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Above the Line
Mary Gordon McFall

SYMPHONY IN THE
FLINT  HILLS

FIELD JOURNAL

Volume XIII, 2021

THE SANTA FE TRAIL

PREVIOUS SPREAD

Map of the Santa Fe Trail
Kansas Historical Society



Symphony in the Flint Hills Field Journal, Volume XIII

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Special thanks to Leo E. Oliva and Joanne VanCoevern.

FOLLOWING SPREAD

Santa Fe Trail (wheel, wall with moon)

Tod Seelie





Prairie Cadence #4
Diana Werts

SYMPHONY IN THE FLINT HILLS, INC.

OUR MISSION

*Heighten appreciation and knowledge
of the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie*

Symphony in the Flint Hills, Inc., works to build awareness for the last stand of tallgrass prairie. Those of us who live in the Flint Hills know this: The land dictates the terms and beauty of our lives, and our culture is shaped by this landscape. Its stone, soil, flora and skies above pull on our souls and care for us, and we are called to care for this place in return.

We answer this call to stewardship with education. We directly engage with the land; we collaborate with musicians, artists, historians, scientists and community members to provide transcendent experiences that open our minds to both the traditions of today and the future of the Flint Hills of tomorrow.

At Symphony in the Flint Hills, we envision a future where our efforts inspire people to strengthen the Kansas prairie by sustaining the region's unique culture and landscape. You can learn about ways to join us at symphonyintheflinthills.org.

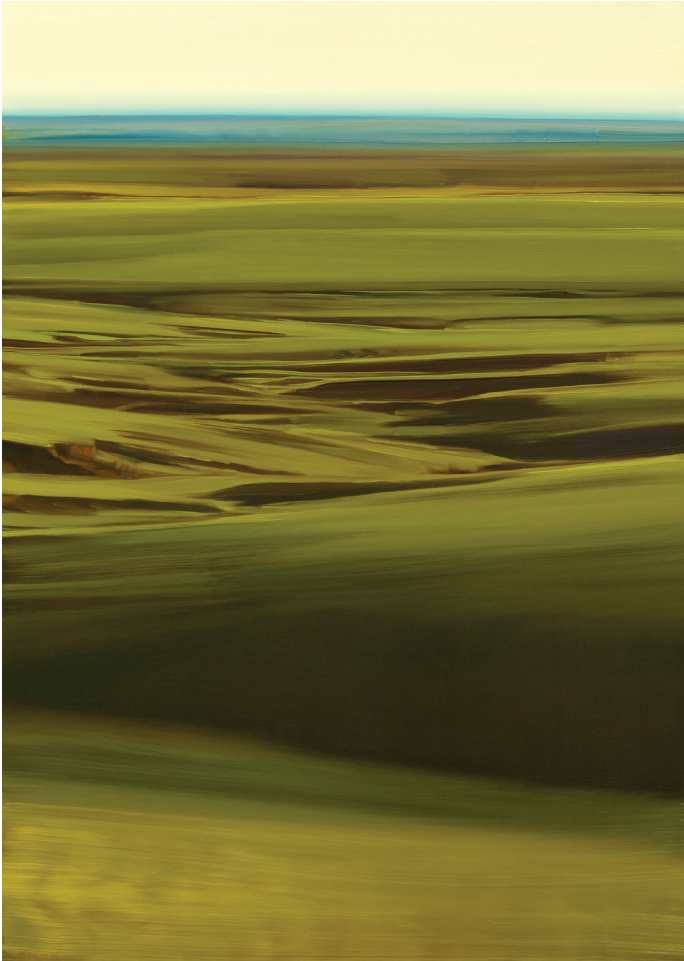


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BNSF Railway is proud to partner with Symphony in the Flint Hills as the Santa Fe Trail bicentennial approaches. Both Kansas and BNSF have deep roots in the Santa Fe Trail, which started moving the state's economy nearly 200 years ago. Today that tradition is stronger than ever as the BNSF network links Kansas farmers, manufacturers and industries to markets across the globe.



Valley 1
Lisa Grossman

THE SANTA FE TRAIL

Symphony in the Flint Hills Field Journal, Volume XIII, 2021

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Approaching Storm

Phil Epp

FOREWORD

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail, which stretched westward from Missouri through the Flint Hills and on to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Our 2021 Field Journal commemorates the milestone with stories about the trail itself, life on the trail, the wagons and freight hauled over it, and the men and women who traveled or were affected by the trail.

The journal's first section, "The Great Prairie Highway," takes a broad look at the trail from end to end — everything from trail history to reminiscences of trail travelers, to facts and details about the great lumbering wagons that hauled the freight. There's even an "explainer" about trail jargon.

The focus narrows to the trail through the Flint Hills in the journal's second section. Here, roam the route across the hills, and learn the important role played by the Flint Hills community of Council Grove.

The saga of the Santa Fe Trail also has a darker, sadder side regarding the fate of Indian tribes living along the trail. The journal's third section is devoted to this Indigenous American perspective, which hasn't been included in much of what has historically been written or taught about the trail. Although this perspective may be uncomfortable for some to read, it's an important part of the Santa Fe Trail story.

Throughout this Field Journal, the given length of the Santa Fe Trail may differ from story to story. The trail's length shortened over time as the trailhead moved from near Franklin, Missouri, to points west. Rather than changing the stories to reflect a uniform trail length, we've decided just to let this be.



THE GREAT PRAIRIE HIGHWAY

The Santa Fe Trail was primarily a highway of commerce. Euro-American traders hauled U.S. freight westward to Santa Fe in gigantic wagons often pulled by teams of 12 oxen. Headed the opposite direction, the wagons of Hispano traders transported goods from Mexico and the Southwest to eastern markets. The traders often filled their wagons with more freight for the trip back home.

But — what was life like on a wagon train traversing the trail? Fortunately, some trail travelers, including women, gifted us with journals describing their experiences. Read on for the nitty-gritty about life on the trail, the trail itself, the jargon used, the songs likely sung, a lively first-person account of bullwhacking on the trail, and the equipment and animals necessary to haul all that freight.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Santa Fe Trail (trail shadow)

Tod Seelie



March 2020
Kelly Yarbrough

“TRAIL TO SANTA FE”

These ruts you see before you where the land is sunk and bowed,
Are remnants of the pathway to Nuevo Mexico.
Near 60 years the wagon trains passed along this way,
As wealth and power moved along this trail to Santa Fe.

Across the wide Missouri back in 1821,
This “commerce of the prairies” had only just begun.
They traveled west with cloth and shoes, mirrors, buttons, beads;
Returned with gold and silver and donkeys for the East.

No this was not a one-way trail for emigrants bound west;
These travelers were merchants seeking markets that were best.
They wagered fortunes, bet their lives against the desert sun,
Going back and forth to Santa Fe and past the Cimarron.

Cross the rolling wide “green ocean,” Kansas prairies fed them well.
A sea of grass without a tree as many diaries tell.
They camped along at water holes a day’s walk in between
And passed by herds of buffalo the likes they’d never seen.

Nine hundred miles they traveled far beyond the bluestem grass,
Past sandy plain, blue desert sky and rugged mountain pass,
To that valley of adobe homes and Mission San Miguel,
The Plaza, and Palacio, and Santa Fe’s sweet bells.

When war broke out with Mexico, the Army filled the trail
With goods for all its western forts and bags of precious mail.
Each day you’d hear the hoof-beats of the oxen and the mules,
The creak of wood and leather as they’d lift their iron shoes.

Comanche, Kaw and Kiowa, the Cheyenne and Osage
In sadness watched as thousands rode this trail they first had made.
Every day more people came like sands upon the shore,
The buffalo were hunted out and the Indians grew poor.

But the lifeblood of this trading trail would soon no longer flow.
Steel rails had reached Pueblo lands within New Mexico.
In 1880 Santa Fe's first railroad cars came through;
So the oxen and the mule trains on this trail were finished, too.

Today the story lies between these ruts of hooves and wheels,
Of lives and fortunes gained and lost in ventures mercantile.
That will to trade and wander to places far away
Led all those souls to follow the trail to Santa Fe.

“Trail to Santa Fe” is the official song of the Santa Fe Trail Association.

Annie Wilson, named the Kansas Flint Hills Balladeer for her songs about the Flint Hills, is an educator, rancher and singer-songwriter with the band Tallgrass Express. She thanks historian Steve Schmidt for advice on this song.



Okesa III
Norman Akers



End of the Trail (After Remington)

Matthew Regier

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL, 1821-1880

The first international commercial road in the United States officially began in 1821.

The Santa Fe Trail lasted for six decades until the arrival of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad in Santa Fe on February 9, 1880. This marked the end of a trail that had provided profits from merchandise traveling east and west; helped to bring an end to the Panic of 1819; and contributed to an exchange of cultures, the establishment of military posts throughout the Southwest and the expansion of the United States.

Previously in 1803, President Thomas Jefferson had paid \$15,000,000 for the Louisiana Purchase. Soon, many settlers, primarily from Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee, moved into the new territory along the Missouri River. Towns sprang up from St. Louis, Missouri, west along the Missouri River to Indian Territory. In 1805, two sons of frontiersman Daniel Boone started a salt business approximately 150 miles west of St. Louis in an area called Booneslick. They shipped the salt they produced to St. Louis by keelboat, a long, narrow boat propelled by sails, oars, poles or ropes. The business was quite successful for a time.

The War of 1812 disrupted life in Missouri as the British instigated skirmishes between the Indians and settlers. William Becknell joined the fighting and met the Boone brothers. After the war, Becknell followed the Boones to Franklin and soon bought part interest in the Booneslick salt business. He also borrowed money for several other business ventures, including a ferry at Arrow Rock and lots in the growing village of Franklin.

With the purchase of the Louisiana Territory, expansion and land speculation was happening across the United States. People

became heavily dependent on loans from banks. However, in 1819 the boom came to an end as the Bank of the United States demanded repayment of the loans in only silver and gold. The Panic of 1819 led to a major depression, and those who could not pay their debts were jailed. Becknell was about to be one of those.

History would change in 1821, with three important events. The first occurred August 10, 1821, when Missouri was admitted as the 24th state, the first state entirely west of the Mississippi River. It was admitted as a “slave state.”

For 300 years the Spanish had strictly controlled the Kingdom of New Spain from the Canadian border south and west of the Mississippi River, allowing trade with the northern colonies only if it benefited the mother country. The scarce supplies the colonists had received came on pack animals and carts from the coast of Veracruz once every three years. The people of Mexico rebelled and, after nearly 10 years of fighting with the large, heavily armed Spanish Army, a treaty was signed on August 24, 1821 ending Spanish control.

The third event began September 1, 1821, when Becknell and five men on horseback crossed the Missouri River at Arrow Rock, Missouri, and headed westward with pack horses carrying trade goods. On June 25, Becknell had placed an ad in the Franklin newspaper

Missouri Intelligencer, announcing a company of men would be organized to go westward “for the purpose of trading Horses and Mules and catching Wild Animals of every description.” It is unclear if Becknell knew that Mexico was free of Spanish control and if he was even serious about capturing horses. The trip to Santa Fe was successful, with Becknell returning in January 1822 with leather bags loaded with silver coins.

Becknell had managed to change the future of both the United States and Mexico. The profits made by his first trading trip brought much-needed gold bullion and silver coins, along with mules, into central Missouri, where the Panic of 1819 had devastated the economy. With no banking system, paper money was considered worthless in Missouri, so only silver coins and gold bullion were accepted as payment of debts. No markets even existed for farmers to sell their products or for merchants to peddle their wares. The influx of Mexican coins, which became legal tender in the United States until 1857, significantly helped Missouri’s economy. Now Mexicans were able to purchase manufactured goods from the United States.

Because of the success of this trip, Becknell was encouraged and quickly advertised for 70 men to go westward on a second trading trip to Santa Fe.



March of the Caravan
Copied from Josiah Gregg, “Commerce of the Prairies”
Kansas Historical Society

Becknell, 30 men and \$3,000-\$5,000 in goods left Missouri in May 1822. This time he had wagons, and Becknell decided to try to find a route that would avoid the mountainous areas he passed through on his first trip. As he left the wooded areas of Missouri, the trees grew fewer. When the men reached the area known today as Council Grove, they found a good stand of trees which would provide material for wagons that needed repairs, abundant grass for the animals and plentiful water.

The tallgrass prairies soon changed to short grass grazed by buffalo herds. Turning south at about the 100th Meridian, they ran into barren land with little available water. After crossing the Arkansas River (boundary of the United States and Mexico), they traveled

through the parched Cimarron Desert, where both people and animals suffered from severe thirst. After 48 days on the long trail, the caravan reached the adobe buildings of Santa Fe. The men sold their wares, including the wagons they had used to make the trip. They returned to Missouri with a profit of nearly \$91,000 and numerous mules. The profitable, and at times romantic, Santa Fe Trail had begun.

Marcia Fox is an educator who has spent half her life involved with the Santa Fe Trail. A charter member of the Santa Fe Trail Association SFTA, she is one of the founders of a Santa Fe Trail camping trip for fifth and sixth grade students. She is currently a SFTA officer.



Santa Fe Trail (sign)
Tod Seelie

EVOLUTION OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL

The Santa Fe Trail, 1821-1880, was a route of commerce and conquest that involved three cultures: Indigenous nations from Missouri to Colorado and New Mexico, Hispano-Americans of Mexico and the American Southwest, and other Euro-Americans from the United States.

Successful trade opened in 1821 with the independence of Mexico from Spain and the admission of Missouri as a state. Efforts to open trade prior to 1821 were thwarted by Spain's mercantilism, which prohibited trade outside the empire.

Independent Mexico and the United States both benefited from economic connections. The Santa Fe Trail was one result, and an era of international commerce was followed by U.S. expansion, leading to a war by which nearly three-fifths of Mexico was added to the U.S. and, later, more than 99% of Indigenous lands were taken.

The Road to Santa Fe, as it was commonly called in the United States, evolved over time, just as an individual, community or institution develops through stages. An understanding of those periods provides perspective to evaluate the history and significance of this important route of commerce, conquest and cultural exchange.

Although successful overland commerce was not possible until 1821, events prior to that time facilitated the birth of the trail when it happened. The era of gestation included commerce and trade routes established by Indigenous nations before the European invasion. Spain, France and the United States sent explorers throughout the region to trade with Indigenous



Santa Fe Trail (stratum and shadows)

Tod Seelie

peoples and attempt to open trade across the Great Plains. When France lost its claims in North America in 1763, Spain extended loose control over much of the continent west of the Mississippi River. The United States began expansion into that region with the Louisiana Purchase, 1803, and the Zebulon Montgomery Pike Southwest Expedition, 1806-1807. Trade with Plains Indians increased. However, efforts to open overland trade between the United States and New Spain were blocked by Spain's refusal to permit colonies to trade outside the empire. That changed in 1821.

The period of international commerce, 1821-1846, profited both nations and saw Mexican merchants and trade caravans actively involved alongside those from the U.S. By 1840, more Mexican merchants were engaged in the business than those from the United States. It was also a time of cultural exchange as trade expanded between Euro-American nations and included Indigenous peoples along the entire route. Relations among the three cultures were mostly peaceful until the U.S.-Mexican War. According to Josiah Gregg, author of the first detailed history of the Santa Fe Trail "Commerce of the

Prairies," the value of the merchandise carried from the United States to Mexico grew from \$12,000 in 1823 to \$450,000 in 1843.

Everything changed with U.S. expansionism of the 1840s, leading to war between the U.S. and Mexico. The Santa Fe Trail was a major route of invasion. General Stephen Watts Kearny's Army of the West and other troops that followed marched from Fort Leavenworth via the trail to Santa Fe and beyond. They occupied much of the land taken from Mexico at the end of the conflict (more than half of Mexico was transferred to the United States by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in February 1848). Then the commercial route was all within the U.S., and trade continued across the border into northern Mexico for decades. Indigenous resistance increased during and after that war in response to the decline in buffalo numbers, the destruction of timber, the invasion of sacred places and various treaties by which Indigenous peoples ceded traditional lands to the United States.

The era between the U.S.-Mexican War and the U.S. Civil War, 1848-1861, saw the militarization of the route with new military posts founded to empower the conquest of Indigenous nations, including forts Mann, Atkinson, Riley and Larned in Kansas; Fort Lyon in Colorado; and forts Union and Marcy in

New Mexico. The freighting of military supplies superseded civilian freight on the trail. Because the Army did not have the resources to provide the transportation of supplies, large freighting firms (such as Russell, Majors & Waddell, which reportedly had 4,000 wagons and 40,000 oxen) dominated the shipment of materials over the trail. The final conquest of American Indians of the region was interrupted by the U.S. Civil War, 1861-1865.

The Civil War saw guerrilla raids along the trail in Kansas as far west as Diamond Spring west of Council Grove. Important battles between U.S. and Confederate troops were fought on the trail, especially the battles at Glorieta Pass in New Mexico, March 26-28, 1862, which was the turning point of the war in the Far West. This stopped Confederate expansion designed to acquire Colorado Territory, New Mexico Territory and the state of California, virtually ensuring Union control of the region and preventing the expansion of the Confederate States of America. During the last years of the war, the subjugation of the Indigenous nations expanded.

The final years of the trail, 1865-1880, saw the wagon route superseded by railroads. As the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division, (which became the Kansas Pacific Railway) built westward from Kansas City to Denver, 1864-1870,

the end of track became the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail. Later the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad followed the Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail into New Mexico. In 1879 the AT&SF reached Lamy near Santa Fe, and a spur was completed into Santa Fe in 1880, ending six decades of commerce and conquest via the trail. The Indian nations along the route were defeated in a series of wars and placed on reservations during this period. Indigenous struggles to protect their homelands ended with the close of the Red River War (known to the Indians as the War to Save the Buffalo, 1874-1875).

The Santa Fe Trail was an important part of the westward expansion of the United States and the conquest of Indigenous nations and Hispanic Americans in the Southwest. For six decades the Santa Fe Trail served the nation as a major route of commerce and conquest. It contributed to the successful development of the nation and its rise to international power. That view, challenged more and more by historians and some citizens, is slowly being re-evaluated for racism, subjugation of Indigenous peoples and destruction of their cultures, and military conquest of territory occupied and controlled by Indigenous nations and the nation of Mexico.

