

Lost Spring, Marion County, Kansas – A Historical Perspective
by
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1. Introduction

The genesis of this paper was my being asked to assist in writing the “Eastern Tour Guide” for the Santa Fe Trail Association’s 2005 Symposium held in McPherson, Kansas. In preparing a synopsis of the history of Lost Spring for the Tour Guide, it quickly became apparent that some local legends were not confirmed by the historical record and that some historically significant aspects of the Lost Spring were not common knowledge. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to present the results of my research into the history of Lost Spring and vicinity, focusing on the Santa Fe Trail.

The accompanying maps will be referenced frequently. Throughout the text of this paper (unless otherwise noted) “Lost Spring” (singular) will be used to designate the spring of water or the “station” on the Santa Fe Trail. “Lost Springs” (plural) will refer to the Town of Lost Springs. This convention has not always been followed in the literature, thus creating various degrees of confusion.

2. The Trail Blazers

The true “trail blazers” were actually the American Indians who had established trade routes and trails that others later appropriated. The history books record the early traders who ushered in the era of the Santa Fe Trail.

In 1804, William Morrison, a Kaskaskia, Illinois merchant, sent Babtiste Lalande and Jeannot Metoyer with trade goods to Santa Fe, whereupon Lalande sold the goods and remained in Santa Fe.^{1,2} Under Spanish control, Mexico did not welcome traders, as Robert McKnight, James Baird, and others in their party discovered when they were arrested and imprisoned (1812 – 1821) for attempting to trade in Santa Fe.^{3,4}

We then move forward to September 1, 1821 when William Becknell, now called the ‘Father of the Santa Fe Trail’, and five men set out from Franklin, Missouri with goods carried on pack animals. With the successful revolution against Spanish rule, Mexico now welcomed foreign trade. By October 21st Becknell had left the Arkansas River (perhaps in the vicinity of the Purgatoire River), reaching Santa Fe November 16th. Two weeks after Becknell reached Santa Fe, James McKnight, Thomas James, and nine others arrived in Santa Fe with goods to sell.^{5,6} However, the McKnight-James party had traveled by way of Ft. Smith, Arkansas, across present day Oklahoma, and across the Texas Panhandle to Santa Fe.⁷ Becknell sold his goods for a handsome profit, left Santa Fe in early December, and arrived in Franklin, Missouri on January 29, 1822.⁸

Becknell wasted no time mounting another trading expedition, this time carrying his goods in three wagons with a party of 21 men, the first use of wagons on the Santa Fe

Trail. They left Franklin, Missouri May 22⁹ or May 25,¹⁰ 1822 and were joined en-route by another party lead by John Heath prior to reaching the Great Bend of the Arkansas. The combined parties left the Arkansas in present day Ford County, Kansas and headed southwest across the Cimarron desert. Some of Heath's company remained in San Miguel, and Becknell's company continued to Santa Fe. Becknell returned to Missouri by a shorter route with specie and mules.¹¹

Also making a trading expedition to Santa Fe was Benjamin Cooper with 14 men and a pack mule train.¹² One final expedition led by Baird and Chambers set out in the fall of 1822 but had to 'winter' near present day Dodge City. They had to cache their goods and return for them from Taos in 1823.^{13, 14}

Stephen Cooper led an expedition in 1823, with 30 men, using pack mules. He returned to "the States" in October 1823 with specie, furs, and 400 jacks, jennets, and mules thus ushering in the "Missouri Mule" trade.^{15, 16} On May 16, 1824 a group of 81 or 83 persons with 25 wheeled vehicles left the Franklin, Missouri area, arriving in Santa Fe July 28th via the Cimarron Route, returning to Franklin, Missouri September 24, 1824.^{17, 18} Braxton Cooper headed a group that left Missouri in November 1824 and returned in the Spring of 1825. In 1825, 130 men made trading expeditions to Santa Fe.¹⁹

All of this activity was noticed by the U. S. Government in general, and Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri in particular. Senator Benton agitated for construction of a road from Missouri to the Mexican boundary²⁰ to promote trade, extend U. S. influence, and provide increased security for traders and others. This finally resulted in government authorization for surveying and marking of the "road" from Missouri to the Mexican settlements, and for the establishment of treaties with the American Indians for a right-of-way for the road and safe passage for travelers.²¹

The government survey of the Santa Fe Road was begun in 1825. Three Commissioners were appointed to direct the survey, and of the three, George Sibley is generally recognized as the leader. The actual surveying duties of the expedition fell on Joseph C. Brown, an extremely capable surveyor of the times, noted for performing several important boundary surveys in the West between 1815 and approximately 1849,^{22, 23} including surveying the western boundary of Missouri in the fall of 1823.²⁴

Brown produced a note book of his survey of the Santa Fe Road in which he would make notes on one page and produce a corresponding graphical plot of the survey on the facing page. Brown's graphical plots in his notebook were made on grid paper, each square representing a mile. Brown's written notes have been published,^{25, 26} but to my knowledge, his graphical plots have not. With my input, Mr. Richard Hayden of McPherson, Kansas electronically projected Brown's graphical plots²⁷ onto modern maps. Mr. Hayden and I used readily identifiable points such as the crossings of the Neosho at Council Grove, the Cottonwood River near present day Durham, and the Little Arkansas River, to orient Brown's survey with modern maps. We discovered that Brown's plots of these points matched perfectly with today's maps when Brown's plots

and today's maps were made the same scale. Based on this work, the route surveyed by Brown on the expedition led by Sibley is shown on *Figure 1*.

Brown began his survey at Fort Osage on July 17, 1825. Expedition member Ben Jones discovered what became known as Diamond Spring when the party camped on August 11th. On August 12th the Expedition set out from Diamond Spring, passing nearby, but not discovering Lost Spring (as shown on *Figure 1*), and camped on a creek ½-mile south of the Santa Fe Road, at a point approximately 2 miles east and 1.3 miles south of present day Tampa, Kansas. On August 13th they arrived at the Cottonwood River west of present day Durham, Kansas.²⁸

3. The International and Interstate Highway of the 1800's

Volumes can and have been written about the Santa Fe Trail covering the period of the late 1820s through the late 1850s. My purpose in this section is not to recount everything that happened in this period along the trail; instead, I want to give the reader a sense of the magnitude of commerce that flowed over the Santa Fe Trail through what would become Marion County, Kansas. The Santa Fe Trail, often referenced as the Santa Fe Road in old documents, was truly the Interstate Highway of the 1800s through Kansas. And, although the Santa Fe Trail was primarily a link between Missouri and Santa Fe, the Trail was but one segment of a vast world-wide network of commerce extending from Europe, across eastern North America, to Santa Fe, and continuing south into Mexico and westward as well. Of particular interest is that unlike the Oregon or California Trails, the Santa Fe Trail was not a trail of emigration; instead, it was primarily a trail of commerce.

In time, it became the custom that wagons singly or in small groups would come together in Council Grove and organize themselves into larger groups called "trains." This was done for mutual aid and protection. Near present day Dodge City, some groups would continue west on the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail traveling through Raton Pass, while others would continue southwest over the Cimarron Branch of the Santa Fe Trail across what is now the western tip of the Oklahoma Panhandle. Whichever route was chosen farther to the west, almost all Santa Fe Trail traffic and travelers passed through what is now Marion County, Kansas.

