

TIGHT TURN OF SCOTT ROAD, NOT ON SANTA FE TRAIL

The public reporting of findings certainly is a goal of historical and archaeological research. The following is the reporting of some follow-up research completed over ten years ago.

In August of 2007, Kansas City Archaeological Society member Jim Roberts contacted KCAS member Mary Conrad whom he knew is interested in historic trails. Roberts reported that Larry Schmits, a professional archaeologist, had completed a survey for Highway 71. Roberts reported that a new bridge would alter a portion of Scott Road, and he wondered whether any historic trail researcher might want to take photos of that road before it would be altered. The reason why Roberts had contacted Conrad was due to a reference to the Santa Fe Trail in the archaeological report of the Schmits highway survey.

Schmits had written the following: Holmes Park was in the vicinity of the interchange of Highway 71 and Bannister. Holmes Park, which no longer exists, extended south. The tight turn of Scott Road to the west of Highway 71 was a turn on the Santa Fe Trail.

After the Oregon and California trails came into use, they ran on the same routes of the Santa Fe Trail in the Kansas City area. The two routes of the combined Oregon, California, and Santa Fe trails were the Independence and Westport ones, named for the beginning points of travelers. The Independence Route, obviously beginning in Independence, followed the Blue Ridge before swinging southwesterly and then split to cross state line at two places, that is, at about 79th Street (from about 1828) and at about 151st Street. About 1840 these two variant Independence routes consolidated and began crossing the Blue River about where the Red Bridge of Red Bridge Road parallels Minor Park in Kansas City, Missouri. This consolidated trail then crossed the state line about 122nd Street, which is named Santa Fe Trail Road on the Missouri side in the vicinity of what was known as New Santa Fe.

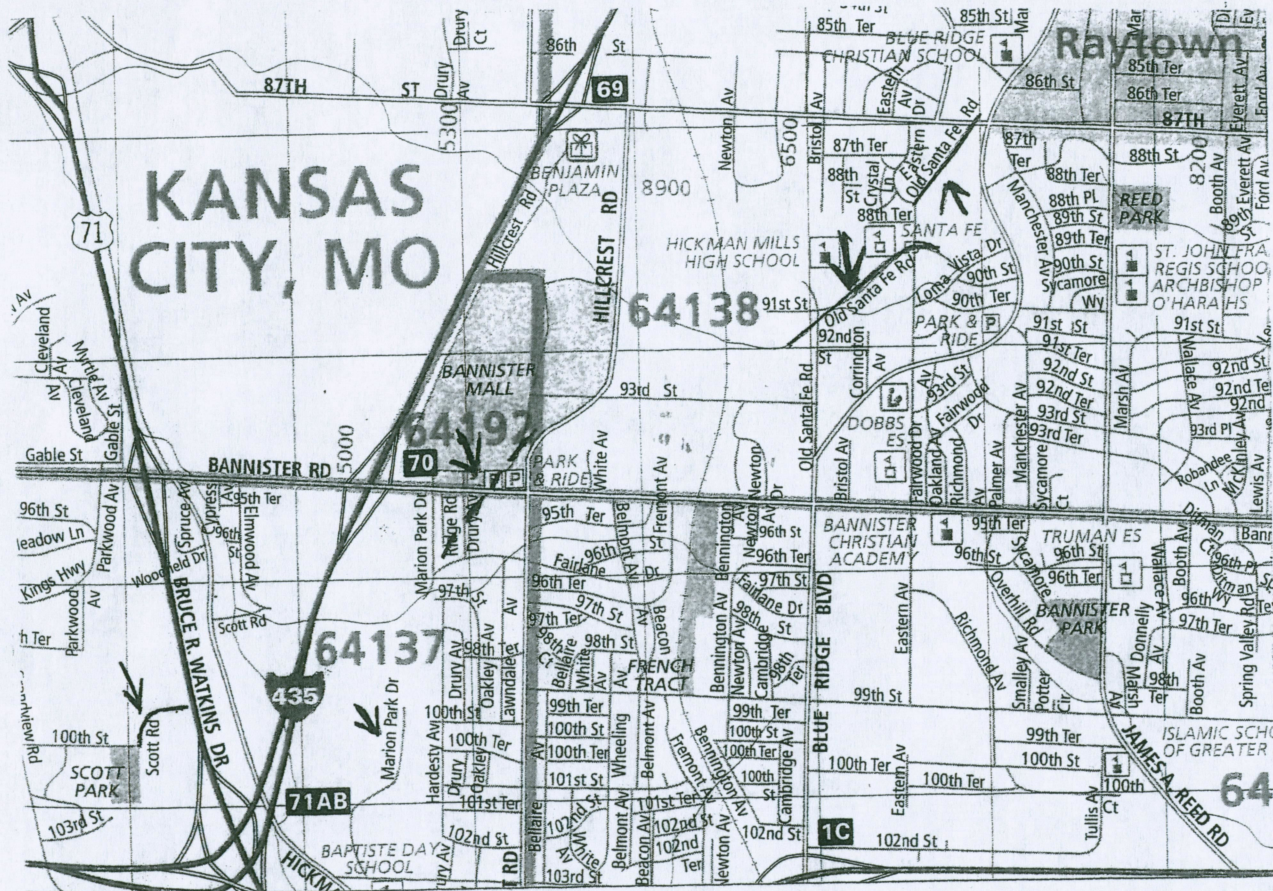
After leaving the Blue Ridge, the consolidated historic trail did swing southwesterly toward state line. Over the years, various persons had noticed that the southwesterly Old Santa Fe Road, running from about 88th to 90th streets, in the Hickman Mills area just southwest of Raytown, was in alignment with the tight curve of Scott Road on farther southwest at about 100th Street.