As the people of the United States continue to reassess national expansion,

including the Santa Fe Trail, a more critical and balanced appraisal will be forthcoming. Although historic events are evaluated in terms of the times in which they occurred, the heritage of conquest affects the descendants of those who were defeated and their culture destroyed. As we commemorate the 200th anniversary of this historic route of commerce and conquest, we must strive to provide a better balance of its history and further evaluate the actions of a nation that played by rules that are not acceptable today. This remains an important task to be fulfilled.

The long life of the Santa Fe Trail has been commemorated in many ways since 1880, mostly in a positive way to celebrate national growth and expansion without any thought to the victims of white nationalism that continues to the present. Beginning in 1906, the Daughters of the American Revolution placed granite markers along the historic route from Missouri to New Mexico, a total of 187 at last count. In 1929, the DAR placed Madonna of the Trail statues along overland trails in 11 states, from Maryland to California. Three of those are on the Santa Fe Trail at Lexington, Missouri; Council Grove, Kansas; and Lamar, Colorado. In 1956, U.S. Highway 56 was designated the Santa Fe Trail Highway. After the Santa Fe Trail Highway 56 Association was founded, it persuaded



Nearing Dusk Along the Trail
Cally Krallman

state highway commissions to mark the road with special signs featuring a covered wagon and "Santa Fe Trail" printed boldly over the wagon. In 1986, the Santa Fe Trail Association was founded, and the Santa Fe National Historic Trail was created by Congress in 1987. The National Park Service continues to mark the historic route. After 200 years, it is time to confront the negative and destructive results, too.

Leo E. Oliva, Ph.D., has been researching and writing about the Santa Fe Trail since 1959, and he has contributed to the positive claims of nationalism and expansion while neglecting the victims of the conquest. Today he strives to overcome the historical perspectives of his professional training and tell a more balanced story. Having been a part of the problem, he now hopes to become part of the solution.



Sumac in Shadow #2
Diana Werts

TRAIL JARGON

black snake or bullwhip a whip that bullwhackers used to drive the oxen, about 16 feet long with an additional 18 inches of buckskin making a whip cracker.

buffalo chips dried bison dung or manure picked up on the prairie and plains and used as fuel for fires in areas where wood was not available.

bullion silver or gold shaped into bars instead of coins.

bull train a caravan of wagons pulled by oxen. They were called bulls because oxen are simply castrated bulls.

bullwhacker the driver of a wagon who walked on the left side of the wheeler oxen, controlling them through yells and with a bullwhip.

cache a manmade hole in the ground where goods or provisions were stored or hidden.

Caches well-known pits dug by James Baird and Samuel Chambers in 1822-1823 to hide supplies and trading goods after their animals died. Bound for New Mexico, the traders' pack train was caught by a blizzard. They later returned and dug

up their materials. The site of the Caches was a few miles west of present-day Dodge City, Kansas, but nothing remains of the pits.

caravan a group of traders and their wagons traveling together. Sometimes called a train.

Concord coach a stagecoach manufactured by Abbott, Downing and Company, Concord, New Hampshire, beginning about 1827. It was the Cadillac of stagecoaches.

Conestoga a large covered wagon first made in Lancaster or Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Conestoga Freighter slightly modified from the Eastern U.S. style of Conestoga wagons.

contraband goods not legally allowed to be exported or imported into another country.

Dearborn a light carriage, usually covered and curtained, named for General Henry Dearborn. Frequently used for transportation by traders on the trail.



Evening in October
Mary Gordon McFall

draft animals animals, usually horses, mules or oxen, used to pull wagons. On the trail, oxen and mules were used almost exclusively to pull freight wagons.

estanco the Spanish word for a government trading post or store in the Southwest.

fandango a lively Spanish or Spanish American dance in triple time, held in New Mexico.

follow the tongue when making camp at night, freighters would spot the North Star and point the tongue of the lead wagon to it in order to move in the right direction the following morning.

gee voice command for an animal to turn to the right.

haw voice command for an animal to turn to the left.

lazy board certain wagons had a plank that could be pulled out to the side from beneath the wagon bed on which the teamster could ride when he was tired of walking.

mess a designated number of people who always ate together.

mosquito bar a woven square-mesh mosquito net meant to bar mosquitoes from entering, sometimes propped over poles.

mountain branch or route a portion of the Santa Fe Trail that runs from present-day western Kansas through LaJunta, Colorado, and then turns south over Raton Pass into New Mexico. This route follows the Arkansas River and then runs along the edge of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to Santa Fe. It rejoined the Cimarron Route near present Watrous, New Mexico, and was one main route from there to Santa Fe.

mud wagon a poor man's Concord coach, open-sided, light and low, and simply constructed.

mule-skinner the driver of one or more mule teams. Like a bullwhacker, he yelled and used a whip to control the animals.

Murphy wagon a large freight wagon crafted by Joseph Murphy in St. Louis for use on the trail.

narrows a ridge of land on the Santa Fe Trail running from near present-day Baldwin City, Kansas, nine miles west to Willow Spring. Wagons had to stay on this ridge to avoid rough terrain and muddy ravines.

nigh an old term for left. Bullwhackers walked on the nigh side of their wheeler pair of oxen.

nooning taking a midday stop on the trail. It was not uncommon on the Santa Fe Trail for teamsters to noon or take a break during which both breakfast and a noon meal were served and animals grazed before a caravan or train continued on its way.

norther a sudden winter storm with freezing temperatures blowing in from the north.

oxen usually steers (castrated bulls) yoked together to pull freight wagons. Six teams or yokes per wagon.

ox train a series of wagons pulled by oxen (as opposed to wagons pulled by mules). Ox trains were sometimes called grass

freight because oxen could survive by eating grass alone.

Pennsylvania wagon a Conestoga wagon manufactured in Pennsylvania.

Pitt schooner a Conestoga wagon manufactured in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

prairie schooner a nickname for a Conestoga wagon because of its ship-like profile.

proprietor a term used early in the trail's years to describe a trader in a caravan or train who had obtained merchandise to trade or sell.

railhead the last point where railroad tracks were laid during the construction of a railroad.

relief people of a wagon train who guard the train from dangers.

rendezvous a gathering of freight wagons waiting until enough wagons were able to join a caravan.

running gear the parts underneath a wagon.

rut Over time, the passage of thousands of wagons and tens of thousands of draft animals created linear depressions across the rolling Kansas prairie. These depressions are called ruts or swales.

Santa Fe Freight wagon a tall-sided wagon with shorter bows on the top.

scoop wagon used to describe a Conestoga wagon with a scoop-shaped wagon bed.

skin To skin mules is to drive them.

sowbelly bacon preserved with salt, sometimes called salt pork.

span a pair of two draft animals that work together.

Studebaker wagon a large freight wagon first built by the Studebaker Brothers in 1852 and used on the Santa Fe Trail.

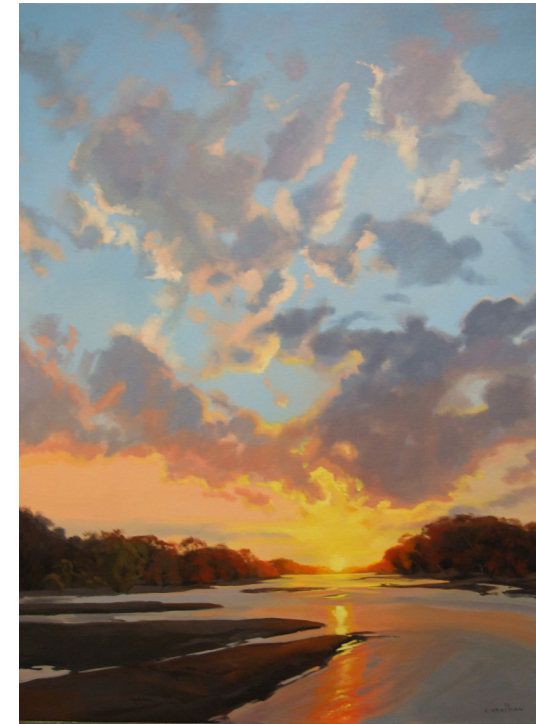
sutler a merchant who sets up a store at a fort to sell supplies to soldiers.

swingers the pair of draft animals that are hitched just ahead of the wheelers.

tandem two or more wagons hitched together and pulled by one team of draft animals.

trailhead the beginning of a trail. The Santa Fe Trail had different trailheads at different points of time. These were also called jumping-off points.

wagon bed the body of a wagon, sometimes called a wagon box, where cargo is carried.



My Favorite Things
Cally Krallman

wagon master the leader of a caravan of wagons or wagon train. Sometimes called the trail boss.

wheelers the pair of draft animals directly hitched to a wagon.

yoke a wooden beam fashioned for a pair of oxen to enable them to work together to pull a load; the yoke was fashioned from a block of wood four feet in length,

arched on the underside at each end to accommodate the curvature of the ox's neck. Two holes were bored at each end of the yoke, spaced apart about the width of an ox's head to receive the bow which encircled the ox's neck. Most often made of hickory, the bow was bent in the configuration of the letter "U" after soaking it in hot water.



Moonrise and Adobe
Phil Epp

HISPANOS CRISS-CROSSED THE GREAT PLAINS GRASSLANDS

Even before the countries of Mexico and the United States existed, there was trade over what would become the Santa Fe Trail by Wichita and other Plains tribes.

Taos, New Mexico, was a center of trade where, for centuries, Indigenous peoples met regularly to exchange goods. By the time Francisco Vázquez de Coronado explored what he called Quivira (Kansas) in 1541-1542, Indian trade routes were well established. Coronado's expedition was led by captive Indian guides, who took it over a route that approximated the Cimarron Route of the Santa Fe Trail.

There is evidence in Spanish documents that many other would-be traders preceded William Becknell's expedition of 1821. French Mallet brothers in 1739 traveled from "Illinois country" into the Spanish Kingdom of Nuevo México. Others, including Jean de Alarí, Pierre Satren and Pedro Vial, crisscrossed the grassy plains of Kansas in 1782. Between 1790 and 1821, a New Mexican who knew the trail well was Juan Lucero. He made at least 13 trips in and out of the Kansas plains along the corridor that would become the Santa Fe Trail.

HOW OFFICIAL TRADE STARTED

As a mercantile empire, Spain discouraged trade with the United States for fear of loss of its monopoly with its colonies. But when Mexico gained its independence from Spain on August 24, 1821, and eventually became the Republic of Mexico, it welcomed trade with its neighbor to the north. Bartolomé

Baca, governor of New Mexico, which was Mexico's northernmost territory in 1823–1825, licensed U.S. citizens to trap beaver in its mountain streams. Baca was interested in developing trade with the United States. In the summer of 1824, Baca sent a delegation of 28 men to Council Bluffs to meet with Pawnee Indians. With assistance of U.S. Indian Agent Benjamin O'Fallon, they signed a treaty with the Pawnees to permit Mexican traders to travel the trail without interference. In 1825, a party of Mexican traders accompanied traders from the United States from Santa Fe to Missouri. In 1826, Manuel Escudéro, a member of the Chihuahua provincial assembly, led a caravan from Missouri in early June with "six or seven new and substantial [goods-laden] wagons," believed to be the first Hispanic trader to lead a wagon train along the Santa Fe Trail to Mexico.

In "Los Capitalistas, Hispano Merchants, and the Santa Fe Trade," Susan Calafate Boyle wrote, "The literature about the Santa Fe Trail tends to celebrate Americans (and some western Europeans) and often portrayed them as daring explorers and visionaries who initiated commercial relations between the United States and Mexico. Often overlooked is the equally significant role played by Hispanos."

Hispanos, including Severino Martínez and his family, became active in trading

with the Americans who were bringing trade goods in by the Santa Fe Trail. The Martínez Hacienda in Taos was the northern terminus for the Camino Real, which connected northern New Mexico to Mexico City. The hacienda was also the headquarters for extensive ranching and farming and, later, for wool processing and weaving operations, which supplied military forts along the trail.

Felipe Baca was one of Trinidad, Colorado's founders and a prominent businessman engaged in trade with the United States. Baca lived and worked in a hacienda with his wife, Dolores, and their children. Later he purchased the John Hough residence, which became the Baca House near the Santa Fe Trail in Trinidad. The two-story adobe Baca House evokes the lifestyle of a prominent period, 1860-1890.

INTERNATIONAL TWO-WAY THOROUGHFARE

After the Santa Fe Trail officially opened in 1821, New Mexican entrepreneurs, with their extensive networks of trade in the Hispano world, facilitated the geographical expansion of trade between Mexico and the United States. In 1837, wealthy landowner Juan Esteban Pino made a request to the Mexican government for an exemption from Mexican import duties on behalf of

himself and others whom he called "capitalistas."

By 1843, entrepreneurs from New Mexico and Chihuahua had become dominant traders involved in the traffic of goods over the trail. Some of these traders became U.S. territorial representatives after the war between the United States and Mexico ended in 1848. Many New Mexicans later joined the Union Army during the American Civil War. One example is José Francisco Chaves who used his distinguished military service as a route to political office in the U.S. Congress. A prominent New Mexico militia commander and a Union officer during the Civil War, Chaves became a local power broker working with key politicians in Santa Fe to strengthen trade.

A member of a wealthy New Mexico family, Miguel A. Otero used his political connections to venture into the private sector. Otero attended St. Louis University with a major in English and went on to become the longest-serving delegate from the Territory of New Mexico, spanning three U.S. congressional sessions, 1855–1861. Otero left New Mexico in 1864 to pursue business interests in Kansas City and in Leavenworth. In 1867, Otero, his brother Manuel, and Scottish immigrant John Perry Sellar formed a commission and forwarding firm, named Otero, Sellar

& Co., that operated from the end of the track as the railroads built west and replaced the Santa Fe Trail, first on the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division, and later on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe. They contracted wagon trains to haul commodities from the end of the track to Santa Fe and beyond. Many of the freighters were Hispanos, especially from Las Vegas, New Mexico.

In the 1870s, Otero served as an agent for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, lobbying on its behalf before the New Mexico territorial government. In this position he continued to pursue one of his goals in Congress: bringing major railroads through New Mexico to spur economic development. He also served on the board of directors of the New Mexico and Southern Pacific Railroad Company and arranged for its passage through the territory. Through Otero's and other enterprising efforts, the advent of the Santa Fe Railroad replaced the wagon trail and gave greater access to international trade.

Genovevo (Gene) T. Chávez Ortiz, Ed.D., is a Humanities Kansas scholar whose focus is documenting the history of Latino people in the Midwest. Of special interest is the connection of Kansas City with the Hispano world of Mexico and the Spanish Southwest.



Anything But Forever, Mead's Milkweed (detail)

Casey Whittier

WHAT WOMEN WROTE ABOUT THE TRAIL

For some women, traveling the Santa Fe Trail was a liberating adventure.

"I breathe free without that oppression and uneasiness felt in the gossiping circles of a settled home," proclaimed trailblazer Susan Shelby Magoffin. For others, it was an arduous, taxing trek. "At first I could not walk over three or four miles without feeling quite weary, but by persevering and walking as far as I could every day, my capacity increased gradually, and in the course of a few weeks I could walk ten miles in the most sultry weather without being exhausted," commented Julia Archibald Holmes about her experience walking with the wagon caravan.

Through journal entries jotted along the way, early female trail-goers described their journey and its uncharted adventures. In 1846, Magoffin, who kept one of the most detailed journals, told about preparing to set out: "Now the Prairie life begins! ... The animals made an extensive show indeed. Mules and oxen scattered in all directions. The teamsters were just 'catching up,' and the cracking of whips, lowing of cattle, braying of mules, whooping and hallowing of the men was a novel sight."

In 1852, another young bride, Rebecca Cohen Mayer, wrote about heading across the prairie: "I just wonder if you or anyone reading this can imagine what it means to have as many as five hundred mules — some that had never been in harness before, wild and untamed — all crowded into a small space and the men trying to lasso the mules. The noise and confusion was terrible. ... In a few hours we left the last traces of civilization [behind] and the weather being fine, the plains looked lovely."

As the 30 wagons stretched out across the prairie, Mayer added, “A long line of wagons with their very white tops ... all of the same size and shape was a strange sight to me.”

Onward toward Santa Fe, Magoffin portrayed the beauty and fascinations she encountered on the prairie: “The grass is fine every place, it is so tall in some places as to conceal a man’s waist. ... I took a little walk this evening ... and picked some little pebbles. ... [Wildflowers were abundant and] I fixed some this evening in my journal. We find some beautiful roses ... wild onions, and a kind of wild bean ... at my tent door there are two [rose] bushes. ... It is the life of a wandering princess, mine ... for nearly two hours I have been wandering ... picking raspberries and gooseberries. ... We fixed a line and tried to fish a little.”

Using a variety of modes of travel, females described riding in fine carriages, in ambulances, in wagons and on horseback, or walking. They learned to dress for the occasion, too. When Julia Archibald Holmes traveled with her husband to the gold fields of Colorado in 1858, she wrote, “I wore a calico dress, reaching a little below the knee, pants of the same [fabric], Indian moccasins for my feet, and on my head a hat. However much it lacked in taste I found it to be beyond value in comfort and convenience as it gave me freedom to roam at pleasure

in search of flowers and other curiosities.” She was not the only female to document the wearing of an unconventional costume. Rebecca Cohen Mayer commented, “I am wearing trousers and a work shirt when I ride, in place of my long-skirted riding habit.”

After long, tiring days on the trail, camp life was welcomed. Mayer explained they traveled with an ambulance that provided space for their bed. Magoffin said, “We ... stretched our tent. It is a grand affair indeed. We have a carpet made of sail duck.”

Once in camp, food preparation became a priority. Mayer noted that they “... carried a stock of preserved fruits, vegetables, and in addition to the usual stock of flour, bacon, dried beans, coffee, sugar ...” and supplemented with fresh game procured as they traveled. Magoffin’s first supper consisted of “fried ham and eggs, biscuit and a cup of shrub” (a common beverage served on the trail).

