Hewit at the post had the "impertinence" to ask if the major were interested in a ferry, Heintzelman reports. At any rate, the rumor spread that the commander was connected with a ferry company. Heintzelman felt that Jaeger and Ankrim

²⁰Heintzelman, December 23, 1850.

would do well in the business. "I think we are bound to make money," he stated. He also began to refer to it as "our ferry company."²¹ It was officially known as the Colorado Ferry Company.

Being a partner did not keep Heintzelman from attending to his military duties. From the very start he had been concerned with finding a better location for the ferry--one that would place it farther from the military post. He came to the conclusion that a better site would be down the river in Mexico so that it would not only be away from the post but no license would be necessary. The major did not want the ferry any nearer to the fort because the emigrants would be an annoyance. The ferry was moved about two miles south in early February, 1851, despite the inconvenience for Jaeger and Ankrim. Heintzelman watched the progress of the ferry carefully, noting that the boats and wagons had been moved and that a new inclosure had been built. Evidently the ferry company shed was not so well built for it fell down the first time that the wind blew.²²

In June, 1851, Heintzelman received orders to depart with his command for Santa Ysabel, a port on the Gulf of California. He left behind a skeleton command of Lieutenant Sweeny and ten others. According to Sweeny,

²¹Ibid., January 8 and 27, 1851.

²²Ibid., February 3, 9, 26, 1851.

Heintzelman did not leave enough supplies for the remaining men and when he did send some provisions later, the wagon train was so small that it "could easily have taken in everything remaining at the river."²³ Sweeny and Heintzelman did not seem to get along too well which was no doubt the reason that Sweeny was chosen to stay at the Colorado. Heintzelman sent orders that Sweeny must move the camp to a new site six miles below the present post, and at that spot Sweeny and his ten men were to protect emigrants and to prevent Indian depredations into Mexican territory. Needless to say, Sweeny was a bit sarcastic when referring to this overwhelming assignment for eleven soldiers.²⁴ When a later wagon train came to take some more equipment to Heintzelman, Sweeny lamented that he could not go with it. If the troops left, however, the ferry company would also have to go and Heintzelman did not want to lose business for his company. "But what does H[eintzelman] care, so that his scalp is out of danger!" grumbled Sweeny.²⁵

The Quechans had become increasingly menacing. At this time the supplies of the ferry company needed to be replenished. Jaeger left for San Diego with a Mexican

²³Woodward, Sweeny, 52.

²⁴Ibid., 54, 55.

²⁵Ibid., 117.

helper and nine pack mules. As he returned from his trip, he was warned that the Indians were becoming quite troublesome; nevertheless he proceeded toward the ferry. Within sight of the stockade he was attacked by a group of bowmen led by Pascual I.²⁶ The Quechans recognized Jaeger and shouted "Yek! Yek!" which was the closest that they could come to pronouncing his name.²⁷ One swung a club at him. Jaeger made a dash for the stockade and had nearly reached it when he was struck in the left arm by several arrows. About five hundred yards from the ferry stockade, Pascual himself rushed from the thickets shouting "Yek! Yek!" Pascual's ensuing arrow pierced Jaeger's neck. Jaeger was able to fire a shot from his pistol; later he learned that that shot had killed the Quechan leader. Jaeger somehow got into the enclosure before he lost consciousness. That night his friends were able to escape with him back to San Diego where he soon recovered from his wounds.²⁸

Meanwhile Sweeny and his men still remained, even though provisions were rapidly being depleted. To make matters worse, the parties of Major Kendrick and Captain

²⁶This Quechan leader was called Pascual I to distinguish him from the chief, Pascual II, appointed by Heintzelman in 1852.

²⁷The Indians pronounced his name "Yek" or "Diego" if they knew any Spanish. The Mexicans embellished it by adding "Don."

²⁸James H. McClintock, Arizona the Youngest State (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916), Vol. III, pp. 396-398. Arizona Sentinel (Yuma), June 1, 1878, p. 1.

Lorenzo Sitgreaves arrived at the camp. Sitgreaves' men were half-starved, having resorted to eating some of their mules.²⁹ Sweeny and his men were compelled to share what meager provisions were left. To add still more to the difficulties, Captain Delozier Davidson and sixteen men came on December 3. After that, it was decided that the camp should be abandoned. The troops left on December 6, 1851. What supplies the men could not take with them, they cached in the ferry company corral. The whole group including the howitzer with ball in mouth and match lighted departed for San Diego. Including the ferrymen and the parties of Kendrick and Sitgreaves, there were one hundred men in all. Heintzelman was quite disgusted with Sweeny for abandoning the fort.³⁰

In San Diego, Jaeger and Ankrim had the opportunity to talk to Heintzelman. Ankrim told about the caches and Jaeger related the story of his narrow escape. They worried about the fate of their ferry boats at the Colorado. When Heintzelman stopped in Old Town in San Diego to talk to Jaeger and Ankrim about this problem, Jaeger borrowed \$300 from him to use to repair the ferry. Jaeger also

²⁹Captain L[orenzo] Sitgreaves, Report of an Expedition Down the Zuni and Colorado Rivers, U. S. Congress, Senate, 33d Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D. C.: Beverley Tucker, Senate Printer, 1854), p. 21.

³⁰Woodward, Sweeny, 137.

sold a \$1000 state bond which was drawing 12% interest payable semi-annually at New York to the major for \$460.³¹

The troops and ferrymen were not to remain away from the Colorado for long. Sweeny and his part of the command left San Diego on February 9, 1852, and reached Camp Yuma on March 25. Heintzelman was eager to get a force to punish the Indians. If he had been cut off from the world with only salt pork and musty bread, he doubtless would have been less eager to return, thought Sweeny.³²

Heintzelman and his command had left about a week earlier. The Quechans had not only destroyed one of the ferry boats but they also had menaced emigrants and sheep drivers. Ankrim had written a letter to the San Diego Herald concerning the killing of four men who were driving sheep to California in November, 1851.³³ Lieutenant Stoneman went down the river to recover one of the ferry company's two boats. All of the goods cached by the ferrymen and troops had been found and taken by the Quechans. In fact, Heintzelman sardonically comments, they dug nowhere else but where the caches had been.

Jaeger, now recuperated from his wounds, had returned with the troops. He and Ankrim faced a rebuilding

³¹Heintzelman, January 28, 29, 1852.

³²Woodward, Sweeny, 145.

³³San Diego Herald, November 27, 1851, 2:4.

job. Jaeger constructed an adobe building which served as a fort and a ferry office. This was the first building in Jaegerville (or Yaegerville as it was commonly known) and was on the California side of the river. This first building later became a station on the Butterfield Overland Mail route. The Butterfield station was three-fourths of a mile west of the fort and just outside the military reserve. On October 29, 1858, it was made the distribution point for San Diego mail when the services of the San Antonio and San Diego Mail were curtailed between El Paso and Fort Yuma. Jaeger's price was five dollars for a regular four-horse team.³⁴ His account books include numerous notations of income from the Overland Mail.

Heintzelman seems to have been quite critical of how his partners managed the ferry. In March, 1852, Ankrim and Jaeger were temporarily disgusted--and no wonder, for they had to begin all over again. Money was scarce and yet the two men had spent most of their funds to buy a cooking stove which had filled their wagon so that no other supplies could have been brought if they had had them. They had trusted that they would find their tools and boats in better shape than they were. Heintzelman remarked that they had done without a stove for several years and now

³⁴Roscoe P. and Margaret B. Conkling, The Butterfield Overland Mail 1857-1869 (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1947), Vol. II, p. 209.

bought one when there were more important things to acquire. In May they borrowed money in San Diego to buy cattle and spent more on what Heintzelman felt were unnecessary items.³⁵ They did, however, pay Heintzelman his share of the profits up to June 30, amounting to \$97.93.³⁶ Not only were his fellow ferrymen spending money unwisely, according to the major but Ankrim was drinking. In a state of intoxication he had believed a party when they claimed to have no money and had bought a hog from them to pay for the passage. It might be worth noting that most of the ferry fees were paid in kind.

Business must have been good, for estimates of the number of persons crossing are in the thousands. One source says that in the fall of 1850 and the spring of 1851 more than 60,000 persons had crossed, paying from \$1 to \$2.50 each and from \$5 to \$10 per team.³⁷ Another source estimates that about 30,000 emigrants crossed the Colorado in 1850-51.³⁸ Heintzelman gave the following report on the ferry business from June 12 to December 3, 1852.³⁹

³⁵Heintzelman, March 1, 1852.

³⁶Ibid., July 19, 1852.

³⁷D. K. Allen, "The Colorado River," The Arizona Magazine, II, No. 2 (August, 1893), 61.

³⁸E. D. Tuttle, "The River Colorado," Arizona Historical Review, I, No. 2 (July, 1928), 51.

³⁹Heintzelman, April 5, 1853.

Emigrants

713	men
111	women
45	children
676	horses and mules
233	oxen
170	wagons
18,211	sheep
111	cargos

United States

1,249	men
470	horses and mules
86	wagons
40	cargos

He adds that many more passed but did not use the ferry. Those who did not pay to be ferried across usually attempted to swim across, but this method was extremely perilous.

Of great significance were the sheep driven from New Mexico and Mexico to California to meet the demands of the miners and growing population there. For example, in June, 1851, several flocks numbering about 5,000 in all were ferried across. Lieutenant Sweeny described the mixing of flocks and the ensuing arguments as "perfect Bedlam."⁴⁰ The ferry remained busy crossing sheep for the California markets. A Mexican party with 4,000 sheep approached in late July, 1852. Some of the drovers came ahead to request help as the Indians seemed hostile. Heintzelman refused as he saw no danger. Some days later an express rider reported that Lopez, the sheep-owner, had died of "sun-stroke" and that the animals were scattered.

⁴⁰Woodward, Sweeny, 75.

A Private Morris rounded up 400 or 500 of the sheep and drove them to the fort where he gave them to the ferry company, as Lopez had owed them for previous ferriage.⁴¹ The sheep business continued. California newspapers contained numerous notices of flocks headed for northern California. One such report stated that 23,000 sheep from New Mexico had crossed the Colorado. Sheep at that time were selling for an average of three dollars a head.⁴² On December 20, 1856, the ferry made nineteen trips in six hours to cross 7100 animals in windy weather. The largest crossing to date according to Jaeger was 7060 head owned by Jesus Luna. The crossing required twenty-five trips in seven hours. The following day 5500 more sheep belonging to Luna were ferried across in twenty trips.⁴³

In March, 1853, the ferry was moved once again. This time it was located about six miles down the river. The ferry had to be relocated because the emigrants were making liberal use of the garden at the fort.⁴⁴ The ferry

⁴¹Ibid., 167, 168.

⁴²San Francisco Bulletin, December 27, 1855, 3:2.

⁴³George William Beattie, ed., "Diary of a Ferryman and Trader at Fort Yuma, 1855-1857," Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California, XIV (1928-29), 223, 224. This is from a fragment of Jaeger's diary found in 1913.

⁴⁴Woodward, Sweeny, 195.

is generally referred to as Ankrim's, though Jaeger seems to have been doing most of the work.

