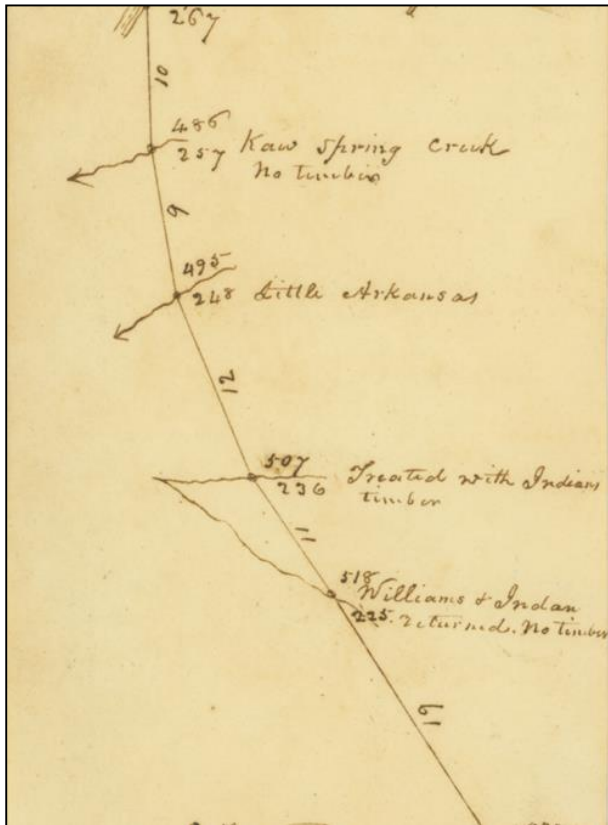


Joseph C. Brown (1784 – 1849)



On March 3, 1825, a bill was signed authorizing a road to be surveyed and marked from Missouri to the Mexican Settlements (Santa Fe). The "Sibley Expedition" (so named for George C. Sibley who emerged as the leader) began its survey near Fort Osage, Missouri on July 17, 1825. **Joseph C. Brown** was the surveyor on that Sibley Expedition of 1825-26 and he is the one that prepared the maps of the expedition upon his arrival in Taos in 1825. Brown also prepared the maps and "fieldbook" for the official report of the expedition issued in 1827. Brown's maps give us unparalleled documentation of the Santa Fe Trail as it existed in the mid-1820s. His survey of the Santa Fe Trail appears to have an error of less than 1% which is remarkable considering the equipment of the time and the conditions present throughout the survey. During the Sibley Expedition, Brown was present for negotiation of treaties for a right-of-way for and safe passage on the Santa Fe Trail with the Osage at Council Grove and the Kanza near present-day McPherson, KS (that site shown on map inset).

Brown was present when Diamond Spring was 'discovered' and probably assisted Sibley in obtaining permission from Mexico to perform the survey in Mexican Territory. Joseph C. Brown served as a U.S. Deputy Surveyor for the General Land Office for over 30 years. In that time he is credited with running thousands of survey miles. His accomplishments include surveying the baseline to establish the beginning point for the first surveys of the Louisiana Purchase Lands, which he began on October 27, 1815, with the survey of the baseline for the Fifth Principal Meridian at the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Francis Rivers and ran it due west. This initial point for the Fifth Principal Meridian controlled surveys in all of Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, North Dakota, and most of Minnesota and South Dakota. Brown also surveyed the western and southern boundaries of Missouri, running the Osage Treaty boundary, and many of the official surveys of early Missouri towns. Throughout his life Joseph Brown played a major role in the development of Missouri and the City of St. Louis, he was a veteran of the War of 1812, served as St. Louis County Sheriff, was elected to the State Senate for two terms and was the St. Louis County Engineer at the time of his death. In October 2015 the Missouri Society of Professional Surveyors, in cooperation with the Friends of Bellefontaine Cemetery (St Louis, MO), dedicated a monument memorializing Joseph C. Brown's life and accomplishments, including his survey of the Santa Fe Trail. The monument will not be a grave site marker, but will, instead, be a cenotaph --- a place reserved in the Brown Family plot at Bellefontaine Cemetery for Joseph C. Brown's final repose should his remains ever be located.