The number of wagons on the Santa Fe Trail varied from year to year depending on market conditions, and the regulations and taxes imposed at any given time by the Mexican authorities. Josiah Gregg, arguably the most thorough observer and reliable source of information on the early Santa Fe Trail, recorded that during the period 1822 through 1843, the Santa Fe trade amounted to a total of 1,558 wagons, 3,160 men, and merchandise valued at \$2,992,000.²⁹ If we assume an average of 6 draft animals per wagon and an equal number of spare stock, this traffic could easily have involved over 15,000 mules and oxen.

Traffic on the Santa Fe Trail increased. Government contracting for freighting to supply its western forts was begun in 1848, and this freighting became a major feature of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1850s and 1860s.³⁰ The magnitude of traffic is illustrated by the

following statistics of caravans transporting goods from Independence to Santa Fe: in 1844, 92 wagons, 780 mules, and 60 oxen arrived in Santa Fe; 141 wagons, 21 carriages, 1,078 oxen, and 716 mules in 1845; and, 363 wagons and 50 carriages in 1846.³¹ In 1848 Lt.-Col. Gilpin recorded 3,000 wagons, 12,000 persons, and 50,000 head of stock past his post on the Arkansas River.³² Added to this commerce, was other activity along the trail such as the Army's Mexican War-related movements down the trail in 1846. Kearny's Army of the West alone consisted of approximately 1,700 men and 300 wagons.^{33, 34} In addition, there were hundreds of wagons carrying supplies for the Army of the West. During the period April to September 1849, 2,500 persons traveled the Santa Fe Trail on their way to the California Gold fields.³⁵

In addition to the Santa Fe trade and the government supply traffic, in 1850 mail wagons began operating on the Santa Fe Trail. Prior to this time, there was no U.S. postal service west of Council Grove, and letters and newspapers going to points west were "unofficially" carried with the caravans and dropped off or picked up at various places.³⁶ On July 1, 1850 a Waldo, Hall & Company mail wagon left Independence bound for Santa Fe, thus becoming the first vehicular transportation of U. S. Mail across the Great Plains under a Congressionally authorized contract.³⁷ Running time to Santa Fe was 29 days.³⁸ The first mail wagon arrived in Santa Fe July 28 and headed back August 1.³⁹ Beginning in October 1850, mail wagons (or "stages") left Santa Fe and Independence on the first day of the month; this became semi-monthly in 1857 and weekly in 1858.⁴⁰ As an aside, the vehicles used to transport the mail are commonly called "mail stages," whether they are Jersey wagons or eight passenger enclosed wagons, because they carried mail and passengers on scheduled trips over a regular route and accomplished the trip in "stages" of travel between stations. The mail stages at this time were not the Concord-type stagecoaches that we commonly envision.^{41, 42} Concord coaches were not introduced on the Santa Fe Trail until 1864.⁴³

The wagons in the freighting "trains" or caravans generally traveled (unless geographic conditions did not permit) two abreast until somewhere west of the Little Arkansas, where four abreast was common.⁴⁴ I believe this was done for several reasons. If strung out single file, it would be difficult to maintain communication among the wagons in case of some difficulty. Staying in a more compact group improved the ability to defend the caravan and it allowed the wagons to be quickly arranged into a defensive configuration. And, if all traveled in a single line, it might become too dusty or too muddy for the wagons at the end of the line.⁴⁴ The result is that the Santa Fe Trail is not a single track or "cow path" across the prairie; instead, it is a corridor of multiple wagon paths that can be one-quarter mile or more wide. In addition, the corridor would shift from time to time as the caravans sought slightly gentler grades, or one area became too wet and muddy, or stream crossing had to be shifted to new locations after floods.

In the early days of the Santa Fe Trail, the wagons were drawn by horses or mules. In 1829, Brevet Major Bennett Riley utilized oxen to pull 20 wagons loaded with flour and four ox carts with camp equipment (in addition, there was a cannon and carriage pulled by mules) on the military escort of traders on the Santa Fe Trail to the Arkansas River, the boundary with Mexico.^{45, 46} Riley returned from the expedition with

24 yoke of oxen after losing several oxen during the trip. Riley writes in his report, "...I let Mr. [Charles] Bent have one yoke ... and he writes in that he went through to Santa Fe better than the mules..." "I let Mr. Bent have them to try whether oxen in the future, if we could get them, would answer, they are so much cheaper. One team of three yokes of oxen will not cost more than two mules."⁴⁷ News of this successful use of oxen was not lost upon the traders, many of whom thereafter used the less expensive oxen to draw their wagons rather than mules. The reader may be interested to know that present day Ft. Riley is named in honor of this same Major Bennett Riley.

The result of the passage of thousands of wagons and people, and tens of thousands of draft animals over the years destroyed the vegetation of the fragile prairie along the corridor of travel. The mechanical pounding of hooves and wheels, and erosion due to wind and water, eventually resulted in the development of parallel depressions along the path of travel. These depressions are called swales or ruts, and are generally the width of a wagon at the bottom, several feet wide at the top, and from a few inches to a few feet deep. From the air, the corridor of swales has the appearance of a giant comb having been dragged across the prairie. In many areas, the vegetation which re-developed in the disturbed areas is noticeably different than the surrounding native vegetation. The swales and differences in vegetation are visible to this day in areas left in pasture and not disturbed by cultivation or earth moving activities. Marion County has some of the most extensive visible remnants of the Santa Fe Trail to be found anywhere.

Many famous, and not so famous, people traveled the Santa Fe Trail, and many of them recorded their experiences in diaries and reports. Most travelers generally made note of Council Grove and of Cottonwood Crossing. Many mentioned Diamond Spring. Interestingly, Lost Spring is seldom mentioned during the early years of the Trail, and if it is, little detail is given. This is quite interesting, as Lost Spring was about one day's drive west of Diamond Spring and one day's drive east of Cottonwood Crossing. Riley in his journal of the military escort of 1829 does not mention Lost Spring.⁴⁸ Susan Magoffin mentions camping at Lost Spring in 1846, being delayed there for a day due to rain, but giving no details of the spring or its surroundings.⁴⁹ H. B. Mollhausen does not mention Lost Spring in his travels of 1858, although he and his party probably camped at present day Tampa, Kansas on the evening of July 14, 1858.⁵⁰ William Richardson mentions Lost Spring in his journal of 1846: "September 1st. – Came to a place, called "Lost Spring," a most singular curiosity. The stream rises suddenly out of the ground, and after rushing over the sand a few yards, as suddenly sinks, and is no more seen."⁵¹

Lost Spring does sometimes appear in tabulations of mileage between various points along the Trail. It is not listed in an 1842 tabulation (although it does list Prairie Spring and Hook's Spring, which would not have been far from today's Lost Spring)⁵² nor in an 1848 tabulation of distances and camp sites;⁵³ however, Lost Spring is listed in 1844,⁵⁴ 1858,⁵⁵ and 1859⁵⁶ tabulations.

