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NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

Report of Reconnaissance of Santa Fe Trail
in Kansas and Colorado

by Ray H. Mattison, Historian
Division of Interpretation
Region Two Office
National Park Service
Omaha, Nebraska
January 1958



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Region Two Office
307 Federal Office Building
Omaha 2, Nebraska

Memorandum

To: Regional Chief of Interpretation, Region Two
From: Historian, Region Two
Subject: Reconnaissance of Santa Fe Trail in Kansas and Colorado

I am submitting herewith a report of my trip from October 14 to 26, inclusive, which was made largely to make a survey of the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas and Colorado.

October 14. Drove from Omaha, Nebraska to Topeka, Kansas. During the afternoon, I conferred with Mr. Nyle Miller, Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society, and other members of his staff, regarding the proposed survey.

October 15. Attended the annual meeting of the Kansas State Historical Society, at which I was a guest speaker on the subject of "The Criteria by which the National Park Service Evaluates Historic Sites." At this meeting, Mr. Alan Farley, attorney, of Kansas City, Kansas, was elected president of the Society, to succeed Mr. Rolla A. Clymer, of El Dorado. Mr. Miller requested permission to publish my paper in a future issue of the Kansas Historical Quarterly.

October 16. Drove from Topeka to Kansas City, Kansas, via Fort Scott, stopping at the boyhood home of General Frederick Funston, near Iola, enroute. My visit to Fort Scott is the subject of a separate memorandum.

October 17. I began the Santa Fe Trail Survey. Below is a brief summary of the historical background of the old route:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Before undertaking this study, it might be well to point out the differences in character between the Santa Fe and the Oregon Trail which the former paralleled in both time and, in some respects, geographically. The latter was primarily the route over which the great overland migration to California and the Pacific Northwest took place. The Santa Fe Trail was, on the other hand, principally a commercial route.

Long before the white men attempted to exploit the fur resources of the Rocky Mountain region and the Pacific Northwest, they were endeavoring to open commercial relations with the Spanish in New Mexico. While the objective of penetrating the rich mining regions of Mexico was perhaps in the back of their minds, the French early saw opportunities for making lucrative profits out of trade with the towns of Santa Fe and Taos in New Mexico. Several parties, Peter and Paul Mallet, in 1739, Pierre Satren, in 1740, and Jean Chapins, in 1752, succeeded in reaching Santa Fe. However, by the time of the cession of Louisiana to Spain in 1763, the French had been unable to open trade with the Spanish.

Soon after the transfer of Louisiana to the United States in 1803, the Americans likewise made a number of abortive attempts to

open commercial relations with New Mexico, then under Spanish jurisdiction. However, the Spaniards continued to maintain a monopoly of the trade and to exclude foreigners. When news was received in the United States of Father Miguel Hidalgo's revolt in 1810 to throw off the Spanish yoke, Robert McKnight and a party, believing Mexican independence imminent, started out to Santa Fe. When the Americans reached their objective, they learned that the revolution had collapsed. They were immediately placed in jail where McKnight remained for nine years. When Mexico finally achieved independence in 1821, the development of the Santa Fe trade over the trail by the same name commenced.

William Becknell is known as the "Father of the Santa Fe Trail." While he had many precursors, Becknell was the first to employ wagons and after he made his first trip, in 1821, the trail remained open. In that year, he and four companions set out from Arrow Rock, Missouri, with the purpose of trading with the Comanche Indians. When they reached a point near the Rocky Mountains, they fell in with a party of Mexicans who induced them to take their merchandise to Santa Fe. There they disposed of their goods at a handsome price.

The profits which Becknell's party realized from its first venture at once induced others to enter the trade. In 1822 two expeditions set out, one of which was under the leadership of Becknell. This time, Becknell, using wagons, to avoid the circuitous route by the Upper Arkansas River and the mountains, after reaching the "Caches," struck off in a southwesterly direction along a shorter route, which

later became known as the "Cimarron Cut Off." On this arid route, the party, after much suffering from lack of water, finally reached Taos. In 1824 the first large wagon caravan, from Franklin, Missouri, with goods valued at \$30,000, reached Santa Fe via the Cimarron route. The merchandise was disposed of for \$180,000 in gold and silver and for furs valued at \$10,000.

The promise of a highly profitable trade with New Mexico led interested individuals to seek assistance from the National Government to establish a permanent trail. As the result of petitions from his constituents, Senator Thomas Hart Benton, of Missouri, in 1825, secured the passage of a bill appropriating \$30,000 for marking the trail and securing concessions from the Indians. As a result of this legislation, three Commissioners, with Joseph C. Brown as surveyor, were appointed in that year to mark the route and treat with the various tribes.

The Commissioners and their party assembled at Old Fort Osage, Missouri, in mid-July. Using the old government trading house as the place of beginning, Brown began his survey. The expedition moved westward with Brown, continuing his work as the party proceeded. At present Council Grove, in August, the Commissioners met with the Osage Indians and signed a treaty with that tribe granting the Americans a route through their country. Near present McPherson, on August 16, they effected a similar treaty with the Kansas. On September 11, they arrived at the Mexican boundary near the Caches. There the Commissioners waited until the 20th for permission from the

Mexican government before they crossed over the line. In the following year, after permission had been procured from Mexico, the Commissioners continued their survey from Cimarron Crossing to Taos.

During the first few years, the trade to Santa Fe over the trail increased. The red men along the route saw in the caravans traveling through their country an easy opportunity to acquire the coveted white man's goods by pilfering.

In late 1820's and early 1830's the Comanche and Kiowa became troublesome. In 1826, caravans suffered severely from the Indians. In 1829 and again in 1833 the Army supplied armed escorts for the caravans going over the trail. The value of the goods, based on its costs in Eastern cities, which annually passed over the trail during the decade of the 1830's is estimated at \$160,000. During the twenty-two years from 1822 to 1843, inclusive, it was estimated at \$130,000 annually.

In the first few years of the trail, Franklin, Missouri, was the principal outfitting point for the journey across the plains. As river navigation improved in the late 1820's and early 1830's, Independence, because of its superior location for transfer of goods from the steamboats to wagons, became the headquarters in the trade. In about 1840 Westport Landing became a rival of Independence and by 1848 supplanted it as the principal outfitting point. With the outbreak of the Civil War, places farther north on the Missouri River became safer starting places. As a result, during the war most of the trains started from Fort Leavenworth and Atchison, Kansas.

The route which the caravan took after leaving Council Grove depended upon various circumstances. As has been pointed out earlier, the course by the Cimarron Cut Off was much shorter. It was, however, through a country almost without water in dry years and infested with hostile Comanche, Kiowa, and Pawnee. Lewis Garrard, writing in about 1850 described the Cut Off route as "over the sand desert, void of water, and, in the severe tornados, the oxen often drop with thirst." The Mountain Branch followed the Arkansas River to Fort Bent. There one branch turned to the southwest up Timpas Creek, crossed Raton Pass and intersected with the main trail. Still another went to a point at present Pueblo, Colorado, and followed the foothills of the mountains and crossed Raton Pass. The Mountain Branch had the advantage of being better watered, and was safer from Indian attacks. Garrard described it as "a longer, but safer and easier road." Since this course reached Fort Bent it offered advantages to those engaged in the Indian trade. This route was used less frequently in the later years.

With the Mexican War (1845-1848) the Santa Fe Trail became of greater importance than before. Thousands of dollars worth of military stores used in conducting the various campaigns were carried over the trail. The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo brought about greatly altered conditions which would affect the traffic over the trail. The acquisition of New Mexico, California, and the Southwest removed the tariff barriers between this country and that

region. The discovery of gold in California in 1848 resulted in a great demand for agricultural and mining equipment to develop the newly-acquired territory. New Army posts needed supplies. In consequence, the flow of merchandise over the Santa Fe Trail increased. This heavy freighting continued into the post-Civil War period.

During the 1860's, hostile Cheyenne and Arapahoe harrassed the wagon trains along the trail. The Government found it necessary to maintain military posts, such as Fort Lyons, Larned, Zarah and Dodge, and protect them. However, as a result of the relentless campaigns of the Army against the hostiles in the late 1860's and the early 1870's, the Indians were subdued and placed on reservations. In spite of Indian hostilities the traffic over the trail continued to increase until the railroads, in the 1870's supplanted the trail as an artery of commerce.

The first site which I visited in connection with the Santa Fe Trail Survey was the old Shawnee Methodist Mission, administered by the State Historical Society. This area, which comprises three brick buildings and twelve acres of land was acquired by the State in the late 1920's and early 1930's at a cost of \$50,000. Since that time, an exclusive residential area has built up around the Mission. Regional Historian Mattes, in his "Report on Eleven Areas in Kansas Proposed for National Designation" (December 1955) has gone



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

West building, erected in 1840, of old Shawnee Mission, Kansas.
Northeast view.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

East building, erected about 1841, of old Shawnee Methodist Mission, Kansas. Northeast view.

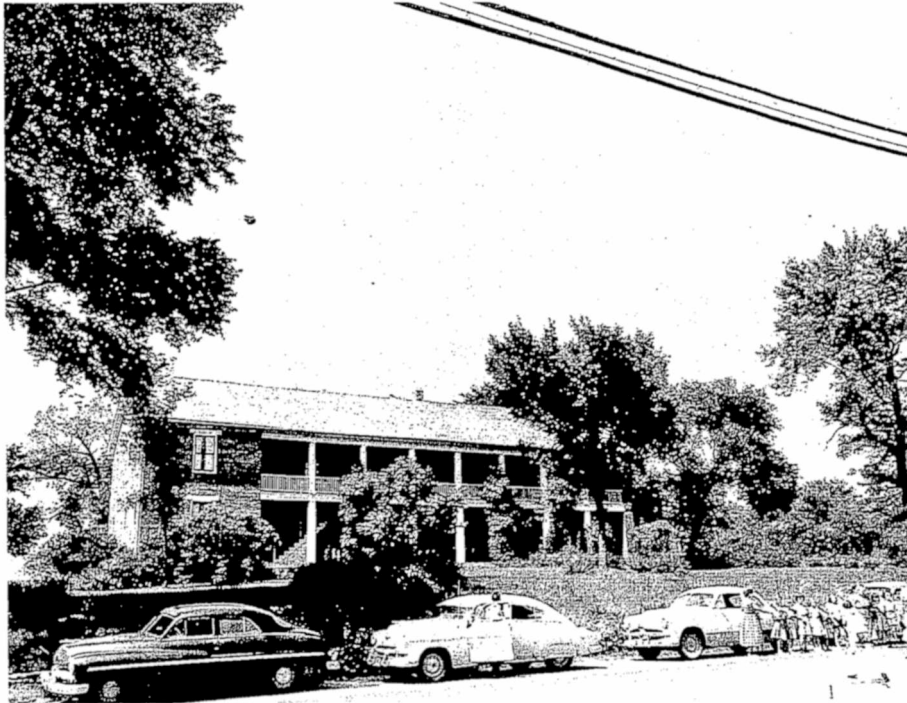


Photo by Mattison, June 1955

North Building, Shawnee Mission, erected in 1845, served as dormitory and boarding school for Shawnee Mission. It has recently been restored. This building was occupied by Andrew H. Reeder, first Territorial Governor, in November 1854. Reeder moved to this place from Fort Leavenworth and kept his executive offices here for a short time. Southwest view.

into the historical background of that area. I will not endeavor to duplicate his efforts. During its heyday there were sixteen buildings operated in connection with the Shawnee Mission. Of these only the three now in state ownership have survived. The first of these is the West Building erected in 1840. This two-story brick structure was originally the home of the superintendents and their families, and teachers. Classes were also held there. Later Territorial officers lived in this structure. It now serves as the residence of the custodian. The building has undergone some alterations in restoration. A photograph is attached.

