

# Santa Fe Trail Documented in Early Marion County, Kansas

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*By L. Stephen (Steve) Schmidt*

Marion County officially became a governmental entity on June 22, 1865, when Kansas Governor Samuel J. Crawford signed an order declaring that Marion County contained “the requisite number of inhabitants to entitle the people of said County to a County organization;” and the Order stated further that the Governor “having Commissioned County Officers,” declared Marion Center (today’s City of Marion) as the county seat of Marion County.<sup>1</sup> Those appointed County Officers consisted of three Commissioners and a Clerk. The first order of business for those appointed County Officers was to conduct a general election August 7, 1865, for those and other necessary county officers. The election returns were certified to the Kansas Secretary of State August 30, 1865.<sup>2</sup>

## Santa Fe Trail Personalities

Use of the Santa Fe Trail in Marion County for international and then national commerce began with William Becknell’s 1821 trading expedition and continued through 1866 when the railroad reached Junction City, Kansas, after which the use of the Santa Fe Trail essentially ceased in today’s Marion County. However, when the county was organized in 1865, use of the Trail was at or near its zenith in the county. Not surprisingly, the names of several people identified with the history of the Santa Fe Trail appear in the county organizational documents and the August 7, 1865, election, including John H. “Jack” Costello and Thomas J. Wise (Lost Spring Station), and Abraham Atlantic (A.A.) Moore (Moore’s Ranch).<sup>3</sup> For historical perspective, note also that the Homestead of Act of 1862 became effective January 1, 1863, and homestead entries were being filed throughout Marion County. The first such entry in Marion County was January 5, 1863, by Claude Francis “French Frank” Laloge (French Frank’s Road Ranch and today’s French Frank’s Trail Segment at the Cottonwood Holes).<sup>4</sup>

In the early entries of the Commissioner’s Journal Vol. 1 and the Treasurer’s Journal Vol. 1, many Santa Fe Trail-related names appear. The Commissioner’s Journal Vol. 1 includes, at various times:<sup>5</sup>

John H. (Jack) Costello (Lost Spring Station): County Commissioner

Charles O. (C.O.) Fuller (Fuller’s Ranch): house used for precinct voting, County Commissioner (including being Chairman from Sept. 3, 1866, through Nov. 8, 1867), Justice of the Peace (Marion Township), State Representative

F. (Claude Francis “French Frank”) Laloge (French Frank’s

Ranch at Cottonwood Holes): Constable

Abraham Atlantic (A.A.) Moore (Moore’s Ranch): County Treasurer; State Representative; Road Supervisor District No. 3, Township Trustee Marion Township, ran for State Senate

E.P. Waterman (Ed Miller story):<sup>6</sup> Township Trustee Marion Township, Judge of Elections

Thomas J. Wise (Lost Spring Station): County Commissioner, Probate Judge

Although the Santa Fe Trail is generally noted as a trail of commerce, not emigration, the above information is enlightening. Those entrepreneurs who established ranches, stations, and post offices along the trail were instrumental in the formation and early administration of Marion County, through which the trail passed. I believe they saw settlement coming, and their entrepreneurial spirit drove them to be active in the early settlement, paving the way for the settlers, farmers, and town builders.

The County Commission lost no time in generating revenue. At the Commission’s meeting of August 19, 1865, one item of business was to require a person to acquire a license to operate a dram shop in the county. And, as might be expected, those operating road ranches on the Santa Fe Trail appear among the list of dram shop licenses in both the Commissioner’s Journal Vol. 1 and Treasurer’s Journal Vol. 1.<sup>7</sup>

John H. (Jack) Costello (Lost Spring Station - location assumed but not specified) Nov. 30, 1865, for period of 1 year

