



Heart of the Flint Hills Chapter Auto Tour

Our Santa Fe Trail tour starts at Lone Elm Campground, which is located just south of Olathe, Kansas. In our area, a great deal of the main Santa Fe Trail parallels US 56 Highway. West of Lone Elm, you will arrive at Gardner, Kansas. Roughly two miles west of Gardner is the junction of the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails.

As you travel west on 56, you come to Black Jack Park, home of the Battle of Black Jack Park and deeply-defined Santa Fe Trail ruts. Baldwin City is the next area to investigate. In Baldwin City there are multiple locations to see with trail markers explaining the site. Hop back on US 56 and continue west to the rural town of Overbrook, Kansas. Another treat awaits you there as you happen upon a cemetery south and east of US 56 Highway off of Cedar Street. There waiting for you is a rut, though faint, but still visible for people to see, marked with a sign. More ruts can be seen at the Osage State Fishing Lake, just south and east as you enter. From the fishing lake continue west and you will pass towns like Scranton, Jones Park DAR marker, and Switzler Creek, where in 1847, a toll bridge was built. Once you reach Burlingame, take SR 31 and continue to Dagoon Creek and Crossing. About one mile and a half past the Dagoon Creek Bridge there is a Daughters of the American Revolution Marker on the north side of the road. Seven miles west and about one mile south of Burlingame, you will find the Wilmington Schoolhouse.

Continue on US 56 and travel west towards the historic town of Council Grove. The Old Stone Barn is located one mile east and just a tad north of Council Grove on US 56 Highway. Council Grove is by far one of the most historic places on the Santa Fe Trail, and has numerous sites on the National Historic Register. The only trading post between Independence, Missouri and Santa Fe, New Mexico was in Council Grove at the Last Chance Store. People relied on the Last Chance Store to get them to their next destination. There are also numerous other historic stops in Council Grove, and an easy-to-follow auto tour is plainly marked throughout the town to see all of the sites. Plan to eat at either the historic Trail Days Bakery, or the Hays House Restaurant.

West of Council Grove you will run into Diamond Spring, or previously named Diamond of the Plains. Currently, Diamond Spring rises in a concrete cistern and is piped to a concrete stock tank. A DAR marker is posted by the spring. This location is on private property of the Diamond Creek Ranch, so the landowners require an appointment for the spring to be viewed. West of Diamond Springs, approximately 6 miles, are the ruins of the Six Mile Creek Crossing and Stage Station, with a DAR marker for people to read. Happy trails, and enjoy your visit on to our area!