Traveling the trail in 1863, Ernestine Franke Huning wrote, “The beans and ham taste very good out in the open, the air giving us all a good appetite. Yesterday we had goose breast and truffles. ... We have china dishes, camp chairs, and a table, so we dine quite well. ... Once in buffalo country, all enjoyed the tongue, the liver and the marrow bones, prepared by roasting and when done, the bones are split open with a hatchet and the marrow



Half of Living is Mourning
Casey Whittier

is eaten spread on bread or crackers with the addition of only salt.”

The time was occupied in camp by “eating, sleeping, smoking tobacco, manufacturing pipes ... and finger rings; playing cards ... the chief games being eucre and cribbage,” according to Julia Archibald Holmes.

Susan Shelby Magoffin best sums up the experiences of those women like her, who found great adventure and beauty on the Santa Fe Trail: “Noon out on the wide Prairie. The Sun it seems is exerting himself; not a breath of air is stirring, and everything is scorching with heat. ... Oh,

this is a life I would not exchange for a good deal! There is such independence, so much free uncontaminated air, which impregnates the mind, the feelings, nay every thought, with purity.”

Joanne VanCoevern graduated with a B.S.E from Emporia State University and is a former teacher and office manager. She is the current manager for the Santa Fe Trail Association. She was born and raised along the Santa Fe Trail east of Dodge City, Kansas, and currently lives in the area where the Smoky Hills meet the Flint Hills north of Salina, Kansas.



Cowboy Silhouettes in Strong City, Kansas
Philip Heying

TRAIL TIME TUNES

“We greeted the new day with loud shouts and with heartfelt songs.”

H.B. Möllhausen, “Over the Santa Fe Trail Through Kansas, 1858.”

Traders on the Santa Fe Trail sang songs. There was little entertainment, not much to break the monotony of another day on a hot and dusty — or cold and muddy — trail. While the threat of danger lurked in the shadows, traders typically endured the boredom of just another day. Singing while they worked provided a respite from watching a distant horizon seemingly move further away with each step in its direction.

Travel on the Santa Fe Trail was a business trip, different from pioneer families on the Oregon Trail seeking a new home. As a business trip, singing on the trail was simply a way to deal with daily tedium. Evening singing may have accompanied the consumption of alcohol and perhaps reflected homesickness or loved ones waiting for the traders’ return.

Favored songs on the trail are unknown, but they were likely the trendy songs of the day. Many songs became popular during the mid-1800s, and some are still familiar today. Songs ranged from soul-stirring hymns to bouncy drinking songs, from mournful ballads to lively hoedowns. The mix of cultures, the American derived from Europe and the Mexican derived mostly from Spain, sparked a new genre of music that was gathered by both cultures into their respective song repertoires.

POPULAR SONGS OF THE DAY

“Buffalo Gals,” 1844, is a song of exuberance with the invitation to “dance by the light of the moon.” While the relationship is unclear, the song is associated with building the Erie Canal in 1817–1825, which connected the New York cities of Albany

and Buffalo. This provided a direct water route from New York City to Lake Erie and the Midwest, which transformed New York City into the commercial capital it remains today.

“Oh Susanna,” 1848, and “Camptown Races,” 1850, are other lively and popular songs written by famous composer Stephen Foster.

“Sweet Betsy from Pike,” 1858, is based on an Irish melody that likely crossed to the New World during the potato famine. Although about California gold seekers, it was no doubt sung on the Santa Fe Trail.

The most famous drinking song is “Little Brown Jug,” 1869. Four years after the Civil War, the country needed a happy tune. Other “just for fun” songs we regard as children’s songs include “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” 1830; “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” 1838; “Polly, Wolly Doodle,” 1843; “Over the River and Through the Woods,” 1844; “Pop Goes the Weasel,” 1852; and “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” 1852.

“Long, Long Ago,” 1833, is an example of a melancholy ballad, becoming a national favorite by 1844. A century later, 1942, Glen Miller had a hit with the same tune with new lyrics and a bouncier tempo: “Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree – With Anyone Else but Me.”

HYMNS AND CAROLS

Susan Shelby Magoffin, who kept a diary of her trail travels in 1846-1847, observed, “The blustering, swearing teamsters remembering the duty they owe their Maker, have thrown aside their abusive language, and are singing the hymns perhaps that were taught by a good pious Mother.”

Hymns that were popular then, and now, include “How Firm a Foundation,” 1832; “Come Ye Thankful People Come,” 1844; “Abide with Me,” 1847; “Faith of Our Fathers,” 1849; “The Church in the Wildwood,” 1857; and “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” 1868.

Christmas tunes of the time include “O Tannenbaum,” 1824; “O Holy Night,” 1847; “Angels We Have Heard on High,” 1862; and “Jolly Old St Nicholas,” 1865.

INFLUENCE FROM MEXICO

The earliest songs of Mexico included pastorales taught to Indians by Catholic missionaries to add music to dramatizations of religious biblical concepts – for example, the birth, life and resurrection of Christ. They originated with the Baroque style of music and dance which flourished in Europe during the 1700s. In the territories of the Spanish, Portuguese and Iberian empires, the pastorela style continued, together with new styles, until the first decade of the 1800s.

By the mid-1800s, the common songs of New Mexico were performed at fiestas which celebrated important religious or civic dates. The Christmas season, December 16 through January 6, was and still is celebrated with musical processions called las posadas, as families go from house to house seeking rest in an inn and are turned away until at last, on Christmas Eve, a kind neighbor opens his home, the baby Jesus is put in a manger and a party commences.

Other celebrations included Easter musical processions, birthdays with serenades and a huge celebration with music to commemorate Mexico’s independence from Spain in 1821.

Salones de baile (dance halls) were places where traditional music could be enjoyed in Mexico. The doors of the hall were left open, with benches on one side of the room for men and on the other for the ladies. As in formal dances, a man would walk across to ask a lady to dance. These salones were likely places where American and Mexican cultures mixed as traders who visited Mexico sometimes married Mexican women and sometimes moved their families to Santa Fe.

The genres prevalent during the 1800s included coplas, like “Cielito Lindo,” a traditional Mexican song likely brought by Spanish settlers. Canciones rancheras is a genre dating to before the years of the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1921. It

later became associated with the mariachi bands that evolved in the Mexican state of Jalisco. The song “El Rancho Grande” is an example of this style.

Corridos were of a Mexican genre similar to ballads of Europe and later the United States. They tell a story, and lyrics can be changed to fit the situation, a love affair or political happening. “La Cucaracha” is likely familiar to most Americans.

SONGS FOR SPIRIT

Songs were used by Santa Fe Trail travelers to raise their spirits and keep them pushing on. Even today these songs are sung and are taught to children. On the trail, a “song in the heart” enabled one to meet the challenges of the day and propelled two young neighbor nations to their destinies.

Jeff Davidson’s music reflects the serenity and solitude of the Flint Hills. Providing music across the state for years, Jeff and his songs focus on historical aspects of Kansas and the history of the West.

Genovevo (Gene) T. Chávez Ortiz, Ed.D., is a Kansas Humanities scholar whose focus is documenting the history of Latino people in the Midwest. Of special interest is the connection of Kansas City with the Hispano world of Mexico and the Spanish Southwest.



"Stage Ride to Colorado," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, July 1867
Theodore R. Davis

I WAS A BULLWHACKER

(FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF
GEORGE E. VANDERWALKER, 1864)

My first experience in "whacking" was in 1864 when I was sent out from Leavenworth to Diamond Spring, just west of Council Grove.

The company that hired me sent men and wagons out, but most refused to go any further West (than Diamond Spring), owing to the Indian scare. I was accepted; the company, no doubt, considered, "half a loaf is better than none." Thus it happened that on an early June day in 1864, I was dumped from a west bound coach at Diamond Springs in the middle of an odd collection of human family. Generally speaking they were long on everything but money, clothes, and religion.

After our arrival in camp we tenderfeet were being instructed in the art of how to handle a wagon with a live end to it, and the proper manner of carrying an ox yoke and bow in yoking the cattle for hitching them to the wagons. A whip was given each driver of the outfit, the lash being about sixteen feet in length with a "popper" (whipcracker) added and fastened to a whip stock eighteen inches in length by a buckskin thong. This instrument of torture required my constant manipulation during my first two hundred miles of the trip before I became proficient enough in handling it to prevent it from going about my neck and hanging me. A gun was issued each man for protection of his life and property. Mine was just one removed from the blunderbuss vintage. Among its interesting adjuncts was a tape cap arrangement on the side of the lock. The original intention of its maker had been that in cocking the gun the

side arrangement pushed the tape over the nipple of the piece, and the hammer striking the tape on the nipple ignited the priming below, thus saving the time of capping the gun in the old way. But a strong wind would often crowd the tape out of place. At times the tape became damp causing a misfire, and often at a very critical time. As a “has-been” relic it could set up among the most ancient; but for actual everyday business it was a failure.

Everything necessary for the handling of the train was furnished by the company, even gunny sacks for the buffalo chip depository. We all carried ten-gallon kegs on the reach poles of our wagons at the rear for water in case of long drives between drinks or of an accident on the road. Each man belonged to a particular mess, where he was supposed to have a vested right to seat himself on mother earth and fill up. (Bullwhackers walked the entire time.) All members of an overland freighter in the early days were called fictitious names foreign to his regular one. They dubbed me “Yank” and Yank I was during that trip. But a fine bunch to “stick,” under any circumstances than our mess I’ve never seen.

An outfit was usually composed of twenty-six wagons—one mess, the other twenty-five freight, with six yoke of cattle to the wagons (12 cattle in all). My previous experience in the bovine line

having been with nothing more fierce than a milk cow, caused me to show up rather awkward in yoking any cattle into teams for my wagon. Consequently I picked the most unruly and meanest of the herd. Two of my teams were never unyoked during the whole trip. They were so contrary, though yoked together, they mutually agreed to disagree and always tried to pull in opposite directions. After the teams were hooked up to the wagons and everything being shipshape to the captain’s satisfaction, the big overland freighters commenced to slowly drift toward the setting sun.

There was with every outfit a bunch of loose cattle driven in the rear of the train by two extras. The loose cattle were called the “cavey yard” and were for use in case of an accident to the teams. The choir of such an outfit consisted of one wagon master and his assistant and two extras. These four rode mules. One night herder, who was supposed to sleep in the wagons while the train was on the move. If he did, I don’t know how he managed to do so, for when one of those wagons fell into a rut, it fell in with a chunk. And then there were twenty-six irresponsible bullwhackers who walked and took the dust. The bullwhackers received forty-five per month and feed. Only a stomach capable of digesting feathers in a wad could long survive the food before indigestion took a fall out of it. Taos



She Eateth Not the Bread of Sloth II

Matthew Regier

Lightning, or “Mule Skinners’ Delight” was frequently used as an antidote. Then there was the water. In the plains country the men and animals were frequently compelled to depend on buffalo wallows and soft mud deposits for water to supply their needs. In making camp the driver’s first duty was to unyoke his cattle. After being unyoked, the cattle would

invariably make directly for these water holes, riling up the already disagreeable appearing fluid and then standing in it to cool off, thus making it still more unpalatable for domestic use.

George Vanderwalker’s reminiscences appeared in “On the Santa Fe Trail” edited by Marc Simmons.



Cloud Reflection
Philip Heying

FORDING THE STREAMS

The road to Santa Fe was expeditiously charted to avoid all but some 30 miles of mountainous travel, much of the distance being over even prairie and plains.

One major obstacle, however, was the streams, many of them insignificant little tributaries, but others raging rivers during flood stage. Even in drier times, the channel floors filled with silt and shifting sand and provided less than desirable fords.

One of the costliest factors en route to Santa Fe was time. Time was money, and an inordinate amount of time could be consumed at a water crossing for several reasons.

First, a crossing could be a bottleneck where wagons would be backed up for days waiting for an opportunity to cross, and floodwaters could make streams impassable for weeks. Such was the case in 1844 when William Bent's caravan was stranded at Pawnee Fork for a full month. After finally fording that river on May 21, Bent pushed eastward to Walnut Creek where he waited another month for the water to subside.

Also, the effort involved in crossing a swollen stream was arduous. James Josiah Webb reported in 1844: "The crossing of the Arkansas was looked forward to with much solicitude, as at best it was attended with a good deal of risk and labor. The stream is about a third to half a mile wide, with a rapid current and quicksand bottom — the channel shifting from day to day, forming holes and bars, making necessary much crooking and turning in the stream to avoid miring down so the water would not reach the bottoms of the wagons and wet the goods. I have two or three times, had to raise the load by placing timbers on the bolsters as high as we dare and avoid the risk of the shaking

off or turning over the loads. Uncle Nick, who had made many trips before this, said that on one or two occasions he found the water so high that they could find no place to ford and, having selected a wagon body best fitted for the purpose, caulked it as well as they could, and (stretching raw buffalo skins on the outside) made a boat or scow to ferry over. This is no small job to ferry across such a stream seventy-five to one hundred tons of freight, delaying a train sometimes a week or ten days, and under an expense of eighty dollars to one hundred dollars a day.”

Following a difficult crossing, the oxen were so exhausted that on the following day, the animals would have to be rested before the expedition could continue. Additional time was also required to lubricate the axles and repair damage done to the wagons.

Where a quagmire was the culprit rather than high water, a huge amount of effort was expended in preparing the stream bed for crossing. The banks were cut away to allow the wagons a safer entrance to and egress from the stream bed. Brush and grass were hauled in voluminous amounts to pack the mud and sand-filled river channels, and men would enter the water to lend their muscle to that of the animals. Josiah Gregg described such crossings at the Little Arkansas in 1831: “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.”

The most difficult streams were located in that portion of Indian Territory which is now Kansas, where white settlement was prohibited by the Indian Intercourse and Trade Act of 1834. Consequently, only one toll bridge was in operation on the Santa Fe Trail prior to the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which opened the territory to white settlement. Near present Burlingame, John Switzler built a bridge on a stream that became known by 1846 as Switzler’s Creek. Switzler was able to circumvent the prohibition of white settlement by marrying an Indian woman and thus becoming a member of her tribe, not an uncommon practice in those days.

With the 1854 opening of Kansas Territory for settlement, six other toll bridges were established in Kansas along the Santa Fe Trail. Geographically, east to west, the first of these bridges was built in 1854 at 110 Mile Creek west of present Overbrook by Fry P. McGee. While the Kansas-Nebraska Act was signed into law on May 30, 1854, the territory was not opened for settlement until months later. Regardless, McGee promptly opened a store to sell provisions to travelers on the Santa Fe Trail and to other emigrants who, like McGee, were squatting on Kansas land. Other ventures included a toll bridge; McGee charged 25 cents per wagon.

Approximately 28 miles southwest, near the present town of Allen, Charles Withington arrived with his family at 142 Mile Creek in June of 1854 and illegally settled in the territory before it was opened to white habitation. He operated a store, saloon, mail station, blacksmith shop and toll bridge. Withington reported heavy traffic on the bridge from May 21 to November 25, 1865: 4,472 wagons, 5,197 men, 1,267 horses, 6,452 mules, 32,281 oxen, 112 carriages and 13,056 tons of freight.

Twenty miles farther southwest, Council Grove had illegally developed into a fair-sized community within the boundaries of the Kaw Reserve. The crossing of the Neosho had a firm rock

bottom, but by 1860, a toll bridge was erected of sturdy oak timbers cut from the groves of hardwood that populated the Neosho River valley. Westward traffic on the bridge for the period of April 24 to October 1, 1860, was reported as men, 3,519; wagons 2,667; horses, 478; mules, 5,819; working cattle, 22,738; carriages 550; and tons of freight, 13,422.

Southwest of Council Grove, no stream was bridged until the trail reached the Little Arkansas River, 91 miles distant in present Rice County. In February 1858, the Kansas Territorial Legislature granted a charter to build a bridge across the Little Arkansas River and set the tolls at wagon or vehicle, 50 cents; each large animal, 10 cents; each small animal and person, 5 cents; man and horse, 10 cents.

Excerpts from David Clapsaddle, “Toll Bridges on the Santa Fe Trail,” *Wagon Tracks*, February 1999, reprinted with permission from the Santa Fe Trail Association.



Santa Fe Trail (wagons and wall with storm approaching)
 Tod Seelie

DOUG HANSEN, HANSEN WHEEL AND WAGON SHOP

“This niche business of building and restoring horse-drawn vehicles has taken us on an incredible journey around the world and back in time.”

Doug Hansen

What started 40 years ago as a hobby and fascination with an old-world craft thrives today as Hansen Wheel and Wagon Shop. Rooted in the history-rich western South Dakota grasslands, and inspired by the Santa Fe Trail, wagon master Doug Hansen and his team of skilled artisans custom build and restore horse-drawn wagons and coaches, with a dedication to historic detail. Owner Doug, a craftsman and horseman with a background in blacksmithing, wheelwrighting and wainwrighting, details his wheeled-history passion.

Describe your business. What do you do? Where are you located?

Hansen Wheel and Wagon Shop, our family-owned and -operated carriage and wagon manufacturing business, was established in 1978. Our location on the western Dakota plains gives us an appreciation for the pioneers and cowboys who developed the region and their old-time ways. This area’s historic resources help us authentically reproduce the wagons in which we specialize.

What services does your business provide?

We custom build horse-drawn vehicles and wheels of the Old West style, specializing in the construction and/or restoration of western and heavy vehicles, including covered wagons, chuck

wagons, buckboards, stagecoaches and draft horse show wagons. Hansen Wheel and Wagon Shop also custom builds all types of wheels and is equipped to handle all wood-hub and roller-bearing style wheels. Besides construction, we do repairs, restorations, appraisals, presentations, museum services and movie props.

What spurred your fascination with wagon-making/restoration and its historical roots?

I think it was the mystique, the unknown, the lost art that spurred me on. I was not satisfied not knowing the answer. It was also the essence of turning raw materials (wood and iron) into a vehicle and the self-sufficiency of it.

In particular, did the Santa Fe Trail influence your passion?

I think a big influence is the Santa Fe Trail's many historic sites, preserved with accuracy and authenticity, along with the recognition that wheeled vehicles made the ruts defining the trail. I have exhibited and spoken at several events along the trail, at Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop, Fort Larned, Bent's Fort and other sites.

How has your work impacted the preservation and historical significance of the Santa Fe Trail?