The East Building, a photograph of which is likewise included in this report, was the second permanent mission structure to be erected. This two-and-one-half-story building, constructed in 1841, contained 14 school and lodging rooms for children and teachers. The attic which served as the boys' dormitory, has the original floors and plaster, and is little changed from what it was over one hundred years ago. The first floor contains the reconstructed chapel. The second floor contains museum exhibits of the period. Several periodical rooms have been furnished by such organizations as Colonial Dames and Daughters of the American Revolution which are out of place in a mission of the 1840-1860 period.

The North Building, erected in 1845, provided sleeping quarters and classrooms for the Indian girls. Kansas Territorial Governors and other officials later held their offices in this

structure. These rooms are equipped with original furnishings and decorations of authentic reproductions where originals were not available. The building itself has undergone some architectural changes in restoration.

During the late 1930's this area was considered by the Advisory Board and approved giving it National Historic Site status. However, at that time, the Kansas State Historical Society could see little advantage in this designation so it proceeded with its program of restoring the old mission buildings.

Within the past several years, Kansas has endeavored to make the Shawnee Mission a national monument. Mr. Edgar Langsdorf, Assistant Secretary of the Society, recently advised the undersigned that the Society would like to be relieved of the financial responsibility of maintaining the Mission so it could expend the money in preserving other historic sites within the State. It is understood that Mr. Nyle Miller, Secretary of the Society, expressed similar sentiments to Mr. Mattes.

In the opinion of this writer, Shawnee Mission does not merit consideration as a Santa Fe Trail site. The main trail, so to speak, ran south of the Mission. Actually, this area played no significant role in the great movement over the Santa Fe Trail. It was not one of the major stopping points on the Trail as, for example, Council Grove, Diamond Springs, Wagon Bed Springs, Old Bent's Fort, and later Fort Larned. To the travelers over the Oregon and Santa Fe trails in the

1830's and 1840's the Mission was the last vestige of white settlement as they left "civilization." It is recommended, however, that consideration be given to include these Mission buildings in the HABS.

Josiah Gregg's map (1844) shows the Mission on a branch line of the Trail which ran through present-day Kansas City, Kansas, to Fort Leavenworth.

It is doubtful if Shawnee Mission itself merits recognition nor was it typical of the other missions on the Great Plains. It left no permanent imprint upon the region. The Shawnee and most of the Indian groups in eastern Kansas who attended the Mission were tribes who had been removed from the East and were later transferred to Indian Territory. The great era of the missions in the Plains region was during the period from 1868 to 1900.

During the afternoon I devoted my time to locating the ruts of the Old Santa Fe Trail located about two miles west of Burlingame. A photograph of the remains is attached. The old route purportedly was along what is now the main street of this town. I also stopped at the Soil Conservation Service office at Osage City, the county seat of the county in which Burlingame is located, to look at the aerial photographs. With the assistance of the supervisor, who was very much interested in the old trail, we were able to locate large segments of the road. I spent the evening in Council Grove.

October 18. In company with Mr. Frank Haucke, former President of Kansas State Historical Society and one-time Republican



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Ruts of the Santa Fe Trail located about three miles north-east of Burlingame, Kansas. Camera pointing toward the southeast.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Ruts of Old Santa Fe Trail located about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles northwest of Burlingame, Kansas. Camera pointing toward southeast.

nominee for Governor of Kansas, I made a tour of the significant historic sites of that town.

Council Grove, listed as 145 miles from Independence, Missouri, was one of the most significant sites on the Trail. The Committee of the State Historical Society which, in 1911-1912, prepared a report on the Santa Fe Trail, described it as "the most noted stopping place between the Missouri River and Santa Fe." Josiah Gregg, writing in the 1830's or early 1840's described it as the "long looked-for rendezvous." Susan Magoffin, in her diary written in 1846, recorded at Council Grove, "We are now at the great rendezvous of the traders. Council Grove may be considered the dividing ridge between the civilized and barbarous, for we may look out for hostile Indians." At Council Grove, the traders assembled their wagons, elected officers, and organized caravan travel began.

Joseph H. Brown, engineer of the Commission which in 1825-1827 made a survey of the Santa Fe Trail from Fort Osage to Taos, New Mexico, made the following comments regarding Council Grove:

"Council Grove, where the commissioners met the Osage chiefs in council on the 10th of August, 1825. This is the largest body of woodland passed through after leaving Big Blue; 'tis here about a quarter of a mile wide; above and below are some groves more extensive. The timber and land are of superior quality and the general face of the country interesting. Springs of excellent water are frequent, and no doubt good water-mill seats may be found on this fork of the Neozho and its numerous small branches that water this beautiful tract of country."

The place received its name from a council which was held here on August 10, 1825, between the U. S. Commissioners and the Osage

chiefs in which the latter agreed to grant the right-of-way of a trail across the plains.

The old trail crossed the Neosho River where the bridge on U. S. Highway No. 56 is now located. It is understood that the trail passed along present main street of the town. Along this street are several sites associated with the trail. These include:

(1) Council Oak, near which the treaty of 1825, mentioned above, was signed, which led to the establishment of the Santa Fe Trail.

(2) Old Hays Tavern, built in 1857 by Seth Hays, great grandson of Daniel Boone and purportedly Council Grove's first white settler. It served as a home, saloon, supply house, and hotel. This building is in private ownership. It has been somewhat modernized by an asbestos false brick covering.

(3) Last Chance Store, a stone structure built in 1857, was given this name because it might have been the traveler's last chance to obtain supplies before he reached New Mexico. For several years, it was a post office; later it became a Government trading post. The building is in private ownership. It is understood that the local historical society is interested in obtaining this structure. Since the building was probably of neither state nor national significance, a local organization would be the proper agency to preserve this building.

Within the town itself and in the vicinity of Council Grove are several buildings associated with the Kaw (Kansas) Reservation.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Near this oak was signed the 1825 treaty with Osage Indians which led to the establishment of the Santa Fe Trail. South view. (Council Grove, Kansas).



Photo by Mattison, October 1957.

Old Hays Tavern, built in 1857 by Seth Hays, a descendent of Daniel Boone, and an Indian trader in the region. This building has since undergone considerable alterations and has a false brick front. (Council Grove Kansas)



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Last Chance Store, built in 1857, was the travelers' last chance to procure provisions on the Santa Fe Trail before reaching New Mexico. Southeast view (Council Grove, Kansas).

In 1846, the Government made a treaty with this tribe whereby the latter was granted a reservation twenty miles square. Congressional legislation in 1872, 1874, 1876 and 1880 authorized the Indians to sell their land and remove to Indian Territory.

The most significant building identified with these Indians at Council Grove is the old two-story stone Kaw Methodist Mission which was completed in 1851. Classes were held in the building for the Indian boys from 1851 to 1854, the average number of pupils attending being about thirty. The state legislature, in 1951, authorized the purchase of the Old Kaw Mission. It is now in state ownership and administered by the State Historical Society. The first floor is used as a museum; the second floor serves as living quarters for the custodian.

About three miles southeast of Council Grove is the site of the old Kaw Agency. One of the buildings, a stone two-story structure in a bad state of repair, which was in use when the tribe removed to Oklahoma, still survives. Nearby is one of 150 small stone residences which the Indian Bureau erected for the Kaw. It is in fair condition and in private ownership.

In the opinion of this writer none of the sites in Council Grove merit preservation by the Federal Government. In this connection, however, it is believed that consideration be given for including Kaw Mission, Last Chance Store, and the surviving Kaw Agency buildings in the Historic American Buildings Survey.

A study was made of the aerial photographs in the Soil Conservation Service office of Morris County, of which Council Grove



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Old Kaw Mission, Council Grove, Kansas. Methodist Mission Building, completed in 1851, served as a mission and school for the Kansas Indian children until 1851. Administered by the Kansas State Historical Society. Southwest view.

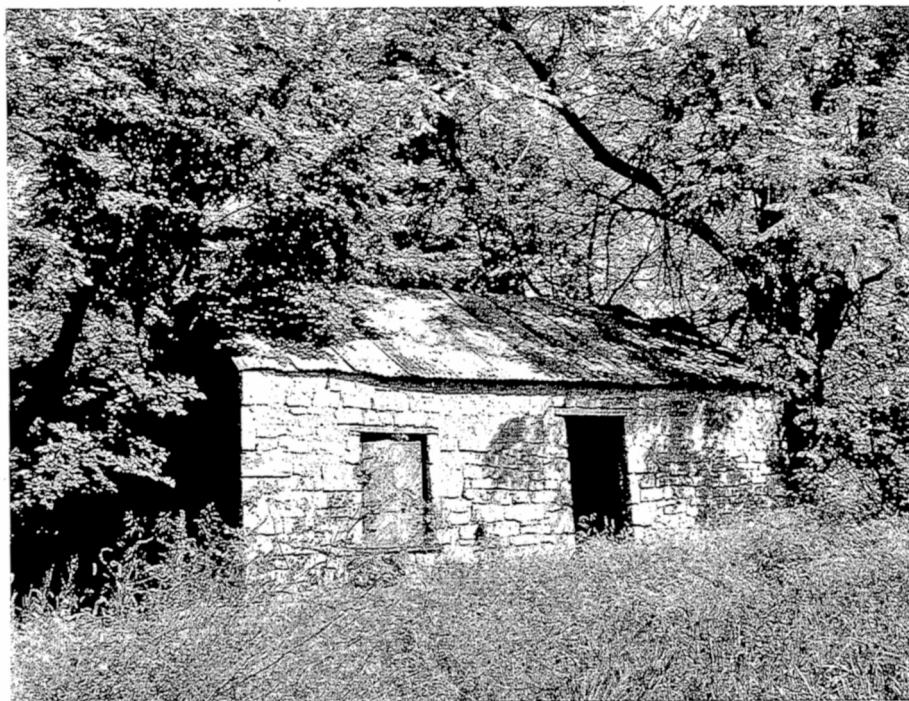


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Old stone house purportedly a residence of one of the Kansas sub-chiefs, built in late 1860's or early 1870's. Southwest view.

is the county seat. Traces of the Old Santa Fe Trail could be seen in a number of places across the county. One local enthusiast, Mr. Roe Groom of Council Grove, who has the Santa Fe Trail as his hobby, has walked the course of the old route across the county and has a detailed knowledge of it in that vicinity. Traces of the Trail may still be seen on the golf course on the northeast side of Council Grove.

