

Edward “Ned” Fitzgerald Beale (February 4, 1822 – April 22, 1893)

Beale was a national figure in 19th century America. He was naval officer, military general, explorer, frontiersman, Indian affairs superintendent, California rancher, diplomat, and friend of Kit Carson, Buffalo Bill Cody and Ulysses S. Grant. He fought in the Mexican-American War, emerging as a hero of the Battle of San Pasqual in 1846.

He achieved national fame in 1848 in carrying to the east the first gold samples from California, contributing to the gold rush. He surveyed and built a wagon road that many settlers used to move to the West, and which became part of Route 66 and the route for the Transcontinental railroad. As California's first Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Beale helped charter a humanitarian policy towards Native Americans in the 1850s. He also founded the Tejon Ranch in central California, the largest private landholding in the United States, and became a millionaire several times over.

He received appointments from five U.S. Presidents: Andrew Jackson appointed him to Naval School, Millard Fillmore appointed him Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California and Nevada, James Buchanan appointed him to survey a wagon road from New Mexico to California, Abraham Lincoln appointed him Surveyor General of California and Nevada, and Ulysses S. Grant appointed him Ambassador to Austria–Hungary

Ned Beale was born in Washington, D.C. His father, George Beale, who was a paymaster in the U.S. Navy, had earned a Congressional Medal for Valor in the War of 1812. His mother, Emily, was the daughter of Commodore Thomas Truxtun of the U.S. Navy. Ned was a student at Georgetown University when, at the solicitation of his widowed mother, President Jackson appointed him to the Naval School in Philadelphia. From 1837 to 1842, Beale was an acting midshipman on naval ships that sailed to Russia, Brazil and the West Indies. He graduated from the Naval School as a midshipman in 1842, and sailed for two years in Europe and South America. In 1845 he was assigned to the squadron of Captain Robert F. Stockton, who was an intimate of presidents. Beale sailed with Stockton's squadron to Texas, where Stockton met with the Texas Congress, which accepted annexation by the United States.

In 1846 He sailed with Stockton to Honolulu, and then to California. Hostilities with Mexico had already begun when the vessel reached Monterey, California on July 20, 1846. After reaching San Diego, California, Stockton dispatched Beale to serve with the land forces. Beale and a small body of men joined General Stephen W. Kearny's column just before December 6, 1846. After the Mexican Army surrounded the small American force and threatened to destroy it, Beale and two other men (his Delaware Indian servant and Kit Carson) crept through the Mexican lines and made their way to San Diego for reinforcements.

Within the next two years, Beale made six more journeys across the country. On the second of these (July–September 1848), he crossed Mexico in disguise to bring the federal government proof of California's gold. After the fourth journey he married Pennsylvania Representative Samuel Edwards' daughter, Mary, on June 27, 1849. They had three children: Mary (1852-1925), Emily (1854-?), and Truxtun (1856-1936). Beale was promoted to Lieutenant in 1850. He resigned from the Navy in 1851.

In 1857, President James Buchanan appointed Beale to survey and build a 1,000 mile wagon road from Fort Defiance, New Mexico to the Colorado River, on the border between Arizona and California. The survey also incorporated an experiment using camels, first proposed by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis four years earlier. Beale took his Camel Corps, comprising 25 camels imported from Tunis, as pack animals during this expedition and on another in 1858 through 1859 to extend the road from Fort Smith, Arkansas to the Colorado River. His camel driver was Hadji Ali. The camels were capable of traveling for days without water, carried much heavier loads than mules, and could thrive on forage that mules wouldn't touch. But the camels scared horses and mules, and the Army declined to continue the experiment. Nevertheless, the wagon road Beale built became a popular immigrant trail during the 1860s and 1870s, and it was this survey which marked out for the first time a practicable highway along the 35th parallel that has been used from that day to this. The general route of the Beale Wagon Road was followed by U.S. Route 66, the Sante Fe Railway, and Interstate 40.