I hope my exhibits and historical presentations have helped bring an awareness of the vehicles that traveled the trail, as well as their features and the technology and styles of the era.

Tell about your efforts to keep your work historically correct.

We fortunately have had the privilege to restore many historic vehicles and, while restoring, have investigated and noted the many technical features of these vehicles and how they were constructed. As I often say, I have studied under the old mates, and this is my classroom.

What is your training? How did you become a Master Craftsman?

In my quest for knowledge, I first visited local blacksmiths and museums to gather tools and tricks of the trade. Once I had some basic skills, I started to study the work of the old masters, paying attention to the finest details, from a scribe mark to a hammer blow. I asked why and began to understand the reasons behind the construction features, not only how they were built, but how they look and the aesthetics of the design.

Describe a typical day.

My day starts out with a review with my craftsmen of the projects on the shop floor. Then I get to work on day duties, followed by gathering details and researching for the projects at hand.

Which segment of your job do you most enjoy?

I think the part I like best is the variety of work — no two jobs are the same — and the variety of mediums we work with, such as wood, iron, pigments, leathers and textiles plus the associated skills for each. Also, I enjoy the constant discoveries I make as we work through the projects.

What are your biggest challenges?

Our biggest challenges are on the supply chain side. Finding materials to support a lost trade is very challenging, but we have become quite self-sufficient.

Where might your wagons be found? And, what projects are you most proud of?

We have wagons around the world in museum exhibits, as well as theme parks, horse shows and corporate branding. I think some of the projects we are most proud of are the early trail exhibits, because those vehicles required the most intense amount of research to maintain accuracy.

What would people find surprising about your work?

When I talk with visitors, I think they are most impressed with the large amount of time it takes to produce a vehicle — some over 1,500 hours. Also surprising is the attention to detail that mimics the original craftsman traits; for example, a router does not produce the same outcome as a spoke shave.

What is your staff size? What role does your family play in the business?

My wife Holly and I, and now my daughter Leah, have assembled a team of 12 dedicated employees. Production is set up much like an 1850s wagon shop with the various traditional trades, including a craftsman, wheelwright, wainwright, coach maker, blacksmith, painter and trimmer. Also, a big part of our business is supporting the trade through our retail department by selling wagon research material, parts, wheels and other supplies on hansenwheel.com.

How important is passing on your knowledge? What would you like your legacy to be?

I have spent a lifetime uncovering lost knowledge and am happy to share it with anyone who can keep our wheeled history alive.

TRAIL TALES

“The Trail had never the rigidity of a railroad or a modern automobile highway. It was a living thing, which changed and wandered and grew. It was not names upon a map, it was people; people traveling, singing, swearing, sweating, fearing, fighting, going in clouds of dust by day, plowing through quicksand and mud, sitting around great fires at night, hunters, trappers, traders, soldiers, emigrants, of all degrees of intelligence, virtue, and vice, of most races, bound together only by a common hardihood and a common exposure to the vastness and desolation and beauty of the trans Missouri wilderness. It was a fabulous procession. When we point to a signpost and read the faded inscription, we see letters that burned into men’s memories like unquenchable flame.”

Robert Duffus, “The Santa Fe Trail,” 1930

“The Santa Fe Trail was in many ways a microcosm of westward expansion, and a study of its history is a study of much of the early frontier West.”

Jack Rittenhouse, “Trail of Commerce and Conquest: A Brief History of the Road to Santa Fe”

In 1858 and 1860, two important articles were published by Missouri newspapers that provide us with the best contemporary descriptions of freight wagons used on the Santa Fe Trail on the eve of the Civil War. The first article appeared in the Kansas City “Western Journal of Commerce,” May 22, 1858. The paper stated emphatically that the wagons used to traverse the plains and mountains “are not ‘double wagons,’ or ‘lumber wagons,’ or ‘farm wagons,’ or ‘Chicago wagons,’ or ‘Concord wagons,’ — they are ‘prairie wagons,’ or ‘schooners,’ as the boys call them, and as novel a sight to an Eastern man, as any Yankee institution is to a frontiersman.” The “Journal” then proceeded to give the specifications for these freighters: “A wagon weighs about four thousand pounds, the pole, or tongue, is thirteen feet long, and with all the ‘fixings’ is as heavy as a light buggy. One of the hind wheels weighs three hundred pounds, and is sixty-four inches in diameter — the tire is four inches wide, the hub is twelve inches through and eighteen inches deep, and the spokes are as large as a middle-sized bed post. Anyone can conceive what an axletree for such a wheel must



Seeking Warmth
Mary Gordon McFall

be. The body is three feet eight inches wide, thirteen feet long at the bottom and eighteen feet long at the top; with bows extending above the bed three feet high, and also extending fore and aft of the bed two feet and a half, so that the top of the wagons, measuring over the bows, is eighteen feet long — height of wagon from bottom of wheels to top of bows is ten feet. These bows are covered with three wagon sheets, made of the best quality of duck, and cost about \$30.”

This wagon, according to the “Journal,” “always carries from fifty-five to sixty hundred pounds of freight.”

Two years later, the “Westport Border Star” published its take on the “prairie schooner,” “A regular wagon of the first magnitude, capable of carrying 6,500 pounds is what we here call a ‘Santa Fe wagon,’ from the fact that so many trains of these wagons are continually leaving Westport and Kansas City for Santa Fe, New Mexico.” Although the

“Border Star’s” description of the “Santa Fe wagon” is not quite as thorough as that found in the “Western Journal of Commerce,” it is just as valuable: “Some of the dimensions of these wagons would surprise [sic] an Eastern man. The diameter of the larger wheel is five feet two inches, and the tire weighs 105 pounds. The reach is eleven feet and the bed forty-six inches deep, twelve feet long on the bottom and fifteen feet on the top, and will carry 6,500 pounds across the plains and through the mountain passes.”

excerpt from Mark L. Gardner, “Wagons for Santa Fe Trade”

When it comes to traffic on the Santa Fe Trail, the Murphy name plays a dominant role. An excessive tax on freight wagons hauling goods into New Mexico resulted in Mr. Murphy building even more massively proportioned wagons. The intent was deliberately aimed at increasing the amount of goods per load and thus helping reduce the oppressive tax burden on freighters trading in Santa Fe. More Murphy freight wagons were used on the plains than either the legendary Studebaker or Espensheid brands.

Throughout the American West, they were truly giants on wheels. Evolving from the early Conestoga freighters traversing so much of the eastern U.S., these pioneering behemoths did more than carry ore, goods, and supplies.

They helped open, grow, and sustain the American frontier while broadening the footprint and foundation of an emerging nation. With imposing physical statures, these commercial Goliaths dominated the western landscape. Many measured fourteen to sixteen feet in length with individual hauling capacities of 4 to 8 tons. Standing empty, they could easily weigh in at 3 ½ tons. It’s a statistic comparable with a full-size, heavy duty pickup truck but with at least 3 to 4 times more payload capacity.

The rear wheels of these wood-carved creations could stand well over a man’s head while the metal tires were often doubled in thickness to minimize worries of wear while also helping reinforce the overall structure of the wheel. Tire widths could range considerably and generally fell anywhere between 2 to 8 inches. However, most promotional literature from noted wagon makers from 1870 through the 1890s generally offer tire widths for freight wagons in the two- to four-inch categories. Western freight wagons such as the legendary “20 Mule Team” borax wagons are known to have employed eight-inch tires for the softer terrain they traveled. It was a factor typically determined more by the terrain and ground condition than anything else. The mammoth frameworks were built by an almost countless parade of makers, many positioned near the Mississippi

and Missouri rivers since these areas were pivotal transportation centers helping feed and grow virtually all parts west. All in all, this was a transportation empire like no other and competition within it was not for the faint of heart nor light in financial backing.

The search for early freighting survivors of the West It’s a mission full of prospects to preserve a legacy that’s as large as the making of America. For roughly three quarters of a century, these massive western machines tackled some of the most torturous terrain and historical pursuits ever attempted on four wheels. Regrettably, the vehicles today are sometimes viewed as insignificant relics tied to an irrelevant past. But, up close, their daunting size, intricate construction, and individual history take on a power and presence worthy of notice. Stirring awe and imagination, they’re a reminder of not only an undaunted pioneering spirit but the vision of a free people to embrace real opportunity and pursue their greatest dreams.

David Sneed, “Santa Fe Freighters, the Search for Survivors,” *Wagon Tracks*, May 2012, reprinted with permission from the Santa Fe Trail Association.

Typhoid fever, a very serious disease, was a common affliction of those traveling the Santa Fe Trail. This disease usually results

from drinking contaminated water. The travelers on the trail were forced to get their drinking water where they could find it. It was common practice to camp around a spring. The springs and water holes were often at the bottom of a declivity, allowing human wastes to drain into them.

Typhoid fever took its toll from the many thousands who traveled over the trail. For the typhoid sick, there was no medicine, and they could only lie in lumbering wagons until they died or recovered.

excerpt from Thomas B. Hall, “Medicine on the Santa Fe Trail”

Slave Hiram Young whittled and crafted his way to freedom and prominence as a wagon builder along the overland trails. Born around 1812 in Tennessee, Hiram entered Missouri as a slave and obtained freedom in 1847. It is said that he worked out his freedom price and that of his wife, Mathilda, by whittling and selling ox yokes.

The Youngs moved to Independence, Missouri, around 1850. Taking advantage of his location near the beginning of the Santa Fe, Oregon and other major trails, Hiram built wagons for western emigrants, area farmers and the U.S. government.

By 1860 he was turning out thousands of yokes and between 800 and 900



Promise and Purpose, the Ancestors' Dream
Kirsten Furlong

wagons a year. He employed about 20 men, and his factory was one of the largest businesses in Jackson County, Missouri. Hiram branded his work "Hiram Young and Company," along with the purchaser's initials. His wagons

could haul nearly 6,000 pounds and were pulled by up to 12 oxen. He described himself as "a colored man of means."

As Civil War tensions mounted between pro- and anti-Union supporters along the Kansas-Missouri border, Hiram

and his family fled to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where slavery was illegal. He continued his wagon business from Fort Leavenworth and, after the war, returned to Independence, where he became a founding member of Saint Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church.

blackpast.org

Charlotte Green, slave of the Bent brothers, may have been the first woman from the United States to travel the Santa Fe Trail. She likely traveled to Bent's Fort, Colorado, as early as 1832 or 1833, although the exact date of her travel is unknown.

Charlotte was reportedly married to another Bent slave, Dick Green. They, with Dick's brother, traveled the trail as far as Bent's Fort, where for more than a decade she was a famous cook and entertainer. All three were freed after Dick Green joined the fight against the Taos Revolt of 1847 that had resulted in the murder of Charles Bent, and Dick was wounded. Charlotte returned to Missouri and was still living when the 1880 census was taken.

[Historian Leo E. Oliva, Ph.D.](#)

Horses, mules, and oxen alike set their heads to return to the settlements. They miss their grain, they missed their stables, their comfortable fenced pastures, their easy labor of good roads. Mosquitoes,

horseflies, and buffalo gnats kept them twitching and itching, stamping, rolling, and tossing their heads day and night, so that men had to drape spare articles of clothing over the wretched creatures, in order to give them enough peace of mind to graze a little."

Some travelers carried mosquito nets to sleep under — and then found no sticks on which to prop them! Others wore green veils over their heads, running the risk of not being able to see where they were going, and so colliding with the business end of a mule! Buffalo chips proved to be good for keeping mosquitoes away. Wet, a chip fire was only a stinking smoke, into which a man was glad to stick his head at night, in the vain hope of snatching a few hours of rest from the torment of the mosquitoes.

[excerpt from Stanley Vestal, "The Old Santa Fe Trail"](#)

The dust was one of the major complaints on all the overland trails. H.M.T. Powell, who traversed the Santa Fe and Gila trails in 1849, wrote, "We eat dust, drink dust, breathe dust, and sleep in dust. I never was so worn out with dust in my life. It is a serious misery. What this God-forsaken country was made for, I am at a loss to discover."

["Adventure on the Santa Fe Trail," edited by Leo E. Oliva, Ph.D.](#)



THE FLINT HILLS

You can still see them if you know where to look: ruts and swales, the mute remnants of the Santa Fe Trail in the Flint Hills.

The trail wound through four Flint Hills counties; the map in this section shows the path from water source to water source. The trail sparked the development of settlements including Council Grove, which was a much-appreciated gathering place even before it developed into a town.

In this section, you'll also learn about individuals, including a famous bushwhacker who shot, plundered and stole horses along the trail. The final article, "Trail Tales," includes delightful descriptions of Council Grove penned by travelers on the trail.

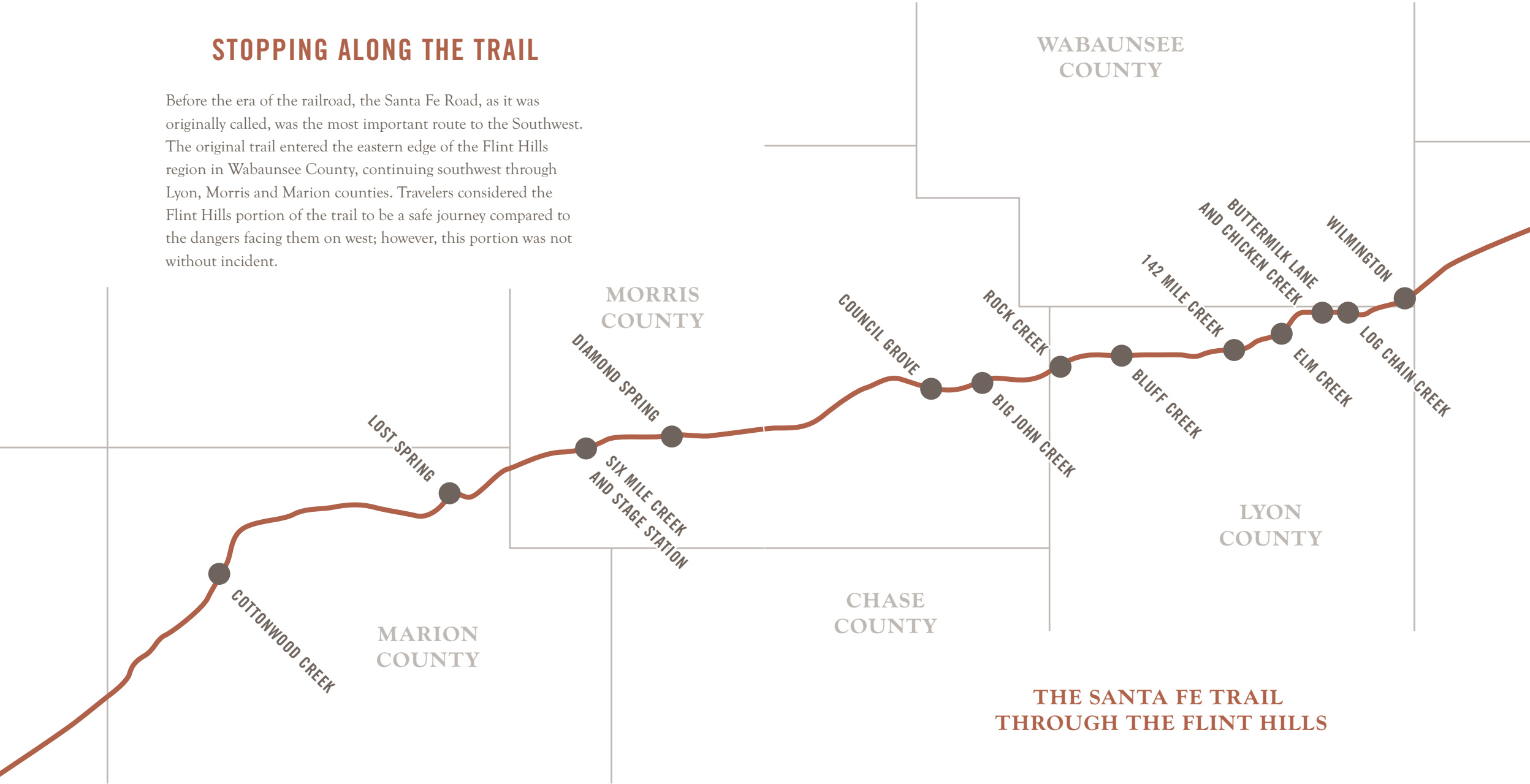
OPPOSITE PAGE

Shadows VIII

Lisa Grossman

STOPPING ALONG THE TRAIL

Before the era of the railroad, the Santa Fe Road, as it was originally called, was the most important route to the Southwest. The original trail entered the eastern edge of the Flint Hills region in Wabaunsee County, continuing southwest through Lyon, Morris and Marion counties. Travelers considered the Flint Hills portion of the trail to be a safe journey compared to the dangers facing them on west; however, this portion was not without incident.



THE SANTA FE TRAIL
THROUGH THE FLINT HILLS

WILMINGTON

Strategically located at the junction of the Santa Fe Road and the Military Road from Fort Leavenworth, the Wilmington area is quite historical. The Dragoon Creek Crossing; the Havana Stage Station; and, lastly, Soldier Creek Crossing are all significant to movement on the trail. Thirty-five soldiers unexpectedly died of cholera at Soldier Creek — thus the name.

LOG CHAIN CREEK

Log Chain Creek was named by travelers when their heavy wagons got stuck in the muddy crossing. Creek crossings were inevitable. Log Chain Creek, like other Flint Hills creeks, had a rock bed, but it was not as solid, easily giving way to mud. Animals sank, wheels and axles broke, wagons upset, and all involved were covered in the muddy quagmire. Log chains were used to pull the wagons out.

BUTTERMILK LANE AND CHICKEN CREEK

Buttermilk Lane was a 3.5-mile stretch of trail where travelers purchased fresh produce, including buttermilk, from local farmers. The community of Waushara sprung up at the east side of Buttermilk Lane, and a post office opened in 1858. At the west end of Buttermilk Lane was Chicken Creek. The origin of the name is unknown and left to the imagination.

ELM CREEK

Two miles southwest of Chicken Creek at the crossing of Elm Creek was a house used as a mail station. The fireplace in the house had a “hiding place” built into it where occupants took refuge in times of danger. In 1862, Bloody Bill Anderson and his gang shot the front door full of holes, attempting to harm Constable Jacoby. The Kansas Historical Society is now in possession of that door.