It is understood that Diamond Springs, an old camping ground on the Trail where water and fuel were always available, is located in NW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 34, T 16 S, R 6 E, about four miles north-northwest of the town by the same name. This old campsite is quite inaccessible unless one has a guide, which I was unable to find.

During the afternoon of that day I stopped at Marion and McPherson, seats of counties by the same name, to consult the aerial photographs. Farming operations in these two counties seem to have obliterated all traces of the Trail. I spent the night at McPherson.

October 19. Traveled from McPherson to Larned, Kansas. I succeeded in finding and photographed the Little Arkansas Crossing of the Trail, located about seven miles south-southwest of Windom in SW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 13, T 20 S, R 5 W. This is one of the more important crossings on the Trail.

I also stopped at the Fort Zarah State Park, located on U. S. Highway 56 about two miles east of Big Bend, where the site of Fort Zarah (1864-1869) is located. The information on this old post is very sketchy. It provided military escorts for travelers along the

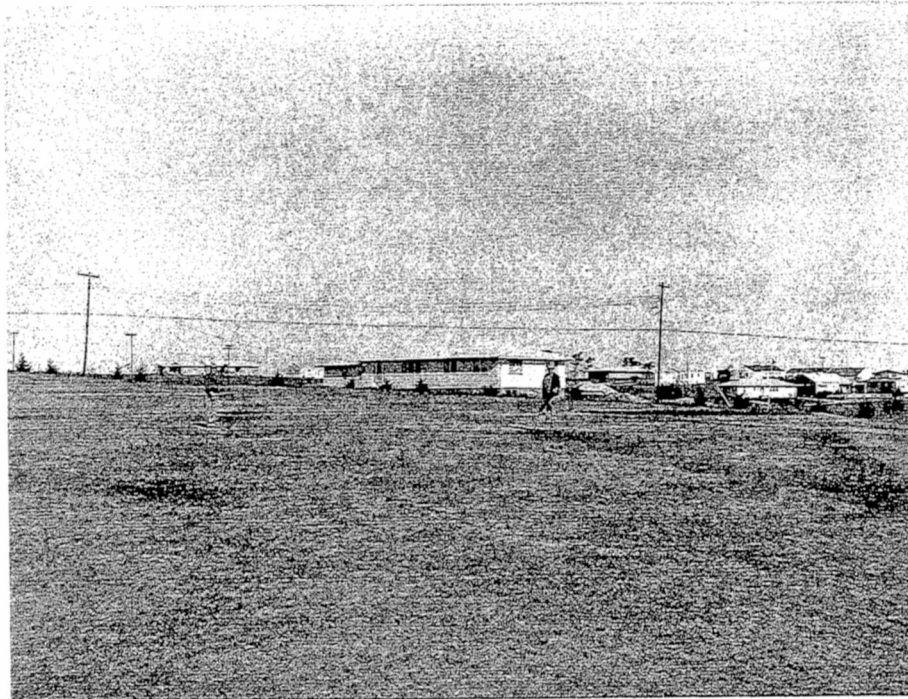


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Marks of the Old Santa Fe Trail on golf course on the north-east portion of Council Grove. Camera pointing to the northwest.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Historical marker near Kansas Indian Treaty Site located about one mile west of Elyria, Kansas. The U. S. Government signed a treaty with the Kansas Indians in which the latter agreed to grant permission for caravans to travel over the Santa Fe Trail.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Marker at the crossing of the Little Arkansas River located on Santa Fe Trail about 7 miles south of Windom, Kansas. West view.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Historical marker at site of Old Fort Zarah, (1864-1869),
Kansas, located at Fort Zarah State Park.

Trail from Council Grove to Fort Larned and in 1868 was unsuccessfully attacked by 100 Kiowa Indians. The War Department records show a company of cavalry was stationed there in 1869. No surface indications remain from the old post.

During the afternoon, I visited Pawnee Rock, a well-known landmark on the Trail which is a short distance from the town by the same name, which is located near U. S. Highway 56. Gregg described the place as follows:

"It is situated at the projecting point of a ridge, and upon its surface are furrowed, in uncouth but legible characters, numerous dates, and the names of various travellers who have chanced to pass that way."

In recent years the red sandstone of the cliff on which travelers carved their names has been removed by railroad and home builders. It can now be seen only within a few miles. It is in marked contrast to Chimney Rock, on the Old Oregon Trail, which is still surrounded by treeless plains and which the traveler may still see for a distance of forty miles.

October 20. Mr. Edgar Langsdorf, Assistant Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society, joined me at Larned. We, together with Mr. Elmer Newachek, Fort Larned Historical Society, and Mr. Harold Evans, Editor of the Larned Tiller and Toiler, inspected old Fort Larned (1859-1878) which is located about five miles west of the town of Larned. This area, as Mr. Mattes pointed out in his report of December 1955, is one of the most significant sites on the Trail. He also summarized the historical significance of the area.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Pawnee Rock, well known landmark on Old Santa Fe Trail, located about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile north of the town of the same name. Originally there was a large red sandstone cliff on which travelers along the Trail carved their names. This cliff has since been removed by quarrying operations. This site is in State ownership. (Pawnee Rock, Kansas).

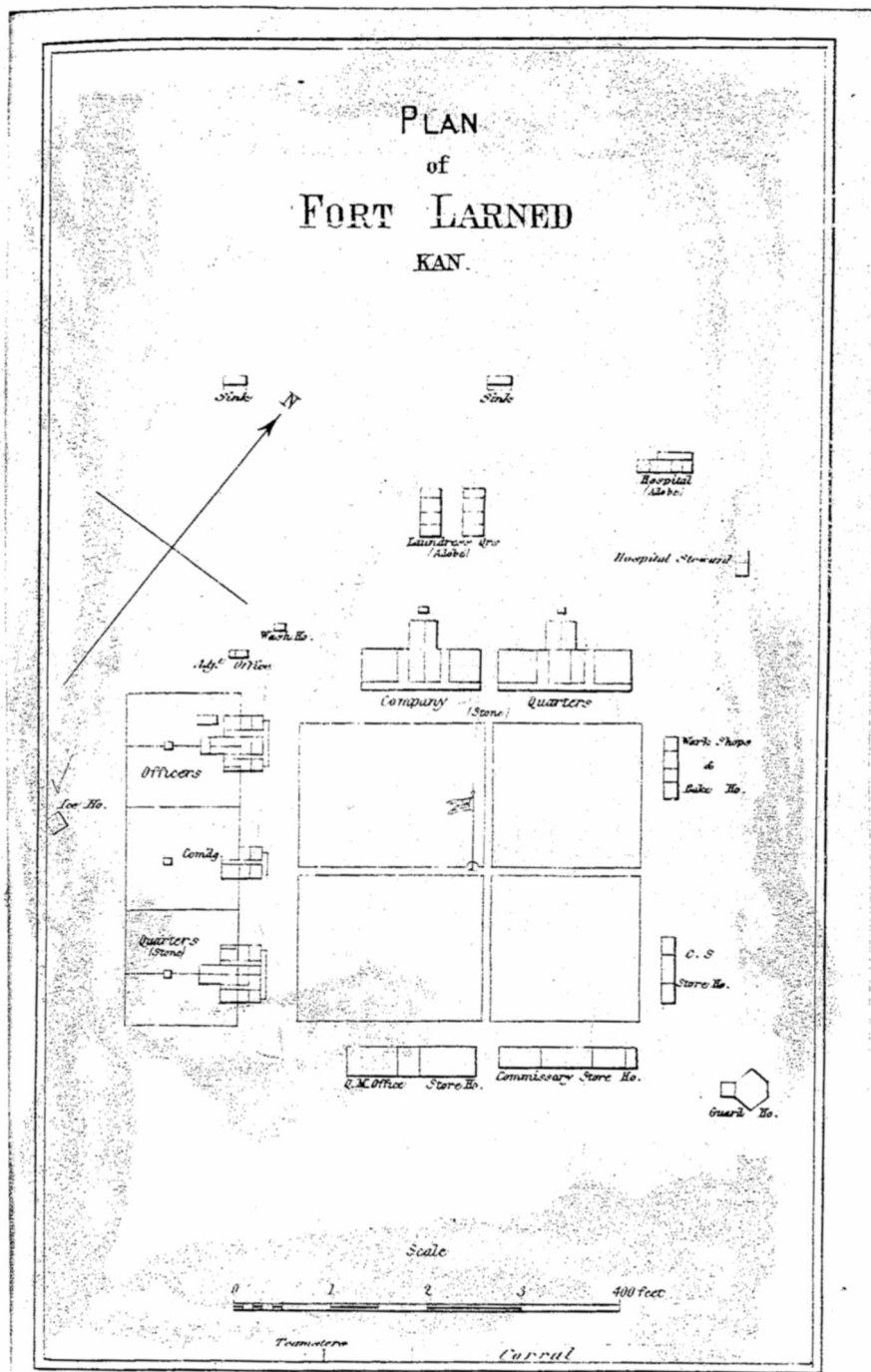
The military post was abandoned in 1878. Following the transfer of the reservation to the Interior Department in 1883, the fort buildings passed into the hands of an English cattle firm which utilized them for its ranch headquarters. In the early 1900's the Fort Larned Ranch passed into the hands of the Frizell family who has since that time used it as the center of their rather extensive ranch operations.

During the past year, by an understanding entered into between the owners, the Frizell family, and the Fort Larned Historical Society, the latter took over the operation of the old Fort Larned Ranch as a historic site. One of the old officers' quarters has been converted into a museum and souvenir shop. An admission charge of 65¢ for adults and 25¢ for children is charged to those visiting the fort. Between May 22 and September 2 of this year, 7,424 visitors registered at the museum. It is understood that the revenues received from the museum admissions and the sale of souvenirs will be used for preserving the old post.

