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Trammel's Trace on Printed Maps of the 19th Century

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Trammel's Trace was a nineteenth century road that traversed East Texas. Recognized today as a historic cartographic feature, this road appeared in different ways on nineteenth century printed published maps over time, and in the mid-to-late nineteenth century was reduced from a route to a fragment. This study is the first to examine the portrayal of the Trace as a historic cartographic feature, how it was presented to the general public, how its portrayal changed over time, and why it appears on the maps at all. In addition, this study is the first to use geographic information systems (GIS) to analyze the presentation of the Trace on printed, published maps.

Introduction

Named for Nicholas Trammel, Trammel’s Trace, Track, or Trail was a nineteenth-century road that connected various towns in East Texas. As described on historical markers, the Trace was “approximately 180 miles long” beginning in “Fulton, Arkansas and continuing to Nacogdoches, Texas” (THC n.d.). It joined with “the Spanish or Mexican Trace connecting early settlements on the Red River with the El Camino Real near Nacogdoches” (THC 2008), ultimately extending “the great Southwest Immigration Road from St. Louis (Missouri) into Texas” (THC 2008). The Trace first appeared as a labeled feature on printed published maps with Hunt and Randel’s 1839 Map of Texas. It is shown as a north-south route connecting Nacogdoches and Jonesboro, Texas. This depiction remained consistent on maps between 1839 and 1845. However, beginning in 1845, the Trace began to change. Instead of a north-south route, it is depicted as a segment, and its path can no longer be followed with any degree of certainty. The temporal and spatial analysis herein illustrates that the portrayal of the Trace changed over time as a result of its role as a feature in the development of the cartographic identity of the new Republic of Texas (ca. 1836-1845). This study contributes to the literature on Trammel’s Trace as the first to examine the portrayal of Trace as a historic cartographic feature, how it was presented to the general public, how its portrayal changed over time, and why it appears on the maps at all. In the summer of 2013 a general search was conducted in the UNT Portal to Texas History and progressively refined. In all, 320 maps were examined for evidence of Trammel’s Trace as a labeled feature. Of those, fifteen editions of five maps published from 1839 to 1872, included the Trace as a labeled feature. These maps are: Hunt, Richard S. and Randel, Jesse F Map of Texas (1839, 1847, 1845); Arrowsmith, John Map of Texas (1841, 1843); Stempfle, G. Karte von Texas (1841); Wilson, James T. A New and Correct Map of Texas (1845); and, Creuzbaur, R. J., De Cordova’s Map of the State of Texas (1849, 1851, 1853, 1854, 1856, 1861, 1867, 1872) (Supplementary Table 1). All of these maps claim to be compiled from, or based on “the most recent surveys” (Wilson 1845) or “records from the General Land Office of Texas” (Creuzbauer 1849). To identify the potential sources for these maps, the digital map collection of the General Land Office of Texas was explored for maps containing Trammel’s Trace as a labeled feature. Twenty one maps were identified (Supplementary Table 2).

Methods

This study is based on maps identified exclusively through the use of digital archives, using map collections available through the University of North Texas (UNT) Portal to Texas History and the Texas General Land Office. To locate nineteenth century printed maps of the Republic and State of Texas, in the
printed maps from the Republic and State of Texas (Figure 1). The second compilation employs maps from the Texas General Land Office (Figure 2). A comparison of these compilations makes it possible to identify divergence between the fifteen nineteenth-century printed published maps and their possible sources.

The following discussion focuses upon the fifteen printed maps that contain Trammel’s Trace as a labeled feature. These maps, including original and subsequent editions (where applicable), are discussed in chronological order. Many were published in conjunction with guide books to the Republic and State of Texas and in atlases published in the United States and abroad.

**Results**

In 1839, Richard S. Hunt and Jesse F. Randel published a *Map of Texas, Compiled from Surveys*. This map was published with their *Guide to the Republic of Texas: Consisting of a brief Outline of the History of Its Settlement: A General View of the Surface of the Country; Its Climate, Soil, Productions; Rivers, Counties, Towns and Internal Improvements; The Colonization and Land Laws; List of Courts and Judicial Officers; Tariff and Ports of Entry &c. Accompanied by a New and Correct Map*. Their efforts were supported by the General Land Office and the Republic of Texas, and this is signed by multiple dignitaries (facsimile signatures).

Trammel’s Trace appears on this map as ‘Trammel’s Trail’. This label appears north of Nacogdoches, between Nacogdoches and Cherokee Cross and forms part of the border between Nacogdoches and Harrison counties. The label appears only once, and beyond Cherokee Cross the trail continues north from Nacogdoches in a slightly sinuous route to Jonesboro. Southeast of Jonesboro, there is an unlabeled route that diverges and connects to Clarksville, continuing eastward to Lost Prairie and La Grange. Fulton is on this map, but is not connected to any route.

