

Archeologists Investigate Santa Fe

Editor's Note: Part I of Marsha King's two-part article on the April 1995 investigations of four Santa Fe Trail sites by the Kansas Anthropological Training Program (KATP) appeared in the May-June 1995 issue of Kansas Preservation. Marsha is on the staff of the Archeology Office of the Kansas State Historical Society.

The Havana Stage Station (14OS1301) is located on the south side of K-31 highway approximately four miles west of Burlingame. No structures were present at this site in 1856 when the General Land Office Survey was conducted. The stage station was constructed in 1858 when the adjacent townsite of Havana was founded by a group of Germans from Chicago and St. Louis. Nearly fifty German and French families settled in and around the town. In addition to the stage station, at least six small buildings, a store, and a large stone hotel were built at the site. The station operated as a stop on the mail stage line offering meals and lodging until around 1869, when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad arrived in nearby Burlingame. A mill and a large distillery were under construction when the town of Havana was abandoned in the early 1870s. Many of the German residents moved to Alma,



Freda Thompson of Atchison and Laverna and Walter Ernst of Enterprise record architectural features of the Havana Stage Station.

and the townsite property was sold for nonpayment of taxes.

The 1879 Edwards Brothers Osage County atlas shows only three structures in the area that had been Havana. One building was indicated on the south side of what is now K-31 highway, probably the stone building. Two structures were shown on the north side of this road, "School No. 8" and a residence, probably the

large stone hotel built at Havana. After the stage station and townsite were abandoned, the site was part of a farm. The remaining buildings were used for storage, a red barn was built to the east, and a granary was built to the south of the stone stage building. The old townsite lands were used for hog pens, pasture, and culti-

(Continued on page 5)

Historic Preservation Office in New Location

By the time this issue of *Kansas Preservation* is distributed, the Historic Preservation Office should be settling into our new offices. With the building construction complete, the entire staff of Kansas State Historical Society, excluding historic sites curators, will now be located at 6425 S.W. 6th Street, Topeka, KS 66615-1099.

With all the opportunities a new building provides, some unexpected changes and difficulties can be anticipated, not the least of which is a change in phone numbers. The central phone number for the Society will be 913-272-8681, and the FAX number will be 913-272-8682. The

Society is updating many of its technical systems including the installation of a telephone voice mail system. While this type of communication system is becoming commonplace, staff is as yet unfamiliar with the system; some time delays in response may occur. Extension numbers for the Historic Preservation Office staff members will be as follows:

Historic Preservation Office,
 general number, 233
 Dick Pankratz, 217
 Desmond Anyanwu, 216
 Martha Hagedorn-Krass, 213
 Larry Jochims, 215
 Sandy McDaniel, 233

Carl Magnuson, 227
 Kim Rivera, 225
 Courtney Swann, 226
 Barry Williams, 214
 Doris Wilson, 234

A minimal amount of delay can be expected in correspondence, project reviews, response to requests for information, etc., since the move required the office to close for several days to pack, move, and unpack. As is usually the case, unpacking and organizing a new space takes longer than anticipated. Please accept our apologies for any delay that has occurred or may occur.

Trail Sites in Osage County (Part II)



Archeologist Tim Weston (right) checks the progress of Barbara Burgess of Topeka and Dolores Werder of Valley Falls as they search for the foundation corner of the Havana Stage Station.

vation. The ruins of the stone stage station are still standing.

Archeological investigations conducted at this site documented the standing ruins and other foundations. The stone stage building was a rectangular structure; as originally built, it was 18.3 feet wide and consisted of a line of four interconnecting rooms. A single unit was excavated along the west side of this building to examine the foundations of the ruined portion of the structure. A rubble mound, probably the remains of the large stage stable or barn, is located south of the stage station within a partial stone wall enclosure. A capped well with a pump is nearby. After excavating through considerable stone from fallen walls, participants exposed a large foundation stone with underlying footings and a possible drain feature in the west wall of a unit laid out near the northeast corner of the mound. A third excavation unit was laid out across the north wall of a small stone-lined depression, a possible small house or shed. This foundation, which measures approximately eleven by sixteen feet, is located northeast of the rubble mound. In addition to a large quantity of machine-cut square nails, farm machinery parts, and fragments of

barbed wire, several more interesting pieces were recovered during the metal detection survey at Havana: a brass finial, a padlock, and a metal step possibly from a stage or buggy.