After Roberts relayed the Scott Road info, Conrad contacted Ross Marshall, a longtime trail researcher of the Kansas City area. Marshall said that specific section of Scott Road had been studied intensively by numerous historic trail persons. Marshall explained that many had noticed the incredible alignment of the southwesterly Old Santa Fe Road with that short piece of Scott Road to the southwest. Since these trail researchers had thought wagons could have continued southwesterly and ended up on that small curved section of Scott Road, various ones had tried to prove that tightly curved part of Scott Road had been used by trail travelers. Instead, these researchers, including Marshall himself, had found primary documentation that the trail was to the east in that general area. Many trail researchers had found the trail route crossed the southeast corner of the old Bannister Mall, in other words just northwest of Bannister Road and Hillcrest. Various researchers had found the trail then proceeded southwesterly along the old Marion Labs property, which is east of Highway 71 and I-435.

Thus while Scott Road may have been an early local wagon road, trail researchers have not been able to connect its tight turn, just to the northeast of Scott Park, to an Independence

route of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails. That tight turn of Scott Road is to the west of Highway 71, while primary documentation shows the historic trail was close in the vicinity of Bannister Road, but between one-fourth to a half mile farther east, on the east side of I-71 and I-435.

Researchers had proved an assumption to be in error, and such negative research should be reported. Without telling of the misconception, the perceived error could continue to be thought of as fact. --Mary Conrad



DEATH OF BILL PHANTZ KCAS member Jeanne McGuire's son had known Bill Phantz for 30 years through caving. Jeanne learned of the death of Bill Phantz through her son.

A neighbor had not seen Bill and called his son who then found Bill sitting in front of his computer and apparently had died a couple days earlier. A state speleology member had not heard from Bill since May 11 and finally called a Scott Phantz who happened to be Bill's son. That is when the caving community heard that Bill had passed a couple weeks earlier.

Even though Bill had not come to KCAS meetings for years, he continued to pay annual dues. Bill was a butcher by trade. Phantz was a quite willing volunteer for many KCAS projects. When KCAS helped professional archaeologists and KCAS members Jim Feagins and John Peterson excavate at Ft. Osage before the Education Center was built, Bill was the volunteer who dug the most number of hours—around 600.