Life was not dull at the Colorado. In the late spring of 1853 a Mexican was shot while men were attempting to arrest him for murder. He apparently was about to escape to Sonora when Jaeger felled him with a shot from his pistol.⁴⁵ "Don Diego" seems to have been quite accurate with a gun. Escapees from California were often seen at the Colorado. On one occasion, Jaeger was awakened by five men demanding to be ferried across to Arizona at two o'clock in the morning. The ferryman refused, and a few hours later learned from a Mexican that the five men had robbed and killed his brother the night before.⁴⁶

With all the business at the Colorado it would be incorrect to assume that Jaeger and Ankrim had the only ferry in operation. As early as 1851 there was a ferry ten miles below Fort Yuma. Possibly this ferry was owned by Charles Minturn, a former member of the Johnson company. Minturn died early in 1853, and Jaeger took over the operation.⁴⁷ There were often rumors that other ferries were being organized. In April, 1853, a report was circulated one was about to be established below the Colorado Ferry in

⁴⁵Ibid., 208.

⁴⁶San Diego Herald, June 16, 1855, 2:2.

⁴⁷Tuttle, "The River Colorado," p. 52.

Sonora. There is no record of Jaeger's reaction, but the news upset Major Heintzelman who declared that his company would "starve them."⁴⁸ It is possible that the rumor had some basis for at times Mexicans did operate some type of a ferry a few miles down the river at Algodones.

Real competition for the Colorado Ferry was provided by the Colorado Opposition Ferry Company. An advertisement in the San Diego Herald stated that the opposition ferry could carry across 3000 cattle and 20,000 sheep a day beginning in July, 1854. Since the site was ten miles below Fort Yuma it could, its owners claimed, save one day's travel. The advertisement was signed "Old George & Co." "Old George" was George Armstrong, head of the opposition ferry.⁴⁹ Armstrong apparently soon sold out his interest in the ferry, since by 1855 the opposition ferry had become known as the Pilot Knob Ferry. This was run by M. W. Thompson, Alexander K. McLean, and William H. Little. The opposition ferry and that of Jaeger competed with each other by placing advertisements in newspapers, which usually appeared one above the other. In its notice, the opposition ferry stressed its location and efficiency; whereas the one of Jaeger and Ankrim, entitled "The Old Colorado Ferry!" emphasized that it was situated at the

⁴⁸Heintzelman, April 2, 1853.

⁴⁹San Diego Herald, June 21, 1854, 2:4.

best crossing location and was run by the original proprietors of the first regular ferry on the Colorado.⁵⁰ While the Colorado Ferry was busily competing with the opposition, Ankrim and Jaeger dissolved their co-partnership in the firm Ankrim and Jaeger on May 16, 1855. Ankrim sold his interest to Heintzelman and then bought into the opposition ferry. It seems that Ankrim had never been a good partner for Jaeger. The same day that the notice of dissolution of co-partnership appeared in the Herald an advertisement for the Colorado Ferry stated that the original proprietor was still at the best location on the Colorado and was signed Lewis J. F. Jaeger.⁵¹ Heintzelman still held his share in the ferry though he had been transferred to a post in Kentucky.

Both ferries were experiencing a booming business. Thompson's Pilot Knob ferry had its share of business. Besides emigrants there were thousands of head of livestock to be ferried across the river. In addition to sheep being driven to California there were Texas cattle headed for the same destination. Upon reaching the Colorado, cattlemen were confronted with the decision of whether to try to make the cattle swim across or to have them ferried. Most of them finally paid to have their livestock ferried

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹San Diego Herald, June 30, 1855, 3:1.

across, although it was an expensive proposition. One man who had tried to ford the river with his animals abandoned the effort after quite a number had drowned. His ferriage was \$850. Another cattleman was quoted the price of \$1500 for ferrying all his cattle. The amount included \$1.50 per head of cattle, \$2 per man, and \$8 for each wagon. Thompson's books showed that more than four thousand head of cattle had been ferried. The ferry was valued at \$20,000.⁵²

Since the Thompson ferry at Pilot Knob was doing such a good business, Jaeger and Heintzelman decided that they would join with them. Apparently three such attempts were made, and each ended in failure. Combinations of the Colorado Ferry and Pilot Knob Ferry were dissolved in December, 1855, March, 1856, and April, 1856.⁵³ If they could not defeat the opposition ferry by competition, Jaeger and Heintzelman could buy out the other business. Gradually the two remaining partners of the Colorado Ferry bought interest in the Pilot Knob Ferry company as well as in the boats, equipment, and property. One such transaction was the sale of one-sixth interest in the ferry company, boats, equipment, and property by William H.

⁵²J. G. Bell, "A Log of the Texas to California Cattle Trail," Southwestern Historical Quarterly (July, 1932), pp. 54, 55, and 57.

⁵³San Diego Herald, January 12, 1856, 2:4 and March 1, 1856, 2:6. Beattie, 108.

Little to Jaeger and Heintzelman on June 25, 1856. Jaeger's share amounted to \$600. He had also bought interest from M. W. Thompson in March, 1856.⁵⁴

Since he was then stationed in Kentucky and could not supervise the business, Heintzelman elected in 1857 to sell his share in the Colorado Ferry. He preferred to sell it to Ankrim so that Ankrim would have an interest in the ferry again, but Jaeger evidently objected to such an arrangement and asked that Heintzelman deal directly with him. The latter finally wrote to George Hooper to authorize him to sell the interest to Ankrim if possible and, if not, to transfer it to Jaeger. The sale was made to Jaeger. He received one-half interest in the houses, boats, cattle, and equipment of the Colorado Ferry in 1857. In December of the same year Heintzelman deeded to Jaeger one-half interest in the houses, boats, equipment, and livestock of the Pilot Knob Ferry.⁵⁵ By the end of 1857 "Don Diego" was the sole owner of the Colorado and Pilot Knob ferries. He knew the value of advertising and continued to place notices in various newspapers. The following item appeared in the Weekly Arizonian on February 26, 1860.

⁵⁴California, City and County of San Francisco, Recorder's Office, Deeds 1, 76, 78, and 80.

⁵⁵Ibid., Deeds 177 and 185.

Old Colorado Ferry
estab. 1850

One mile below Ft. Yuma
The only safe and reliable ferry on
the Colorado. Ferriage at the low-
est rates, and at all hours. A con-
stant supply of Groceries, Provisions,
for sale at low rates.⁵⁶

No doubt emigrants were glad to see a store selling provisions at the Colorado. Jaeger must have enjoyed a good business, especially before stores were built across the river at Arizona City, on the east bank. Since his store was near the fort and the Indian reservation, Jaeger was not allowed to sell liquor. He seems to have abided by this regulation though the fort commander sometimes came to check.

All was not profit for the ferryman. Expenditures included buying supplies. Some he bought from the steamers: beans for twenty-eight dollars per cargo, corn at six cents a pound, and figs at fifteen cents a pound.⁵⁷ Many times when his supplies ran low he took the Camino del Diablo⁵⁸ to Sonora to replenish them. His diary entries describe trips to the settlements of Sonoita, Caborca, and Altar. After 1857, the animosity aroused in Sonora by the

⁵⁶Weekly Arizonian (Tucson), February 26, 1860.

⁵⁷Beattie, 221.

⁵⁸Camino del Diablo, or highway of the Devil, was a particularly parched section of a road in northern Sonora near the present-day international boundary leading to such settlements as Sonoita and Magdalena.

Crabb filibustering expedition caused Jaeger to shift his travels to San Bernardino and San Diego. Since he was well known in San Diego, Jaeger's arrival there often was announced in the "personals" columns of the newspapers.

The ferryman undoubtedly sold beef in his store, since he raised beef cattle for government contracts. Apparently one needed a butcher's license to cut and sell meat for there is record of such an application by Jaeger.⁵⁹

Jaeger seems to have been making money, for a passenger on the Butterfield stage remarked,

Mr. Jaeger keeps a very good establishment here for the accommodation of travelers and I recommend him to those who may be enroute for this place. One may obtain all supplies needed between here and the settlements in the east, but the less said about the price the better.⁶⁰

Although Jaeger operated his ferry between two states, he paid ferry license fees only to California since his ferry operation was technically located in that state. (California claimed a strip of land on the Arizona side until 1873.) California required ferry licenses to be kept up-to-date. Such licenses were generally for a term of six months. Jaeger regularly applied for them and paid the necessary fees. In a letter of May 23, 1860, he requested a ferry license for six months under the rules of San Diego

⁵⁹ Jaeger Biographical File, Junipero Serra Museum Library, San Diego, California.

⁶⁰ Douglas D. Martin, Yuma Crossing (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954), p. 209.

County.⁶¹ The quarterly report of the auditor of San Diego County regularly listed payments of license fees by the Colorado Ferry.⁶² From 1855 to 1860 the fee varied from twenty to thirty dollars a month. The annual price of licenses ranged from \$120 in 1869 to \$161 in 1875.⁶³

The Colorado Ferry was also under contract to do the ferrying for Fort Yuma. Contracts were renewed annually. During the years 1867-1874 the amount paid each month was from \$200 to \$250.⁶⁴ After the ferryman had been declared bankrupt in 1869, agreements were made between the military officer in charge and Jaeger's wife.⁶⁵ Occasionally the ferryman encountered difficulties, and frequently was

⁶¹L. J. F. Jaeger, letter to George A. Pendleton, Clerk of Supervisors of San Diego County, Jaeger Biographical File, Junipero Serra Museum Library, San Diego, California. (Hereinafter referred to as JSML.)

⁶²One such report may be found in the San Diego Herald, April 14, 1869, 2:4.

⁶³L. J. F. Jaeger, "Diary 1875-1880," MS, p. 5 (University of Arizona Special Collections, Tucson, Arizona). In the case of this fragment page numbers are more easily followed than entry dates.

⁶⁴U. S., Department of the Army, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Record Group 92 (Microfilm from National Archives, Washington, D. C. Hereinafter referred to as Quartermaster.)

⁶⁵In 1860 Jaeger married an attractive Castillian Spanish woman, Cleofe Sais, of Magdalena, Sonora. He met her in Tucson where she sang in the church choir. They were married by the commanding officer at Fort Yuma, but the ceremony was repeated later in a Catholic church. (James H. McClintock, Arizona the Youngest State [Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916], III, 399, 400.)

late in receiving his monthly payments. In March, 1876, the quartermaster, Colonel Bradley, notified Jaeger that ferriage payments would stop. (Contracts with the government included the provision that the government could terminate the agreement at any time.) Bradley complained that there was scarcely enough space for the ferry to operate when the barges and steamers of the Colorado Steam Navigation Company were at the landing. In addition, there was a sand bar in the river which hampered travel. The quartermaster thought that Jaeger should build a bridge across the river even though such an endeavor would cost at least \$200. The ferryman replied that he could do no better. Payments stopped. Major Arnest from the fort visited Jaeger and suggested the construction of a wing dam to wash away the sand bar. This would cost fifty dollars, the major added, and would not be a job that he personally would undertake. Jaeger felt that he could neither build a bridge nor construct a dam.⁶⁶ The disagreement evidently was soon over for Jaeger was able to hire two more employees soon afterwards. The fact that the Southern Pacific Railroad was coming probably explains Jaeger's unwillingness to build a bridge.