Visitors to the site during the Kansas Archeology Training Program (KATP) furnished information about modifications to the site. Most indicated that over the years large quantities of limestone have been removed from the site, resulting in the destruction of buildings and stone walls. They provided a number of differing interpretations of the history and layout of Havana, and of the locations and functions of specific buildings. Several suggested that a large three-story stone house that once stood across the highway from the site was the newer stage station or hotel. The visitors also indicated that the stone walls to the south had formed a completely enclosed rectangular stone corral. The mound inside the enclosure was referred to as having been a large stone barn, possibly the stage stable, with stone-arched openings at the east and west ends.

The Dragoon Creek Crossing (14OS1303) is a rock bottom stream crossing located on the north side of K-31 highway west of Burlingame and a short distance east of Havana.

In 1825 Benjamin Reeves described what appears to be the Dragoon Creek Crossing as having a bold current and "good rocky ford." Wilson Hobbs mentioned that in July 1852 he encountered "deep fording for ponies" at Dragoon Creek. He indicated that "the stream ran in a very narrow and deep channel, so that a small increase of water made fording difficult or impossible." The 1858 *Guidebook to Gold Mines of Western Kansas* indicates that at Dragoon Creek "wood, water, and grass will be found on the west side of the creek, and south of the road."

The exact location of this crossing is disputed. The 1856 General Land Office Survey shows the Santa Fe Trail crossing Dragoon Creek just south of the center of section 7. The location identified as Dragoon Creek Crossing by the National Park Service and the consultant who prepared draft nominations is on the western edge of the section near the section line road. This site, which is locally referred to as "Rocky Ford," has a solid rock bottom. It also has a very steep bank on the west side.

Both crossing locations and the trail route leading to and from the crossings were briefly examined during the project. The fields to the south and west of Dragoon Creek were being burned off, making survey difficult. Historical cultural material marking the site of a late-nineteenth-century farmstead was recovered to the north and east of the crossing area. We were not able to determine which of the two suggested locations was the Dragoon Creek Crossing of the Santa Fe Trail. It is possible that both crossings were utilized during the sixty years that the trail was actively used as a freight road.

The other Santa Fe Trail stream crossing examined as part of the KATP event was the Soldier Creek Crossing (14OS1302). This site is located south of K-31 highway a short distance west of Havana and a short distance southeast of the grave of Samuel Hunt. Hunt was a young dragoon in Colonel Dodge's expedition to the Rocky Mountains who

(Continued on page 6)

Archeologists Investigate Santa Fe Trail . . .
(Continued from page 5)

died of measles near this crossing on September 11, 1835.

This creek was variously referred to in early accounts. George C. Sibley's notes of the survey expedition refer to this stream interchangeably as "Waggon Creek" and "Pat's Creek," because in 1825 Garrison Patrick broke a wagon tongue while crossing the stream. Benjamin Reeves, traveling with Sibley in August 1825, mentioned the stream as "another fork of the Osage, 15 or 20 feet wide, in places high rocky banks, bold running current, good ford, thinly timbered, oak, elm, walnut, &c." Captain John C. Fremont probably meant Soldier Creek when he recorded on July 4, 1845, that his expedition camped and celebrated on the hill beyond a small creek, which he referred to as "Independence Creek." The earliest reference found to the stream as Soldier Creek was made by trader F. X. Aubry in August 1847 when reporting that he had met four

Independence traders with twelve wagons at "Soldiers creek."