Thus, we have seen the traffic on the Santa Fe Trail grow from a few pack animals to thousands of wagons each year, traveling across Marion County, leaving their mark on the prairie.

4. The 1857 General Land Office Survey

In 1854, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, creating the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, the western boundary of the Territories initially being the Continental Divide. The population of Kansas Territory was 8,500 in 1854 and 100,000 by 1860.⁵⁷ Clearly there was increasing pressure to open the prairies for White settlement. The 1862 Homestead Act would soon become a reality (January 1, 1863). To reference the boundaries of land that might be obtained by individuals, the government instituted a monumental task --- divide the prairies into uniquely defined and locatable rectangular parcels, according to a system of survey established by the Land Ordinance Act of 1785.⁵⁸ By laborious surveys, reference points would be established marking the corners of 'sections' of land, and marking the half-section lines to define 'quarter-sections.' A 'section' is one mile square; a quarter-section is one-half mile square. These surveys to this day are the basis for defining land ownership in Kansas. For an excellent and fascinating description of how these surveys were accomplished, the reader may consult the Kansas Society of Land Surveyors web site.⁵⁹

In 1857, some thirty-six years after Becknell made his first trading venture to Santa Fe, the General Land Office caused the public land surveys to be performed in Marion County. The surveys had two equally important purposes. The first was to establish the reference points for sections and quarter-sections described above. The second, which I believe is not generally recognized or appreciated, was to record an inventory of the land, both natural features (streams, lakes, natural resources, land suitable for farming or grazing, and so forth) and man-made features (roads, buildings, fences, and so forth). The surveyors were given extensive instructions on what to look for and record, and how to record it.⁶⁰ The surveyors kept notes, and maps were produced from those notes. The notes and surveys give us a snap-shot in time of what this great land looked like in 1857 in Marion County.

Of particular interest on the 1857 General Land Office map of Marion County is the location of the Santa Fe Trail and the location noted for Lost Spring in Section 16, both shown on *Figure 2*.⁶¹ Based on my research and study, and the 1857 GLO map, I believe the Lost Spring described in various accounts prior to 1857, and probably prior to 1859, refer to the Lost Spring in Section 16, which is a little over a mile to the northeast of what we today commonly identify as Lost Spring in Section 17. As this statement differs from many articles written about Lost Spring over the years, some further discussion is in order to validate this opinion.

- I rely heavily on the accuracy of the 1857 GLO survey map⁶¹ and notes⁶² because from the amount of traffic previously described, there can be no doubt that the Santa Fe Trail was plainly visible to the surveyors and because any other roads or alternate routes would have been noted on the survey notes and shown on the map if they existed. No trail or spring is shown on the map or recorded in the survey notes in Section 17. Other GLO maps prepared at this

time show alternate routes of the Santa Fe Trail at Cottonwood Crossing, as well as other trails such as the Cherokee Trail and the Kaw Trail several miles to the southwest.

- The Survey of U.S. Mail Route No. 8912⁶³ surveyed March 1858 corresponds to the 1857 GLO survey except the segment B-E is not shown, indicating the mail route traveled B-C-D-E on the attached map (*Figure 2*). I do not believe the March 1858 survey is merely a copy of the 1857 survey because the 1858 survey has considerably more detail, showing the lands and legal descriptions of the mail stage stations, and which branches of the Santa Fe Trail at Lost Spring and at Cottonwood Crossing were on the mail route. And, remember, the mail stages had now been in operation for eight years, and the stages now ran semi-monthly (4 stages per month, two each way).⁴⁰ The mail stage stations in the vicinity in 1858 were Council Grove, Diamond Spring, Cottonwood Crossing, and Moore's Ranch;⁶³ no Lost Spring stage station is shown.⁶³ Lost Spring is labeled on the Mail Route No. 8912 map in the same location as shown on the 1857 GLO map.
- Aerial photos taken in 1956 clearly show the Santa Fe Trail corresponding to the 1857 GLO survey. The Trail appears as a corridor 150 to over 250 feet wide running H-J-K on *Figure 2*, with 8 to 10 parallel ruts visible.⁶⁴ There can be no question that this section of the Santa Fe Trail received very heavy usage.
- Aerial photographs taken in 1991 show traces of the Santa Fe Trail A-B,⁶⁵ at D,⁶⁶ and possibly at F⁶⁷ on *Figure 2*. At A-B, the gentle swales can be seen today on the ground in a hay meadow, and the Trail is marked by a 1908 limestone marker, possibly set by the Marion County Old Settlers. At D, one distinct rut is visible on the ground today, but the others have been obliterated because the area is used as a feed lot. The traces of the Santa Fe Trail at A-B and D also appear in the previously mentioned 1956 aerial photos.⁶⁸ The coloration in the field in the 1991 aerial photographs at E⁶⁹ indicates the presence of the Trail, and is consistent with the appearance of the Trail in other aerial photos of cultivated fields that I have examined.⁷⁰ There are linear features both in the 1991⁶⁷ and 1956⁷¹ aerial photos at F that could be indicative of the Trail.
- Mileages reported in various accounts give us some information in determining whether Lost Spring in the tabulations was in Section 16 or Section 17. Several sources are in remarkably close agreement on the distance from Council Grove to Diamond Spring^{25, 55, 56, 63, 72} and from Council Grove to Cottonwood Crossing.^{52, 55, 63, 72} Of those, three^{55, 56, 72} provide distance information from Lost Spring to Cottonwood Crossing; those mileages are in close agreement and are, in my opinion, consistent with Lost Spring being in Section 16.
- I believe the two routes shown on the 1857 GLO map could explain why some travelers noted Lost Spring and some did not. Depending on whether they were traveling slow or fast, did or did not need water, and where they chose to camp, they may or may not have actually come upon Lost Spring in Section 16.
- I have examined the location of the Lost Spring in Section 16. A strong flow of water issues forth from a cavity in the rocks at the base of a small rocky cliff. There is one very discernable swale either side of the creek that indicates a

crossing point a few yards downstream of the spring. There are deep erosion gullies just downstream of that crossing which may have started as swales and would indicate another crossing point. Just downstream of these crossings, the area along the creek is very swampy. There is level ground east of the spring that would have made a good camping area. This spring is on Lyon Creek. Interestingly, water cress grows here.

Subsequent to development of the above bulleted information, final confirmation of the location of Lost Spring on Section 16 came from Mr. Steve Brosemer, a professional surveyor from Emporia, Kansas. He located reference to Lost Spring in a General Land Office surveyor's note dated July 1857. The note summarizes the qualities of land in T 17 S, R 4 E. The note reads in part, "There are some fine springs of fresh water in this Township and among their number is the spring known to all Santa Fe traders and trains as the Lost Spring. It is situated in Section 16 near the center of the section. The spring affords fine fresh water."

In summary, the location of Lost Spring in Section 16 is consistent with the 1857 GLO survey notes and map, and with early accounts. So, how does all of this relate to what we know today as Lost Spring in Section 17?