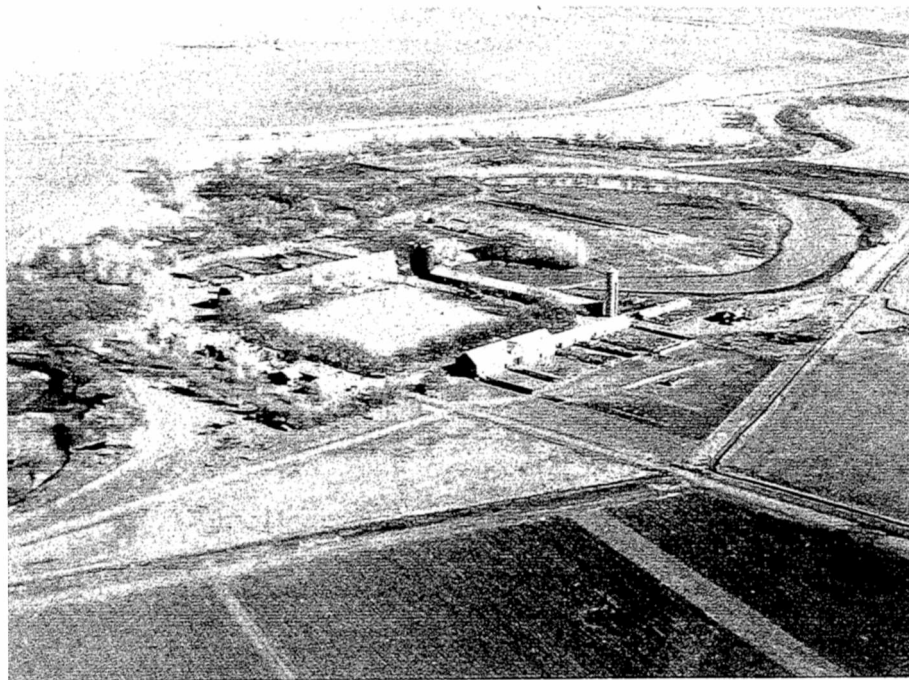
First called Fort Alert, Fort Larned was constructed of adobe in 1860. For several years it served as the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Agency. In 1867 the post was rebuilt, the buildings being of sandstone. In 1868 the two tribes were moved to Indian Territory. Below is a ground plan of the post as it appeared about 1876.

Of the buildings outside the parade ground, only the old icehouse, likewise built of stones, remains. The guardhouse, the corral, with a capacity for 150 horses, the laundresses quarters, the

PLAN of FORT LARNED KAN.



Ground Plan of Fort Larned about 1876



(Courtesy Kansas Industrial Development Commission)

Aerial photo of Fort Larned, Kansas, showing the buildings of Old Fort Larned. Southwest view. U. S. Highway No. 156 may be seen in the background.

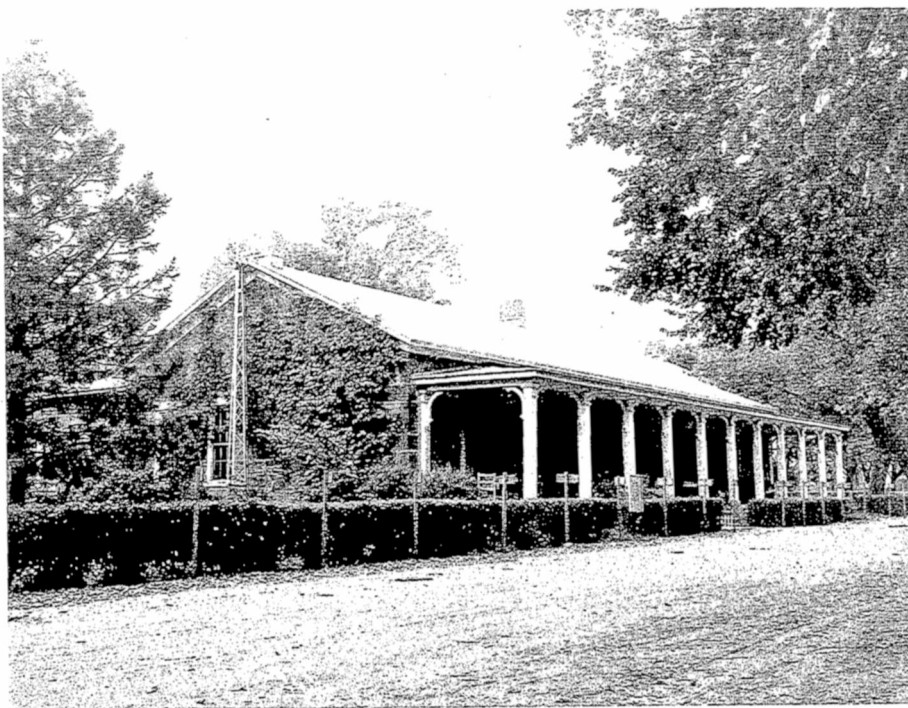


Photo by Mattison, October 20, 1957

Building No. 1. Old double officers' quarters, southeast view, at Fort Larned Ranch. This building, originally designed to accommodate two captains and four lieutenants, is now the home for the ranch hands and their families. The writer did not see the interior of this building but was informed that it has undergone but few alterations. The porch, except for the concrete floor, is likewise original. The roof, of course, is new. This building is not open to the public.



Photo by Mattison, October 20, 1957
Building No. 2. Old Commanding Officer's Quarters, Old Fort Larned. North view. This building, which serves as the residence of the owner, has undergone considerable interior alteration and some architectural changes. The porch, which is screened, at one time probably extended the full length of the east side of the house. The building is not open to the public.

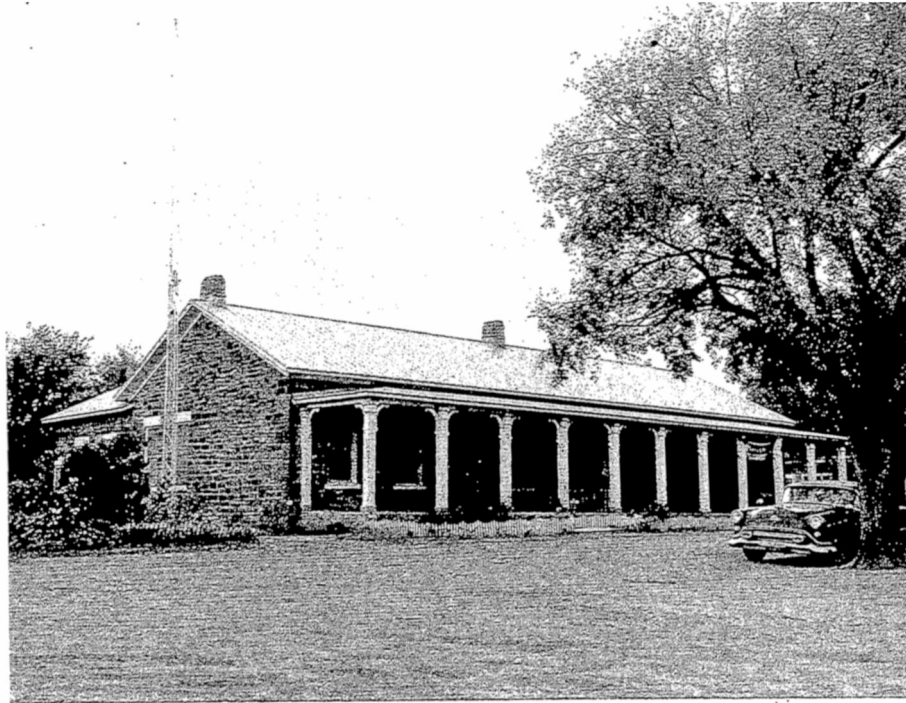


Photo by Mattison, October 20, 1957

Old stone officers' quarters at Fort Larned, Kansas. Building No. 3. Southeast view. Like Building No. 1, this structure was originally built to accommodate two captains and four lieutenants. This structure has undergone practically no exterior alterations and but few interior changes. A portion of the original floor survives. It is now utilized as a museum and is open to the public.



Photo by Mattison, October 20, 1957

Old stone commissary warehouses at Fort Larned, Kansas. Buildings 4 and 5, northwest view. The ground plans indicate two buildings, one of which served as a commissary storehouse and quartermaster's office, the other a commissary storehouse, were converted into this barn. The stone work indicates that the roof of the first building was removed and about four feet of stone wall added to the original and then reroofed. The gables on both the southwest and northeast ends were added, as well as the one on the northwest side below which is the double wooden door. The second building on the northeast has undergone but few alterations. The second building is open to the public.



Photo by Mattison, October 20, 1957

Building No. 5, Old Fort Larned. West view. The old port-holes, to be used in event of an Indian attack, may still be seen in this old storehouse located at the southeast corner of the parade ground. This is the only structure which has portholes. Open to public.

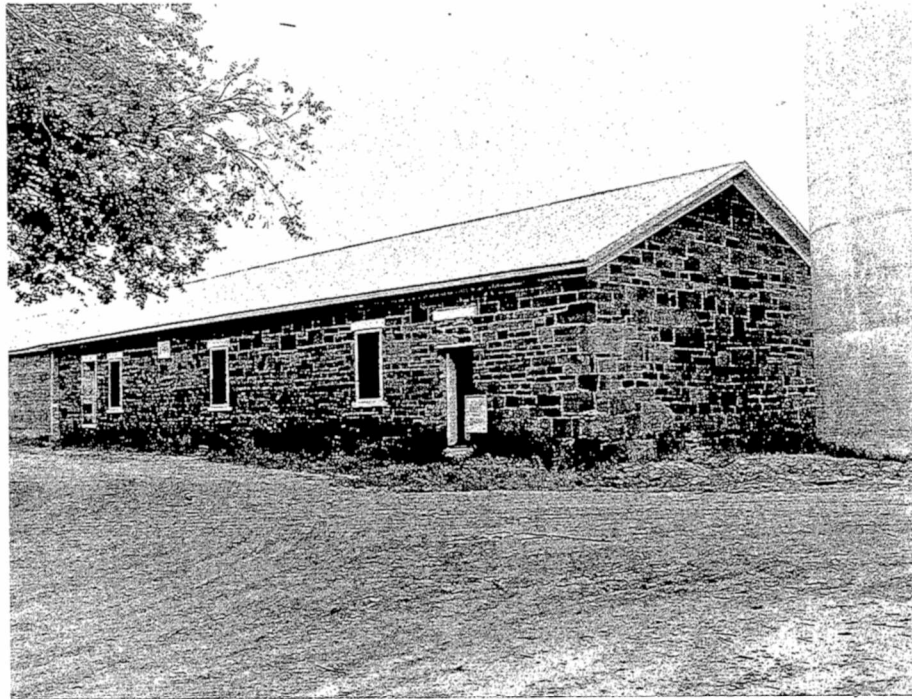


Photo by Mattison, October 20, 1957

Building No. 6, Old Fort Larned. Ordnance Sergeant's Office and storehouse, southwest view. This building has undergone but few alterations. The old wooden floor has been replaced with one of concrete. It is open to the public. On the north corner of the parade ground is a similar structure, Building No. 7, which served as the workshop and bake house.