142 MILE CREEK

Three miles further was the crossing at 142 Mile Creek, named for the number of miles between it and the trail’s eastern terminus at Fort Osage, Missouri, where the survey of the trail began in 1825. In 1854, Charles Withington built the first store in Lyon County (formerly Breckenridge County) to accommodate weary travelers. His blacksmith shop was equipped with 10 forges, which indicates the scope of his business on the trail. Withington also established a toll bridge, one of only a few toll bridges along the trail.

BLUFF CREEK

Bluff Creek was about six miles further west and for a few years was the family home of Bloody Bill Anderson.



Diamond Creek
Cally Krallman

ROCK CREEK

Five miles further was Rock Creek, known by the Indians as Ne-Co-Its-Sa-Ba or Dead Man’s Creek, named because of an early battle between Indian tribes. A.I. Baker established a trading post in 1854 on the Kaw Reservation. Later the spot became Agnes City. Rock Creek crossing was later annexed into Morris County.

BIG JOHN CREEK

Big John Creek and Big John Spring were named after “Big” John Walker, the guide for the 1827 survey party headed by George Sibley. The area around Big John Spring, just east of Council Grove, became a popular campsite along the Santa Fe Trail. Along the creek to the south was Chief Ishtalasea’s village, one of three Kaw villages on the reservation in Morris County. In 1860, the population

of this village was 271. According to some diaries, travelers sometimes traded with the Indians in this area.

COUNCIL GROVE

Council Grove is one of the most historic towns in Kansas; however, there was no settlement for the first 25 years of the Santa Fe Road. During much of the Santa Fe Trail era, Council Grove was the home of the Kaw Indian Reservation. Freighters and travelers appreciated the groves of hardwood trees for wagon repairs; lush prairie grasses for the animals; plenty of elk, deer, turkey, antelope, and some bison for food; and clean water. Travelers felt safe between Missouri and Council Grove, so Council Grove became the gathering place, the Rendezvous, to prepare for more dangerous travel west.

DIAMOND SPRING DIAMOND OF THE PLAIN

The famous prairie fountain, Diamond Spring, was near the Kaw Trail as well as the Santa Fe Road. The spring was known for its high-quality spring water, which quenched the thirst of those eating trail dust all day. A stage station and small settlement grew up here prior to the Civil War, but it was destroyed, the station owner killed and, his wife injured in a raid by Missouri bushwhackers, led by Dick Yeager and Quantrill's guerrillas

in 1863. The station was never rebuilt, but Diamond Spring continued to be a valuable water source and popular campsite as long as the trail was active.

SIX MILE CREEK AND STAGE STATION

After the station at Diamond Spring was destroyed, the stage moved its operation to Six Mile Creek, so named because the crossing was six miles west of Diamond Spring. Business activity here was short-lived, just three or four years.

LOST SPRING

Certain times of the year Lost Spring would literally disappear and stop flowing. The Kaw called the spring Nee-nee-oke-pi-yah, and the Mexicans referred to it as Agua Perdida, both terms meaning "lost water." George Smith was the first to operate a boarding house and tavern here in 1859, but he lost it in a card game to a drifter named Costello. Costello made a number of improvements to the station but began to cater to the lawless element of the area. Consequently, the station soon became known as a hangout for ne'er-do-wells. Eleven men were said to have met their deaths at Costello's station.

COTTONWOOD CREEK

Seventeen and a half miles west of Lost Spring was Cottonwood Creek,



Rain on the Cimarron
Cally Krallman

known as Moore's Ranch in the 1860s. Cottonwood Creek was a difficult crossing. The banks were steep and the channel was deep, so the crossing had to be navigated carefully. Double or triple teams were needed to pull the wagons up the banks. If possible, wagons crossed the stream immediately upon arrival so the wagon crossing could be completed before a rainstorm might cause the creek to rise and delay crossing, perhaps for days. After

Cottonwood Creek, the trail left the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie and entered the mostly treeless shortgrass prairie where buffalo chips were the fuel of choice for the rest of the journey to Santa Fe.

Vicki Patton is a retired educator and librarian who enjoys the history, culture and the people of the Flint Hills. Special thanks to Ken McClintock and Mark Brooks, Council Grove historians.



Sumac in Shadow #4
Diana Werts

CHARLES PARKER, FREIGHTER AND TOWN BUILDER

For nearly 20 years, from 1849 to 1869, wagon master Charles G. Parker skillfully and fearlessly guided freighters from Kansas to Santa Fe.

He eventually retired from his distinguished days on the trail and settled outside Council Grove, where he founded his namesake town of Parkerville and earned further respect as a farmer, stockman, businessman and noted Morris County citizen.

Parker was born around 1820 (reports about his birthdate vary) in Connecticut. His parents died when he was 10, leaving him and his nine siblings behind. Little is known about Parker's early life, but he eventually made his way west where he became an important figure on the Santa Fe Trail and in Morris County, Kansas.

In 1849, Parker made his first trip, presumably from the port of Kansas on the Missouri side of the Missouri River, to Santa Fe, carrying freight for a military wagon train. For almost 20 years, he traveled southwest, sometimes with his own wagon train and other times in the employment of other freighters. In 1860, the Council Grove Press took note of Parker, returning from Santa Fe, as he brought his train into town: "C.G. Parker's train consisting of 21 wagons, 225 mules, and 30 men passed through town on Wednesday last for Kansas City. Mr. Parker's wagons were loaded with government stores. He also brought 18 passengers from New Mexico to the States."

Freighters faced constant dangers and risks on the trail. In 1857, for instance, before reaching the Arkansas River near abandoned Fort Atkinson outside present-day Dodge City, a large band of 200 Kiowa Indians ordered Parker's train to

stop. In a sworn statement, given August 28, 1857, Parker stated, “With arrows drawn, they requested blankets and coats and whatever else was in the wagons. The men on the train drew their guns and demanded the train be able to move on. The Indians followed for six or eight miles until their chief, Peshamo, rode up and asked for provisions. Peshamo promised the train would be left alone if we gave him flour, crackers, sugar, coffee, rice, smoking tobacco and butcher knives. We gave them the provisions. After the chief left with the provisions, several miles later two more Indians of the same band rode up to us, fired arrows into two mules, killing them, and rode off.”

The next year, 50 of Parker’s mules were lost in an Indian raid when his train traveled into Mexico. Parker searched for weeks but never found them.

Indians and cholera were the two chief hazards in the trail’s Cimarron Crossing area during the summer of 1867. At the Cimarron Crossing of the Arkansas River on June 16, 1867, a band of 70 Kiowa Indians attacked the stage station at the crossing and at the same time attacked the Charles Parker train, which was crossing the river from the south. Eight wagons were on the north side of the river and three were on the south side. Due to the high-water level, a herd of mules was left on the south side of the river to graze. Of the four men guarding the mules, two were killed

and scalped by the Indians. The other two survived by swimming across the river.

In a newspaper interview late in his life, in 1906, Parker recalled, “That Old Santa Fe Trail. Well, I once knew it so well that I could travel it day or night without going astray. I knew every little creek that crossed it for 1,500 miles*, and every crook and turn along its tedious winding way across the plains. In those early days we had to travel in (wagon) trains in order to guard against the Indians. Sometimes we got separated, and frequently they stole our teams. We would give chase, and occasionally they would hide from us, and show fight. I have had arrows sent after me many a time but was never very badly injured by them. While my days are about over, still the very thought of those early times on the old trail seems to bring back the spark of youth.”

Charles Parker eventually retired from freighting in 1869 and settled in the Council Grove area where he had purchased land 18 miles northwest of town. There he built a house and began developing the town of Parkerville, which was incorporated in 1871 as a third-class city. The town began to grow when the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad was

*The length of the Santa Fe Trail was around 800 miles (National Park Service) depending on which route was traveled. Parker traveled approximately 600 miles further to Chihuahua, Mexico, several times.



Blue Moon Over Dragoon Creek
Cally Krallman

built along the Neosho River valley. By 1871, 35 businesses had been established at Parkerville. The town built a two-story stone school and even vied to be the Morris County seat, eventually losing out to Council Grove. As of 2021, around 60 people still reside in Parkerville.

Besides his notoriety as the town founder, Parker was also involved in local and state politics, serving as a member of the Kansas House of Representatives in 1870, and he established and operated Neosho Mills. In 1878, The Morris County Enterprise wrote, “Neosho Mills (steam-driven) owned by Mr. C.G. Parker is one of the best mills on the Neosho River, and has a splendid patronage. Mr. Parker is a clever gentleman and is founder of Parkerville.”

Parker enjoyed good health for many years and continued to prove he was capable of handling the rugged life and

its difficulties. When he was 86 years old, he rode all night on a freight train, accompanying a carload of his cattle to the Kansas City stockyards.

It has been 172 years since Charles G. Parker first traveled through Council Grove on the way to Santa Fe. After his days on the Santa Fe Trail, he decided to settle in the Flint Hills of northwest Morris County, Kansas. He spent the last 40 years of his life at Parkerville, the community he helped create, and died in his home at Parkerville on September 7, 1909, at 89 years of age.

Excerpts from “Charles G. Parker: Wagonmaster on the Trail to Santa Fe,” Charles R. Strom, edited by Larry Patton. Patton, whose family has been in the Flint Hills for five generations, is dean emeritus of humanities and fine arts at Butler Community College.

TRADE THROUGH COUNCIL GROVE

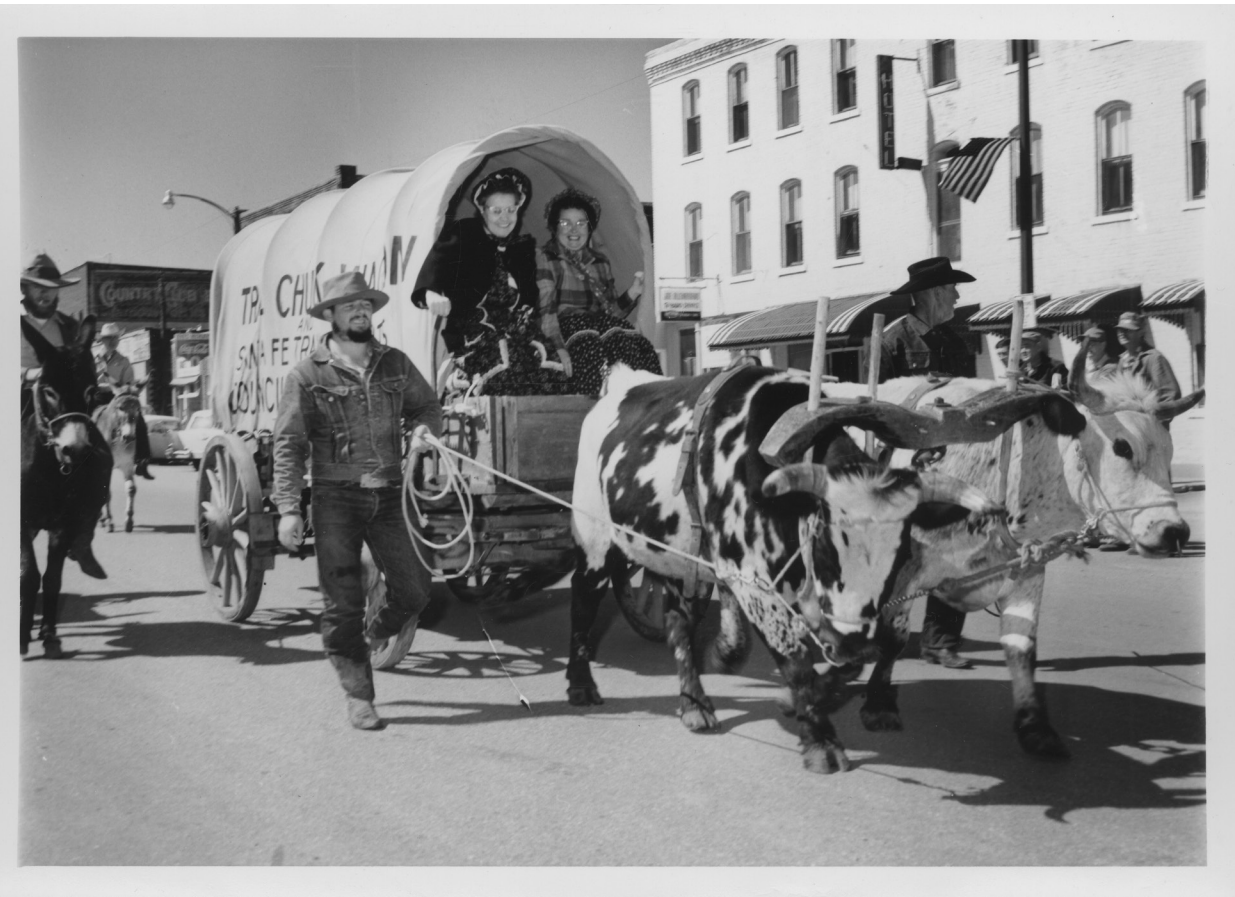
Along today's limited access highways, signs announcing the approach of exits sometimes include the words "No Services"—i.e., no gasoline stations, no restaurants, no lodging, no stores of any kind.

Until 1847, Santa Fe-bound travelers leaving Missouri entered about 800 miles of "no services." They had to haul essential supplies with them and otherwise "live off the land."

In 1821, the overland trip to Santa Fe, began at Franklin, Missouri. As river ports were developed upstream on the Missouri River, the "jumping off" points moved west—to Arrow Rock, to Westport, to Independence. Trade goods purchased back east were shipped to these points by steamboats and offloaded for shipment by wagon train to Santa Fe. It was at these port cities that wagon makers, harness makers, blacksmiths, warehousemen, hoteliers and other businessmen prospered. But from there on, travelers were on their own.

In 1847, Council Grove became the westernmost location to obtain supplies to outfit a wagon train. Seth M. Hays, great-grandson of Kentucky frontiersman Daniel Boone, established the Boone & Hamilton trading post at the Council Grove campsite alongside the Neosho River crossing (just east of the present-day Hays House restaurant). Hays and his slave, Sarah "Aunt Sally" Taylor, became Council Grove's first permanent settlers. A prominent businessman, Hays also built in 1858-1859 a wood-frame store building, operating as S.M. Hays & Co.

The town grew as trail traffic increased. Chouteau brothers Frederick and Cyprian in 1848 constructed a log trading post. On July 1, 1850, the firm of Waldo, Hall & Co. began



1961 Santa Fe Trail Reride in Council Grove
Kansas Historical Society

carrying the United States mail between Independence and Santa Fe. The firm purchased a log structure, built as a blacksmith shop in 1848 by William Mitchell, blacksmith for the Kaw, and converted it into a mail station. The firm also obtained a license to trade with the Kaw.

In 1857, the Westport firm of Northrup and Chick built a small stone building, which was the last store westbound travelers passed leaving Council Grove. Save for a “trading ranch” in western Kansas with a very limited selection of merchandise, the “Last Chance Store,” as it was nicknamed, was the last chance to get supplies before reaching New Mexico. Other traders and merchants followed, offering about anything needed to outfit a wagon train or an individual traveler, from needles and thread, coffee and sugar, to ox yokes and wagons, mules and oxen, and everything in between. Wagon makers, blacksmiths, harness makers and others soon provided full services for Santa Fe freighters.

Outfitted for the journey, wagons steadily traversed what became a well-worn route across the grasslands. But even though the Santa Fe Trail was a primary prairie pathway for 45 years, it was just part of a progression from creek beds to trails to railroads and highways that spurred America’s commerce.

The heyday of the Santa Fe Trail through Council Grove ended in the fall of 1866, when the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division (later re-named the Kansas Pacific) reached Junction City. The next spring, freighters offloaded at the railhead and took the Fort Riley to Fort Larned military road to reach the Santa Fe Trail, bypassing Council Grove.

Kenneth W. McClintock is a fifth-generation resident of Morris County, where all eight of his great-grandparents and four great-great grandparents lived prior to 1900. Retired from the practice of law, Kenneth and his wife, Shirley, operate the Trail Days Café and Museum as volunteers at Council Grove.



Repeat and Shift: Badger
Kirsten Furlong



November 2020
Kelly Yarbrough

FLINT HILLS TRAILS AND TRACKS

The Santa Fe Trail is by far the most prominent historic trail through the Flint Hills, including Morris County. However, other local trails and tracks passed through the area as well.

TRAILS

Prehistoric Indian Trail This trail passed through Kansas, roughly following today's K-177 highway. Immediately south of Council Grove, an ancient pile of stones marks the supposed site of the martyrdom of Father Juan de Padilla, the first Christian martyr in the United States, 1542. Subsequent research has established that Father Padilla more likely met his fate east of Lyons. Instead, the pile of stones was an ancient Indian guide marking the route of the prehistoric Indian trail. The town of Herington has a monument to Padilla in the City Park, and a historical kiosk on U.S. 77 highway at Herington tells his story.

Kaw Trail Roughly parallel to the Santa Fe Trail, this trail led the tribe from its reservation southeast of Council Grove to its traditional hunting grounds in western Kansas.

Fort Riley to Fort Scott Road This military road connected the two forts, angling southeasterly through Council Grove and Emporia.

Fort Riley to Lost Springs Road This connected the fort to the Santa Fe Trail through western Morris County to the campsite at Lost Springs.

Mormon Trail Traveled by some Mormons going to Utah, this route passed through the northernmost portions of Morris County before traveling northwesterly, eventually joining the main Mormon Trail along the Platte River in Nebraska.

Topeka to Council Grove Road An early day wagon road which became Kansas highway K-4.

TRACKS

Union Pacific Railway, Southern Branch

The first section opened for traffic on October 27, 1869, when a special excursion train escorted the Kansas governor, James Madison Harvey; railroad officials; and others from Junction City to Council Grove. In 1870, the name was changed to the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway. Council Grove has the only M-K-T depot still on its original site in Kansas.