5. The Times They Are Changin'

International trade with Mexico dominated the early years of the Trail. In 1846, Santa Fe came under control of the United States, and supplies and trade goods continued to be carried along the trail. Soon thereafter, government freighting of supplies to military forts dominated the Santa Fe Trail, quickly followed by introduction of mail stages that carried the U.S. Mail. I believe the introduction of mail stages in turn helped to introduce a different class of people along the Santa Fe Trail. Previously, most people on the Trail were those actually engaged in the operation of the freighting, traveled self-sufficiently at a relatively slow pace, and lived off the land and the supplies they carried. Now, by the late 1850s there are businessmen, people traveling for various reasons, and others riding the relatively swift mail stages, with little opportunity to obtain provisions or rest. Mail stage stations were created to provide fresh stock. With mail stage stations and military forts, there are now more non-native people occupying the land, whereas earlier, most non-natives merely passed through. There was some minor amount of emigration, in addition to relatively large numbers of travelers involved in the 1849 California Gold Rush and the 1859 Colorado Gold Rush (or, perhaps, more correctly the Kansas Gold Rush, as portions of Colorado Territory located east of the Continental Divide were not carved out of Kansas Territory until 1861).⁷³ And, in addition, with the influx of non-native inhabitants, Kansas had become a Territory.

Particularly after the mail stages began running weekly in 1858,⁴⁰ and with the generally slow but significant influx of people into the Territory, I believe there arose business opportunities for entrepreneurs; those opportunities took the form of "road ranches," perhaps the 1860s equivalent of today's convenience store, bar, and grill. Some road ranches seemed to be integral with mail stage stations; other road ranches

were simply located along the trail. All provided various services such as fresh stock, feed for stock, supplies such as ammunition, provisions, liquor, and simply a place for persons to congregate. While road ranches may sound somewhat romantic and may have provided a public service, it is interesting to note that Tom C. Cranmer, in his "Rules and Regulations by Which to Conduct Wagon Trains," says that Wagonmasters are "never to idle your time about a station, town, or grocery" and to "never allow card playing"... all in addition to the general prohibition of liquor on wagon trains.⁷⁴ It sounds as if road ranches could have a deleterious effect on the organized conduct of freighting.

In the late 1850s we see the establishment of mail stage stations or road ranches along the Santa Fe Trail ahead of settlement of the area (I make a distinction among: road ranches which were neither mail stage stations nor Post Offices; mail stage stations which were not Post Offices;^{63, 75} and, Post Offices⁶³). It is unclear when George Smith established a station at Cottonwood Crossing; however, the 1857 GLO map⁶¹ shows a hotel just south of the crossing, and the 1858 survey of Mail Route No. 8912 shows land related to Mail Station No. 9 at Cottonwood Crossing in portions of Section 17 and 20, T 18 S, R 2 E.⁶³ In any event, Smith sold out to Abraham and Ira Moore in 1859.⁷⁶ George Smith then moved farther east and established another station that same year at Lost Spring⁷⁷ --- except, this Lost Spring is located near the south quarter-corner of Section 17, T 17 S, R 4 E, over a mile southeast of the Lost Spring previously identified in Section 16, all as shown on *Figure 3*.

From study of available documents, I believe that sometime between the time of the GLO survey of 1857, and 1859 when Smith established the Lost Spring Station, the stages began taking a short-cut shown by the dotted line as shown on *Figure 3*. This "Alternate Route" has been described by the Marion County Surveyor,⁷⁸ who describes points L, M, N, P, and R on *Figure 3*. The route is also visible in aerial photos of Section 19 at O,^{79, 80} and through Section 24,^{64, 81} particularly at Q on *Figure 3*. This route was shorter than the main trail which I believe was located farther south and continued to be used. I believe the relatively fast and light stages, as well as travelers on horseback, could easily negotiate going down into and up out of the valley, ravine, and creek bed of Cress Creek, while the relatively slow and heavy freight trains would logically prefer the longer route to the south because it presented more gentle terrain. I assume the stages could run-through without camping, while the freighters might still camp at the Section 16 Lost Spring. The Section 17 Lost Spring could also furnish some water, but it is interesting to note that a well was dug at the Lost Spring Station not far from the spring.⁸²

Given the above hypothesis, it would not have taken long for stages and others to create a definite trail along the route which passed Lost Spring Station, with weekly stage runs in each direction beginning in 1858⁴⁰ and military patrols along the Trail. If that was the case, when George Smith decided in 1859 to establish another road ranche, a logical location would be on the stage route, near a spring, and close to the established camping spot at the Lost Spring of Section 16. Perhaps in an effort to give his new road ranche "name recognition" he logically might call it Lost Spring Station, and the adjacent spring in Section 17 would then become known as Lost Spring.

6. Lost Spring Station Established

An account of the establishment of the Lost Spring Station is presented in Van Meter's "Marion County Kansas, Past and Present", which blends together several accounts from various other sources. I will quote Van Meter extensively in italics⁸³ below, interspersed with quotes from other sources that are shown in normal font.

George Smith established a hotel and tavern, and *was the first man to run the station at Lost Spring. The station house was located on the south side of the trail [near the north quarter-corner of Section 20, T 17 S, R 4 E] southeast of the main spring and situated on a knoll where one could see up and down the treeless ravine and creek bed. The three-room structure measured 30 feet by 40 feet with an L extension on the south side containing the dining room and kitchen. The construction was of siding with the joints 'stripped,' (or clapboard standing on end). The roof was covered with sod and dirt, thus making a very comfortable dwelling.*⁸² *There were four outside doors and five windows and each had twelve small lights.* The rooms were papered with newspapers, and bricks for the chimneys being unavailable, the stovepipes, called 'prairie chimneys,' ran up and through the roof. Southwest of the ranch house was a stockade enclosing about an acre of ground, a great hollow square surrounded by eight-foot posts, with loopholes at regular intervals. These posts were hauled by Fletcher Cress on Lyon Creek, from about five miles north of the station.⁸² *In case the spring got 'Lost' Alexis D. Blanchett had dug a well about a rod⁸² south of the house in 1860.*

In 1859 the ownership of the Lost Spring Station passed from Smith to Jack H. Costello. When a teenager, Costello had enlisted as a drummer in the U.S. Army. He had served in the Mexican War, and at posts in New Orleans and San Antonio. He had a reputation of being as wild as any ordinary soldier of his time. He was mustered out at Ft. Union⁸⁴ and was returning east over the Trail with several others when they stopped at the Lost Spring Station for the night. George Smith and the travelers spent the night drinking whiskey and playing cards. Smith ran out of cash and gambled the ownership of the station. Costello was in such a stupor he didn't realize that he had won the station from Smith until the next morning when Smith and the others saddled their horses and rode away.

Jack Costello completed the building of the station and stockade. He ordered more supplies and liquor and tended to cater to gamblers and toughs who came along the Trail.

Costello was joined in the fall of 1859 by Thomas Wise and family who had been unsuccessful gold seekers in Colorado. Wise had intended to stay overnight only at the station, but instead decided to stay because the land around there seemed excellent for farming. Costello and Wise became partners in the Lost Spring Station.