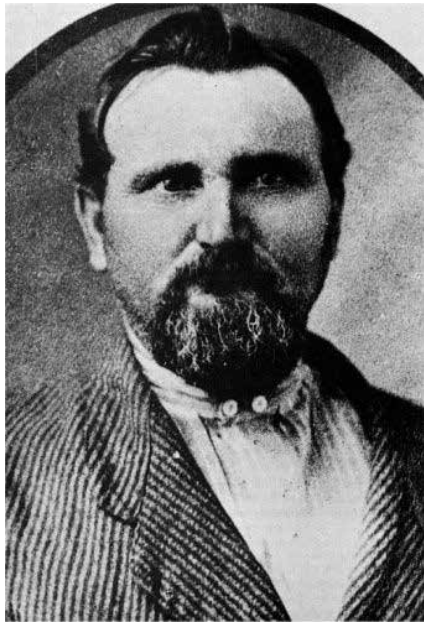
Charles O. (C.O.) Fuller (Fuller’s Ranch - location assumed but not specified) Aug. 19, 1865, for period of 1 year, and Jan. 1868 for period of 6 months

A.J. Greenway (location specified as Little Arkansas Ranch); April 1, 1867, for period of 6 months. Greenway was elected Probate Judge Nov. 5, 1867.

Greenway and Burkhead (presumably A.J Greenway at Little Arkansas Ranch (?)) but location not specified) Nov. 29, 1865, for period of 1 year

Frank Laloge and Peter Martin (original partners in French Frank’s ranch at the Cottonwood Holes, but location not specified) Oct. 3, 1865, for period of 1 year

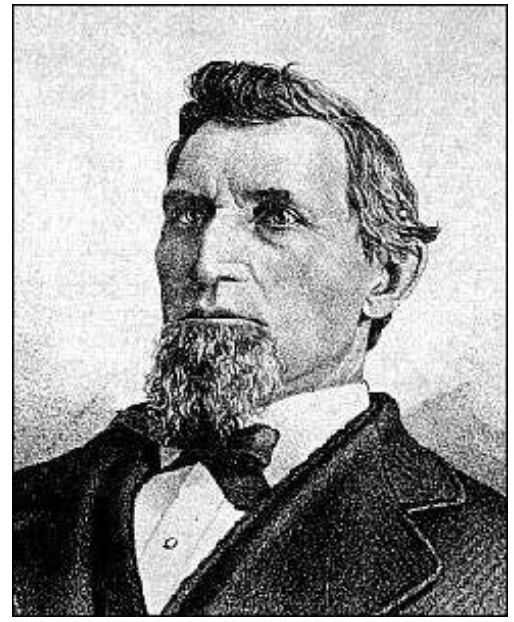
William “Buffalo Bill” Mathewson (location not specified) April 4, 1866, for period of 7 months based on license fee paid of \$30



A. J. Greenway



Charles Rath



William "Buffalo Bill" Mathewson

Abraham Atlantic (A.A.) Moore (Moore's Ranch – location assumed but not specified) July 2, 1866, for period of 9 months

Charles Roth [Rath] (location specified as Ft. Zara) April 1, 1867, for period of 6 months

George F. Russell (location specified as Cottonwood Holes; Russell bought out C.F. "French Frank" Laloge in 1866) July 3, 1866, for period of 6 months

Shaff and Hartwell or Shaft & Co. (location specified as Cow Creek) April 1, 1867, for period of 9 months

License fees were \$25 for 6 months, \$37.50 for 9 months, and \$50 for one year.

### Out West

In the above list of persons having a dram shop license, you may ask, "Why are some of these names included in the Marion County records? They were located west of today's Marion County." For a brief period, Marion County also included its present footprint (more or less) *plus* what had been identified as Peketon County. Peketon County had included all of Kansas south and west of the northwest corner of Marion County. Thus, for a time, Marion County encompassed essentially all of the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas west of Lost Spring.<sup>8</sup> The post offices at Fort Aubrey, Fort Dodge, Fort Larned, and Fort Zarah were first established in Marion County.<sup>9</sup>

William Wheeler figured prominently in the history of the Ranch at Little Arkansas Crossing from 1858 to at least May 1864. Louise Barry asks, "And who was keeping the

Little Arkansas stage station in April 1865 when unidentified Indians ... put the stock at Little Arkansas Ranch in jeopardy?"<sup>10</sup> Based on the dram shop license obtained Nov 29, 1865, most likely it was [A.J.] Greenway and Burkhead. Barry postulates that Greenway could have been at Little Arkansas Crossing in 1864 because he filed a claim against the Kiowa for stock stolen July 22, 1864, which was within two months of the last record of Wheeler being at the Crossing. Barry quotes a letter written by Greenway at Little Arkansas Ranch May 28, 1867, shortly before Greenway obtained his 6-month dram shop license April 1, 1867. Barry states that Thomas Sternburg took over the Ranch in 1867, and Greenway apparently went to Wichita, Kansas.<sup>11</sup> Note also that Greenway was elected Probate Judge November 5, 1867, and paid property tax for the year 1867.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, Sternberg, if he did in fact take over the Ranch in 1867, must have done so late in the year.

