UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME
HISTORIC SANTA FE TRAIL RUTS

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER 9 miles west of Dodge City, Kansas on U.S. 50
CITY. TOWN Dodge City
STATE Kansas

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY __DISTRICT
__BUILDING(S)
__STRUCTURE X SITE
__OBJECT

OWNERSHIP __PUBLIC
X PRIVATE
__BUILDING(S) IN PROCESS
BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS __OCCUPIED
X UNOCCUPIED
__WORK IN PROGRESS
__IN PROCESS
BEING CONSIDERED

PRESENT USE __AGRICULTURE
__COMMERCIAL
X EDUCATIONAL
__ENTERTAINMENT
__GOVERNMENT
__INDUSTRIAL
__MILITARY
__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__PUBLIC ACQUISITION
__ARCHITECTURAL
__ARTISTIC
__HISTORIC
__SCIENTIFIC
__TRANSPORTATION
__OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME The Boothill Association (Mr. George Henrichs)
STREET & NUMBER 500 Wyatt Earp Street
CITY. TOWN Dodge City
STATE Kansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Registry of Deeds, County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY. TOWN Dodge City
STATE Kansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE None
DATE
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY. TOWN
STATE
The Santa Fe Trail Ruts located 9 miles west of Dodge City, Kansas are remains of the once major thoroughfare of westward expansion. Much of the remains have been lost. However, a splendid specimen of some approximate 140 acres have been preserved by the Boothill Association. This section contains a major arch of the trail as it curved across the Kansas countryside. Also on this parcel are several separate sections of the ruts (see accompanying photograph). The ruts at this point stretch some 400 feet in width. When one of the ruts would become too deep, wagons would be shifted and new troughs would be dug into the earth.

There have been a number of intrusions which have severed the trail in various locations. These intrusions include U.S. 50, a railroad and irrigation ditch built in the 1890's which winds back and forth across the ruts. Cattle grazing on the ruts have also greatly impaired sections of the trail.

In addition to the above mentioned intrusions, the Arkansas River has shifted as much as half a mile to the south from its original channel. Despite these alterations in the historic scene, the well defined ruts retain a great deal of their historic integrity.
**PERIOD**

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**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW**

- ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
- ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
- COMMUNITY PLANNING
- CONSERVATION
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SCULPTURE
- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER (SPECIFY)

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

On January 29, 1822, four trail-worn men rode into Franklin, Missouri. Forty-eight days before, they had left San Miguel--fifty miles southeast of Santa Fe. In their packs were the fruits of their journey to New Mexico. As townspeople gathered to welcome Captain William Becknell and his companions, the packs were opened. Not the furs of an Indian Trader spilled out, but heavy rawhide sacks. One of the traders held high a sack and slashed its thongs. Silver pesos tumbled to the ground and rolled into the gutter. Thus the expedition of William Becknell begins a period of western migration, commerce and communication all using one of the major thoroughfares of the day--the Santa Fe Trail.

The Santa Fe Trail Ruts are owned by the Boothill Association which has purchased 140.38 of the original property for the purpose of preservation. This parcel of land is located nine miles west of Dodge City, Kansas on U.S. Route 50.

**HISTORY**

The adventure of Captain William Bucknell saw the first successful Missouri to Santa Fe trading expedition and set the state for enterprising men to throng the trail to the City of Holy Faith. In this apparently simple act was summed up much that lent to the Santa Fe Trail and its namesake city an air of El Dorado. It was partly this that caused early traders to gamble their lives and fortunes against distance, terrain, weather, hostile Indians and the caprice of Mexican customs officials.

The Santa Fe trail was more than an escape valve for high spirited men, or simply the route by which the mule came to Missouri. It was a commercial and cultural link between the borderlands of the United States and Mexico. Manifest Destiny would travel this trail. At its end was an empire of mesa and mountain, of canyon and river and of vast distances and desert, all ripe for the picking. The trail then became a military highway clogged with the freight and banners of war.

After the Army of the West had done its bloodless duty, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had sealed the conquest, this empire had to be administered and protected and provisioned. Thus men and material for this gigantic task came over the Santa Fe Trail. For two decades after the Mexican War, the Santa Fe Trail held undisputed position as truckline to the Southwest. It was the road and the tie by which civilization and sovereignty filtered into this wild
Gregg, Josiah. Commerce of the Prairies. (Norman, Oklahoma, 1954).