Photo by Mattison, October 20, 1957

Buildings No. 8 and 9, Old Fort Larned. Barn, the photograph of which was taken from south corner of the parade ground, adapted from two double sets of company barracks. (See ground plan). Fort Larned was built to accommodate four companies. As may be noted, the roofs of the original structures were removed and about four or five feet of stone added to the old wall and then reroofed. The large doorway seen below the gable was formerly a passageway between the two double barracks. The extensions on the northwest side of the barracks shown on the ground plan have undergone little change.

adobe hospital, the sutler's store, and the house of the hospital steward have all disappeared. The only intrusions are the feedlots, two silos and several frame structures on the northeast side of the parade ground.

During the 1860's, when Santa Fe Trail was carrying very heavy traffic, Fort Larned was the most important post on the overland route. The old military post served as headquarters for the forces guarding the Trail. It was also an Indian agency and a gathering place for the Plains tribes. It also provided protection for the settlers in south central Kansas and for construction workers on the Santa Fe Railroad.

During the past seven years, the undersigned has visited the site of practically every significant military post within Region Two which existed up to 1900. With one exception, Fort Totten in North Dakota, which was of considerable less importance, Fort Larned is in the best state of preservation of any and would the most easily lend itself to restoration. There are significant remains at Forts Warren, Leavenworth and Riley, but these have been absorbed by later developments.

October 21. Mr. Langsdorf and I traveled from Larned to Dodge City. During the day, I stopped at the Soil Conservation Service offices in the county seats of Pawnee, Edwards, and Ford counties to look at the aerial photos for indications of the Trail. My findings at Pawnee were negative. Those at Ford and Gray counties will be discussed later.

Near Dodge City, we visited old Fort Dodge (1865-1882), now a State Soldiers Home, which at its time was the furthestmost western post in Kansas of the large posts on the Santa Fe Trail. In its early



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Building believed to be one of the double officers' quarters at Old Fort Dodge (1865-1882), Kansas. Date of construction unknown.

years, Fort Dodge was quite an active post. It served as the base of General Phil Sheridan's operations against the Cheyennes during the winter of 1868-1869.

Many of the buildings of old Fort Dodge have survived. These include several officers quarters and other buildings which I was unable to identify from the 1876 ground plan I had with me. Upon the basis of available information, it was impossible to date the existing buildings as to time of construction.

As to the significance of Fort Dodge, the post was constructed during the last days of the Trail so did not play as important a role in its history as Fort Larned. The area does not give an atmosphere of a frontier post of that period and would not be suitable for development.

Near Dodge City, we called upon Mr. James P. McCollom, who is one of the best authorities on historic sites in that vicinity and has a deep personal interest in the Trail. Mr. McCollom was kind enough to take us to the leading historic sites in the vicinity which were associated with the old overland route. These sites are:

(1) Caches. These are located about 200 yards north of U. S. Highway No. 50 several miles west of Dodge City in SE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 30, T 26 S, R 25 W. They were one of the more significant landmarks on the Trail and are frequently mentioned in the journals of the travelers. This place was described by Mrs. Magoffin as "large holes dug in the ground somewhat in the shape of a jug." These were made by James Baird and his party who set out in the fall of 1822 from St. Louis

with a caravan for Santa Fe. Near the site of Dodge City winter overtook them. Their animals wandered off or died so the party was forced to cache their goods here and go overland to Taos where they procured animals to complete their journey. When Baird and his party returned to their caches they found their goods safe so, after recovering them, were able to proceed on to New Mexico. The open pits of the Caches were still evident until a very short time ago. They have recently been filled in by bulldozing operations. During the heyday of the Trail, the Caches was a favorite stopping place for travelers. About two miles west of this landmark is "Gravel Rocks" described by Brown as "a rocky point of a hill at some distance from the river, composed of cemented pebbles."

(2) Fort Mann, Fort Mackay, Fort Atkinson. The sites of these posts are located in SW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 29, T 26 S, R 25 W, about six miles west of Dodge City and about a half mile south of U. S. Highway No. 50. In 1847 during the Mexican War the Government found it desirable to have a station equidistant from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe where it might repair the wagons and allow the animals to rest in safety. It therefore, constructed a post which Lewis H. Garrard described following his visit there in 1848 as "four big houses connected by angles of timber framework, in which were cut loopholes for the cannon and small arms." It was about 60 feet in diameter. The walls were 20 feet in height.

Fort Mackay was established on the same site in 1850. It apparently was a temporary affair as it is described as being "built of sod, covered with poles, brush, sod and canvas." Its name was

changed in 1851 to Fort Atkinson. Probably the greatest event which occurred at the post was the signing of the treaty with the Comanche, Kiowa and Apache on July 27, 1853, which was brought about by Thomas Fitzpatrick. Under the treaty the Government agreed, in return for the right to establish military posts and railroad depots along the Trail, to pay the three tribes \$18,000 in goods for a period of ten years. Fort Atkinson was abandoned in the same year.

No physical evidences of the old post may be seen on the site. Mr. McCollom, the former owner, said that he has found old horseshoes, bolts, clevises, and other items on the site.

Mr. McCollom also took us to the old Santa Fe Trail remains about 10 miles west of Dodge City. I was very much impressed with the extensive ruts which covered an area of several miles. (See attached photograph) This area is still prairie and has never been under cultivation. It has at times, apparently been overgrazed which accounts for its now being covered with sunflowers and other obnoxious weeds.

A group from Dodge City is sponsoring this area for national designation. Kenyon Riddle, who has spent some ten or twelve years making a study of the Trail, has inspected practically all of it including aerial surveys. He states regarding the remains, "At this point offers the best example of study and explanation of the different aspects of the Trail I know of." The undersigned has examined the aerial photographs of fifteen counties in Kansas for evidences of the Trail and



(Courtesy Kansas Industrial Development Commission)

Aerial photo of the Old Santa Fe Trail remains located about ten miles west of Dodge City, Kansas, taken from the east. U. S. Highway No. 50 may be seen on the left.

they are more pronounced here than at any other point along the old route which he has examined.

These remains run adjacent to U. S. Highway 50, one of the leading transcontinental highways. No doubt thousands of potential visitors pass it each year. While the writer has some mental reservations as to whether this place is the most suitable one from which to interpret the story of the Santa Fe Trail, certainly these ruts merit preservation by either the State or Federal Government.

Mr. Langsdorf and I visited Mr. Jess Denious, Jr., of the Dodge City Globe. The former then left for Topeka. During the afternoon, I spent some time in the Soil Conservation office looking over the aerial photographs. Portions of the Trail showed up in several places and were particularly noticeable in that portion of Ford County mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

From Dodge City, I drove to Cimarron, the county seat of Gray County. Near that town and extending to Ingalls was the well-known Cimarron "Cut Off." At that place, one branch of the Trail crossed the Arkansas River in a west southwesterly direction to the Cimarron River and followed the left bank of that stream to present southwestern Kansas and into the southeastern corner of Colorado. From there it continued west and southwest through the panhandle of present western Oklahoma into New Mexico and thence to Santa Fe.

At Cimarron, there is a city park where the "Crossing" of the Arkansas was purported to have been located. Kenyon Riddle's Records and Maps of the Old Santa Fe Trail indicates that the caravans

forded the Arkansas all along the river from Cimarron to Ingalls. I examined the aerial photographs in the Soil Conservation Service office of Gray County. These showed no indications of the old Trail except in the extreme east end of the county, mentioned above. In this county, the route followed closely to the north bank of the Arkansas along which the Santa Fe Railroad and U. S. Highway No. 50 also runs. The railroad and highway, together with farming operations for many years, have obliterated all vestiges of the Trail. Farming operations in the flat country south of the Arkansas have likewise resulted in removing all traces of the route at that point.

October 22. During the forenoon I drove from Garden City, Kansas, to Holly, Colorado, stopping to examine aerial photographs in the Soil Conservation Service's offices of Finney, Kearny and Hamilton Counties in Kansas. Only in Kearny County did I find any traces of the old Trail.

Chouteau Island, near Hartland, Kansas, was a prominent point on the Trail. This at one time was the upper ford of the Arkansas. It received its name in 1816 when Auguste P. Chouteau and several others, returning from an expedition to Mexico, were attacked by the Pawnee. The white men retired to this island where they succeeded in driving off the Indians. In the following year the Americans were arrested in Mexico, their goods confiscated, and sent back to the United States. Chouteau Island has since disappeared. From a point near Dodge City to Bent's Fort and above, the Arkansas River, until 1848, was the boundary between the United States and Mexico.

Near Syracuse, I visited the site of Fort Aubrey which is located three miles east of that town and a half mile south of U. S. 50 in NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 23, T 24 N, R 40 W. This post was established in 1865 to defend the Santa Fe Trail. This two-company post was abandoned in the following year. Farm buildings now stand on this site and all vestiges of the post seem to have disappeared.

At the suggestion of Mr. Maurice Frink, Executive Director of the Colorado State Historical Society, I called upon Mr. Fred M. Betz, Publisher of the Lamar Daily News and Chairman of the Democratic National Committee for Colorado. Mr. Betz was very interested in the Historic Sites program and proved very cooperative. Through him, I procured the assistance of Mr. R. J. McGrath, the State Water Commissioner, who took me to the sites of New Fort Bent and Fort Wise.

The site of New Fort Bent is located on a high hill overlooking the Arkansas River in Sec. 23, T 22 S, R 48 W, about seven miles west of Lamar. In 1853, after dissolving his partnership with Ceran St. Vrain, William Bent moved thirty-eight miles down the Arkansas from his old fort and established a new fort at Big Timber. This latter was built of stone and was one story in height. According to David Lavender, author of Bent's Fort (New York, 1954), "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."