By February 1866, William Mathewson was spending most of his time at Fort Zara. Mathewson's wife sent a letter dated June 20, 1866, from their home at Cow Creek to William at Fort Zara. Mathewson was subsequently appointed postmaster at Fort Zara September 3, 1866.<sup>13</sup> So how does this fit with Mathewson's dram shop license of April 4, 1866? Could he have had a business arrangement of some sort with Charles Rath at Rath's trading post? It seems unlikely they would each have their own dram shop at Fort Zara. More information is needed to answer those questions.

Louise Barry states that the history of Cow Creek Crossing cannot be written for the period June 1866 to June 1872 because there is no information recorded.<sup>14</sup> We now know, however, that Shaff and Hartwell (as listed in the Commis-

sioner's Journal) or Shaft & Co. (as listed in the Treasurer's Journal) had a dram shop license for that location for a period of 9 months beginning April 1, 1867.<sup>15</sup> More information is needed regarding Shaff or Shaft.

Charles Rath took over the Ranch at Walnut Creek Crossing after George Peacock was killed in 1860. By 1867 Rath was the trader at Ft. Zara. Rath's tenure as Ft. Zara's trader probably ended in late 1867 or early 1868. Joseph W. Douglas was post trader in 1868.<sup>16</sup>

On October 7, 1867, the Marion County Commission met, and among other matters, took the following action (quoted exactly as written): "Established the rate of Toll allowed on Walnut Creek Bridge in Peketon County now attached as territory to Marion County for horse backman Ten cents one horse & Bugy fifteen cents two horse vehicle twenty five cents four hors teem & wagon fifty cents and more than 4 horse teem .75"<sup>17</sup>

Charles Rath was one of several men who incorporated the Walnut Creek Bridge Company in 1863 "for the purpose of building a toll bridge over Walnut creek, in Peketon County, State of Kansas, where the Great Santa Fe Road crosses said stream." A military report of April 1867 stated: "There are two public buildings of stone at Zarah.... A trader named Rath claims a stone building near the Round Tower as private property and also a toll bridge over Walnut Creek."<sup>18</sup>

The rate of toll established by the Marion County Commission October 7, 1867, almost certainly applies to Rath and his toll bridge. By coincidence, Rath's dram shop license expired on October 1, 1867.

Per the records of the dram shop licenses, the arrival in Junction City of the railroad in 1866 had an effect. Of the ten Santa Fe Trail personalities listed above who were dram shop license holders, only two had licenses east of Walnut Creek in 1867 and only one in 1868. Additionally, the two post offices remaining on the trail in Marion County closed in 1866. In the 1860s, several post offices on the trail in Marion County and in Morris County west of Council Grove closed and later post offices were established in new towns nearby.<sup>19</sup>

### **Poe-tay-toe or Pah-tah-toe?**

The "Santa Fe Trail" is not mentioned in the Commissioner's Journal; instead, it is called the Santa Fe Road... well, sort of. Whereas, today, we generally pronounce Santa Fe as San-tuh-faye, the pronunciation in Trail days appears to have been Sant-eh-fee. Seven examples (italics added) appear in the Commissioner's Journal.<sup>20</sup>

July 6, 1865, the Commission divided the County into 3 townships, including "*Santifee Township*."

June 4, 1866: Petition to lay out a County Road from Cottonwood Falls to intersection with the Junction City Road near Marion Center (today's City of Marion), "thence west to intersect with the *Santefee Road* at or near Fuller's Ranch."