⁶⁶Jaeger, "Diary 1875-1880," 129, 130.

Many persons traveling to and from California remarked about Jaeger and his ferry. One such emigrant likened him to Charon, the ferryman of the mythical River Styx.

I am stopping with Mr. Jaeger, the ferryman of the Colorado, a name as well known to all pilgrims this way as that of him of the fabled Styx. The ferry house, though not strictly a hotel, is a very desirable place to stop at, as it is here that the primitive and modern customs of the country are best seen. It is in fact the only place that affords accommodations to travelers.⁶⁷

Jaeger kept a record of the number of persons in each party, number of wagons, animals, home of the people, and their destination. In July, 1852, a party of emigrants reported numbers of emigrants on the way "with all kinds of transportation, from a packed burro to a fine yoked wagon."⁶⁸

Being located at a crucial point, Jaeger had the opportunity to meet many different people, from emigrants to surveying parties. In 1854 Jaeger met another man who would be making Arizona history--Charles D. Poston. Poston and his surveying party were proceeding on their way to San Diego when they came to the ferry crossing at the Colorado. They were tired and had no money to spare for ferriage. Jaeger quoted a price of \$25. The shrewd Poston had his men pretend to be surveying for the future capital of

⁶⁷Martin, 212.

⁶⁸Woodward, Sweeny, 167.

Arizona, which would be called Arizona City. Poston extolled the advantages of owning property in such an ideal location. Jaeger became interested in the prospect of making money and inquired about the price of lots in this new town. Poston replied that \$25 a lot was the price, and pointed out a spot on the waterfront as an especially desirable one. Jaeger promptly requested Poston to register one lot in his name and exchanged ferriage for the party for the price of the property. True to his promise, Poston did register a lot in Jaeger's name.⁶⁹ No doubt this account is partly legendary. It seems unlikely that Jaeger would be so easily tricked, but then every man makes some mistakes. It is true, however, that Poston registered a lot for the ferryman.

When Lieutenant Joseph C. Ives and his party reached Fort Yuma on January 5, 1858, Ives reported what he saw. There was an "anticipated town" called Colorado City opposite the fort. The town included a store, blacksmith shop, and a tavern. A good ferry was operated by a rope stretched across the river, and to which a boat was attached. Most descriptions of the ferry agree that it was run by a pulley arrangement running across the river. There were posts to which the pulley ropes or wires were attached at

⁶⁹ Many sources contain this account, but a copy of the deed for the lot is included in the following book. A. W. Gressinger, Charles D. Poston: Sunland Seer (Globe, Arizona: Dale Stuart King, Publisher, 1961), pp. 17, 18.

each side of the river. Ives reports that he was rowed across in a skiff. That this should have happened was not unusual, for passengers were often so transported.⁷⁰

Edward D. Tuttle, a soldier stationed at Fort Yuma and later an agent for the steamer company, described the ferry boat as a good-sized flat scow with a capacity to cross wagons safely. There were pulleys running on a big cable affixed to each bank just below the mouth of the Gila. The front end of the boat was higher upstream than the rear end so that it caused the boat to be at an angle to the current.⁷¹

Jaeger was aware of the emigrants' difficulties with the Indians in Arizona. He knew about the Oatman family massacre, a story that has been chronicled by the Reverend Royal B. Stratton, who had never been to Arizona. The emigrant family had left Tucson and was proceeding toward Fort Yuma in March, 1851, when some Apaches were encountered. After trying to placate and reason with the Indians, the father was beaten to death with a club. Other members of the family died similar deaths except for two of the girls, Mary Ann and Olive, whom the Apaches took with

⁷⁰Lt. Joseph C. Ives, Report Upon the Colorado River of the West, U. S. Congress, House, Exec. Doc. No. 90 36th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1861), p. 43.

⁷¹Edward Deen Tuttle, MSS papers (photocopy University of Arizona Special Collections).

them. The oldest son, Lorenzo, who had been left for dead, managed to reach the Pima villages. Major Heintzelman at Fort Yuma had been requested to help this family by a Doctor Lecount who had met the Indians on his way to the river. Heintzelman finally did send some men to help, but they found only the massacred family and the broken wagon. Lorenzo Oatman gradually found his way to the fort and was treated by a Dr. Hewit there.

Lorenzo Oatman spent much of his time trying to find his sisters, and on March 21, 1856, five years after the incident, he was reunited with the one surviving sister Olive. Reverend Stratton's epic account of the incident told of the heart-warming, tearful reunion. Jaeger in his diary passes it off by saying, "I went up to the fort with him also, and she did not know him & he did not know her also, so much change in 5 years" ⁷² According to Olive Oatman's own account, she had been traded to the Mohaves for ten horses, two blankets, and beads. She and her sister, who died soon after, were adopted by the chief. Finally in 1856 she was bought from the Mohaves for two blankets, and seven pounds of beads. At the time of the interview she and her brother were on their way to Oregon where some relatives were living. ⁷³

⁷²Beattie, 101.

⁷³San Francisco Bulletin, June 24, 1856, 1:1.

Jaeger also saw the ill-fated Crabb filibustering expedition leave for Sonora. On March 20, 1857, Crabb and his followers were at Fort Yuma preparing to depart for Sonoita. They eagerly expounded upon their aims to any available listeners. One newspaper correspondent remarked that it was no wonder that the Hispano-Americans hated the United States.

The expedition met its end near Hermosillo, Sonora, in April, 1857. Details included the information that at least ninety Americans were killed. Crabb and about fifty others surrendered, and were taken in groups of five or ten to face the firing squad. The inept marksmanship of the Mexican soldiers added more horror to the incident. Crabb alone was reserved for the goriest death of all, culminating in having his head cut off.

The Sonoran reaction to the Crabb expedition was so intense that almost no American dared to travel in that Mexican state. In May of that year Captain Ankrim, Jaeger's partner, who spoke fluent Spanish and was well-known to the Mexicans, was compelled to turn back from a journey to Sonoita. It was at this time that Jaeger stopped buying supplies in Sonoita and went to California instead.⁷⁴

The Civil War had its effect upon the Colorado ferry. In 1862 the ferry boats were brought to the fort to

⁷⁴Ibid., March 20, 1857, April 7, 1857, and May 15, 1857.

be destroyed by order of the commanding officer at Fort Yuma. Only Jaeger's largest one was saved and was operated under the guns of the fort as were the steamers. By 1863 the ferry was completely under the control of the fort, and was referred to as the government ferry.⁷⁵

Jaeger was still the ferryman, however, even though he no longer owned the boat. Men from the California Column at Fort Yuma were sent on details to help him with the ferry.⁷⁶

In order to check any movement of Confederate sympathizers from Arizona to southern California, all travelers were required to carry passports signed by the general in command of United States forces in the area from which they came. In addition, all persons passing in or out of California or Arizona were instructed to report to the commander at Fort Yuma to state their business before they were allowed to proceed. Though the years 1861 and 1862 marked times of flooding on the Colorado, the one operating ferry escaped ruin.⁷⁷

After the Civil War had ended, the government allowed Jaeger to buy back his ferry boat. In a contract dated March 5, 1866, Jaeger purchased the boat at a cost

⁷⁵Tuttle, Papers.

⁷⁶Entry of June 12, 1862, George O. Hand MS Diary (typescript copy at Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, Tucson. Hereinafter referred to as APHS.)

⁷⁷Tuttle, Papers.

price and paid for all other equipment including spans, wire ropes, and blocks. Jaeger was then to be under contract to do the public ferrying at Fort Yuma "at each, every and all times when called upon" and to give preference to the ferriage needs of the fort. The contract went on the dictate the prices that Jaeger might charge: one mule wagon and team for \$4.75, each footman 25¢ and a man and a horse for 75¢. (By 1875 the price for a mounted man had risen to one dollar.) Jaeger was allowed to keep the boat on the government reserve, but he could not remove it without authority from the fort. The contract was for five years, March 5, 1866, through March 4, 1871.⁷⁸ "Don Diego" must have suffered losses from the ferry and his other businesses during the war, especially in the cases of government contracts. The government could not pay in gold and often did not pay at all.

Nevertheless, Jaeger's ferry must have been doing a good business. The Sacramento Union of December 13, 1866, noted that Jaeger had quite a good business. The paper tartly remarked that the government was paying Jaeger from \$1000 to \$1500 a month for ferriage when a good bridge could clear the cost in a year and be but one-third of the present charge.⁷⁹ The paper was mistaken in its

⁷⁸Contract: Major William Hooper and L. J. F. Jaeger, March 5, 1866, Quartermaster.

⁷⁹Sacramento Union, December 13, 1866.

quotation of monthly ferriage income from the government for Jaeger never received such a large amount.

It was at the time of the 1861-62 floods that a settlement on the Arizona side across the river from Jaegerville began to grow. This was the "predicted" town of Arizona City. The nearby settlement known as Colorado City had been almost completely obliterated by the floods. The first building in Arizona City was the adobe house of the "Great Western." This was the name given to Mrs. Sarah Bowman, who had followed General Scott's regiment in the Mexican War and nursed wounded soldiers. She served as a laundress for the soldiers at the fort and later ran a restaurant in Yuma. Next, George F. Hooper and Dr. George McKinstry, who had been the owners of the sutler's store at Fort Yuma, built a store. Later McKinstry sold out his interest to Jack Hinton and the store became Hooper and Hinton Company.

Arizona City officially became Yuma by an act of the territorial legislature approved February 2, 1873. Captain Isaac Polhamous, Jr., helped to move the records of the county seat from La Paz to Yuma by steamer. Yuma continued to grow and its reputation for being a "rough" place spread. One reminiscence about Yuma in the 1870's

stated, "If there was not a man or two killed every morning, we called it a dull day."⁸⁰

Although Jaeger's home was near the fort on the California side, he made frequent business trips to Yuma as well as numerous ferry crossings. Jaeger occasionally mentioned feeling ill, but his wife seems to have constantly suffered from ill health. Taking her to the doctor in Yuma was almost a daily routine. Trips to the doctor were also required for the three children, although they sometimes were taken to the one at Fort Yuma. The children apparently had the usual childhood disorders such as measles and stomach aches. Jaeger often mentions in his diary that one of the children had not gone to school because of illness. The children went to school across the river in Yuma. The younger son Louis seems to have been a favorite of Jaeger. His father was quite pleased that Louis was so well-behaved while being treated at the fort for a severely mashed toe. Jaeger's concern for good health extended beyond that for his family. He remarked about the health of his acquaintances and their families.

The Jaeger family apparently enjoyed a pleasant home life. The house was a meeting place for many, including a number of officers from Fort Yuma who visited

⁸⁰Fred Brecht, Tucson, April 21, 1932, "Reminiscences" as told to Mrs. Edith Kitt, Biographical File, APHS.

quite often. Jaeger, of course, was interested in maintaining a favorable relationship with the military men for business reasons as well as for personal ones. He had even given a chair to the reputedly dour Major Heintzelman. Edward Tuttle, Deputy Quartermaster, was a frequent guest. On his visits he would take a siesta on the cool veranda and then drink coffee and smoke with his host. Tuttle describes Mrs. Jaeger as a sprightly young Spanish woman who was the life of any party when there was dancing. The ferryman enjoyed bringing guests to his house to eat, and especially liked to serve barbecued heads of beef cattle. "Don Diego" obviously took pride in the appearance of his home, for he often speaks of planting gardens and flower beds. The fourteen-room Spanish style house must have been impressive until it was washed away by an 1891 flood. Adjacent to the house were the store and blacksmith's shop.