The Homestead Act of 1862 became effective January 1, 1863, at which time persons could file for a Homestead Entry. However, Costello, through his improvements to the land, apparently had a pre-emption that gave him a prior claim. In the Land Tract Book ⁸⁵, he is shown to have a claim on the following land as of December 31, 1862, thus pre-empting claims to this land by others under the 1862 Homestead Act:

SE ¼ of the SW ¼, Section 17, T 17 S, R 4 E
SW ¼ of the SE ¼, Section 17, T 17 S, R 4 E
NE ¼ of the NW ¼, Section 20, T 17 S, R 4 E
NW ¼ of the NE ¼, Section 20, T 17 S, R 4 E

Thus, Costello claimed 160 acres approximately centered on the Lost Spring Station. This is a somewhat unusual claim, as claims generally were for whole quarter sections.

Costello obtained a Patent on those four 40 acre tracts by “purchasing” the land using a military bounty warrant. The Patent reads, “Whereas, In pursuance of the Act of Congress approved March 3, 1855, entitled ‘An Act in addition to certain acts granting Bounty land to certain Officers and soldiers who have been engaged in the military service of the United States,’ there has been deposited in the General Land Office Warrant 100,873 for 160 acres in favor of Augustine Perez, Teamster, U.S. Quartermaster Department, war with Mexico ... the said warrant having been assigned by the said Augustine Perez to John H. Costello”. The patent is dated June 15, 1864, but was not filed for record until December 24, 1885.⁸⁶ (Patents were often not recorded until some years after the date of the patent.) I have found no information on why Mr. Perez assigned the Bounty Warrant to Costello, although a good assumption would be that Mr. Perez saw more value in cash money than land, and sold the warrant to Costello. Selling of bounty warrants was not uncommon.⁸⁷

7. Activities at the Station

The Marion County Commissioner’s Journal, Vol. 1 (available at the Marion County, Kansas Courthouse), records the Minutes of the Commission meeting of November 10th, 1865. One action of the Commission was recorded on Page 10 as follows: “License was granted to J. H. Costello for to keep a dram shop in Marion Township in Marion County, Kansas for one year to commence on the 10th day of October 1865.” It is interesting to note that the license was granted retro-actively, although Costello paid \$50.00 for the license on August 19th, 1865 as recorded in the Marion County Treasurer’s Book, Volume 1 (also available at the Marion County, Kansas Courthouse). The Minutes of the Commission, Pages 9 and 10, also contain election results for County Officers, a partial list of which follows:

A. A. Moore	State Representative
T. [Thomas] J. Wise	Probate Judge
Charles O. Fuller	County Commissioner
A. A. Moore	County Treasurer
F. Laloge	Constable

Interestingly, all were road ranche proprietors in Marion County. Presumably, being active in local politics was a good idea to protect and promote one's business interests.

The Marion County Treasurer's Book, Volume 1, Page 5, lists an "Account of Money Received for Dram Shop Licenses for the Year 1865." Among the names are: C. O. Fuller, Laloge and Martin, J. H. Costello, A.A. Moore, and William Mathewson (Buffalo Bill) --- all road ranche proprietors. Sale of liquor apparently was important to the business of running a road ranche.

As an aside, Marion County was temporarily in existence in 1855 only, but began to take on its present shape in 1861. During 1865-1866, Marion County was temporarily expanded to encompass approximately the southwestern one-fourth of what is present day Kansas.⁷³

In reviewing various sources, I have discovered some confusion regarding the mail stage companies operating at various times past Lost Spring. A listing which I have compiled from "First Mail West"⁸⁸ follows:

Waldo, Hall and Company	1850-1854
Hockaday and Hall	1854-1858
Jacob Hall	1858
Hall and Porter	1858-1860
Missouri Stage Company	1860-1861
Slemmons, Roberts and Company	1861-1862
Cottrill, Vickory and Company	1862-1863
M. Cottrill and Company	1863-1864
The Santa Fe Stage Company	1865-1866
Barlow and Sanderson	1866-1867

Sources that I have reviewed strongly indicate that Costello's hotel and tavern were a mail stage station, but when it actually became an official mail stage station rather than a road ranche is not defined. Most sources refer to it as "Lost Spring Station". Both Moore's Ranch and Diamond Spring were referred to as "U.S. Mail Stations" in 1858⁶³ and both later became Post Offices: Moore's Ranch in 1860 and Diamond Springs in 1859.⁹⁰ It is quite logical that Costello's Lost Spring establishment soon became a mail station prior to becoming a Post Office. A Post Office was established at Costello's Lost Spring Station (listed officially as "Lost Spring" not "Lost Springs") August 29, 1861 and

was closed May 23, 1864 as shown on *Figure 3*.⁹¹ The first Post Master at Lost Spring was Joshua Smith.⁹²

Beginning July 2, 1866, the mail stages left the rail head at Junction City traveling westward then southward, and did not join the Santa Fe Trail until a point on the Arkansas River near the mouth of Walnut Creek. All stage stations and post offices east of that point were then no longer served by the “Santa Fe Mail.”⁸⁹

Some references to Lost Spring^{93, 94} as being a “Pony Express Station” are historically incorrect. The system of routes established throughout the western United States to carry the U.S. Mail by contractors using wagons or coaches, which operated through Lost Spring Station, was not the “Pony Express.” The “Pony Express” only operated between St. Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento California during the period April 1860 and October 1861, following the route of the Oregon and California Trails.⁹⁵

8. End of One Era, Beginning of Another

The ending of the Civil War resulted in an initial and massive wave of western expansion and influx of Anglo-Americans. Construction of the transcontinental railroad had begun, and railroads were now pushing westward through Kansas. The Santa Fe Mail ceased to run on the Santa Fe Trail through Lost Spring Station when the railroad reached Junction City in 1866.⁸⁹ By 1867 the railroad had reached Abilene, and the era of the great cattle drives had begun.⁹⁶ By October 1867 the end of track had reached Hayes City.^{97, 98} The eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail advanced westward with the railroads, and the Santa Fe Trail as a highway of major interstate commerce in Marion County was over by 1867.⁹⁹ From end of track on the Union Pacific, Eastern Division (Kansas Pacific) the freight wagons would travel south and west until they intersected the Santa Fe Trail. Before the end of 1872, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway had advanced from Newton, through Dodge City and reached the Colorado border.¹⁰⁰ From there, the wagon trains carried goods on to Santa Fe.

With the dramatic decrease of traffic on the Santa Fe Trail, Wise and Costello operated the Lost Spring station and hotel until 1868, when Costello sold his interest in the land and the station to Thomas Wise. Costello moved to Marion Center (Marion) where he operated a general store and tavern, and was elected Marion’s first Mayor.¹⁰¹ The Trail was no doubt still used for local travel and commerce, and in addition to some minor military traffic, it was probably used by various travelers and emigrants who could not afford rail travel or otherwise chose to follow the Santa Fe Trail.

