The National Survey of
Historic Sites and Buildings

THE
SANTA FE TRAIL

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
To die anywhere seems hard, but to heave the last breath on the burning, desolate prairie seems hard indeed.

--Lewis Garrard
THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

Theme XV
Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries 1830-1898

* * * * * * *

THE SANTA FE TRAIL
(subtheme)

1963

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Stewart L. Udall, Secretary

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Conrad L. Wirth, Director
The distance from Independence to Santa Fe may be divided into three stages. The first, from the starting point to Council Grove is about a hundred and fifty miles, and passes through the country of the Shawnees, Caws, and other friendly Indians, and by the roadside is seen the occasional cabin of a frontier settler. The second stage is from Council Grove to Fort Union, some six hundred miles, which lies across the immense plains of the interior of the continent, and is roamed over by the Comanches, Apaches, Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Pawnees, Kiowahs, and other Indian tribes, and is the home of immense herds of buffaloes and antelopes. The country is generally level, with an occasional roll, and bare of wood, except the few cottonwood trees found along the streams. Throughout all this region water is scarce. The third stage brings us to Santa Fe through a mountainous and partially settled country, covered with a growth of inferior pine timber, and tolerably well watered.

W. W. H. Davis,
El Gringo, or New Mexico
and Her People.

Danger, privation, heat, and cold are equally ineffectual in checking their career of enterprise and adventure.

Augustus Storrs,
November 1824.

And the blue soldier-mountains walk with you as you go

Down the sand-gray roads of New Mexico.

S. Omar Barker.
PREFACE

"The Santa Fe Trail" is a subtheme of Theme XV, "Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries, 1830-1898", of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. The National Survey is a resumption of the Historic Sites Survey, begun in 1937 under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935. During World War II and the Korean War, it was necessary to suspend these studies. The Survey has now been resumed as part of the National Park Service MISSION 66 program.

When completed the Survey will make recommendations to the Director of the National Park Service and the Secretary of the Interior as to the sites of exceptional value that commemorate and illustrate the history of the United States. This will assist the National Park Service in contributing to the Nationwide Recreation Plan, including sites which may be administered by the National Park Service to fill in gaps in historical and archeological interpretation within the National Park System. It will also recommend and encourage programs of historical and archeological preservation being carried out by state and local agencies.

The purpose of this study is to assemble data on historic sites believed to be of exceptional value in commemorating or illustrating the history of the Santa Fe Trail. It early became apparent that the historical theme of Westward Expansion was too vast to be adequately treated within a single study. The theme was therefore divided into a number of separate subthemes, of which "The Santa Fe Trail" is one.

Part I is a narrative treatment of the theme, designed not as a definitive study but as a brief summary from which the general reader may obtain
an over-all view of the subject. Part II evaluates sites believed to possess exceptional value in illustrating or commemorating the theme, together with brief descriptions of sites of importance but not of exceptional value.

The study was prepared by historians of the National Park Service, who in 1958 and 1962 visited each of the sites treated. William E. Brown, Southwestern Regional Office, Santa Fe, New Mexico, served as coordinating historian and wrote the historical narrative. Ray H. Mattison, Midwestern Regional Office, Omaha, Nebraska, was contributing historian. It should be noted that Mr. Mattison prepared a preliminary report on the Santa Fe Trail based on his 1953 field survey. Both his report and field work were extremely helpful in the preparation of the present study. Two other contributing historians should be listed: Roy E. Appleman of the Service's Washington Office, who accompanied the writer throughout the 1962 field work, bringing his recognized authority to bear on the site work; and Robert M. Utley, whose exhaustive work on the historical and geographic relationships of Fort Union to the Santa Fe Trail, as well as his constant counsel, were of great assistance. Original artwork was prepared specifically for this study by Charles A. Norgenthaler of St. Louis. Cartographic draftsmen Mary B. Huey and Clyde Arquero, of the Southwestern Regional Office, prepared the cover design and special maps. Clerk Stenographer Ortencia Gonzales did exemplary work in preparing and proofing the stencils.

After completion, the study was presented to the Consulting Committee for the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. The Committee consists of Dr. Waldo G. Leland, Director of the American Council of
Learned Societies; Dr. S. K. Stevens, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Dr. Louis B. Wright, Folger-Shakespearean Library; Mr. Earl H. Reed, American Institute of Architects; Dr. Richard H. Howland, Head Curator, Civil History, Smithsonian Institution; Mr. Eric Gugler, American Scenic and Historical Preservation Society; Dr. J. O. Brew, Committee for the Recovery of Archeological Remains; Mr. Frederick Johnson, Robert S. Peabody Foundation for American Archeology; Mr. Robert Garvey, Jr., Executive Director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and Dr. Ralph H. Gabriel, Sterling Professor of History Emeritus, Yale University, and Professor of American Studies, American University.

The over-all Survey, as well as the theme study which follows, is under the general direction of John O. Littleton, Chief, National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, who works under the general supervision of Herbert E. Kahler, Chief, Division of History and Archeology, of the National Park Service.

Conrad L. Wirth
Director
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work of the National Survey profits from the experience and knowledge of many persons and organizations. Every effort is made to solicit the considered opinion of as many qualified people as possible in reaching final selection of the most significant sites. Assistance in the preparation of this study from the following is acknowledged:

Mrs. Kitty Shiskin and Miss Ruth Rambo of the Research Library of the Museum of New Mexico; Dr. Myra Ellen Jenkins, Archivist, New Mexico State Records Center; Dr. Bruce Ellis, Associate Director of History for the Museum of New Mexico; Dr. Don Danker, Archivist, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln; Dr. George R. Brooks, Director, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis; Mr. E. E. Newacheck, President, Fort Larned Historical Society, Fort Larned, Kansas; Dr. Frank Haucke, former President, Kansas State Historical Society, of Council Grove, Kansas; Mr. James Anderson, Native Sons of Kansas City, Missouri; Mr. W. Howard Adams, Jackson County Historical Society; Department of Agriculture, especially Area Conservationist Bill A. Bothwell of Las Vegas, New Mexico, who made the Soil Conservation Service aerial maps in northeast New Mexico available; New Mexico Department of Game and Fish; Mr. Nyle H. Miller, Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; Mr. Reginald Strutz, Boonslick Historical Society, Boonville, Missouri; Dr. William J. Scarborough, President, Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas; State Historian Agnes Wright Spring of the State Historical Society of Colorado; Mr. J. D. Haley, Assistant Archivist, University of Oklahoma; Curator A. R. Mitchell, Baca House Museum, Trinidad, Colorado; Superintendent Homer Hastings, Fort Union National Monument; Staff of the Denver Public Library, Western History Department; Library of Congress; National Archives.

Owners of sites visited were uniformly cooperative, and the following private parties with interest in the Santa Fe Trail were especially helpful: Mrs. Margaret Ward, Cimarron, New Mexico; State Senator W. C. Wheatley of Clayton, New Mexico, President of the Santa Fe Trail Highway Association; Mr. John Wheatley of Clayton, brother of the Senator; Mr. Fred Lambert, Ute Park, New Mexico; Mrs. Grace Collier, Hays, Kansas, Executive Secretary, Santa Fe Trail Highway Association; Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Joyce, Ulysses, Kansas; Mr. Robert Frizzell, owner of Fort Larned; Mr. Don A. McNiel, Chairman of the Council Grove Historic Sites Committee; Mr. Warren Gilman, Council Grove Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Roe Groom of Council Grove, local authority on the trail; and Mr. E. V. Wood and Mayor Roger Martin of Baldwin City, Kansas.
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PART I

A SUMMARY OF THE THEME

On January 29, 1822, four trail-worn men rode into Franklin, Missouri. Forty-eight days before, they had left San Miguel--50 miles southeast of Santa Fe.¹ In their packs were the fruits of their journey to New Mexico. As townspeople gathered to welcome Captain William Becknell and his companions, the packs were opened. Not the furs of an Indian trader spilled out, but heavy rawhide sacks. One of the traders held high a sack and slashed its thongs. Silver pesos tumbled to the ground and rolled into the gutter, and the eyes of onlookers widened.²

Before those coins were gathered up, news of the first successful Missouri-to-Santa Fe trading expedition was already on its way to the adventuring, enterprising men who would soon throng the trail to the City of Holy Faith. Romance and profit would keynote the Santa Fe Trail throughout its existence. No ordinary man, unused to dreams, would have slashed those thongs. The one who did knew well the drama of the moment. In that act is summed up much that lent and still lends to the Santa Fe Trail and its namesake city an air of El Dorado. It was partly this that lured the early traders to gamble their lives and their investments against distance, terrain, weather, hostile Indians, and the caprice of Mexican customs officials.

But the trail was more than an escape valve for high-spirited men,

or the route by which the mule came to Missouri. More even than a commercial and cultural link between the borderlands of the United States and Mexico. Manifest Destiny would travel this trail. For at its end was an empire of mesa and mountain, of canyon and river, of desert and vast distance. An empire ripe for picking. Thus did the trail become a military highway clogged with the freight and the banners of war.

After the Army of the West had done its bloodless duty, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had sealed the conquest, this empire had to be administered and protected and provisioned. The men and the material for this gigantic task came over the Santa Fe Trail. For two decades after the Mexican War the Santa Fe Trail held undisputed position as trunkline to the Southwest. It was the road and the tie by which civilization and sovereignty filtered into this wild expanse, tamed it, and fused it to the Nation. All that followed the Mexican War on this trail—gold rush, Civil War, Indian war, stagecoach, emigrant train, and the constant plod of oxen hauling tandem freighters—was part of this task of consolidating the conquest of 1846-48.

The railroad came, pushing the eastern terminus of the trail ever westward, until finally by 1880 there was no more trail. Then faded into legend the bearded trader and all that fabulous crew that had followed him across desert and mountain and plain to Spanish Santa Fe. Something grand was lost thereby, days of adventure and great accomplishment gone forever. But the product of those days is with us yet, a booming subcontinent—the modern Southwest. And this is the true significance of the Santa Fe Trail, the first great trail of the West.
Before Becknell

William Becknell would later be canonized as the founder of the Santa Fe trade and the father of the Santa Fe Trail. But many men had crossed Kansas before Becknell. Kansas was Quivira to the Spaniards, a land of fable conjured up by Indians who knew the Spanish love of gold. Coronado ventured there in 1541, doubtless tramping portions of the later trail on his disappointed return. Other Spaniards, robed and holy men, sought souls in Quivira but found martyrdom there. Still others risked scalps to trade with the wild plains Indians.

Later, Frenchmen from the Illinois country sighted the silver peaks that bounded the western plains. They were drawn toward that jagged horizon by prospects of trade and by a wanderlust that ever goaded the sons of Gaul in the New World. About 1700, random Frenchmen began descending from the mountains to the Rio Grande towns. That long ago they knew Taos and Santa Fe, remote outposts of Spain's imperium. They found out that the New Mexicans wanted to trade. For under Spain's restrictive colonial system, New Mexico was forbidden to manufacture its own goods, and those brought by burro over the Chihuahua Trail were the dregs of European manufacture, and they sold at fantastic prices.

The scent of profits wafted across the plains, and French traders followed it clear to Santa Fe. But not for long. Spain feared for her borderlands. The French and their Indian allies spelled danger. And the merchants of Old Mexico wanted no competition on the Rio Grande. Even the hardy French viewed confiscation of their goods and indefinite residence in Spanish calabozos as poor rewards for the journey across
Indian-infested plains. So the trade languished into occasional smuggling, and the Santa Fe Trail—already venerable—remained unborn. Imperial rivalries had made the plains a rampart instead of a roadway.

But now began a series of world-wide convulsions that would confound cartographers for two-thirds of a century, and eventually shatter all artificial barriers between the Missouri and Rio Grande frontier. The trouble started in 1754 when Britain and France clashed over possession of the trans-Allegheny country. By 1803—after wars, revolutions, Napoleon, and periodic treaty conferences in Paris to sift the wreckage—the map of North America was dominated by a new colossus that stretched from the Atlantic shore to indefinite boundaries abutting the Rockies and the nearly vacant northern provinces of New Spain.

By its purchase of Louisians, the United States had leaped across the Mississippi to a vantage point on the roof of the continent. When men of imagination shaded their eyes and looked westward from that point, the horizon was marked by blue Pacific waters. Jefferson had such vision, Lewis and Clark would merely confirm what he had already seen on the globe in his study.

Even before Lewis and Clark had completed their epic journey, the first ripple of official American interest in the Southwest was lapping at the frontier of New Spain. In July 1806, Lt. Zebulon Montgomery Pike and 22 companions set forth from Belle Fontaine near St. Louis. Pike's mission was to explore the newly acquired territory of the United States extending southwestward toward the Spanish borders, to conciliate the Indian tribes living there, and to find out what he could about New Mexico
and the best route there. The ramifications of his mission and the
caracter and motives of the man who sent him, Gen. James Wilkinson,
have provided generations of historians with food for speculation. That
is of no concern here. But the journey and its results directly af-
lected the Santa Fe Trail. Some writers believe that Pike should receive
the greatest share of the credit for opening the trail. That he con-
sidered this an important part of his mission is proven by a report he
dispatched to Wilkinson on October 2, 1806, while camped in Pawnee
lands. After noting that the road to Santa Fe was easy thus far, he
concluded: "I would pledge my life . . . for the successful march of a
reasonable body of troops to New Mexico."1

Pike planted the American flag on the Great Plains for the first
time. He mapped the Arkansas River from near Great Bend to the head-
waters in the Rockies, following in part the later Mountain Branch of
the Santa Fe Trail. After months of winter suffering in the mountains,
the party reached the upper Rio Grande where they invited capture by
the Spaniards. Pike and party were taken to Santa Fe, then shunted
south to Chihuahua, and eventually, after many adventures, escorted
across Texas and released at Nagadoches in June 1807.

While in New Mexico, Pike closely observed political and commercial
conditions there. His narrative, published in 1810, gave Americans
their first inside view of this Spanish province. They beheld a land
and a people potentially rich, but bowed down by tyranny, isolation, and

1. Quoted in Isaac J. Cox, "Opening the Santa Fe Trail," Missouri
Historical Review, XXV (October, 1930), 51.

5-I
ignorance. A few people, the ricos, were very rich; but most of New Mexico's 40,000 inhabitants were condemned to live in poverty. Sheep raising was the principal industry. Stretching along the Rio Grande valley from El Paso to Taos were great ranchos employing armies of herdsmen in charge of millions of sheep. Mining was the second industry—copper, gold, and silver. The New Mexican government was headed by the great landholders who owned the ranchos. These leaders were often corrupt and looked upon public office as a means to increase their own wealth at the expense of the poor. Commercial activity was dead except for an occasional caravan from Chihuahua. Here was a land with money at the top, but no place to spend it—a land starved for the manufactures of more advanced countries. Pike was quick to note the possibilities of a competitive overland trade from Missouri to Santa Fe.

This description would lure American traders toward profitable adventure in New Mexico, by way of the Santa Fe Trail. More profoundly, Pike's account was the first of many Mexican journals written by men steeped in the blessings of Anglo-Saxon liberty. In damning the Old World despotism that chained the Mexican populace, these writers planted the seeds of morality and missionary obligation in American foreign policy. A generation hence these ideas would be used to justify the Mexican War.¹

Spain's reaction to the exploratory mission of Lieutenant Pike predated his approach to the Spanish borders. A party of 600 dragoons had attempted to intercept him far inside the Louisiana Territory. And though

¹. See Hiram Martin Chittenden, A History of the American Fur Trade in the Far West, II (Stanford, 1954), 485-88, for a typical 19th-century expression of this theme.
Pike himself was treated with civility by the Spaniards who captured him later, their suspicions and fears of the United States were only confirmed by his presence among them. A paradox was here--Spain, able to muster 600 horsemen who marched with impunity far into United States territory; Pike and his ragged crew, begging capture in the wilderness. At the time it was difficult to imagine Pike the herald of the future, the dragoons the symbol of a dying empire.

The first major American trading expedition to Santa Fe was in 1812. By this time Pike's narrative was common parlance in Missouri, and rumors of Mexican revolt promised the end of Spanish trade restrictions. But the rumor was premature, and the traders were jailed in Chihuahua. Other expeditions in 1815-17 and 1819 met confiscation, imprisonment, and banishment from Spanish territory.

As they had blocked the French earlier, the Spaniards now blocked the Americans. Their reclusive policy--aided by geography and abetted by intense suspicion of American designs--seemed the final, negative answer to the Santa Fe Trade. But the failure of these early American traders was not total. They had rediscovered the geographic and economic feasibility of commerce across the prairies. The only barrier was political. That last barrier was swept away on September 27, 1821, when, after three centuries of Spanish rule, Mexico proclaimed its independence.¹

¹. The foregoing narrative of the trail's early history is based on Duffus, The Santa Fe Trail; Chittenden, A History of the American Fur Trade . . . , II, Chapters XXVII and XXVIII; The Southwestern Expedition of Zebulon M. Pike, edited by Milo Milton Quaife, (Chicago, 1925); and Max L. Moorhead, New Mexico's Royal Road (Norman, 1958).
Trail Breakers.

At least three American trading expeditions were within striking distance of New Mexico in the late autumn of 1821. All eventually reached Santa Fe. But the one led by Capt. William Becknell was the most important to the history of the Santa Fe Trail. For Becknell was the first to stumble upon the new state of affairs in New Mexico. He was the first to realize the import of this change and to follow up with a regular trading expedition to Santa Fe.¹

In the June 25, 1821, columns of the Missouri Intelligencer, Becknell had proposed "An article for the government of a company of men destined to the westward for the purpose of trading for Horses and Mules, and catching Wild Animals of every description." His plan called for up to 70 men to equip themselves and join in the purchase of trade goods, each man's share of profits to be proportionate to his original contribution. Those who signed the article would be bound by rules of good order, to be enforced by the elected officers of the company. This organization of joint proprietors became the prototype for the early caravans to Santa Fe.²

On September 1, 1821, the Becknell expedition departed Arrow Rock just west of Franklin, Missouri. At Fort Osage the men wrote last letters, then left "the confines of civilization." Heading west-southwest,

Zebulon Pike, whose 1806-07 expedition to Santa Fe and Chihuahua influenced American traders to look to northern Mexico for profitable adventure. Denver Public Library Western History Collection.

Senator Thomas Hart Benton, proponent of a road to Santa Fe, and instigator of the 1825-27 survey of the route. Library of Congress.

Theodore R. Davis' impression of Santa Fe. Museum of New Mexico
Becknell's company reached the Arkansas River on September 24. They followed its course toward the Rockies and on October 21 came to the "forks of the river." They took the left fork, perhaps the Purgatoire River, then climbed into the mountains, where for 2 days they struggled against high cliffs and boulder fields. This was doubtless Raton Pass. Finally they descended to level prairies, where 2 more days' travel brought them to the Canadian Fork. Continuing south, they met Mexican troops, who hailed them as brothers in the blessed state of liberty, then escorted them through San Miguel to Santa Fe.

It was November 16, 1821. The people of Santa Fe, still in fiesta mood over Mexican independence, welcomed the Americans warmly. Their goods sold at what Josiah Gregg later called "a very handsome profit." Becknell related that the governor gave him an audience and expressed the hope that Americans would keep up their intercourse with New Mexico, even emigrate there. With such an invitation, Becknell did not dally. By December 13 he was on his way back to Missouri. Just 48 days later he arrived at Franklin and immediately began organizing a second expedition.

On May 22, 1822, Becknell again crossed the Missouri at Arrow Rock and, with 20 companions carrying $3,000 worth of trading goods in three wagons, struck for Santa Fe. Becknell's second expedition is noteworthy for three reasons: It was organized and carried merchandise solely for the Santa Fe trade--no trapping or Indian trading was contemplated; it used wagons for the first time on the trail; and it pioneered the Cimarron Cutoff between the Arkansas River and San Miguel--a shorter
more level route than the one through Raton Pass. It was in fact the true beginning of the Santa Fe trade.

Becknell's company had a scrape with Osage Indians on the south bank of the Arkansas. And while crossing the Jornada of the Cimarron Desert, thirst reduced the men to sucking blood from tipped mules' ears and drinking the murky mess in a buffalo's belly. But their wagon wheels had marked the main trail to Santa Fe, and, not less important to the trade, they made 2,000 percent on their original investment.¹

Missouri statehood and Mexican independence both occurred in 1821—a coincidence that foretold Missouri's dominant role in the Santa Fe trade. There were good reasons for this dominance. As western vanguard of the States, Missouri was poorly situated for internal trade, but well situated for external trade with northern Mexico. Her aggressive, land-hungry population—reaching far out on the western prairies—needed cash to buy the land it hungered for. In New Mexico were dollars—and furs and mules that could be sold for dollars. In St. Louis were merchants eager to provide the cotton goods that comprised the principal trade article for the Santa Fe market.²


So when Becknell returned from his first expedition, his handsome profits galvanized the Boon's Lick country, centering around the town of Franklin. Col. Benjamin Cooper led one party out in April 1822, getting the jump on Becknell himself. James Baird and Samuel Chambers headed another of 50 men that autumn. Their rash departure so late in the season caught up with them on the Arkansas near the Cimarron Crossing. There a severe snowstorm forced them into winter quarters. Next spring, their pack animals dead from exposure, the traders buried their goods and continued on to Taos for more pack mules. They returned to the Arkansas and recovered their buried goods, leaving a number of jug-shaped holes, The Caches, that became landmarks on the trail.¹

In 1823 the trade paused for breath, only one expedition going out that year. This one, led by Maj. Stephen Cooper, a nephew of Benjamin, lost most of its horses to the pesky Osages about 300 miles out from Franklin. The party was delayed while a detachment rode back for more animals, but then continued on to big profits in New Mexico.²

Josiah Gregg picked 1824 as the next "remarkable era" in the trail's history after the Becknell expeditions. The caravan of 1824 included about 80 men, 25 wagons, a small field piece, and $35,000 in trade goods. It was the biggest venture yet, involved the first extensive use of wagons, and was the first attempt by American traders to enter the Chihuahua market—where in later years about half of the Missouri imports were sold.³

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¹ Chittenden, The American Fur Trade, II, 503; Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, edited by Max L. Moorhead (Norman, 1954), 46, 47.
² News items from Missouri Intelligencer, quoted in Missouri Historical Review, IV (Jan., 1910) 70, 71.
In this party were two leading citizens of Missouri: M. M. Marmaduke, later governor of the State; and Augustus Storrs, who the next year would be appointed first American consul in Santa Fe. Marmaduke's Journal provided the first detailed account of the Jornada across the Cimarron Desert—a barren plain where men tormented by thirst gouged out the sands of dry river beds to save themselves in the seeping waters hidden there.

When Storrs returned from this expedition, Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri requested a statement from him describing the Santa Fe trade. Benton was the prime spokesman in Washington for the Missouri traders. His interest in the trade was enduring. As editor of the Missouri Enquirer in territorial days, Benton had prophesied a profitable trade between Missouri and Mexico. Now that it had commenced, he was pressing for support from the National Government to extend and protect it. Benton saw the trade not only as a stimulus to the Missouri economy, but as the answer to the financial instability that plagued Missouri and other western States. The shortage of hard money in these States had led to a flood of worthless paper currency. Spanish dollars derived from the trade would whip this problem in Missouri, later to be known as the hard money State.¹

Benton's constituents had two major complaints: The Indian menace, and the arbitrary application of customs regulations by New Mexican authorities.² In 1824, at Benton's instigation, the traders had sent

several communications to Washington requesting protection from the Indians and consular representation in Santa Fe. Congress took no action that year. Now Benton was circulating petitions and gathering more information for a second try. Thus his request for a statement from Storrs.

This statement was a series of answers to questions propounded by Benton. It is a valuable document, for it gives a comprehensive picture of the Santa Fe trade at its inception by an intelligent observer and participant. Storrs was capable of poetry; his descriptions abound with images. In eastern Kansas: "The prairie here, in the month of May, is adorned with a great variety of flowers, and probably presents some of the most distant and beautiful views on earth." Approaching the sandhills bordering the Arkansas River: "My first view of them was distant over a level plain. They were perfectly destitute of vegetation, and of a yellow color which, under the reflection, and gleaming of the sun, exhibited precisely the appearance of a dim flame of fire, fifteen or twenty feet in height."

But more than poetry commended Storrs' report. He gave hard facts:

Q. 6. What kind of merchandise are principally carried out to the internal provinces?
A. Cotton goods, consisting of coarse and fine cambrics, domestic, shawls, handkerchiefs, steam loom shirtings, and cotton hose. A few woolen goods, . . . some light articles of cutlery, silk shawls, and looking glasses . . . and many other articles necessary for the purposes of an assortment.

Q. 7. What is received, and brought back in exchange for merchandise carried out?
A. Spanish milled dollars, a small amount of gold and silver, in bullion, beaver fur, and some mules.

Q. 9. Have duties been paid on the merchandise carried out? . . .
A. The duty imposed by the government of the internal provinces . . . was 25 per cent, ad valorem. The Americans, universally suspected, that this duty was arbitrarily imposed by the governor of New Mexico, without law . . . .

Q. 10. Are the inhabitants of the internal provinces favorable to the continuance of this commerce?
A. The affirmative of this question is beyond a doubt. . . . In all their principal towns, the arrival of Americans is a source of pleasure, and the evening is dedicated to dancing and festivity. . . . they denounce the duty as an act of injustice and extortion. . . .

Storrs correctly prophesied that American goods carried over the trail could compete in the Chihuahua market with those imported by sea. He went on to describe the ignorance, the lack of civilization, the destitute condition of all but the wealthiest Mexicans, and he contrasted this with the abundant natural wealth of the country—its mines, its livestock, its unused dollars waiting upon American goods. He cited the Indian menace and listed the robberies and threats perpetrated by the Osage, Pawnee, and Comanche on the trail.

To protect and encourage the trade he advocated a marked road from Fort Osage to the Arkansas, a garrison at the Arkansas crossing, treaties with the Indians, and United States agents at Chihuahua and Santa Fe. The last he deemed more important than protection from the Indians, for he considered the cupidity and capriciousness of New Mexican officials the greatest single obstacle to the trade. Other traders placed greater emphasis on the Indian danger than Storrs did. But except for this difference, Storrs' proposals summed up the position of the Missouri traders in Congress.¹

In January 1825, Benton introduced a bill to survey and mark the trail from Missouri to the international boundary at the Arkansas River, and from there to New Mexico, under such arrangements as the President might conclude with the Mexican Government. The bill provided for three commissioners to oversee the survey, and also empowered them to treat with the Indians whose territory the trail crossed. In presenting the bill, Benton urged that the President provide consular representation at Santa Fe and Chihuahua, and a military post at the Arkansas crossing. The bill became law on March 3, 1825. That same spring consuls were appointed to Santa Fe and Chihuahua—Storrs getting the post at Santa Fe.¹

Meanwhile, Benton was applying pressure on the Secretary of War to establish a military post at the Arkansas crossing. Indeed, it looked in 1825 as though the National Government was fully committed to support and protect the Santa Fe trade. Whether for this reason or because of the trade's own momentum, traffic on the trail began to boom.

Coincidentally the Governor of New Mexico commissioned a special envoy to the United States. His mission was to negotiate with the American authorities for protection of the trail from the plains Indians. Received favorably by the United States Indian Agent at St.

¹. Kate L. Gregg, ed., The Road to Santa Fe (Albuquerque, 1952), 1-7.

Although four consuls were appointed from Washington to reside at Santa Fe, none of them was recognized by the Mexican Government, and only one filed reports with the Department of State. Storrs was at Santa Fe in September 1825, but is without record after that date. Other appointees did not assume their duties until the appointment of Manuel Alvarez in 1839. Though never recognized by the Mexican Government, Alvarez served as acting consul until the American occupation in 1846. Max L. Moorhead, New Mexico's Royal Road (Norman, 1958), 123-124n.
Louis, the envoy, Manuel Simón Escudero, proceeded to Washington and laid his proposals before the Mexican minister at Washington. This worthy was incensed that the New Mexican governor had bypassed diplomatic channels, so nothing came of the proposals for mutual protection. But the incident illustrates the early importance of the Santa Fe trade to New Mexico. And Escudero was accompanied by the first recorded Mexican merchants to trade with the United States via the Santa Fe Trail. The prairies would henceforth be a two-way street, and Mexican merchants would make up a large percentage of the Santa Fe traders.¹

The Government Survey of the trail started from Fort Osage in July 1825. By September it had progressed to the international boundary at the Arkansas River. The next summer, after tedious negotiations with the Mexican Government, the route was surveyed to Taos. Final surveys and corrections were completed in the summer of 1827. But by then the traders had laid out their own road— to Santa Fe, not to Taos. Major Alphonso Wetmore stated that the trail survey was a useless expenditure of funds, for "This task had been previously performed by the traders themselves."² Even those conducting the survey were aware of this. On June 11, 1827, Commissioner George C. Sibley was making the final survey corrections on the trail. His journal entry for that date stated that beyond Diamond Spring, 150 miles west of the Missouri line, "The road

¹ Moorhead, New Mexico's Royal Road, 66; William R. Manning, "Diplomacy Concerning the Santa Fe Road," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, I (March, 1915), 523-24.
Brown's Notebook (cont.), showing Point of Rocks, and describing Rabbit Ears Creek Camp. National Archives.
as traveled is already well enough Marked by the Waggons, any Mounds put up would be Soon thrown down by the Buffalo and Indians . . ."¹

The sod mounds used to mark the survey track had not been followed by the traders anyway. A heavy rain would wash out a stream crossing or create a quagmire, and the traders would take a different tack. And they were always experimenting with new cutoffs to save a mile or a day. In fact, the trail could not be captured and held by a surveyor's sextant or a sod mound. It was a living thing that varied with the seasons and with the gambling instincts of the traders.

The Field Notes and maps of the commission's surveyor, Joseph C. Brown, would have been invaluable to newcomers on the trail, but they were filed away in Washington and never used, except in later years by historians of the trail. One lasting benefit did come out of the survey: Treaties with the Osage and Kansas Indians in August 1825. From that time forward these tribes gave no serious trouble to the traders.² Less amenable were other tribes farther west.

Trouble on the Trail

Gregg called the early years of the trade a "peaceful season." True, Indians had raided caravans for livestock and any other loot that might be handy, but their aims were mercenary not murderous. In 1828 the season changed. Tragedy struck the trail.

¹ Kate L. Gregg, The Road to Santa Fe, 184-85.
² The survey commissioners met the Osage chiefs in a fine grove of hardwoods along the Neosho River bottom, the last before the grasslands began. Sibley named it Council Grove on the spot, and it became an important stop on the trail.
The two caravans that year got to Santa Fe with no trouble. They were the biggest trains yet, carrying approximately twice the merchandise of any previous year. And though the New Mexican tariff was raised and some imports were prohibited, it still looked like a big season. But on the return to Missouri the lead caravan got into trouble. Near the present New Mexico-Oklahoma boundary two young traders, McNeese and Monroe, bored with the caravan's slow pace, rode ahead. They found a creek and laved off the dust of their journey and drank the cool waters. Then, in the warm sun, they went to sleep. Indians crept up and shot them with their own guns. The other traders found McNeese dead and Monroe almost so. They buried McNeese on the banks of the creek that henceforth bore his name, then carried the bleeding Monroe 40 miles to the Cimarron, where he too died. As the traders buried their murdered companion, six or seven Indians appeared on the opposite bank of the river. On impulse the enraged whites shot all but one, who straightaway made dust back to his tribe with news of the massacre. Doubtless these Indians were innocent, else they would have shied clear of the wagon train.

Revenge came at a price. The train lost nearly 1,000 head of horses and mules near the Arkansas, and the threat of reprisal harried the traders all the way across the plains.

The second caravan was small, about 30 men. Near the Cimarron they ran into a large camp of Comanches, possibly relatives of the Indians who had been killed by the earlier caravan. Wary of the Indians' invitation to share camp, the traders brandished their weapons and began to march forward. In the melee that followed, one man was pulled from
his horse, shot, and scalped. The others got past the Indian camp and corralled their wagons. Constant harrassment followed the traders in succeeding days. Their progress slowed to a halt. Finally, livestock gone, they abandoned their wagons and under cover of night began the 500 mile hike home.

Weeks later a few of the stronger men reached Missouri. Search parties found the rest scattered out over 150 miles of the trail. One of them, blind from starvation, was lying flat on his back fending off prairie wolves with a stick when finally rescued.¹

Modern romances picture the Santa Fe Trail as strewn with blood and paved with bones from the beginning. But this was not so. The outrages of 1828 marked the first recorded deaths on the trail of men actually engaged in the Santa Fe trade. Their impact was therefore great. Missouri was in an uproar. The traders, though used to normal trail hazards, cried that their enterprise would fold unless something could be done about the Indian menace. Three lives lost and profits cut by at least $30,000 was too high a price to pay for a season's trading.²

Missouri's Governor John Miller blasted the National Government for its delay in setting up an army post at the Arkansas crossing. He cited the government's solicitous attitude toward maritime commerce and contrasted this with the neglect of the inland trade with Mexico. Responding to the Governor's outcry, the Missouri Legislature in December 1828 memorialized Congress, calling for the Arkansas River post and

¹. Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 18, 19; Otis E. Young, The First Military Escort on the Santa Fe Trail, 1829 (Glendale, 1952), 15-29.
². Young, First Military Escort, 29, 33.
escorts to accompany the traders to and from New Mexico. The memorial relayed a warning from the Indian Agent on the Upper Missouri that 1,500 rampaging Pawnee braves had sworn to kill every white man in their path, which would doubtless cross the Santa Fe Trail. Following hard on the memorial, Senator Benton introduced a bill "for the better security of the inland trade with Mexico," but it died in committee.¹

Despite the howls from Missouri, it looked as though the Santa Fe traders would be on their own again in 1829. But in March that year a new President occupied the White House. Andrew Jackson had done some Indian fighting himself. He ordered an escort for the 1829 caravan. The escort would march with the traders as far as the international boundary at the Arkansas crossing, encamp there, and return with the caravan in October.

This was a start, but hardly a solution. For beyond the Arkansas lay the greatest danger. Between the crossing and the New Mexican frontier near San Miguel was Comanche land. And it was the Comanches that the traders feared most. Efforts to raise a company of Missouri militia to guard the caravan on this section of the trail failed.

Thus the 1829 caravan organized under a cloud. Few traders were tempted by the Comanche-infested Jornada south to the Cimarron. Hankering for adventure played no part in the decision of those that did go. They were driven by the hard facts of economics. They had mortgaged themselves to buy their outfits; now they must risk danger to pay off

Scene on the Santa Fe Trail. Denver Public Library Western Collection.
Major Bennet Riley left Cantonment Leavenworth on June 3, 1829, with an escort battalion of 180 infantrymen. His supply train was drawn by oxen—an innovation on the trail dictated by Riley's slim allotment for draft animals. Mules were too expensive. Soldiers and traders met on June 8 at Round Grove, about 35 miles west of Independence. Captain of the caravan was Charles Bent. He led a small outfit—79 traders, 38 wagons, $60,000 in trade goods—less than half the traffic of 1828.

Caravan and escort trekked across Kansas in an uneventful journey, arriving July 9 at Chouteau's Island at the upper crossing of the Arkansas. The most interesting thing about the trip thus far was the way the army oxen had kept up with and even surpassed the traders' mules as draft animals. They marched as fast and they were more dependable.

At Chouteau's Island, the traders entreated Riley to go across the river with them into Mexican territory, but he would not give in on this point. Finally, after promising to rendezvous with Riley by October 10, the traders crossed the river and struck south across the Jornada on July 11. They carried with them Riley's letter to the New Mexican Governor suggesting a return escort to the Arkansas. They also carried Riley's warning to them to stick together and be alert, no small party getting more than 100 yards from the wagons.