Christmas was a special holiday for the family. Gifts were hung from the branches of a small willow or cottonwood tree. Jaeger made a special effort to give pleasing gifts to his children, especially his daughter. Gifts to her included dolls, dishes, and even a canary. The first organ in the Yuma area was a present for her. It had been bought, unassembled, by boat from San Francisco. The instrument evidently was purchased on the "installment plan," for there are records of his payments

in his account books.⁸¹ Mrs. Jaeger played both the guitar and harp, but her husband's only known musical accomplishment was singing "In The Sweet Bye and Bye."⁸²

Jaeger dutifully accepted his civic responsibilities, serving as an election inspector and as election judge for state and national elections. The voting district was known as Colorado Township. (Until 1873 California had claimed this strip on the opposite side of the river.) Voting usually took place at Jaeger's house.⁸³ Jaeger rejoiced when Buchanan was elected in 1856, perhaps because the candidate was from his home state. He was also a Mason. His diary contains numerous mentions of his having paid dues to the Los Angeles chapter. Jaeger's son Louis also became a Mason and graduated to Master Mason in 1889.⁸⁴

When the Southern Pacific Railroad began construction in 1876 Jaeger was ready to take advantage of the

⁸¹Jaeger's account books are also in fragments-- January to June, 1860, February to November, 1861 (Vol. 1 microfilm No. 179 in University of Arizona library), January, 1874 to December, 1876, and January, 1884 to August, 1891 (Vol. 2 Roll 179).

⁸²Most of the information about the Jaeger home life was found in a typescript of a taped interview of Jaeger's daughter, Mrs. Concepción Martinez, by Douglas Martin in Yuma in July, 1957.

⁸³San Diego Herald, August 11, 1855, October 11, 1856, July 18, 1857, and October 6, 1869.

⁸⁴Arizona Sentinel (Yuma), September 21, 1889.

situation. Since the railroad company was a potential market for beef and freighting services, Jaeger recorded its progress with interest. In February, 1877, it was 75 miles from Yuma. The first train arrived at Pilot Knob on April 28, 1877, and by late May the crew was completing the construction of the bridge over the Colorado. The Yuma Arizona Sentinel reported on May 21, 1877, "The first train of the S.P. R.R. arrived at Jaeger's one mile below here this morning. . . . Jaeger's will hereafter be called Colorado River Station. . . . The Weather is cool. Town full of strangers." Jaeger, realizing that his ferry would soon lose much of its business, presented to James Barney a copy of a paper offering the ferry for \$8000 cash to be paid in sixty days.⁸⁵ The ferry was not sold at that time, however.

In the meantime the railroad progress had been temporarily stopped, for the company found it necessary to obtain authorization to build through the Indian reservation on the Arizona side. When authorization was granted the railroad company began to buy out the major sources of competition, including the Colorado Steam Navigation Company and Jaeger's ferry. Jaeger and the Southern Pacific Company agreed on terms of sale in June, 1877. By the terms of the agreement Jaeger would sell the ferry property

⁸⁵Jaeger, "Diary 1875-1880," p. 258.

for \$8000, the livestock for \$2000, and the ferry itself for \$8000 with the sale going into effect on July 1. Jaeger also sold ferry lots 4 and 7, two ferry boats, a skiff, rope, and a foal belonging to the ferry for \$4500 in gold coin to the Colorado Steam Navigation Company (which had been sold to the Southern Pacific in April, 1877). In addition, Jaeger and his family were entitled to free ferriage for one year and free passage on the steamers for one year also.⁸⁶

The days of "Don Diego" the ferryman were over. Jaeger chose to move away from the scene of his previous business. He was living in Colton, California when B. A. Stephens interviewed him in 1881.

His form now is rounded and his locks are grizzled, but at the advanced age of sixty-four years his eyes are not dim nor are his natural forces abated. He is about 5 feet 10 inches high, and weighs about 150 pounds. His hair is slightly gray, and his full gray beard is short. Clear blue eyes look out on either side of an aquiline nose from under a high forehead which retreats slowly back to thin locks. Genial, warm hearted and communicative, he is a prince among pioneers for reminiscences.⁸⁷

"Don Diego," however, was not the type of man to retire and do nothing. Since his ferry business no longer existed, he was free to spend more time with his other business ventures, notably his mining investments.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 290, 291.

⁸⁷ Stephens, 36.

CHAPTER III

ENTREPRENEUR AT THE CROSSING

L. J. F. Jaeger, like most opportunistic businessmen, had his hand in almost every possible money-making venture. In the 1850's and 1860's discoveries of gold, silver, and copper ore in Arizona caused much excitement. The enthusiastic reports by finders of mineral wealth led to a rush of men to make their claims. One of the early discoveries of gold placers was that of the Jacob Snively party in September, 1858. The mining town of Gila City soon existed near this spot. Four years later, the mountain man Pauline Weaver found gold along the Colorado River. A month after he had reported the news to Fort Yuma, the mining settlement of La Paz had its beginning. There were numerous yarns about the abundance of precious metals, including claims that Arizona Indians used bullets of solid gold.¹

Jaeger, like most of the other men, showed interest in the discoveries but did not drop everything to rush off to investigate. Instead, he remained at the Colorado, ready to ferry across emigrants and the flood of

¹Arthur Woodward, ed., Journal of Lt. Thomas W. Sweeny (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1956), pp. 213, 214.

gold-seekers. His store no doubt provided many miners with equipment and food supplies, and his freighting business benefited from hauling ore.

The ferryman, however, could not completely resist the temptation to enter the mining business directly; consequently, he became part owner in various endeavors in Arizona. In 1854 he became a stockholder in the Ajo copper mines.² A second interest was a lode of auriferous quartz located ninety miles north of Fort Yuma on the Colorado was owned by Jaeger and James Halstead.³ Moreover, in the late 1870's he worked a mine seventy-five miles north of Yuma with W. Davy and "J. Rendo" (perhaps José Redondo). They claimed 1500 feet in a vein ten to twenty feet wide and ten feet deep. Some years later, Don Diego attempted to work his claims in the Castle Dome gold fields, but claim jumpers ended the venture. The disappointed loser spoke of the men involved as the "Castle Dome villains."⁴

Although he was interested in various types of mines, Jaeger primarily invested in silver lodes. His partners frequently were Hill DeArmitt and James Halstead. The ferryman rarely visited excavations as long as he was

²Frank C. Lockwood, Pioneer Days in Arizona (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), p. 193.

³Thomas Edwin Farish, History of Arizona (Phoenix: By the author, 1915), II, 76.

⁴Jaeger, "Diary 1875-1880," MS pp. 314, 326 (University of Arizona Special Collections).

operating his ferry business. Instead, he carried on his transactions by correspondence, regularly receiving letters from DeArmitt and another miner, Joseph Tuttle, telling of yields, improvements made, and investment offers. In October, 1875, Tuttle informed Jaeger that George A. Brown would accept \$2000 for interest in the Athram mine. Don Diego planned to buy the share and then sell it to Davy for \$4500, but neither sale was consummated.⁵ DeArmitt reported to his partner the number of sacks of ore yielded by the Redeemer mine.⁶ In March, 1876, the Redeemer smelted 1100 pounds of ore worth \$2112. The ferryman shipped one hundred twenty sacks of it on Barge Number Three of the Colorado Steam Navigation Company. The Redeemer was producing well enough for the owners to sell some interest in it to William Moran of San Francisco for \$600. It was finally sold to a Philadelphia company in July, 1879. DeArmitt also persuaded his partner to contribute toward buying one-tenth interest (one hundred fifty linear feet) in the Boomerang Mine in Pinal County.⁷ Very little was ever said about this mine after the sale. Their best known lodes, however, were those in the Cababi District in Pima County.

⁵Ibid., 76.

⁶There is no official record of a mine by this name. Perhaps this is a nickname given by Jaeger.

⁷Jaeger, "Diary 1875-1880," pp. 114, 125, 136.

The Cababi mines included the Don Diego Lead, Fernandez (also called Comobabi because it was in the Comobabi Mountains on the Papago Reservation), Cokespa, Picacho, Cobreza, and Tiger lodes. The Don Diego Lead ("Don Dago" as Jaeger spelled it) was owned first by Jaeger, Halstead, and Francisco Padres. In 1867 Padres sold out.⁸ Ten years later the mine was deeded to DeArmitt for \$25,000.⁹

DeArmitt reopened the Fernandez in 1862. The copper and silver mine had previously been worked by Don Juan Fernandez. James Halstead then invested in the lode, but sold out to Jaeger in November, 1866.¹⁰ In May, 1874, DeArmitt sold half interest to Jaeger for one dollar.¹¹ The following September they applied for a patent for 1500 linear feet and a mill site. The plat of the claim was granted in June, 1881, for 25.66 acres to Jaeger alone.¹²

Two other important Cababi mines were the Cokespa and Picacho. The former contained argentiferous quartz.

⁸Arizona, Pima County, Recorder's Office, Mining Deeds Book 1 Deed 173 (Microfilm Pima County Court House. Hereinafter referred to as Pima County Deeds.)

⁹Jaeger, "Diary, 1875-1880," 259.

¹⁰Pima County Deeds, 1:157. At the same time Halstead sold his interest in the Cokespa and Picacho lodes (1:154 and 156).

¹¹Ibid., 1:314.

¹²Ibid., 14:215.

In 1874 Jaeger applied for a patent on 2640 linear feet. A plat was drawn up for a lode and mill site of 29.25 acres in August, 1880.¹³ The patent was not granted, however, until May, 1882, after a "long and bitter contest by parties who had no lawful or equitable claim to it."¹⁴ At that time it was issued to Jaeger, DeArmitt, and George A. Brown. The Picacho mine had first attracted attention in 1861 when a small amount of gold was found. The gold soon was gone, but there were also silver veins. In fact, the Picacho was reportedly the most productive silver mine in the territory.¹⁵ The ore was assayed at eighty dollars a ton for a two to six foot vein.¹⁶ Soon Jaeger, Halstead, and Padres owned the mine, and the last-named worked it using the patio process until he sold out to Jaeger in 1867. Though the mine was rich, it was periodically necessary to stop work because of water. A plat for 32.55 acres was issued, and a patent was granted in 1880.¹⁷ The same year the ferryman sold two-thirds interest to B. F.

¹³Ibid., 15:452.

¹⁴Weekly Arizona Citizen (Tucson), May 7, 1882, 3:2.

¹⁵Weekly Arizona Miner (Prescott), November 15, 1873, 1:3-5.

¹⁶Richard J. Hinton, 1000 Old Arizona Mines (Toyahville, Texas: Frontier Book Company, 1962), p. 75. This is a reprint of part of the Handbook of Arizona published in 1878.