Over an approximately 20 year period we see a limited local economy based to a large degree on the Santa Fe Trail shift to a growing economy driven by a second wave of emigration that included settlement and town building. This is illustrated by the Kansas Post Office records. Trail related Post Offices closed: Diamond Spring 1863, Six Mile Creek 1866, Lost Spring 1864, Muddy Creek 1864, and Moore’s Ranch 1866.¹⁰² Settlement increased and towns with Post Offices were established: Diamond Springs (near Diamond Spring) 1868, Burdick (near Six Mile Creek) 1887, Tampa (at Muddy

Creek) 1888, Durham (near Moore's Ranch) 1887.¹⁰³ About this period in time, the County began to open roads along the section lines, and use of the Santa Fe Trail ceased altogether as quarter sections of land were homestead or purchased to establish farms to raise crops and livestock.

About a mile east of Lost Spring Station a community of sorts began to develop as settlement progressed through the 1870s and 1880s. The Lost Springs (Lost Springs, plural) Post Office was established July 9, 1879 with Benjamin C. Slagg as the first Postmaster,¹⁰⁴ fifteen years after the closure of the Lost Spring (Lost Spring, singular) Post Office. The Lost Springs Post Office and store were located on the south side of the road in the NE ¼ of the NW ¼, Section 21, T 17 S, R 4 E as shown on *Figure 3*. In 1885 this was on land owned by Moses F. Shupe. A school (District 49) was located ½ mile east and ½ mile north. Doster owned the north half of Costello's original 160 acres and Beebe owned the south half.¹⁰⁵ Menno Shupe opened a store, and a blacksmith shop was built nearby. Joe Shields operated a creamery and made cheese. Several houses were built within a half-mile radius.¹⁰⁶

On May 23, 1887 the Lost Springs Town Company filed a plat for the Town of Lost Springs where today's Town of Lost Springs is located.¹⁰⁶ The new Town of Lost Springs is located 1.5 miles east of the first Lost Springs Post Office. In 1887 the Santa Fe Railroad built east-west and the Rock Island Railroad built north-south, crossing at the new Town of Lost Springs. Both railroads completed depots in 1888.¹⁰⁶ The original Lost Springs soon withered as the new Town of Lost Springs developed. I have not determined when the Lost Springs Post Office was actually relocated to the new town site, but it likely would have been soon after the railroads were completed.

The 1902 Marion County Atlas shows Costello's original 160 acres as being owned by W. H. Oliver.¹⁰⁷ The original Lost Springs Post Office building is shown but was no longer labeled as a post office. The map must have been prepared before Costello's original 160 acres were acquired by J. B. Shields, as the land has been in the Shield's Family since 1902.¹⁰⁸ The 1921 Marion County Atlas shows J. B. Shields as the owner.¹⁰⁹

9. Marking the Santa Fe Trail

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) first proposed marking the Santa Fe Trail across Kansas in 1902. In 1905, Mr. Roy Marsh of Topeka, Kansas prepared a map of the Santa Fe Trail drawn on topographic sheets prepared by the Geological Survey (perhaps of interest, the topographic sheets south of the Arkansas River had not yet been completed).¹¹⁰ The DAR envisioned that 3 or 4 markers would be set along the Trail in each County, and they solicited local interest and suggestions for locations for the markers. Please refer to the attached map for locations of the markers described below (*Figure 4*).

In a letter to W. D. Armstrong dated September 25, 1906, Alex E. Case writes, "I received a letter this morning from Hon. G. W. Martin, Secretary of the State Historical

Society of Kansas saying that the Daughters of the American Revolution want to plant three or four monuments as markers of the Santa Fe Trail in Marion County. In my letter to Martin, I have suggested the sites of Lost Springs Ranch [Lost Spring Station?], Moore's Ranch, French Frank's Ranch, and one near the west line of the county, as nearly as possible to mark the place of the massacre of Ed Miller, of our settlement [Marion]."¹¹¹ Mr. Case's recommendations were followed except in the case of "Lost Springs Ranch," the DAR chose to place the marker in the Town of Lost Springs, between the Santa Fe and Rock Island depots.¹¹² (At some point in time, possibly 1908,¹¹³ that marker was moved to the east side of Highway 77, a mile east and about 1.1 miles north of the Town of Lost Springs.)

The DAR erected 96 monuments across the State of Kansas,¹¹⁴ in large part funded by an appropriation of \$1,000 from the State of Kansas¹¹⁵ and \$698.83 collected from children in 485 schools in a penny collection project.¹¹⁶ These granite monuments cost \$16.00 each plus freight and installation.¹¹⁷ The DAR monuments read:¹¹⁸

SANTA FE TRAIL
1822 – 1872
Marked by
The Daughters
of the
American Revolution
and the
State of Kansas
1906

The first DAR markers were placed in Rice County;¹¹⁹ most were placed in 1907. The date 1822 on the markers was chosen as the year wagons were first used for the Santa Fe trade, and 1872 as the year the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway reached the Colorado border.¹²⁰

For reasons unknown, the DAR chose to place their marker in the Town of Lost Springs rather than at the site of the Lost Spring Station. However, in 1908, the Marion County Old Settler's organization decided to erect additional monuments in the vicinity of Lost Spring and Lost Spring Station. The Old Settlers set one limestone monument on the main Santa Fe Trail 1.5 miles east of Lost Spring Station and another on the Alternate Later Route 0.5 miles west of Lost Spring Station.

J. B. Shields owned the "Costello 160 acres" in 1908, and he and the Marion County Old Settlers wanted to erect a monument on the site of the Lost Spring Station. Donations from local residents were solicited to help pay the \$155 cost of the monument.¹⁰⁸ Approximately 561 persons made donations ranging from 25 cents up to one dollar. A list of the persons donating, the amount donated, and the date they moved into the area was transcribed from the original list at the Marion County Historical Society by Sharon Waldschmidt Drake, July 2, 2006. Mrs. Drake was kind enough to provide me with a copy of her transcription. The base of the monument contains a "time

capsule” consisting of a half-gallon fruit jar sealed with wax containing a parchment scroll listing the names of those donors, and similar jars containing Indian relics, ox shoes, and other items.¹²¹ The west face of the monument is inscribed “Marked by the Old Settlers of Marion Co. July 4, 1908” and the east face is inscribed “Lost Springs [plural] Station on the Santa Fe Trail Operated 1822-1872”. The dates on the latter inscription apply to the Santa Fe Trail in general as inscribed on the DAR markers. As described earlier in this paper, I believe the Lost Spring Station and Alternate Later Route of the Santa Fe Trail date from about 1859 through 1868.

The dedication of the Old Settler’s Lost Spring Monument on July 4, 1908 was quite an event, with 800 to 1,000 people attending. “We think we never saw a grander sight than that long procession from the grove down over the stone arch bridge and up the hill to the monument, led by J.W. Moore, A. Terry and the Lost Springs band, and how eagerly they gathered around the monument to give of their old relics and historical belongings to be placed in that receptacle....Everyone says it was the grandest Fourth of July ever spent.”¹²²

Also about 1908, another stone marker was placed on the west line of Section 24, T 17 S, R 3 E, on the west side of today’s Quail Creek Road. The marker is inscribed:

SANTA FE TRAIL
1822 -1872
ERECTED BY THE CHILDREN
AND CITIZENS OF SCHOOL DIST 90
RAMONA MARION CO KAN
1908

This marker is often referred to as a “DAR Marker”, but it is not listed in the tabulation of the original 96 DAR markers.¹¹⁴ This marker is located near the western end of the Alternate Later Route, somewhat east of the intersection of the Santa Fe Trail defined by the 1857 land survey (which I call the Main Trail) and the Alternate Later Route. I have not delved into the history of this marker, and more research is needed.