CALIFORNIA Explorers

Edward Fitzgerald Beale

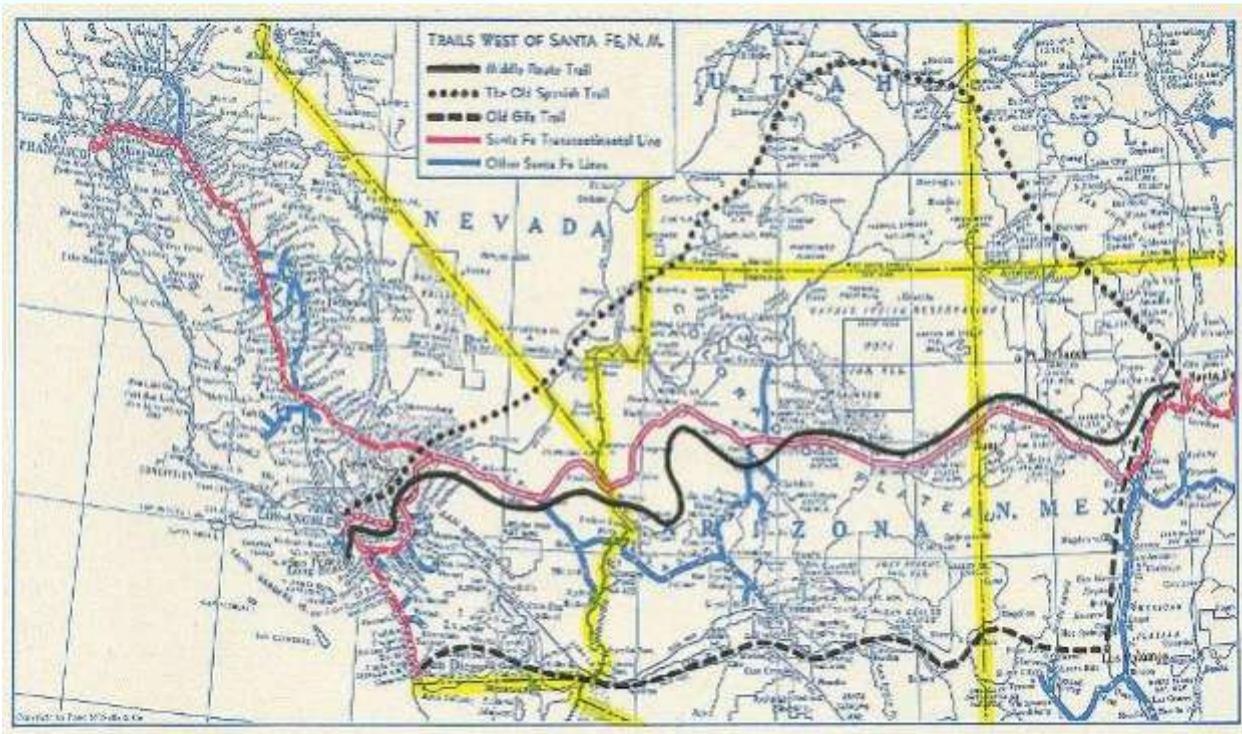


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Legacy

- Tejon Ranch, Bakersfield, California.
- Ash Hill, Hyattsville, Maryland
- Beale Air Force Base, a United States Air Force base in California.
- Beale Street (San Francisco)
- U.S. Route 66
- Beale Street and monument in Kingman, Arizona, and Beale's Springs nearby.
- Beale Memorial Library, Bakersfield, California.
- Beale Mountains in California.
- USS Beale (DD-40), a *Paulding*-class destroyer ship of the U.S. Navy.
- USS Beale (DD-471), a *Fletcher*-class destroyer ship of the U.S. Navy.

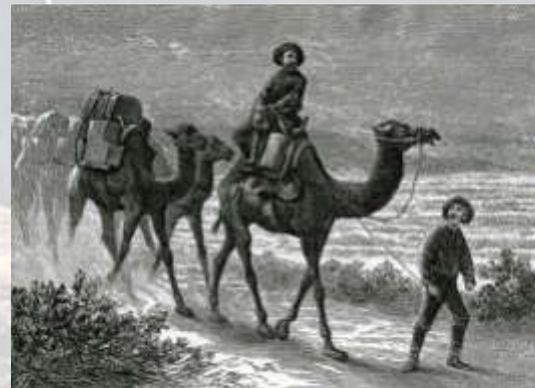
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Portions of the original Beale wagon road are still visible.

Of this road, Beale wrote: "... It is the shortest (route) from our western frontier by 300 miles, being nearly directly west. It is the most level, our wagons only double-teaming once in the entire distance, and that at a short hill, and over a surface heretofore unbroken by wheels or trail on any kind. It is well-watered! Our greatest distance without water at any time being twenty miles ... It crosses the great desert (The Mojave) which must be crossed by any road to California at its narrowest point."

"In opening this highway," wrote Gerald Thompson, "Beale joined the small group of explorers who left an enduring mark on the American West during the nineteenth century."



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In 1861, Beale was appointed by President Abraham Lincoln as Surveyor General of California and Nevada. He had an important passage named after him due to his widening of a cut used by the Butterfield Overland Mail, a stagecoach that operated mail between St. Louis, Missouri and San Francisco. In 1862, he dispatched a crew of Chinese workers to widen an 1858 cut, which also reduced the climb by 50 feet. Beale's Cut, as it was known, lasted as a transportation passage through the modern day Newhall Pass area until the construction of the Newhall Tunnel was completed in 1910.

At the urging of Beale, Fort Tejon was established by the U.S. Army in 1854, to protect and control the Indians who were living on the Sebastian Indian Reservation, and to protect both the Indians and white settlers from raids by other Indian groups of the desert regions to the east. Fort Tejon was abandoned in 1864. In 1865 and 1866, Beale purchased the Mexican land grants which now comprise the 270,000 acre Tejon Ranch.

When the U.S. Army sold its camels, Beale purchased some of them and kept them at his ranch. Tejon Ranch is the largest private landholding in California. Others were turned loose in the desert and alternately domesticated and hunted. To this day, a law remains on the books of Kingman AZ. making it illegal for them to be hunted within city limits.