¹⁷Pima County Deeds, 14:353.

Bivins for \$25,000, and the following year sold him the remaining one-third for one dollar.¹⁸

Two other Cababi District mines in which Don Diego invested were the Cobreza and the Tiger lodes. The Cobreza share had been sold by H. C. Hooker in July, 1877. Jaeger received a plat of 20.66 acres in June, 1881. In November of that year he deeded it to J. W. Anderson for one dollar.¹⁹ The Tiger silver mine was owned by Jaeger and Michael Leyden. Don Diego paid \$1000 in 1871 for one-half interest.²⁰ He sold his share in 1881.

The Yuma ferryman also invested in the Atlanta claim in the Meyers Mining District of Pima County. It was located on March 16, 1879, by William Webb, Jaeger, and Samuel W. Dyer. Later an extension to the claim was developed. B. F. Bivins bought all of Jaeger's interest in the Meyers District in 1880 and 1881.²¹

Although he experienced much good fortune with his business ventures, mining speculations drained much of Jaeger's wealth. It seems that most of his sales were for a loss. Throughout his years of investments Jaeger had had setbacks, but sometimes he was able to avoid serious

¹⁸Ibid., 14:493 and 513.

¹⁹Ibid., 1:709, 14:211, and 14:539.

²⁰Ibid., 1:245.

²¹Ibid., 4:324, 13:456, and 14:698.

losses. His mortgaged interests in the Picacho, Cokespa, and Fernandez mines were foreclosed in February, 1867; consequently, they were offered for sale at public auction. The highest bid was that of Daniel H. Stickney for \$2600. A few months later Stickney sold the property to John G. Capron of Tucson. Capron, in turn, sold the mining shares back to Jaeger on June 19, 1867, for \$4800.²²

The wily Don Diego seems to have been adept at recovering mining property. On July 3, 1868, he deeded his interests in the Picacho, Cokespa, and Fernandez mines to James M. Barney for \$4484. Somehow he contrived to regain possession of these shares, for when he was adjudged bankrupt in 1869 they were included as part of his estate. At the sale of his property, his wife bought all of it back, including the mines. In April, 1874, she sold these mines for the nominal sum of ten dollars to John S. Carr of Yuma who on the very same day sold the mines to Jaeger for the same sum--ten dollars.²³

It may be of interest to add here some details concerning Jaeger's bankruptcy. In August, 1868, at the request of the creditors Columbus Waterhouse and J. W. Lester, both of San Francisco, Jaeger filed for involuntary

²²Ibid., 1:163, 1:164, 1:166, 1:168, and 1:172.

²³Ibid., 1:186 and 1:309. This is also found in Records of the General Land Office, Arizona and New Mexico Districts 1856-1888 (Microfilm roll 157 reel 1 University of Arizona library).

bankruptcy in accordance with the act of Congress entitled "An Act to Establish a Uniform System of Bankruptcy Throughout the United States" which had been approved in March, 1867. A man named B. Cohn was appointed the assignee of the estate on November 7, 1868.²⁴ Necessary procedures required by the law were then followed. Announcements of the petition for bankruptcy and notice of a general meeting for all creditors appeared in the San Diego Herald.²⁵

The estate included interests in the Picacho, Cokespa, Fernandez, and Don Diego mines. In addition, the list mentioned a house and four lots in San Diego,²⁶ the house and shops near Fort Yuma, and two shares in an irrigation ditch company on the Salt River twenty miles from Maricopa Wells. Besides these items there was the Santa Ysabel Ranch in San Diego County which had been an old Spanish land grant formerly owned by José Joaquín Ortega.²⁷

²⁴Pima County Deeds, 1:182-87.

²⁵San Diego Herald, April 14, 1869 and May 12, 1869.

²⁶Jaeger had bought lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 in Block 539 of "Old Town," San Diego from Cave Coutts on April 25, 1853, for \$4000 in gold coin. (California, San Diego County, Recorder's Office, Deeds, Book D Deed 99.)

²⁷How Jaeger managed to have this in his possession in 1869 is a mystery. On April 22, 1868, he had sold Rancho Santa Ysabel to Alfred H. Wilcox of the Colorado Steam Navigation Company for \$1062. The rancho, surveyed in 1866, contained 17,736.65 acres. (Ibid., Book 3, Deed 124.)

The bankruptcy act also dictated that the estate be sold at public auction. Jaeger, however, requested permission to sell his properties privately so that he could receive a higher price and avoid added expenses. Cleofe Jaeger, his wife, bought the properties for \$4050. (The same indenture later quotes \$5050 as the price.) The "sale" took place on October 8, 1869, and was duly recorded and approved by the United States District Court for the District of California.²⁸ It is quite probable that Jaeger had given what cash he had to his wife so that he could be declared bankrupt and avoid paying some of his debts. By doing this and arranging for a private sale, he was able to retain control of his properties.

Although he was fortunate at times, "Don Diego" lost much more than he gained in mining speculations. He was undoubtedly a successful businessman, but even so, he had his moments of misfortune and defeat.

Perhaps the most unheralded endeavor of Don Diego Jaeger was his attempt to have an irrigation ditch constructed in the Imperial Valley of California. Certainly the move had foresight and required determination, for an undertaking of this kind was not a common event in 1857. The canal that he planned would have furnished water for from 30,000 to 40,000 acres of the rich land along the

²⁸Pima County Deeds, 1:182-87.

Colorado. The plan was good and whole project showed enlightenment, but there was one drawback. Jaeger trusted an acquaintance who claimed to be a civil engineer. The so-called engineer set to work and constructed the canal and also the viaducts across the arroyos. The viaducts were made of stone and portland cement. The work was all finished and the water was turned into the canal, "When, lo, it was found that the water would run better from what was intended to be the lower end of the canal."²⁹ One can only speculate what may have happened if the engineer had been a competent one. Although the amount of the monetary loss for Jaeger is not known, it must have been a considerable sum. Jaeger had his part in the irrigation of the Salt River valley, too, for he invested in the first irrigation ditch there.³⁰ This venture was a success, but unlike the one mentioned above it was not completely Jaeger's endeavor.

News reported to California about the establishment of a permanent military post and operation of a reliable ferry at the lower Colorado whetted the already keen interest in this region. Of particular concern was the development of navigation of the river. Since "Don Diego" was an investor in many different types of enterprises, he

²⁹Arizona Sentinel (Yuma), September 21, 1893.

³⁰Lockwood, Pioneer Days, 193.

was ready to do business with steam navigation companies when they became a reality.

The first attempt at commercial navigation of the Colorado was that of the schooner Sierra Nevada which arrived at the river mouth on February 17, 1852, to bring supplies to Fort Yuma. This was also the first realization that such an undertaking would suffer difficulties. After the vessel had reached its destination, it took nine days for the men to assemble the flatboats to be used to carry the goods up the river to the fort. One of the loaded crafts then sank. It was soon comprehended that the system of using flatboats to relay provisions from the mouth of the Colorado to the Gila junction was not practical since the fort used up the supplies faster than they could be furnished. The observation was then made that small steamers might be the ideal types of shuttle boats.³¹

At this point George A. Johnson and Benjamin Hartshorne, two of Jaeger's former ferry partners, and Alfred Wilcox founded the George A. Johnson Company which presented the first steamboat to ascend the Colorado. The Uncle Sam arrived, unassembled, aboard the Capacity late in 1852. When it had been put together, the side-wheel steamer measured sixty-five feet in length with a twenty-five ton capacity, and had a twenty-horsepower

³¹San Diego Herald, February 3, 1852, April 3, 1852, and April 17, 1852.

locomotive-type boiler.³² Besides experiencing problems in maneuvering the craft on the unpredictable river, the suppliers learned that the Uncle Sam was too small. The fort still used up provisions more rapidly than they could be brought up from the head of the Gulf. To illustrate the predicament, Sweeny recorded on January 20, 1853, that the Uncle Sam had arrived at the fort with forty tons of commissary stores, but she would have to make five or six more trips before the Capacity was completely unloaded.³³ By June, 1853, the Uncle Sam, lately so heralded, was neglected and used infrequently. She sank at the ferry landing after a careless worker had removed a bilge plug and then left the boat to fill up with water.³⁴ The successor of the sunken steamer was the General Jessup which served on the river from 1854 to 1858 when she exploded.

When gold was discovered on the Colorado above Yuma and with such mining towns as La Paz in existence, George A. Johnson saw the prospect of making more money by supplying these settlements. He asked the United States government for an appropriation to finance his exploration of the

³²Francis Hale Leavitt, "Steam Navigation of the Colorado River," California Historical Society Quarterly, XXII (1943), 5.

³³Woodward, Sweeny, 192.

³⁴San Diego Herald, July 9, 1853. Woodward, Sweeny, 268.

upper Colorado. While this request was being considered, there was a change of administration in Washington. Soon Johnson received a communication from Major Robert Allen, Chief Quartermaster for the Department of the Pacific Coast, asking for such particulars as what type of boat would be needed on the Colorado and the probable expense of building and getting such a vessel to the river. Johnson answered Allen, giving the specifications for the boat and other information. To his surprise and disgust a Lieutenant Joseph Ives appeared at the Colorado late in 1857 with the appropriation that Johnson had been seeking. He had brought with him the parts of his steamboat, the Explorer, ready to proceed up the Colorado. Johnson was quite angry about Ives's apparent desire to win all the glory of such an expedition for himself and, while Ives was assembling his craft, he hurried off to explore the river as far as the junction of the Virgin River. On the return trip he met Lieutenant E. F. Beale and his party. Meanwhile, Ives could go no farther than the Black Canyon because of the difficulty with steering the Explorer, which had been designed with the Delaware River in mind. When Ives returned, he sold his boat to the Johnson company, but the Explorer was never much of an asset to anyone. One day after she had gone out of control and drifted down the river, she was left where she had run aground and was

forgotten. (A surveying party in 1929 found her one mile from the present course of the river.)³⁵

Until 1864 the Johnson company had a monopoly in steamboating on the Colorado, but by August of that year there were three competing companies. A group of San Francisco merchants organized the New Union Line and sent Captain Truworthy and the Esmerelda to the river. Soon the Philadelphia Mining Company at El Dorado Canyon in California entered the Nina Tilden and Captain Gorman into competition with the others. In June, 1865, the two more recently organized companies merged to create the Pacific and Colorado Steam Navigation Company.³⁶ In 1869 the George A. Johnson became incorporated and known as the Colorado Steam Navigation Company.³⁷ The company had capital stock worth \$500,000 divided into five thousand shares valued at \$100 each.³⁸ Jaeger apparently held stock in this company, and did business with it as well. Entries

³⁵The story of Ives and Johnson is the topic of a book by Arthur Woodward--Feud on the Colorado (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1955). See especially pages 69 and 91.

³⁶Leavitt, 14, 15.

³⁷The 1860 census had reported that the George A. Johnson Company had a capital investment of \$100,000. The same census listed L. J. F. Jaeger as a merchant having real estate valuing \$15,000 and personal estate worth \$40,000. Winfred Davidson Notes on Census of July 20, 1860 (in Jaeger and Johnson biographical files at Junipero Serra Museum Library).