About this same time, the Eunice Sterling Chapter of the DAR in Wichita, Kansas decided that it wanted to place a marker on the Santa Fe Trail. They chose to erect a relatively elaborate stone monument in the park in the Town of Lost Springs. This was south of but close to the DAR’s 1906 monument already placed in the Town of Lost Springs. The monument is inscribed “Erected by Eunice Sterling Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution Wichita 1908” The monument includes an inlaid bronze tablet on which is sculpted an illustration of oxen pulling a wagon. This monument was dedicated in a rather elaborate ceremony commencing promptly at 1 o’clock, Saturday, November 14, 1908⁸⁴ at which Ex-Senator “George P. Morehouse (justly named the historian on the Trail)”¹²³ was the keynote speaker.

10. Legend and Lore

In his address at the November 14, 1908 dedication, Morehouse applies the names Lost Spring and Lost Springs variously to the spring, the station, and the town, making the distinctions among the three very difficult. However, from my research I believe that his address did become the source of some Lost Spring lore often quoted in later years. Morehouse said,⁸⁴

“There are several reasons given why this place was called ‘Lost Springs.’ Presumably it came from the fact that it failed to flow at times and afterwards burst forth as usual. This might have happened at some long droughty period, and persons who were looking for the spring which they previously visited or heard described would naturally say it was lost.”

“Others claim that it was so named for the reason that it refreshed and saved a party of travelers or hunters who were lost on the plains.”

“Some have said it was covered up or destroyed by Indians so that it would not assist the white man across the plains and that there was something mysterious about its strange actions, running for some, dry for others.”

“There is no doubt the name came from the fact that certain Indians and travelers across the plains, who once had camped there were unable to find the spring during some subsequent trip in those days. It seemed to be a periodical spring flowing abundantly for years, then drying up or running low for a time; but whether running or dry, the place was called Lost Spring.”

Morehouse went on to say in his speech and in the poem he had written for the occasion, that the Kansa Indians called the spring “Nee-nee Yol-ly” meaning “Spring Good” or “Nee-nee Oke-pi-yah” meaning “Spring Lost”. He also said that the Spaniards called it “Agua Perdida” meaning “Water Lost”. I was able to confirm the Kansa translation with Justin McBride, Language Director of the Kaw Nation as follows:¹²⁴

- “Spring Good” in the Kaw language would be nihníⁿ yáli pronounced nee-nee yal-ly.
- “Spring Lost” in the Kaw language would be nihníⁿ oxpáye pronounced nee-nee oke-pi-yah.

Local legend is that Spaniards referred to Lost Spring as “Ollala Perdida”, supposedly meaning “Sweet Spring”.^{93,94} This is not correct, as “Ollala” does not appear to be a Spanish word and, of course, “Perdida” means “lost”. “Sweet Spring” would actually translate in Spanish as “Dulce Manantial”. “Agua Perdida” does translate as “Water Loss” or “Water Lost.”

A legend is prevalent that the source of the water flowing from Lost Spring is in Colorado, the spring being an outlet to an underground river;¹²⁵ or, the origin of the water is in the Rocky Mountains, with flow along an underground fault that is blocked by cave-ins from time to time.⁷⁷ The latter explanation was repeated in other references.^{126, 127, 130} However, this is not correct. Instead, “the Flint Hills are, in general, a region of water surplus; water leaves the region via many surface streams and by subsurface migration ... Groundwater migration is generally from east to west. Recharge takes place where aquifers outcrop to the east, and water moves down the regional bedrock dip toward the west”¹²⁸ into central Marion County. There are at least 14 springs in central and western Marion County fed from the Flint Hills to the east.¹²⁹ Lost Spring is one of them.

Other lore involving the spring and station appears in various forms and various writings in later years. I have not been able to trace the origin of these stories for certain, nor have I located any primary sources that would substantiate any of these stories. Nevertheless, I will summarize the recurring accounts that I have located in my research. Additional research is needed to determine if any of these stories can be substantiated with contemporaneous documents.

The statement that the government authorized planting of watercress and strawberries at the Spring in the 1840’s to help combat scurvy among soldiers appeared in Reference No. 77, and was repeated in later references.^{126, 127, 130} I have not located primary source documentation of this. Watercress thrives and commonly occurs naturally in most spring runs in Kansas¹⁴¹. Although cases of scurvy did occur along the Santa Fe Trail, I question whether untended strawberry plants would survive or would produce strawberries in useful quantities for trail travelers.

The Station is said to have catered to the lawless element, gamblers and toughs, with gambling and consumption of liquor.^{108, 126, 130, 131} This would be consistent with the admonition to wagonmasters to avoid stations, as mentioned earlier in this paper. Consumption of liquor is confirmed by the liquor license records previously mentioned in this paper. Drinking and gambling supposedly led to a number of shoot-outs, resulting in several deaths at the Station.^{108, 130} Depending on the reference, there were:

- One murdered in his sleep, and the body thrown down the well,^{94, 126}
- Five died or murdered, and buried northeast of the station,^{82, 94, 126}
- Eleven murdered,^{108, 126, 130, 131} with 9 buried nearby and 2 thrown down the well,^{108, 126, 130,} or
- The 9 nearby graves were not murder victims at all, but were cowboys frozen to death in a blizzard along with 1,000 head of cattle.⁸²

When it comes to people supposedly perishing in blizzards and buried nearby, you can take your pick of various accounts:

- Nine cowboys frozen to death in a blizzard along with 1,000 head of cattle,⁸²
- Eleven or 17 cowboys frozen to death in the blizzard of 1878,^{93, 94}
- Fifteen soldiers in the blizzard of 1885,¹³⁰ or simply 15 men,¹⁰⁸ or
- Fifteen cowboys along with 1,000 head of cattle in the blizzard of 1886.¹²⁶

Perhaps of interest, “the blizzard of December 1885 and January 1886 was probably the most destructive to life and property of any storm that ever swept over the state [up to 1912]. Losses of life during this blizzard were reported in Clark, Ellis, Ellsworth, Finney, Ford, and Wallace counties, together with a few casualties from the southwestern part of the State.”¹³² However, I have not found primary source documentation of blizzard deaths described in the Lost Spring legends.