2. Sources for section on Riley escort: Riley's Report in Fred S. Perrine, "Military Escorts on the Santa Fe Trail," New Mexico Historical Review, II (April, 1927), 175-193, and Young, First Military Escort, passim.
But as the train plowed through the sandhills south of the Arkansas it got badly strung out. Seeing their opportunity, lurking Kiowas jumped the train, killing one man of the advance guard. Charles Bent got his men entrenched then sent word to Riley, who immediately led his troops into Mexican territory to the rescue. He was risking international incident and a shattered career to do so. The troops scared the Kiowas off, then escorted the train two more days past the ambush country.

The train continued on to Santa Fe, having several more Indian scrapes on the way. Riley returned to his camp in the vicinity of Chouteau's Island. He too was harrassed by Indians, losing 4 soldiers and 75 horses and oxen in a series of encounters in August. But the disciplined defense of the soldiers was too much for the Indians, who henceforth left the army camp alone. In his Report Riley lamented the infantry's inability to cope offensively with the mounted Indians: "Think what our feelings must have been to see them going off with our cattle and horses, when if we had been mounted, we could have beaten them to pieces; but we were obliged to content ourselves with whipping them from our camp."

The October 10 rendezvous date came and went with no sign of the traders. On the 11th Riley broke camp and headed for the States. But he had hardly started when he was stopped by an express from the traders, who said they would arrive the next day. On the 12th the traders came up, escorted by Mexican troops under Col. José Vizcarra. It was fortunate that the New Mexican Governor had acted favorably on Riley's suggestion to provide a return escort. For the train and its
Mexican escort had been attacked by a band of Gros Ventres on the Cimarron, but the combined force had beaten them decisively. The traders had vented their hatred by scalping a number of Indians alive and skinning others—barbarities that shook even the tough Mexican soldiers.

After amenities were exchanged by the military forces—the Mexicans especially admiring the Americans' 6-pounder field gun—Riley escorted the train as far as the Little Arkansas, where the traders broke into small groups and headed for Missouri on their own. The soldiers reached Leavenworth on November 8.

Riley's contribution was two-fold: His Report showed that infantry was not effective against mounted Indians—the army needed cavalry; he also showed the utility of oxen on the trail—henceforth they would share the load with mules on the road to Santa Fe.

Other escorts followed Riley's, but they were few and far between. For one thing, without cavalry (the army had had no mounted troops since the War of 1812) escorts had been proven ineffective. The military saw no sense in urging escorts until mounted troops could be provided to make them useful. Another trail tragedy helped to bring this about. In 1831 famed mountain man Jedediah Smith was killed by Comanches near the Lower Spring of the Cimarron. This event, in conjunction with the Black Hawk War, jolted Congress into authorizing a force of mounted rangers the next year. The rangers were assigned to escort the return caravan in the fall of 1832, but they were late for the rendezvous and never did make contact with the wagon train. The rangers were irregulars and were soon found wanting.
In 1833 Congress authorized formation of a unit of regular cavalry, the First Dragoons. The next year Capt. Clifton Wharton led the dragoons in escorting the 1834 caravan, from Council Grove to the Arkansas. But what Wharton saw made him doubt the need for escorts. He found the wagon train large and well organized: "For such a large caravan an escort was unnecessary, and it only served to encourage the traders to adopt a hostile demeanor towards the depredating Comanches, thereby increasing the danger of small parties."

Wharton's superiors agreed with him, stating further that escorts were positively dangerous. They encouraged small, poorly equipped trains to take the trail. But the escorts had to leave the trains at the Arkansas crossing, and it was beyond that point that the real danger began.

The upshot was this: Escorts were rare occurrences—none in the years 1830, 1831, and 1832; none on the Santa Fe Trail proper from 1834 to 1843. They were ineffective because they could not go into Comanche territory across the Arkansas River. The traders learned to protect themselves, assembling in large caravans, carrying their own cannon, adopting a military organization and order of march. The strength of these caravans was complemented by the Indian idea of warfare, which was to count coups, take loot, and not get killed. Thus, after their howls for protection in the 1820's, the traders became self-sufficient on the trail and solved their own problems of protection. The army contributed its presence on the trail, periodically sending out
bodies of troops to impress the Indians and to accompany Indian agents
during treaty negotiations.¹ But until Indian raiding began in earnest
after the Mexican War, it was no part of the army's program to provide
a permanent military presence or annual escorts on the Santa Fe Trail.²

Caravan to Santa Fe

By the early 1830's caravan procedure and the best route to Santa
Fe had been established. The traders followed a routine and a course
that varied little from year to year. The Indian threat was by now
viewed as a normal hazard of the trail. And dealings with New Mexican
officials followed a time-honored pattern of bribery, under-cover
arrangements, and officially sanctioned smuggling. This procedure
caused endless grumbling and haggling, but nevertheless was understood
and was workable. The trade had come to maturity and now began to
expand at a rapid pace.

During the winter, traders or their agents bought trade goods in
St. Louis or in Philadelphia—the true emporium of the trade. By early
spring steamboats were chugging up the Missouri to Independence Landing.
And to that rough-hewn frontier town came a stream of people and goods

¹. Probably the most noted of these expeditions was that of Col.
Henry Dodge in 1835. With 100 dragoons Dodge crossed the plains to the
Rockies, then circled back to Bent's Fort on the Arkansas. Here he met
with representatives from most of the plains tribes. His expedition was
in part along the Santa Fe Trail and duly impressed the Indians in that
quarter.

². The foregoing summary of military protection of the Santa Fe
Trail before the Mexican War is based on Henry Putney Beers, "Military
Protection of the Santa Fe Trail to 1843," New Mexico Historical Review,
XII (April, 1937), 113-33; Fred S. Perrine, "Military Escorts on the
Santa Fe Trail," New Mexico Historical Review, II (April, 1927), 175-193,
and III (July, 1928), 265-300.
Independence was full of Santa Fe men. Mules, horses, oxen and waggons at every corner. Groups of hardy-looking men about the stores . . .

--Francis Parkman
and wagons and mules and oxen that filled it to bursting. By May 1
Independence was a lively chaos of traders, drivers, merchants,
suppliers, and hangers-on of every description. In camps surrounding
the town were the wagons and animals that would soon depart for Santa
Fe. While merchants hawked their wares, other men were training mules
to the wagons, often starving their unruly charges into submission.
Many of the best muleteers were Mexicans. Wearing their brightly
colored serapes and conical hats, they worked wonders with the mules.
Their skill with the lasso thrilled the crowds that assembled to watch
them catch and break to harness the stubborn beasts.

By mid-May the grass was up on the prairie—forage for the
animals. It was time to load the great white-topped Pittsburg wagons
and get on with the journey. The Conestogas were packed with scrupulous
care so that the joltings of the prairie voyage would not displace the
precious cargo. Aside from its paying cargo, each company carried
supplies for its men: fifty pounds of flour apiece, fifty of bacon,
twenty of sugar, fifteen of coffee, salt, and a bag of beans. Once on
the plains, buffalo would supply fresh meat. Fuel for cooking would
also be supplied by the buffalo--his droppings, the dried buffalo
chips of the plains campfire. With a skillet, coffee pot, and butcher-
knife for preparing his grub, the traveler was ready for 6 or 8 weeks of
travel.¹

Departure from Independence was a great event. Matt Field observed
the scene in 1839:

Suppose the starting of a caravan for Santa Fe. In the square you observe a number of enormous wagons into which men are packing bales and boxes. Presently the mules are driven in from pasture, and a busy time commences in the square, catching the fractious animals with halters and introducing them to harness for their long journey. Full half a day is thus employed before the expedition finally gets into motion and winds slowly out of town. This is an exciting moment. Every window sash is raised, and anxious faces appear watching with interest the departure. The drivers snap their long whips and swear at their unruly mules, bidding goodbye in parentheses between the oaths, to old friends on each side of the street as they move along.¹

Sometimes a driver still suffering from his last fling fell into a drunken rage and frightened his mules. Running amuck, they would dump wagon and goods across the countryside. While onlookers jeered, the fuming men reloaded their wagon and tried to catch up.

From Independence to Council Grove, about 150 miles, the companies traveled separately. Trail routine was developed and the animals were broken in during these 10 days. The wagons streamed across the rolling prairies of eastern Kansas, lacking order or discipline. At Council Grove, general rendezvous of the traders, the caravan was formed. A captain and division lieutenants were elected. They made guard assignments and set the order of march. This procedure took some days. Meanwhile firearms were put in order and parties of men cut spare axles from the groves of hardwoods that lined the Neosho’s banks. Others laundered their clothes and got acquainted with their march companions. Finally the caravan was ready for the 600 mile trek to Santa Fe. The start from Council Grove was usually a ragged affair. There were laggards. Others, confused by the order of march, lost their place. But within a week the caravan shook down into a well ordered routine that was followed every day.

¹ John E. Sunder, ed., Matt Field on the Santa Fe Trail (Norman, 1960), 64.
The wagons marched in parallel columns—two in eastern Kansas, four in dangerous Indian country. This was to allow rapid corralling in case of attack. This maneuver is described by Nick Eggenhofer:

The two outside columns swung out in arching movements, the first two wagons meeting and leaving a space for the entrance, the following ones coming alongside to lock their front wheels with the rear wheels of the wagons ahead. The inside columns paused until the tail wagons of the outer ones were in place, then swung out at right angles, one right, one left, to join up with the two tail wagons and complete a rectangle. Another opening was left in the rear for the stock to be driven in. Wagon tongues were lashed to the wheels of the vehicles before them, making a nearly impregnable fort.¹

Each night the wagons corralled to make camp—usually after crossing a stream, for streams might rise in the night, and stream banks were tough obstacles; it was poor practice to force animals into a crossing first thing in the morning when they were in cold harness. Animals were picketed outside the wagons under guard. Soon campfires twinkled on the prairie and the simple fare of the road was being dished out in the separate messes of 8 or 10 men. After the meal, some sang songs while others wrapped up in their blankets, picking a soft spot under the wagons or in the open air. Lewis Garrard recalls a scene such as this:

There were eighteen or twenty Canadian Frenchmen . . . composing part of our company, as drivers of the teams. As I have ever been a lover of sweet, simple music, their beautiful and piquant songs, in the original language, fell most harmoniously on the ear as we lay wrapped in our blankets.²

At first light the day began with the cry "Catch Up----Catch Up!" Drivers herded their animals into the corral and harnessed them, then led them outside and hitched them to the wagons. Soon calls of "All Set"

¹. Nick Eggenhofer, Wagons, Mules, and Men, 63.
². Lewis H. Garrard, Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail (Norman, 1955), 11.
Mi alma was out this morning on a hunt, but I sincerely hope he will never go again. The buffalo is apt to whirl suddenly on his persuer, and often serious if not fatal accidents occur.

--Susan Magoffin
began to ring out, and the caravan captain got the train moving with
the cry "Stretch Out----Stretch Out!" Then the train began its march
to the horizon, each wagon falling into its assigned place.

At 9 or 10 o'clock the animals were given a rest and a chance to
graze. The men used this pause to make a quick breakfast of coffee
and bacon. In the well watered eastern half of the trip, streams and
springs provided good nooning stops. Then on through the afternoon,
sometimes well into darkness, the train continued its way. The caravan
captain sent outriders ahead to prepare the campsite and dig out stream
banks for easier crossing. Finally, after making the day's quota of
12 or 15 miles, the wagons corralled again. The cycle of the day's
journey had come to a close.

Past Council Grove the landscape changed from rolling prairie,
with an occasional copse of trees, to flatter, short-grass prairie.
Trees, mainly cottonwoods, were found only along streams, and the
horizon became like that of a far-stretching sea.

Near the Little Arkansas the buffalo range was reached and the
lure of fresh meat caused pandemonium in the train. Now every man
became a hunter, and a wild scramble to horse and to arms always
signalled the first buffalo sighting. Old hands knew that the clumsy
looking buffalo could run deceptively fast and seemingly forever. So,
while the greenhorns wore out their horses, the veterans stalked their
game carefully in a technique known as "crawling." Taking advantage of
wind and terrain, they approached within range of the shortsighted
beasts on hands and knees. Then followed a barbecue on the plains, some
of the old timers eating the smoking liver raw.
The next landmarks were the sandhills of the Arkansas. Then came Pawnee Rock, where newcomers to the trail carved their names in sandstone and got a splendid view of the plains.

By now the lush-grass prairie had been left far behind. Cactus and tight-curled buffalo grass was the only vegetation. Arid was the land, and monotonous. Here is a traveler's impression of the trail along the Arkansas and the dry route between Pawnee Fork and present Dodge City:

Nothing can exceed the dull monotony of a journey along the Arkansas. Neither in the character of the country nor in any department of science, do we find a variety in a day's march of twenty miles. . . . The short, dry buffalo-grass alone grows over the whole surface of the country. . . nature has here lost all her freshness and sweetness, and . . . wears a gray, sterile, and forbidding aspect.¹

Finally the caravan came to the Middle or Cimarron Crossing of the Arkansas River, here a shallow stream hundreds of yards wide. Sink-holes and quicksand lurked in the placid waters of the Arkansas. Crossing it was a major feat for the drivers and wagonmasters. The wagons were double-teamed and once into the water were kept moving at all costs to avoid sinking in the sand. Previously, men had waded the river, staking the best route across. Despite these precautions, wagons sometimes mired or animals spooked at their shadows and had to be manhandled across. Then curses flew and the drivers' long whips set up a regular barrage of sound.

Initial impressions of Mexican territory were not favorable. First came the torturing sandhills on the south bank of the Arkansas, then the 60-mile Jornada--a barren plain without landmark or spring. Until

¹ Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean . . . in 1853-54, II (Washington, 1855), 24, 27.
1834, when the course across the Jornada was marked by wagons during unusually heavy rains, trains got lost here and missed their destination at the Lower Spring of the Cimarron. Thirst and heat made the Jornada a nightmare to be gotten across by forced marches. Winter or summer, terrible storms might suddenly sweep across this shelterless expanse, stampeding the animals and soaking the cargo in the wagons. Mirages or false ponds danced in the shimmering air, and men wished that they were somewhere else.

After a rest at the Lower Spring, the caravan wound along the snaking Cimarron, often crossing its dry, sandy bed to find firm ground. For 80 miles the caravan traced the Cimarron, passing Middle Spring, Upper Spring, and Cold Spring enroute. Then came the ravine-slashed country of the present Oklahoma panhandle. Guided by double-peaked Rabbit Ears--most important landmark on the Cimarron Cutoff--and Mount Dora and Round Mound, the caravan proceeded into northeastern New Mexico, camping at McNees Crossing, Turkey Creek, and Rabbit Ears Creek on the way.

Throughout all this arid stretch were springs about a day's journey apart. Each spring was an oasis that promised life in a hostile environment. At Rabbit Ears Creek (like other "creeks" in this country, dry except for springs in its bed), fine meadows and constant water beckoned the traders to rest. Often they laid over here a day to recruit the animals after the long water scrape and the poor forage during the march from Middle Crossing.

Here the traders might meet some Mexican Ciboleros, heading east to their buffalo hunting grounds on the great plains. And seldom did a
Upon descending into the valley of the Cimarron, on the morning of the 19th of June, a band of Indian warriors on horseback suddenly appeared before us... an imposing array of death-dealing savages.

--Josiah Gregg
train pass through this country without at least one Indian alarm. Out-
riders would whirl their horses from some distant eminence and gallop back to the train—"Indians! Indians!" Quickly the wagons corralled and the men trundled out their little field piece and formed line-of-battle before the wagon fortress. Then came the Indians—wild and free, beautifully mounted—dashing up to the train in a proud show of strength, but seldom attacking. There would be a parley, some bread and coffee passed out to the unpredictable guests, then the Indians would depart, probably enriched by some loose item they had managed to lift. Fright gone, wise old timers joking about the incident, the wagons slowly took up the march again.

The Caravan from Round Mound, in Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*. Denver Public Library Western Collection.
In the vicinity of Rabbit Ears it was customary to send runners ahead to Santa Fe to scout the market and make arrangements with Mexican customs officials. Slowly the train followed, past Round Mound and Point of Rocks, then on to the Canadian Crossing. Here, at the New Mexican frontier, soldiers from San Miguel met the caravan and escorted it the rest of the way. Presents were passed out to the soldiers and illegal arrangements, diligencias, were commenced to smuggle in contraband items. Bribery was a potent weapon with these poor men, described as follows by one trader:

The militia . . . beggared all description. . . . Such a gang of tatterdemalions, I never saw, before or since. They were of all colors, with all kinds of dresses and every species of arms. Some were bareheaded, others were barebacked--some had hats without rims or crowns, and some wore coats without shirts; others again wore coats without sleeves. Most of them were armed with bows and arrows. A few had guns that looked as if they had been imported by Cortez, while others had iron hoops fastened to the ends of poles, which passed for lances.1

South from the Canadian Crossing the wagons continued to Wagon Mound and Santa Clara Springs, then on to La Junta, the junction of the Mora and Sapello Rivers. Here the traders encountered the first signs of settlement since they had left Missouri--scattered ranchos of Mexican sheepherders. In later years La Junta would boast a fort and stores that would cater to the jaded travelers. And it would be the assembly point for returning caravans, the Council Grove at the western end of the trail.

A feature of this part of the country might be a stray carreta bringing supplies to the rancheros:

1. Quoted in Robert Glass Cleland, This Reckless Breed of Men (New York, 1952), 152.
In descending to the Rio Colorado, we encountered a party of custom-house agents, who, accompanied by a military escort, had come out to guard the caravan to the Capital.

--Josiah Gregg
Travelling this morning over the plain, we heard in the distance of several miles a singular, awful noise, like a combination of falling rocks, breaking of bones, screams of anguish, and cries of children, but the deep impression which the mysterious concert had made upon my ears was but surpassed by the surprising effect, when with my own eyes I descried the wonderful machine whose action produced that unearthly music—a Mexican carreta. Imagine to yourself a cart, made without any nails or iron of any kind, with two solid wheels formed out of the trunk of a big tree, and in circumference rounded, or rather squared, and with a frame of ox-skin or sticks fastened together by rawhide, and this machine then put into motion by three yoke of oxen, and carrying a load, which on a better vehicle one animal could transport much faster and easier, and you will have an idea of this primitive and only vehicle used in Northern Mexico.¹

San Miguel was the first real settlement reached by the traders, their first view of the strange, new culture that was New Mexico. Located at the crossing of the Pecos River, San Miguel was a cluster of flat-roofed adobe houses where some 500 or 600 people eked out a living by farming and ranching. It was a typical Mexican village that elicited descriptions such as this one:

Take one hundred and sixty-seven brick-kilns (such as we have at home) ready for burning; divide them all horizontally, and a few in addition perpendicularly; place them about on the ground in spots, with a sickly and attenuated effort at streets—et voila—there's your Mexican village. No trees, no shrubs, no grass-plats.²

As the wagon train drew near San Miguel, the little village erupted and en masse came out to greet the traders. Children, many of them stark naked, stood in the background and watched their parents sell milk, cheese, aguardiente (brandy), and hot Mexican food to the Yanquis.

¹. Adolphus Wislizenus, Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico, Connected with Col. Doniphan's Expedition, in 1846 and 1847 (Washington, 1848), 16, 17.
². James P. Meline, Two Thousand Miles on Horseback, Santa Fe and Back (New York, 1867), 105.
After a day's rest at San Miguel the caravan headed into the mountains, past Pecos Ruins, through tortuous Glorietta Pass ("the road winds and turns, crossing steep pitches and ravines, over rocks, and around boulders, making short and difficult turns, with double teams to make an ascent"), and on to Arroyo Hondo, 6 miles from Santa Fe. Here the train encamped and the men donned clean clothes, shaved and attached new poppers to their long whips. They would enter Santa Fe in style on the morrow!^1

Santa Fe

On a high plain surrounded by mountains, Santa Fe was beautifully situated. From the tableland just south of the city, the men of the caravan first viewed the cornfields and adobe buildings of the town. This first glance was often disappointing—a sprawl of mud houses like any other Mexican town. But then came the cries of the townfolk as the caravan was spotted: "Los Americanos"—"Los Carros"—"La entrada de la caravana!" Sleepy streets, crooked and narrow, came to life as the wagons wound into the city, and its 5,000 people turned out to welcome the traders. The drivers cursed and wielded their great whips with scientific abandon. Like ships coming into dock, the wagons cruised into the plaza. Here, across from the Palace of the Governors, Indians and Spaniards and Americans—with children, dogs, cats, burros, mules, and oxen—blended in an exciting scene of confusion and joy. After a long voyage the sailors of the plains had reached their port. After a long season of waiting, the people of the town welcomed their visitors,

^1. Basic data on the march of the caravan from Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, passim.
Wagon Train in the Santa Fe Plaza before the Governors' Palace--1860's. Museum of New Mexico.
who brought not only valued goods but an appetite for pleasure that promised fiesta.

At the earliest possible moment the hired hands abandoned the wagons and sought out the wine and women of the town. The merchants immediately began their parleys with the officials. Duties were paid, settlements made, manifests checked. Punctuated by the bilingual clatter of interpreters, the haggling, the complaints, and the screams of outraged virtue went on. A tone of honest dishonesty pervaded the whole proceeding. Bribes, called by many other euphemisms, were paid, and contraband was passed. Men who would be called corrupt and men who would be called smugglers in another place and tongue were here following customs "which had become recognized as law by the authorities throughout the country, without any misrepresentation, prevarication, or deceit."¹

From the customs house some traders arranged forthwith to retail their goods in Santa Fe. Others got the necessary passes and documents that would allow them to proceed to Chihuahua and other southern markets. Still others, under pressure for immediate payment of bills in Missouri, sold their goods wholesale to American and Mexican merchants in Santa Fe.

The pleasures of Santa Fe were many. For some the nightly fandangoes were the greatest joy. These dances were usually held in the salas of private homes. Guitars and violins provided the music. In a separate apartment wine and brandy and sweetbreads could be obtained—at double prices. The music was wild and the dancers were not less so. One young

¹. James Josiah Webb, Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade 1844-1847 (Glendale, 1931), 87.
enthusiast remarked that some dances pitted the men against the women as though in battle, and there was an undertone of primitive excitement. After the dances the streets were dangerous because of the carousing gangs of Americans that roistered there.

Most everyone agreed that New Mexico was a backwash of civilization, isolated, ignorant, and tyrannized. But from that point on opinions differed strongly. Rufus Sage, a particularly rigid American, said: "There are no people on the continent of America, whether civilized or uncivilized . . . more miserable in condition or dispicable in morals than the mongrel race inhabiting New Mexico."\(^1\) Doubtless he referred to the fact that women smoked and flirted, that men were indolent—and being caballeros, above work, that dancing and gambling were constant enjoyments.

Others found the Spanish people of Santa Fe delightful. They were honest when they stole from you, and they had a sense of humor that belied their hard condition. The apparent abandon of the people they attributed in large part to the influence of drunken Americans. Whatever the opinion, Santa Fe left no one without an opinion. It was an exciting city where food, dress, manners, and way of life were different from the ways of staid America. Men either hated or loved Santa Fe.\(^2\)

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1. Quoted in Cleland, This Reckless Breed of Men, 151.
2. This description based on Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies; Webb, Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade; Sunder, ed., Matt Field on the Santa Fe Trail; W. W. H. Davis, El Gringo, or New Mexico and Her People (Santa Fe, 1938); and Garrard, Wah-to-Yah.
Nature of the Trade

The first efforts at the Santa Fe trade were simple ventures by individual proprietors. They each bought a few hundred dollars in trade goods from Missouri merchants, outfitted their own wagons, and then journeyed to Santa Fe themselves. Very soon this pattern changed into a complex business technique involving agents, middlemen, and hired salesmen. Capitalization increased rapidly:

The pioneer venture involved 20 or 30 proprietors, no employees, and (at ten dollars per man) only from $200 to $300 worth of trade goods. During the next eleven years, from 1822 through 1832, the annual average was 60 proprietors, 60 employees, and $93,000 worth of merchandise; and from 1833 through 1843, 31 proprietors, 127 employees, and $173,000 in goods. This demonstrates a remarkably capitalistic development: fewer merchants employing more help and investing a greater amount of money in merchandise were coming to dominate the trade.

Other characteristics of the maturing trade—along with greater investment and more reliance on hired help—were buying in gross quantities, importing from abroad, exploitation of Mexico's southern markets to the neglect of New Mexico, greater reliance on credit, and development of larger wagons.

By 1840 the term "Santa Fe Trade" was a misnomer. No longer were the Missouri towns and Santa Fe the termini of the trade—rather they were frontier entrepots for a trade that extended on the one hand to Philadelphia, New York—even Liverpool and Hamburg; on the other to El

1. This section is heavily based on Moorhead, New Mexico's Royal Road, 76-151. Other references include Webb, Adventures of a Santa Fe Trader, 80-88 and 137, 138; Stephens, "Economic Effects of the Santa Fe Trade on Missouri," MHR, XI, 289-312; Lewis E. Atherton, "Business Techniques in the Santa Fe Trade," Missouri Historical Review, XXXIV (April, 1940), 335-41; Gregg, Commerce of The Prairies.
2. Moorhead, New Mexico's Royal Road, 77.
Paso, Chihuahua, Durango, and finally Mexico City. A glance at the accompanying table prepared by Josiah Gregg shows that by the late 1830's traders were shipping more than half of their goods to the southern markets—often without even breaking the loads in Santa Fe.

As the volume of business increased, traders bypassed the Missouri merchants who had heretofore supplied them with goods at 20 or 30 percent over wholesale prices in the East. Rather the Santa Fe men went to the wholesalers themselves, then shipped the goods to their own warehouses on the Missouri River. This mode of purchase introduced a complex credit system whereby Santa Fe traders obligated themselves to eastern wholesalers. Speed in selling goods became essential if these obligations were to be met, and competition in the trade increased accordingly. Some traders, to meet this problem, maintained agents in Santa Fe or Chihuahua year around. Their task was to line up buyers for quick sales. Others shipped goods to New Mexico and sold wholesale to Mexican merchants in Santa Fe or Chihuahua; thus they skipped the tedious retail procedure altogether. This shuttle trade from Missouri to New Mexico by Anglos, then to the southern markets by Mexican traders became an important phase of the total business. Often times, using this procedure, the Anglo wholesalers could squeeze in two trips from Missouri in a season, making up in gross volume what they lost by forfeiting retail profits.

The main trade article throughout the period of international trade was domestic cotton goods. But Mexico was starved for all kinds of manufactured goods. Traders' manifests list a fantastic array of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Amt.</th>
<th>Mdse.</th>
<th>W'gs.</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Pro's.</th>
<th>T'ntoCh'a.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pack-animals only used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>do. do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>do. and wagons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>do. do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wagons only henceforth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>3 men killed, being the first.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>1st U.S. Es.--1 trader killed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>First oxen used by traders.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>Two men killed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Party defeated on Canadian.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>(2 men killed, 3 perished.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>2d U. S. Escort.</td>
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<td>1835</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>70,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>80,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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<td>1839</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>Arkansas Expedition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Chihuahua Expedition.</td>
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<td>1841</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>Texan Santa Fe Expedition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>3d U. S. Es.--Ports closed.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

merchandise—everything from rings and necklaces to mirrors and cologne; from writing paper to champagne.

Specie was the main return in the trade, a commodity sorely needed in Missouri and other western States. In time the Spanish dollar was the main coin in circulation in Missouri. And her banks, in the midst of surrounding panic, paid off in specie. Missouri was the soundest State financially in the Union because of her hard money predilections and because she got such money from the Santa Fe trade.

1. From Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 332. The column, "T'n to Ch'a" shows the amount of goods taken to Chihuahua. Note that Gregg is in error in stating that pack animals only were used in 1822; this is the year that Becknell used the first wagons.
Furs had been an important return in the early days of the trade, but soon dropped off to a peripheral item as the beaver streams of the Southwest were cleaned out.

Mules were a valuable commodity as long as the international trade lasted. Typically, great droves of jacks, jennets, and mules returned with the caravans, to be sold in Missouri or in the South. Often traders sold their wagons at a profit in Mexico and hauled their rawhide sacks of specie back on the mules.

The southward thrust of the trade into Mexico was dictated by these facts: New Mexico's population was scant; its economy was primitive; it suffered from an unfavorable balance of trade with the interior provinces. New Mexico had not the wherewithal to absorb the growing imports from America. As the traders turned south they entered a wealthier, more sophisticated market—one that demanded the finest imported materials. This gave rise to a tariff problem that plagued the traders until the eve of the Mexican War. Santa Fe traders who hauled goods imported from Europe paid two national import duties—one to the United States, one to Mexico. This double taxation put them at a disadvantage when competing against Mexican and American merchants who imported such goods through the seaports of Mexico. These latter paid only one import duty—to Mexico. Beginning in 1831 the Santa Fe traders agitated for a rebate of the American duty imposed on those imported items that were shipped to Mexico. Finally, in March 1845, a rebate act was passed—a great stimulant to the trade that year and the next. But its affects were shortlived, for the Mexican War largely destroyed the international trade via Santa Fe.
The rebate problem and the normal hazards of the trail were as nothing compared to the difficulties encountered with Mexican officialdom. Theoretically, such difficulties should have been obviated by the 1831 treaty of amity and commerce between the United States and Mexico. But this agreement was never strictly enforced, as attested by continued complaints from the traders and the shameful treatment of Alvarez, the American consul in Santa Fe.

The traders had to put up with a bewildering variety of Mexican duties and taxes: national import duties, state excise taxes, taxes on wagons and animals; taxes to open a retail shop, taxes on the various documents without which they could not conduct their business. Tariff schedules changed with confounding speed— one port of entry charging according to one schedule, another to an entirely different one. Even the Governor of New Mexico, Manuel Armijo, could not keep up with the tariff schedules and shifted from *ad valorem* duties to a flat $500 impost per wagon.¹

Fortunately for the traders, Mexican customs officials were both inefficient and corrupt. If they could not be fooled they could be bought. One trader especially adept at fooling was known as Old Contraband. But for these techniques of evasion, the trade would have strangled in red tape.

During times of international tension, beginning with the Texas Revolution, traders had more trouble. Import restrictions damaged them.

¹ The traders circumvented Armijo by double-loading their wagons and introducing much larger freight wagons.
Government controls became more rigid. Merchants were robbed and mobbed as a result of government inspired propaganda. This state of affairs was especially pronounced in the early 1840's during the period of the Texan-Santa Fe Expedition. At such times too, a vicious form of economic nationalism favored Mexican traders over the Americans by means of special rebates. For a time indeed--September 1843 to March 1844--during a period of intense suspicion and fear of the Americans, the trade was banned entirely. But New Mexico's dependence on the American caravans was so great that the ban was lifted before it could affect the 1844 season's trading.

The Santa Fe trade was a risky business. Difficulties, officially inspired and otherwise, plagued it. Only the canniest of Yankee traders came back from Mexico with their shirts on, which usually meant profits of 20 to 50 percent.

The Road to War

The Santa Fe Trail played a large role in the national attitudes that led to the Mexican War. From the beginning of the trade, the Americans had been viewed with suspicion by the Spanish people of New Mexico. In part this was an inherited attitude whose roots were centuries old. New Mexico had been a buffer province from the date of its founding--an outpost against the imperial claims of others. Like the French and the English before them, the Americans were expansive and energetic. In 1836, after colonizing Texas, the Americans had successfully revolted against Mexico. (Mexicans made no distinction between Texans and Americans.) The plot thickened when the United States
Government extended diplomatic recognition to the Republic of Texas in March 1837. And soon thereafter the Texans petitioned for annexation to the United States, exacerbating an already tense situation.

Until 1845 Mexico continued to view Texas as a wayward province, never accepting the fact of its independence. Would the Americans similarly infiltrate New Mexico and win it away from the Fatherland? It seemed that this was happening through the instrumentality of the Santa Fe trade. By the mid-1830's New Mexico's government was completely dependent on the trade for its revenues. New Mexico's economic well-being was directly tied to the trade. Its culture was becoming Americanized, and the relatively inexpensive but high quality goods brought over the Santa Fe Trail had become necessities, not luxuries.

Now began a series of internal and international events that would increase Mexican fears and suspicions. New Mexico was wracked by revolt in 1837. The Americans were suspected of favoring the uprising, even aiding the insurrectionists—at least so said official propaganda.

In 1841 the hated Texans launched an expedition against New Mexico that had as its purpose acquisition of all lands east of the Rio Grande, from its source to its mouth. These lands were claimed by the Texans as rightfully theirs, including Santa Fe itself. Success in this venture would put the Texans astride the Santa Fe Trail, giving them the revenues of its lucrative trade and thereby butressing the shaky finances of the new Republic.

With 270 volunteers and a wagon train of Santa Fe traders, General Hugh McLeod set out from Austin on June 18, 1841. Three months later, after an epic but ill-managed march across the Staked Plains, they reached
the New Mexican frontier—a ragged and starved crew easily captured by
the Mexican army that Governor Manuel Armijo had sent out to intercept
them. First jailed at San Miguel, the Texans were then marched 2,000
miles to the City of Mexico, losing 40 men from exhaustion, exposure,
and starvation on the way. Once in the City of Mexico they were
subjected to various indignities and cruelties before being released
the next year. These terrible experiences became the subject matter
of many journals and editorials in Texas and the United States.

Most famous of these publications was George W. Kendall's
Narrative of the Texan-Santa Fe Expedition, published in 1844. Its
recitation of misfortune and cruel treatment became famous across the
land and engendered great hatred of the Mexican Government. Kendall's
book would later be called the Uncle Tom's Cabin of the Mexican War.

On the Mexican side the Texan-Santa Fe Expedition was viewed as an
act of naked aggression. Official propaganda implicated the American
traders and charged the United States Government with inciting the
move. Santa Fe traders suffered badly from the incident—not only from
more rigid controls over the trade, but from mob hysteria.

Matters were not improved when Texans, seeking revenge, engaged in
a number of murderous freebooting expeditions in 1842 and 1843. These
forays were directed against New Mexican frontier towns and against
Mexican traders on the Santa Fe Trail. The town of Mora was raided
and five of its citizens killed. These people had always been friendly
to American traders. And on the trail near the Arkansas River, Antonio
José Chávez, prominent merchant and friend of the Americans, was brutally
murdered. Another party of Texans under Col. Jacob Snively attacked the vanguard of a caravan escort sent out by Governor Armijo, killing 23 men and wounding several more. This series of outrages was finally halted in early 1843 when Capt. Philip St. George Cooke's military escort of the spring caravan caught up with the lurking Texans. Cooke disarmed them and sent them packing to Texas.

The results of the Texan-Santa Fe Expedition and the subsequent reprisal raids were failure for Texas and heightened Mexican suspicions of Americans in general. Even Cooke's escort, designed to cooperate with the Mexican authorities in ridding the trail of Texan raiders, was seen as a threat to New Mexico—an unwanted extension of United States power.

Throughout this period the Santa Fe traders bore the brunt of Mexican retaliation. During the winter of 1843-44 the trade was banned entirely. And it did not breed goodwill when the New Mexicans realized they were too dependent upon the traders to make the ban stick. New Mexico was hooked. And in the manner of all who are dependent on others, the realization of dependency made for bitterness.

The last step prior to war was United States annexation of Texas in March 1845. Mexico had always maintained that annexation would be viewed as an act of war. Immediately Mexico severed diplomatic relations. All that was needed now was a spark. It would come soon enough in the disputed Texan lands between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande.

On the eve of war, international trade over the Santa Fe Trail reached its climax: $450,000 in 1843; $200,000 in 1844; $342,000 in 1845;
and though the war had actually begun when the caravans took the trail in the spring of 1846, $1 million dollars that year, carried in a record 363 wagons. This was a far cry from the 30 men carrying $300 in trade goods who had opened the trade in 1821.