Missouri Pacific Railroad Construction began in Council Grove in 1882 and proceeded west to Pueblo, Colorado, as the Topeka, Salina & Western RR. In 1886, the Council Grove, Osage City & Ottawa Railway connected with the TS&W. Both of these lines merged into the Missouri Pacific Railroad which made Council Grove a division point and maintained a roundhouse for locomotive repairs for many years. It merged with the Union Pacific in 1982. The tracks were removed from Osawatomie to Herington in 1994-1995, and the right-of-way is now a rail-trail, the Flint Hills Trail State Park. As the trail approaches Council Grove, it roughly parallels the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska Railway Co. Built in 1887, the railroad line still exists across northern Morris County, passing through Dwight and White City. Owned by a series of companies, the line is currently owned by Union Pacific Railway.

Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway

The main line of the ATSF reached the Flint Hills at Emporia in 1870, proceeding through Strong City, Florence and on through Newton and Dodge City. It reached the Colorado line in December of 1872 and Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1880. Years later, 1887, a spur or short line was built through southwestern Morris County and the towns of Diamond Springs and Burdick. Often referred to as the Santa Fe, the railroad company merged with the Burlington Northern in 1996 to form the Burlington Northern Santa Fe, now called BNSF. The Morris County tracks were removed in 2006, but the main line has seen increased traffic in recent years and remains an important transportation thoroughfare through the Flint Hills.

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Prairie Slope Sketch

Lisa Grossman



Bloody Bill
Matthew Regier

BLOODY BILL ANDERSON IN A RUT

Born in Kentucky in 1839, young William T. Anderson moved with his family to Kansas when he was 18.

They settled in Lyon County at the Bluff Creek crossing on the Santa Fe Trail in 1857, where they farmed and sold provisions and whiskey to travelers on the trail.

Young Bill took jobs in the vicinity and made several trips over the trail to Santa Fe working for wagon trains. Lured by easy money, Bill became a horse thief with his brother Jim and cousins, stealing horses over a wide area and selling them to travelers on the trail and in Council Grove and other towns.

In late 1861, Bill and Jim escalated their predatory ways on a plundering raid led by former judge A.I. Baker, who owned the Agnes City trading post on Rock Creek west of the Andersons. Later conflict between these neighbors culminated in Baker shooting and killing Bill's father on May 12, 1862. Wanted locally for their criminal activities, Bill and Jim escaped east on the Santa Fe Trail. Their sisters followed, abandoning the home in Kansas. In Missouri, the brothers joined with lawless gangs in killing, looting and burning at anti-slavery farms and towns in Kansas and northern Missouri. They were bushwhackers, striking hard and fast on the best horses they could steal, then fleeing to evade capture.

Out for revenge for his father's death, Bill returned with cohorts to Agnes City on July 3, 1862, and after dark sent one of the men to Baker's house with a request for whiskey. Baker went to the store cellar for the whiskey. Bill, Jim and the others were waiting for him as he came up the stairs. A gunfight ensued. The gang kicked the wounded Baker down the steps, set a heavy

barrel on the cellar door and set all of the buildings on fire. They stole Baker's best horses before riding off into the night.

The killers raced east along the Santa Fe Trail, reaching Allen on 142 Mile Creek at about midnight. They burst into O.F. O'Dell's store there and looted it while they related how they had killed Baker. Trading their tired mounts for fresh stage-line horses, they continued east.

At Elm Creek the gang paused to shoot holes in the station house door, wanting to kill Henry Jacoby, who as constable had been involved in the events leading to the shooting of Bill's father. Scared off by sounds from a wagon train nearby, they rode on to the stage station at the Chicken Creek crossing. With fresh horses they raced 20 miles to the 110 Mile Creek station in Osage County, arriving about sunrise. Giving the station owner 15 minutes to make breakfast, they ate quickly and headed east. By stealing fresh mounts from stage stations on the trail, they made it to Missouri in less than 16 hours.

In early May of 1863, Bill and Jim Anderson again traveled west on the Santa Fe Trail with other bushwhackers, armed men moving at night in small groups of two or three. Led by notorious bushwhacker Dick Yeager, their wagons were loaded with weapons, ammunition and provisions. They were on a covert

mission for the Confederate military to try to instigate an uprising in the West that would divert Union troops away from the Civil War.

In Lyon County, someone recognized Bill in the moonlight, and soon a large posse rode in pursuit. Pausing at Council Grove for supplies, the guerillas took the wagons on the trail 18 miles southwest to Diamond Springs station. There they murdered the storekeeper, shot his wife in the arm and burned the buildings.

The posse later came upon the wagons at Cottonwood Hole, six miles beyond Cottonwood Crossing where the trail forded the Cottonwood River in Marion County. They took the wagons and guards into custody, but the bushwhackers on horseback split into small groups and escaped back to Missouri. Dick Yeager, Bill Anderson and others left the trail, avoiding it to move rapidly east and north across the open prairie.

Riding east-northeast through Lyon County, they came back to the Santa Fe Trail halfway across Osage County at the 110 Mile Creek station, where they stole horses. At the Black Jack station in southeast Douglas County, the bushwhackers paused to rob a mail coach and its passengers and stole stage-line horses. Reaching the stage station at Gardner, they again robbed and stole horses before riding on to



Sign with Horses

Phil Epp

Missouri, where they divided the horses and other loot. They had not returned home empty-handed.

Bill Anderson became one of the most notorious bushwhackers of the Civil War era, the leader of a band of lawless men who did not dare disobey him. He died in a hail of Union Army gunfire on October 26, 1864, near Albany, Missouri.

From the Author: Please note that conflicting stories exist about Bloody Bill's brief career, including several about the events at Agnes City, because of reliance on hearsay and varied wording as the events were reported and retold.

Sharon Spade, with experience in genealogy, fiber arts and museum work, is director and curator of the North Lyon County Museum at Admire, Kansas. A native Emporian, she appreciates the subtle beauties of the Flint Hills.

TRAIL TALES

“We struck our camp on the hill. There is a large mound just by us, from the top of which is a splendid view is to be had. On one side, to the west, is a wide expanse of prairie; as far as the eye can reach nothing but a waving sea of tall grass is to be seen. Out the other, for miles around are trees and hills. I went up onto it at sunset, and thought I had not seen, ever, a more imposing sight.”

“Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico, The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-1847”

“We reached the edge of the elevation from where we had a view of the wooded valley of the Neosho and the delightfully situated little town of Council Grove. We halted almost involuntarily in order to feast our eyes longer on the landscape which was lovely beyond all description. The dense, vigorous forest with its strange distinct contours hid the little river from our view. But I thought that I had never seen anything more beautiful and more charming than when I looked down on the tops of the oaks and hickories, the sycamores and cottonwoods which with their magnificent shades of color blended together as in one single carpet,

and as I watched, the shadows of light feathery clouds glided along lazily and yet animatedly over the expanse of the woods and darkened the fresh green of the trees for a few minutes at a time.

“We rode down from the upland and when we entered its only broad street we noticed crudely painted signs on all the houses on both sides of the street; the houses numbered about thirty. By these signs we saw that the place was inhabited exclusively by merchants. There were also two inns and each stood out because they were painted white. We entered one of them which also had a store connected with the hotel.

“We halted there long enough to read an 8-day-old newspaper and to eat breakfast which was served us by an old negress and consisted chiefly of fresh, cool buttermilk and cornbread. we bought as much of the buttermilk as we could put in our bottles, and enriched in this way we left the town. After crossing the Neosho we rested for several hours in the shade of tall trees. While the mules were enjoying themselves in the rich grass, we refreshed ourselves by a bath in the little river and not until the sun had



Heinrich Balduin Möllhausen
Kansas Historical Society

crossed the noon line did we leave the charming valley.”

Heinrich Balduin Möllhausen, “Over the Santa Fe Trail through Kansas in 1858”

This is a beautiful spot, one hundred and fifty miles from the town of Independence, Missouri. Here the Santa Fe traders generally pause a day or two for rest — to enjoy the shade of the tall trees, and drink the clear cool water that runs bubbling, through the grove — as dear a sight to the prairie wanderer as the glance of love from the eye of beauty. Here the

different adventurers meet to elect their leader, arrange their plan to travel, put their firearms in order, and hold council on other matters connected with their enterprise. From this the place derives its name of “Council Grove.”

We were ten days travelling from Independence to this spot; we remained two days, and never in hall or drawing room, did we spend a more delightful time. Reading or sleeping, beneath the trees on the banks of the chrystal water in the hot noon — or fishing, where we could see the little finny creatures playing

with our bait. Or, in the evening, singing in the moonlight the songs we had been used to sing at home, those Native strains that melt us while we sing them. We sang duets, one on one side, and one on the other of the beautiful stream. We sang loud choruses [sic], and the lonely woods give us back a running accompaniment of echos [sic]. And when the night-birds screamed, after we had laid our heads upon our saddles to sleep, we laughed at the poor be knighted creatures, and raised our voices in merry imitations of the doleful sounds, till the hungry wolves caught up our cry, and awed us into silence with their dismal howlings.

excerpt from “Matt Field on the Santa Fe Trail,” collected by Clyde and Mae Reed Porter

“Wanted — A middle-aged man six feet, four inches high, well proportioned, to stay in our office, and kick men downstairs, who interrupt the printers, spew tobacco juice about the floor, smoke in the office, meddle with the type, read copy. If such a one does not come soon, we shall commence the work in person.”

Council Grove Press, May 4, 1863

“Trains Moving — For a week past, there has been one continued throng of wagons passing, to and fro, on Santa Fe Avenue [present Main Street] — Even the devil himself can’t keep count and attend to his

legitimate business. Several large trains, eastward bound, are encamped out west of town, and as we put this to type, the main thoroughfare is completely lined with large caravans, heavily loaded, from Kansas City, as far as the eye can reach, east and west.”

Council Grove Democrat, July 1, 1866

Early explorers to Kansas discovered a plethora of animals and birds. One of the most unique birds to be found in great numbers was the Carolina Parakeet. It was described as a small green neotropical parakeet with a bright yellow head, reddish orange face, and a pale beak.

Many journal and diary entries mention the Carolina Parrot. In 1804, William Clark mentions “I observed a great number of Parrot queets this evening.”

Lt. James W. Abert reports in 1847, while traveling on the Santa Fe Trail, that, “The day was stormy and cold, but we pressed on until we reached ‘Council Grove.’ Paroquettes [sic] were sweeping rapidly in large circuits among the topmost branches of the ancient denizens of the forest, and their screams shrill, and grating echoed through the lofty arches of boughs, now shorn of their summer glory.” Abert also mentions seeing a great number of Prairie Hens.

By the time Kansas began to be settled in 1854, the Carolina Parakeet numbers



Still Life: Carolina Parakeet (detail)

Kirsten Furlong

were greatly reduced, mainly from overhunting and capture for pets. By 1880, the parakeet was extinct in Kansas, and sadly the last surviving bird died in the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens in September 1914.

Mark Brooks, Council Grove historian

Seth Hays, businessman and trader, came to Council Grove crossing on the Santa Fe Trail in 1847 and brought Sarah “Aunt Sally” Taylor, an African American slave. She remained in his household as a servant after she was freed in 1861 when Kansas was admitted to the Union as a free state. Sally was the caretaker for bachelor Hays’ adopted daughter, Kittie

Robbins Hays. Kittie’s mother died when Kittie was a baby, and she was brought to the Hays home.

In 1867, Seth Hays built another home. Aunt Sally lived in the basement quarters and cared for the family until her death in 1872. Her funeral was held in the Hays home, and Seth Hays insisted she be buried in Council Grove’s Greenwood Cemetery, instead of the portion of the original cemetery where some African Americans are buried. Upon his death, Hays was buried in the same cemetery lot as Aunt Sally.

Vicki Patton, Flint Hills historian



INDIGENOUS AMERICANS

For many years, the Indian perspective on the Santa Fe Trail was largely missing from scholarly and popular writings about the trail, an omission that is being recognized and brought to light today.

Here, insightful writers, including three members of Indian tribes, share their stories. Learn about the fate of the Osage and Kaw (also called Kansa) tribes that lived and hunted along the trail, and about Indians and colonialism from a member of the Pawnee tribe.

Another account addresses the interactions between trail travelers and Indigenous peoples, and “Lost Art of the Santa Fe Trail” paints a picture of artists who traveled the route and their puzzling failure to portray the beauty of the Flint Hills. The surviving art of one of these artists reinforced stereotypes of Indians that were popular at the time but not accurate.

Ride along and explore the Indigenous Americans’ history and their untold stories for a better understanding of the impact of the Santa Fe Trail.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Border Crossing
Norman Akers



Viviparous Quadrapeds of the Anthropocene (Hare)

Kirsten Furlong

AMERICAN INDIANS AND THE SANTA FE TRAIL

On May 22, 1822, William Becknell began his second journey to Santa Fe, New Mexico. His aim was to trade three wagon loads of American goods for Mexican silver.

He was in charge of 21 men who were, themselves, in charge of the 24 oxen that were pulling the wagons. Onlookers called his assemblage the “Caravan of Death,” for how could these men with slow-moving oxen rather than fast horses escape attacks from the various Indigenous American peoples who lived along their route? The party carried firearms, but Becknell had also included gift items to help pave his way through this potentially dangerous territory.

Over 100 miles after leaving Fort Osage, Missouri, Becknell’s wagons encountered Indians near what is today Burlingame, Kansas. There he had his first and only significant encounter with Indians on this trip, a band of Osage. Ready to fight if necessary, Becknell and an interpreter approached the leader of the Osage and offered various gifts as tokens of peace. Their offer was accepted, and the traders went on their way unmolested.

In what would become Marion and McPherson counties, small bands of Kansa Indians followed but did not make contact with the wagons. The same thing occurred with Comanches from present-day Dodge City into New Mexico, small groups occasionally appearing but never coming close. Becknell’s Caravan of Death followed a route that angled southwest from a spot east of present-day Great Bend past present-day Tucumcari before arriving in Santa Fe, where he sold not only his trade

goods but his wagons as well. On his return home, he traveled a different way, establishing a trade route that would become one of the most famous trails in American history. To be totally accurate, he was not the first to trod this trail, a path Indigenous peoples had used parts of for centuries.

Although Becknell in 1822 encountered only three tribes, some dozen different tribes lived and hunted along the 800-plus miles of the Santa Fe Trail. Besides the Osage, Kansa, and Comanche, others included the Pawnee, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, Kiowa (or Plains) Apache, Ute, Jicarilla Apache, and Pecos Pueblo. In addition to these tribes, the trail also cut through the Shawnee allotment near Kansas City.

The standard view is that Indians along the Santa Fe Trail were usually hostile, prone to attack, steal, plunder, and kill teamsters. That's an exaggerated notion. Attacks and fights did occur, but more often, especially in the earlier years, the Plains tribes were more interested in trade or in asking for food. When that trade involved alcohol, trouble was more likely to occur. The Pawnee, who lived in towns along the Republican River in Nebraska and Kansas, would go on extended buffalo hunts during the summer, often along the big bend of the Arkansas River. In the 29 years from 1822 to 1851, there

were only 18 fights between Santa Fe traders and the Pawnee in that area.

The Osage and Kansa, like the Pawnee, lived in villages, farmed and traveled onto the Plains for extended buffalo hunts. Farther to the southwest, Pecos Pueblo Indians had lived near the banks of the river of that name since around 1300, residing in a 700-room pueblo and living by farming, trading and hunting. When Becknell opened trade with Santa Fe in 1821, their population had greatly decreased from its peak, and only 17 members had survived by 1838 when they moved west and merged with the Jemez Pueblo. The Plains tribes were all essentially nomadic hunter-gatherers. All dozen tribes also traded among themselves and with Euro-Americans. Each tribe had its own religious practices, but all had in common a religious belief in the sacredness of the earth and its plants and animals, on which their lifestyles depended.

These Indigenous peoples generally perceived Euro-American incursions into their respective territories as trespassing and users of the Santa Fe Trail as trespassers. Active opposition to this violation of their territory began early, and in 1829 the United States responded to the threat of violence by sending troops to protect wagon trains. Attempts by Indigenous peoples, particularly by the Plains tribes of the Cheyenne, Arapaho,



**1925 Centennial Reenactment of the Signing of the Compact
between the Osage and the U.S. Government in Council Grove**
Kansas Historical Society

Comanche, Kiowa, and Plains Apache, to resist and repel Euro-American invaders increased markedly during the years when the United States was determined to take their lands and force them onto reservations. During this period, and a few years before, the United States had established a number of forts to protect the invading settlers and traders — forts Leavenworth, Mann, Atkinson, Zarah, Larned, Dodge, Lyon, Union and, Aubrey along the Santa Fe Trail, and also Harker, Riley, and Wallace to the north of the trail.

A major obstacle to peace, not only along the Santa Fe Trail but throughout the American continents, was the concept of land ownership. To the Europeans who settled in (invaded?) the New World, ownership required an official title registered with the proper authorities, an almost incomprehensible idea to the original inhabitants. How, they wondered, can one own or sell or fence off one's mother? Mother Earth was sacred and nearly literal to their way of thinking. But to Europeans, prior occupancy counted for naught when met with legal title.

Europeans claimed New World lands through what was termed the "Doctrine of Discovery," a legal premise established by a Supreme Court decision in 1823 that allowed them to claim ownership no matter who was already living there

or how long they had been living there. Moreover, "Manifest Destiny" also allowed Americans to believe that they had an inalienable right to rule the land from "sea to shining sea."

From the perspective of Euro-American history, the Santa Fe Trail was a great achievement, opening up trade and friendly relations with the Mexican government that had, in turn, replaced a Spanish government hostile to trade with the United States. But from the Indigenous people perspective, particularly that of the Plains tribes, this new international commercial highway was an intrusion, a trespassing on land where they had traditionally lived and hunted.

Where Euro-Americans saw innate Indian savagery as the cause of conflict along the Santa Fe Trail, Indigenous peoples considered Euro-American expansionism as something to be resisted in order to maintain their traditional way of life.

Jim Hoy, professor emeritus, Emporia State University, is a native of Cassoday, Kansas, and the author of "Flint Hills Cowboys" and "My Flint Hills," both from the University Press of Kansas.



Pawnee Smoke Along the Republican River
Phil Epp



Untitled

Lydia Cheshewalla and Jessica Price

AN OSAGE PERSPECTIVE ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL

The Osage people have been connected to the Flint Hills for centuries. Our ancestors were a powerful force and frustrated Spanish, French and American attempts at conquest by controlling trade routes through the Southern Plains.