In addition, there are supposedly 7 graves of unspecified circumstances,^{94, 126} and the grave of a “squaw” nearby.^{94, 126}

“Indian troubles” were reported:

- In 1865 a party of Indians kept the station under siege for a number of days, burning the hay and destroying the grain. Costello spent most of the time on the roof of the station and was not injured.¹³¹
- In another incident, Wise was trapped on the roof for half a day by Indians begging for whiskey. The Indians left when travelers approached.^{126, 131}
- A battle with Indians took place near the Station,^{93, 94} perhaps taking place in the late 1860s.¹²⁶

11. Later Developments

In its Eighteenth Biennial Report, 1911-1912, the Kansas State Historical Society published a “*Report of Committee Appointed to Prepare a Correct Map of the Old Santa Fe Trail Across the State of Kansas.*” This effort was proposed by George P. Morehouse in response to road improvement associations circulating inaccurate maps proposing roads which supposedly would follow the Santa Fe Trail. The “Correct Map” map, prepared by George A. Root of the Kansas State Historical Society and accompanying the report, is at a rather small scale and somewhat general in nature; therefore it has limited usefulness in precisely locating the Santa Fe Trail. The report references the marking of the Santa Fe Trail by the Society and the DAR only 5 or 6 years earlier, and states that for more detailed location of the Trail, the Society has sectional maps that show the location of the Trail and its minor variations to a fraction of a mile.²⁵ My speculation is that those “sectional maps” are the maps prepared by Roy Marsh for the DAR mentioned above in this paper. I did not locate those maps in my research at the Kansas State Historical Society, and those maps were not listed as references in the *Maps of the Santa Fe Trail*. This is an item that requires more research to see if those maps still exist.

It is interesting to observe that after 1912, there seems to be little further interest in marking and mapping the Trail, although there continued to be a number of books and articles written about the Santa Fe Trail in general and few about Lost Spring in particular. My speculation is that the marking and mapping activity of the early 1900s was a manifestation of the generation who actually experienced the Trail wanting to preserve the history of the Trail.¹³³ My perception is that to a degree, interest in the Trail waned among following generations preoccupied with WWI, economic expansion, the

Great Depression, WWII, and the social problems of the 1960's. At least in my experience, there seems to have been a renewed interest in our history and heritage in the 1970's.

I believe this renewed interest appeared on the National level as an outgrowth of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which lead to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which in turn lead to creation, for example, of the Historic American Engineering Record and the National Register of Historic Places. One example of this is nomination of Lost Spring for the National Register of Historic Places Inventory by Richard D. Pankratz, Director of the Kansas State Historical Society on December 5, 1975. Lost Spring was entered into the National Register September 30, 1976. The reader may find it of interest that the nomination forms and supporting documentation are clearly for the "Lost Spring" (singular) located in Section 17, and the nomination specifically excluded the Lost Spring Station.¹²⁷ However, again, the old problem of naming reappears, as the present National Register of Historic Places lists Lost Spring as "Lost Springs" (plural), site number 76000826,¹³⁴ not as "Lost Spring" (singular) as shown on the application.

"The 1968 National Trails System Act (Public Law 90-543) listed [the Santa Fe Trail] as one of 14 trails to be studied for possible designation as either a national scenic or recreational trail. In 1976 the former Bureau of Outdoor Recreation determined that the Santa Fe Trail was nationally significant and merited recognition for the role it played in the westward expansion of the United States. However, the Trail did not meet the legislative criteria for designation as a national scenic trail."¹³⁵

"In 1978, a new category for national historic trails was created." "The Santa Fe Trail clearly [met the criteria for a national historic trail], as supported by the National Park Service (NPS) testimony in 1986 and 1987 before House and Senate subcommittees. Various organizations, such as the Santa Fe Trail Association, and individuals worked diligently to ensure passage of the national historic trails legislation for the Santa Fe Trail. On May 8, 1987, President Ronald Reagan signed Public Law 100-35 (an amendment to the National Trails System Act) to establish the Santa Fe National Historic Trail" (SFNHT).¹³⁵

In May 1990, the NPS published a "Comprehensive Management and Use Plan" for the SFNHT. Appendix C, "High Potential Historic Sites and Route Segments Along the Santa Fe Trail" of the Plan lists Lost Spring as Site Number 82.¹³⁶ As part of the Plan, the NPS contracted with the Patrice Press to prepare a comprehensive set of maps of the Santa Fe Trail.¹³⁷ The maps were published in 1989 in the book "Maps of the Santa Fe Trail." In that book, the location of the Trail closely matches the historic maps and present physical evidence, but the location of Lost Spring does not match the documentation for the location of the Lost Spring in either Section 16 or Section 17. And, the maps do not show the Alternate Later Route passing by the Lost Spring in Section 17.¹³⁸ I have plotted the data from "Maps of the Santa Fe Trail" on the attached map for the reader's reference (*Figure 5*).

The Patrice Press maps became the basis for the 1990 Map Supplement to the NPS's Comprehensive Management and Use Plan. The map in the NPS Map Supplement shows the location of the Section 17 Lost Spring, but the location of the Santa Fe Trail is shown entirely wrong in the vicinity of Lost Spring.¹³⁹

The Santa Fe Trail Association (SFTA) was founded in 1986 for the purpose of preserving and promoting the history of the Santa Fe Trail. The SFTA holds a biennial symposium in September of odd numbered years where persons interested in the Santa Fe Trail can share information, learn more about the Trail, and tour local Trail sites. In 2005 the symposium was held in McPherson, Kansas, at which time the Shields family was honored with an Award of Merit for Trail Preservation in recognition of their preservation of Lost Spring and promotion of the history of Lost Spring Station for almost 100 years.¹⁴⁰

In 2008, the Virginia Shields Trust donated an easement to Marion County, Kansas for the purpose of constructing a "wayside exhibit" to inform visitors of the history of Lost Spring and the history of the Santa Fe Trail in the vicinity. The project to develop the wayside exhibit was sponsored by the Cottonwood Crossing Chapter of the SFTA, and the project was endorsed by the national SFTA. The project, in general, consisted of:

- Relocating the 1908 monument to the north side of County Road 340 in a location more conveniently accessible, and providing a new base for the monument.
- In the process of relocation of the monument, finding the "time-capsules" placed under the monument in 1908; however, they were broken and the contents severely deteriorated.
- Installing a historic interpretive plaque (wayside exhibit) describing the Lost Spring Station and spring, and describing other features related to the Santa Fe Trail of historical interest in the general vicinity.
- Providing a parking area off of the County Road
- Providing public access to the spring.

The relocation of the monument occurred in July 2009, and the formal dedication of the Lost Spring Wayside Exhibit was held in July 2010 after all work was completed for the site.

12. Conclusion

The history of Lost Spring and vicinity is interesting and significant. Earlier printings of this paper provided the basis for the interpretive information that is presented at the Lost Spring Wayside Exhibit.

I encourage and welcome input from the reader. While many references are cited, there are no doubt others I have not located that could provide valuable information --- information which could further confirm, or require modification of the conclusions presented in this paper.

I wish to thank Richard Hayden of McPherson, Kansas for his excellent work in creating the maps attached hereto. I also wish to thank Dr. Leo Oliva, the late Harry Myers, and the late Dr. David Clapsaddle for their review of, and comments on a preliminary draft of this paper. Nevertheless, I am fully responsible for its content, and any errors are my own.

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First Printing October 2008
Second Printing April 2010
Third Printing, June 2017