Ruts in the pasture on the east side of the Soldier Creek Crossing provide evidence of the wagon traffic along this portion of the Santa Fe Trail. The creek banks at this crossing site are relatively low, and the bed of the stream consists of loose limestone. Due to bad weather, metal detector survey at this site was limited to two small areas on the east side of the creek. A number of pieces of relatively modern field machinery and trash were recovered. The major find at this site that could be attributed to the period of the Santa Fe Trail was an 1823 silver Liberty dime of the "Capped Bust" type. The "3" in the date had been struck over a "2" in a coin minted the previous year. A single .64 caliber lead ball and several bolts and nails, possibly used on freight wagons, also were recovered during the metal detector survey at the Soldier Creek Crossing.

In conclusion, the archeological investigations conducted during

the five-day KATP event in Osage County contributed to the body of data available about these four Santa Fe Trail sites. The fieldwork at the 110-Mile Creek Crossing and McGee-Harris Stage Station site helped determine the location of McGee's house, document the construction of the toll bridge, and define the boundaries of this important trail site. Further analysis of patterning in the distribution of the piece-plotted artifacts found during the metal detector survey may help in locating the log cabins that were present on the site when the McGees arrived. The KATP investigations at the Havana Stage Station and townsite provide important documentation of this site. Although post-trail period activities at the site have resulted in the demolition of most of the structures and removal of quantities of building stone, intact subsurface foundations and other remains are present at the site. Further docu-

(Continued on page 7)



Saundra and Henry Stricklin of Weir and Willis Stricklin of Galena attempt to define the limits of the rubble pile that once was the hotel at the Havana townsite.



Bob Thompson of Atchison and Roger Ward of El Dorado excavate a possible cellar wall at the Havana Stage Station.

Archeologists Investigate Santa Fe Trail . . .

(Continued from page 6)

mentary research and fieldwork at this site might allow the location of additional buildings and features such as trash pits or privies associated with the stage station and town occupation. While the limited investigations of the Dragoon Creek Crossing vicinity could not settle the dispute over the location of this crossing, they did result in the identification and recording of the late-nineteenth-century McCoy farmstead site. The limited fieldwork conducted at the Soldier Creek Crossing provides evidence of Santa Fe Trail period artifacts, suggesting that a more intensive survey of this crossing might result in establishing the locations of campgrounds and better defining the site's boundaries.

The Kansas State Historical Society wants to thank all of the volunteers for their assistance with the project. The 175th anniversary of William Becknell's first trip along the Santa Fe Trail will be celebrated in 1996 with many events scheduled along the route of the trail.—*Marsha K. King.*

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Application Process Open for 1996...

(Continued from page 1)

accepted preservation practices, provide recommendations for the prioritization of needed work, etc. Interested parties are encouraged to submit preliminary applications as well. Staff will review the pre-applications and provide direction for preparing a stronger proposal. Preliminary applications will be accepted until January 19, 1996. Following that date, staff cannot guarantee the return of preliminary applications in time for the submitter to make modifications for the final application.

For additional information concerning the program or to be placed on the mailing list for applications, please contact the Kansas Historic Preservation Office, Kansas State Historical Society, 6425 S.W. 6th Street, Topeka, KS 66615-1099; 913-272-8681. (The old telephone number of 913-296-7080 will be valid until late August or early September.)

Worth Noting...

The Thomas Barn, located near Woodson in Rooks County, was struck by lightning on May 23 and totally destroyed by the ensuing fire. The "Classic Big Barn" organization had invested major funding, time, and effort in the restoration of the barn, one of the largest in the state.

The following projects recently were approved for FY 1997 funding in the historic category of the Transportation Enhancements program by the Kansas Department of Transportation: the Abilene and Smoky Valley Railroad Association, acquisition and renovation of track; the Madison Santa Fe Depot, interior renovation; Ottawa Santa Fe Depot, rehabilitation; Dodge City Santa Fe Depot and Harvey House, phase II of the rehabilitation; Kansas State Historical Society, geoarcheological investigations of KDOT districts I and II. In addition the Austin Bridge, a National Register-listed bowstring bridge, will be relocated to a Chanute park as part of a hike-bike trail project.