³⁸Leavitt, 14, 15.

in his account books cite transactions with the company and the various agents including David Neahr and John Dow, who had been the postmaster of Yuma (Arizona City) in 1858. The ferryman noted when the Cocopah, Gila, and other steamers came load and unload at the ferry landing.

The other company did not have much success, and by 1870 the Colorado Steam Navigation Company had a monopoly once more. In 1868 the Esmerelda and Nina Tilden had been sold to the Colorado Steam Navigation Company. It then owned five steamers and three barges.³⁹

In 1877 the Colorado Steam Navigation Company sold out to the Southern Pacific Railroad. The property transferred included the four river steamers Cocopah, Colorado, Gila, and Mohave, four barges, warehouses, offices, and wharf at Yuma. The ocean steamers Newbern and Idaho were not sold, as the company planned to continue its business between San Francisco and Mexican ports.⁴⁰

The Colorado Steam Navigation Company had received a good portion of its revenue from government contracting. Such a good opportunity was not ignored by "Don Diego" Jaeger. The ferryman not only made ferriage contracts, but also entered into the supplying and freighting businesses.

³⁹Ibid., 154. E. D. Tuttle, "The River Colorado," Arizona Historical Review, I (July, 1928), 57.

⁴⁰San Diego Union, April 24, 1877.

Wherever there were military posts, government contracts offered a source of income to men who were willing to furnish supplies. Jaeger agreed to provide Fort Yuma and a number of Arizona garrisons with hay and freighting services as well as to bring beef and wood to nearby Fort Yuma. To be entitled to enter into such arrangements it was necessary to underbid the other competitors. The agreements were usually in effect for one year, but payments were made at intervals of a few months each.

The earliest mention of beef contracts was on June 10, 1856, when the ferryman noted that he had received \$899.37 for two months beef provisions.⁴¹ It is probable that a similar pact had been in force the preceding year, since two weeks later the diarist reported that he had submitted a lower bid than a man named Horbock to regain the contract for another term. The bids had been for sixteen cents and twelve cents a pound.⁴²

Occasionally there was friction between the officers at Fort Yuma and the ferryman about meat brought to the post. In June, 1857, a Sergeant Reed informed the contractor that an inspector had condemned the beef.

⁴¹George William Beattie, ed., "Diary of a Ferryman and Trader at Fort Yuma, 1855-1857," Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California, XIV, pts I and 2 (1928, 1929), 114.

⁴²Ibid., 116, 117.

Jaeger claimed that he had known that the meat was not of good quality but most of it had been used by the time he had sent an employee to bring it back. "They made a great muss about it," he commented.⁴³

Since supplying beef had become a regular business for Jaeger, he purchased cattle to raise on his two ranches on the Colorado and the one near San Diego. At least three different herds were kept on the ranch near the fort. Some animals were reserved for breeding purposes but most were feeder cattle. The diary contains numerous records of transactions including descriptions of heifers bought and sold (most purchases were heifers because they could be used for the dual purposes mentioned above). The ferry boat was often employed to transport livestock.

Selling cattle was not limited to dealing with Fort Yuma. Sales and trades were made with various cattlemen who lived in the area or who were driving their animals to northern California. Jaeger records a sale of a 575 pound heifer "with horns sawed off" to the Larch Reed Beef Store for ten cents a pound. (Reed was also one of Jaeger's freight wagon drivers.) There are many recorded transactions with a cattleman named Birney; on one occasion, for

⁴³Ibid., 238.

example, the ferryman bought ten animals at ten dollars each.⁴⁴

When construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad approached Yuma in 1876, "Don Diego" sensed a business opportunity. He began to sell livestock to the railroad company. Soon he held regular contracts for supplying beef to the construction crews.⁴⁵

Besides supplying meat to the fort, Jaeger provided milk for the officers' mess, although there was no contract for this. His account books contain daily notations of money received from the officers from 1860 to 1886. He and his son Louis did the milking and selling. There were also civilian customers for milk--a long list of them, in fact.⁴⁶ Prices for a quart varied from time to time, and often it seems that they differed depending upon the person involved. In February, 1875, the price was about \$1.12 a gallon, or twenty-eight cents a quart; however, a quart of milk could cost as little as twelve cents for some customers and as much as the full twenty-eight cents for others.⁴⁷ Jaeger was obviously pleased with his milking

⁴⁴Jaeger, "Account Books 1874-1876," entries for February 14, 1874 and February, 1875.

⁴⁵Jaeger, "Diary, 1875-1880," pp. 158, 195.

⁴⁶Jaeger, "Account Books, 1874-1876," February, 1875.

⁴⁷Ibid.

herd, for an entry in his diary proudly states that eighteen cows were then producing.⁴⁸

Not being one to pass up chances to earn money, Jaeger knew that the horses and mules as well as the men at military posts had to be fed. Records of hay contracts began the same year as those for beef--1856. These agreements frequently included very specific terms. Usual stipulations were for a certain amount of hay to be brought to a fort by a given deadline. More specific conditions might be similar to those of an 1860 Fort Yuma arrangement which required that one hundred fifty tons of freshly baled forage be delivered to the right bank of the Colorado. Each bale was to weigh no more than two hundred pounds and was to be held together by three strong wire hoops. The price was sixty-five dollars a ton.⁴⁹ Ascertaining the exact number of pounds was difficult, and many times was never accomplished. In most instances the weight of a loaded wagon was simply estimated. On windy days, as Jaeger pointed out in his diary, it was almost impossible to calculate the amount of forage; consequently, one just "guessed" the weight.

⁴⁸Jaeger, "Diary, 1875-1880," p. 345.

⁴⁹U. S., Department of the Army, Records of the Office of Quartermaster General, Regular Supplies Contracts 1818-1912, August 13, 1860 (Record Group 92, Microfilm from National Archives, Washington, D. C. Hereinafter referred to as Quartermaster.)

Since he operated a freighting service, it was not difficult for "Don Diego" to take hay to many forts. An agreement dated July 1, 1862, required the delivery of 150 tons to Fort Yuma, 15 tons each to Cooks Wells, Indian Wells, Carisa Creek, and San Felipe at \$55, \$60, \$80, \$60, and \$40 per ton respectively.⁵⁰ The ferryman and Yuma merchant George Hooper often combined efforts to furnish hay to military posts. In August, 1865, for example, they assumed responsibility for providing 150 tons to Fort Yuma at \$64.50 per ton. Similar agreements were made in July, 1866, for 500 tons of "The best quality river bottom hay" at \$84 and in September, 1867, for 60 tons at \$32 per ton.⁵¹

The payments earned must have made the work worthwhile. One such receipt in April, 1856, provided \$1641.72 gross for the contractor.⁵² A considerable portion of the ferryman's income obviously came from the federal government for ferriage, beef, and hay not to mention wood and freighting revenues.

Selling wood seems to have become a business for the enterprising ferryman in the 1870's. A contract dated April 28, 1873, states that Jaeger had agreed to furnish all of the soft wood needed at Fort Yuma. It was to be cut

⁵⁰Ibid., July 1, 1862.

⁵¹Ibid., August 4, 1865, July 3, 1866, and September 28, 1867.

⁵²Beattie, 107.

in lengths of four feet and closely piled so that the government would get enough. Naturally, he could not cut any from military or Indian reserves. The price to be paid was \$5.50 per cord; whereas it had been \$4.68 the previous year.⁵³

Like the other agreements, the wood contracts were not limited to military customers. Deputy Sheriff Wiley of Yuma frequently came to place an order. One arrangement offered \$15.85 a cord for soft wood and \$18.95 for harder types.⁵⁴ It is probably that these prices were for several months. Sons Henry and Louis gathered most of the brush. They were sometimes aided by an undependable hired hand named Thomas. Jaeger seldom expressed a written opinion about anyone, but he did not spare the man who failed to help his sons.

Supplying wood was not a major source of income, but it serves as a good example of the diversity of the ferryman's enterprises. Freighting, however, was of much more importance.

Jaeger's freighting business was a rather extensive operation. He transported ore, military stores and, later, equipment for the Southern Pacific. The first ore taken from the Ajo and Vulture mines had been hauled to the

⁵³Quartermaster, Consolidated Correspondence File, April 28, 1873.

⁵⁴Jaeger, "Diary, 1875-1880," p. 15.

awaiting steamers on the Colorado by pack mule. That from the Ajo copper mine had been moved for \$105 per ton.⁵⁵ No doubt "Don Diego" conveyed metals from his own mines and those of others. He was interested in transporting almost anything. An advertisement for his freighting operation emphasized that Jaeger owned wagons built expressly for the business and was prepared to take goods from the Colorado to any point in Arizona.⁵⁶

Freighting military supplies provided for much business. The procedure was the same as that followed for other government contracts. Men submitted bids with the assignment awarded to the lowest bidder. Often the quartermaster at Prescott placed announcements of services needed in newspapers. The notice would mention the destinations and materials involved. In answer to one such advertisement, Jaeger and a man named Banning presented their bid on August 1, 1866, for transporting two hundred twenty-one tons of government stores from Fort Yuma to Fort McDowell at six cents a pound for every hundred miles. Evidently both bids were more than had been expected for the deputy quartermaster at San Francisco, who was responsible for approving negotiations involving the two forts, complained to the Fort Yuma quartermaster that the bid was too

⁵⁵Lockwood, Pioneer Days, 193.

⁵⁶The Arizonian (Tucson), February 9, 1861, 4:4. There is no word "weekly" in the title of this issue.

high but had to be accepted since it had been the only one submitted.⁵⁷

There were other interesting terms connected with freighting contracts. An agreement made May 20, 1865, between Captain Hooper of Fort Yuma (a relative of the merchant Hooper) and contractors Jaeger and Barney provided for an escort of not less than ten men for protection from the Apaches on the route from Fort Yuma to Tubac. Stipulations for the freighters were that they handle at least fifteen tons of supplies a month and a total of at least one hundred tons for the year. For this they would receive eight cents a pound in gold coin, or the equivalent.⁵⁸

Oaths of allegiance were required in the years immediately following the Civil War. Each time one entered into a government agreement he was obligated to swear that he would not take up arms against the United States government. Notices for bids often stated such conditions as the following example from an announcement by Deputy Quartermaster Tuttle.

No bid will be entertained from any person who has given aid or comfort to further the late rebellion.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Quartermaster, Consolidated Correspondence, June 27, 1866.

⁵⁸ Quartermaster, Regular Contracts, May 20, 1865.

⁵⁹ Quartermaster, Consolidated Correspondence, May 11, 1867.

Jaeger helped to bring supplies to many locations. An 1868 agreement allowed for carrying military stores from the Colorado to Camps McDowell and Grant and to Tucson Depot for two and three-fourths cents a pound for every hundred miles.⁶⁰ On one of these trips a train of six wagons of commissary stores stopped above Mohawk station to camp. The men made the mistake of camping in the Gila River bed. During the night a flood washed away the camp and wagons. The mules were all that the men could save. Jaeger was held responsible for the loss of the government supplies until a few years later when he was excused. The loss of the wagons was quite costly for the freighter.⁶¹ Even though he suffered some mishaps, "Don Diego" earned a considerable amount of money from dealing with the government. As was the case with the ferry business, he lost money during the Civil War, when the government often could not make payments.