Ironically, the trade had become big business at the very moment when the forces it had helped create were about to end it forever. Ironically, too, the trade that had so benefitted New Mexico was the most important factor in preparing the way for conquest by the United States. This is the true significance of the Santa Fe trade: It had turned New Mexico northward, away from Mexico, through a species of economic imperialism. Commercially, New Mexico had been conquered by the United States long before 1846. The path of empire soon to be followed by the American army had been fashioned by the wagons of the traders.¹

Path of Empire

In 1844 America decided to expand to the Pacific. Election to the presidency of James K. Polk was a mandate for Manifest Destiny. Oregon and Texas and California were the goals of the expansionist movement.² Annexation of Texas and conquest of California meant war

¹ Foregoing narrative based on Lansing B. Bloom, "Texas Aggressions, 1841-1843," Old Santa Fe, II (October, 1914), 143-156; "Commerce and New Mexico," Old Santa Fe, II (October, 1914) 119-128; "The Closing Months of Mexican Administration," Old Santa Fe, II (April, 1915), 351-65; Chittenden, History of the American Fur Trade, II, 513; Twitchell, Leading Facts of New Mexican History, II, 69, 73; Moorhead, New Mexico's Royal Road, passim.
² Ray Allen Billington, The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860 (New York, 1956), 143, 144.
with Mexico. On May 13, 1846, "by the act of the Republic of Mexico," war came, sparked by border incidents on the lower Rio Grande.

The route to California lay across New Mexico, by way of the Santa Fe Trail. With its annexation of Texas, the United States had inherited the Texan claim to all lands east of the Rio Grande. Now that claim would be fulfilled, and vastly exceeded. The instrument of acquisition would be the Army of the West, commanded by Colonel, soon to be General, Stephen Watts Kearny. Kearny knew the Santa Fe Trail well. In the summer of 1845, after a military demonstration along the Oregon Trail, he had marched with the First Dragoons from Bent's Fort on the upper Arkansas to Fort Leavenworth, following the Mountain Branch of the trail. The expedition was frankly a reconnaissance of the route to Santa Fe and was made in full knowledge that war with Mexico was probable.\(^1\) The way was mapped and Bent's Fort was settled upon as the advanced base of operations if war should come.

Under the management of Bent, St. Vrain and Company, Bent's Fort, at the crossroads of the southern plains, had been a center of Indian trading since 1833. It was the far outpost of American influence in the southern Rockies area. Mexico had viewed it as a threat from the beginning, and as Mexico had long feared, it would soon fulfill its role as the base for conquest of the Southwest.\(^2\)

When war was declared, Kearny was ordered to protect the caravans to Santa Fe. His mission of protection became one of conquest.

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Immediately he began assembling his army at Fort Leavenworth: First Dragoons, Missouri Volunteers under Alexander Doniphan, a battalion of infantry, two companies of light artillery, and a troop of rangers—about 1,650 men. As the army gathered, Kearny sent supply trains ahead to Bent’s Fort.

Detachments of dragoons meanwhile combed the plains for wagon trains, ordering them to halt at Pawnee Fork and await the army. Some trains escaped the army dragnet and raced on to Santa Fe. Their proprietors, convinced that war would send profits sky high, were not dissuaded by the dangers that war might bring. What better commentary on the daring and enterprise of the Santa Fe traders?

The Army of the West began its march from Fort Leavenworth on June 16. Kearny chose the Mountain Branch for two reasons: Bent’s Fort was a ready-made base of operations where his army could rendezvous for the final lunge into New Mexico; and the Mountain Branch was better watered than the Cimarron Cutoff. The northern route had its disadvantages: it was longer than the Cutoff by nearly a hundred miles, and the Raton Mountains were a difficult barrier. For these reasons the traders had heretofore avoided the Mountain Branch—only occasional caravans had used it, those with business at Bent's Fort. But now the Mountain Branch would be opened by the Army of the West, and the traders would follow their guardians to New Mexico through Raton Pass.

The march across the plains took the holiday out of war. Kearny’s Missouri Volunteers were young and inexperienced, and, in the beginning,
William Bent, whose fort on the Arkansas River was at the crossroads of the Southwest. Here was the rendezvous of Indian, trader, trapper, and the Army of the West. State Historical Society of Colorado.

Susan Shelby Magoffin's diary is an acknowledged classic of the Trail. Her husband, Samuel, led one of the first trains into Santa Fe with the Army of the West. Missouri Historical Society.

Alexander Majors of the firm Russell, Majors & Waddell. Majors developed large-scale freighting operations that supplied military posts in New Mexico in the fifties and early sixties. Denver Public Library Western Collection.

"Uncle Dick" Wootton, mountain man and builder of the Raton Pass toll road. Denver Public Library Western Collection.
undisciplined. Dispensing with training at Fort Leavenworth, Kearny correctly calculated that the plains would discipline his men. If the Missourians grewed constantly, they were still game. Sometimes they marched 30 miles a day. Wind and sand and sun beset them. Mosquitos and buffalo gnats choked them. Bad water wrenched their insides. Some died, but most of them reached Bent's Fort in late July.

The trail had never been busier. First came the army--mounted troops, infantry, artillery, and hundreds of supply wagons. Then came the traders in over 300 wagons--giant lumbering freighters that dwarfed the trim little army wagons. And after the main traffic had passed by, the trail was still tramped daily by couriers and expresses and other driblets of army traffic. As Kearny's supply service developed, long trains from Leavenworth continued to flock the trail. "In this area," as Bernard DeVoto has said, "Manifest Destiny took the shape of a large-scale freight operation."1

While the army assembled at Bent's Fort, Kearny prepared the way for his bloodless conquest of New Mexico. On August 2 he sent Capt. Philip St. George Cooke to Santa Fe under flag of truce with an escort of 12 dragoons. Cooke carried a letter from Kearny to Governor Manuel Armijo. The message was to the point: Surrender New Mexico east of the Rio Grande or we will fight you. Peace and amity were offered the New Mexicans, but resistance meant bloodshed.2 Along with the threat

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1. The Year of Decision, 1846 (Boston, 1946), 246.
2. Colonel Kearny to Governor Armijo, Aug. 1, 1846; quoted in Lansing B. Bloom, "Passing from Mexico to the United States," Old Santa Fe, II (April, 1915), 367n.

Gen. Manuel Armijo—defense was hopeless. Museum of New Mexico.
went some sweetening in the person of James Wiley Magoffin. Known in Mexico as "Don Santiago," most illustrious of the Santa Fe traders, Magoffin had the mission of softening up Governor Armijo, his cousin by marriage. Magoffin was respected and admired in New Mexico. His hospitality and grand entertainments were legendary. He had married the daughter of a prominent Chihuahua family and his connections extended clear to Mexico City. For all these reasons President Polk had commissioned the famed trader to help Kearny align the New Mexican people with the United States.¹ Thus again is emphasized the role of the Santa Fe trade in preparing the way for military conquest. Magoffin was only one trader among many who were related by business and marriage to the influential families of New Mexico. As events would prove, the commerce of the prairies had wedded New Mexico to the United States with bonds too strong to be broken even by war.

Cooke and Magoffin negotiated with Armijo and his second in command, Col. Diego Archuleta. What passed between these men remains speculation. But ensuing events indicate that Kearny's emissaries were successful in persuading the New Mexicans not to fight. Probably Armijo was bribed. And Archuleta was offered the governorship of western New Mexico—which at this time was not publicly claimed by the Americans.²

Following hard after his emissaries, Kearny led the Army of the West from Bent's Fort on August 2. In the Army's wake came the wagons of the traders.

¹. Moorhead, New Mexico's Royal Road, 157, 158; Stella M. Drumm, ed., Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico, Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin 1846-1847 (New Haven, 1962), xxiii-xxvi.
². Drumm, ed., Down the Santa Fe Trail, xxv, xxvi.
The march to Santa Fe was accomplished in 17 days. It was a race against time, for, despite his foresight in sending advance wagon trains to Bent's Fort, Kearny was short on supplies. The army went on half rations from Bent's Fort, and before reaching Santa Fe rations were halved again. By abandoning his base of operations and striking into enemy territory, Kearny was taking a big chance. If his army were held up by prolonged Mexican resistance, he might fail miserably.

But Kearny's desire to avoid bloodshed was based on more profound motives than purely military considerations. He realized that his conquest of New Mexico would add this territory to the United States. If he left a legacy of bloodshed and violence among the new citizens, assimilation would be hindered by bad memories and the thirst for vengeance. Thus it was that Kearny prohibited his soldiers from taking even a pepper or an onion from a Mexican without payment. And even as his emissaries talked to the leaders of New Mexico, Kearny sent circulars ahead to the Mexican villages promising friendship and protection to all who would peacefully accept the American occupation. He cast himself and his army in the role of liberators, not conquerors.

Fording the Arkansas near Bent's Fort, the army struck across the arid Timpas plain. Along Timpas Creek water was found only in occasional murky pools impregnated with alkali. Men and animals suffered torture from thirst and the dust-laden winds that swept this desert expanse.¹

¹ Details of the Army of the West’s march to Santa Fe taken from W. H. Emory, Notes of a Military Reconnaissance, from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California (Washington, 1848), 15-32; and John T. Hughes, Doniphan's Expedition; Containing an Account of the Conquest of New Mexico . . . (Cincinnati, 1848), Chapter III.
South across the Purgatoire Valley, castellated Fishers Peak or Raton Mountain, left, north entrance to Raton Pass, center right at break in hills.
We commenced the passage of one of the most rocky roads I ever saw; no one who has crossed the Raton can ever forget it.

--Lt. James W. Abert
Soon the Spanish Peaks and the dim outline of the great spine of the Rocky Mountains came into view. After 4 days the army descended into the valley of the Purgatoire, then, having had its fill of water from the swift-running stream, began the ascent of the Raton Mountains.

Parties of pioneers were sent ahead to repair the road, and on August 7 the pass of the Raton was negotiated. No one could cross Raton Pass without remarking on the wild and beautiful scene it commanded: to the westward the Spanish Peaks and the great chain of the Rockies; to the south the mesas and plains of the Canadian Valley.

South from the pass summit the road degenerated into a rocky defile that smashed wagons and ground axles to splinters. But with some men levering the biggest boulders out of the way and others roping the wagons across the worst spots, the army continued its march.

Having reached the Valley of the Canadian, the troops forded this river and pushed rapidly south, crossing the Vermejo, the Cimarron, and the Ocate, and passing by the beautiful valleys and gorges whence these streams descend from the snow fields of the Sangre de Cristos.

Meanwhile rumors of Mexican defensive preparations at Glorieta Pass began to reach the army. This easily defended defile was the gateway to Santa Fe. Near La Junta, at the junction of the Mora and Sapello Rivers, Kearny received a message from Armijo: We plan to fight you at Glorieta Pass, it said, but first let us negotiate on the plains of Las Vegas.

But Armijo did not come to Las Vegas. Kearny took possession of the town, addressing the citizens from the roof of a building in the plaza. The alcalde took the oath of allegiance and the flag of the United States was raised for the first time over New Mexican soil.
Protection and freedom of religion were promised to those citizens who accepted the American liberators. "But listen!" said Kearny, "he who promises to be quiet, and is found in arms against me, I will hang!"¹

Now the army commenced threading its way through the mountains. Six hundred Mexicans were reputed to be waiting in a gorge near Las Vegas. Guidons and colors unfurled and the dragoons formed in battle array. But the rumor was unfounded and the march was continued--through Tecolote, Bernal, and San Miguel. At each village the ritual of possession was repeated.

Now rumors increased in number: 2,000 men entrenched at Glorieta Pass, an impregnable position--the entire country in arms--resistance a certainty. But hard on this disquieting news came the truth: Armijo had been unable to hold his army together. "If the Americans came in friendship, why should we die uselessly?" This was the question asked by the poor peones who made up the militia. And forthwith they had drifted back to their ranchos. Armijo--having saved face by the pretense of resistance--had then surrendered to his belief that resistance was useless. With his bodyguard of dragoons he had fled to the south. The way to Santa Fe was open.

From their August 17 camp on the Rio Pecos, in the shadow of the Pecos ruins, the American troops girded their loins and, tired, hungry, and trail-worn, began the 29-mile trek to Santa Fe. Past the deserted abattis in Glorieta Pass, across the Arroyo Hondo, and finally--on the afternoon of the 18th--into the ancient plaza of Santa Fe, Kearny's

¹ Emory, Notes, 27.
army marched. Except for a 13-gun salute at sunset as the American flag was raised, not a shot had been fired in the conquest of New Mexico.

General Kearny wasted no time in formalizing his conquest. On the morning of the 19th he addressed the citizens of Santa Fe and administered the oath of allegiance to all government officials. On the 22d he issued a proclamation by which he formally took possession of all of New Mexico, on both sides of the Rio Grande. The same day he appointed Charles Bent governor of the Territory of New Mexico. Bent was but one of several civil officers drawn from the ranks of the Santa Fe traders. Thus were those who had prepared the way for conquest recognized as the most competent to administer it.¹

Meanwhile Kearny consolidated his military position. Should insurrection or invasion from Mexico occur he must be able to defend Santa Fe. On a hill commanding the city he built Fort Marcy. It became an enduring symbol of the conquest, the rivet at the end of the Santa Fe Trail that bound New Mexico irrevocably to the United States.

The occupation of New Mexico was the prerequisite of the Mexican cession, later to be formalized by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildalgo. Gen. Winfield Scott's military victories in southern Mexico were more dramatic than the bloodless march into New Mexico. But the substance of the war was territorial acquisition. This was the business of the Army of the West. Henceforth the great Southwest would be part of the United States. Lansing Bloom has summed up the meaning of the conquest in these words, directed to New Mexico, but equally applicable to the entire cession:

¹ Lansing Bloom, "Passing from Mexico to the United States," Old Santa Fe, II, 374-78.

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With this change, the people of New Mexico might . . . now look forward with reasonable hope to securing the stable conditions, the enlightenment, and the development of their resources which had hitherto been denied them. . . . With the transition from Mexican to American administration, it may be said that they stepped forth into the combined privileges and responsibilities of civil and religious liberty.¹

Truly the Santa Fe Trail was the Path of Empire, and the conquest of New Mexico was its climactic period.

* * * * * * * * *

Kearny's army was soon augmented by reinforcements that came over both the Mountain and Cimarron Branches of the trail. Sterling Price's Second Missouri Volunteers used the Cutoff, and so did the iron men of the Mormon Battalion. Both detachments suffered severely from lack of water during their crossing.

The further adventures of the Army of the West--punitive expeditions against the Navajos, the marches to California and Chihuahua, and the suppression of the Taos Insurrection in 1847--followed other trails and cannot be covered here. But one further word is warranted about the effects of the war on the Santa Fe trade. The traders who had followed the Army of the West got caught in the military thrust south from Santa Fe. At El Paso and Chihuahua they were blocked and harassed by Mexican officials. Small wonder, for they marched with Doniphan's Missouri troops and actually participated in the battles they fought. The upshot was that markets were disorganized and poor. Mexican citizens were unfriendly. Only at a sacrifice could the traders dispose of their goods at all.

The war, in effect, killed the old trade through Santa Fe. Henceforth the Santa Fe Trail would be principally the route of freighters bringing goods and supplies to the newly acquired American territory. And the remnants of the international trade would be conducted mainly over more direct routes through Texas.¹

Consolidation of the Conquest

With the annexation and occupation of the New Mexican Territory, the Santa Fe Trail began a new era. No longer was it a route of international commerce. Rather it was the lifeline of the new American territory—"The one great bond that united the newly-acquired possessions in the far Southwest to the rest of the United States."² The amount of trade and goods coming over the trail far exceeded the traffic of the pre-Mexican War years. And the trail became a trunkline through the wilderness that would encourage settlement between Missouri and New Mexico. As the trail entered the last half of its history, it became one of the great forces that led to the vanishing frontier in America. This was to be the real significance of the trail's later days.

Freighting

In January 1853 the Territorial Legislature of New Mexico memorialized Congress to designate the Santa Fe Trail as a public highway and provide station houses a day's journey apart, along with a right-of-way to assure

¹. Lewis E. Atherton, "Disorganizing Effects of the Mexican War on the Santa Fe Trade," Kansas Historical Quarterly, VI (May, 1937), 115-23; Moorhead, New Mexico's Royal Road, Chapter 7.
water and forage for travelers. Why? Because "The road to Missouri is the great business throughfare of the Territory."¹ Congress took no action on this request, but the New Mexicans were right about the trail's importance. During the 1850's traffic over the Santa Fe Trail soared to heights never conceived in the palmiest days of international trade. Indeed, "Kearny's baggage train started a new era in plains freighting. . . . It became a matter of business, running smoothly along familiar channels."²

Commercial freighting boomed.³ Location of army families in New Mexico, emigration, and Americanization of the Spanish inhabitants created a new market to replace the one south of the border. There was a great demand for calicoes, bleached domestics, hosiery, and shoes. But flour, whiskey, hardware, and ammunition formed the bulk of the freight. Traders prospered on their return journeys, too, for the shearing of wool and the production of hides became big business in New Mexico in the late 1850's. Thenceforth, returning wagons loaded up with these products, which brought good profits in the States. As settlement and Americanization progressed the freight increased in variety—furniture, fire engines (!), musical instruments (even pianos), and machinery and boilers for mining operations.

¹. Laws of the Territory of New Mexico, 1852-53, 135-37.
Freighting techniques were improved to handle the new cargos. And innovations, such as winter trips, allowed some freighters to make several crossings a year. One of the freighters, F. X. Aubrey, made a specialty of winter freighting with his "Lightning Express."

Volume of trade leaped upward every year. In 1858, 1,827 wagons representing a total investment of $3.5 million crossed the prairies. The next year the trade was estimated at $10 million. In 1862, 3,000 wagons traversed the trail, hauling goods valued at $40 million—40 times the pre-Mexican War record. This new record was in turn smashed by the 5,000 to 6,000 wagons that were estimated on the trail in 1866.

At both ends of the trail, terminii changed. By 1850 Independence had bowed to the Kansas City-Westport tandem as the principal outfitting points. During the Civil War years, bushwhackers, Jayhawkers, Redlegs, and plain highway men on the Kansas-Missouri border drove many traders north to Leavenworth City for outfitting.

Meanwhile, Fort Leavenworth, on the eastern end of the trail, and Fort Union, on the western end, had become the military freighting terminii. Military freighting was big business in its own right. In 1860 alone the military phase of freighting accounted for more than 900 wagons, better than a third of the total that year.

The Southwest had proved an expensive acquisition to the United States, for the population had been promised protection from marauding Indians. In 1849 almost 1,000 soldiers, one-seventh of the United States

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army, served in New Mexico's Ninth Military Department. By 1859 the number had risen to 2,000, distributed among 16 scattered frontier outposts. The land was not rich enough to subsist this army, and almost all provisions had to be hauled over the Santa Fe Trail from Fort Leavenworth.

Fort Union was founded in 1851 to provide a distribution depot for the goods bound to the frontier outposts. Military freight hauled from Fort Leavenworth was unloaded at the Fort Union depot, repacked, and assigned as needed to the posts in New Mexico and Arizona. Often, when wagons or entire trains contained shipments for one fort only, they continued directly to the destination without unloading at Fort Union.

Virtually all military freighting on the Santa Fe Trail was performed under contract by civilian companies. Waste and inefficiency had characterized the logistical support, managed by the Quartermaster Department, of Kearny's Army of the West, and in 1848 the government turned to the contract system. For $11.75 per hundred, James Browne of Independence in that year agreed to transport 200,000 pounds of supplies to New Mexico. The next year, in partnership with William H. Russell, he contracted to haul all government stores over the Santa Fe Trail for $9.88 per hundred. Joseph Clymer and David Waldo entered the field in 1850, and that year 278 wagons of military freight passed over the trail to Santa Fe. Browne, Russell, and Company were the largest contractors, accounting for 135 of the 278 wagons.

In 1853 another new freighter made his appearance, his name destined to be linked to that of William H. Russell. Alexander Majors made two round trips to Santa Fe, one with a consignment of goods from Independence
to Santa Fe, the other under government contract from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Union. In 1854, again under contract, he sent 100 wagons in four trains from Leavenworth to Union. The following year he went into partnership with William H. Russell. In 1856 Majors and Russell had 350 wagons on the trail, and the next year they contracted to deliver 5 million pounds of freight. In 1858, a third partner having joined the firm, Russell, Majors, and Waddell contracted to deliver all freight turned over to them by the government. By 1860 they were the principal contractors freighting between Fort Leavenworth and Fort Union.

Alexander Majors was the greatest freighter ever produced by the Santa Fe Trail. In the partnership he was the "field man," the one who supervised the wagon trains. To his partners he left the business of promotion and finance. He developed freighting into an art and a science; therefore what he has to say about wagon freighting is the essence of what there is to know about it:

The organization of a full-fledged train for crossing the plains consisted of from twenty-five to twenty-six large wagons that would carry from three to three and a half tons each, the merchandise or contents of each wagon being protected by three sheets of thin ducking, such as is used for army tents. The number of cattle necessary to draw each wagon was twelve, making six yokes or pairs, and a prudent freighter would always have from twenty to thirty head of extra oxen . . . . In camping or stopping to allow the cattle to graze, a corral or pen of oblong shape is formed by the wagons . . . . When the cattle are driven into this corral or pen, each driver yokes his oxen, drives them out to his wagon, and gets ready to start. The entire train of cattle, including extras, generally numbered from 320 to 330 head and usually from four to five mules for riding and herding. The force of men for each train consisted of a wagonmaster, his assistant, the teamsters, a man to look after the extra cattle, and two or three extra men as a reserve. . . . I think perhaps there was never a set of laboring men in the world who enjoyed more uninterrupted good health than the teamsters upon the plains. They walked by the side of their teams, as it was impossible for them to ride and keep them moving with regularity. The average distance traveled with loaded wagons was from twelve to fifteen miles per day, although in some
instances, when roads were fine . . . I have known them to travel twenty miles. But this was faster traveling than they could keep up for any length of time. Returning with empty wagons they could average twenty miles a day without injury to the animals.

Oxen proved to be the cheapest and most reliable teams for long trips, where they had to live upon the grass. This was invariably the case. They did good daily work, gathered their own living, and if properly driven would travel 2,000 miles in a season . . . .

In contrast to the stereotyped and generally true picture of cursing, carousing wagonmasters and bullwhackers, Major's men were noted for trim appearance and moral behavior. He required them to sign an oath that forbade even cursing. Mistreatment of animals was strictly forbidden. As a result, the Majors trains were harmonious, well-drilled outfits. His men could yoke up in 16 minutes. There was always a guard of two men over the cattle. Each group of six or eight men formed into a mess, one of whom had no camp duty but cooking. No two trains ever camped together, else forage would be destroyed.

The bullwhackers were tremendous men. A contemporary describes their trademark:

The most peculiar part of their equipment was the formidable whip, its stock a good-sized, tough ash or pecan sapling nearly ten feet long, with a lash somewhat shorter, but fully two inches in diameter, ending in a buckskin thong. To wield this tremendous implement required all the strength of a man's loins.

The crack of these whips was like a pistol shot. And with precision the bullwhacker could raise a mist of blood and hair from the flank of a lagging ox. Their wonderful dexterity with the whip soon cleared out the rattlesnakes along the route of the trail. For all this they were paid $1 a day plus board.

1. Alexander Majors, Seventy Years on the Frontier (Chicago, 1893), 102, 103.
2. Quoted in Robert Glass Cleland, This Reckless Breed of Men (New York, 1952), 147.
By 1860 a tremendous volume of freight was flowing over the Cimarron Cutoff to supply the military posts and commercial outlets of the Southwest. After 1860, however, two factors influenced freighters to make increasing and ultimately almost exclusive use of the Mountain Route in the 1860's and 1870's.

First was the Civil War. Throughout the war years Union authorities in New Mexico expressed fear that Confederate guerrillas from Texas would attempt to cut the lines of supply and communication with the States. And although this threat never materialized, the mounting hostility of the plains Indians, combined with the scarcity of troops and their preoccupation with defense against Confederate invasion, made travel on the Cimarron Branch extremely dangerous. Col. E. R. S. Canby in June 1861 asked the Commanding Officer of Fort Larned, Kansas, to "advise trains passing that fort to keep up the Arkansas and come into New Mexico by the Raton route," and the following January formally requested the Commanding General of the Department of Kansas to issue orders directing all trains to use the Mountain Branch.  

Freighters thereafter increasingly avoided the Cimarron Cutoff. By 1866, according to one traveler, "The usual Route is by the Raton Pass and the Arkansas River."


2. Thirteen trains came to Fort Union during July and August 1861, following Canby's request. The first seven used the Cimarron Cutoff, the next six the Mountain Branch. Maj. William Chapman (Fort Union) to Anderson (Santa Fe), Aug. 18, 1861, NA, AC.

The Cimarron Cutoff never regained its favored status, for in 1865 the Kansas Pacific Railroad began building west from Kansas City. As its rails reached into western Kansas, the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail likewise moved west. From railhead to Santa Fe the Mountain Branch became the shortest and most convenient route.¹

Stagecoaches.²

After 1846 and until the railroad reached Santa Fe in 1880, stage-coaching was an important activity on the Santa Fe Trail. The coaches carried passengers, but the U. S. Mail contract made the business possible and it was as mail carriers that they were chiefly important. The first mail was carried under contract in 1849, and in July 1850 regular monthly service was inaugurated.³

Basis for the mail contracts that financed the stage line was an act of Congress in 1847 designating the Santa Fe Trail "from Independence via Bent's Fort, to Santa Fe" a post route. Throughout the 1850's, however, the stages consistently used the shorter Cimarron Cutoff. This is obvious from military correspondence of the period dealing mainly with mail escorts. After 1851 the stages probably left the Cimarron Cutoff at either the Canadian Crossing or at Wagon Mound and followed one of the trail branches to Fort Union, for Col. E. V. Sumner in that year requested the Postmaster General to send the Santa Fe-bound mail wagons

² Based on ibid.
³ LeRoy R. Hafen, The Overland Mail, 1849-1869 (Glendale, 1926), 70.
The stages are set up in elegant style . . . The team consists of six mules to each coach.

--Missouri Commonwealth, July 1850
by way of the fort and to appoint the local sutler postmaster of Port Union.¹

A reporter for the Missouri Commonwealth described the new stage between Independence and Santa Fe in July 1850:

The stages are got up in elegant style and are each arranged to convey eight passengers. The bodies are beautifully painted, and made water-tight, with the view to using them as boats in ferrying the streams. The team consists of six mules to each coach. The mail is guarded by eight men armed as follows: Each man has at his side, fastened in the stage, one of Colt's revolving rifles; in a holster below, one of Colt's long revolvers, and in his belt a small Colt's revolver, besides a hunting knife; so that these eight men are ready, in case of attack, to discharge one hundred and thirty six shots without having to reload. . . . Two of their stages will start from here the first of every month.²

Despite this glowing account, stagecoaching during the 1850's was primitive. There were few stations along the road, none between the Arkansas and the Mora. Passengers paid $150, were permitted 45 pounds of baggage, and had to eat and sleep on the ground. The fare included meals. A mail train consisted of from one to three wagons, depending on the amount of mail and baggage and the number of passengers. The train on which Attorney General Davis came to New Mexico in 1853 was made up of three wagons, one for passengers, one for mail, and one for baggage and provisions.³ In the 1850's the trip usually took 25 to 30 days, but throughout the decade the stages failed to maintain dependable

¹. Sumner to Postmaster General W. W. Hall, Aug. 1, 1851, NA, AC. Sumner pointed out that "It would be but a few miles farther than the present route, as this post is only six miles north of Barclay's Fort, which is one of their relay houses." As it was, the Colonel had to send a courier to Santa Fe, 100 miles distant to pick up the Port Union mail.


³. W. W. H. Davis, El Gringo; or, New Mexico and Her People (New York, 1857), 13-15; Hafen, Overland Mail, 72.
schedules. As late as 1860 the commander of the Department of New Mexico complained bitterly to the Postmaster General about the "great irregularity of the Mails."¹

Complaints about overland stage travel were many:

Twenty-four mortal days and nights--twenty-five being scheduled time--must be spent in that ambulance; passengers becoming crazy with whiskey, mixed with want of sleep, are often obliged to be strapped to their seats; their meals, dispatched during their ten minute halts, are simply abominable, the heats are excessive, the climate malarious; lamps may not be used at night for fear of non-existent Indians.²

A sure-fire method of handling passengers' grips was developed by one driver; "We had a way of managing them . . . when they got very obstreperous; all we had to do was to yell Indians; and that quieted them quicker than forty-rod whiskey does a man."³ The driver was captain of the expedition and he had unlimited authority, backed up by his guards. When women traveled on the stage, they were treated with great respect by male passengers, for the standard punishment for those who took liberties was to be set afoot, whether in dangerous Indian territory or not.⁴ Stagecoach travel was not for sissies. One traveler recounted how a runaway team pulled his coach down a steep stream bank, bouncing the body completely off the running gear. The mules bolted, dragging what was left behind them; the wheels flew off, and when the mules were caught they were joyfully dragging just the axles. One passenger was

¹. Col. T. T. Fauntleroy to Postmaster General, December 16, 1860, NA, AC.
². Quoted in Carl Coke Rister, The Southwestern Frontier, 1865-1881 (Cleveland, 1928), 45.
³. Hafen, Overland Mail, 235.
badly cut and the others were stunned, but in one hour, after patching
the stagecoach together, they again hit the trail.¹

Jacob Hall won the mail contract in 1854 and again in 1858, when he
inaugurated semi-monthly service. The first contract was for $10,990
a year, the second, because of mounting Indian hostility, for $39,999.
Hall's contract was apparently not renewed at the end of the second 4
years, for by 1863 the Barlow-Sanderson Overland Mail and Express Company
was operating stages between Kansas City and Santa Fe. This company ran
weekly coaches in both directions, and gradually evolved a service much
superior to its predecessors. Because of the Civil War and the increasing
settlement of the upper Arkansas country, the Barlow-Sanderson line adopted
the Bent's Fort route. By the late 1860's relay stations had been built
and staffed at frequent intervals along the way, reducing the time from
Kansas City to Santa Fe to 13 days and 6 hours. Half-hour stop home
stations on the route from Bent's Fort to Santa Fe were located at Bent
Canyon, Trinidad, Red River (the Clifton House at the Mountain Branch
crossing of the Canadian), Rayado, Sapello Crossing, and San Jose. Ten-
minute stop relay stations included Wootton's House in Raton Pass, Ocate
Crossing, and another station 3 miles north of Fort Union. The eastern
terminus of the line moved west with the railroad in the late 1860's, and
finally, with completion of the Santa Fe Railroad to Santa Fe in 1880, the
firm went out of business.²

¹. Davis, El Gringo, 17.
². Hafen, Overland Mail, 278; Nolie Mumey, Bent's Old Fort and Bent's
New Fort on the Arkansas River, Vol. I of Old Forts and Trading Posts of
the West (Denver, 1956), 113-120. The stage stations in New Mexico are
located on the Wheeler map of 1875 (see Bibliography).
The Santa Fe stage was the quickest mode of transport between Missouri and New Mexico. It was the pioneer stage route across the plains, the forerunner of the great overland routes that followed.

In short, the overland stage and mail from Missouri to New Mexico was an important factor in keeping the southwest territories in constant touch with the rest of the United States, and remained so until displaced by its more famous successors, the telegraph and the railroad.¹

Emigrants

In contrast to the Oregon Trail, an emigrant road from the beginning, the Santa Fe Trail was primarily a route of commerce throughout its history. Nevertheless, emigrants did use it, especially during the 1849 gold rush to California and the 1858 stampede to the Colorado gold fields. The Forty-niners who used the Santa Fe route came mainly by way of the Cimarron Cutoff. Between April and September 1849, about 2,500 emigrants from at least 10 States went to California via the Santa Fe Trail. From Santa Fe they took Cooke's Wagon Road (blazed by the Mormon Battalion in 1846-47), Kearny's Trail (the route of the First Dragoons in 1846), or the Old Spanish Trail through Utah and Nevada.² The Colorado rush populated the Colorado country in the late 1850's, making use of the Mountain Branch of the trail as far as the site of Old Bent's Fort, then striking northward to Pueblo and Denver.³

Though the Anglo population of New Mexico grew slowly immediately following the Mexican War, there was a constant flow of small bodies of

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¹ Bieber, "Some Aspects of the Santa Fe Trade," 166.
² Ralph P. Bieber, ed., Southern Trails to California in 1849, (Glendale, 1937), 51.
emigrants to Santa Fe—mainly merchants, mechanics, and artisans to service the army population. In time this migration would increase as New Mexico and Arizona filled with ranchers and farmers from Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Texas, and the South.

Military Protection of the Trail—Mexican War to Civil War

By the terms of the Indian Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834, a permanent Indian country was set up between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains. Here, in the "Great American Desert," the Indians would be free to live their nomadic lives, insulated from harmful contact with the white man. This beneficent policy had no chance from the beginning, for the greater part of Great American Desert was not a desert at all. The white man could not be kept out. The Mexican War opened the gates for a flood of soldiers, settlers, and gold seekers who would stream across the plains until the frontier had vanished, and with it the nomadic life of the Indian. With the disruption of his way of life—the destruction of his game, the loss of his ancestral lands—the Indian struck back blindly at the white juggernaut that was crushing him. Military protection of the Santa Fe Trail was part of this larger story of the vanishing frontier.¹

The events of 1846-47 illustrate the Indian problem. Big Timbers, east of Bent's Old Fort on the Arkansas, was a favorite camping spot of the Southern Plains Tribes. Here in the shade and shelter of giant cottonwoods, they found game aplenty, winter and summer. The army, and the traders, teamsters, and settlers that followed it, desecrated Big

¹. Frederick L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier, 1763-1893 (Boston, 1924), 276-285,493.
Timbers. They scared the game away, they fouled the water, and they indiscriminantly cut the trees. This is but one example.

In 1846 and 1847, the Indians retaliated. They had fair game in the inexperienced teamsters hired by the army. These novices had had no experience contesting the right-of-way with Pawnees, Kiowas, and Comanches. They suffered as they learned. In the summer of 1847 alone, Indians killed 47 Americans, destroyed 330 wagons, and stole 6,500 animals on the Santa Fe Trail. They practically closed the Cimarron Cutoff and made the Mountain Branch a dangerous hazard. Heeding the need for protection, the government detailed a battalion of troops in September 1847 to guard the trains. Most of these troops concentrated at a temporary post called Fort Mann near the Arkansas Crossings. Others escorted trains to Bent's Fort. Later, troop details from New Mexico escorted the wagons through Raton Pass.¹

There had been two theories of military protection on the plains ever since Riley's escort of 1829. One advocated roving columns—a mobile police force making "demonstrations" and fighting random battles. The other favored fixed-point defenses in the form of a string of forts located at strategic spots, with escorts between them as needed. In 1847 the theories were tested and the roving column was found ineffective.² As a result, through the 1850's and early 1860's, forts and escorts were the prime instruments of military protection on the trail.

Fort Atkinson, the successor of Fort Mann near the Arkansas Crossings, was the first real fort on the trail (excluding Forts Leavenworth and Marcy at the trail termini). It was founded in 1850 and finally abandoned in 1854. On the mail route from Independence to Santa Fe, it was the "half-way house" on the trail. It was valuable as a stopping and resting place, and as a rallying point in time of danger. Its disestablishment for economy reasons in 1854 caused the New Mexico Territorial Legislature to memorialize Congress. The New Mexicans said that the post was "absolutely necessary," for, "From Council Grove . . . to Fort Union . . . , a distance of six hundred miles, the country is entirely unsettled and swarming with hostile Indians." But since the Kiowas and Comanches were not actively hostile during the mid-1850's, the fort was not reestablished.

Fort Union, established in July 1851, was the second fort on the trail. In 1851 and 1852 troops from Fort Union escorted caravans to and from the Arkansas. After 1852, protection took the form of military escorts for the Independence-Santa Fe Mail. The escorts, usually 20 to 40 men, accompanied the mail caravan in wagons; thus they were better protected in case of attack and had less of a problem with the scant forage along the Cimarron Cutoff.