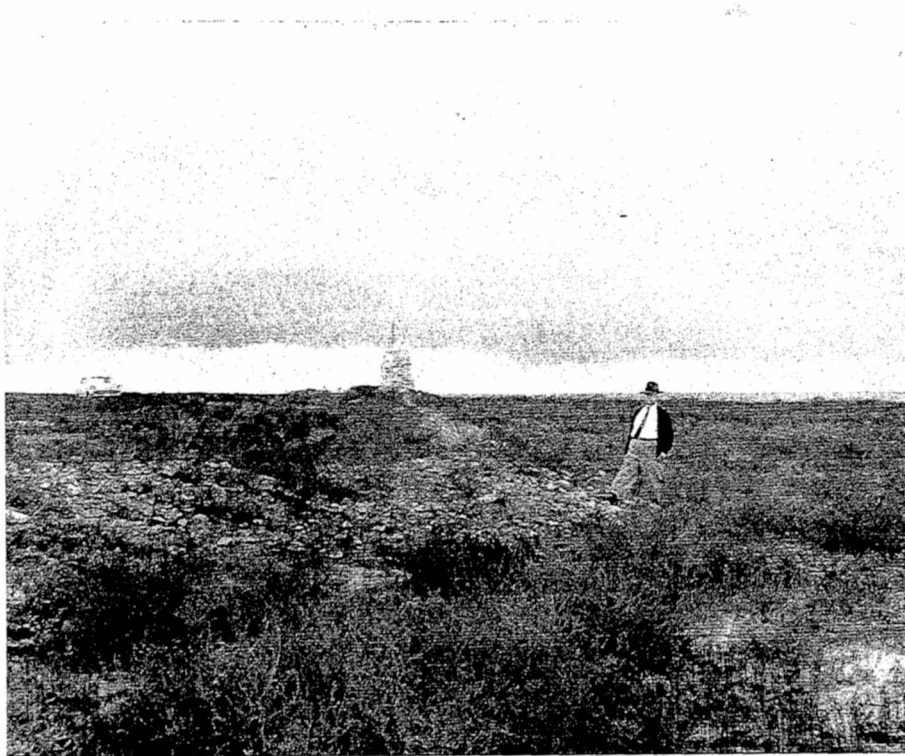


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Remains of New Fort Bent (1853-1860) located about 7 miles west of Lamar, Colorado. The old earthwork may be seen on the left. Mr. R. J. McGrath is in the right foreground. Southeast view.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Remains of New Fort Bent (1853-1860) located about 7 miles west of Lamar, Colorado. The old earthwork may be seen on the left. Figure on right is that of Mr. R. J. McGrath. Southwest view.

With the exception of 1857 when it was temporarily loaned to the Government, New Bent's Fort was occupied as a trading post by William Bent until 1860. During this period, it served also as a distributing point for Cheyenne annuities. In 1860, the Army began the construction of a cantonment, known as Fort Wise, near New Fort Bent and leased the latter as a commissary and storehouse. The Army threw up earthworks with diamond-shaped gun emplacements at the corners around the fort itself. According to one writer an "enormous ditch faced by a high stone wall encircled the fort and enclosed five acres of ground."

The old stone buildings were removed many years ago, perhaps by the neighboring ranchers. However, the stone chips from these structures still disclose very clearly the outlines of the old fort. There are still very substantial remains of the old enclosure surrounding the fort itself. (See photograph) This site is in private ownership.

On the north bank of the Arkansas River in Secs. 34 and 35 of T 22 S, R 48 W and about a mile west of Bent's New Fort is the site of Fort Wise, or Fort Lyon No. 1. The buildings of this post, which included company barracks, officers' quarters, stables, etc., were of stone. It was established on August 29, 1860, by Companies F, G, H, and K, of the 1st Cavalry. During the Civil War it was an important center for operations against the Indians. In 1862, its name was changed from Fort Wise to Fort Lyon. In 1866, the Arkansas River

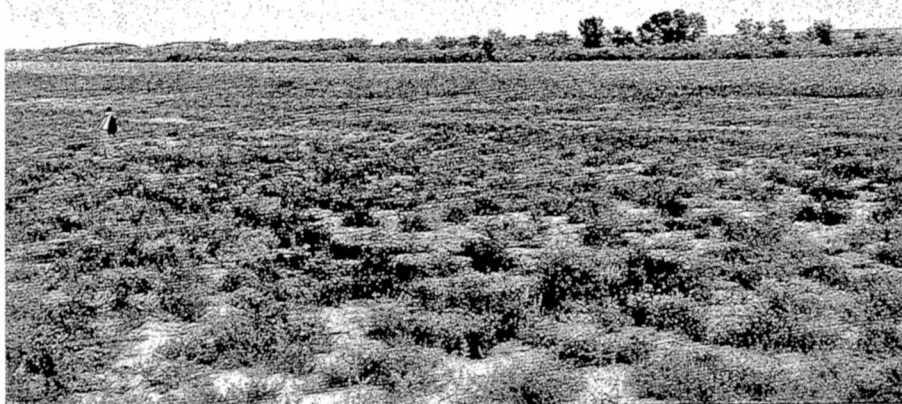


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Site of Fort Wise, later known as Fort Lyon No. 1, erected in 1860 and abandoned in 1867. The buildings were originally of stone. Because of the flooding from the Arkansas River this post was abandoned in 1867 and moved to a new site near Las Animas. Northwest view.

overflowed and began undermining the walls of Fort Lyon, making it untenable. In March 1867, the Army moved up the river about twenty miles and selected a new site. (See Fort Lyon No. 2 below).

Like New Fort Bent, the old stone buildings of the post were carted away many years ago. The outlines of these structures may still be seen. (See photograph). About a quarter of a mile north is a large pit purportedly used as a storehouse for ammunition. This site is in private ownership.

October 23. I visited Fort Lyon No. 2, which was established in 1867 about two miles below the mouth of the Purgatoire River. This four-company post was established in 1867 and abandoned in 1889. It now serves as a Veterans Administration Hospital. Of the original structures, only the officers' quarters have survived. (See photograph).

About two or three miles southeast of Los Animas are the remains of the old ghost town of Boggsville. This area has been proposed for national designation by Senator Gordon Allot.

Following his abandonment of New Fort Bent at Big Timber, William Bent erected a temporary stockade on the south side of the Arkansas near the mouth of the Purgatoire which he enlarged and reoccupied three years later. This establishment was subsequently swept into the river. Boggsville was established by Thomas O. Boggs, who made the first successful experiment in irrigation in the region. It is also the oldest Anglo-American settlement in southeastern Colorado and at one time was a thriving community. Only two houses of any significance in Boggsville have survived. One of these is the



Photo by Mattison, October 1957
Old Officers Row at Fort Lyons No. 2, (Colorado (1867-1889)
These buildings, date of construction unknown, are the only
surviving buildings of the original fort. Southeast view.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Old John Prowers home built in the early 1860's which served as a hotel, store, and Santa Fe Trail Stage Station. For a short time it served as the seat of Bent County. It is built of adobe and covered with plaster. It was originally a much larger structure. Southwest view. (Near Las Animas, Colorado).

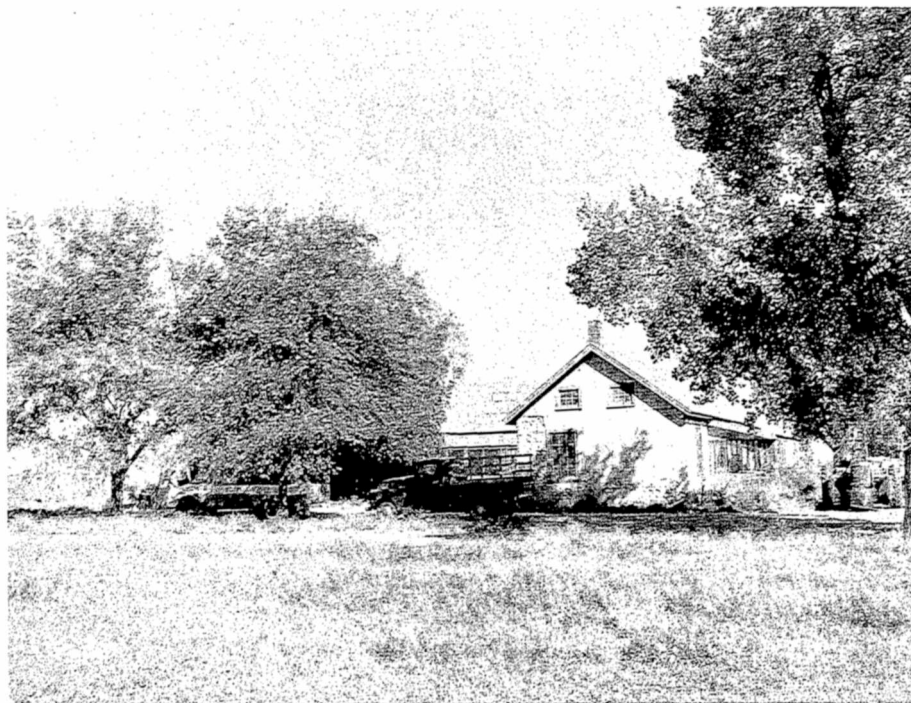


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Old Thomas O. Boggs house erected in the early 1860's. This building originally had 10 rooms and 4 fireplaces. Its plastered adobe walls are 30 inches thick. Boggsville was the oldest Anglo-American settlement in Southeast Colorado. (Near Las Animas, Colorado).

old John W. Prowers Home, built in early 1860's, which served as a hotel, store and Santa Fe Trail stage station. At this place, horses were changed and the passengers were fed. For a short time it served as seat of Bent County. This structure, built of adobe and plastered, is unoccupied and is in a dilapidated condition. (See attached photograph).

The other building is the old Thomas O. Boggs House which was erected about the same time as the one constructed by Prowers. This one-story building with an open court facing the south originally had ten rooms and four fire places. Its plastered adobe walls are thirty inches thick. This building is currently occupied and is in a fair condition. (See attached photograph).

At the side of Old Fort Bent, I was unable to find Mr. James Baldrige, the Caretaker, who is deeply interested in the area. A bill designed to give this area national designation has been sponsored by Senators John A. Carroll and Gordon Allot, as well as Representative William S. Hill. This proposal appears to have the support of the State Historical Society of Colorado. It is understood that the State is willing to transfer this area to the Federal Government provided the site is made a national monument.

William Bent's Old Fort, frequently called Fort William, was the center of the fur trading operations and the major stopping point on the Mountain Division of the Santa Fe Trail. It played a similar role on that overland route as did Fort Laramie on the Oregon Trail. This post was the center of the fur trade for the Comanche, Cheyenne, Arapahoe and Sioux in that region. The date of the construction of this



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Remains of Old Fort Bent (1833-1853) near Las Animas, Colorado.
The reconstructed north wall may be seen in the background.
Southwest view. (In state ownership).