Hunt and Randel’s 1839 map was frequently copied and translated, with or without original credit being given. The *Karte von Texas*, published by G. Stempfle (1841), may have been published with a translation of Hunt and Randel’s *Guide to the Republic of Texas*, specifically for German immigrants. This map was the first that claimed to be based on original surveys from the General Land Office and the Republic of Texas, and is signed by multiple dignitaries (facsimile signatures).

Trammel’s Trace was identified as the route between Nacogdoches and Cherokee Cross, with a northern connection to Jonesboro, on the Arrowsmith map. This route is consistent on the 1843 edition, with no changes being made to Trammel’s Trail, or any other routes through East Texas.

By 1845 the density of routes increased dramatically to the north and northeast of Nacogdoches compared to those depicted on Hunt and Randel’s 1839 *Map of Texas*. However, despite growth in the transportation networks, only one segment continued to be labeled Trammel’s Trail. Trammel’s Trail was identified as the route between Nacogdoches and Henderson. Hunt and Randel republished this map in 1847 with no...
Figure 1. Reconstruction of Trammel’s Trace routes from printed published maps.
Figure 2. Reconstruction of Trammel’s Trace routes from cadastral maps.
Robert Creuzbaur, a surveyor and draftsman, worked for the General Land Office of Texas in the 1840s as a mapmaker (Ristow 1985:459). In the records of the Land Office, thirty-six maps that date from 1847 to 1880 bear his name. Creuzbaur worked with J. De Cordova, a land speculator and promoter, to compile and publish a new map of the State of Texas. Creuzbaur was the only cartographer among those discussed so far who worked for the General Land Office of Texas as both a surveyor and mapmaker, giving him experience not only with the territory being mapped, but also with the records of the Land Office itself. In 1848 he was commissioned by J. De Cordova to compile a map of Texas. Originally published in 1849, J. De Cordova’s Map of the State of Texas Compiled from the records of the General Land Office of the State by Robert Creuzbaur remained in publication through 1872. The map was published and sold as a pocket map that folded to fit between the covers of a small book (Ristow 1985: 313). This map, like the Hunt and Randel and Arrowsmith maps, bears the seal of the General Land Office, and the State of Texas. The map also bears signed statements supporting the accuracy of the map and its sources from the General Land Office.

We the undersigned Senators and Representatives from the State of Texas do hereby certify that we have carefully examined J. De Cordova’s map of the State of Texas compiled by R. Creuzbaur from the records of the General Land Office of Texas and have no hesitation in saying that no map could surpass this in accuracy and fidelity.

It has delineated upon it every county in the State, its towns, rivers, and streams and we cordially recommend it to every person who desires correct geographical information of our state. To the persons desirous of visiting Texas it will be invaluable.

Trammel’s Trace appears on the 1849-1856 editions of this map but is shown only as a segment that is not connected to any other routes, serving only as the border between Rusk and Panola counties. In the 1861 edition significant changes occurred that remained consistent through 1872. On these later maps, Trammel’s Trace appears to originate in northwestern Nacogdoches County and proceed northeast to Mt. Enterprise. From Mt. Enterprise it extends north to Pine Hill, on the border of Rusk and Panola counties. From Pine Hill it completes the county border, paralleling and eventually crossing Martin’s Creek, and terminates at the border of Harrison County. The label Trammel’s Trace is found between two place names, in this case Mt. Enterprise and Pine Hill.

Trammel’s Trace on Promotion and Atlas Maps - Compilation

Routes from the Hunt and Randel, Stempfle, Arrowsmith, Wilson, and Creuzbaur maps were georeferenced and digitized on a current county map of East Texas (Figure 1). The Hunt and Randel, Stempfle, and Arrowsmith routes produce a series of roughly parallel paths connecting Jonesboro directly to Nacogdoches. However, Trammel’s Trace on the Wilson map (1845) differs dramatically from these three presentations. The Wilson route extends from Nacogdoches and veers north and east passing midway between Jefferson and Port Caddo, where it turns sharply west to connect with Clarksville and Jonesboro. Along this route the label Trammel’s Trace appears between Nacogdoches and Marshall. Finally, the route as depicted by Creuzbaur is largely confined to the county line between Rusk and Panola counties, where the Trace exists only as a segment.

These maps claimed to be “based on the most recent surveys” and with the exception of the Wilson map, all asserted that they were compiled with the use of records from the General Land Office of Texas. Established in 1836, the General Land Office of Texas took charge of all land records in 1837 and assumed control of all public (vacant) lands (TGLO 2010:9). To identify maps that include Trammel’s Trace, Trail, or Track as a labeled feature a general search was conducted within the digital map collection of the General Land Office for maps including those placenames. Twenty-one maps were found which may have served as sources for the printed maps.