2. Laws of the Territory of New Mexico, 1853-54, 182-84.
There was no safety between Council Grove and the Canadian.

--R. L. Duffus
Meanwhile the traders and freighters had resumed their old pre-Mexican War defensive tactics—large trains with military organization—and were again taking care of themselves. This was possible because after the first impact of the Mexican War, the Indians had settled down to a grudging form of peace that allowed strong parties to move through their lands without intense danger. The prevailing spirit of the times is captured in this advice of a traveler during the fifties:

The best advice that I can give . . . is to treat . . . [the Indians] well invariably. If they come in bands of three or four, feed them—or if in bands of two or three hundred, feed their chief men. Watch them constantly or they will steal everything you have. Trade with them freely if you need their mocassins, robes or belts; but keep your arms in good order, and always ready for use. Be kind, and yet cautious, and you will have no trouble with them.1

Throughout the decade following the war, however, small parties continued to be picked off. The White Massacre near Point of Rocks in 1849 and the Mail Train Massacre at Wagon Mound in 1850 were only the most notable of these incidents.

The Colorado Gold Rush of 1858 opened a new chapter in military protection on the Santa Fe Trail. The streams of gold seekers, often traveling in small parties, invited attack. Indian depredations increased. In response to these attacks, two new trail guardians were established in 1859, Fort Larned on the Pawnee Fork, and Fort Wise—renamed Fort Lyon—near Bent's New Fort2 at Big Timbers.

There were now three permanent posts on the trail—Fort Union, Fort Larned, and Fort Lyon. Throughout the dangerous years that were about to commence, these three posts would bear the burden of keeping the Santa Fe Trail open.

2. William Bent abandoned the old fort in 1849 and moved his trading operations to the more favorable Big Timbers location.
Military Protection of the Trail—Civil War and After

From 1860 to 1867 the trail was primarily a military highway, with conflicts raging all the way from the Missouri border to New Mexico. At the eastern end of the trail the border ruffians—bushwhackers, Red Legs, guerillas, and Jayhawkers—kept escorts from Fort Leavenworth busy. They protected trains that used the "Government Lane" branch of the trail from Leavenworth to near the Oregon Trail-Santa Fe Trail junction. Toward the central and western part of the trail, Confederate raiders and invaders were a constant threat. And along the entire route Indians raised havoc, taking advantage of the white man's internecine strife.¹

Early in the war a general order from Washington withdrew most regular troops from the frontier outposts. Henceforth volunteer units would bear the burden of trail protection.² Even before the war began, Kiowas and Comanches were aware that the tempo of army activities had slowed at the frontier forts. With secession in the air, enthusiasm for Indian fighting—never great—dwindled.

In October 1859 the mail from Independence to Santa Fe failed to arrive on schedule. As a result practically the entire Fort Union garrison escorted the next eastbound stage to the Arkansas, meeting the westbound stage and escorting it back to Fort Union. On December 4, at Cold Spring in the Oklahoma Panhandle, Kiowas attacked the mail wagon and escort, wounding one soldier and keeping the caravan pinned down with long-range rifle fire for several hours. These were the beginnings of the Kiowa-

² Twitchell, Leading Facts of New Mexican History, III, 407.
Comanche raids that made travel on the Cimarron Cutoff a dangerous undertaking throughout the Civil War years.

To meet the Indian challenge, a new system was devised for escorting the mail caravans. Troops from Fort Union escorted eastbound mail about half way to the Arkansas and there met an escort from Fort Larned with the westbound mail. The detachments then switched caravans and took them back to their home bases.

In an attempt to halt the Kiowa-Comanche raids, Col. Thomas T. Fauntleroy, commanding the Department of New Mexico, authorized the commanding officer at Fort Union, Lt. Col. George B. Crittenden, to strike the Indians whenever he had the opportunity. In December 1860, Crittenden led 88 men of the Regiment of Mounted Rifles against a war party that had been harrassing the Mountain Branch. Pursuing the Indians east as they swung toward the Cimarron Cutoff, Crittenden, on January 2, 1861, surprised a 175 lodge Kiowa-Comanche camp 10 miles north of Cold Spring. Ten Indians were killed and their village was destroyed at a cost of four wounded soldiers, Crittenden among them. Crittenden's blow was effective in keeping the Kiowas and Comanches relatively quiet until 1864. But sporadic raids and the threat of Confederate attacks pushed most of the Santa Fe Trail traffic northward to the more protected Mountain Branch. In fact, military authorities at Fort Larned began ordering caravans to take the Raton route.¹

Increasing danger on the trail was a direct threat to the lifeline of the Federal forces in New Mexico. In June 1861, the new commander in

¹ Twitchell, Leading Facts of New Mexican History, III, 408.
New Mexico, Col. E. R. S. Canby took two steps to protect his line of supply and communications. He organized parties of Mexican spies who operated south of the Santa Fe Trail to give warning of Confederate movements. And he dispatched troops along both the Cimarron and Mountain Branches of the trail to escort freight caravans to Fort Union. It is noteworthy that not since the Mexican War had freight trains required escorts.

These patrols and escorts operated throughout the winter of 1861 and the summer of 1862. By August of 1862 a system of patrols was covering the Mountain Branch—troops from Fort Union escorting trains to Raton Pass, and detachments from Fort Lyon picking the freighters up there and escorting them to the Arkansas toward Fort Larned. Troops from Fort Larned continued to cooperate with those from Forts Union and Lyon throughout this period.

That Canby utilized his slim forces for escort duty during 1861 and 1862 is a measure of his deep concern over keeping the Santa Fe Trail open. For these were the critical Civil War years in New Mexico. Texans under Lt. Col. John R. Baylor occupied southern New Mexico in the summer of 1861, and the Confederate brigade of Brig. Gen. Henry H. Sibley began to push north in February 1862. The invasion of New Mexico was the first step in a grand design for detaching the West from the Union and extending the Confederacy to the Pacific. Success would result in the capture of large stores of Federal property, bring new manpower to the Confederate cause, and, vastly more important, divert the flow of western gold and silver from the Federal to the Confederate Treasury.
Col. Canby's Federal army concentrated at Fort Craig to meet the Southerners. At the battle of Valverde on February 21 Sibley defeated Canby and, while the Federals remained at Craig, drove on to Albuquerque and Santa Fe. The next objective was Fort Union, with its depot containing $300,000 in stores, the only obstacle between Santa Fe and Denver. Appreciating the danger to Colorado posed by Sibley, Governor William Gilpin had hurriedly raised a regiment of volunteers and sent them by forced marches through the winter snows of Raton Pass to reinforce the weak garrison at Fort Union. They arrived at the fort March 11-13. Under Col. John B. Slough, 1,300 infantry, cavalry, and artillery set forth to meet the Confederates advancing from Santa Fe. Because Sibley was in Albuquerque, Lt. Col. W. R. Scurry commanded the 1,100 Texans. The two armies, both brigade size, met in Glorieta Pass, a defile in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains by which the Santa Fe Trail reached its destination.

The battle began in the pass on March 26 when the Union advance guard, 418 men under Maj. John M. Chivington, encountered a southern advance guard under Maj. C. S. Pyron in Apache Canyon. In several hours of hard fighting, Chivington succeeded in pushing the Texans back to Johnson's Ranch, at the western end of the pass. The approach of night, however, caused him to break contact and fall back to Pigeons' Ranch, then, because of insufficient water, farther east to Kozlowski's Ranch. On the 27th Colonel Scurry and the main Texan force reached Johnson's Ranch, and the next day Slough joined Chivington at Kozlowski's Ranch with the rest of the Coloradoans.
Col. E. R. S. Canby defended New Mexico against Confederate invasion in 1862. The decisive battle of the campaign occurred in Glorieta Pass on the Santa Fe Trail. National Archives.


Gen. James H. Carleton commanded the Department of New Mexico from 1862 to 1866 and developed the escort system for Santa Fe caravans to its highest point. Museum of New Mexico.

Slough and Scurry advanced at the same time and met on the morning of the 28th at Pigeon's Ranch. They fought indecisively all day, while Major Chivington worked a stratagem that won the battle for Slough. With seven companies, Chivington made his way through mountainous terrain around the Confederate flank with the objective of falling on the enemy rear. From a bluff overlooking Johnson's Ranch, at the western entrance to the pass, he discovered the Confederate supply train, 73 wagons and 500-600 mules and horses, guarded by a small detachment. The Federals charged, destroyed the wagons, killed the animals, then withdrew to Kozlowski's Ranch.

Loss of his supplies forced Scurry to turn back, leaving the field to Slough. Joined by Sibley, the army retreated down the Rio Grande, avoiding Canby, and returned to Texas. Compared to the great conflicts in the East, Glorieta Pass in numbers engaged and losses (150 Federal, 400 Confederate), was a small skirmish. Yet the issues were large, and the battle decisive in resolving them. The Confederates very likely would have taken Fort Union and Denver had not the Colorado Volunteers stopped them at Glorieta.¹

When Canby went east to other duty in September 1862, Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton, who had led the California Column to New Mexico, took command of the department and retained it until the end of the war.

¹ Battle narrative based on William C. Whitford, Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War: New Mexico Campaign in 1862 (Denver, 1906); Robert Lee Kerby, The Confederate Invasion of New Mexico and Arizona (Los Angeles, 1958); J. F. Santee, "The Battle of La Glorieta Pass," New Mexico Historical Review, VI (January, 1911); Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. IX.
A Hot Trail, by Charles Schreyvogel. Denver Public Library Western Collection.
The Rear Guard, by Charles Schreyvogel. Denver Public Library Western Collection.
He appreciated the importance of the Santa Fe Trail, and, from previous experience patrolling it from Fort Union in 1851 and 1852, was familiar with the problems involved in its protection. He believed that troops should be temporarily stationed on the most dangerous sections of the trail, and recommended to the Adjutant General in May and again in July 1863 that four companies be placed at Cold Spring and four at the Lower Springs of the Cimarron.

This plan called for reinforcements and seems not to have been adopted until 1864, by which time the plains were in the throes of a disastrous Indian uprising, with Kiowas, Comanches, and Cheyennes attacking trains between the Arkansas and Fort Union. In the summer of 1864 Carleton stationed 50 cavalrmen and 50 infantrymen at the crossing of the Arkansas, an equal force at Lower Cimarron Springs, and 50 cavalrymen and 30 infantrymen at Upper Cimarron Springs. He also sent one company to Fort Lyon and one to Gray's Ranch on the Purgatoire River in Colorado, to police the Mountain Branch.

Carleton next decided to strike at the home country of the Indians who were raiding on the Santa Fe Trail. Late in November 1864, he sent Col. Kit Carson and the First New Mexico Cavalry, fresh from victory over the Navahos, into the Texas panhandle, heart of the Kiowa-Comanche country. On November 25 the troops attacked a large camp of Kiowas on the Canadian River near the ruins of William Bent's old trading post. Joined by Comanches, the Kiowas counterattacked and besieged Carson in the ruins. The Battle of Adobe Walls raged all day, but mountain howitzers kept the Indians at bay. At dusk the troops burned the Kiowa village and withdrew.
Climaxing the year of bloodshed was Col. John M. Chivington's massacre of Black Kettle's Cheyenne band on Sand Creek. Chivington's Colorado Volunteers marched to the Sand Creek village from Fort Lyon and attacked the Indians at dawn, November 29. This band was negotiating peace at the time and allowed the soldiers to approach to the village with no resistance. Then ensued a brutal massacre of men, women, and children that was later to be denounced by a Congressional investigation. A frontier already volatile exploded into increased Indian warfare as a result of this ill-considered attack. The Cheyennes would, for years to come, ravage western Kansas and the Santa Fe Trail.¹

Aside from the controversy stirred up by the Chivington Massacre, the expeditions of 1864 were pivotal in the development of Indian warfare. Henceforth the army would follow this pattern of attacking the Indians' winter encampments. It was this strategy that eventually crushed the plains tribes.

Meanwhile, military authorities all along the trail were making plans to protect caravans during the 1865 travel season. General Carleton had hoped to establish temporary camps during the summer of 1865 at Lower Cimarron Springs, Cold Spring, Rabbit Ear Creek, and Whetstone Creek near Point of Rocks, but, probably because of insufficient men, modified this plan. Instead, on February 8, 1865, he published the following notice:²

To the people:

Owing to Indian difficulties upon the roads leading from New Mexico to the States, a company of troops will leave Port Union, New Mexico, for Fort Larned, Kansas, on the first and fifteenth of every month, until further orders, commencing on the first day of March, 1865. The first company will go by the Raton mountain route, the second by the Cimarron route, and so on, alternately. The merchants and others who wish to send trains in after goods can assemble their trains at such points near Port Union as may be desired by them /La Junta was the usual rendezvous/, so as to have the protection of these periodical escorts, if such be their wish. Arrangements will be made with Major General Curtis, commanding the department of Kansas, so as to send these companies back from Fort Larned at such times as may best promote the interests and safety of all who may have trains upon the road coming in this direction.

By command of General Carleton:

Ben. C. Butler,
Assistant Adjutant General.

On January 24 Carleton had written to Maj. Gen. Samuel R. Curtis, commanding the Department of Kansas. His letter set forth the minimum requirements for protecting the trail during the coming season. Essentially, he requested that Curtis guard the trail east from the Arkansas Crossing, while he, Carleton, would provide protection west from that point. Curtis had troops available at Fort Dodge--built in 1864 near the Arkansas Crossing, at Fort Larned, and at Fort Zarah--also built in 1864 on Walnut Creek. He set up an escort system between Council Grove and the Arkansas Crossing that complemented Carleton’s escorts from Fort Union. Later in 1865, Fort Aubrey was built in western Kansas to provide a mid-point for escorts on the Mountain Branch between Forts Dodge and Lyon.

Carleton's ambitious escort system put such a drain on his limited manpower that he had to discontinue the service after only 2 months. To compensate, he ordered Col. Kit Carson, with two companies of the First New Mexico Cavalry and a company of California Volunteers, to leave Fort Union on May 20 and establish a cantonment at Cedar Bluff or Cold Spring on the Cimarron Cutoff. Carson was to occupy this camp throughout the 1865 travel season and protect trains passing to and from the States. Near Cedar Spring Carson's men built Camp Nichols, a fort consisting of stone officers' quarters and walled tents surrounded by stone breastworks banked with earth. The first escort left Camp Nichols on June 19 and accompanied a caravan of 70 wagons to Fort Larned. Camp Nichols furnished escorts to caravans for the remainder of the season, then was abandoned in late September.

The extensive system of forts and escorts in 1864-65 was the climax of military protection on the Santa Fe Trail. Indian warfare continued into the 1870's and sporadic raids swirled about the trail, with occasional bloody attacks on freight and mail caravans. Escorts were a fixture throughout this period. But never again did the trail suffer the heavy depredations of 1864-65. With the advance of the railhead westward, the dangerous Cimarron Cutoff was bypassed in the late sixties. Trail traffic shifted to the safer Mountain Branch. The army mounted campaigns against the Kiowas, Comanches, and Cheyennes in 1868-69 and again in 1874-75, but not in the locale of the Santa Fe Trail and not primarily because of depredations on the trail.¹

¹. The foregoing account is heavily based, in part verbatim, on Robert M. Utley's "Fort Union and the Santa Fe Trail," New Mexico Historical Review, XXXVI (January, 1961), 36-48.
Last Days of the Trail

"A few years ago," said the Junction City Union in August 1867, the freight wagons and oxen passing through Council Grove were counted by thousands, the value of merchandise by millions. But the shriek of the iron horse has silenced the lowing of the panting ox and the old Trail looks desolate. The track of the commerce of the plains has changed and with the change is [sic] destined to come other changes better and more blessed.1

The Civil War had released the industrial energies of the Nation, and foremost among them was the great surge of the railroads across the plains. The railroads broke distance into pieces. The old trails had thrived on distance, on isolation, on wilderness. Trails of mud and dust could not compete against the trails of steel that now stretched westward from the Missouri.

The Kansas Pacific reached Topeka and Junction City in 1865, and thereafter continued rapidly westward—shifting far enough south to get the Santa Fe trade. By 1867 the Santa Fe Trail east of Fort Larned was out of business. Shortly, the Cimarron Cutoff was bypassed and remaining wagon traffic stuck to the Mountain Branch exclusively.

The old trail, once the path of empire, now became a servant of the railroad. Cut off at the roots, it bent and writhed across the plains, from railhead to railhead, ever westward. In 1870 the Kansas Pacific reached Kit Carson, Colorado, and this became the eastern terminus of the trail. Financial backing for the railway lagged for a while and the pause gave the remnant of the Santa Fe Trail a short lease on life. But no mistake, the trail was now a spur line of the railroad.

1. Quoted in Duffus, The Santa Fe Trail, 258.

82-I
The view from our camp [near the summit of Raton Pass] is inexpressibly beautiful, and reminds persons of the landscapes of Palestine.

Lt. William H. Emory
The pause gave Richens (Uncle Dick) Wootton a few more years to collect tolls on his improved wagon road over Raton Pass. In 1864 Uncle Dick had seen that the pass would be the main artery of travel between Colorado and New Mexico. In 1865, armed with a charter from the Territorial Legislature of Colorado, he gathered an army of Mexican laborers and began blasting out the overhangs and hairpin curves of the trail in Raton Pass. His toll gate began swinging in 1866.¹

But time was short. The Kansas Pacific reached West Las Animas near the site of Bent's Old Fort in 1873. On a clear day, one could almost see the belching smoke of the engines from Raton Pass.

Meanwhile, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railway was following up the Arkansas. It got to Granada, Colorado, in 1873, paused for breath then pushed on to join the Kansas Pacific at La Junta in 1876. The Denver and Rio Grande shot a steel tentacle south from Pueblo to El Moro in that same year. For a while, El Moro, near modern Trinidad, was the trail terminus. Then, in 1878, the Santa Fe won the right-of-way through Raton Pass. It pushed on to Las Vegas the next year. Finally, on February 9, 1880, the first train entered Santa Fe. The old trail was now a part of history.²

Conclusion

Today the historic sites and landmarks of the Santa Fe Trail hint at

¹ Bess McKinnan, "The Toll Road Over Raton Pass," New Mexico Historical Review, II (January, 1927), 83-89.
its turbulent history. The Palace of the Governors still stands in Santa Fe--Pike, Becknell, Gregg, Webb, Armijo, Kearny, and Kit Carson knew this place. The plaza where the wagons congregated is now a manicured city park; but on a quiet morning one can frame one's eyes and mind and shut out the modern. And over great stretches of the trail one can follow the grass-grown ruts from landmark to landmark--Rabbit Ears and Wagon Mound are still guides to travelers. One can visit the springs and the isolated, wild places where the old forts stood--where their ruins still stand. Raton Pass is much the same, just a few feet from the highway. Council Grove preserves its heritage. Arrow Rock still recalls the pioneer days of the trail.

And so, though the wagons have long ceased to roll, the old trail still lives for those with the imagination and the energy to trace its history and its still plain course.

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And when the night has drawn its veil
The teams plod, span on span,
And one sees o'er the long dead trail
A ghostly caravan.

--Arthur Chapman
'In all this distance the river is the guide'.

'South Bend. This route unsafe in very dry weather'.

'From the lower to the upper spring travel up this creek, mostly north of it'.

'Boundary line between the United States and Mexico'.

'Annotated copy of Surveyor Joseph C. Brown 1827 map of the Santa Fé Road - approximately one-fourth size of original in the National Archives.'
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\[\begin{align*}
\text{\textit{Stephens, F. F., ed., "Major Alphonso Wetmore's Diary of a Journey to Santa Fe, 1828," Missouri Historical Review, VIII (July, 1914), 177-97. Another of the classic early diaries during the trail-breaking phase of the trail's history.}} \\
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PART II

SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

Though the great days of the Santa Fe Trail ended nearly 100 years ago, its history and its route can be reconstructed by means of the 53 sites studied during the course of this survey. Methods of investigation were varied and comprehensive. Documentary sources, with heavy emphasis on primary material, gave the initial data on route, history, and description of particular sites. Historical maps were compared with modern topographical maps to relate sites to present road systems and towns. Aerial maps were used to pinpoint trail remains—especially abundant on the western half of the trail. And finally, every site listed was visited, either in 1958 during a preliminary survey of trail sites, or during the October 1962 survey which preceded the writing of this study.

Many types of sites are included in the listings—terminii cities, trail remains, forts, stage stops, rendezvous and outfitting points, campsites, river crossings, trail junctions, and physical landmarks. Each type illustrates a particular facet of trail history. Together, properly understood, they can make the great wagon trains roll again in the mind's eye.

Those sites chosen for exceptional value classification are meant to provide as wide a spectrum of trail history as possible, given sites with integrity, along with a geographic distribution that does justice to the trail's sub-continental span. Fortunately every State the trail
traversed can be represented, for the wagons left an imprint that has survived a century. True, the greatest concentration of sites is in New Mexico. This is understandable, for during the greater part of the trail's history the Missouri frontier opened upon 700 miles of unbroken wilderness. Only at the far end of the journey did the towns and structures of man greet the traveler's eye. And in the natural grandeur of New Mexico's high plains, where they meet the outposts of the Rockies, the great landmarks of the trail are found. But in Oklahoma and Colorado and Kansas are found the life-saving springs, and the string of forts that protected the trail. At Council Grove is the traders' general rendezvous. At Arrow Rock is the trail's dawning.

It might be thought that the Santa Fe Trail is too restricted a segment of American history to merit the number of sites proposed for exceptional value. But the significance of the trail is broad. It illustrates the total scope of Westward Expansion: trappers and traders, diplomacy and war, territorial acquisition, emigrants and gold seekers, Indian warfare, the advance of civilization into the wilderness. Amongst this profusion of basic themes the broader history of the Nation at large is interwoven. What is the meaning of Manifest Destiny if the Santa Fe Trail and the history that flowed along its ruts are subtracted? How understand the economic and romantic motives that irresistably drove Americans into the sunset without the Santa Fe Trail? Even hemispheric affairs cannot be properly understood today without knowledge of the Mexican cession--and the Santa Fe Trail was the avenue of conquest that made that cession reality.
Here is a great story, in this trail of hardship and golden promise. Its place in the American heritage should not be neglected. Its landmarks and historic sites should receive their due. Taken together and visited in proper sequence the sites listed below have enormous collective value for investing with reality and meaning the trail to Santa Fe.

Given the importance of sequence, sites in each category are listed east to west (1) from Missouri to the Cimarron Crossing, (2) from the crossing to Santa Fe via the Cimarron Cutoff, and (3) from the crossing to Fort Union via the Mountain Branch.
SITES OF EXCEPTIONAL VALUE
ARROW ROCK, MISSOURI

Location. In Saline County, 12 miles northwest of U. S. 40 (Interstate 70) on State Route 41.

Ownership. State of Missouri and various private.

Significance. Arrow Rock was the rendezvous for the Boon's Lick traders who opened the Santa Fe Trail. It is the outstanding site in the State of Missouri to commemorate the beginning of the trade.

A river crossing since Indian days, Arrow Rock figured prominently in the trail breaking expeditions that opened the West, beginning with the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804. By 1817 a ferry crossed the Missouri River at Arrow Rock. Within 2 years traffic was so heavy that the county court ordered a road laid out from the ferry to Cooper's Fort. This road was later incorporated into the post road from Arrow Rock to Fort Osage, and became the great thoroughfare of the early traders.

From the vicinity of present Boonville and Old Franklin, the traders came by road and ferry to Arrow Rock. Here, in a valley watered by the Santa Fe Spring, they organized their caravans and prepared for the long journey to Santa Fe. Both of the pioneering Becknell expeditions rendezvoused here, as did the other major caravans of the early 1820's.

Driven by the panic of the 1820's to find an outlet for their produce and merchandise, Boon's Lick farmers and merchants turned to the Santa Fe trade. From New Mexico they brought back silver, gold, mules, and furs. These returns stimulated the Missouri economy and helped to extend settlement westward. Based largely on the Santa Fe trade, Missouri
Above: At Arrow Rock, Mo., the ca. 1820 road leading from ferry landing to traders' rendezvous on bluffs above Missouri River.

Below: Santa Fe Spring, the rendezvous at Arrow Rock.
became the supply depot and port of embarkation for expansion into the Far West.

Arrow Rock, the earliest rendezvous of the traders, symbolizes the early trade and the vast movement west which it spawned better than any remaining site. For this reason, and because the beginnings of the trade are nowhere else properly commemorated, Arrow Rock rates exceptional value classification.

Present Status. Important sites associated with the Santa Fe Trail are encompassed by Arrow Rock State Park. The rocky bluff where the ferry tied up and for which the site was named today overlooks bottomland of the shifting Missouri. Remains of the old road from the ferry landing wind up the valley of Santa Fe Spring to the top of the bluffs. Santa Fe Spring is enclosed in a tasteful shelter, and the surrounding rendezvous area is in natural vegetation--grassy meadows in the valley, trees on the slopes. The town of Arrow Rock, though post-dating the significant trail period, has many associations with later trail days. Among these is the Arrow Rock Tavern, from the 1830's on a favorite resort for those enroute to the trail termini at Independence and Westport. The town from its beginning has been a refuge for writers and artists, among them the famous painter of rural and river Americana, George Caleb Bingham. His home is preserved in the park. Bypassed by highways and railroads, Arrow Rock today is withdrawn from the present, a living historical monument.

FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS

Location. Leavenworth County on the Missouri River.


Significance. Fort Leavenworth was established in 1827 to protect the Santa Fe Trail. For more than 50 years this post was command headquarters for military protection of the trail, base for trail escorts, and, from the Mexican War on, center for the great wagon freighting operation that supplied Southwestern military posts. Beyond these direct associations with the Santa Fe Trail, Fort Leavenworth served throughout the Indian Wars as nerve center for the far-flung system of frontier defenses in the West. Here were made the decisions that brought into being Forts Zarah, Larned, Dodge, Atkinson, Aubrey, Lyon, and Union—all protectors of the Santa Fe Trail.

Major Bennett Riley's first escort on the trail jumped off from Cantonment Leavenworth in 1829. So did Capt. Clifton Wharton's dragoon escort of 1834, Col. Henry Dodge's Rocky Mountain Expedition of 1835, and Capt. Philip St. George Cooke's Texas border patrol of 1843. Based on Fort Leavenworth, the Fremont and Kearny Expeditions of 1844-45 mapped the invasion route to New Mexico, over the Santa Fe Trail.

At Fort Leavenworth Col. Stephen Watts Kearny assembled the Army of the West. With this 1,650-man force of dragoons and Missouri Volunteers Kearny conquered New Mexico in 1846, by way of the Santa Fe Trail. From Santa Fe, Kearny's army spread over the western deserts to California, to Chihuahua—and by right of occupancy made certain Mexico's cession of the Southwest to the United States.
Fort Leavenworth, 1881. National Archives.
When the Mexican War ended the United States was obligated to protect its new citizens from raiding Indians. Forts, camps, and Indian agencies soon scattered over the vast landscape of the conquest, and Fort Leavenworth became a great depot—supplying its military progeny and the Indian agencies by way of wagon trains over the Santa Fe Trail. In 1858 government contracts with private freighters called for hauling as much as 10 million pounds of freight from Fort Leavenworth to the New Mexican frontier. Fort Leavenworth was literally flooded with barrels, boxes, and bales of supplies waiting for the wagons that would carry them across the plains. In the heyday of military freighting, 1,000-plus wagons a year were employed in this task.

The Civil War brought the jayhawker and the redleg and the bushwhacker to the Kansas-Missouri frontier. Kansas City became a hotbed of intrigue and violence. It was no place for private traders and freighters, so they shifted to Leavenworth City, which, with the fort, became eastern terminus of the trail in the years 1861-63. Troops from Fort Leavenworth escorted the traders through the border ruffian country, using Government Lane, the spur of the trail running south from Fort Leavenworth and connecting with the main trail near Gardner at the junction of the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails.

In 1862 Confederate invasion of New Mexico threatened the Union's hold on the Southwest. From Fort Leavenworth came the war materials that gave New Mexican and Colorado Volunteers the where-withal to destroy the Confederate campaign of conquest.

The railroad's rapid push west after the Civil War spelled finis for the wagon freight depots on the Missouri River. But Fort Leavenworth
continued until the trail's last days as the command post for military protection. The railroad chopped up the isolation of the plains, brought civilization to the wilderness, destroyed forever the open spaces that had sheltered the Indian. Thus ended the trail and Fort Leavenworth's role as its protector.

Present Status. Fort Leavenworth is an active military post and headquarters for the Army Command and General Staff College. Several noteworthy structures survive. These include the Post Chapel, erected in 1878; the original home of the General School for Officers, now the Command and General Staff College; the enlisted men's barracks dating from the 1880's; the Syracuse House, constructed in the late 1860's; and a portion of the Fort's original wall. One of the old cavalry stables now houses a transportation museum, which includes exhibits relating directly to the Santa Fe Trail.

Location. In Morris County on U. S. 56.

Ownership. Various public and private.

Significance. Council Grove was the most important way-point on the route to Santa Fe. Situated on the Neosho River, where rolling prairies gave way to the Great Plains, it was a natural stopping place, well-watered, with abundant grass and timber.

Gregg states that Council Grove was the "general rendezvous" of the traders:

It is usual for the traders to travel thus far in detached parties, and to assemble there for the purpose of entering into some form of organization, for mutual security and defence during the remainder of the journey. It was from thence that the formation of the Caravan was to be dated . . .

The grove comprised a wide band of timber along the Neosho River, including most of the hardwoods found in the east—oak, hickory, walnut. It was about 150 trail miles west of Independence. The beauty of the spot captivated even hardened soldiers like John T. Hughes, who described it as a "pleasant and romantic valley."

Council Grove was named in 1825 when, in the shade of its giant oaks, the Government Survey Commissioners made treaties with the Osages that guaranteed the caravans safe passage through the Indians' territory. But later the name referred to the grand councils of the traders. Their politicking for the positions of caravan captain and division lieutenants

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1. Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 26.
2. John T. Hughes, Doniphan's Expedition, 40.

11-II
Council Grove, 1860's, showing Shamleffer & James trading post. Kansas State Historical Society.
was noisy and spirited—frontier democracy at its best, and worst. The wordy warfare and intrigue that accompanied these campaigns was the worst. But the social compact entered into by each caravan was a renewal of an honored Anglo-Saxon tradition centuries old. The quasi-military organization that emerged made a large caravan practically invulnerable to Indian threats—at least during most of the trail's history.

In many respects, Council Grove was a watershed on the trail: It marked the east boundary of the arid plains that extended to the Rockies. Past Council Grove there was no hardwood; thus it was common practice to cut spare axles and stow them under the wagons here. Beyond Council Grove a man alone could not return to civilization safely, for Council Grove was at the eastern range of hostile Indians. From the time of the Mexican War, when the first army wagon-repair depot was established at Council Grove, this place was the last outpost of civilization on the westerly trek. With the founding of the town of Council Grove in 1857, the traders found here their last chance to buy supplies, tools, and arms on the road to Santa Fe.

For these many reasons, Council Grove ranks among the three most important landmarks on the trail, being exceeded in academic importance only by Santa Fe and Independence.

Present Status. Surprisingly, after more than a century as a settled community, Council Grove retains much integrity. The Neosho River is still shaded by giant hardwoods just north and south of the town. Within the town itself a number of landmarks survive. And to the east and
Last Chance Store, Council Grove--from here the next store-bought goods were 700 miles away.
west of the town, good trail remains—a rarity this far east—show the route of the wagons into and out of the Neosho Valley.

The citizens of Council Grove take great pride in their historic heritage. Landmarks are described in a numbered tour and great care is exercised to preserve historic places and atmosphere.

Among the sites associated with the trail, the Last Chance Store is most important. Located across Main Street from Old Courthouse Square, a favorite campsite, the store was founded in 1857. Here, paraphrasing a trader of the period, the Kaws and other Indians traded buffalo robes, deer and wolf skins, and other peltries for coveted things. Everything needed was kept, from a cambric needle to complete frontier outfits, and every luxury could be obtained—from a cathartic pill to a cask of whiskey. Here was the last chance to buy sow-belly, beans, and other supplies on the trip to Santa Fe.

The Last Chance Store appears little altered, except for new shingles. The old, wide-plank floors survive, and the exterior stone construction is unaltered except for fresh repointing. The store is now privately owned and is being used as a catch-all museum and curio shop. But the City of Council Grove is seriously considering buying the site and refurnishing the building as a frontier store. Doubtless classification of this site, focal point of the Council Grove story, would be a helpful boost in this direction.

The Old Kaw Mission, now a State monument, was built in the winter of 1850-51. It first served as an Indian school, but Indian indifference to education could not be overcome. After 1854, the mission building
Above: Shelter over remains of Council Oak, Council Grove, Kans.

became the school for the white children of Council Grove, one of the first in Kansas Territory. For many years the Kaw Mission was the most imposing building in Council Grove, and it was often used to accommodate distinguished travelers as they passed by on the Santa Fe Trail.

Even today the Kaw Mission is a beautiful and interesting building. As a landmark and stopping place on the trail, it is a fine complement to the Last Chance Store. These two landmarks, plus those of lesser importance, listed below, combine to give Council Grove the status of an historic community.

--Council Oak. Tradition relates that the 1825 treaty with the Osages was signed under this magnificent tree, which was blown down by a windstorm in 1958. The stump of the tree is preserved under a very attractive shelter (see illustration) and the city plans to turn this area into a park.

--Post Office Oak. This great tree still stands. A cache at its base was a trail post office from 1825 to 1847.

--Hays Tavern. Built in 1857, this old time hostel and inn offered travelers a last fling and night under a roof before they embarked for Santa Fe. Academically this site is important. But at present it is unique in the Council Grove complex in having low integrity. The building has been altered almost beyond recognition.

--Madonna of the Trail Monument Park. This attractive park was an important campsite. Situated near the trail's crossing of the Neosho River, which can be seen from U. S. 56, the park might be developed as a center for interpreting the Council Grove story.
In summary, Council Grove has an academic significance that rates exceptional value classification. Its citizens are conscious of their historic heritage, and the many historic sites remaining in the town—all of them under the watchful eye of a citizens' Historic Sites Committee—are well preserved. Local plans call for implementing the concept of an historic community through park preservation and restoration of historic buildings.

No community on the trail has more to offer in commemorating the Santa Fe Trail. None is more deserving of recognition.

FORT LARNED, KANSAS

Location. Five miles west of Larned in Pawnee County.

Ownership. Private.

Significance. Fort Larned played a conspicuous role in the history of the Southwestern Frontier. It was the most significant military post on the eastern portion of the Santa Fe Trail. For several critical years Fort Larned was the principal guardian of the trail, its escorts cooperating with troops from Forts Union and Lyon on both the Cimarron Cutoff and the Mountain Branch. It figured prominently in numerous hostilities as well as peace negotiations with plains Indian tribes.

Fort Larned, originally known as "Camp on Pawnee Fork" and later Camp Alert, was established in October 1859, and immediately and for a good 10 years thereafter became heavily involved in contests with the Indians, who were allergic to the white invasion of their buffalo hunting preserve. In 1860 the fort was made the agency for the Cheyenne, Arapaho and Plains Apache, and not infrequently as many as 3,000 Indians would be encamped in the neighborhood. It is estimated that in 1862 there was $40 million worth of merchandise carried along the Santa Fe Trail, accompanied by 12,000 or more teamsters and travelers annually. In 1864, due to the increased tempo of Indian hostilities, the War Department issued an order that no trains could proceed west of Fort Larned without armed escort.