July 3, 1866, the matter of the road from Cottonwood Falls was again brought up, stating "west to the *Santefee Road* at or near Fuller's Ranch."

October 1, 1866: "...that there be a voting presinc [precinct] established at Little Arkansas Ranch on the *Santefee Road*..." ("The Poll Books from the Little Arkansas Precinct..." were mentioned in the Commission Minutes of January 5, 1867.)

April 3, 1867, the road from Cottonwood Falls "...to or near Fuller's Ranch on the *Santefee Road*..." was ordered to be surveyed.

July 4, 1867: There being a petition filed for A.J. Greenway to keep a dramshop at Little Arkansas Ranch on *Santefee Road*...."

July 4, 1867, "License was granted to Shaff and Hartwell for to keep a dram shop on Cow Creek on *Satifee [Santifee]*..." The Commission's action specified the license date from April 1, 1867.

In case you might think this pronunciation of Santa Fe was peculiar to Marion County clerks in the mid-1860s, George Sibley, in his introduction to his personal journal of his expedition in 1825 says, "Journal from St. Louis to *Santa Fee*, from the notes taken during the journey by G.C. Sibley,...." (Italics added). His entry of October 19, 1825, says, "If I had attempted to reach S[an]ta fee by way [of] San Miguel,...." And, Commissioner Benjamin H. Reeves in a letter to the Hon. James Barbour, Secretary of War, April 15, 1826, states, "...in a caravan returning from St. Fee..." and "Mr. Sibley is still in St. Fee..."<sup>21</sup>

### **Afterword**

I was pleasantly surprised at the amount of Santa Fe Trail-related information appearing in the early Marion County records. I wonder if this is unique to Marion County. If not, perhaps various other county records are an underutilized source of historic information.

### **Endnotes**

1. Marion County Kansas Organization Records (total of 7 pages) available at [www.kansasmemory.org/item/217027/page/1](http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/217027/page/1)
2. Ibid.; Commissioner's Journal, Vol. 1, p 1-4.
3. Marion County Kansas Organization Records; Commissioner's Journal
4. National Archives and Records Administration, Kansas City, MO; 49.9.12 Records of Kansas land offices; Records of the Salina

land office (1871-93), and its predecessors at Ogden (1857-59) and Junction City (1859-71), including tract books 1859-93, register of homesteads 1863-70, and homestead entry papers 1872-89.

5. The first 58 pages of the Commissioner's Journal Vol. 1 were examined, covering the period from County formation June 22, 1865 through Nov. 8, 1867.

6. Ed Stratton, "A Bold and Fearless Rider: Ed Miller and the Paper Trail," *Wagon Tracks*, Vol. 17, No 1, Nov. 2002, p 14.

7. Commissioner's Journal, Vol. 1, p 6, 10, 16, 34, 44, 58; Treasurer's Journal Vol. 1, p 5, 11.

8. Helen G. Gill, Establishment of Counties in Kansas, Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1903-1904, Edited by Geo. W. Martin, Secretary, Vol. VIII, Topeka, Geo. Clark state printer, 1904; Robert W. Baughman, Kansas Post Offices, The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS, McCormick-Armstrong Co, Wichita, KS, 1961, p 244 – 246. Although Gill indicates Peketon County was attached to Marion County 1865-66, the Commissioner's Journal, Vol. 1, p 54, indicates Peketon County was attached at least through Oct. 7, 1867.

9. Baughman, p 46, 203.

10. Louise Barry, "The Ranch at Little Arkansas Crossing," *Kansas History*, Autumn 1972, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 3, pages 287 to 294 (online version available at [www.kshs.org/p/the-ranch-at-little-arkansas-crossing/13223](http://www.kshs.org/p/the-ranch-at-little-arkansas-crossing/13223)).

11. Ibid.

12. Commissioner's Journal, Vol. 1, p 58; Treasurer's Journal Vol. 1, "Money Received on Tax of the Year A.D. 1867".

13. Louise Barry, "The Ranch at Cow Creek Crossing" (Beach Valley, P. O.), *Kansas History*, Winter 1972, Vol. 38, No. 4, pages 416 to 444, (online version available at: [www.kshs.org/p/the-ranch-at-cow-creek-crossing/13226](http://www.kshs.org/p/the-ranch-at-cow-creek-crossing/13226)).