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY  c. 140.38

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A 1 4 3 9 5 2 6 0 4 1 8 3 5 4 0
B 1 4 3 9 5 4 0 4 1 8 2 6 4 0
C 1 4 3 9 3 8 9 0 4 1 8 3 1 2 0
D 1 4 3 9 3 0 0 4 1 8 3 9 4 0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
See continuation sheet.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE
STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE
Joseph Scott Mendinghall (original form submitted by Donald Dosch)
ORGANIZATION
Historic Sites Survey
STREET & NUMBER
1100 L Street, N.W.
TELEPHONE
(202) 523-5464
CITY OR TOWN
Washington, D.C. 20240

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act (1966, Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

GPO 892-453
expanse, tamed it, and fused it to the Nation. All that followed, the Mexican War, the gold rush, the Civil War, stagecoach and emigrant train and the constant plod of oxen hauling tandem freighters was part of this task of consolidating the conquest of 1846-48.

Finally, the railroad came, pushing the eastern terminus of the trail ever westward, until by 1880 there was no more trail. Like the bearded trader and the fabulous crew which followed the trail, it too faded into the annals of legend and conversation of glorious days past. Something grand was lost. Days of adventure and great accomplishment as well as the times of trials and defeat were gone forever. But the products of those years are yet apparent through a booming subcontinent of the modern Southwest. This is the true significance of the Santa Fe Trail, the first great trail of the West.
For numerous reasons, as indicated in the description of this report, much of that area which contains remains of the trail has been impaired. The best section of ground to be designated the historic landmark is owned by the Boothill Association. This acreage is established exclusively for the preservation of the historic property. Other lands on which the ruts are located are in commercial use as grazing lands for cattle. Moreover, plans call for agricultural use.

The State of Kansas has built a highway turn-off for access to the ruts by visitors. The site lacks any interpretive facilities, though the landmark plaque sits on a stone marker. The boundary, marked in red on an accompanying plat map titled the Santa Fe Trail Ruts and also the USGS map, is described by deed as follows:

PART OF THE WEST ONE-HALF OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER AND PART OF LOT 1, SECTION 17, TOWNSHIP 26 SOUTH, RANGE 26 West, FORD COUNTY, KANSAS.

Beginning at the Northwest corner of Section 17, Township 26 South, Range 6 West, Ford County, Kansas; thence South 0°11' East along the West line of U.S. Highway 50, as the Right of Way now exists; thence Southeasterly along the existing Right of Way line of U.S. Highway 50 for a distance of 1403.8 feet to a point on the East line of Lot 1, Section 17, Township 26 South, Range 26 West; thence North 0°09' West for a distance of 479 feet; thence North 46°50' West for a distance of 1306.8 feet; thence North 0°11' West for a distance of 1320 feet to a point on the North line of Section 17, Township 26 South, Range 26 West; thence North 89°55' West for a distance of 363.6 feet to the point of beginning. Containing 35.28 acres, more or less.

AND,

PART OF THE NORTH ONE-HALF OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER AND PART OF LOTS 3 AND 4, SECTION 18, TOWNSHIP 26 SOUTH, RANGE 26 WEST, ALL IN FORD COUNTY, KANSAS.

Beginning at the Northeast corner of Section 18, Township 26 South, Range 26 West, Ford County, Kansas; thence North 89°55' West along the North line of said Section 18 for a distance of 2631 feet to the Northwest corner of the Northeast Quarter of said Section 18; thence South 0°01' East along the West line of said Northeast Quarter for a distance of 1286.7 feet to a point on the North Right of Way line of U.S. Highway 50, as the Right of Way now exists; thence Southeasterly along the existing North Right of Way of said U.S. Highway 50 along a curve to the Right for a distance of 1010 feet; thence continuing Southeasterly along the existing North Right of Way line of U.S. Highway 50 for a distance of 1794.2 feet to a point on the East line of Lot 4, said Section 18; thence North 0°11' West along the East line of said Section 18 for a distance of 2208.1 feet to the point of beginning. Containing 105.1 acres, more or less.

Total acreage, 140.38 acres, more or less.
LOCATION MAP
Dodge City Complex, with notes on crossings by noted travelers. Descriptive phrases attributed to first-listed traveler.

Kansas

Principal Ford
(Beckwith, R.R. Survey, Fording 1853.)
(Marcy, 1859.)
(Alvarez, 1840 ca.)

Usual Place
(Wizlizenus, 1846.)
(Gregg Crossing, 1831.)
(Susan Magoffin, 1846.)

Crossing Sometimes Used
(Beckwith, R.R. Survey, 1853.)

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

Scale 1" = 4 miles

Main Roads
Section Road
Verified Trail Remains
An easement 50' in width South of and adjacent to the North line of the above described properties is granted to the present owners of property adjacent to this tract of land. This easement is intended for the use of movement of livestock across said property and associated vehicles required for such movement.

I hereby certify that the sketch herewith correctly represents a survey made under my supervision and, to the best of my knowledge, property boundary lines have been established, or re-established, in accordance with information of public record and other available information.

Job No. 221-68
August 1, 1968
Description Revised: August 30, 1968

Licensed Professional Engineer
RAZAK ENGINEERS
Dodge City, Kansas