As a military center, Fort Larned played an important part in the Plains War of 1863-64. In 1864 it served as base for an expedition
Fort Larned, 1869. Kansas State Historical Society.
Aerial of Fort Larned, comprising present Frizell Ranch, 1956. Kansas Industrial Development Commission photo.
against the Southern Cheyennes. In the autumn of that year, Kiowas under Satanta killed a sentry at the fort and captured the horseherd. Satanta sent word to the post quartermaster that the horses were inferior and that he hoped the army would provide him with better stock in the future. Fort Larned was also a base for Maj. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock in 1867. Hancock led 1,400 men to the Kansas prairies with the objectives of impressing the Indians with the strength of the United States and punishing those tribes that were interfering with traffic over the Santa Fe Trail. Mainly, however, he succeeded in frightening and antagonizing them.

Fort Larned was a key post in the war of 1868-69. When government agents at the fort refused Southern Cheyenne demands for arms and ammunition, this tribe adopted so threatening an attitude that Lt. Col. Alfred Sully complied. The Cheyennes immediately went on the warpath, including the Santa Fe Trail in their scourging raids. Sully took the field, but found the Indians so formidable that he retired to Fort Larned. These events signalled a general war, for Kiowas, Comanches, and Arapahoes also began raiding and pillaging from Kansas to Texas. In response, Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan organized a winter campaign. He ordered Lt. Col. George A. Custer and the 7th Cavalry to Fort Larned to outfit for a thrust south into Indian Territory. Custer's campaign culminated in the Battle of the Washita on November 27, 1868, with the decisive defeat of Black Kettle and a large camp of Southern Cheyennes. With the close of this campaign, the southern plains enjoyed a comparative tranquility that lasted until the Red River War of 1874-75. But Custer's
campaign had substantially ended the Indian threat to the Santa Fe Trail.

Throughout the 1860's, Fort Larned was also an administrative center for peaceful attempts at managing the Plains Indians. Here from 1861 to 1868 officials of the Indian Bureau issued annuities to tribes that had signed the Fort Wise Treaty of 1861. In 1864 the fort became agency for the Kiowas and Comanches, and the following year for the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and Kiowa-Apaches. Attracted by the opportunities thus found at Fort Larned, traders flocked to the post, and it became an important center of trade, much of it illicit. The agency at Fort Larned was abolished in 1868, and the tribes were moved to new reservations in Indian Territory.

The last important function of the post was to help sign the death warrant for the trail it had so long protected. Beginning in the early 1870's the post provided protection for construction workers on the Santa Fe Railroad. With the completion of the line through Kansas, the fort was abandoned in 1878.

Present Status. Beginning about 1864, substantial stone buildings largely replaced the earlier sod-and-adobe construction. Nine of these stone buildings are still standing, used in part as the headquarters of the extensive Robert R. Frizzell ranching enterprise and in part to house museums maintained by the Fort Larned Historical Society. Three large silos, together with surrounding plowed fields and stock-feeding lots, intrude somewhat on the historical setting, but otherwise the scene is unimpaired. The officers' quarters, with minor modifications of the original construction, now serve as residences for ranch personnel. The
two barracks, designed to quarter two companies each, together with the quartermaster office and storehouse, were converted into barns after the fort was abandoned, but are now used as museums. The workshops, bakery, and storehouses of the army, subsequently used for ranch purposes, are now also part of the fort exhibit. Buildings maintained by the Fort Larned Historical Society are open to the public.

Fort Larned became a Registered National Historic Landmark on the Santa Fe Trail in April 1961. A bill approved by the National Park Service is now pending before Congress providing for the establishment of Fort Larned as a National Historic Site. In this latter connection, the survey team found exceptional trail ruts in a 60-acre pasture approximately 4 miles southwest of Fort Larned on the farm of Mr. Paul Eickemier. It is understood that Mr. Eickemier is anxious to cooperate with the National Park Service in preserving these ruts because of their association with Fort Larned. Should some method be found to preserve them, it would be an important addition to the historical resources at Fort Larned and would have important bearing in the interpretation of the trail story there.

TRAIL REMAINS WEST OF DODGE CITY, KANSAS

Location. Nine miles west of Dodge City, just north of U. S. 50.

Ownership. Private.

Significance. These remains, 2 miles long, describe an arc around broken ground that borders the Arkansas bottomlands. They are the best remains on the trunk-line of the trail before it splits into the Cimarron and Mountain Branches at the crossings of the Arkansas. In close association with the crossings, overlooking the Arkansas Valley, and easily accessible from U. S. 50—a major transcontinental route, they offer, with proper development, the best opportunity for trail interpretation for a large number of travelers anywhere on the trail.

Physically speaking, these remains are outstanding because of their extent, width, and the splendid swinging detour they make around the river bluff—an exceptional case of working with terrain for the easiest passage. Exploitation of this interpretive theme would brilliantly illustrate the nature of wagon freighting across the plains.

Academically speaking, the location of these remains on the trunk-line of the trail, and their close association with the obliterated but highly significant Cimarron Crossings 10 to 20 miles upstream, give these ruts an importance not otherwise reserved for trail remains alone. At this strategic point the two major branches of the trail could be described. And the reasons why travelers chose one or the other could be related. Here, overlooking the Arkansas, the method of crossing the river, its significance as mid-point of the journey, and its position...
LOCATION MAP
Dodge City Complex, with notes on crossings by noted travelers. Descriptive phrases attributed to first-listed traveler.

Kansas

Principal Ford (Beckwith, Usual R.R. Survey, Fording 1853.)
(Marcy, (Wizlizenus, 1859.) 1846.)
(Alvarez, (Gregg Crossing, 1840 ca.) Crossing Sometimes Used (Beckwith, R.R. Survey, 1831.)
(Susan Magoffin, 1846.)

Arkansas River

Note: Crossing locations based on rough mileage estimates by travelers and are approximations.

Scale
1" = 4 miles

- - - - - - - Main Roads
- - - - - - - Section Road
- - - - - - - Verified Trail Remains
Aerial of Trail remains 10 miles west of Dodge City. Intersecting the Trail is an irrigation ditch built about 1900 to water the tableland north of Dodge City. To the left is U.S. 50. Kansas Industrial Development Commission photo.
during the early period of the trail as international boundary could all be told.

To summarize, these trail remains possess qualities of physical extent and strategic location—both historically and in terms of present accessibility—that raise them into a different qualitative sphere from any other remains along the entire trail.

**Present Status.** At a point .8 mile west of the Howell grain elevator the trail leaves the river bottomlands and ascends a knoll north of U. S. 50 (see location map). From the top of this knoll, the remains—averaging about 800 feet wide—skirt the north side of a bluff overlooking the river bottomlands. (In the historic period the river itself swept close to the foot of this bluff.) The trail descends and ascends a number of shallow ravines formed by spurs extending northward from the bluff. At a point about 1-3/4 miles from the beginning of the remains, the trail cuts southwest, down a draw, and descends to the bottomlands again. This descent to the river is one of the most illuminating sections of the trail; its many variations show the great care of the wagonmasters in selecting the best terrain for wagon passage.

The overall effect of the remains is a 2-mile-long arc whose chord is U. S. 50 (see aerial photograph). The length of the highway between the trail intersections is 1.6 miles. A serpentine irrigation ditch dating from about 1900 intrudes somewhat on the trail remains, but on the ground there are many viewpoints and stretches of trail where the ditch is not evident.

Exceptional value classification is recommended for these remains, but only if local or state agencies can arrange to make the remains
accessible and can provide interpretive facilities to make them meaningful to visitors. It is conceivable that the prospect of some form of Federal memorialization of these remains would provide the spur that would lead to this result.

While these remains are of exceptional value, they are not of the caliber to merit inclusion in the National Park System. The irrigation ditch is an intrusion that impairs overall integrity too greatly for this purpose. Furthermore, excellent trail remains at Fort Union are already preserved in an area administered by the Service. It is possible that trail remains at Fort Larned will also be included in the System. In both of these cases, trail remains are associated with outstanding landmarks on the trail and are thus clearly superior to the remains west of Dodge City.

Location. Twelve miles south of Ulysses.

Ownership. Private.

Significance. On the westward journey, the Lower Spring of the Cimarron was the lifesaver of the traders. This pinpoint in the dry bed of the Cimarron was the destination of the long trek across the Jornada or Cimarron Desert. Here was the only living water for many miles. To miss it meant death for the straining animals that had gone at least 2 and usually 3 days with little or no water. This in turn meant abandonment of the wagons, disaster for the caravan, and possibly death for the traders. No spring on the Santa Fe Trail was of such critical importance as this one.

Until the road across the Jornada was marked during the rains of 1834, it was a common thing for traders to miss the Lower Spring. Then frantic search parties pursued the dry course of the Cimarron, racing against the killing thirst of their failing oxen and mules. Men were driven to notching their horses' ears, drinking the blood to stay alive. Comanches and Kiowas were always on the alert for these small parties, whose haste and single-minded search deprived them of normal caution. Many a caravan lost men in the vicinity of the Lower Spring.

The journal of M. M. Marmaduke, later governor of Missouri, is a typical account of the trials of the Jornada. His 1824 caravan—the first large-scale enterprise in the Santa Fe trade—comprised 80 men and 25 wagons. After days without water, Marmaduke related that "I never in my life experienced a time when such general alarm and consternation
pervaded every person on account of want of water."¹ Eventually they found the Lower Spring, which saved their lives.

The most famous historical incident relating to the Lower Spring was Jedediah Smith's death nearby in 1831. Though he had made a fortune in the fur trade, Smith wanted to put his capital to work with a venture into the Santa Fe trade before settling down to write a book about his travels. With a number of other famous mountain men in his party— including William and Thomas Sublette and Thomas (Broken Hand) Fitzpatrick— Smith's caravan set out across the Jornada in late May 1831. On the 27th, after 3 blistering days without water, Smith and Fitzpatrick began a desperate search for the Lower Spring. After instructing Fitzpatrick to wait for the caravan at a hollow in the plain, Smith rode on alone. A few miles beyond, on the banks of the Cimarron, he encountered a Comanche hunting party. The Indians disregarded Smith's signs of peace and began waving blankets to frighten his horse. As it wheeled they shot him in the back. Smith managed to get off one shot, killing the chief, before the rest set upon him with lances. Details of Smith's death came from Mexican traders with the Comanches. The exact place where it occurred will probably never be known. But that it was close to the Lower Spring is the most reasonable conjecture, for this was the caravan's immediate destination.

The name Wagon Bed Spring dates from the later days of the trail when a trader placed a wagon bed in the spring for use as a dip basin.

Above: Dry cistern marking original location of wagon bed in the Lower Springs, Kans.

Below: Troughs left by the wagons leading west from Lower Springs.
Present Status. Wagon Bed Spring is on the cattle ranch of Mr. Harry Joyce, Ulysses, Kansas. The site became a Registered National Historic Landmark on May 16, 1961. Mr. Joyce has fenced off the immediate area of the spring; the Landmark Plaque and a marble marker are within this enclosure. Mr. Joyce has also placed directional signs on his ranch roads to encourage visitation.

The original spring flowed from a draw on the bank of the Cimarron, at the apex of a westerly curve in the river bed. This site is marked by a small cistern at the point where Mr. Joyce's pioneer father found the old wagon bed in the late 1870's. At present the water appears as seepage from the river bank a few paces from the original spring site. This seepage forms a narrow pool in the river bed several hundred feet long. The bed of the Cimarron is now densely wooded with cottonwood, hackberry, ash, and Chinese elm. This is a major change from the historical appearance, for accounts of early travelers state that the area was a grassy marsh devoid of timber.\(^1\) Mr. Joyce explained that the trees date from the great flood of 1914, and, once established, were watered by the spring.

Fair trail remains are found near the spring site, running on a northeast-southeast tangent to it.

Access to Wagon Bed Spring is shown on the location map, as is the site of a State historical marker turnout on U. S. 270 just south

of the Cimarron River bridge. At the latter place is a monument to
Jedediah Smith.

References. Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, edited by Max L.
Moorhead. Norman, 1954; Kansas State Historical Society, A Survey of
Historic Sites and Structures in Kansas. Topeka, 1957; Santa Fe Trail (containing Field Notes of Joseph C. Brown). Reprinted
from the Eighteenth Biennial Report, 1912; Randolph Barnes Marcy, The
Dale L. Morgan, Jedediah Smith. Indianapolis, 1953; F. A. Sampson, ed.,
"The Santa Fe Trail, M. M. Marmaduke Journal," Missouri Historical
Review, VI (October, 1911), 1-10.
Location. Cimarron County, 3 miles northeast of Wheeles.

Ownership. Private.

Significance. Camp Nichols was founded in May 1865 by Col. Kit Carson to protect wagon trains using the dangerous Cimarron Cutoff. The bloody Indian uprisings of 1864 continued into 1865. Hostile Kiowa and Comanche war parties engaged in sporadic raiding all along the Cimarron Cutoff. Fearing a full-scale Plains war, Gen. James H. Carleton, commanding the Department of New Mexico, ordered Carson to establish Camp Nichols. It would be "a desert halfway station upon the route of 300 miles between Fort Union and the Cimarron Crossing of the Arkansas . . . "

Following establishment of the post, Carson's orders were to protect the trains with escorts, then talk to the Kiowa and Comanche chiefs, telling them: "If the Indians behave themselves, that is all the peace we want, and we shall not molest them; if they do not, we will fight them on sight and to the bitter end. . . . They must not think to stop the commerce on the plains . . . ."

With two companies of New Mexico Volunteers and one of California Volunteers, Carson by June had built six sets of stone officers' quarters and a quartermaster building, and the men had been housed in tents with stone walls. Breastworks of stone and banked earth enclosed the camp, which occupied an area about 200 feet square.

Above: Ruins of Camp Nichols from the northwest--stone walls and foundations of post buildings.

Below: Cedar Bluffs and Cedar Spring in ravine one-quarter mile west of Camp Nichols.
Reports from Camp Nichols show that trains from New Mexico assembled at the camp and were then escorted by 50-man detachments to the Arkansas. The troops were instructed to stay with the trains, which were corralled under Indian attack, rather than pursue the war parties. The first escort left Camp Nichols on June 19 and accompanied a caravan of 70 wagons to Fort Larned.

Carson had no opportunity to confer with the hostile chiefs, for he was almost immediately called to Santa Fe to testify before a joint congressional committee investigating Indian affairs. Maj. Albert H. Pfieffer, his second-in-command, remained to furnish escorts for the remainder of the season. The camp was abandoned in late September 1865.

Camp Nichols was an important post throughout the summer of 1865, providing a way-station on the most dangerous section of the trail. It was a major improvement over the escort system used the previous summer, when small bodies of troops were dispatched along the Cimarron cutoff to serve as roving escorts. For without a fortified camp, neither the troops nor the wagon trains had a rallying point in the event of a major Indian attack. Camp Nichols provided that rallying point during the dangerous summer of 1865. That it was a successful experiment is attested by a report submitted to the Quartermaster General of the Army by Maj. J. C. McFerran, former Chief Quartermaster, Department of New Mexico. In his report McFerran recommended that Camp Nichols be made a permanent post.¹

Above: Ruts just south of Camp Nichols.

Below: In a sweeping curve, the Trail descends to the Cedar Spring branch of South Carrizozo Creek. Trail remains and environment excellent here.
Except for the abandonment of the Cimarron Cutoff due to the rapid westward advance of the railroad, it is probable that Camp Nichols would have been reactivated in succeeding years.

Though not of surpassing academic significance, Camp Nichols provides a combination of factors that rate exceptional value classification: Its lonely ruins illustrate with great force the important theme of military protection of the Santa Fe Trail—the dangers, the isolation; in association with nearby Cedar Spring—an important trail camp—and exceptional trail remains, it is easily the most significant Santa Fe Trail site in the State of Oklahoma. In addition, very few sites along the entire trail evoke for the present-day visitor such a feeling of untampered trail territory, such a vivid feeling of walking into the past.

Present Status. Camp Nichols is situated on a high point of land between two ravines cut by the forks of South Carrizozo Creek. The topography is broken and wild, bestowing upon the site a scenic beauty accentuated by its isolation and freedom from modern intrusions. The ruins consist of low stone walls 2 to 3 feet high outlining the breastwork, and foundations and walls of officers quarters, commissary and hospital. In the center of the enclosure is a flagstone area perhaps 20 feet wide by 100 feet long where the tie rack for the horse herd was located.

One-quarter mile west of the ruins is the left fork of South Carrizozo Creek. Here, in the shadow of cedar (juniper) covered bluffs, is Cedar Spring, whose pools stretch along the stream bed for 200 or 300 yards. This was the water supply for the camp as well as for passing wagon trains.
South of the camp one-half mile are exceptional remains of the Cimarron Cutoff. These may be followed for many miles. They vary from gullied ruts on steep slopes to shallow troughs 30 or 40 feet across and 1 or 2 feet deep. They execute sweeping curves around rough outcrops and in descending and ascending the banks of stream courses. Altogether they are among the most impressive trail remains along the entire trail.

At Camp Nichols is a variety of plant and animal life that fascinated the travelers of the trail: yuccas or soapweed, prairie shortgrass and many other species of grasses, weeds and bushes; grasshoppers and moths; many varieties of birds, including ravens and hawks. Frogs and minnows inhabit the spring pools, and many succulent plants surround them. Diaries and journals of the trail are filled with statements of amazement at the great variety and abundance of plant and animal life found along the trail—a seemingly inhospitable environment. Camp Nichols is probably the outstanding trail site for the present-day visitor to experience this same feeling.

The sense of wild isolation is real at Camp Nichols, despite the fact that the site is easily accessible from the highway between Wheeles and Mexhoma (see location map). The turnoff from this highway, two-thirds of a mile west of Wheeles, is marked by a homemade sign, "Camp Nichols." The owner of the ranch land on which the site is located, Mr. Ed Thoma, evidently welcomes visitors, for he has allowed the Boy Scouts of America to erect a directional sign at the ranch road fork shown on the location map. Should Landmark status be granted, it is conceivable that Mr. Thoma might give the Boy Scouts permission to
erect an interpretive sign at the ruins, with the advice and assistance of the National Park Service. This would perform a very useful service for visitors to the site.

CLAYTON COMPLEX (RABBIT EARS), NEW MEXICO

Location. Union County, north and west of Clayton.

Ownership. Various public and private.

Significance. No landmark on the trail was more important than the Rabbit Ears--symbol of the Cimarron Cutoff. From the Upper Spring to Turkey Creek, 4 days of travel, this double-peaked mountain was the guide. It was the focal point for a series of camps and landmarks that are conveniently grouped as the Clayton Complex (see location map):

McNees Crossing. In the fall of 1828 two young traders, McNees and Monroe, who had gone in advance of a returning caravan, were shot here by Indians, almost in sight of the lagging caravan. After burying McNees, the traders carried the expiring Monroe to the Cimarron where he finally died. As the burial service ended, six or seven Indians appeared on the opposite bank and the revengeful traders shot down all but one of them. This incident sparked the outrages on the trail that led to the first military escort in 1829.

On July 4, 1831, a memorable Independence Day celebration, recorded by Josiah Gregg, was held at McNees Crossing--the first documented 4th of July observance on the plains. The crossing was ever afterwards a noted landmark on the trail.

Turkey Creek Camp. A fine camp, good for wood, water, and grass, Turkey Creek was a major stop on the trail.

Rabbit Ears Creek Camp. Another excellent campground, with level meadows, a steady spring, and plentiful wood, grass, and game, Rabbit Ears Creek Camp was a rest stop where trains often laid over for a day
Above: McNees Crossing, looking west across Corrumpa Creek to American Legion Monument.

Below: Springs at Turkey Creek (Alamos Creek) Camp.
Wagon ruts at the Rabbit Ear Creek Campground. Creek behind and to right of camera point.
"On the south of Rabbit Ears Creek, everywhere, is a rocky hill several hundred feet high."

--Joseph C. Brown
Rabbit Ears from U.S. 64-87 west of Clayton. Trail passed north of tableland on line with second telephone pole from left.
Round Mound (Mount Clayton), taken from the trail ruts about one mile north of mound.
From north slope of Round Mound (Mount Clayton) looking west, Point of Rocks (Peck Mesa) in center distance.
or two before resuming the trip to Santa Fe.

**Mt. Dora.** This was one of the guideposts on the trail in the Rabbit Ears vicinity. Its sloping north face ends in a series of rocky bluffs that overlook Rabbit Ears Creek Camp. This sloping tableland determined the route of the trail for many miles along Rabbit Ears Creek.

**Round Mound.** From Turkey Creek, Round Mound or Pilot Mountain was the traders' guide. A beautifully symmetrical, round-topped cone, Round Mound was often climbed by the traders for the splendid view of mountains and plains that it afforded. The trail passed immediately on the north of the mountain. The picture of the caravans passing by its base is shown by the accompanying illustration from Josiah Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*. Gregg himself climbed Round Mound and left these impressions:

Some of the most persevering of our adventurers succeeded in ascending the summit of the Round Mound, which commands a full and advantageous view of the surrounding country. . . . Looking southward a varied country is seen, of hills, plains, mounds, and sandy undulations; but on the whole northern side, extensive plains spread out, studded occasionally with . . . peaks and ridges.

These immense bordering plains, and even the hills with which they are interspersed, are wholly destitute of timber, except a chance scattering tree. . . .

As the caravan was passing under the northern base of the Round Mound, it presented a very fine and imposing spectacle to those who were upon its summit. The wagons marched slowly in four parallel columns, but in broken lines, often at intervals of many rods between. The unceasing "crack, crack" of the wagoners' whips, resembling the frequent reports of distant guns. . . .

**Present Status.** The Rabbit Ears and its satellite landmarks and camps are located on a portion of the trail remarkably preserved from

modern intrusions. The mountains are impressive and still serve their function as landmarks in the Clayton area.

McNees Crossing, on present Corrumpa Creek, is accessible from State Route 18, and a monument there commemorating Gregg's 4th of July celebration in 1831 is frequently visited. Excellent trail remains descend from the ridge just east of the crossing. This area is rich in the flora and fauna of the trail, including the strange devils-claw vine and great flocks of migrating birds in season. The historical significance of the site is recognized by the owner; he has not broken the sod here, and he welcomes visitors.

Both the Turkey Creek and Rabbit Ears Creek Camps are in a pristine state. Trail remains are especially notable at the latter, where they descend from the surrounding tableland to the meadows along the stream. Rabbit Ears Creek Camp is altogether one of the most impressive sites on the trail. Rocky bluffs and crags bordering the southern bank of the creek give the area a wild aspect; antelope are frequent visitors to the springs. Access to these sites is shown on the location map. Note that the traders' Turkey Creek is now known as Alamos Creek, and Rabbit Ears Creek is the present Cieneguilla Creek.

Round Mound, just south of Grenville on State Route 120 is on private ranch land, but is accessible. A present-day visitor can climb it just as the traders did and receive the same impression of immense bordering plains and mountains. Though trail remains are very faint near the mountain, they deepen to the east and can be plainly seen at the point where they cross U. S. 64-87 just southeast of Grenville.
There a trail marker helps the traveler to locate the crossing.

The Clayton Complex encompasses a significant segment of the trail and should be accorded exceptional value classification. Central feature of the many sites in this segment of trail is the Rabbit Ears, one of the two or three most important landmarks on the entire trail, Mountain Branch included. As Raton Pass symbolizes the Mountain Branch, so does the Rabbit Ears symbolize the Cimarron Cutoff.

State Senator William C. Wheatley of Clayton, an expert on the trail in this vicinity, suggests that Landmark status for the Rabbit Ears would tend to open up the other nearby landmarks and camps, calling them to the attention and making them available to the traveling public. The State already commemorates the Rabbit Ears and McNees Crossing at a State historical sign turnout at the intersection of U. S. 56 and State Route 18, 3 miles east of Clayton. Senator Wheatley suggests the possibility of a State sponsored interpretive marker and map at this point that would tie the Clayton Complex into a package. This is a laudable suggestion and should be encouraged by Landmark recognition.

FORT UNION, NEW MEXICO

Location. In Mora County, 9 miles north of Watrous.

Owner. United States Government.¹

Significance. Fort Union, at the western junction of the Mountain Branch and the Cimarron Cutoff, was from its founding in 1851 to the coming of the railroad in 1879 the entrepot for the great wagon freighting operation that supplied far Southwestern military posts. In this role it altered the course of the Santa Fe Trail and became a freight destination rivalling if not exceeding Santa Fe in importance. Its officers and men blazed new roads and helped improve old ones. And throughout the 1850's and 1860's protection of the Santa Fe Trail was the major field duty of the Fort Union garrison.

The Southwest proved an expensive acquisition to the United States, for the population had been promised protection from marauding Indians. In 1849 almost 1,000 soldiers, one-seventh of the United States Army, served in New Mexico's Ninth Military Department. By 1859 the number had risen to 2,000, distributed among 16 scattered frontier outposts. The land was not rich enough to subsist this army, and almost all provisions had to be hauled over the Santa Fe Trail from Fort Leavenworth. The need for a depot on the eastern frontier of New Mexico to receive and distribute these goods to other posts early became apparent. In

¹Fort Union is a National Monument. It is treated here briefly to provide continuity of Santa Fe Trail sites, and to note specific findings of the survey team relative to Santa Fe Trail remains in the vicinity of the fort. For complete treatment of this subject, see Robert M. Utley's special report, "Fort Union and the Santa Fe Trail" (1959), upon which this site description is based.
spring 1851 surveys were initiated to choose a site, and in July 1851 Col. Edwin V. Sumner established the new supply depot, Fort Union, which also became department headquarters.

Virtually all military freighting on the Santa Fe Trail was performed under contract by civilian companies. Military freight hauled from Fort Leavenworth was unloaded at the Fort Union depot, repacked, and assigned as needed to the posts of New Mexico and Arizona. Often, when wagons or entire trains contained shipments for one fort only, they continued directly to the destination without unloading at Fort Union. Other quartermaster depots were established, at Yuma and San Antonio, but Fort Union continued throughout its life-time to be the supply center of the frontier army in the Southwest.

Large-scale military freighting, dominated by Russell, Majors, and Waddell, continued until 1866, when the railroad moved west into Kansas. Each railhead town thereafter served briefly as the port of embarkation for freight wagons. After the rails reached Denver in 1870, wagons continued to move supplies over the Mountain Branch of the trail between Pueblo and Fort Union. The Santa Fe Railroad crossed the Mora Valley in 1879 and ended the era of military freighting on the Santa Fe Trail.

Freight caravans followed well established routes, but amount of use was no key to quality of road. One of the roughest though most used stretches of the Santa Fe Trail was its southerly bend around the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Improvement of this route was essential if Fort Union was to efficiently perform its dual function as supply depot and department headquarters. The Santa Fe Trail from Fort Union to Santa Fe
was part of a million-dollar Federal road program carried on in the west during the late 1850's. This 100-mile stretch of road, according to one historian, was one of the most important of the Federal projects, "for it was the principal entrance to the heart of the territory; it afforded communication between that post and the headquarters of the military department, and it served as a portion of the great mail route between the eastern states and the largest settlement in the territory."¹ Officers from Fort Union supervised the work of improving this road, using civilian labor.

Another important road project was the Fort Leavenworth freight road (see end Jacket fold map). It was surveyed from Fort Union in 1851 and used to an undetermined extent until the Civil War, when the more sheltered Mountain Branch again assumed first importance. The Fort Leavenworth road was a compromise between the Mountain and Cimarron Branches. It was shorter than the Mountain Branch and, by skirting the eastern slope of the Raton Mountains, avoided the winter snows of Raton Pass. Its probable advantage over the still shorter Cimarron Cutoff was that it was better watered.

Protecting the trail was doubtless the most dramatic work of the Fort Union garrison. During the first two years after the fort's establishment, troops patrolled the Cimarron Cutoff to the Arkansas crossings. In the 1850's regular military escorts of the Independence-Santa Fe mail became an important duty.

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¹ Averam B. Bender, The March of Empire: Frontier Defense in the Southwest, 1848-1860 (Lawrence, Kans., 1952), 70.
Ruins of Fort Union supply depot.
Military protection of the Santa Fe Trail achieved its greatest development during the Civil War years because of the mounting Indian menace, Confederate invasion of New Mexico, fear of Confederate attacks on freight caravans, and the vital need of assuring a continuous flow of provisions to Union forces in New Mexico. This story is covered in the narrative section of this report. It is sufficient to note here that Fort Union—using escorts, temporary posts, and full-scale offensive campaigns—kept the Santa Fe Trail open during its most dangerous period.

**Present Status.** Fort Union is a National Monument administered by the National Park Service. Its relationship to the Santa Fe Trail—both historical and physical—has been established in Robert M. Utley's exhaustive special report, "Fort Union and the Santa Fe Trail" (1959). Through museum exhibits, publications, and guided and self-guided tours, visitors are given an appreciation of this relationship, as well as exposure to the trail's larger history. In fact, at this time, Fort Union National Monument is the most important center of Santa Fe Trail interpretation in existence.

Ruins of this post, the largest in the Southwest, have been stabilized and treated to prevent erosion of the adobe walls. Their stark outlines cover a vast area that extends nearly half a mile north of the Park Visitor Center—corrals, stables, hospital, barracks, officers quarters, and great warehouses. Nearby is the star fort, whose classical parapets were built to repel Sibley's Confederate invaders in 1862. In

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1. See end jacket fold map for the major routes of the Santa Fe Trail in the Fort Union area.
Above: South of Fort Union at point where Cimarron Branch divides, the left fork going to Watrous, the right to Tiptonville. Apex of fork at left center.

Below: Descent to Tiptonville, south of Fort Union.
Gullied ruts of the Santa Fe Trail descending to the Mora River Valley south of Fort Union. Laura Gilpin photo.
late afternoon, when the flag waves over the deserted parade and long shadows add mystery to the scene, Fort Union is indeed an impressive sight. At this ghostly hour it is easy to recall the time when this post, situated where the mountains meet the plains, was the bustling center of frontier defense in the Southwest. Then, in the minds eye, the great tandem freight wagons pulled by 12-yoke teams come swinging into the Fort Union depot, and the Santa Fe Trail--lifeline of civilization--is a living reality again.

Unfortunately, Fort Union is 8 miles north of U.S. 85, its only access highway. As a result, visitation is low--less than 11,000 in 1961. Yet within a few yards of and visible from U. S. 85, in either direction from the Fort Union turnoff, are exceptional trail remains that could be used as lures to the fort.1 A minimum use of these excellent trail remains would be carefully spotted interpretive turnoffs on U. S. 85. Such turnoffs might appropriately be provided by the New Mexico Highway Department on its right of way, with the advice and assistance of the National Park Service.

Another problem at Fort Union related to the Santa Fe Trail is inaccessibility to the site of the original fort (1851-61) and later arsenal.2 The old fort site is slightly above Wolf Creek Valley and provides an impressive view of the Mountain Branch sweeping northward

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1. One of these sites is on the Cimarron Cutoff, 1 1/2 miles northeast of the Fort Union turnoff, in Wolf Creek Valley. The other is on the reunited trail just southwest of the Sapello Crossing, 2 miles from Watrous.

2. Visitors see the second or star fort (1861-62) and the third fort (1863-91), which are located across Wolf Creek Valley from the original fort.
past the Turkey Mountains. Nowhere else within the confines of fort property is such a view to be found. This, of course, is aside from the intrinsic interpretive value of access to the earliest fort site. Arrangements for free access should be made with the private rancher who owns the land between the two federally owned properties.

LA JUNTA (WATROUS), NEW MEXICO

Location. In the vicinity of Watrous.

Ownership. Various private.

Significance. The Mountain and Cimarron Branches of the Santa Fe Trail joined at the Mora River, which here forms a pleasant, tree-lined valley known since Spanish times as La Junta de los Ríos Mora y Sapello—the junction of the Mora and Sapello rivers. Until engineers of the Santa Fe Railroad laid out the town of Watrous in 1879, the area was known simply as La Junta. It early became an important camping place on the trail, for the Mora traced the New Mexican frontier, separating the settlements from the arid plains infested by hostile Indians.

From the first years of the trade, travelers destined for Missouri formed the custom of camping at La Junta until wagons and men numerous enough for self-protection had collected, whereupon the entire group elected officers and adopted regulations for the journey across the plains. An observer who passed La Junta in 1848 wrote:

As Independence [more accurately, Council Grove] is the eastern, so may the Mora be considered the western port of the great Santa Fe Trail. It is here that the returning caravans make their final preparations for the trip, and catch their final glimpse of even Mexican civilization. The Mora is therefore, during the season of travel, a halting place of no little importance, and presents at times, when visited by busy traders, quite a lively appearance; indeed during the summer of 1848 there was scarcely a day which did not witness the arrival or departure from this camping-ground of a fleet of those prairie ships, the unwieldy Santa Fe Wagons.

It is not surprising that a settlement grew up at La Junta early in the history of the trail. The soil of the valley was fertile, and surrounding grasslands were perfect for stock grazing. The two branches of the trail joined here, and traders and travelers weary from the long journey across the plains made good customers. After 1843, therefore, La Junta replaced Las Vegas (which in 1833 had replaced San Miguel) as the first New Mexican settlement reached by caravans from Missouri.

Leader of the colonization scheme was John Scolly, who with nine others on March 27, 1843, petitioned Gov. Manuel Armijo for a grant of land at La Junta. Scolly and his associates, together with an Englishman named James Boney, an American named George Carter, and several others, had by November 1843 colonized the triangular valley at the junction of the two streams.

The settlement was on firm footing by 1846 when the Army of the West camped in the valley near the Sapello Crossing—"the first settlement we had seen in 775 miles," wrote Emory.\(^1\) Though Kearny's soldiers were not overly impressed with the dirty town whose houses resembled brickkilns, they found its cheese, milk, and other produce, including whiskey, a welcome change from the fare of the road.

In 1849 Alexander Barclay, an eccentric Englishman, and J. B. Doyle, an American, came to La Junta. They had been Indian traders on the Platte and Arkansas Rivers, and planned to build a trading post at the Mora Crossings to engage in the Indian trade and sell produce to passing travelers on the Santa Fe Trail. During the 1850's Barclay's Fort on

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1. Emory, Notes, 24.
Above: Sapello Stage Station from northwest near point where Cimarron and Mountain Branches of Trail unite before making crossing of Sapello.

Below: Watrous Ranch and Store.
the Mora was a well-known stopping place on the trail and a relay station for the Independence-Santa Fe Mail. W. W. H. Davis, enroute to Santa Fe to become Attorney General of New Mexico, described the post as it appeared in November 1853:

It is a large adobe establishment, and, like the immense caravansaries of the East, serves as an abode for men and animals. From the outside it presents a rather formidable as well as a neat appearance, being pierced with loop-holes and ornamented with battlements. The rooms within were damp and uncomfortable, and all the surroundings looked so gloomy, the hour being twilight, that it reminded me of some old state prison where the good and great of former times have languished away their lives.¹

Samuel B. Watrous, who had come to New Mexico from Vermont in 1837, settled with his family at La Junta in 1849. He bought one-seventh interest in the Scolly Grant and built a great adobe ranch house and store at the junction of the Mora and Sopelco. He amassed large herds of cattle, which grazed the grasslands north of the Mora, and sold merchandise to the troops at Fort Union and to travelers on the Santa Fe Trail. One of Watrous' daughters in 1849 married William Tipton, who went into partnership with his father-in-law and settled on the north side of the Mora a mile from Barclay's Fort. The village of Tiptonville grew up around his ranch. Another daughter married George Gregg, who managed the Barlow-Sanderson stage station 1 1/2 miles south of Phoenix Lake during the 1860's and 1870's. This was a "home station" where stages made half hour meal stops. When the Santa Fe Railroad reached La Junta in 1879, the chief engineer named the new town laid out around the station after S. B. Watrous.

¹ Davis, El Gringo, 51.
Above: Sapello Creek Crossing from the north.

