

## **Wet/Dry Routes**

Larned, KS

President George Elmore

We met on April 30 at Fort Larned, with a program by Park Superintendent Kevin Eads on his time in the National Park Service and his vision on the long- and short-term goals at Fort Larned.

END OF THE TRAIL for two chapter members:

Sympathy is extended to family and friends of Mary Cottom who passed away on February 27, 2023, in Manhattan, Kansas. Both Melvin and Mary had a longtime interest in history and especially Santa Fe Trail history. They were longtime members of the chapter as well as the Old Guard at Fort Larned, Santa Fe Trail Association, Kansas State Historical Society, and the Riley County Historical Society, to name a few. Melvin Cottom was on the faculty of Kansas State University in Electrical Engineering. Burial was in the Pleasant Valley Cemetery. Memorial may be sent to KSU Foundation, Beach Museum of Art, 2323 Anderson Ave, Manhattan, KS 66502. Happy trails to you.

Dorothy Kroh, charter member of the chapter, died on March 18, 2023, in Lenexa, Kansas. Lee and Dorothy were instrumental in forming the Kansas City Area Historical Trails Association as well as marking trail sites in the Greater Kansas City area. You always found them at every SFTA function as well as many historical societies in the Kansas City area. Long before they formed KCAHTA, they were marking various trails, including the Military Trail that ran through the location of Dorothy's parents' home. The Clapsaddles met them at Bent's Old Fort parking lot in about 1985 and became fast

friends since. Sympathy is extended to Bryan and Roger Kroh and families as well as a score of friends. Dorothy has joined Lee and David, no doubt marking trails. You are missed.

When we think about a thief, normally we are thinking about someone who takes something that belongs to another for their own personal gain. Theft affects us all, in a way that we often don't think about as stealing. Theft of history takes place, and in a way is an insidious form of theft. For example, a historian will spend weeks, days, and hours to understand a battle, structure, trail crossing, or historic village site. Then a book, map, or marker is placed that gives the location of the site for the public to learn and get an appreciation for the site and its history. Someone takes that information, then uses a metal detector, or relic hunts the site, removing the artifacts just to put them in a box at home.

The artifacts are important as they help tell the complete story of the site and are now gone. Often, without location identification, a wonderful resource is now stolen from the historic record. This isn't just stealing knowledge from the historian but stealing from you too, and everyone in the futures' complete understanding of the site. Sometimes the relic hunter will have permission of the landowner to locate and remove the artifacts. The landowner may not have the appreciation for the artifacts or even care about the site's history.

When artifacts are found they should be documented with the exact location, and eventually given to a public holding that will preserve, allowing researchers the able to study the artifacts. The focus is on making the information available for future research. A perfect example of this is the work done in Pawnee County by Earl Monger. All the material he located was well documented and today is located at the Kansas State Historical Society and the Santa Fe Trail Center.