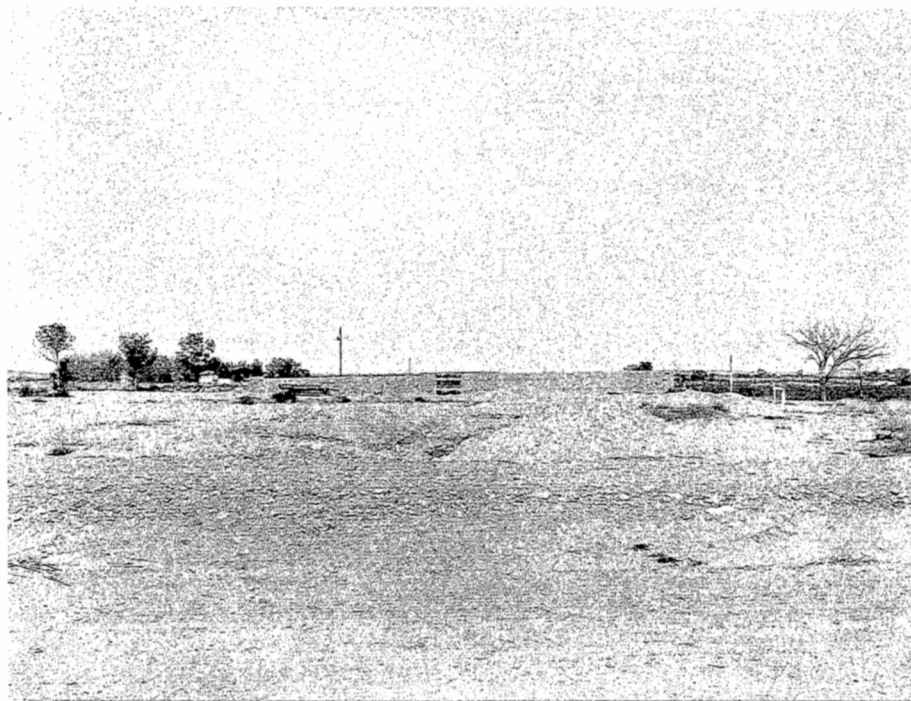


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Remains of Old Fort Bent (1833-1853) near Las Animas, Colorado.
The reconstructed north wall may be seen in the background.
Southeast view. (In state ownership.)

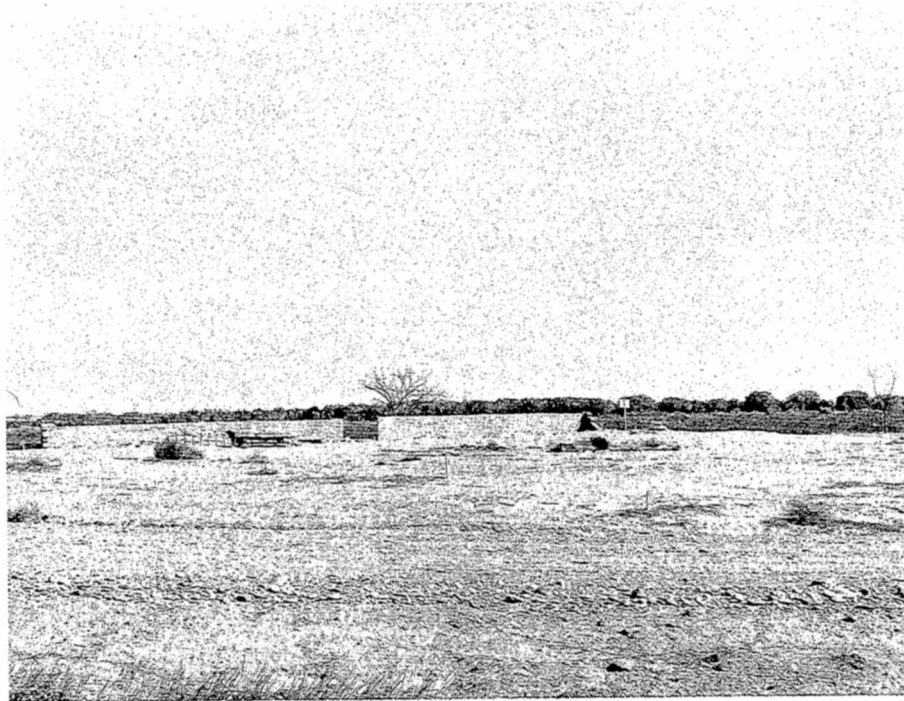


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Remains of Old Fort Bent (1833-1853) near Las Animas, Colorado.
The reconstructed north wall may be seen in the background.
Southwest view. (In state ownership).

post is uncertain. Dr. LeRoy Hafen, perhaps the best recognized scholar of the history of that region, is of the opinion that Old Fort Bent was erected in 1833. It was abandoned in 1850 when William Bent moved to Big Timber. (See New Fort Bent, above). This adobe fort with enclosures was in the shape of a trapezoid with towers on both the northeast and the southwest corners. The north wall was approximately 178 feet, the west, 180 feet, and the east wall, 137 feet long.

The site of Bent's Old Fort is in State ownership and the State Historical Society of Colorado is interested in reconstructing the old post. In 1954, excavations were conducted by the Society under the direction of Dr. Herbert W. Dick, an archeologist who teaches at the Trinidad (Colorado) Junior College. (A report by him on the excavations was published in the Colorado Magazine, July 1956.) The Society has reconstructed a portion of the north wall which may be noted in my photographs. My evaluation of this site will be included in the summary at the end of this report.

At La Junta, I had lunch with Mr. Milton Andrus, Manager of the Chamber of Commerce, who is very much interested in Old Bent's Fort, and with whom Mr. Frink suggested I get in touch.

Between La Junta and Pueblo, I stopped at the site of old Fort Reynolds (1867-1872), located near Boone on U. S. Highway 50. During the Indian Wars of the late 1860's this post was erected to protect the travelers on the Mountain Division of the Santa Fe Trail. The buildings at Fort Reynolds were of frame and adobe. The post was

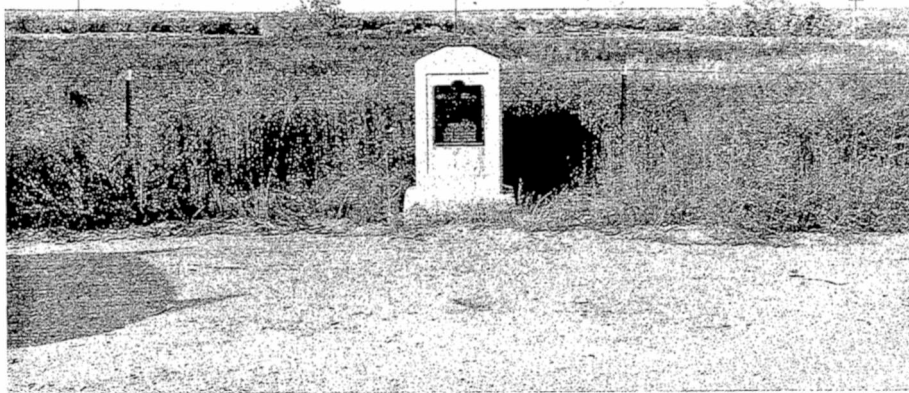


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Site of Old Fort Reynolds (1867-1872), a frame and adobe one-company post. South view. (Near Boone, Colorado).

erected to accommodate one company although it was sometimes occupied by two. Nothing remains of the buildings. The site, which is in private ownership, is adjacent to U. S. Highway No. 50, and is indicated by a stone marker. (See photograph). The Surgeon General in 1870 reported regarding Fort Reynolds: "No movements of any consequence having taken place from the post, its military history is unimportant."

In Pueblo, I called on Mr. Ralph Taylor, News Editor, Pueblo Chieftain and Journal. Mr. Taylor has a very deep interest in Colorado history and a number of his feature articles on various historic sites have appeared in several newspapers in the State. Mr. Taylor called attention to several places I should visit between Pueblo and Trinidad.

October 24. Between Pueblo and Trinidad and a point ten miles north of Walsenburg is Huerfano Butte, a cone of volcanic rock which stands alone. The butte was a well-known landmark on the Santa Fe Trail. George F. Ruxton, an English traveler who visited the region in the late 1840's described it as "a remarkable isolated rock of sandstone." Lieutenant E. G. Beckwith, in the Pacific Railway Reports for 1853-1854, gives a detailed description of this landmark. On his last expedition in 1853, Col. John C. Fremont took along an artist, S. N. Corvalho, who made a picture of the butte by the daguerre process. He proposed that, if a railroad were ever built through the valley in which this landmark is located, an equestrian statue of Fremont be placed on the summit of Huerfano Butte, with the explorer's right hand pointing to California, "the land he conquered." (See photograph).



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Well known landmark on the Pueblo-Trinidad division of the Old Santa Fe Trail, located about ten miles north of Walsenburg, Colorado, on U. S. Highways 85 and 87. Southwest view of Huerfano Butte.

The other landmarks on the Pueblo-Trinidad route of the Santa Fe Trail are the Spanish Peaks, called also Huajatollos, or "breasts of the world," located west of Aguilar. Ruxton described them as towering "like twin giants over the plains." (See photograph).

At Trinidad, I endeavored to find Dr. Herbert Dick, who, as mentioned earlier, conducted the archeological investigations at Fort Bent, and Arthur M. Mitchell, curator of the Felipe de Baca museum at that place. Unfortunately, Dr. Dick was out of town and I was unable to locate Mr. Mitchell.

From Trinidad, I followed U. S. Highway Nos. 85 and 87 about ten miles south to the old Wootton Ranch at Raton Pass which is in private ownership. "Uncle Dick" Wootton (1816-1893), its former owner, was one of the picturesque characters identified with the history of the old Trail. He was a trapper and trader in the Southwest and was in business in Taos, New Mexico. In company with a party of 22, Wootton, in 1852, drove 9,000 sheep from New Mexico to California.

In 1865, under an act to incorporate "The Trinidad, Ratoon Mountain Road," Colorado granted Wootton permission to construct a road between Raton and Trinidad and collect such tolls as Huerfano County might fix. Wootton, in partnership with George H. McBride, constructed this road and operated it from 1866 until the Santa Fe Railroad was constructed through the Raton Pass in 1878-1879. Wootton erected a residence and an inn at this place. (See photographs).

From Trinidad I traveled over U. S. Highway No. 350 to La Junta. This follows generally the "cut off" or short cut route from

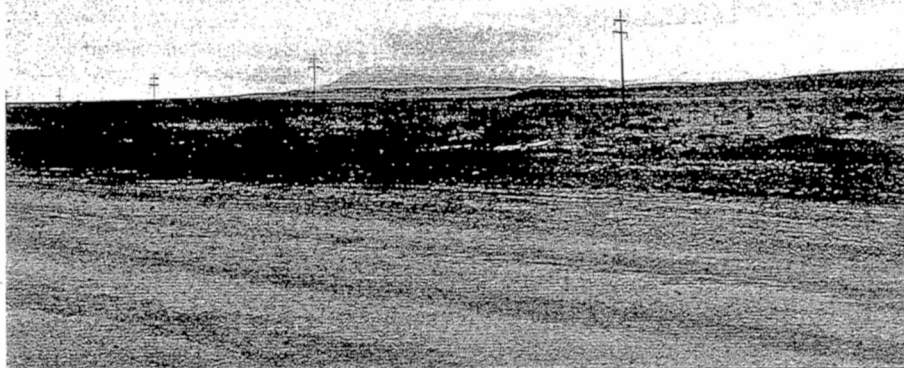


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Spanish Peaks, one of the prominent landmarks on the Pueblo-Trinidad route of the Santa Fe Trail. This photograph was taken from a point on the U. S. Highways 85 and 87 near Huerfano Butte. Northeast view.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

"Uncle" Dick Wootton home located about ten miles south of Trinidad. "Uncle" Dick, a colorful figure in the history of the Trail, operated a toll road at Raton Pass on the Trail. Southwest view.