Louis Jaeger was involved in almost every investment venture available in his time and region, and like so many others, he both made and lost large sums of money. In his last years, when money was quite scarce, he spent much of his time pressing claims against the government.

⁶⁰Quartermaster, Regular Contracts, April 15, 1868.

⁶¹Tuttle, Papers.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAST YEARS OF "DON DIEGO"

Although "Don Diego" Jaeger occupied himself with various activities after 1880, it seems that he had passed his peak of prosperity. He continued to work, though his major sources of income were gone--freighting, government contracting, and the ferry. Business transactions were fewer, but he kept up his milk deliveries, and sold chickens and eggs. He also gave up his remaining mining interests and suffered losses. He seems to have lived primarily on interest money from bank accounts, especially from 1884 to 1888. In 1884 Jaeger, as the trustee of the estate of Miss Catherine Miller of Yuma, was provided annual payments of \$215 each for a period of four years. He deposited these amounts along with other income in the Fidelity Insurance, Trust and Safe Deposit Company of Philadelphia. In addition, he apparently received some money from two life insurance policies that he had previously held.¹

The man who had dealt in terms of thousands of dollars now recorded a transaction so small as buying a copy of the Los Angeles newspaper for five cents. In 1889

¹L. J. F. Jaeger, "Account Books 1884-1891 (University of Arizona Library, Microfilm 179, vol. 2).

Jaeger, his wife, and daughter left the Colorado to reside at Colton, California, about fifty miles east of Los Angeles. The house near the fort (Fort Yuma had been abandoned in 1885) was rented to a Chinese woman. This house, a visiting place for persons from almost every walk of life, was finally washed away by a flood in 1891. After the former ferryman had moved to Colton, his income was reduced even further. Net income from March 22, to July 19, 1889, amounted to \$206.54--quite a change from that of earlier years. The following year, net earnings dropped to \$126.18.²

Much of "Don Diego's" life after 1880 was devoted to his attempts to win a case for payment of his destroyed ferry boat. His last year of life was spent entirely in Washington, D. C. The former ferryman now labored to secure sworn statements from old acquaintances to corroborate his claims. Most of the documents were drafted in California and Arizona, but on one occasion Jaeger traveled to his home state of Pennsylvania to obtain a notarized statement. This trip was made in the summer of 1886. Jaeger records his stops and expenses including such details as eating oysters for lunch after arriving in Washington in June. No doubt he sought advice from the law firm of Pettis and Agnew while he was in that city. The entire journey was by

²Ibid.

train, and from Washington he went to Philadelphia, Reading, and finally to Hamburg. He spent much of his time visiting relatives and friends in New York City and eastern Pennsylvania. Finally, in September he purchased his return ticket to Los Angeles for \$78.61. On the trip back to California, Jaeger stopped to see Niagara Falls. The journey was not without mishaps, for in Detroit the ticket was accidentally destroyed. Somehow another one was acquired and Jaeger traveled through St. Louis and on to El Paso where he met his old acquaintance, Charles D. Poston. He reached California in late September with \$428.67 cash on hand.³ It is very likely that his brothers gave or loaned money to him. There would be other trips to the East, for the legal case was a long and difficult one.

The first claim,⁴ filed in the Indian Bureau on July 18, 1874, requested payment for a boat which Jaeger declared had been destroyed by the Yuma Indians⁵ on August 16, 1872. In an affidavit dated September 1, 1873, Jaeger asserted that his boat, plying the Colorado between Arizona

³Ibid.

⁴A microfilm reel from the National Archives (G. S. A. Job 11978, NCRD 864) contains copies of all documents pertaining to the legal case. The case is entitled, "L. J. F. Jaeger v. the U. S. and Yuma Indians,"--"Indian Predation Claim 1108 in the U. S. Court of Claims."

⁵This was part of Jaeger's difficulty, for the Indians involved were technically Quechans.

and California, had broken loose from its moorings a few days before August 16th and had drifted about fifteen miles downstream. He retrieved the craft, secured it, and left it in the care of the Yumas. It had been the custom over the years to leave boats with the Yumas, and no mishap had occurred before this time, Jaeger added. Yet, on the date mentioned, the Yumas had burned and destroyed the ferry. Jaeger reminded the Bureau that his ferry was a regular licensed one and was under contract with Fort Yuma to transport troops and to carry the United States mail.

Affidavits from William Poole, the pilot of the steamer Cocopah; Peter Shell, an employee on the steamer; and A. L. Grow, the engineer of the Cocopah, accompanied Jaeger's testimony. All three men on the steamer attested that on August 10, 1872, they had seen the boat made fast to the bank of the river at Pilot Knob where it had been recovered and that on August 16th the same craft had been seen on fire. All three speculated that the Yumas had been responsible for the fire, and that the ferry had been worth \$3000 in gold coin. In addition to these three affidavits, testimonies of two Yuma Indians, Ackawamar and Joseyo, were included. Both testified to seeing the boat in question made fast near the Indian camp, and claimed that the Yumas had built fires alongside it. The ferry boat then had caught fire. They did not claim to know which individuals had been responsible. The implication in all of these

affidavits is that although the Yumas caused the ferry to catch on fire, they did so inadvertently. Included with the affidavits was a communication dated February 11, 1872, in which the Indian agent stated that the Yumas had been hostile on occasion after they had signed a treaty with Major Heintzelman in 1852. The claim seems to have simply been lost in the wheels of bureaucracy, for nothing came of it. It was among the 3900 unpaid claims listed in the letter of the Secretary of the Interior to the House of Representatives April 11, 1886. Apparently his concerted effort to win the claim began in 1886. Prior to that time he had done no more than submit the necessary forms.

Consequently, on June 23, 1886, Jaeger had another affidavit drawn up--this time by his brother-in-law, Jackson Levan, a justice of the peace in Berks County, Pennsylvania. In this statement Jaeger reminded the government that he had filed claims in 1874 for loss of a ferryboat valued at \$3000 in gold coin. The boat, in good serviceable condition, had been burned by the Yuma Indians. Jaeger reiterated that the ferry boat had transported United States troops, government supplies, "citizen passengers," vehicles, horses, cattle, and sheep across the Colorado River. The boat was described as having dimensions of 63 feet long by 15 feet wide and having a capacity of 25 tons. At this time Jaeger employed the services of the law firm of Pettis and Agnew of Washington,

D. C. In the United States Court of Claims his claim became known as Indian Depredation Claim 1108. This 1886 petition was in accordance with an act passed by Congress on March 3, 1885, which allowed persons to make Indian depredation claims. This act was entitled "An Act to Provide for the Adjudication and Payment of Claims Arising from Indian Depredations." Jaeger still requested payment of \$3000, "no part of which has ever been paid."⁶ Again, affidavits were submitted. They were the same ones used for the previous claim with the exception of an additional one by William Webb. Webb claimed that he had been living with the Jaeger family on and before August 16, 1872, and knew that the boat had broken loose in high water. It had drifted to Pilot Knob where Jaeger found it and secured it, leaving it with the Yumas. The boat, worth \$3000, had subsequently been burned and destroyed by the Indians, said Webb. No result came from this claim, however, despite the efforts of the claimant.

In 1891 Congress approved a new law which allowed persons to make claims for property damaged by Indian depredations, provided that claimants could show evidence that the Indians involved had been bound in a treaty arrangement with the United States at the time that the act was committed and that the scene of the act had been in the

⁶L. J. F. Jaeger v. the U. S. and Yuma Indians.

United States. Jaeger's case as presented in the Court of Claims pursuant to the 1891 law was that: (1) Jaeger was a citizen of the United States, (2) he had been the owner of a boat which had been "taken, used, or destroyed" by the Yumas in August, 1872, (3) these Indians had been in amity with the United States at the time so that the United States had had supervisory charge of them, (4) previous claims for the same boat had not been paid, and (5) Jaeger now was filing under the new act and was requesting payment of \$3000.

The government counsel proceeded to find loopholes in the case. The Yumas had never been in treaty relations with the United States; therefore they are aliens living in this country, said the counsel. The counsel continued to argue against Jaeger's case, insisting that the claim violated the "due process" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment since the right of trial by jury is provided if a claim value exceeds twenty dollars. The Yuma Indians had not been granted their rights to be tried in their district of residence. Then came the climax:

And, if they are not entitled to these rights (rights that are guaranteed to every Italian organgrinder, every Chinese "washee-washee," every Russian mennonite, and even to the assisted immigrant), it is suggested that the learned opposing counsel will point out the principle or adjudication that excludes the defendant Indians therefore.

Can it be possible that these rights are guaranteed by our Constitution and laws to every

resident person of whatsoever color or nationality except to the defendants and their brethren, whose ancestors occupied our territory long before a white man set foot upon its shores?⁷

The government counsel then plunged into the tangled complexities of defining Indian tribes. There is no such tribe as the Yumas, said the counsel, because the Yumas are scattered, and by definition tribe means uncivilized savages under one head. Citing the Bureau of Ethnology and the Eleventh Census, the counsel claimed that the Yuma family embraced Hualapai, Apaches, Maricopas, Mohaves, Mohave-Apaches, Cosnejos, and Tonto Apaches; therefore the Yumas were not citizens as were the Pueblos of Arizona and New Mexico. (However, the point had just been made that the Yumas' constitutional rights had been violated.) The government counsel's conclusions were as follows: (1) that the act of March 3, 1891, neither applies to persons outside jurisdiction of a competent court nor authorizes judgment outside the judicial district where parties reside or may be served with process; (2) no sufficient notice had been given to Yumas; (3) no rule of court existed concerning how to accomplish the above, i.e., giving notice to Indians; (4) such notice has to be given before court can act; and (5) no treaty exists. The government counsel concluded that Yuma Indians are entitled to

⁷Ibid.

have this action dismissed for want of jurisdiction and service in these proceedings.

Pettis and Agnew, Jaeger's attorneys, did not give up, although their efficiency in the case is questionable. An amended petition was filed August 31, 1891. In the brief of this case, the attorneys urged a hastening of the examination of facts because of the growing infirmity of Jaeger. "The claimant in this case is at present in the City, on the downhill side of life, living upon borrowed time, having passed the 72d milestone [this was not true, as Jaeger was 67 at the time], and asking that long delayed justice in this case may be meted out to him."⁸ The attorneys pointed out that they had obtained assurance from Indian Agent Turner and Indian Commissioner Smith that the claim was just and reasonable. Agent Turner reported that he had seen the boat on fire as he rode by on the steamer Cocopah. The attorneys mentioned that the War Department files would show that Jaeger had received "atrocious and murderous treatment" from the Yumas in 1851. Pettis and Agnew then answered the conclusions by the government counsel. Amity meant "friendship, in a general sense, between individuals, societies, or nations . . ."⁹ according to Webster. Thus, said the attorneys, the act had been

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

committed by Indians in amity with the United States and the act had been committed within the United States. Jaeger deserved favorable consideration for his courageous work at the Colorado, they maintained.