14. Ibid.

15. Commissioner's Journal Vol. 1, p 44, Treasurer's Journal Vol. 1, p 11.

16. Louise Barry, "The Ranch at Walnut Creek Crossing," *Kansas History*, Summer 1971, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, pages 121 to 147 (online version available at [www.kshs.org/p/the-ranch-at-walnut-creek-crossing/13210](http://www.kshs.org/p/the-ranch-at-walnut-creek-crossing/13210) )

17. Commissioner's Journal, Vol. 1, p 54.

18. Information for this paragraph was taken from Louise Barry, "The Ranch at Walnut Creek Crossing," *Kansas History*, Summer 1971, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, pages 121 to 147 (online version available at [www.kshs.org/p/the-ranch-at-walnut-creek-crossing/13210](http://www.kshs.org/p/the-ranch-at-walnut-creek-crossing/13210) ). The quotations in this paragraph are from References No. 81 and 95 in Barry, "Ranch at Walnut Creek Crossing."

19. Commissioner's Journal Vol. 1, p 10, 16, 34, 44; Treasurer's Journal Vol. 1, p 5, 11; L. Stephen (Steve) Schmidt, *Lost Spring, Marion County, Kansas, A Historical Perspective*, privately published, Third Printing, June 2017, p 13-14 (available online at [www.santafetrail.org/publications/new-research/sfta-lost-spring.html](http://www.santafetrail.org/publications/new-research/sfta-lost-spring.html) )

20. Commissioner's Journal, Vol. 1, p 1, 17, 19, 21, 28, 36, 44

21. Kate L. Gregg, Ed., *The Road to Santa Fe, The Journal and Diaries of George Champlin Sibley*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM, 1995, p 49, 105, 231. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list, only a random sampling from this book.

Note: All URLs were accessed in early December 2022.

Photos accessed in Louise Barry's articles in *Kansas History*. ✦

## Kaw Mission Council Schedules Monthly Presentations

The 2023 Kaw Mission Councils is a series of lectures and events focused on the rich history of westward expansion. All programs begin at 2 p.m. at Kaw Mission Education building (next to the Kaw Mission) unless otherwise noted. There is a suggested donation of \$3. Co-sponsored by the Kansas Historical Society and the Friends of Kaw Heritage.

February 19 – 2 p.m. – "Railroaded: The Industry that Shaped Kansas," presented by Dr. Leo Oliva.

March 19 – 2 p.m. – "Keep the Whiskey in the Cellar and the Ammunition on the Windowsill: Archeology of the A.I. Baker Store on the Santa Fe Trail," presented by Chris Garst.

April 16 – 2 p.m. – "Native Americans on the Santa Fe Trail," presented by Mike Dickey.

May 21 – 2 p.m. – "A Marking Mystery: Milestones on the Santa Fe Trail," presented by Dr. Mike Olson.

June 18 – 2 p.m. – Join us for a presentation of Kanza Culture and interpretive dancing by members of the Kanza tribe on the grounds of the Kaw Mission. Please bring your own lawn chairs.

July 16 – 2 p.m. – "Women on the Santa Fe Trail," presented by Marla Matkin.

August 20 – 6 p.m. – Community Band Concert and Ice Cream Social: Bring your own lawn chairs and your appetite for ice cream and live music.

September 17 – 2 p.m. – "The Last Stand at Rebel Creek: The Osage as Union Allies in the Civil War," presented by Isaias McCaffery.

October 22 – 2 p.m. – "Hispanic Traders on the Santa Fe Trail," presented by Fort Larned Ranger Celeste Dixon.

November 19 – 2 p.m. – "Charles Curtis: The First Native American Vice President," presented by Erin Poupirt.

December 21 – 7 p.m. – Christmas Open House. Join us for a performance of Christmas Carols by area school children. Afterwards, tour the 173-year-old Kaw Mission and Museum and enjoy refreshments served by the Friends of Kaw Heritage. ✦

**April 10 is the  
submission deadline for the  
May issue of  
Wagon Tracks.**

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