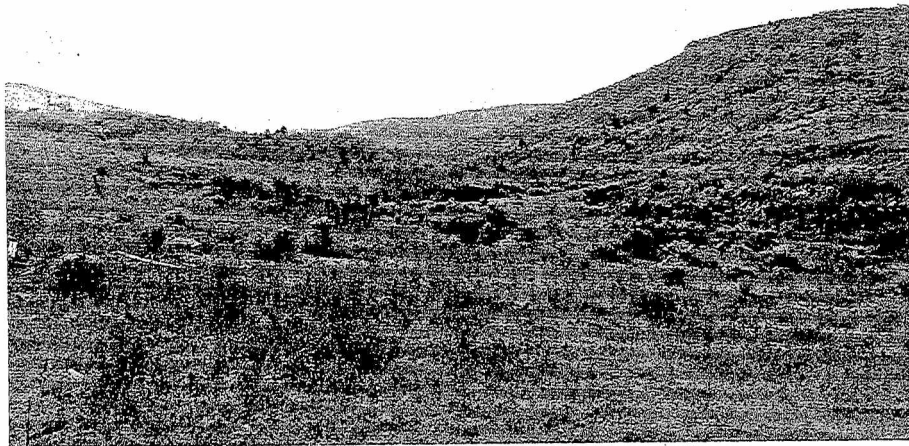


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

In 1865 "Uncle" Dick Wootton received permission to operate a toll road over the Raton Pass on the Trinidad-Raton section of the Santa Fe Trail. This road was operated until about 1878 or 1879. North~~east~~ view.

Old Fort Bent to Trinidad. Colonel Stephen W. Kearny and his army, enroute from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe, in 1846 traveled this route after leaving Old Fort Bent. A highway marker stated that the ruts of the Old Trail were in evidence on this cut-off. I did not check the aerial maps of this portion of the Trail. However, since most of this region is submarginal in character and much of it is in prairie, I have but little doubt but what there may still be substantial vestiges of the Old Trail along this old route.

October 25. After spending the night in Springfield, Colorado, I plowed through the mud (there had been a rain and some snow during the night) to Elkhart, Kansas. Several miles west of the latter town was the route of the Cimarron Cut Off of the Old Trail. Northwest of Elkhart several miles, on the north bank of the Cimarron near the east line of Sec. 12, T 34 S, R 43 W, stands a landmark known as the "Point of Rocks," a rocky bluff rising above the river, not to be confused with a landmark of the same name in New Mexico, near which the Old Trail crossed the stream.

Southwest Kansas is a part of the "Dust Bowl." During World War II much of this region was put into cultivation. For the past eight years, I was informed, it was subject to drouth and much wind erosion. On the aerial photographs, taken in 1939 and 1942, of the Soil Conservation Service at Elkhart, one could follow the Trail most of the way across Morton County. This was likewise true on the photographs of Stevens County at Hugoton. However, in Grant County, it disappeared in places as one approached the eastern side of the

county. The Soil Conservation Service agent of Haskell County advised me that in his county one could still find the Old Trail in places.

In company with Mr. Joe Kingsolver, Soil Conservationist at Hugoton, I visited Wagon Bed Springs, a prominent watering place on the Cimarron Cut Off. Brown, naming this stop "Lower Semaron Springs," described it as follows:

"Lower Semaron Spring /Wagon Bed spring, Grant county/ is at the west edge of a marsh green with bullrushes. The marsh is north of the creek and near it. The spring is constant, but the creek is sometimes dry until you ascent it ten or twelve miles, where it will be found running. The stream is bolder and the water better as one travels up it. It is the guide to the traveler until he reaches the upper spring near eighty miles. Three miles above the lower spring is some timber, from which place the road is on the hill north of the creek for twelve or fifteen miles. One may then either continue on the hills north of the creek or travel in the bottom but the hills are best for ten or fifteen miles further, as the valley of the creek is sandy in many places. One must necessarily camp on the creek to have water, but the water is very bad until one travels a great way up it, as it is impregnated (with) saline matter, which, like fine powder, makes white a great part of the valley. The grass in this valley is not so good as that on the Arkansas, the land not being so good either in the valley or on the hills."

The traces of the Old Trail were everywhere in evidence in the immediate vicinity near Wagon Bed Springs which had never been in cultivation. The ruts were not, however, as clear or as extensive as near Dodge City. Unfortunately, as the results of the heavier rainfall this year, the Wagon Bed Springs area was covered with tall weeds so the remains of the old route are not apparent in the photographs.

From Ulysses, I drove to Topeka, where I arrived about 10:00 p.m. On the 26th, after conferring with Messrs. Miller and Langsdorf, of the Kansas State Historical Society, I drove to Omaha.



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Ruts of the Old Santa Fe Trail located a short distance west of Wagon Bed Springs, a prominent watering place on the Cimarron cutoff of the Old Santa Fe Trail. Wagon Bed Springs in the background. West view. (Ulysses, Kansas).



Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Ruts of the Old Santa Fe Trail located a short distance west of Wagon Bed Springs, a prominent watering place on the Cimarron cutoff of the Old Santa Fe Trail. East view. (Near Ulysses, Kansas).

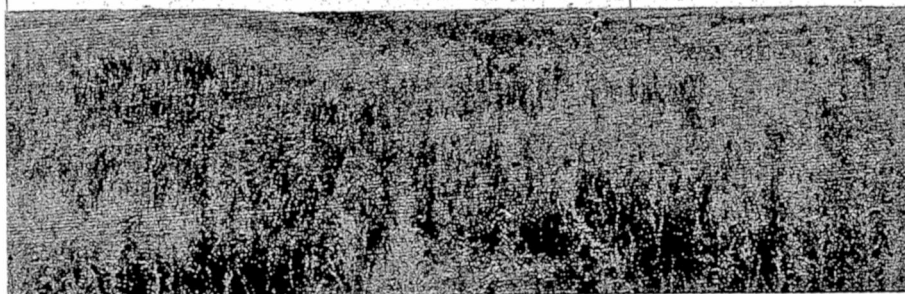


Photo by Mattison, October 1957

Ruts of the Old Santa Fe Trail located a short distance west of Wagon Bed Springs, a prominent watering place on the Cimarron cutoff of the Old Santa Fe Trail. East view. (Near Ulysses, Kansas).

Conclusions

In this writer's opinion, of the sites visited, only three (Fort Larned, the Santa Fe Trail remains near Dodge City, and Old Fort Bent) merit consideration for national designation. The Shawnee Mission, which is now being adequately preserved by Kansas, played no significant role in the Santa Fe Trail. As a mission, it served primarily the tribes which had recently been moved from east of the Mississippi and was not representative of those of the period of great missionary activity on the Plains region during the 1870's and 1880's. Its work left little imprint on the region.

From the statements of travelers along the Trail, Pawnee Rock was a very impressive landmark when the Arkansas Valley was in its primitive state. The red sandstone cliffs of Pawnee Rock, upon which travelers carved their names, stood out in striking contrast to the flat prairie and treeless plains which surrounded it and could be seen for many miles. With the removal of the cliff and the development of the region surrounding it, Pawnee Rock is no longer impressive and, unlike Chimney Rock, retains few of the characteristics which made it a prominent landmark of one hundred twenty-five years ago. The observatory which has been erected on the "Rock" detracts from the landmark. The area has been proposed for national designation by Senator Frank Carlson. In the opinion of the undersigned, Pawnee Rock is being adequately preserved as a state park and does not merit serious consideration for inclusion in the National Park System.

The ghost town of Boggsville has been proposed for national designation by Senator Gordon Allott. One surviving building in this

old town, the home of John Prowers, during the 1860's served as a stage stop and inn on the Old Trail. Only a portion of this building has survived so it has lost most of its integrity. The chief claim of Boggsville for distinction is that it was the first Anglo-American settlement in southwestern Colorado. Assuming that such a claim is valid, it still does not give the old town sufficient significance to merit its inclusion in the National Park System.

Council Grove was one of the most important places on the Old Trail. However, the town by the same name now occupies the old assembling place of the traders so the site has lost its integrity. There are a number of historic sites within the town itself identified with the old overland route but these are of minor significance.

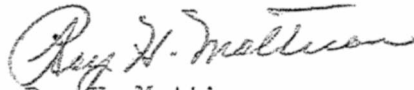
Of the three sites which this writer is recommending for consideration, Old Fort Bent is, in his opinion, of the greatest historical significance. This post, together with its successor, New Fort Bent, played an important role in the history of Santa Fe Trail from 1833 to 1860. These two posts served not only as the center for the Indian trade of the region but as one of the principal points of contact on the Great Plains between the whites and the red men for over a quarter of a century. If there were substantial remains of Old Fort Bent whereby an authentic reproduction of the old post could be made, I would have little hesitation in recommending it for consideration as a national monument. However, the reconstruction of the old post would be a project of considerable magnitude and the writer questions whether sufficient data can be obtained whereby a suitable reproduction of it could be made.

While Old Fort Larned is of less significance in the history of the Santa Fe Trail than Old Fort Bent, it lends itself more readily to development as a national monument. The writer is of the opinion that, with the existing remains of the old military post, an authentic restoration of the major buildings would offer no serious problems. There might be, however, some obstacles in acquiring the site. The Frizell family will relinquish the buildings only if equally suitable headquarters can be provided them for their extensive ranching operations. It would also be necessary to purchase additional lands for park purposes. The writer shares the earlier opinion of Regional Historian Mattes that it would require at least a half million dollars to acquire the site and necessary lands, restore the major buildings and develop the area into a first class historical park.

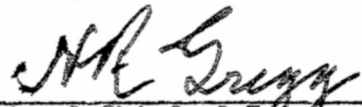
The Santa Fe Trail remains near Dodge City are very impressive. These are on unbroken prairie and extend for several miles adjacent to U. S. Highway 50. The only intrusion is an old irrigation ditch which runs through the area. It is understood upon reliable authority that these are the most extensive remains of the Old Trail in the five states the route traversed.

By means of the ruts, various aspects of travel over the Trail might be interpreted. For example, wagons carrying the heavier loads were forced to take a route over the lesser slopes while those transporting the lighter burdens took a steeper and shorter course. In inclement weather, the wagons followed the high ridges and avoided wet gullies while in dry weather they made shortcuts through valleys and across small streams.

In the opinion of this writer, this area merits preservation as perhaps the best visible remains of the Santa Fe Trail. It would offer the minimum problems of protection and maintenance. It likewise would not involve any expensive restoration or reconstruction.


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Concurred in:


Regional Chief of Interpretation

Date: 1/28/58

Cleared for distribution:


Regional Director

Date: 1-27-58

Copy to: The Director
Regional Director, Region Three

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