The case proceedings dragged on and on. Jaeger, though he was not in good health, frequented the Capitol and the White House, as well as the office of his attorneys, in attempts to win his case. Daily trips to the Capitol seem to have been the rule. On one occasion Jaeger conversed with an Ohio Congressman about the Vulture Mine, and at a White House reception he shook hands with President Benjamin Harrison.¹⁰

Jaeger hoped for payment of two other claims besides the \$3000 claim. He attempted to draw up petitions for claims for destruction of ferry boats by the Yumas and California Column in 1851 and 1861 respectively. Pettis and Agnew repeatedly told Jaeger that he would get no favorable results from either of these claims. Much to Jaeger's disgust the attorneys refused to do anything about the 1861 claim. Pettis and Agnew, however, did attempt to draw up a brief for the 1851 case. Jaeger and his attorneys worked diligently in order to assemble the

¹⁰L. J. F. Jaeger, "Diary 1892" (University of Arizona Special Collections). Since this fragment is badly worn, it is impossible to read all dates. There are no page numbers.

necessary materials for the claim. They had even requested a copy of a report that Major Heintzelman had sent to the War Department. The report, written while Heintzelman had been stationed at Fort Yuma, stated that Jaeger had come to the Yuma area in 1849 and had remained there except for a brief stay in San Diego in 1851. Finally Jaeger's attorneys were able to convince him that proceeding with the petition would be useless. Jaeger protested and his nephew George, with whom he was living in Washington, became angry. George suggested that his uncle refuse to pay the attorneys until they had agreed to go on with the claim. Jaeger soon begrudgingly allowed the attorneys to drop the 1851 petition entirely.¹¹ Thus, only one claim, the one for \$3000, was taken through the courts to any settlement.

But victory was not to be had for Louis Jaeger, and he did not live to learn the final settlement of the claim. His son Louis carried on the case. A motion for a new trial was made June 20, 1894, maintaining that the court had erred: (1) in not finding the Yumas negligent, (2) in not finding that Yumas had a tribal organization which enabled them to enter into treaty arrangement, (3) in applying the claimant's language about the faithfulness of Yuma employees to Yumas in general, (4) in not finding that

¹¹Ibid.

Pilot Knob was in the United States, and (5) in finding that the Indians had been on their own ground and could make fire there. More affidavits were added. In one such statement, John Mellon attested that Pilot Knob was not on the Indian reservation, that the Yumas generally knew the circumstances concerning the presence of boats there, and that none of them except Jaeger's two employees had tried to save the boat.

This case began with a petition on April 29, 1891. It was submitted June 30, 1892, but a decision was not rendered until March 5, 1894. At that time the case was dismissed. On June 20, 1894, a motion for a new trial was made. On February 7, 1898, the Court of Claims ruled that it was too late to reopen the case, and that the new evidence did not affect the result. Therefore motion for a new trial was overruled. One last attempt was made January 24, 1910, in the form of a motion for a new trial, but this, too, was overruled.¹² The claim would never be paid.

Paying the attorneys' fees was undoubtedly a burden to Jaeger. On one occasion Jaeger had his nephew telegram William Jaeger in Baltimore for \$75. Jaeger also sold two ranches in 1892. He had instructed James M. Barney to sell the Colorado River ranch for no less than \$6000 cash. Soon

¹²L. J. F. Jaeger v. the U. S. and Yuma Indians.

after that he decided to sell the home ranch at Fort Yuma for \$5500 cash to C. C. Stephen.¹³

Although he was busy in Washington, Jaeger had the opportunity to dine with old acquaintances and to visit government buildings. He seems to have been quite impressed by his visit to the Bureau of Printing and Engraving. Since Jaeger and his friend were the only visitors that day, they were allowed to stand on a platform to look down at the money kept "under lock and key." Here the clerk showed them \$150,000 in currency and over \$100,000 in gold and silver.¹⁴ Jaeger also attended the Church of the Covenant at 18th Street and Connecticut Avenue.

While he was in Washington Jaeger kept in contact with his family in Pennsylvania as well as with his wife and children in California. Jaeger mentions mailing some garden seeds to California and telling the postmaster about his wife and children. When he was in California, Jaeger often lamented that he could not be with his parents, for he realized that he might never see them again. He corresponded with his father and sister Louisa in Hamburg. Often, letters from them would include entreaties for him to come home to stay. He also wrote to his sister Amanda

¹³Jaeger, "Diary 1892."

¹⁴Ibid.

and brothers Samuel and William. William lived in Baltimore and Samuel was a druggist in Reading, Pa.¹⁵

It was in Washington that the end of the eventful life of Don Diego Jaeger came. On June 30, 1892, he died of pneumonia contracted after an appendectomy at Garfield Memorial Hospital. The body of Louis John Frederick Jaeger is buried at St. Johns Evangelical Reformed Lutheran Church in Hamburg, Pennsylvania. He had specified that he be buried there in the family plot atop a high hill overlooking the Schuylkill River.¹⁶

The pioneer apparently died intestate. There was little remaining in his estate other than his lot in "Old Town" San Diego, for he had sold his ferry, mining interests, and ranches before his death. His heirs seem to have made no claim for the lot. In 1920 ownership of

¹⁵Jaeger, "Diary 1875-1880."

¹⁶The full inscription on his gravestone is as follows.

Lewis J. F. Jaeger.
 Son of
 G. F. I. & Mary Jaeger
 Born Oct. 8, 1824
 Died June 30, 1892.
 Aged
 67 Yrs. 8 Mo. 22 Days
 — — —
 Died in Garfield Hospital
 Washington, D. C.
 — — —
 Behold The Pilgrim As He Lies,
 With Glory In His View,
 To Heaven He Lifts His Longing Eyes,
 And Bids The World Adieu.

Lot One in Block 539 of "Old Town" was granted to a M. Hall in a case against the current occupant, Hulda A. Hensley. At that time the property was valued at no more than one hundred dollars.¹⁷

Jaeger's obituary in the Yuma Arizona Sentinel¹⁸ reviewed his success in business and then declared that "Indian depredations, bad investments, unfaithful employees, and untrue friends" had caused much of Jaeger's fortune to be wasted away. The article went on to comment on Jaeger's consistent youthful spirit and the respect that he had from nearly everyone who knew him.

At the time of Jaeger's death his wife and daughter were living at Colton, California. The older son Henry had died recently in Yuma. The surviving son, Louis Jaeger, Jr. would also make his mark in business. Among his accomplishments were owning the Montezuma Hotel in Nogales¹⁹ and managing the San Xavier and Santa Rita hotels in Tucson.²⁰

¹⁷This information was found in the "Petition of Herbert C. Kelly" of San Diego, filed January 30, 1920, in the Recorder's Office of the San Diego County Court House in San Diego, California.

¹⁸Arizona Sentinel (Yuma), July 9, 1892.

¹⁹William J. Colburn, "Reminiscences," as told to Mrs. Edith Kitt at APHS in 1927.

²⁰Charles C. Wheeler, "History and Information of Hotels in Tucson of Early Dates," as told to Mrs. Edith Kitt at APHS, no date.

Perhaps the best known description of Jaeger is that by J. Ross Browne, written in 1864.

Who, for the last dozen years or more, has ferried the military and public across the Colorado?--Don Diego. Who has clothed the naked and fed the hungry of this howling wilderness during all that time?--Don Diego. Who has kept the military arm of the Government from becoming paralyzed for lack of beef, pork, frijoles, and forage; supplied the roads with sustenance for man and beast; kept needy officers and thriftless men in funds? Who but Don Diego? When burning suns of the Colorado wilted every other man down to a state of inanity, who was it that always remained fresh and vigorous, and brimful of enterprise?--The irrespressible, the irresistible Don Diego! I say irresistible advisedly; for his only fault has been an overruling devotion to the fair sex, upon whom he has squandered his money even as the prodigal of old. But he is now the happy husband of a charming Sonoranian lady, Doña Cloena, whose fascinations have at length subdued his erratic heart, and his children are even as the apples of his eyes. Rich in experience, rich in ranches, rich in silver mines, rich in family--long live Don Diego!²¹

²¹J. Ross Browne, Adventure in the Apache Country: A Tour through Arizona and Sonora, with Notes on the Silver Regions of Nevada (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1869), p. 53.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Louis John Frederick Jaeger was a pioneer at an important focal point of southwestern history. "Don Diego" the ferryman not only witnessed the history that was being made, but also participated in much of it, though he doubtless never realized the significance of his work. Since he had always been a determined worker, he must have viewed the challenge he faced merely as a job to be done.

To become a successful businessman in an unsettled region one needed to be adventurous--but more than that, it was necessary for him to possess the determination to keep him going when the novelty of adventure waned. There is no doubt that Louis Jaeger possessed such determination. Not all pioneers performed in the same manner. Some discovered places, temporarily settled there, and then moved on. Others, like Jaeger, were pioneer settlers who remained in the immediate location to contribute to its development.

Though he did not distinguish himself in the early years of his life, the potential and necessary qualities for success were present in this young Pennsylvanian. George Johnson must have noted this, since he chose Jaeger as one of the first members of his company. During his

years of working in machine shops, on bay steamers, and as a member of a ferry company the young adventurer was learning the art of "getting along" with others. He evidently had learned his lesson well, for he was respected and well-liked. Nowhere does one find a personal insult leveled against him, even though there were complaints about his prices and his partners. As a businessman "Don Diego" was always very much aware of the actions of employees and the operation of each enterprise.

The pioneer ferryman was a garrulous fellow, but not a gossip--at least not in his written accounts. He was kind-hearted and perhaps too trustful of his supposed friends, yet he was a shrewd businessman and aware of business opportunities. "Don Diego" was a gracious host and a devoted husband and father. His hard work was often supplemented by luck, and by the same token it was sometimes rewarded by misfortune. In all, it would seem that most of his personal attributes were rather typical for a pioneer settler and businessman.

"Don Diego's" life was indeed an eventful one. He began as a member of a ferry company but in six years became sole owner of an immensely successful commercial ferry operation. Had the man stopped there, he would have been the best-known ferryman of the lower Colorado; however, he elected to involve himself in other business activities. "Don Diego" the ferryman played a role in the settlement of

Arizona by supplying provisions and freighting services to many of the forts. He was associated with the steam navigation of the Colorado and with the building of the Southern Pacific Railroad. This pioneer also possessed the foresight to realize the value of irrigation in present-day Imperial Valley, California, and the Salt River valley of Arizona. By operating a ferry at Yuma Crossing, "Don Diego" Jaeger met almost everyone who passed that way, including surveying parties, miners, soldiers, emigrant families, and other notable persons.

The life of the pioneer might have been an Horatio Alger story, had it ended about fifteen years earlier. The ferryman, like most pioneers, suffered setbacks; however, those of Jaeger's later life were especially disheartening to a man who had achieved so much success. His failure to win the case for payment of his claim against the government was undoubtedly a crushing blow for the man who had done so much for the development of his region. Although he must have experienced anger and frustration, the entrepreneur never complained, for he undoubtedly realized that taking the risks of a forerunner often lead to losses. He died tired and defeated, but no one could take away the accomplishments and contributions of his eventful life as "Don Diego," the ferryman of the Colorado.

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