Below: Trail remains south-southwest of Sapello Crossing; paralleling U. S. 85, they are among the best left.
Present Status. The valley in the angle formed by the Mora River and Sapello Creek has been under cultivation for many years. There are therefore few visible remains of the old road system to which the written evidence of early diarists can be applied. By the use of maps and journals, however, it has been possible to trace the approximate routes of the trail in this area and to locate the main crossings of the two streams. The accompanying map shows these routes and indicates where trail remains survive to this day. The best of these survivals, reading from the top of the map down, are as follows: In the vicinity of the fork of the Cimarron Cutoff, one fork leading directly to the Mora Crossing, the other leading over the hills and descending to Tiptonville; the Mountain Branch leading north from the Sapello stage station; and very fine ruts bordering U. S. 85 just south of the Sapello Crossing. These remains are shown in the accompanying photographs.

Historic sites and buildings associated with the Santa Fe Trail are profuse in this area. Of these the most important and accessible is the Watrous Store and Ranch. This one-story adobe house stands today with few alterations from its historical appearance. It is now used as a private residence. The site of Barclay's Fort is nearby, at the crossing of the trail from Tiptonville. The Sapello stage station and Fort Union Corral are at the original junction of the Mountain and Cimarron Branches near the Sapello Crossing. Both are well preserved and reasonably accessible, and fine trail remains are in the immediate vicinity.

PECOS PUEBLO AND MISSION RUINS, NEW MEXICO

Location. San Miguel County, on State Route 63, about 4 miles north of U. S. 84-85.

Ownership. State of New Mexico.

Significance. Ralph Emerson Twitchell called the Pecos pueblo and mission ruins the most notable landmark on the entire Santa Fe Trail.¹ Judging from the space devoted to them in contemporary journals, he may have been right.

The pueblo of Pecos, on the fringe of the buffalo plains, was one of the largest pueblos of New Mexico in the 17th century and an outstanding landmark to most of the early Spanish explorers. At Pecos in 1540 Coronado found the Indian his men called "The Turk," who guided the Spaniards on their journey in search of Quivira. Castano de Sosa attacked and subjugated Pecos with 19 soldiers in 1590, and Onate was peaceably received there in 1598. By 1620 the mission of Nuestra Senora de los Angeles de Porciuncula had been founded at Pecos. It was described by Benavides in 1634 as "a very splendid temple of distinguished workmanship and beauty." Other Spaniards who visited it used equally glowing terms. The people of Pecos participated in the Rebellion of 1680, burned the church, and, 500 strong, joined other Indians in besieging Santa Fe. After the Reconquest, the mission was re-established on the orders of Gov. Don Diego de Vargas. Pecos began its decline in the middle 18th century, as smallpox and warfare with the Comanches and Apaches of the

¹. Twitchell, Leading Facts of New Mexican History, IV, 201.
Ruins of Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de Porciuncula Mission at old Pecos, according to Twitchell, the most famous landmark on the Trail.
plains reduced the population. In 1782 the mission was abandoned, and in 1788 an epidemic all but annihilated the pueblo. In 1838, the few survivors moved to Jemez to live with kinsmen, and left the pueblo and mission abandoned.

From the beginning of the Santa Fe trade, the ruins intrigued those who passed by on the trail. Before the Mexican War, local memories were clear, and the origins of the Pueblo Indians who had inhabited the ruins and the reasons for abandonment were reported accurately by the traders. But by the time of the Mexican War a body of myth had grown up about the ruins. Susan Magoffin, though doubting the validity of this myth, was obviously captivated by it:

Saturday 29th /August 1846/. I have visited this morning the ruins of an ancient pueblo, or village, now desolate and a home for the wild beast and bird of the forest.

It created sad thoughts when I found myself riding almost heedlessly over the work of these once mighty people. There perhaps was pride, power and wealth, carried to its uttermost limit, for here it is said the great Montezuma once lived . . . .

At any rate these pueblos believed in and long looked for the coming of their king to redeem them from the Spanish yoke. And I am told by persons who saw it, that it is only within some two or three years since it was inhabited by one family only, the last of a once numerous population. These continued to keep alive "Montezuma's fire," till it was accidentally extinguished, and they abandoned the place, believing that Fate had turned her hand against them. This fire, which was kept in vaults under ground, now almost entirely filled in by the falling ruins, was believed to have been kindled by the king himself, and their ancestors were told to keep it burning till he returned, which he certainly would, to redeem them, and it has been continued down to this time, or within a few years.1

Present Status. The pueblo and mission are now incorporated in the Pecos State Monument administered by the Museum of New Mexico. The massive adobe walls of the mission, visible from the highway, rise as

high as 50 feet in places. The church has been excavated. Adjacent
mission buildings have not been excavated, but low walls outline the
pattern of the convento. The pueblo, north of the mission, was partially
excavated and stabilized in 1915-25. The exposed portions, of stone
construction, give a good sample of the architecture and layout of Pecos,
but by far the largest portion of the pueblo still lies underground.
Mounds indicate terraced houses four stories high that have not been
excavated. One large kiva has been restored and is open to visitors.
The stone defensive wall that once surrounded the entire pueblo has been
restored to a height of 3 or 4 feet. A small, one room museum interprets
the history of Pecos.

As a result of the Advisory Board's recommendation that Pecos State
Monument be classified as a site possessing exceptional value in the
Spanish Exploration and Settlement Theme, these ruins have been proposed
for addition to the National Park System. At this writing, details of the
transfer of this property to the United States are being negotiated with
the State of New Mexico.

References. Stella M. Drumm, ed., Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico,
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Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, III. Washington, 1937; F. W.
Hodge, Handbook of American Indians, Pt. 1. Washington, 1910; F. W. Hodge,
G. F. Hammond, and Agapito Rey, eds., Fray Alonso de Benavides' Revised
Memorial of 1634. Albuquerque, 1945; Alfred V. Kidder, "The Story of the
Pueblo of Pecos," El Palacio (LVIII, 1951); George Kubler, The Religious
Architecture of New Mexico. Colorado Springs, 1940; Ralph Emerson Twitchell,
The Leading Facts of New Mexican History, IV. Cedar Rapids, 1917.
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Location. City of Santa Fe.

Ownership: Various public and private.

Significance. The end of the trail, Santa Fe was the goal toward which the caravans had struggled for 8 or 10 weeks. It was the great entrepot of the Santa Fe trade, for here the traders bargained with Mexican customs officers, unloaded their wares, and traded them-either for gold and silver, or for native goods and furs to be transported back to the States. It was also a great recreational arena for the weary traders just off the trail, offering as it did many and various amusements that appealed to Americans now briefly free of the conventions of their own society.

Beautifully situated on a high, mountain-girt plain, Santa Fe was yet a strange and often disappointing town to the Americans. Their first view of La Villa Real de Santa Fe de San Francisco belied its name and its position as capital city of Mexico's northernmost province. From a distance the town looked like a great brickyard-flat-roofed, one-story adobe houses its kilns. Its most imposing building, the Governors' Palace, was, as one writer described it, but a straggle of mud. The plaza, heart of the town, was a dirt confusion shaded by a few ragged cottonwoods, a market place, a thronging center of mules and wagons and men, where lank Missourians stopped short at strange sounds and sights--Indians from nearby pueblos, rebozo-wrapped Spanish matriarchs trudging purposefully to church, dried meat and chiles hanging from surrounding portals, funeral processions, ragged children dashing by, and, most intriguing, the young women with their glaring escorts.
Santa Fe in 1846, showing old Fort Marcy above the town, from Abert's Report. National Archives.
Different cultures here met in a kind of pandemonium. Some Americans were exhilarated, others upset by the differentness. And behind the walled houses, the old Spanish ways went on, defying the new, viewed only by the fortunate American with connections.

Arrival of the caravans galvanized the town, as though a long-sought ship were sighted by an isolated island colony. The people tumbled out to the call "Los Americanos," and the slumber of past months was forgotten in a round of haggling, fandangos, and general festivity.

In Santa Fe was a different morality that shocked or pleased the Americans. Women smoked and seemed, and often were, openly flirtatious. Gambling flourished. Religion was medieval. Ignorance was profound. Yet, sinful, unenlightened and tyrannized as they were, the people were happy. Once the patronizing American dropped his rigid attitudes, he discovered grace, courtesy, generosity, honesty—perhaps in dishonesty itself, and even an ancient dignity in the people of Santa Fe. Someone young and flexible like Lewis H. Garrard found Biblical charm in women drawing water from community wells. A mature, long-term resident like James Josiah Webb found decorum and much to be admired in the traditional society. A rigid Victorian like W. W. H. Davis found little but shocking immorality, and, with missionary fervor, conceived America's duty the "improvement" of this misguided race. Santa Fe was many things to the men who saw it.

It was no less protean historically. From its position as end of the trail in the early days of the trade, Santa Fe became a way-station on the longer trail to southern markets. And in time it would be headquarters for Americanization of the far Southwest.
Governors' Palace, Santa Fe.
Present Status. Santa Fe still retains, in its architecture and its people, much of the Spanish-Mexican-Indian flavor that so impressed, favorably or unfavorably, the 19th-century Americans. Pueblo and territorial style buildings still line the narrow streets; Spanish language and customs still predominate; and many of the same characteristics noted by the early traders may yet be observed among the people of the city. It contains a number of historic sites possessing Santa Fe Trail associations. Among them are:

The Plaza. Still the commercial and social center of Santa Fe, the Plaza was the end of the long trail. Here the wagons were parked and unloaded. Here the customs negotiations were carried out. And from here the Americans spread out over the town in search of entertainment. Originally encompassing two city blocks, the Plaza now includes but one. It is shaded by large cottonwood trees and crossed with concrete sidewalks. A large memorial to New Mexico's Civil War volunteers stands in the center, and a marble monument marking the end of the Santa Fe Trail stands on the southeast corner. In recognition of its role as end of the trail, the Plaza became a Registered National Historic Landmark in May 1961.

Palace of the Governors. Across from the Plaza, occupying an entire block along its north side, stands the historic Palace of the Governors, oldest public building in the United States. It was built between 1610 and 1612, and, except for the 12 years following the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, housed the offices and residence of successive Spanish, Mexican, and American governors of New Mexico. Lt. Zebulon Pike was taken here and interrogated by Spanish officials after his arrest in the San Luis Valley.
of Colorado in 1807. In 1812, James Baird, Robert McKnight and party, pioneers of the Santa Fe trade, were imprisoned here; in 1817, Auguste Pierre Chouteau suffered a similar fate. It was at this place that the Santa Fe traders came into contact with the Mexican official hierarchy. When the Army of the West entered Santa Fe in 1846, Gen. Stephen W. Kearny raised the American flag over the Palace, and thereafter American governors ruled from the building. In 1885 a larger capitol was built, but the governors continued to live in the Palace until 1912. Although the edifice has undergone many architectural changes during its long history, it still occupies the original site and is very much the original structure. Now owned by the State, it houses the Museum of New Mexico. The Palace's great importance in the Spanish Exploration and Settlement Theme resulted in its being declared a Registered National Historic Landmark in July 1961.

San Miguel Mission. A well-known landmark to Santa Fe traders, this old mission stands on College Street, the route by which the trail entered the city, several blocks south of the Plaza. The oldest church in Santa Fe and one of the oldest in the United States, San Miguel was built some time between 1640 and 1680. Like the Palace of the Governors, it has undergone architectural changes, but the basic structure still remains on the original site. All of the caravans entering Santa Fe passed by San Miguel Mission.

Location. Overlooking Santa Fe.

Ownership. Private.

Significance. Fort Marcy has the misfortune to be an important historic site where nothing ever happened. But in its location, in the reasons that impelled its building, Fort Marcy put the seal on General Kearny's conquest.

Kearny himself reported to the Adjutant General of the Army in Washington:

A large number of the troops are daily employed under the direction of Lieutenant Gilmer of the Engineers in erecting a fort for the defense and protection of the city, and as this is the capital of the Territory, a new acquisition to the United States, the fort will be an important and permanent one.¹

The Army of the West entered Santa Fe the evening of August 18, 1846. The very next day Lts. William H. Emory and Jeremy F. Gilmer were ordered to make a reconnoissance of the town and select a site for a fort. Emory reported that this duty occupied him diligently on the 19th and 20th. By the 22d a plan and site for the fort had been approved by the general. Next day work commenced. Emory described the site as follows:

The site selected and marked on the map is within 600 yards of the heart of the town, and is from 60 to 100 feet above it. The contour of the grounds is unfavorable for the trace of a regular work, but being the only point which commands the entire town, and which is itself commanded by no other, we did not hesitate to recommend it. . . . It is computed for a garrison of 280 men.²

¹ Quoted in L. Bradford Prince, Old Fort Marcy (Santa Fe, 1912) 6, 7.
² Emory, Notes, 32.
Fort Marcy was the first U. S. military post in what later became the Mexican cession. Its purpose was to provide a fortification for the defense of Santa Fe against an attempted Mexican invasion up the Rio Grande or against an insurrection of native New Mexicans. Such an insurrection came in the winter of 1846-47. But it was nipped in the bud at Santa Fe and got rolling only in Taos. Had the flames of rebellion seared Fort Marcy, it would today be a famous site, fulfilled in its purpose. Yet, ironically, it fulfilled its purpose too well and has been forgotten, for without the strong garrison at Fort Marcy, the revolt in Santa Fe might well have been bloody—as it was in Taos.

Fort Marcy symbolizes the American conquest. It was the rivet at the end of the Santa Fe Trail—by its very presence fastening the Mexican cession to the United States for keeps. And since the Mexican War was the trail's most momentous period, it is proper that Fort Marcy should be considered as a Santa Fe Trail site. Although Fort Marcy never had to meet a challenge to American domination, it is nevertheless exceptionally valuable. Alone of important Mexican War sites in the United States, Fort Marcy retains a high degree of integrity and at the same time illustrates a significant phase of American history. It stands for the achievement of General Kearny in conquering the Southwest without bloodshed, more specifically of capturing Santa Fe, the first foreign capital to fall to American soldiers, without firing a shot. It stands for the extension of American boundaries to the Pacific—the acquisition of the future states of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and California. By the same token, it stands for Manifest Destiny, the great motivating
Ruins of old Fort Marcy poised over Santa Fe.
idea that, as much as any other factor, produced the Mexican War and
the rounding out of the continental boundaries. Better than anywhere
else in the nation, one can grasp at Fort Marcy the meaning and the
larger patterns of the war with Mexico and its results.

Present Status. Though once a city park, Fort Marcy was neglected and
has reverted to private ownership. The hill on which it stands commands
not only the city but one of the great views of the continent.

Completed in 1847, the fort was an "irregular hexagonal polygon,"
with adobe walls 9 feet high and 5 feet thick. These walls were
surrounded by a ditch 8 feet deep and enclosed an area 270 by 80 feet.
A log building in the compound served as a powder magazine, and a log
blockhouse, east of the gate outside the walls, served as both barracks
and additional defensive works. Thirteen cannon mounted on the walls
commanded the city.

The remains of old Fort Marcy consist of mounds of earth several
feet high tracing the outline of the adobe fortification, and a single
mound covering the foundations of the block house. Excavation would
undoubtedly reveal extensive remains of the fort. No modern buildings
or improvements have encroached on the historical scene.

References. L. Bradford Prince, Old Fort Marcy. Santa Fe, 1912; R. E.
Twitchell, The Conquest of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the Building of Old
Fort Marcy, A. D. 1846, Historical Society of New Mexico, No. 24.
Santa Fe, 1923; William A. Keleher, Turmoil in New Mexico, 1846-1868.
Santa Fe, 1952.
BENT'S OLD FORT, COLORADO

Location. In Otero County on the north bank of the Arkansas River, 7 miles east of La Junta.

Ownership. Being acquired by the United States Government.¹

Significance. From its erection in 1833 to its destruction in 1849, Bent's Fort was the principal stop on the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Almost 600 miles from the Missouri border, it was the first sign of civilization in all that distance. Bent's Fort was the staging area for the American invasion of New Mexico in 1846; it proved to be an indispensable base of operations.

In July 1853, almost 4 years after William Bent destroyed the fort, Lt. E. G. Beckwith summarized the advantages of its location:

Here, beyond all question, would be one of the most favorable points for a military post which is anywhere presented on the Plains. There is abundance of pasturage, fuel, and building material in the neighborhood . . . . It is of easy access from its central position, from the east, from Santa Fe, from Taos through the Sangre de Cristo Pass, and from Fort Laramie. It is on an immigrant road from southern Missouri and Arkansas . . . and it is in the heart of the Indian country . . . ."²

From this location, "Heartland of the Plains," the brothers Charles and William Bent and Ceran St. Vrain managed a private trading empire that encompassed "the middle plains from Texas into Wyoming, from the mountains to the middle of Kansas."³ Beyond this, they had major commitments

¹. Bent's Old Fort was a State Monument administered by the Colorado State Historical Society. Congress recently authorized its development as a National Historic Site, contingent upon acquisition of surrounding private lands.

². U. S. Cong., Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertaın the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean ... in 1853-54, II (Washington, 1855), 28.

³. Lavender, Bent's Fort, 323.
Left: From Abert's Report, 1845.

Right: Model in Colorado State Museum. Denver Public Library Western Collection.
in the Santa Fe trade proper—large mercantile stores in Taos and Santa Fe, and yearly caravans that traversed both the Cimarron and Mountain Branches of the trail. The Bents and St. Vrain, according to Bernard DeVoto, "were mighty men, whose will was prairie law, who could sway whole tribes, who knew Indians and Mexicans as few others did."

They freighted their own goods from Independence and their Indian trade reached far to the north, west, southeast, and southwest. They maintained smaller posts in the Indian country and agents of theirs lived with various bands. They had great influence with all the tribes for hundreds of miles, and through William Bent they held the southern Cheyenne in the hollow of their hand.¹

Great conclaves of Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, Kiowa, Prairie Apache, Sioux, and Pawnee came to trade here in an atmosphere of peace encouraged by the Bents—Indian warfare meant poor trade. To this place, too, after long winters in the mountains, trappers brought their furs, and stayed to spin yarns, gamble, and celebrate. Among the better known figures of the west employed at the post were Lucien B. Maxwell, Thomas O. Boggs, Baptiste Charbonneau, Kit Carson, "Old Bill" Williams, and "Uncle Dick" Wootton.

Many travelers and officers who visited Bent's Fort in the 1830's and 1840's left descriptions of the old adobe trading post. One of the best was that of Lt. James W. Abert, in 1845:

The fort is composed of a series of rooms resembling casemates, and forming a hollow square, the entrance on the east side. A round tower on the left, as you enter, and another diagonally opposite, constitute the flanking arrangements. The outer walls, which are nearly two feet in thickness, intersect in the axes of the others, thus permitting their faces to be completely enfiladed; the outside walls of the enceinte and towers, pierced with loop holes, are continued four

¹ DeVoto, Year of Decision, 261.
feet above the flat roofs which serve for the banquette, which being composed of clay cannot be fired by inflammable substances that might be east upon it; the whole is built of "adobes", sunburnt brick, formed of clay and cut straw, in size about four times as large as our common bricks. The roofs are sustained by poles. On the west side is the cattle yard, which is surrounded by a wall so high as effectually to shelter them. The coping of the wall is planted with cacti, which bear red and white flowers.¹

The post itself was a fairly self-sufficient institution. It was well supplied with flour, corn, and beans from the New Mexican settlements. Chickens supplied the fort with eggs, and a herd of cattle furnished milk and butter. The establishment was described by one of the employees as follows:

The area enclosed within the walls would probably comprise over an acre, which is subdivided by high walls; so, in case of a siege, all the horses, mules, cattle, wagons, etc., can be secured and protected inside the walls. Round the inside of the wall of the fort proper, are the storehouses, shops for blacksmith, gunsmith and carpenters, men's quarters, private rooms for gentlemen, dining room, kitchen, etc. The buildings have flat roofs, covered with adobes, and rendered perfectly tight, affording a pleasant promenade.²

The fort was a long-sought shelter for every caravan that passed over the Mountain Branch to Santa Fe. Here traders and travelers stopped for several days to relax from their long vigilance against the Indians and to enjoy the luxuries of civilization--the proprietors made iced mint juleps for special guests. Post blacksmiths and carpenters repaired wagons, and oxen and mules were allowed to rest before they continued their long trek to Santa Fe.

With the approach of the Mexican War, Bent's Fort became a rendezvous for military mapping and exploration parties--one of them led by

¹. Quoted in Ray H. Mattison, "Report on the Santa Fe Trail" (unpublished report, 1958). The walls were 6 feet thick at the bottom and 15 feet high.
². Quoted in Ray H. Mattison, "Report on the Santa Fe Trail."
Col. Stephen Watts Kearny, who would soon retrace his steps with the Army of the West. New Mexican officials viewed the fort as a direct threat, a jumping-off place for the invasion they feared. And they were right. For with the coming of the war, the fort was virtually taken over by the army. As the Mexicans had feared Bent's Fort became the rendezvous for the invading Army of the West. Here Kearny's dragoons and Missouri volunteers prepared for their final push into New Mexico, in August 1846. Thereafter government wagon trains congregated at the fort in ever-increasing numbers. Government cattle overgrazed nearby pastures. Quartermaster stores piled up in the fort, and government soldiers, teamsters, and artisans occupied its rooms. Bent, St. Vrain, and Company had supplied the outpost for imperialism, a convenient substitute for the fort the War Department had failed to build.

The steady flow of soldiers across the Plains during the Mexican War, together with the influx of settlers, goldseekers, and adventurers that came later, constituted a white tide that irrevocably changed the Great Plains. Watering places were fouled, precious wood was wantonly used, buffalo were frightened away from accustomed haunts. Bent, St. Vrain and Company was caught between the millstones of resentful Indians and invading whites. Indian warfare and raiding commenced seriously in 1847, and from then on the days of rich trading were gone. Meanwhile, Charles Bent was killed in the Taos revolt, he who had held together the divergent interests of the company. This blow, together with the sharp decline in business, destroyed the firm. St. Vrain sold his interest in the fort to William Bent, then departed for New Mexico. Bent,
disillusioned and disappointed, abandoned the fort in 1849, partially destroying it. He then moved to Big Timbers where he built another fort¹ and carried on the dying Indian trade for another decade.

Bent's work of destruction was more symbolic than substantial. By 1859 the fort's rehabilitated adobe walls sheltered a stage station, the principal stop on the Barlow & Sanderson stage, mail, and express route between Kansas City and Santa Fe. Here the superintendent-general manager lived for a time, and the company maintained a general repair shop. After the railroads had replaced the state, the buildings served as cattle corrals. Gradually the fort collapsed and disintegrated. Some of the adobe bricks were probably removed by ranchers and found their way into other buildings in the vicinity. By the early part of the present century, most of the evidences of the old fort had disappeared.

Present Status. Bent's Fort was excavated in 1954 under the direction of Dr. Herbert Dick, Trinidad Junior College. According to Dr. Dick's findings, the buildings of the 24-room post were arranged in the shape of a quadrangle. Circular bastions were located on the northeast and southwest corners. The accompanying aerial photograph of the excavation shows the trapazoidal layout of the fort, whose walls averaged about 165 feet in length.

There has been a long sustained movement to preserve this important historic site. In 1926, the cattle company which owned the land transferred title to the La Junta Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Later the site became a State Monument, administered by the Colorado State

¹. See site description for Bent's New Fort.
Historical Society. During this period, local historical groups reconstructed the fort's north wall and erected interpretive signs and markers to aid visitors. The site has been authorized as a National Historic Site and property is now being acquired prior to development by the National Park Service.

An Ox Train in the Mountains, by Frederic Remington. Denver Public Library Western Collection.
Location. On the border between Colorado and New Mexico, 6 miles north of Raton.

Owner. State, municipal, railroad, various private.

Significance. Raton Pass was the shortest and most practicable route from the upper Arkansas Valley to New Mexico. Both a barrier and a gateway, the Raton Mountains symbolized the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail as did no other landmark. Those who traveled this way viewed Raton Pass as the climactic challenge of the trip to Santa Fe. For ahead, under the looming cliffs of castellated Fishers Peak, lay a winding, rugged trail that claimed many wagons and animals as the price of passage.

Because this way was hard, and because it was longer than the Cimarron Cutoff by a hundred miles—a week's travel—caravans usually took the shorter road. True, on the cutoff they were more exposed to Indian attacks, and the Cimarron desert was a barrier in its own right. But considerations of time and distance normally prevailed with men who sought quick returns in the markets of Mexico.

This being so, and contemporary accounts admit no other interpretation, what claim does Raton Pass possess as an historically significant gateway on the Santa Fe Trail? Its claim is secure in this fact: Raton Pass and the Mountain Branch bore heavy traffic at critical moments in the history of the trail.

The Army of the West used this route in 1846 on its way to the conquest of New Mexico. Colonel Kearny had heeded traders' warnings that his 1,700 men and thousands of animals would not survive the waterless
Cimarron desert in mid-summer. He chose the longer, better watered Mountain Branch.

Throughout the Civil War the trail through Raton Pass was the strongest link between the far Southwest and the Union. Fear of Confederate raiders from Texas and increased Indian activity on the exposed Cimarron Cutoff forced virtual abandonment of that route, especially in the years 1861-63. But, shielded by the very mountains they cursed, the freighters continued to bring munitions, food, and supplies to the isolated Union troops in New Mexico--through Raton Pass.

In March 1862, when Confederate arms threatened total conquest in New Mexico, and Fort Union alone blocked the way to Colorado's gold fields, the heights of Raton Pass overlooked a scene of destiny. One hundred miles to the south lay Fort Union, undermanned, but preparing for a last stand against Gen. H. H. Sibley's Confederate army. This last hurdle he must overcome to complete the conquest of New Mexico. At this moment the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteers reached the summit of Raton Pass. There, at the last height, several eagles circled above them. The haggard, foot-worn soldiers mustered energy to cheer these symbols of liberty and victory. Then, hurried by desperate couriers from the south they forsook sleep and marched the hundred miles to Fort Union in 2 days. Having saved the fort, they and the regulars and volunteers from Fort Union now went on to save New Mexico in the Battle of Glorieta Pass. The gateway through the Raton Pass led to victory at Glorieta and the final collapse of the Confederate campaign in the Southwest.

During the trail's last days, when the advancing railhead was the eastern terminus of the wagon trade, the Mountain Branch and the Santa Fe
Trail were one. The Cimarron Cutoff was dead, bypassed by the railhead in 1868. These were the days of Richens L. "Uncle Dick" Wootton's toll road over Raton Pass. Uncle Dick, a former mountain man, had read the signs as early as 1864: Raton Pass would be the major artery between eastern Colorado and New Mexico. Fortified with a charter from the Colorado Territorial Legislature, he blasted out the worst trail barriers and improved its grades. Then, in 1866, he erected a toll gate at the northern end of the pass and cashed in on the traffic that flowed heavily upon his road. This lasted until 1879 when the Santa Fe railroad surmounted the pass and crowded him out, thus crowding into legend the Santa Fe Trail itself.¹

Raton Pass and the Mountain Branch were not highly significant in the routine progress of trail development and history. This distinction belongs to the Cimarron Cutoff. Contemporary accounts plainly show that before the Mexican War, and between that war and the Civil War, the Mountain Branch was little used—even abandoned for wagon traffic.²

¹. The Santa Fe railroad followed the old trail through Raton Pass and filled up the canyon of Raton Creek. This forced wagon traffic to take the more westerly Chicken Creek and Dillon Canyon route across the Raton Mountains. Modern highways bypass the old trail summit for the same reason. Old Scenic U. S. 85 (closed to through traffic) follows a ridge to the west of the trail; new U. S. 85-87 cuts into the mountains to the east.

². Matt Field, crossing the pass in 1839, wrote that wagons broke apart on the rocky slopes, even though they were hand-roped across the roughest points. The Notes of Lt. W. H. Emory, who advanced with the Army of the West in 1846, indicate that the march through Raton Pass was a trail-breaking operation. He concluded that money would have to be spent to straighten the road if it was to be a permanent communication link. Dragoon Percival G. Lowe who traveled the pass in 1854 said that the road was an abandoned route, with trees and rocks across the way. Pioneers of his regiment labored several days before the troops could get their wagons through.
But at times of decision, when the course of history was being abruptly altered, the Mountain Branch and its greatest landmark, Raton Pass, played crucial roles.

**Present Status.** Establishing the exact course of the Santa Fe Trail through Raton Pass is difficult, for the railroad with its many early switchbacks, along with modern highways, have eroded the ground considerably. Wootton's toll road was an earlier intrusion, but comparative study of historical maps indicates that his road followed closely the original Santa Fe Trail. His function, then, was to improve the old trail, not make a new road.¹ Using the few secure checkpoints, the logic of topography, accounts of travelers, historical maps, modern maps and aerials, and intensive ground reconnaissance, the route has been reconstructed as shown on the accompanying aerial map. The trail ascended Raton Creek Canyon to the pass summit directly over the present railroad tunnel, turned west and slightly north on the dividing ridge for about one-quarter mile, then bent south again to descend along the course of Willow Creek to the present town of Raton. Lt. J. W. Abert came through the pass in September 1846 with a supply train. It is certain that his train followed the trail broken by the main body of the Army of the West a month earlier. Abert's description of the trail through the Raton substantiates the northwesterly swing of the trail at the summit, thus eliminating from consideration the older pack trail which turns east from the summit. (see aerial map):

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¹ Kenyon Riddle, leading authority on details of the trail route, comes to this same conclusion (see his map sheet, 3A).
Spanish Peaks from the Trail Summit in Raton Pass, facing west.
Above: Wootton Toll Gate marker and rebuilt Wootton house at north end of Raton Pass.
Below: From the north, Santa Fe tunnel going under Raton Pass summit; willows mark Trail route going over.
Above: Remains of Wootton Toll Road near Raton summit.

Below: Early switchback system used by A.T. & S.F. to surmount Raton Pass, replaced by tunnel. Denver Public Library Western Collection.
We had no sooner left camp when we commenced the ascent of a long hill, whose top forms the dividing ridge of the waters running north from those running south. From the top of this ridge one has a magnificent view. As the road is very tortuous, at one time one beholds the Spanish peaks directly in front [to the northwest]; but it is only for a moment, as the road immediately bends its course to the south.

The bottom of the gorge was now comparatively level; we travelled along quite rapidly, until near the "embouchure" of the pass, when we again encountered difficult ground.

Soon . . . we commenced the passage of one of the most rocky roads I ever saw; no one who has crossed the Raton can ever forget it . . . in many places the axletrees were frayed against the huge fragments of rock that jutted up between the wheels . . . .

The words "at one time one beholds the Spanish Peaks directly in front," are crucial. For once well into the pass, the only place from which these peaks can be seen is one-eighth mile west and slightly north of the trail summit. This pinpoints Abert's viewpoint, and it is here that excellent trail remains are found today.

Abert's description of difficult descent is accounted for by the many affluents of Willow Creek, which cut into the main stream and form rock-strewn gullies running across the course of the trail. It was across these gullies that the Army of the West hand-roped its wagons.

About 2 miles north of the pass summit is the rebuilt Wootton House, a nooning stop on the stage line. Here, as marked by the Daughters of American Revolution, Wootton's toll gate swung for 13 years. This land is on the Old Wootton Ranch owned by Don Berg. From the ranch house nearly to the trail summit above the railroad tunnel, trail traces are gone. The railroad and construction of Old Scenic U. S. 85 obliterated them.

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Valley of the Canadian from Raton Mesa--the country trail travelers saw during their descent from Raton Pass.
From the north end of the tunnel and directly above it to the crest of the divide, ruts and lines of small willows mark the trail. But the best remains near the summit are on the northwesterly jog of the trail as it follows the ridge crest to the head of Willow Creek. In the descent from this point, early railroad switchbacks erased the trail.

An exceptional viewpoint for modern motorists is 1 1/2 miles south of the highway summit. From the turnout here (marked on the aerial map), the history of transportation through Raton Pass is made manifest. To the west, on the far ridge, is the Old Scenic Highway; in the narrow valley of Willow Creek, on the opposite bank, are obvious traces of the Santa Fe Trail; just below the turnout are the railroad tracks; to the northeast is the course of the early pack-train trail, which crossed the lowest point of the pass; and roaring by on U. S. 85-87 fronting the turnout are the cars of modern travelers.

Raton Pass became a Registered National Historic Landmark on October 22, 1961, having been declared eligible the previous December. The bronze Landmark Plaque was presented to the City of Raton; it was mounted on a concrete base on the Old Scenic Highway just north of the city. This is an unfortunate location, for an intervening ridge blocks a view of the canyon through which the trail descended.

OTHER SITES CONSIDERED
500 feet west of this spot is the site where stood the building in Franklin in which was published THE MISSOURI INTELLIGENCER and BOON'S LICK ADVERTISER by Nathaniel Patten & Benjamin Holliday. The first number was issued April 23, 1819. It was the first newspaper printed in Missouri west of St. Louis and was Missouri's pioneer country newspaper. This monument was erected and dedicated by the MISSOURI PRESS ASSOCIATION May 9, 1919.
Old Franklin, Missouri.

Until 1828, when it was washed away by the rampaging Missouri, Old Franklin was the most important town west of St. Louis. Metropolis of the Boon's Lick Country, homeland of the earliest Santa Fe traders, Old Franklin naturally became the first outfitting town for the infant trade. Of this period Gregg relates:

The town of Franklin on the Missouri river, over a hundred and fifty miles... west of St. Louis, seems truly to have been the cradle of our trade; and, in conjunction with several neighboring towns, continued for many years to furnish the greater number of these adventurous traders.\(^1\)

In the spring of 1828 Franklin presented to the eye of a Fayette Intelligencer reporter "a busy, bustling, and commercial scene, in buying, selling, and packing goods, practising mules, etc., etc., all preparatory to the starting of the great spring caravan for Santa Fe."\(^2\)

But that same year of 1828 saw the town's boom come to an end. The river caused its demise as outfitting point in two ways, either of which would have been fatal: first, by engulfing it; second, by providing cheap water transportation to a more westerly and convenient trail headquarters, Independence, founded in 1827.

Though its reign as queen of the trail was short, Old Franklin holds an important place in the history of the Santa Fe Trail. For William Becknell's pioneering expeditions of 1821 and 1822 both were conceived and outfitted here. And many of the trail's great figures called Old Franklin and its environs home, including Becknell, M. M. Marmaduke, the Coopers, and Kit Carson.

Corn and alfalfa now flourish on the approximate site of the "Metropolis of the West," which is across the Missouri River bridge from Boonville. A marble monument on the east side of U. S. 40, just north of the bridge, commemorates Old Franklin's role in the dawn days of the Santa Fe trade. Unfortunately this monument has been knocked over and lies flat on its back. One-fourth mile west of U. S. 40 on State Route 87 is a monument to the Missouri Intelligencer and Boon's Lick Advertiser, Missouri's first country weekly west of St. Louis (est. 1819), and a prime source for the early development of the Santa Fe Trail.

1. Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 22.
Independence, Missouri.

From 1828 until the mid-1840's Independence was the principal outfitting point for the Santa Fe trade as well as for the Oregon Trail. Platted in 1827, Independence soon became the leading town on the Missouri River in western Missouri. Eastern terminus for the trail during the period of expanding international trade, Independence ranks second only to Santa Fe in academic significance as a Santa Fe Trail site.

Independence was the focal point for trade goods bought in St. Louis, New York, Philadelphia, and in Europe. The big traders made their own purchases in these centers, then had the goods shipped to Independence in time for departure of the caravans in the spring. Throughout its active trading life, however, Independence catered to smaller operators who purchased their entire outfit in the town--animals, wagons, trade goods, and supplies.