The location of Trammel’s Trace on these maps as a labeled feature varies widely.
The Trace appears as a series of disconnected segments of varying lengths on the Bowie County (1840, 1841, 1897-1931), Cass County (1848) and Titus County (1858) maps. The only map on which the Trace is indicated as a route to Fulton is the 1838 map of the boundary between the Republic of Texas and the United States. Even here Trammel's Trace is depicted as a segment accompanied by the note “To Fulton” (1838).

None of the maps from the General Land Office support the depiction of the Trace as a complete north-south route directly connecting Nacogdoches and Jonesboro. However, these maps illustrate a consistent route from Mount Enterprise to Jefferson, and demonstrate the use of the Trace as a county boundary line separating first Nacogdoches and Harrison counties, and later Rusk and Panola counties (Figure 2).

**Discussion**

Early presentations of Trammel's Trace on printed maps are not entirely consistent with their cited sources, documents from the Texas General Land Office. Hunt and Randel (1839), Arrowsmith (1841, 1843), and Stempfle (1841), illustrate the Trace as a relatively direct north-south route connecting Nacogdoches to Jonesboro, a depiction that is not supported by maps from the Texas General Land Office. However, the Trace's use as an early county line separating Nacogdoches and Harrison counties is confirmed. In later editions of the Hunt and Randel maps (1845, 1847), the Trace connects Nacogdoches to Henderson, a route that is not confirmed by maps from the General Land Office. On the Wilson map (1845) the Trace emerges from Nacogdoches and terminates at Marshall following the current Rusk-Panola county line (Figure 1). In 1843, Trammel's Trace was part of the border between Rusk, Harrison, and Nacogdoches counties and this is reflected on Wilson's map, demonstrating a direct link from his map to source maps from the Texas General Land Office (Figure 2). Finally, on the Creuzbaur maps (1849-1872) Trammel's Trace is identified as part of the Rusk- Panola county line. The Trace was formally incorporated as part of this border in 1846 (Ford 1846:1).

On later maps of Texas, including the Wilson and Creuzbaur maps, Trammel's Trace is identified as part of a county line with the label nested between two placenames. As the road network became more dense it became difficult to determine whether Trammel's Trace was actually a continuous route, connecting a variety of places, or if it was a single segment of a longer route. Records from the General Land Office support the depiction of the Trace as a county line, but not as a continuous route. Maps from the General Land Office identify small segments in both Cass (1848) and Bowie (1841-1862) counties as Trammel’s Trace but these are isolated and not connected to any larger route. While these segments appear on maps produced by the General Land Office, they are not included in any of the maps of the Republic, or the State of Texas. Trammel's Trace is most consistently depicted on maps from the General Land Office (1841 – 1895) as a route connecting Mt. Enterprise, Tatum, and Jefferson, with the southern half of this route forming the county line between Rusk and Panola counties.

**Conclusion**

From 1839 to 1872, Trammel’s Trace appears on printed maps of the Republic and State of Texas. The label Trammel’s Trace consistently appears between two place names indicating that the Trace may have been a segment of a larger route. The north-south route depicted on early maps of the Republic including Hunt and Randel (1839), Arrowsmith (1841), and Stempfle (1841), was a Spanish road that appeared on Spanish maps as early as 1807 with Jose Maria Puelles’ manuscript map, Provincia of Texas. Given that this road was used and mapped by the Spanish, why any part of it would bear the name “Trammel’s Trace” is an open question. The explanation lies in the nature of printed maps and the development of the cartographic identity of the Republic of Texas. Hunt and Randel’s Map of Texas in 1839 was the first map of the Republic to claim authority based upon records from the General Land Office. It was developed as part of a guidebook to the Republic for potential settlers and was intended to promote the Republic. Although it illustrates some physical features, it is primarily a political map showing the borders of the Republic and early counties. While the cartographers may have intended the name Trammel’s Trace to apply to only a segment of an immigrant’s road, as supported by sources from the General Land Office, this label has been interpreted to encompass the entire route from Nacogdoches to Jonesboro. Finally, although segments of Trammel’s Trace appear on maps of Bowie and Cass counties from the General Land Office these segments do not appear on any of the fifteen printed atlas and promotional maps identified in this study. If representative of a longer route through East Texas, possibly connecting to Fulton, the route would likely have appeared on published promotional maps. Instead, nineteenth-century mapmakers chose to associate Trammel’s Trace with an older Spanish road. This attribution of a known road to an early Anglo settler helped to solidify the identity of the new Republic and disassociate this important local resource from Texas’ Spanish past.
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