

Roe Wayne Groom

(1900 - 2001)

Roe Wayne Groom was born in 1900 in Plainville, Kansas. Roe grew up in Rooks County and developed a love for the Santa Fe Trail. As he continued to read about the famed trail, he discovered that there were visible ruts near Dodge City, Kansas. He vowed that when he could, he was going to travel the trail and see exactly it where it went. He married Alice Ruth Meade in 1924. He was the father of Dorothy, Weston, Lois, and Kenneth. In 1938, he moved his family to Council Grove, Kansas, located in Morris County. He discovered that there was roughly 25 miles of the trail in Morris County. Groom along with a local farmer, Ed Yeager started walking along the trail. On Sunday afternoon, Groom's wife Alice would take Roe and students to a spot on the Santa Fe Trail and then pick them up ten to fifteen miles down the trail. The following Sunday, Alice would then take them back to where she had picked them up the previous Sunday and they would start down the trail again. He was known for his knowledge of the locations of visible ruts and enjoyed teaching and showing students the trail. It is believed that he walked all of the route in Kansas and some in other states. Groom participated in several years of the Santa Fe Trail Walk and Trail Ride for Arthritis. During the 1976 Bi-Centennial, Groom participated in a wagon train. He was the oldest person on the train. In 1987, he received the Award of Merit of the Santa Fe Trail Association. He took up painting and had great interest in painting scenes from the Santa Fe Trail. The Kaw Mission State Historic Site in Council Grove has on display a painting of a Santa Fe Trail river crossing in their collection.

After his wife died, he married his brothers widow Althea Groom. Groom is mentioned in numerous newspaper articles about his passion for the Santa Fe Trail. He is also in several issues of "Wagon Tracks. Roe lived a long life sharing his love and knowledge of the Santa Fe Trail until his death in 2001.