George Ruxton described Independence in its heyday as follows:

Independence may be termed the "prairie port" of the western country. Here the caravans destined for Santa Fe and the interior of Mexico, assemble to complete their necessary equipment. Mules and oxen are purchased, teamsters hired, and all stores and outfit laid in here for the long journey over the wide expanse of prairie ocean.¹

Francis Parkman described the place in 1846 prior to his western journey:

... At Independence, every store is adapted to furnish outfits--the public houses were full of Santa Fe men and emigrants. Mules, horses, and waggons at every corner. Groups of hardy-looking men about the stores and Santa Fe and emigrant wagons standing in the fields around.²

According to W. Howard Adams, in charge of historic sites preservation for the Jackson County Historical Society, "no tangible remains of the Trail days are extant in Independence with the exception of the relocated log courthouse" built in 1827. Mr. Adams goes on to say that the "log courthouse is the original courthouse structure. However, when

Independence Courthouse and Square, 1830's. Missouri Historical Society.
it was moved many additions were made including the Quaint Mount Vernon porch. To my knowledge, it is the only log cabin with Palladian architectural pretensions in existence.\textsuperscript{1} The city's present structures are in no way associated with the Santa Fe trade. The old steamboat landing that had given Independence its advantage in the Santa Fe trade was swept into the Missouri in 1844. With this event began the decline of Independence and the rise of Westport. In the courthouse square square markers commemorating the starting points of the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails.

Westport-Kansas City, Missouri.

From its founding in 1832, Westport began to encroach on the Santa Fe trade monopoly held by Independence. Westport's advantages were an upstream landing (Westport Landing, later Kansas City),\textsuperscript{2} avoidance of the difficult Big Blue River crossing, and more room for pasturage of draft animals. Coincidental with the great flood of 1844, which wiped out the Independence landing, Westport became headquarters for a number of ambitious merchants. That year outfitting at Westport made its real debut. By 1845 the tandem of Kansas City and Westport were fairly dividing the trade with Independence. Five years later Kansas City was the main terminus of the trail.

Economically, Kansas City and Westport were inextricably one from the beginning. At the first were the wharves and warehouses for the steamboats, at the second the mercantile establishments that supplied the traders. Within a few years the two had practically merged into one great emporium commanding a trade that dwarfed earlier efforts. Where a few hundred wagons had once traversed the prairies, now thousands embarked for Santa Fe, carrying millions of dollars worth of goods. Kansas City's staff of freighting life was the Santa Fe Trail--the lifeline to the great Southwest.

Government freighting comprised a large share of Kansas City's business in 1860 when the army depot supplying the West's military posts was moved there from Leavenworth. But the next year secession struck the Kansas-Missouri frontier, nearly killing the Kansas City trade. Until 1865, border disturbances disrupted the Kansas City market and most traders used the protected "Government Lane" from Fort Leavenworth and Leavenworth City to reach the Santa Fe Trail.

But Kansas City was the natural terminus of the trade and by 1865 it was again the center for the private traders. Its revival as a wagon

\textsuperscript{1} Ltr. of November 8, 1962.
 \textsuperscript{2} Westport Landing was on the Missouri River just below its junction with the Kaw (Kansas) River. Westport was 4 miles south of Westport Landing.
Above: Fitzhugh-Watts Mill site in Kansas City, Mo., rendezvous point for Santa Fe Traders.
Below: Alexander Majors house built in 1855, Kansas City Mo.
freighting capital was short-lived however, for in 1866 the railroad began moving west, and with it went the eastern terminus of the trail.

According to James Anderson, historian for the Native Sons of Kansas City, all sites and buildings with direct Santa Fe Trail associations have been destroyed in Kansas City proper. The only remnants of trail days are a few street lines and names. Westport, of course, has been swallowed by greater Kansas City. But a few sites have survived: The old store of A. G. Boone, prominent trail outfitter, at the corner of Westport Road and Pennsylvania Avenue; the home of Alexander Majors, 8145 State Line Road; the William Bent Home, at 1032 West 55th Street; and the Dr. John Parker House at 305 Lawrence. The owners of all of these residences were prominently identified with the trade. The Fitzhugh Mill site, where some of the traders rendezvoused is at 110th Street and State Line Road.

Diamond Spring, Kansas.

Abundant water, fine camping facilities and the richness of surrounding wild pasture grasses made Diamond Spring a favorite stopping place for the overland trains on the Santa Fe Trail. In the later years of the trade, when camping space at Council Grove was crowded, the overflow wagons came to Diamond Spring to organize into caravans.

This place was known to the earliest traders, but was "discovered" again during the 1825-27 Government Survey. Its rushing cold waters won for it the name "Diamond of the Plains." Joseph C. Brown described it as "a remarkably fine large fountain spring, near which is a good camping ground."  

Commissioner George C. Sibley published an account of the survey in The Western Journal, in which he stated:

The spring gushes out from the head of a hollow in the prairie, and runs boldly among the stones into Otter creek [Diamond Creek], a short distance. It is very large, perfectly accessible, and furnishes the greatest abundance of most excellent, clear, cold water—enough to supply an army.

There is a fountain, inferior to this, in the Arabian Desert, known as 'The Diamond of the Desert.' This magnificent spring may, with at least equal propriety, be called

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1. Ltr. of November 26, 1962.
2. Built in 1836-37, this is the oldest building in Kansas City.
'The Diamond of the Plain.' We found it a most excellent camping place. A fine elm tree grows near to and overhangs the place.1

Waldo Hall, who in 1849 won the first U. S. Mail contract on the Independence-Santa Fe run, built a stage and relief station at Diamond Spring. It comprised several large two-story stone buildings, including an inn for travelers, a stone corral capable of holding several hundred head of stock, along with sheds, shops, and other improvements. This layout was the most pretentious between Council Grove and Santa Fe.

A number of trail tragedies occurred at or near Diamond Spring--Indian massacres, killing storms, and the raids of Quantrill's men during the turbulent Civil War years. One raid, led by Dick Yeager in May 1863, destroyed the stage station and it was abandoned. But the spring continued to be a noted campsite until this section of trail was bypassed by the railroad.

Diamond Spring is on the Diamond Spring Ranch, on a section road 2.3 miles south of the turnoff from U. S. 56. The section road turnoff is 14 miles west of Council Grove. The spring is below a knoll just behind the ranch house. Its fast-running waters join Diamond Creek 100 yards south of the spring in a lovely elm-shaded valley. Diamond of the Plains is still a good name. This section of Kansas, in Morris County, is part of the Flint Hills county; natural vegetation is the long bunch grass of the low plains.

Pawnee Rock, Kansas.

First of the famous trail landmarks, Pawnee Rock held a special place in the journals of the travelers. It was always mentioned. And though but 50 or 60 feet high during the historic period, it assumed the proportions of a mountain on the monotonous plains. Seen from 15 miles away, a day's journey, it became an object of curiosity--the only break in the prairie horizon. Most travelers climbed it, and many inscribed their names on its friable sandstone face.

All of the overland trails had their inscription rocks. This was the most famous one on the Santa Fe Trail. There was a compulsion in those who took the trails to record their passage. They knew they were making history. They believed that those who followed would take heed of their predecessors.

Timorous Susan Magoffin relates her adventure at Pawnee Rock in July 1846:

1. Quoted in George P. Morehouse, "Diamond Springs, 'The Diamond of the Plain,!'" Kansas Historical Collections XIV (1915-1918), 796.
I was anxious to see this wonderful curiosity. We went up and while mi alma with his gun and pistols kept watch, for the wily Indian may always be apprehended here, it is a good lurking place and they are ever ready to fall upon any unfortunate trader behind his company—and it is necessary to be careful, so while mi alma watched on the rock above and Jane stood by to watch if any should come up on the front side of me, I cut my name, among the many hundreds inscribed on the rock and many of whom I knew. It was not done well, for fear of Indians made me tremble all over and I hurried it over in any way.  

One of Kearny's soldiers describes the panoramic view from Pawnee Rock:

I climbed up the rock, from the top of which I witnessed one of the grandest sights ever beheld. Far over the plain to the west and north was one vast herd of buffaloes; some in column, marching in their trails, others carelessly grazing. Every acre was covered, until in the dim distance the prairie became one black mass, from which there was no opening, and extending to the horizon.  

Lewis H. Garrard found tragedy at Pawnee Rock in the autumn of 1846:

On the top of the rock, near the edge, was a deposit of earth, where the remains of some poor fellow had been placed. To die anywhere seems hard, but to heave the last breath among strangers, on the burning, desolate prairie, with no kind mother or sister to pay those soothing attentions which divest the bed of sickness of many of its pangs, is hard indeed. How must we pity the invalid, who, after being jolted in a wagon under the scorching rays of a summer's sun for days, until nature yields, is put into a mere hole, with his blanket for coffin and shroud, without a prayer or tear! Yet such is a frequent fate on the Santa Fe Trail.

With the intrusion of civilization, Pawnee Rock has lost its singular appearance. Much stone from its cliff has been removed by railroad and home builders. Unlike Chimney Rock, on the Oregon Trail, it retains few of the characteristics which made it a prominent landmark on the trail over a century ago. The rock is no longer impressive and it can be seen for only a few miles from U. S. 56. Pawnee Rock is just

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1. Drumm, ed., Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico, 40, 41.
Fort Dodge, 1879. Kansas State Historical Society.
north of the town of that name, off U. S. 56. The remaining rock is now a State Park. A shelter and monument are on the summit, and there is a state historical marker on the highway west of the town.

Fort Dodge, Kansas.

Most westerly of the big forts on the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas, Fort Dodge was established in 1864. It was strategically located near the intersection of the wet and the dry routes from Fort Larned, and between two of the favorite Indian crossings of the Arkansas—the Cimarron Crossing 25 miles west, and the Mulberry Creek Crossing 15 miles east. Together with Fort Larned, Fort Dodge provided escorts for wagons trains and mail coaches during the turbulent sixties, the bloodiest period of Indian warfare on the southern plains. This period was climaxed by General Phil Sheridan's winter campaign of 1868-69 against tribes in the Indian Territory and Texas. Fort Dodge was Sheridan's base of operations during this campaign, which ended general warfare on the southern plains.

In 1868 Fort Dodge was the distributing point for Arapaho, Plains Apache, and Southern Cheyenne annuities. Indian traders sold guns and ammunition to the Indians at this time, in sight of the very soldiers who would later be killed by them. This unrestricted trade in firearms was one of the most difficult problems that faced military authorities in the West. Finally General W. T. Sherman, commanding the Military Division of the Missouri, ordered that only his post commanders could issue arms to Indians, and then only to friendly tribes and to the extent necessary for hunting. The order came too late to prevent many depredations in the Fort Dodge area. In September 1868 Comanches and Kiowas attacked Fort Dodge, killing 4 soldiers and wounding 17 more. The same year Cheyennes and Arapahoes attacked a Mexican wagon train near the fort, killing and scalping 16 of the traders.

Fort Dodge was a three-company stone, adobe, and frame post with shelter for one company of cavalry horses. It was abandoned in 1882, long after the Santa Fe Trail was overtaken by the railroad in this region. Dodge City grew up in the shadow of protection cast by Fort Dodge.

Fort Dodge is 4 miles southeast of Dodge City on U. S. 154. It is now a State soldiers' home, and all existing buildings dating from army days are still in use, though they have been remodelled for institutional use. Absorbed by more modern structures, the buildings and the area no longer provide the impression of a frontier military post.

Fort Mann-Atkinson, Kansas.

Fort Mann and the later Fort Atkinson were predecessors of Fort Dodge
in the vicinity of the Cimarron Crossing. Fort Mann was established in 1847 to serve army caravans as a repair depot and rest stop equidistant between Fort Leavenworth and Santa Fe. According to Garrard, "The fort was simply four log houses connected by angles of timber framework, in which were cut loopholes for the cannon and small arms. In diameter the fort was about sixty feet. The walls were twenty in height." Service at Fort Mann was dangerous, for the post was too small to hold a garrison sufficient to repel a serious attack. The summer of 1847 was marked by many Indian depredations along the trail, and the teamsters and blacksmiths at Fort Mann were a nervous crew before it was over.

Fort Atkinson (at first named Fort Mackay) was established at the same site in 1850, and Fort Mann was then abandoned. Throughout its existence, sod-built Fort Atkinson was the halfway point between Council Grove and the New Mexican frontier. Probably the greatest event which occurred at the post was the signing of a treaty with the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache on July 27, 1853. Brought about by Thomas Fitzpatrick, Indian agent, the treaty gave the government the right to establish military posts and railroad depots along the trail in return for $18,000 dollars in trade goods to be paid to the three tribes over a period of 10 years.

Fort Atkinson's abandonment and destruction in 1854 was a serious blow to the Santa Fe traders and freighters. The Territorial Legislature of New Mexico petitioned Congress to have the post reestablished, stating that it was an "absolutely necessary" rallying point in time of danger. For, "From Council Grove . . . to Fort Union, . . . a distance of six hundred miles, the country is entirely unsettled and swarming with hostile Indians." The petition went unheeded for 5 years. Not until establishment of Fort Larned in 1859 was there a single military post along the central section of the trail.

A marker on the north side of U. S. 50, 4 miles west of Dodge City, commemorates the site of Fort Mann-Atkinson (see location map). The site is 2,500 feet southeast of the marker in cultivated bottomland along the river. No remains of the fort survive.

Middle or Cimarron Crossing, Kansas.

After 1829 the Middle or Cimarron Crossing was regularly used by the caravans. Until the Mexican War this crossing marked the international boundary between Mexico and the United States. For this reason alone it was a landmark of the first importance. The crossing was a little more than halfway between Independence and Santa Fe; thus it signified the midpoint of the long journey--the point of no return. Most important,

1. Lewis H. Garrard, Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail, 255.
2. Laws of the Territory of New Mexico, 1853-54, 182-84.
the Cimarron Crossing marked the division of the trail into its two great branches, the Cimarron Cutoff and the Mountain Branch. The cutoff meant long, waterless marches across the Cimarron Desert or Jornada, and the serious threat of attack by Kiowa and Comanche war parties. But it was shorter and was therefore preferred by the traders. During only three periods—the Mexican War, the Civil War, and during the last days of the trail when the Cimarron Cutoff was bypassed by the railroad—was the Mountain Branch favored. These were periods of abrupt historical change. But the normal development of the trade was via the Cimarron Cutoff. So much so that many travelers taking the Mountain Branch in the 1840's and 1850's considered that they had left the Santa Fe Trail once they had passed the Cimarron Crossing. "Left the Santa Fe Trail today at the crossing and continued on to Bent's Fort" was a typical journal entry.

The crossing of the Arkansas was a landmark in another respect. It was a difficult crossing. Though the waters were shallow, the current was strong and wide, and the bottom was full of sink-holes and quicksand. Wagons tipped in the holes; animals spooked and became hopelessly entangled in their lines; if a wagon stopped, it sank to the hubs in a few seconds and the animals panicked in the clutching quicksand. Then the drivers and extra hands leaped to the rescue, manhandling the mules and oxen across the river, hitching fresh teams and bodily dragging wagons free—perhaps unloading them to make the task possible. A large train took a day to cross the Arkansas. And afterwards, the sandhills south of the river might be covered with bright fabrics, as a wetted wagon load was spread to dry in the sun.

Josiah Gregg noted that "nothing like a regular ford had ever been established" across the Arkansas. Three crossing areas were recognized: the Lower Crossing in the vicinity of present Ford, Kansas, 20 miles east of present Dodge City; the Middle or Cimarron Crossing, 20 to 30 miles west of Dodge City, in the vicinity of present Cimarron and Ingalls; and the Upper Crossing at Chouteau's Island. The Cimarron Crossing soon emerged as the favorite. The other two crossings were seldom used after the late 1820's. But as shown on the location map for the Dodge City Complex, the Cimarron Crossing itself shifted from time to time. Statements of the travelers show that the Ingalls area was the favored crossing point, with the crossing at Cimarron a sometimes-used alternate.

No physical remains of the crossings survive. Agriculture in the bottomlands of the Arkansas and the shifting of the river bed have wiped them out.

1. See site description for Raton Pass for detail on these periods.
2. Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 49.
No particular historic site or physical landmark provides a focal point on the Jornada between the Arkansas and the Lower Spring of the Cimarron. The Jornada itself—nearly 60 miles long—is the landmark. Gregg called it "the grand 'prairie ocean'; for not a single landmark is to be seen . . . scarcely a visible eminence by which to direct one's course. All is as level as the sea, and the compass was our surest as well as principal guide."

The literature of the trail abounds with tragedies that occurred on this dreaded desert—wagon trains lost, thirst-maddened men wandering under a fiery sun over a plain apparently illimitable in every direction. Greatest of the mountain men, Jedediah Smith, met his death here in 1831—he who had explored the Great Basin, the Mojave, the Rockies, the Columbia. Yet the paltry 60 miles of the Jornada trapped him, and the search for water lured him into Indian ambush and death, alone.

A place of extremes, the Jornada was as much noted for screeching thunder-storms and blizzards as for its dryness. In the summer of 1834 one after another of these torrential storms swept the treeless plain. Wagon trains crossing the soggy ground indelibly marked the trail. Henceforth there was no danger of getting lost, and with all water kegs filled at the Arkansas or the Lower Spring, a caravan lucky enough to avoid wandering bands of Comanches had little trouble on the Jornada.

The curse of the Jornada extended into the 1930's, when this part of Kansas was swept by the terrible wind and sand storms that created the dust-bowl. Today, under better soil management, the region is a thriving farm area. The prairie has been broken and cultivated. Little or no trace of the old trail remains. U. S. 56 parallels the caravan route, but is 8 to 10 miles to the south of it.

From the Lower Spring caravans followed the sandy bed of the Cimarron River for 80 miles, often crossing back and forth to find firm ground, and finally leaving it near the Upper Spring. Half way along this course they reached the Middle Spring and Point of Rocks. Surveyor Brown noted that the "Middle Spring . . . is near half a mile from the creek Cimarron River, on the north of it, near a mile below downstream from a sort of rock bluff at the point of a hill."2

Because the Cimarron was normally dry, intermittent pools appearing only after a rain, the springs along its course were the only sure water sources.

1. Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 50.
Above: Point of Rocks, Kans., with Cimarron River Valley in background, view from southwest.
Below: Pool at Middle Springs, Kans., one mile north of Point of Rocks.
supply. Each spring, then, was an oasis—its small, grass-rimmed pools and cattail marshes of inestimable value to the traveler. Only days of travel on the burnt-grass, wind-swept prairie can evoke proper appreciation for these springs. They are microcosms of life—lush little jewels where frogs and dragonflies and water plants have intruded into the hostile, surrounding barrenness. Water is the key, and though the pool may be only a few feet across, it supports a teeming world of succulence. Travelers from green Missouri must have wondered how such minute relief from the dry prairie could be so welcome.

From the Middle Spring the trail headed toward the river bed and crossed in front of Point of Rocks to avoid the broken ground of which the point is the culmination.

The location map shows access to the Middle Spring and Point of Rocks via a dirt ranch road about 100 yards north of the Cimarron bridge. The sites are on private cattle grazing land.

Cottonwoods and elms surround the springs, which were buried during the dust bowl era. They have since been uncovered and their water is tapped by five pipes that are hidden in the deep grass. Except for the thick growth of trees, the springs retain their historical aspect. Point of Rocks, likened to the prow of a ship by travelers, is unchanged except for a dirt road leading to its summit. From this point can be obtained a fine view of the Cimarron Valley and the route of the trail. Trail remains are visible coming from the spring across the face of Point of Rocks.

Upper Spring, Oklahoma.

The topography changes from prairie to ravines, knobby crags, and rough breaks as one proceeds up the Cimarron Valley. This variety of landscape meant rougher going for the caravans, but uniformly the diarists of the trail welcomed the change and praised the wild scenery—it was tangible evidence that the seemingly endless prairies did not go on forever.

Upper Spring was one of the more picturesque places on the trail. Josiah Gregg relates his first view of it in 1831:

It was on the last day of June that we arrived at the 'Upper Spring,' which is a small fountain breaking into a ravine that declines towards the Cimarron some three or four miles to the north.... We halted at noon on the brook below, and then branched off towards the waters of the Canadian, in an average direction of about thirty degrees south of west. As the wagon-road passes upon the adjacent ridge a quarter of a mile to the south of this spring, some of us, to procure a draught of its refreshing water, pursued a path along the ravine,
Above: Approach to Upper Spring, Kans., from southwest showing rocky knobs mentioned by travelers.

Below: Pools at Upper Spring.
winding through dense thickets of underbrush, matted with green-briers and grape vines... The wildness of this place, with its towering cliffs, craggy spurs, and deep-cut crevices, became doubly impressive to us, as we reflected that we were in the very midst of the most savage haunts. Often will the lonely traveller, as he plods his weary way in silence, imagine in each click of a pebble, the snap of a firelock, and in every rebound of a twig, the whisk of an arrow.1

George Sibley, leader of the Government Survey in 1825 was similarly impressed with the scenery:

Here we found, Situated amidst huge rocky cliffs The Upper Semerone Spring, affording abundance of excellent Water, and the long narrow Valley that it waters supplied us with plenty of Wood for fuel & pretty good pasturage for our Horses. This is a noted camping place, and is the point from whence we are to take our departure across a sort of Sandy desert... to another Creek to the West... Altogether, the Scenery here is extremely beautiful.2

One-half mile south of the spring is a level plain, used as a campground by the traders. The main trail headed west-southwest from the campground, topping a distant ridge. From this ridge the traders first glimpsed the Rabbit Ears, which became their guide.3

Access to the Upper Spring is from U. S. 287-385 at the State highway historical sign turnout 9 miles north of Boise City (see location map). At this point, where the trail crosses the highway, a dirt road goes west across private ranch land for about 2 miles. There the high rock crags overlooking the spring come into view about one-quarter mile to the north.

Though a small dam now holds the waters flowing from the spring, it is a few hundred yards downstream from the pools and does not impair the site's integrity. Excellent trail remains lead to the spring; this branch off the main trail was used by water wagons. The main trail is plainly visible all the way from the highway to the distant ridge where the Rabbit Ears come into view.

Locally this spring is called Flag Spring, because at some undetermined time a trader mounted a guide flag on one of the high crags.

1. Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 61, 62.
2. Kate Gregg, ed., The Road to Santa Fe, 93-95.
3. See site description for the Clayton Complex.
Above: Cold Spring, Okla., the pool just west of stone spring house.

Left: Inscriptions on rock ledge overlooking Cold Spring—some date from 1830's.
Cold Spring, Oklahoma.

At Cold Spring the trail left the Cimarron Valley and bore southwest toward the Rabbit Ears, the principal guide for many days' travel. Cold Spring was not only a favorite campground of the traders. Along with the Lower Spring and Cedar Bluffs Spring, it was "a favorite place where Indians lie in wait to attack passing trains . . ." Attacks on mail coaches and wagon trains in the vicinity of Cold Spring were largely responsible for the intensified escort system developed by General Carleton during the Civil War.

In 1843, General Manuel Armijo camped at Cold Spring with a force assembled to protect the trail from raiding Texans. But when his vanguard was defeated by the Texans near the Arkansas, Armijo's army precipitately fled to Santa Fe, leaving "spurs, lareats and other scraps of equipage . . . scattered in every direction" about the camp.

Of great interest at Cold Spring are the scores of inscriptions on the rock bluff overlooking the pool. Many date from the 1840's. That the Mormon Battalion and Price's Second Missouri Volunteers passed here on their march to Santa Fe is evidenced by a number of 1846 inscriptions, many of them with a many-pointed symbolic star alongside the name.

The spring itself is now enclosed by a stone spring-house, but the pool in Cold Springs Creek retains its historical appearance as a desert oasis. From Boise City, the spring is reached as follows: 5 miles west on paved Wheeles road; 8 miles north on section road (first 4 miles paved); 1 mile, west at crossroad, then take left fork to trees that shade spring and Gorman ranch house (see location map).

Point of Rocks, New Mexico.

From the slope of Round Mound, the southern spurs of the Raton Mountains become visible. The last of these spurs is Point of Rocks, 30 miles from Round Mound. For two days the travelers guided on this point. The bold face of Point of Rocks made it a natural landmark, and an excellent spring in a canyon just west of the point made it a favored camping spot.

1. See site description for Camp Nichols.
3. Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 339.
4. See Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXVII (Autumn, 1960), 310-322, for a report on these inscriptions.

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Above: Point of Rocks, N.M., from one-half mile southwest.

Below: Spring Canyon at Point of Rocks. Pools extend up the canyon about one-quarter mile.
LOCATION MAP
Point of Rocks and Rock Crossing of Canadian R.
New Mexico

Main Roads
Ranch or Section Roads
Verified Trail Remains

Viewpoint: Wagon Mound to Raton Mtns.

Scale 1" = 4 miles
As was typical of the rougher camp- and spring-sites, the main trail passed a good distance away from the broken ground, in this case a mile to the south. During times of Indian troubles, an armed party would reconnoiter the site and post lookouts before the train or water wagons and stock were brought up to the spring.

Just east of Point of Rocks occurred one of the most famous tragedies of the trail, the White Massacre of October 1849. Here J. M. White, a Santa Fe merchant, his family, his servants, and two other travelers were attacked by Jicarilla Apaches. All were killed except Mrs. White and her little daughter, taken captive. Kit Carson was a member of the scouting party that led the pursuit of the Indians, but it was a luckless expedition. Mrs. White was killed just as she was about to be rescued. The little White girl disappeared with the fleeing Indians, never to be heard from again, despite a $1500 reward for her return voted by the 31st Congress in 1850.

Except for a ranch one-quarter mile to the south, Point of Rocks retains its historic aspect. The spring in the west canyon is a beautiful spot, with descending pools stepping down from higher ground. Trail remains are very impressive, and near the abandoned Wheatland School (see location map), are so deep that the Soil Conservation Service has thrown earth dams across them to prevent erosion. As shown on the location map, the site is accessible from U. S. 56.

Rock Crossing of Canadian River, New Mexico.

The Rock Crossing of the Canadian, el Vado de Piedras, was an important landmark and road junction on the Santa Fe Trail. It marked the true New Mexican frontier, for west of the Canadian, Mexican soldiers patrolled the country. Such patrols often met the traders at the crossing and escorted them to San Miguel--more to hinder smuggling than to guard against Indians. From the Rock Crossing the main road led south to Wagon Mound. After the establishment of Fort Union, another road led southwest from the crossing directly to Fort Union. Yet another trail took off from the crossing and led directly west across the Sangre de Cristos to Taos, center of the southern Rockies fur trade. This road was much used by both trappers and traders with business in Taos. Often, "runners" from a wagon train went to Taos from the Rock Crossing. There they scouted the market, then worked their way south to Santa Fe to meet the

1. The northeasterly extension of this direct route to Fort Union was the Fort Leavenworth freight road, which intersected the Mountain Branch at the Kansas-Colorado border. See site description for Fort Union for additional information on this road--another of the spokes radiating from the Rock Crossing.
Above: Gully ruts descending to Canadian River Crossing from east. Fringe of willows to right in valley is just opposite crossing.

Below: Rock canyon of Canadian below the crossing.
Rock Crossing of the Canadian (el Vado de Piedras), two miles south of U.S. 56 bridge. The Trail descended to the plain by the gap in the mesa, to the east in the center distance. A few yards south of crossing, the rock canyon of the Canadian begins.
wagon train, which had gone by way of San Miguel. If the Taos market looked good, the traders dispatched some of their wagons there. This activity illustrates the close tie between the Santa Fe Trade and the southern Rockies fur trade, especially in the 1820's and 1830's.

A famous Indian fight occurred at the Rock Crossing in 1833 when 12 traders enroute to Independence were attacked by 200 Comanches. After battling for 32 hours, the traders were nearly out of ammunition and most of them were wounded. At this critical juncture, the Indians unexpectedly told the traders to go in peace. Of the ten men still living, seven reached the settlements, but the other three lost their way in the Rock Gorge of the Canadian and died.

Joseph C. Brown stated that "The ford of the Canadian is rocky and shallow and is easy to find. If missed the traveler would not be able to cross below the ford in many miles." Here Brown gives an example of the logic of terrain on the trail, for immediately south of the crossing--within 20 yards--the Rock Gorge of the Canadian begins. It was an impassable barrier for wagons. The effect of this barrier is seen in the course of the trail from Round Mound to the crossing. In all this way, though San Miguel is southwest, the trail aims west-southwest to avoid the Rock Gorge. But immediately after the trail crosses the Canadian, it angles acutely south-southwest to make up for lost time and distance. The directional sense of the traders was sharp. They never marched a foot out of their way unless forced to do so by terrain.

The best approach to the Rock Crossing site is down the west side of the Canadian from U. S. 56, exactly 2 miles via ranch road (see location map). At this point, just north of a fence gate, a galvanized cattle shelter points the way to the crossing. Looking east from the crossing it is possible to pick out the trail's descent from the tableland east of the river. To the south-southwest, the plain tracks of the trail can be followed for many miles toward Wagon Mound.

From the tableland to the east is revealed a splendid panorama, encompassing the Canadian Valley from Wagon Mound on the south to the Raton Mountains on the north. Directly west, the snow-clad Sangre de Cristos bound the scene. The best viewpoint is shown on the location map. It would be an excellent site for an interpretive turnout from U.S. 56, where the story of both the Mountain and Cimarron Branches could be told. At no other point on the trail is such a tremendous scope of trail country to be seen.

Wagon Mound (Santa Clara Spring), New Mexico.

Wagon Mound was the last great landmark on the westward journey across the plains of northeastern New Mexico. It first becomes visible

1. Field Notes, 20.
Above: Wagon Mound, N.M.

Below: From the top of Wagon Mound, looking west up Santa Clara Spring Canyon, beginning at left center. The spring is two miles up the canyon.
near Point of Rocks, and from the Rock Crossing was the guidepoint for the caravans. Early travelers likened the mountain to a shoe with the toe pointed west, but soon a trader had an inspired vision and saw in the humped up hill a wagon bearing southwest with its yokes of oxen lumbering over the horizon. The name he gave it, Wagon Mound, stuck. And a more appropriate simile for the Santa Fe Trail would be hard to find.

Two miles northwest of Wagon Mound is Santa Clara Spring, up a canyon by the same name. Here the traders camped in a natural bowl, sheltered from the winds that unceasingly whip across the open plains. Beginning in the late 1840's Santa Clara Spring was the scene of frequent Indian ambuscades. Wagon Mound became not only a guide, but a warning sign. A military report of May 1850 tells a somber story illustrating this grim period:

The mail carriers from Fort Leavenworth to this place [Santa Fe] were killed near the Wagon Mound (Santa Clara Springs) about forty-four miles east of Las Vegas. They were accompanied by a number of other persons; altogether eleven dead bodies have been found; their persons have not been identified. The probable perpetrators of these murders were the Jicarilla Apaches who have generally associated with them some straggling Comanches and Utes . . . . A party of citizens going hence to the States discovered the dead bodies on the 18th instant in such a state of decay as to show that they had been killed ten or twelve days previous. The mail bags were broken open and the contents much scattered . . . . I have directed Lieut. Col. Alexander, Third Infantry, Commanding at Las Vegas, . . . to send a party to the Wagon Mound and have the dead bodies interred . . . .

After the founding of Fort Union in 1851, a major road to the fort branched from the Cimarron Cutoff at Wagon Mound, skirted the north edge of the Turkey Mountains, then joined the Mountain Branch near Turkey Rock (see end jacket fold map). Military freighters made heavy use of this alternate route.

Today U. S. 85 and the railroad pass between Wagon Mound and the Pilot Knobs, slightly to the west, just as the old trail did. South of Wagon Mound extensive remains show the route of the trail toward La Junta (Watrous), and the westerly swing of the alternate to Fort Union is also plainly visible. The town of Wagon Mound (formerly the Mexican settlement of Santa Clara) hugs the base of the mountain, somewhat diluting the integrity of the site. But from only a few miles to the northeast, Wagon Mound appears to rise alone and untrammeled from the plain, still a landmark. Santa Clara Spring--2 miles northwest of the town on State

Route 120, then one-half mile north by ranch road—is utilized for the municipal water supply. It is covered with a tin-roofed, concrete shelter. But this intrusion is softened by overhanging willows and cottonwoods, and the spring site retains much integrity.

Wagon Mound may be climbed, and from its summit stretches out a splendid view of the mountains and bordering plains. Permission to visit the springs may be obtained from the owners, who dwell in the old Sim Calley ranch house just across the highway from the town on State Route 120. This ranch house was once a stage stop on the trail.

Las Vegas, New Mexico.

For a decade before the founding of the La Junta settlement, Las Vegas marked the New Mexican frontier for the Santa Fe traders. Here, on well-watered vegas or meadows, they camped and gave their animals a rest before striking through the mountains on the final leg of their journey to Santa Fe. Mexican settlers from nearby ranchos drifted into camp, peddling eggs, cheese, milk, and aguardiente for goods the traders carried. Wide-eyed children debouched from the town's cluster of mud hovels and watched the big Yanquis handle wagons and stock in silent wonderment.

Historically, Las Vegas' big moment came in the Mexican War. The town's historian describes the scene and its significance:

General Stephen W. Kearny entered Las Vegas on the morning of August 15th, 1846, and Juan de Dios Maese greeted General Kearny as he came into town. Through his interpreter, Antonio Robidoux, General Kearny directed the alcalde to lead the way to the roof of a building on the Plaza and indicated he would follow. Once on the rooftop General Kearny explained his mission. He absolved the citizens of their allegiance to the Mexican Government and said that he was now the governor representing the United States. He told them he had come as a friend and not as an enemy and swore to protect their rights, their property and religious freedom. He warned that anyone taking up arms against him would be hanged. With these provisions explained he proceeded to give the oath of allegiance to Juan de Dios Maese and his executive officers.

Thus began a long sequence of events in which Las Vegas was to have the honor of being first. The first American flag to fly over a village in the Territory of New Mexico was raised over the Las Vegas Plaza. Juan de Dios Maese was the first mayor or alcalde of an American village in the Territory.1

Above: San Miguel del Vado Mission.

Left: Mexican Woman Washing, by Frederic Remington. Denver Public Library Western Collection.
Today the plaza of old town (West Las Vegas) retains much of the atmosphere that greeted Kearny's soldiers. The building upon which the general stood to deliver his proclamation still stands as the core of a larger, two-story structure.

San Miguel del Vado, New Mexico.

In the early days of the Santa Fe trade, San Miguel del Vado (St. Michael of the Ford) was the first Mexican village encountered by the traders. Josiah Gregg, speaking of his 1831 trip, called it "... the first settlement of any note upon our route."1 Americans new to the trade received here their first impression of the strange culture they were about to enter. It was a fair enough impression, one that braced them for Santa Fe. Because San Miguel at the crossing of the Pecos River was a typical Mexican village of a few hundred souls surrounded by the ranchos of herdsmen and farmers. Built in 1806, San Miguel's church was then as now the most impressive building in the town, a well-recognized landmark on the trail.

During the Mexican Period, San Miguel was a port of entry and here traders had their first bouts with Mexican customs officials. Diligencias, or illegal settlements with officials, began here and did not cease until Mexican territory was departed.

With the rise of Las Vegas in the 1830's, San Miguel faded as an important stopping-place on the Santa Fe Trail. Its last fling with events of historical moment occurred in 1841 when members of the Texan-Santa Fe Expedition were brought here from Anton Chico, where Governor Armijo's soldiers had captured them. The Texans were imprisoned at San Miguel, several were shot in the town plaza, and soon after, the rest began their cruel march to Mexico.

Today San Miguel is a sleepy Spanish village 3 miles south of U. S. 84-85 and 23 miles southwest of Las Vegas. Time has brought a kind of oblivion to San Miguel—off the main track in its locale of river valley and small farms, in the shadow of pinon-covered mesas. The town's brown adobe buildings and dirt streets, its central plaza, and its simple country folk have escaped modernity. Almost a ghost town now, the few people who remain here live under the guardianship of the village priest, much in the manner of their Spanish ancestors.

Glorieta Pass, New Mexico.

Blocked by the impassable barrier of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the Santa Fe Trail swung south to the narrow gateway of Glorieta Pass.

1. Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 77.
Here, between the southern spurs of the mountains and the red-rock walls of Glorieta Mesa, the old road threaded its way to Santa Fe. Until the Federal road project which improved the Fort Union-Santa Fe road in the 1850's, Glorieta Pass was a difficult barrier itself. James Josiah Webb describes the condition of the road in 1844:

The road through the mountains was the worst imaginable, to be called a road, no labor being expended to keep it in repair except such as was done by the traders to make it possible to get along. . . .