Hence, the United States government needed to sign a treaty at Council Grove with the Osage in 1825 to secure safe passage for white travelers on the Santa Fe Trail. In other words, the U.S. government needed that assurance.

At the same time, the establishment of routes such as the Santa Fe Trail and the influx of white settlers represented a decline of Osage power in the region. Even though this created challenges for the Osage people through land dispossessions, disease and a socio-cultural breakdown in the Osage way of life, we are still here. We, the authors, are both citizens of the Osage Nation, as well as working professionals who have committed years of service in the Osage community in the fields of education, agriculture, natural resources, land management and more. As members of the community, we both have a vested interest in making the perspectives of Indigenous peoples more visible in the annals of settler colonial nostalgia. This perspective begins by looking at the past in order to understand the present and reimagine our future. For the Osage people, the history of the Flint Hills is part of that ongoing story, as we all continue to move forward with entangled histories.

From one perspective, the Santa Fe Trail represents the romanticized grit and determination of white settlers. From

another perspective, the trail is part of a larger story that tells of Euro-American settlers' attempts to conquer and eradicate Indigenous peoples standing in the way of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, an ambitious movement that white descendants still benefit from daily. But as Osage citizens in the present, our perspectives on these histories represent endurance, resistance, adaptation and ongoing survival as Indigenous peoples. We are a continuation, yet another generation in our ancestral lines. We are not extinct; we are present, with over 20,000 Osage citizens living in Oklahoma and Kansas and across the United States.

For the Osage, our existence endures because of our ancestors, who committed to our future even when settlers were working to eradicate us. For example, our ancestors relied on seasonal migrations across the prairies of Kansas to hunt bison. These hunts were key to the Osage way of life in this region. However, as Euro-American settlers encroached on Osage lands, whites were encouraged to kill bison as a way to eradicate Indigenous peoples of the plains. By the late 1800s, the Osage had to abandon those hunts.

This led to a socio-cultural breakdown that forced our Osage leaders to abandon the old ways and explore how to maintain and move core values forward into future generations. With the help of the Poncas and Kaws, Osage leaders started a new

ceremony, the *ncoshka*, and those core values and important socio-cultural ways were embedded into that ceremony, a gathering still held every June. This important dance is a place of learning, where younger generations listen to elders, and where core Osage concepts related to order and mutual respect are learned through experience and observation. It is one of the primary places where Osage people move forward, where we continue our communal relationships and learn Osage ways of living and being part of a community.

While the late 1800s represented a difficult time for the Osage people, our leaders were strategic in their decision making, working to ensure our future. During that time, our ancestors reorganized under new forms of government, one being the Osage Nation Constitution of 1881. Later, as Oklahoma worked to become a state in 1906, the Osage were pressured to reorganize and abandon the communal (or Osage national) land ownership established under the 1881 constitution — land they purchased and owned. So in 1906, these Osage lands, still valued by incoming settlers, were forcibly divided into allotments with individual owners, putting an emphasis on individual land ownership instead of Osage national land ownership. However, during the allotment process, Osage leaders leveraged negotiating

power to gain a more favorable process and maintained a form of communal ownership for the sub-surface land, what is now known as the Osage Minerals Estate.

This new government took on a corporate style structure tied to this minerals estate, meaning each Osage in 1906 inherited a share, and they could pass that down through their family lines. This also meant that those shares, as they became fractioned, represented partial votes instead of one full vote per Osage citizen. Furthermore, with the oil boom in the 1920s, the Osage had access to a new form of wealth, which then drew more envy from whites. This resulted in a wave of corruption and murder where whites exploited the system imposed upon the Osage to gain access to that oil and mineral wealth, using murder and corruption to meet their goals. This is often referred to as the Osage Reign of Terror, and it served as yet another challenge for our people with ongoing encroachment of whites wanting more of what the Osage have. Yet, once again, the Osage people endured and still maintain the Osage Minerals Estate today.

After 100 years of pushing back against the 1906 system which was imposed on the Osage people, the Osage Nation engaged in a government reform process in 2004-2006 which allowed our people to exercise our sovereign rights and once again reorganize in order to keep moving towards a new future (see Jean Dennison,

“Colonial Entanglement: Constituting a Twenty-First Century Osage Nation”). This time, Osage leaders moved our system to a three-branch structure in which each Osage descending from the 1906 rolls is a member of the Osage Nation and can now vote if of age. As our leaders emphasized in the preamble of the new constitution, there is still a commitment to “preserve and perpetuate a full and abundant Osage way of life that benefits all Osages, living and as yet unborn.” Once again, our leaders continue to press forward to make way for an Osage future.

Immediately following the establishment of the new government, the Osage Nation started the process of developing a 25-year strategic plan, which established goals and priorities based on the will of the Osage people. This plan has since been updated by Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear's administration. One priority was to purchase land and expand the reservation land base in an effort to regain lands that have been lost. Working towards these goals, the most significant Osage land reclamation is the purchase from media mogul Ted Turner of 43,000 acres, in the southern portion of the Flint Hills within the Osage Reservation boundaries in Oklahoma. Chief Standing Bear emphasized that this purchase was another significant step that allowed us to “get back what has been lost.” On this land, the Osage Nation is building a herd of bison,

a significant step as we consider the role of the bison in the historic Osage way of life. Furthermore, the Osage Nation has recently developed a meat-processing facility and a vegetable/fruit farm for the benefit of Osage citizens.

However, the Osage strategic plan isn't just about land reacquisition; it also puts an emphasis on culture and language education, as well as economic development and health (among other priorities). Specifically, the Osage Nation is dedicating significant resources towards culture and language education, trying to re-awaken the words spoken across the plains before settlers brought their wagons on the trails from the East, trails which brought Euro-American government(s), which then forced our ancestors into schools mandating English only. To heal some of the damage done in these histories, Osage leaders have created a language department, early childhood learning centers, an elementary school, a cultural center and more. Furthermore, with resources acquired through tribal enterprise and entrepreneurship, and with the wisdom of elders from families who have held on to those old ways, Osage leaders have created a brand-new Osage orthography to represent the unique sounds of ᏍᏏᏏᏏ ᏍᏏ. This orthography, a form of language sovereignty that reduces Osage reliance on English text and phonetics,

has also been made to work with Unicode so that it works across multiple technological platforms. This has also allowed the Osage Language Department to develop apps for Android and iOS platforms, as well as create fonts that work with Microsoft Office and Google apps and across social media. Artists also use this orthography on murals, stop motion educational videos, blanket designs and more.

Beyond Osage language revitalization efforts, leaders have also renovated the historic Osage Nation museum, built a new tribal headquarters equipped with modern technologies, and erected new statues and monuments to commemorate our leaders of the past, along with our veterans. Our leaders have done these things so our story continues so that they may be there for our children and grandchildren.

Ultimately, as we reflect back to what the Santa Fe Trail means to the Osage people, it represents something different from what most descendants of Euro-Americans on the Southern Plains might consider: encroachment, disease, land dispossession, conquest and more. But here we are, still moving forward, entangled with settler-colonialism in the present, in shared spaces such as the Flint Hills. But the 1800s and the trails of white settlers coming from the East are but one part of the Osage story, one of



Border Crossing II
Norman Akers

the past. Although these encroachments still continue in various ways, the Osage Nation is still looking to a new horizon outlined in the strategic plan and beyond. On that new horizon, we are proud to be Osage citizens under the 2006 constitution and proud to be working to help our Osage people move our story forward as best we can.

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Association for Native American Education. His scholarship and service is focused on building capacities for Native nations to take on a more prominent role in the education of their citizens.

Jann Hayman is a citizen of the Osage Nation and director of the Osage Nation Department of Natural Resources. She is also a doctoral candidate in educational leadership at Kansas State University. Her research interest is focused on the development of Indigenous specific agricultural education programs.



Kaw Beaded Awl Holder
Kansas Historical Society

THE KAW NATION

Following the loss of the tribe's homeland in northern and central Kansas, the tribe went from a thriving and healthy people, strong in spirit and body, to a small group of destitute people that relied solely on the United States government for survival because everything had been taken from them.

The following is a narrative of the Kaw Nation from 1800 to their final forced relocation to a small tract of land in Indian Territory.

By the mid-18th century, the "Wind People" — as they were known to white traders and explorers — were in possession of most of present-day northern and eastern Kansas. Demographers have estimated that, as a consequence of the white man's diseases (principally smallpox, cholera and influenza), their population had been reduced perhaps to less than 50%, down to about 1,500 men, women and children by 1800. Even so, the Kaw presented a formidable obstacle to American expansion into the trans-Missouri West following the U.S. acquisition of this vast region by the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. From their villages and small vegetable farms in northeastern Kansas and later along the Kansas River west of present-day Topeka, Kaw warriors maintained control of the lower Kansas valley against both the white man from the east and tribes to the west. Kaw hunters also engaged in semi-annual hunting expeditions onto the plains of western Kansas. But with a major change in United States Indian policy in the early 19th century, all of this changed dramatically.

Beginning in 1825, formalized by the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and continuing well into the mid-1840s, the federal government forcibly transplanted nearly 100,000 people comprising tribes such as the Shawnee, Delaware, Wyandotte, Kickapoo, Miami, Sac and Fox, Ottawa, Peoria and Potawatomic onto lands claimed by the Kaw and Osage. This action required Kaw to sign treaties whereby vast acreage was ceded to the government in return for annuities and promises of educational, agricultural and other forms of material assistance. Underlying these treaties was the invader's strategy for rapidly changing the Kaw from an independent, semi-sedentary people into individual family farmers on the model of white agricultural society in Missouri, Illinois and other so-called "settled" states in the East. But the treaties made it clear that during the period of transition the Kaw would remain in a state of dependency under the watchful and supposedly benevolent scrutiny of their government agent.

The first and perhaps most devastating Kaw treaty was negotiated in 1825 following the admission of Missouri to statehood in 1821, the opening of the Santa Fe Trail that same year, and especially the need to establish reservations for the emigrant Shawnee, Delaware and Kickapoo. The Kaw agreed

to a reduction of their 20-million-acre domain, covering roughly the northern half of future Kansas, to a two-million-acre reservation 30 miles wide beginning just west of future Topeka and extending west to a line to be marked by government surveyors. For this huge cession, the Kaw were awarded a \$3,500 annuity for 20 years, a quantity of cattle, hogs and domestic fowl, a government blacksmith and agricultural instructor, and schools to be funded from earlier Kaw land sales in the Kansas City area.

As a special concession to Chief White Plume's vigorous support of the treaty, 640-acre plots along the Kansas River just east of the new reservation were granted in fee-simple terms to all 23 half-bloods of the Kaw tribe. The rest of the tribe received no such benevolence, and factionalism was thereby greatly encouraged. Life for the Kaw between 1825 and the Mission Creek Treaty of 1846 was anything but easy. Whiskey merchants on the Santa Fe Trail exploited the Kaw annuity fund through sharp trading practices, while the bison supply on the plains diminished dramatically and little progress was made in agriculture. Most Kaw parents refused to allow their children to attend distant government boarding schools. The periodic eruption of smallpox and cholera epidemics continued to decimate the Kaw population.

Poverty-stricken by the failure of the 1825 treaty and weakened by continuous government (and private) pressure for yet another land cession — this time to accommodate railroad, town and land speculators — the Kaw leadership went to the treaty table again in 1846. Arrogantly, and tragically indicative of racial attitudes of that time, Indian Superintendent Thomas Harvey in St. Louis boasted to his superiors in Washington that he could work out a new deal with "the degenerate and docile" Kaw in a matter of five days. This he did with the help of Indian Agent Richard W. Cummins in 1846. The 1846 treaty required the sale of the two-million-acre reservation to the government for just over 10 cents an acre. The money received was to be divided between a 30-year annuity at \$8,000 per year, \$2,000 for educational and agricultural improvement, a \$2,000 grist mill and a concentrated 256,000-acre reservation at present-day Council Grove, extending south into Lyon County, Kansas.

As Professor William E. Unrau has emphasized in his book, "The Kaw People," no longer were the Kaw being encouraged to become sedentary farmers; "now they were being forced to change their way of life."

But urged on by railroad developers, the Council Grove bankers and merchants, and even some members

of the Kansas Territorial leadership, the white land-jobbers could not be contained. A census in 1855 revealed that at least 30 white families had located illegal claims in the very heart of the new Kaw reservation, but when a federal agent attempted to evict the squatters, his cabin was burned and he and his family were forced to flee to Missouri. Then when it was discovered that the Council Grove town site was actually on Kaw reservation land, the need for yet another treaty was apparent — certainly not to the Kaw, but to land-hungry white farmers, the Council Grove merchants, promoters of the Union Pacific Southern Branch Railroad and the United States government.

The U.S. government began talking about a complete removal of the tribe from Kansas. The consequent Kaw treaty of 1859 (ratified in 1860) allowed the tribe to keep only 80,000 acres of the poorest land, to be subdivided into 40-acre plots for each family head with the remaining 176,000 acres to be held in trust by the government for sale to the highest bidder. Forty acres of marginal Kansas land was wholly insufficient to support one Kaw family, and by the late 1860s, the government was obliged to authorize emergency funds to prevent outright starvation of the Kaw people. Finally, on May 27, 1872, in a measure strongly opposed by Chief Allegawaho

and most of his people, a federal act was passed providing for the removal of the Wind People from Kansas to a 100,137-acre site in present-day northern Kay County, Oklahoma, which was carved out of former Osage land and for which the Kaw eventually paid \$70,000, mostly from the sale of their trust lands in Kansas.

With the enactment of the Kaw Allotment Act of July 1, 1902, the legal obliteration of the Kaw tribe was accomplished. The act provided approximately 400 acres of land under government trusteeship to 249 persons whose names were placed on the final allotment roll. The act was largely the work of Charles Curtis — a distinguished one-eighth blood member of the tribe who eventually served as vice president of the United States under President Herbert Hoover, and who in 1902 was a Kansas congressman and member of the powerful House Committee on Indian Affairs — and a small group of Kaw leaders headed by Chief Washungah. A significant minority of full-bloods, whose political power in the tribe had declined dramatically since the forced removal from Kansas, opposed the Allotment Act, and, until the tribe was reorganized under federal authority in 1959, factionalism and political struggles over tribal affairs were commonplace.

Following allotment in 1902, the Kaw people retained 260 acres near the Beaver Creek confluence with the Arkansas River until the mid-1960s, when their former reservation land was inundated by the Kaw Reservoir constructed by United States Corps of Engineers on the Arkansas River just northeast of Ponca City, Oklahoma. Here, dating to the late 19th century, were located the tribal council house, the old Washungah town site and the tribal cemetery. After much negotiation with various federal and local officials, the cemetery was relocated to Newkirk, Oklahoma, and the council house to a 15-acre tract a few miles northwest of the former Beaver Creek trust lands. By subsequent Congressional action, the new council house tract was enlarged to include approximately 135 acres, which presently are administered by the Kaw Nation as official trust lands.

Primary source, William E. Unrau, “The Kaw People,” reprinted with permission from The Kaw Nation.



Little House Effect
Norman Akers



Independence and the Opening of the West (detail)

Thomas Hart Benton

Mural at the Harry S. Truman Library

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AMERICAN INDIANS AND THE COLONIALISM OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL

The axiom that the winners interpret history rings true when it comes to the enduring legacy of the Santa Fe Trail.

This became exceedingly clear to me as I drove westward on U.S. 56, a stretch of highway in southeastern Kansas near where wagons once hauled people and goods over this famous trail that connected Missouri and New Mexico.

Although I was crossing the southern periphery of lands once claimed by my Pawnee ancestors, the overcast skies, along with my critical reflections about the horrors of the past and the dramatic changes in the land, added to a gloomy feeling that had overtaken me earlier that day. In considering the legacy of colonialism, I thought about the vast array of stereotypical misrepresentations found in the Euro-Americans' intellectual thoughts and popular culture that cast the Pawnees, Comanches, Cheyennes, Kiowas, Arapahos and other Indigenous peoples as backward, warlike savages who raided lumbering trains, took innocent lives and plundered without remorse.

Near present-day Great Bend, I stopped at the site of Fort Zarah, an installation constructed by U.S. soldiers in 1864 to protect trail traffic from Indians; it was abandoned five years later. In the 20th century, however, the state of Kansas constructed a roadside park on the site. A large marker reads: "In 1825, the Federal government surveyed the Santa Fe trail, great trade route from western Missouri to Santa Fe. Treaties with Kansas and Osage Indians safeguarded the eastern end of

the road but Plains tribes continued to make raids. Fort Zarah, at this point, was one of a chain of forts built on the trail to protect wagon trains and guard settlers. It was established in 1864 by Gen. Samuel R. Curtis and named for his son, Maj. H. Zarah Curtis, who had been killed in the Baxter Springs massacre, October 6, 1863. The fort was built of sandstone quarried in near-by bluffs. Fort Zarah was successfully defended against an attack by 100 Kiowas on October 2, 1868. It was abandoned in 1869.”

The marker’s narrative reflects an enduring problem with the trail’s history: that Indians were a threat to the country’s economic and political development. It did not offer the slightest hint at the harm the Santa Fe Trail brought Indians or why Kiowas had attacked the fort. Moreover, it suggests that Indian relations always involved violent conflict.

The Santa Fe Trail was the first Euro-American road to penetrate the Great Plains, passing through Indian country. A rich diversity of Indigenous peoples from nearly a dozen different Indian nations encountered the trail travelers; their interactions ranged from cooperation to warfare. However, travelers often described Indians with a repertoire of stereotypes that had existed since the onset of the European invasion of the Americas in both romantic and negative ways. Their stories resonated with a

comfortable plot line for Euro-Americans, depicting Indians as warlike, savage and uncouth beings who blocked the road to America’s progress. Although some historical encounters contain elements of truth about specific events, these stories rest squarely on the false premise that Indian savagery, not colonial expansion, was the root cause of conflict.