But a few miles from . . . Pecos Ruins we enter the big canyon, where the road winds and turns, crossing steep pitches and ravines, over rocks, and around boulders, making short and difficult turns, with double teams to make an ascent. At other places the turns are so short that only two or three yoke of cattle can be allowed to pull the load, from danger of turning over into the ravine. One of these difficult passes we called the "S", which required all the skill of the best drivers to get around. And often wagons would be turned over with all the precautions we could use. Six or eight miles a day was considered good traveling.1

Except for Webb's fine statement, the trials of the pass elicited surprisingly little comment from trail diarists. It was the last barrier before Santa Fe--its difficulties could be borne in anticipation of the morrow.

During the Mexican War, Governor Manuel Armijo made a show of defending Santa Fe by blocking the Americans in the confines of Glorieta Pass. But, with Falstaffian logic, he thought better of this design, and, except for a few abandoned abattis, the Americans found no sign of defenders. Emory noted that the pass "is a gateway which, in the hands of a skilful engineer and one hundred resolute men, would have been perfectly impregnable."2

Battle flags sufficed to force Glorieta Pass in the Mexican War, but the next invading army had to use guns, and yet they lost. On the battlefield of Glorieta Pass, Colorado Volunteers shattered Confederate strategy in the West. Shattered too was the Confederate dream of an empire stretching to the Pacific, encompassing a land of gold and silver to fill the coffers of Richmond.

The story of General Sibley's invasion from Texas and the defeat of his army in Glorieta Pass is covered in the narrative section of

2. Emory, Notes, 31.
this report. To clarify the accompanying map, however, the following
points are repeated: Base camps of the Union and Confederate forces
were at the Kozlowski and Johnson Ranches respectively. After an
indecisive fight at Apache Canyon on March 26, the two forces withdrew
to the ranches, where they licked their wounds and received reinforce­
ments the next day. On March 28, Maj. John M. Chivington struck the
decisive blow. With a few companies of Federals, he swung south of
the main battle raging at Pigeon's Ranch, crossed over Glorieta Mesa
and destroyed the Confederate supply train at Johnson's Ranch. Bereft
of war materials, badly hurt by the heavy fighting, the Confederates
began a retreat that ended in Texas.

The three key sites associated with the battle of Glorieta Pass
are readily identifiable, although their integrity has been impaired.
Kozlowski's Ranch, site of the Union base camp, is now part of the
Forked Lightning Ranch. At Pigeon's Ranch, focal point of the battle
between the main contending forces, part of the original adobe ranch
house and corral are still standing. Its owner, however, has decked it
with a multitude of signs proclaiming it an "old Spanish fort," and
charges admission to it and the "oldest well in the U.S.A." At
Johnson's Ranch, where Chivington destroyed the Confederate supply train,
the ranch house was recently torn down. But the setting here retains
integrity. The wagon park is in natural growth, and the bluffs down
which Chivington charged and the foothills surrounding the ranch remain
unimpaired. Much of the ground over which the armies fought has
suffered little encroachment. Despite the construction through the
pass of a super highway, which has somewhat altered the character of
the terrain, the important sites may be easily located, and the setting
visualized.

Glorieta Pass was declared eligible as a Civil War Landmark in
November 1961. It became a Registered National Historic Landmark in
March 1962, during the centennial observance of the battle. The Land­
mark plaque is on Museum of New Mexico land near the highway, just
east of Pigeon's Ranch.

Chouteau's Island, Kansas.

Located at the Upper Crossing of the Arkansas River, 5 miles south­
west of present Lakin, Kansas, Chouteau's Island received its name in
the spring of 1816 when a party of trappers led by Auguste P. Chouteau
was besieged here by Pawnees. Chouteau and Julius De Munn of St. Louis
had been trapping in Spanish territory at the headwaters of the Arkansas.
Received favorably by the Spanish in 1816, they hoped for permission to
trap the Rio Grande headwaters. But the next year they were arrested
by Spanish troops, conducted to Santa Fe, and relieved of their furs and
property before being sent back to the States. This was another of the
discouraging incidents that kept the Santa Fe Trail closed during the
Spanish period.
Chouteau's Island next figured in the history of the trail during the 1825-27 Government Survey. Joseph C. Brown chose this rare timbered island as a landmark for the Upper Crossing of the Arkansas. From this crossing it was but 33 miles due south to the Lower Spring of the Cimarron, chopping almost in half the Jornada or water scrape from the Middle Crossing to the Lower Spring. Despite this advantage, traders seldom used the Upper Crossing. To do so necessitated traversing two sides of a triangle, as opposed to the straight line from the Middle Crossing. This added at least 2 days to the over-all journey. The loss of time outweighed the threat of the Jornada.

In the vicinity of Chouteau's Island Maj. Bennett Riley and four companies of infantry camped in 1829. This was the first military escort on the trail. The adventures of this escort and of the wagon train of 1829 are described in the narrative.

Chouteau's Island is no more. The Arkansas has changed its course and only the site remains, tentatively identified on aerial photographs.

Bent's New Fort, Colorado.

After destroying Bent's Old Fort in 1849, William Bent moved 38 miles down the Arkansas to Big Timbers. Here, in a temporary stockade, he resumed trading with the Indians. He became dissatisfied with the temporary post, and in 1852-53 built a big stone fort that was reminiscent of the old adobe fort:

Standing on elevated ground above the river in such position that it could be approached from one direction only, the structure was somewhat smaller than its predecessor. It was extensive enough, however. There were twelve rooms around a central court, each room ten feet high and ranging in size from two apartments fourteen by fifteen and a half feet to a warehouse fifty-five feet long. There were parapets, but evidently no bastions, and the little cannon were placed on corners of the roof. From the top of the walls, sixteen feet high, one could see on a crystal day a dim line that was the mountains.

Big Timbers was a good location. It was a rarity along the Arkansas to find great cottonwoods growing, as they did here, in a strip several miles long. A favorite Indian camping ground, Big Timbers provided shelter, firewood, good feed for ponies, and plenty of buffalo--whose hides tanned into soft robes were the main article of trade. Bent had established a small trading post at Big Timbers as early as 1844. Wrote one visitor of that period:

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1. See site description for Bent's Old Fort.
2. Lavender, Bent's Fort, 324.
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90-II
Buffalo were plentiful and Indians gathered there in force. A big camp of Cheyennes had pitched their lodges near the log houses of the traders; two miles below, on the north side of the river, was the Arapaho village; on the south bank, opposite the trading houses, were the camps of the Kiowas and Prairie Apaches, while farther down on the south side the northern bands of Comanche had gone into winter camp. At night, when the soldier societies were giving dances the drums could be heard beating in the camps all night long. In the daytime the trading houses were crowded with Indians bringing in their robes to trade. The Cheyenne and Arapaho women brought their robes on their own backs, but the women from the camps on the other side of the river brought theirs on the backs of mules and horses.1

By the 1850's, all this was changing. Emigrants, gold seekers, and growing freight operations made of the Arkansas a main-traveled highway. The white man invaded Big Timbers, cut the trees, chased away the antelope and buffalo. Bent's dream of re-establishing the trading empire of old progressively faded as Indian self-sufficiency declined. In place of proud hunters who could provide buffalo robes aplenty, the Cheyenne and Arapaho now came to the fort with hands out seeking annuities.2 Bent's investment in the new fort never paid off. The great stone trading post was an anachronism.

When Bent learned of army plans to build a military post nearby, he knew that the Indian trade would be utterly destroyed. Trying unsuccessfully to sell his fort to the government, Bent finally leased it to the army in September 1860. It was henceforth used as a commissary and quartermaster storehouse for Fort Wise, later renamed Fort Lyon, which was built 1 mile to the west. The army later built extensive earthworks around Bent's New Fort and equipped it with diamond-shaped gun emplacements on the corners.

Bent moved upstream to the mouth of the Purgatoire, where he had a stockade. During the Civil War he shifted from Indian trading to expanded wagon freighting for the army in New Mexico. His influence with the Cheyenne and Arapaho was a key factor in keeping these tribes neutral during the Civil War, thus frustrating Confederate efforts to arouse the plains tribes to a concerted attack on the Santa Fe Trail.

The site of Bent's New Fort is about 8 miles west of Lamar, Colorado, on the north bank of the Arkansas, nearly opposite the town of Prowers. The fort's old stone buildings were removed many years ago, but stone chips disclose very clearly the outlines of the fort. There are also substantial remains of the old earthworks.

2. Bent was Indian Agent for the Cheyenne and Arapaho in 1859.
Fort Lyon was the principal guardian of the Mountain Branch during the Civil War. This was a time of continuing Confederate threats to the trail and intensified Indian depredations. Cooperating with detachments from Forts Larned and Union, troops from Fort Lyon escorted trail traffic along the upper reaches of the Arkansas to Raton Pass.

The Indian threat reached a climax in the summer of 1864 when savage bands scourged the wagon trails west, practically halting traffic on the Santa Fe Trail. Military authorities considered the plains to be in the throes of general war involving all the major tribes. This condition sparked a major incident involving Fort Lyon. In November 1864 Col. John M. Chivington led Colorado Volunteers from the fort against Black Kettle's band of Cheyennes on Sand Creek, 40 miles to the north. Though the Indians were negotiating peace at the time, Chivington, in a surprise attack at dawn November 29, massacred them without quarter—men, women, and children. Later denounced by a government investigating committee as a loathsome act of brutality, Chivington's Sand Creek Massacre luridly reflected passions engendered by the collision of incompatible cultures.

For several years Fort Lyon served as the distributing point for Cheyenne and Arapaho annuities. Here also the Government in 1861 effected a treaty guaranteeing these two tribes western Colorado as far south as the Arkansas and Purgatoire Rivers.

Fort Lyon—originally named Fort Wise to honor Virginia's Governor Wise—was established in August 1860, a mile upstream from Bent's New Fort. Officers' quarters, soldiers barracks, corrals, and stables were all built of stone. In the spring of 1866 floods swept into the fort, undermining many of the buildings. This factor, together with the unhealthy conditions of the post and the decreasing supply of timber, caused the army to move the fort upstream 20 miles to the mouth of the Purgatoire. Remaining buildings of the old fort continued to be used as a stage station on the mail, express, and passenger line operating between Kansas City and Santa Fe.

With final abandonment of the old fort, settlers carted away the stone of its buildings, which, however, can still be seen in outline. The site, on the north bank of the Arkansas across from the town of Prowers, is in private ownership.

Cimarron, New Mexico.

As division point for Taos or Fort Union-Santa Fe wagon traffic, stage stop, and headquarters of the 1,700,000-acre Maxwell Land Grant, Cimarron was an important stop on the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe
Above: At Cimarron, N.M., the Don Diego Hotel.

Below: At Cimarron, N.M., Lucien Maxwell's 1864 mill.
Trail. Lucien B. Maxwell, a former trader and trapper, acquired the Beaubien-Miranda grant in 1864, having married the daughter of Carlos Beaubien, one of the original grantees. He then started the large-scale ranching operations that made Cimarron for a time headquarters of the cattle industry in northern New Mexico. Maxwell's adobe mansion, expensively furnished and noted for lavish entertainment, was the first civilized stop on the trail in New Mexico. Many Santa Fe traders knew Maxwell or did business with him enroute to Santa Fe, and he habitually invited them to stop for the night to enjoy the regal hospitality of his home.

During Maxwell's ascendency, which lasted only until 1870 when he was ruined financially by mining ventures, Cimarron was the local agency for the Ute Indians, the cowboy capital of northern New Mexico, and the outfitting point for prospectors, trappers, and hunters bound for the mountains. Territorial Governor Lew Wallace, Kit Carson, and Buffalo Bill Cody were but three of the famous men that called upon the monarch of the Cimarron.

Cimarron is neatly divided by the Cimarron River into an old and a new town, thus helping to preserve the old from modern encroachment. Although the Maxwell House burned in 1885, several other buildings with trail associations have survived. Most important of these is Maxwell's 1864 stone flour mill, a noted trail landmark that looks today precisely as it did a century ago. Jicarilla Apaches and Utes obtained their government flour and rations here, and trail travelers sometimes jostled into the mill with them to replenish flour supplies for the home stretch of the journey to Santa Fe. The warehouse for the Ute Agency, reputedly built about 1850 is a one-story stuccoed adobe that housed a grocery store in 1958. Swink's Saloon, now a service station, was built as a brewery in 1854, but soon became the most notorious gambling hall in northern New Mexico. According to the local historical marker on this building, it was a place where "Taos lightning, powder smoke & bullets caused many to bite the dust & caused many to be carried out feet first." The county courthouse, a one-story building built in 1872, now stands deserted, as does the old stone jail of the same period. One of the walls of this jail is of more recent vintage, having been replaced after it was dynamited by a lynching party. The Don Diego Tavern, originally the St. James Hotel, was built in the 1870's by Henry Lambert, formerly chef to Grant and Lincoln. Buffalo Bill, who organized his "Wild West Show" in Cimarron, spent Christmas in this hotel whenever possible and gave Christmas parties for the children of Cimarron. Reputed to have been the scene of 26 killings, the two-story stuccoed adobe still serves as a hotel. Several newer buildings have been built in old town, but their architecture conforms to the historical setting.

Old Cimarron is an interesting historical district whose value to the community of Cimarron is locally recognized. Its greatest importance was as a cattle center. Except for Maxwell's Mill, the Ute Agency warehouse, and Swink's Saloon--the last two possessing little integrity--the
Above: Reconstructed Kit Carson ranch at Rayado.

Below: Maxwell House at Rayado; only the center section of this house is original, dating from 1849.
historical structures remaining in Cimarron date from the very last days of the Santa Fe Trail and their prime associations are with the later pioneering and ranching eras.

Rayado, New Mexico.

At the north end of a funnel between the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and rough mesa country to the east, Rayado early assumed importance as a gateway on the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Here were reunited the "upper road" and the "old road" from Santa Fe Fork near present Hoxie Junction. South from Rayado the trail threaded between mountains and mesas to Ocate Crossing and Fort Union. This strategic location attracted the earliest settlement in the Maxwell Grant area. Backed by mountains, watered by snowfed streams, Rayado was ideal for cultivation and cattle. Here, in April 1849, Lucien B. Maxwell and Kit Carson built ranches that became welcome landmarks on the trail. In 1850 a small dragoon and infantry post was established at Rayado to escort Santa Fe wagon trains between Raton Pass and Las Vegas, and to protect nearby settlers from Utes and Apaches. Later Rayado became a home station on the Barlow & Sanderson stage line.

From Rayado an early mule track led across the Sangre de Cristo range to Taos. This route was used by trappers, who often met wagon trains at the Canadian River Crossing on the Cimarron Cutoff. And it was by way of this track from Taos that Capt. William N. Grier led the punitive expedition against the Jicarilla Apaches who murdered the White party near Point of Rocks in October 1849. Grier stopped at Rayado to pick up Kit Carson, who served as a scout during the pursuit.

Today the hamlet of Rayado is surrounded by cattle ranches. Often described in contemporary journals, the beauty of this country where mountains and mesas join the plains is untrammeled. It is indeed a favored spot. State Route 21 from Cimarron parallels the trail all the way to Rayado, and fine remains are to be seen close to the road. A deeply eroded trail rut sweeps into Rayado from the northeast, joining the present road at the northern fringe of the town. This is the junction of the "upper" and "old" trails, the deep rut being the last few hundred yards of the latter.

Kit Carson's house has been reconstructed. Its present appearance—a large, walled, castle-like adobe—differs markedly from the simple two-room house shown in historical photographs. Maxwell's house has been incorporated in a later frame and gingerbread structure that looks not at all like a pioneer's cabin.

Rayado is a picturesque place with interesting trail associations, but none of them are of the caliber to induce exceptional value classification for this site.
Ocate Crossing, New Mexico.

The west side of the Canadian River Valley is laced by many streams descending from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains: Vermejo, Ponil, Cimarron, Rayado, Sweetwater—to name a few. The Mountain Branch crossed all of these. Another stream crossing might seem merely redundant; but this was not so at Ocate Creek. Here the junction of trail, terrain, and watercourse acted together to breed an interest that was reflected in many trail journals. For here a mesa stretching to the southeast and a cañoned creek flowing along its southern slope channeled the trail, forced it by the logic of terrain to follow a particular course (see end jacket fold map).

The mesa is called Apache Hill. From its top, Rayado Mesa can be seen to the north. The trail headed south from there to the north slope of Apache Hill. Lieutenant Abert describes the Army of the West's march from that point:

When we looked to our right hand, we saw another horizontal plain yet higher than the one we were then travelling on, and covered also with a bed of volcanic rock about five feet in thickness. Keeping close to the foot of this highest "mesa," we reached the "Ocate," as it is cañoned, that is, is enclosed with high rocky walls, we were forced to go two miles up stream in order to reach the crossing.¹

Colonel Kearny and the advanced guard of the Army of the West camped near this crossing on August 11, 1846. They had marched nearly 32 miles from the Cimarroncita that day. According to Emory, Mexican spies infested every canyon along the way:

Five Mexicans were captured by Bent's spy company; they were sent out to reconnoiter our forces, with orders to detain all persons passing out of New Mexico. They were mounted on diminutive asses, and presented a ludicrous contrast by the side of the big men and horses of the first dragoons. Mountain man Tom7 Fitzpatrick, our guide, who seldom laughs, became almost convulsed whenever he turned his well practised eye in their direction.

Two more Mexicans . . . were captured to-night, or rather they came into camp. Their story was, that they had come out by order of the alcalde of the Moro town to look out for their standing enemies, the Eutaws, who were reported in the neighborhood. . . . They were ordered to be detained for a day or two, for it was quite evident to all they were spies, who had come too suddenly into the little ravine in which we were encamped.²

¹ Abert, Report, 27.
² Emory, Notes, 21, 23.
View of the Ocate Creek crossing on the Mountain Branch of the Trail. Eroded ruts descend from the left, cross the sandy bed of the creek, then aim between the two mesas in distance.
The Army of the West's camp on the Ocate is described by a Missouri Volunteer:

A march of twenty miles, mostly through the gorges of the mountains, over a rocky, flinty road, brought us to the Ocate, a limpid stream of fresh water, where we halted for the night. The nearest timber was two miles and a half distant. Of an evening when the army would halt for the purpose of selecting a camp ground, and the order was given to dismount, a busy scene ensued. Every man was his own servant. Some were scrambling after the scattering sticks of wood, or dry brush; some busy in pitching their tents and arranging them in order; some tethering the animals; and some bringing water for cooking purposes. At length, "all is set." The coffee is made, the meat broiled, and the bread prepared . . . . when the several messes, gathering round their respective fires, seated upon the ground . . . dispatch in "double-quick time," their scanty fare. Supper over, the men next see after their horses, picket them on fresh grass, return to camp, spread their blankets upon the earth, wrap up in them, and unceremoniously fall asleep,--leaving the spies and guard to take care of the enemy.¹

From the crossing the main trail headed south, crossed the line of present State Route 120, then passed through the saddle between two mesas or knobs 3 miles from the crossing. Fifteen miles beyond were the "ponds in the prairie," near the site of the later Fort Union.

Except for a short section taken over by a ranch road, the trail remains from the tip of Apache Hill to the Ocate Crossing are exceptional. They are not deeply eroded. Rather they are two shallow troughs, each about 18 inches deep and about 40 feet across. The accompanying photo shows how plainly these breaks in the prairie stand out. Essentially, this heavily traveled section of trail has not changed since the wagons last used it.

One question that disturbed the survey party was the extent to which construction of the dam shown in the photo might have affected the trail remains. Written inquiries to the Soil Conservation Service, long-time local residents, and the State of New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, which administers the dam, shed no light on this phase of its construction history. It is the conclusion of the writer, however, that construction of the dam did not affect the trail remains. They are far enough removed not to have been used for access to the construction site. And, furthermore, they are on the wrong side of Ocate Creek for this purpose. Doubtless the heavy trucks that hauled construction materials used present State Route 120 or its predecessor, then cut directly across country to the dam site, which is slightly north of the highway. We

¹ John T. Hughes, Doniphan's Expedition (Cincinnati, 1848), 69.
Looking west from Apache Mesa to the Ocate Crossing. Between the camera point and the tree-lined canyon of Ocate Creek, lie the ruts of the Mountain Branch. The Army of the West used these ruts, which sweep left beyond the dam to the crossing point some four miles upstream.
found in this survey that wherever automobile or truck traffic had appropriated trail remains, an unmistakable two-rut tire track was cut. Such a track does not appear in the Ocate remains, except for the short ranch-road section mentioned above.

Ocate Crossing is 14.4 miles from Wagon Mound on State Route 120, to the "Mora Ranch Quarter Horses" sign on the right side of the road, then a mile to the right on the Mora Ranch road. From the crossing it is a 3-mile hike to the tip of Apache Hill. Access by unimproved road from the Rayado direction is possible only with 4-wheel drive vehicles.

Ocate Crossing is a strong "Also Considered Site," but it does not rate exceptional value classification. Trail remains in themselves are numerous. Without strong landmark or historical supporting features they are not exceptional.
ALSO NOTED SITES
Fort Osage, Missouri.

Fort Osage was one of the most successful of 28 trading houses operated from 1795 to 1822 under the United States factory system. It was the first United States Army post west of the Mississippi. During its period of active existence from 1808 to 1822, and its later use as a government storehouse, it was the principal outpost of civilization in western Missouri.

The latter fact made it a stopping place for the earliest traders, who here made final purchases before departing into the wilderness. Fort Osage was also the zero milestone for the 1825-27 Government Survey of the Santa Fe Trail.

The fort has been reconstructed under the aegis of the Native Sons of Kansas City and the Jackson County Historical Society, and is operated as a Jackson County Park. It is at Old Sibley on the Missouri River, 14 miles northeast of Independence. Fort Osage became a Registered National Historic Landmark on May 14, 1962, based on its significance in the Fur Trade subtheme.

Shawnee Mission, Kansas.

Shawnee Mission, established in 1839, was a prominent landmark on one of the branches of the Santa Fe Trail near present Kansas City, Kansas. Actually it was several miles north of the main trunk line of the old overland route. To many travelers, the red-brick mission buildings were the last vestiges of civilization after they had left Independence and Westport. Several noted persons, such as Francis Parkman, Marcus Whitman, and John C. Fremont were entertained here before beginning their westward journeys. The mission's history, like its location, is tangential to the Santa Fe Trail.

Three of the mission's old buildings still stand; they are owned by the State of Kansas and administered as a State park.

Fork of the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails, Kansas.

At what was once a lonely spot of treeless plain, a crude wooden sign pointed the way along the "Road to Oregon." Here the trunk line of the two great overland trails divided, to the left Santa Fe, to the right Oregon. The one was a route of commerce and conquest, the other a pathway of emigration and preemption.

This site, 2 miles west of Gardner on U. S. 56, is marked by a Kansas State Historical Society marker.
"Old Castle," Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas. Built in 1858, this was the first building of the first college in Kansas Territory—illustrating the role of the Santa Fe Trail in bringing civilization to the prairies.
The Narrows and Baldwin City, Kansas.

The Narrows is a ridge separating the waters of Wakarusa Creek, an affluent of the Kansas River, from those of Ottawa Creek, a tributary of the Osage. During heavy rains this was one of the most difficult stretches of the trail, a place of troublesome quagmires. At one point the ridge separating the waters is only a few paces wide. A wagon mired here held up the entire train.

Baldwin City (originally Palmyra) was founded at the mouth of the Narrows funnel in 1854. It soon became an important stop for wagon repairs and outfitting. More than this, it was symbolic of the Santa Fe Trail's influence in the passing of the frontier. Baldwin started out as a trail town, making its living from the travelers who passed by. But frontier prosperity was not enough for the far-sighted citizens of Baldwin. By 1858 they had built the first building of the first college in Kansas Territory. This was the "Old Castle" of Baker College. In November of the same year the first classes began. Thus was the frontier thrust westward.

The Santa Fe Trail was but part of the story of the vanishing frontier in America. The Old Castle at what is now Baker University still stands as a symbol of this civilizing influence.1

Little Arkansas Crossing, Kansas.

This steep sided creek was typical of the many streams crossed in eastern Kansas. Gregg's description of the crossing here serves to illustrate them all:

Early the next day we reached the 'Little Arkansas,' which although endowed with an imposing name, is only a small creek with a current but five or six yards wide. But, though small, its steep banks and miry bed annoyed us exceedingly in crossing. It is the practice upon the prairies on all such occasions, for several men to go in advance with axes, spades and mattocks, and by digging the banks and erecting temporary bridges, to have all in readiness by the time the wagons arrive. A bridge over a quagmire is made in a few minutes, by cross-laying it with brush (willows are best, but even long grass is often employed as a substitute), and covering it with earth, across which a hundred wagons will often pass in safety.2

1. The Old Castle will be more fully considered in the forthcoming restudy of the Education Theme.

2. Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 39.
Marker for the Caches and Fort Atkinson on U.S. 50, three and a half miles west of Dodge City center. The sites are gone.
Fort Zarah, Kansas.

Fort Zarah was the most easterly link in the chain of frontier forts guarding the Santa Fe Trail. Established in 1864 by Gen. S. R. Curtis and named for his son, who was killed by Quantrill's raiders, Fort Zarah was on Walnut Creek a mile from its junction with the Arkansas. This was an important caravan campground.

Escorts from Fort Zarah accompanied trains west to Smoky Crossing, between Zarah and Larned, and East toward Council Grove. The post was abandoned in 1869, following a decrease in Indian depredations and in trail traffic due to the advance of the railroad.

The site of Fort Zarah, 2 miles east of Great Bend on U. S. 56, is commemorated as a State Park. No trace of the sandstone fort survives.

The Caches, Kansas.

The Caches were made by James Baird and his party of about 50 men, who had set out from Missouri in the fall of 1822 with a caravan for Santa Fe. On the Arkansas, winter overtook them. Their animals wandered off or died, so when spring came the traders cached their goods and went on to Taos for more animals. Returning to the Caches, they recovered their property and continued their journey to Santa Fe.

The jug-shaped holes in which Baird and his companions had hidden their merchandise were objects of curiosity on the trail. Travelers seldom failed to make a pilgrimage to the spot.

Gregg notes that "The term cache, meaning a place of concealment, was originally used by the Canadian French trappers and traders."

The hole was lined with sticks and grass to keep the hidden articles dry, and great care was taken to obliterate all signs of disturbed ground. Either the turf was replaced, or a campfire was built over the entrance, or animals were penned over it. Caching goods was practised in the Santa Fe trade whenever a party lost its animals. Sometimes, to avoid customs charges based on the number of wagons, traders would double load before reaching the New Mexican frontier. The emptied wagons would then be buried in a cache.

The Caches are commemorated along with Fort Mann-Atkinson on the marker 4 miles west of Dodge City on the north side of U. S. 50 (see location map). The site is 1,100 feet northwest of the marker. Bulldozing operations have obliterated the Caches in recent years.

Willow Bar, Oklahoma.

This site was at the crossing of the Cimarron, just south of the

1. Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 47, 48.
present Oklahoma boundary. A scattering of cottonwoods and intermittent water in the Cimarron made this a desirable campground. Albert Speyer's caravan of September 1844 was marooned here in a snowstorm and most of his mules died from cold and starvation. It became a favorite sport of travelers to arrange the mule bones in fanciful patterns for the amusement of the next caravan.1

A few miles southwest of Willow Bar was the "Battleground," named for Colonel Viscara's skirmish with the Indians in 1829 while escorting the return caravan from Santa Fe to the Arkansas.

Fort Aubrey, Kansas.

Fort Aubrey was a temporary post built to defend the Santa Fe Trail during the Indian War of 1865. W. A. Bell, a traveler in the sixties, described the role of these isolated temporary posts:

Along the main lines of travel throughout the whole western country, at distances from sixty to three hundred miles apart, the United States government are obliged to maintain a great number of these little military establishments. . . . In many instances not a white man lives in the intervening country, and yet without them overland travel would be impossible.2

Established in September 1865 by two companies of the 48th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, Fort Aubrey was abandoned the following April during a lull in Indian activities. It was located 100 miles west of Fort Dodge and 50 miles east of Fort Lyons at a favorite Indian crossing of the Arkansas near Chouteau's Island.

The site is on private farm land 4 miles east of Syracuse, Kansas, and 1 mile south of U. S. 50. No buildings remain, but faint traces of rifle pits and trenches may still be seen.

Boggsville, Colorado.

Boggsville, 2 1/2 miles southeast of Las Animas, was a stopping point on the trail during the late period. Only 2 buildings remain of the old town. One of them, the John W. Prowers home, built in the early

sixties, served as a hotel, store, and stage station. Here horses for
the overland stage were changed and passengers were fed. The second
building is the old Thomas O. Boggs residence, of about the same age as
the Frowers house.

Fort Lyon, No. 2, Colorado.

This 4-company post was established about 2 miles below the mouth
of the Purgatoire in 1867, when the old site of Fort Lyon at Big Timbers
was abandoned. By the late sixties, military protection of the Mountain
Branch had declined in importance—the Confederate threat was over, and
the scene of major Indian difficulties had shifted to the Fort Larned
area and the Indian Territory. Thus the history of Fort Lyon No. 2 is
not marked by important incidents. But troops from here did participate
in Indian campaigns elsewhere, chiefly that of Sheridan into Indian
Territory in 1868-69. In 1890, by Act of Congress, the fort was
abandoned as a military post. It is now federally-owned and serves as
a Veterans' Administration hospital. Several of the original officers'
quartermasters' survive, though they have been remodelled. Other buildings have
been replaced by modern structures.

Timpas Creek, Colorado.

Less renowned than the Cimarron Jornada, but longer and nearly as
dry, was the water scrape between Bent's Fort and the upper Purgatoire.
Travelers along Timpas Creek spoke of a bleak, cactus-strewn plain
alternating with abrupt cliffs and buttes. Here the primeval history of
the earth was revealed in basaltic dikes that marched like Great Walls
across the sandblown country.

Water in Timpas Creek was brackish and intermittent. It gathered in
muddy pools, here and there, and was covered by noxious vegetation. Those
who marched with the Army of the West described how men would fight with
their thirst-crazed beasts to keep them from these pools, where, in
excitement, they would foul the water with excrement, making it un-
drinkable for the equally thirsty men. Still men drank it, one who did
so noting that he had to "shut both eyes and hold his breath until the
nauseating dose was swallowed."

At the headwaters of Timpas Creek was spring-fed Hole-in-the-Rock.
Ten miles farther on toward the Purgatoire was Hole-in-the-Prairie, a
small, grass-bordered lake in a natural depression. These two watering
places provided the only sweet water until the Purgatoire was reached,
and were thus important landmarks on the trail.

1. Quoted In DeVoto, Year of Decision, 266.
Above: Mountain Branch crossing of Canadian River--Red River Peak in distance.

Below: Clifton House ruins, just west of crossing and about 5 miles south of Raton.
Today U. S. 350 follows closely the route of the trail from La Junta to Trinidad. The countryside has changed little since trail days and extensive trail ruts can be seen along the way, especially near Delhi. The site of Hole-in-the-Rock (dry since 1929) is one-half mile west of U. S. 350 at a point 1 1/2 miles northeast of Thatcher. Hole-in-the-Prairie is one-half mile west of Tyrone.

Clifton House, New Mexico.

An important stage stop on the Santa Fe Trail a few miles south of Raton Pass, Clifton House was built in the years 1866-70 by rancher Tom Stockton. He used adobe for the 2 1/2-story walls, but a pitched, shingle roof and promenade balconies around the upper stories gave the house the look of a small-town eastern hotel. Clifton House was originally conceived as a rendezvous for northern New Mexico ranchers during spring and fall roundups. But its strategic location at the Mountain Branch crossing of the Canadian River, midway between major stage stops at El Morro and Cimarron, soon attracted Barlow & Sanderson agents. They leased most of the house to be used as a stage stop, then built barns, outbuildings, and a blacksmith shop nearby.

Clifton House was a "home station" on the stage line where 30-minute meal stops were made. Some passengers elected to stay overnight, and the place became famous for its meals and lodgings—reputedly the best available commercially in northern New Mexico. While passengers ate and admired the profile of the nearby landmark, Red River Peak, teams were changed at the barns. Stages heading south to Cimarron fitted up with four horses. Those preparing for the hard run over Raton Pass received a stronger six-mule team. Used up teams were turned out in cottonwood-shaded pastures along the Canadian River, here a swift stream about 15 yards wide.

Clifton House had a short, busy life in the last decade of the trail. By 1879 the railroad reached Otero, just north of Clifton, and the stage line became an anachronism. Soon deserted, Clifton House decayed and was forgotten, its usefulness a thing of the past.

Today a chimney remnant, a few eroded adobe walls, and scattered foundation stones are all that remain of the old hostel. The railroad skirts the west side of the ruins, its embankment largely destroying the integrity of the site, its thundering trains accenting the reason for the demise of Clifton House. The site is about 5 miles south of the City of Raton via U. S. 64-85, just across the Canadian River from the "Clifton House" State historical sign turnout. Access is by foot over private ranch land.

Santa Fe Fork, New Mexico.

From the crossing of the Canadian River at Clifton House the Santa Fe
Trail swung south-southwest to the vicinity of present Hoxie Junction. The modern highway forks here, and so too did the trail. The older, mainline of the trail continued across the plains on a direct south-southwest line to Rayado. An upper trail, little used until after the Mexican War, took a more westerly course along the foot of the mountains to Cimarron, then went south to Rayado where it reunited with the older trail.

The Santa Fe Fork just north of Hoxie Junction provided an interesting episode in the Mexican War, one that shows the respective importance at that time of the two routes to Rayado. Lieutenant Emory relates this episode:

\[\text{August 9, 1846}\] At the distance of six miles from last night's camp \[\text{near the Canadian Crossing}\], the road forks--one branch running near the mountains to the west, but nearly parallel to the old road, and never distant more than four miles, and almost all the time in sight of it. The army was divided--the artillery, infantry, and wagon train ordered to take the lower, and the Missouri volunteers and first dragoons the upper road . . . .

\[\text{August 10, 1846}\] Colonel Kearny was dissatisfied with the upper road, and determined to strike for the old road. We did so after reaching the Vermejo . . . .

By the time Lucien Maxwell built his ranch on the Cimarron in 1864, the upper route bore considerable traffic. The Denver-Santa Fe stage went this way. Also, a wagon road to Taos via Cimarron Canyon was opened about this time, attracting more traffic to the upper route.

Today, the Santa Fe Fork is evidenced by very plain remains of the older trail cutting across U. S. 64 just southwest of the place where that highway forks from U. S. 85.

1. Emphasis supplied. Emory, Notes, 7.
Appendix

CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. Structures or sites at which events occurred that have made an outstanding contribution to, and are identified prominently with, or which best represent, the broad cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the Nation, and from which the visitor may grasp the larger patterns of our American heritage.

2. Structures or sites associated importantly with the lives of outstanding historic personages.

3. Structures or sites associated significantly with an important event that best represents some great idea or ideal of the American people.

4. Structures that embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, exceptionally valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction; or a notable structure representing the work of a master builder, designer, or architect.

5. Archeological sites that have produced information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have produced, or which may reasonably be expected to produce, data affecting theories, concepts, and ideas to a major degree.

6. Every historic and archeological site and structure should have integrity - that is, there should not be doubt as to whether it is the original site or structure, and in the case of a structure, that it represents original materials and workmanship. Intangible elements of feeling and association, although difficult to describe, may be factors in weighing the integrity of a site or structure.

7. Structures or sites which are primarily of significance in the field of religion or to religious bodies but are not of national importance in other fields of the history of the United States, such as, political, military, or architectural history, will not be eligible for consideration.

8. Structures or sites of recent historical importance, relating to events or persons within 50 years, will not, as a rule, be eligible for consideration.