Today, contemporary sources continue to distort the trail’s history and rely on coded and overt language of conquest that rationalizes U.S. expansion into Indian lands. Repetitive recitals of this history through books, roadside markers, oral presentations and popular culture objectify Indians as “savage” threats while denying or ignoring the destructive consequences of U.S. expansionistic policies and settlement. Stated another way, written history about the trail is marred by conscious and protracted attempts to absolve Euro-Americans of culpability for their acts of aggression. Equally problematic is that this history rarely tells how much of the trail’s history involved friendly and cooperative interaction between Indians and non-Indians, including both Mexicans and Euro-Americans.

The trail played a devastating role in diminishing the sovereignty of Indian nations. This sovereignty emanated from creation stories and was rooted in the history of this continent. Native peoples



Buffalo and Smoke
Phil Epp

governed themselves in accordance with their respective beliefs, values and customs. They often viewed the passing of uninvited travelers as trespassing, an offense punishable by the confiscation of personal property, corporal punishment and death. At the least, they expected gifts, or tolls, for the right to passage.

However, most Euro-Americans expressed contempt for the idea of Indian authority. U.S. and Mexican travelers willfully violated Indian sovereignty by failing to obtain prior consent from the appropriate Indian nations before embarking on their journeys. This problem was partially resolved in 1825 when U.S. commissioners signed right-

of-way treaties with two Indian nations whose lands touched the trail, but no further attempt was taken to acquire such approval from other Indian stakeholders until years later.

Instead, responding to calls from traders and western politicians for protection, U.S. policymakers gradually amassed a strong military presence throughout the region. In 1827, the U.S. Army established Cantonment Leavenworth in eastern Kansas to protect the Santa Fe Trail and maintain peace. Two years later, amid reports of increasing Indian opposition to the flow of traffic, officials sent troops to escort caravans en route to Santa Fe. By the



Uncertain Light
Norman Akers

mid-1860s, when Indian resistance on the trail had been reduced to five Indian nations – Comanches, Kiowas, Plains Apaches, Cheyennes and Arapahos – the U.S. Army garrisoned numerous cavalry and infantry units at forts Leavenworth, Zarah, Larned, Dodge, Lyon and Union. Additionally, forts Harker, Riley and Wallace stood north of the trail in Kansas.

Thus, the U.S. military established a firm foothold in the contested land. By the late 1860s, there would be no Indian peoples left along the trail. The survivors of this campaign of ethnic cleansing were placed on reservations in Wyoming, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

The governments of the United States and Mexico, as had Spain, based their claims to Indian lands on the doctrine

of discovery, an imperialistic concept found in international law. The discovery doctrine served as a legal premise for European nations to carve vast empires in the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australia as well as to politically subjugate, dispossess and deny fundamental human rights to Indigenous peoples. Concocted during the 15th and 16th centuries by European philosophers, clerics and monarchs, the doctrine was little more than a crass scheme to legitimize the European appropriation of lands belonging to non-Christians. In keeping with the prevailing rules of imperialism, Western colonizers claimed an exclusive right to acquire title to vast regions of land inhabited by Indigenous peoples.

Today, this pervasive master narrative tells the trail's history with 19th century assumptions regarding the alleged inferiority of Indians and the superiority of Euro-Americans. This language of racism continues to have a stranglehold on academic writings, historiography and popular thought. Anti-Indian rhetoric, either explicitly or implicitly, places the Santa Fe Trail and its relationship to Indians within the context of manifest destiny and American exceptionalism. Histories written from this perspective identify with the intrepid, heroic and rugged explorers, trappers, merchants, soldiers and settlers who overcame human barbarism and

harsh environmental obstacles to carve a great nation out of a wilderness. This myth objectifies Indians as savages who delighted in swooping down on non-offending travelers for the sake of extracting blood, scalps and booty. It misrepresents and denigrates Indians as being unworthy, irrational beings whose depravity excluded them from the rights afforded "civilized" nations. It informed the development of U.S. Indian policy and rationalizes recurring acts of aggression against Indigenous peoples.

The story of Indian relations with the Santa Fe Trail is woefully lacking, superficial, damaging and often devoid of reality. Here lies the problem of Santa Fe Trail historiography. Subsequent generations of scholars have since adopted the same disparaging stereotypes and themes used by trail travelers to describe Indians. These secondary accounts fall squarely within the genre of the master narrative and discourage honest intellectual inquiry.

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Daguerreotype of a Cheyenne Village at Big Timbers
Solomon Nunes Carvalho

LOST ART OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL

In 1846, Susan Shelby Magoffin, 18 years old, newly married and a rare woman on the Santa Fe Trail, found herself awestruck by the beauty of the Flint Hills.

She wrote in her diary: “The scenery is truly magnificent. At one view we have stretched before us lofty hills entirely destitute of shrubbery; at their base gurgled along in quiet solitude a pearly stream laving the feet of giant trees that looked down with scorn upon the diminutive creature man. ... To our backs lay other and similar scenes, beautiful alike for the artists pencil. We have one in our Company, Mr. Stanley rather celebrated for his Indian sketches.”

The artist she refers to is John Mix Stanley, a skilled painter, adventurer and the most famous artist who traveled the trail. He was working to add portraits to his Indian Gallery, a collection of loosely ethnographic paintings that recorded the varied cultures of the Indigenous American nations. Stanley hoped his paintings would rival George Catlin’s in the annals of art history. Considering his professional training and sophistication compared with the clumsy studies by the self-taught Catlin, he likely would have succeeded; however, most of these works perished in a fire in 1865. Only eight of Stanley’s Indian Gallery paintings survive.

Painter Solomon Nunes Carvalho learned daguerreotype photography sometime around 1840, at a time when most Jewish people still rejected depiction of the human form; he is now widely considered the first Jewish photographer in history. Entrepreneurial, hardworking and curious, Carvalho set off on the Santa Fe Trail in 1853 with John C. Fremont’s Fifth

Expedition. We know from his journals that he took photos of bison near Great Bend, Kansas; the river country at Pawnee Fork (near present-day Larned, Kansas); and the mountain panoramas and Utah scenes west of the Rockies. Sadly, only one photo of his Santa Fe Trail journey survives: a ghostly image of a Cheyenne village in western Kansas Territory at Big Timbers along the Arkansas River west of present-day Lamar, Colorado. Like Stanley's work, nearly 300 photos of Carvalho's travels were lost in a fire.

Another artist on the trail traveled for purposes other than experience or images. Vincent Colyer, an accomplished artist trained at the National Academy, was an English Quaker who devoted himself to humanitarian work for the U.S. Indian Commission. He worked to resolve hostilities between Indigenous Americans, the U.S. military and white settlers. ("Resolution" at the time meant assimilation and negotiation for reservation land.) Although his official work was diplomatic, he was known to sketch and paint watercolors in the evenings. Two known works on his Santa Fe Trail travels in 1869 bracket the Flint Hills: a landscape at Fort Leavenworth and an Osage horse race scene in southwestern Kansas.

What to make of this lack of Flint Hills art by these artists? Like the diarist

Magoffin, today we are moved by the subtle beauty of the hills. Were Stanley and other artists of his time immune? Is it because they were men? Unlikely, given the fondness exhibited for the Flint Hills today. The answer is simple: Stanley and Carvalho were working for the marketplace, and audiences then were quite different from audiences today. Put simply: Tastes change.

The Flint Hills, though beautiful, likely provided an intimidating quietude, even an emptiness, for artists who knew what their patrons wanted: drama, and loads of it.

That's why art from the Santa Fe Trail reflected the purposes of American art of its day — to document the new lands being explored, to promote the ideas of Manifest Destiny, and to ease the apprehension or guilt of claiming more land. Stanley and Carvalho were artists of their time, laborers within a profession, and they needed to create items that the public would buy. These were the days before self-expression or art for art's sake. They needed to appeal to buyers, and what those buyers wanted was a sense of drama, beauty and a future-looking America that could stretch and expand beyond its borders.

One of Stanley's most celebrated works is "The Last of Their Race" (c. 1859). The narrative of Indians on the brink of extinction appealed to a time



Buffalo Hunt on the Southwestern Prairies
John Mix Stanley

period prone to tragic romance and also bolstered a feeling of inevitability. Stanley's painting is similar in spirit to James Fenimore Cooper's novel "The Last of the Mohicans." Critics have noted that the narrative of a soon extinct Indigenous culture reinforced a feeling of racial superiority and sense of entitlement to the land.

This supposed documentation would often spill over into fake news. Stanley's dramatic "historical" painting, "Osage Scalp Dance," 1845, demonstrates the appetite for drama over truth. The painting depicts threatening Osage men in shadow and places a distressed white woman and child in the center, terrified, with benevolent light upon her. It's ridiculous — such a scene never took place, and critics cringe at the vast historical inaccuracies. Rather than reveal Indigenous culture to white Easterners, the painting seems to be more a communication of Stanley's desire to ascend to European modes of art-making. That this work is today in the Smithsonian collection (although not on view in 2020) attests to the racism that art patronage of the time propagated.

These artists looked upon their subjects as the Other. The paintings and photographs documenting life on the Plains were presented as reportage; although wholly American in training and content, the artists and their

works operated as wholly European in composition and delivery. Did Stanley or Carvalho see the intricate beadwork of the Plains Indians, or the graphic pottery designs of the Pueblo peoples, or the breathtaking baskets of the Apaches? If so, did they perceive these with the fascination for craftsmanship they deserved? Did they accept them as more North American, more unique than their own styles? Were they, for example, compelled to paint a stylized antelope onto the canvas?

We know that Pueblo, Apache and Plains Indian goods traveled back East on the Santa Fe Trail. At the time, however, they were received as curiosities and ethnographic samples for study. It would not be until the 1920s — 40 years after the end of the Santa Fe Trail route — that a collectors' market in Indian visual art would blossom. Whereas the sweeping historical narratives of the mid-19th century have waned in popular interest, the Santa Fe art market, and its Indigenous American artists, thrive today.

Leslie VonHolten is the former executive director of Symphony in the Flint Hills.



Sketch of a Prairie Flower
Vincent Colyer



Solitude
Lisa Grossman

THE END OF THE TRAIL FORGING A NATION ACROSS THE PRAIRIE

“I remember so clearly the beauty of the earth, and how, as we bore westward, the deer and the antelope bounded away from us. There were miles and miles of buffalo grass, blue lagoons and blood-red sunsets, and once in a while, a little sod house on the lonely prairie...

It was strange about the prairies at dawn, they were all sepia and silver; at noon they were like molten metal, and in the evening they flared into unbelievable beauty—long streamers of red and gold were flung out across them. The sky had an unearthly radiance. Sunset on the prairie! It was haunting, unearthly and lovely.”

Marian Sloan Russell, “Land of Enchantment: Memoirs of Marian Russell Along the Santa Fe Trail.”

It may seem farfetched to say that the social isolation of this pandemic year has given me a better understanding of how some travelers on the Santa Fe Trail might have felt. They were on a journey that for many would take them to unfamiliar places, would test the limits of their strength and endurance, and would expose them to new sights. This pandemic has certainly been a time that I have felt uncertain about what lies ahead, and yet awed by the world around me in so many ways.

I have had the good fortune to live at both ends of the trail. In Santa Fe, the trail meets with the Camino Real and descends the Río Grande deep into Mexico. St. Louis is not often thought of as part of the trail, but surely it began here at the docks, warehouses and wagonmakers’ sheds on the banks of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.

Walking different sections of the trail, I imagined the thousands of footsteps of those who walked here before me. The first were Indigenous American hunters and their

families, followed by French and Anglo-American trappers and traders, then soldiers and settlers, Mormon refugees fleeing intolerance in the Midwest, and merchants and Civil War troops of many backgrounds moving west to the drumbeat of Manifest Destiny. Those who came from the Southwest journeying east were Mexican and New Mexican merchants and their caravan hands.

Some left accounts of their personal journeys of healing or hardship; others passed by on missions that forged this nation. More often travelers left no written record of their own, having journeyed west or east. Some of the participants in Santa Fe Trail expeditions were transformed by their journeys, and, in some cases, their reputations and place in history were made by their crossings of the expanding United States.

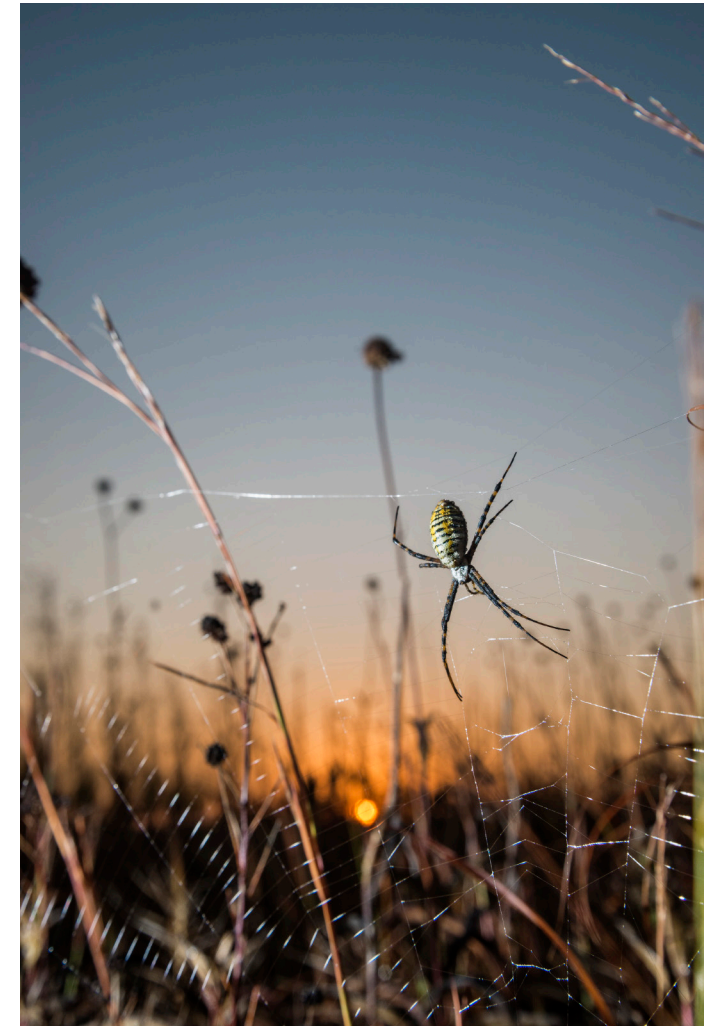
What interests me most about the Santa Fe Trail are the cross-cultural exchanges that took place along the trail. People of diverse heritages perceived each other's cultures differently, sometimes opportunistically, as they united both ends of the trail to link the territories and then states that would form our nation.

Over 1,000 miles separate Santa Fe and St. Louis. That distance spans the heart of the North American continent, and the two ends of the trail link vastly different regions. The transition from the lush confluence of the Mississippi and

Missouri river drainages near where the trail begins in Missouri gives way to the vast prairie in Kansas and Oklahoma. Then gradually the land rises to the high desert and Rocky Mountains at the western end of the trail in Santa Fe and Taos respectively. It is the geographic and cultural diversity found along the trail that undergirds its history.

The literature of the Santa Fe Trail is considerable. Trail journals, military reconnaissance reports, and memoirs were written as travelers moved westward from the American frontier in Missouri to meet eastward travelers from the Spanish Southwest. Westbound travelers were immigrants from Anglo-American, French or German-speaking communities of the midcontinent. Some westbound travelers, too, came as African American servants or slaves in trail caravans. In Kansas and Missouri, travelers from the Southwest encountered Americans in their larger cultural milieu, not as interlopers on Mexican soil as they would come to be seen in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War.

Crossing the midcontinent opened travelers to the potential and limitations of environmental resources at each end of the trail. In all of the accounts, the travelers were crossing lands of Indigenous peoples, yet there is precious little recorded in their voice or words.



Writing Spider
Philip Heying



Santa Fe Trail (entry)

Tod Seelie

Not all of the intercultural interactions led to conflict. Indeed, the men and women who traveled the Santa Fe Trail and who settled even for a time at opposite ends of the trails created cross-cultural families and friendships. French trappers and traders found partners and wives in Indigenous communities, as well as in the Hispanic settlements at the far ends of the Santa Fe Trail. They produced blended families and succeeding generations of descendants, some of whom identified as French, others as Spanish or Mexican or other European identities. There were those family

members, too, who took their place in Native communities, and still others who claimed their mixed heritage, identifying as métis in French or mestizo in Spanish.

Kansas was the geographic setting for much of the Santa Fe Trail. Many travelers recalled the immense seas of grass, colorful sunsets, and the brilliant stars they saw there. The Santa Fe Trail had two routes that crossed Kansas. The Cimarron Route covered 446 miles in Kansas, or 52% of Cimarron's 865 miles. The Mountain Route traversed 401 miles of its 909-mile course in Kansas, or 44% of its length.

So important is the Santa Fe Trail to the history of Kansas that the state seal, designed in 1861 by committee, has a cluster of symbols that encompass themes in Kansas history and its aspirational message that reads *Ad Astra per Aspera ...* "To the Stars through Difficulties," or "Through Hardship to the Stars." Whatever slight variation one would put on that phrase, it is an apt accompaniment to some of the other symbols of the seal: the steamship as a symbol of commerce, the homesteader plowing fertile soil and the wagon train pulled by oxen. Both the buffalo and the Indigenous American hunter would not share that same future place in Kansas' destiny.

Wagon trains moving west to markets in Taos and Santa Fe and further south into the interior of Mexico carried manufactured goods, such as bolts of cloth, machinery and hardware, household goods and delicacies. Wagons loaded with furs and hides and silver specie and mules moved from the southwest, east across Kansas to the

Heartland. The Santa Fe Trail was, throughout its history, more often a trail of merchants and armies, and only after the mid-19th century did it transport a significant number of settlers to the newly annexed Southwest.

Marian Sloan Russell was awed by the beauty of the prairie, but something deeper was happening there as well. A new nation woven from the threads of different experiences of peoples from different cultures and languages was forged in the colors of sunset on the prairie.

Frances Levine, Ph.D., an ethnohistorian by training, has been president and CEO of the Missouri Historical Society and Missouri History Museum in St. Louis since 2014. Previously she was director of the New Mexico History Museum and Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe. Her fascination with the Santa Fe Trail stems from having lived at both ends of the trail and from her interest in culture contact and culture change dynamics.

FOLLOWING SPREAD

Sunset Looking North From Camp Creek

Philip Heying

