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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill

Other names/site number KHRI # 127-581

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number East of North Belfry Street, generally from Columbia to Conn Street not for publication

City or town Council Grove vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Morris Code 127 Zip code 66846

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

2-20-15

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO

Date

Kansas State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

4/14/15

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill  
Name of Property

Morris County, Kansas  
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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
0		buildings
2		sites
0		structures
2		objects
4		<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: park, outdoor  
recreation, and monument/marker

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE:  
monument/marker

Work In Progress

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A  
walls: N/A  
roof: N/A  
other: Stone: limestone  
Other: earth and natural rock outcroppings

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## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources, if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary

Belfry Hill is a prominent physical landmark in the Neosho River valley, rising approximately 70 to 100 feet in elevation above the river and the surrounding community of Council Grove (2010 population 2,182). Providing scenic views of the town, Belfry Hill is a tree-lined bluff with natural stone outcroppings that functions as a local park welcoming visitors. The crest of the hill runs north/south, paralleling Belfry Street, which provides vehicular and pedestrian access up the hill and to the McKinley/Old Bell Monument and Hermit's Cave, a tourist attraction within a natural park setting on the hill's east bluff.

A portion of Belfry Hill that was developed in 1901 as a natural and historical park is classified as a contributing site, with both manmade and natural features contributing to its significance. Much of the eastern bluff of Belfry Hill includes a natural outcropping of stone that has functioned as a gathering spot and tourist site since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Located in the rock bluff, Hermit's Cave is a shallow indentation beneath a stone ledge that has long been interpreted by local historians as the cave where Italian priest Giovanni Maria de Agostini, locally known as Father Francesco, lived for five months in 1863.<sup>1</sup>

Adding to the site's significance as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century park that welcomed visitors is the chain fence supported by square concrete columns that runs along the site's west edge along Belfry Street and a stone staircase leading from the street down to Hermit's Cave. There are remnants of manmade, dry-laid stone terracing on the east slope of the hill. In addition to the natural park and cave, the other significant visitor-oriented resource on Belfry Hill is the McKinley/Old Bell Monument, a tapered round limestone obelisk that is capped by the remains of a bell for which the hill was named. The monument, a contributing object, is located approximately one block south of the park along Belfry Street.

The nominated area includes less than one acre and is comprised of four significant resources: the site of Belfry Hill (park), the site of Hermit's Cave, the concrete fence/guardrail on the east side of Belfry Street, and the McKinley/Old Bell Monument. The nominated site is proposed with a discontinuous boundary defined by the natural topography, man-made features, and property lines. The boundary is discontinuous because the related sites/resources are about a block apart from one another with non-historic development in between.

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## Elaboration

### Belfry Hill

Belfry Hill is a naturally-occurring rise that comprises approximately 10 square blocks – five blocks long (north/south) from Main Street/U.S. Highway 56 on the south to Huffaker Street on the north, and two blocks wide between Chautauqua Street on the west to Mission Street on the east. The hill crests between 70 and 100 feet above downtown and the Neosho River.

The hill provides scenic views of downtown Council Grove and the Neosho River valley to the east. The earliest views of the hill – and vistas from the hill – recorded in photographs illustrate a bare mound void of trees and vegetation. By the 1880s, the hill was full of mature trees providing a backdrop to downtown. The west half of Belfry Hill, from Belfry Street to Chautauqua Street, developed as a residential neighborhood from 1880-1920, as did the lower eastern slope of the hill. Two houses have been constructed since 1929 on the southern portion of the east bluff, north of the McKinley Monument. However, the higher eastern bluff – from Huffaker Street on the north to Hays Street on the south – has generally escaped development, due in large part to its steep terrain and abundant stone. This block-long portion of the undeveloped area has long been the location of a natural park and an early tourist attraction known as Hermit's Cave.

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, accounts describe this area as overgrown and unsightly. Belfry Street was first graded as a gravel path/road in 1901, and walks were installed to provide access up the hill. Nearby residents terraced the east face of

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<sup>1</sup> The National Park Service has certified the Hermit's Cave as a site along the Santa Fe National Historic Trail, although the precise location of where Italian priest Giovanni Maria de Agostini (aka Father Francesco) lived during his brief stay in the bluffs overlooking Council Grove has not been corroborated by primary sources or physical evidence.

Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill

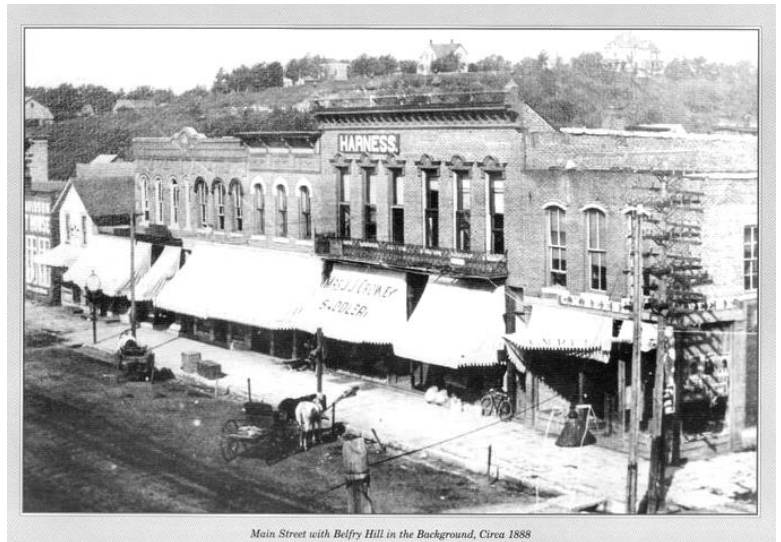
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the hill immediately east of the roadway in 1901.<sup>2</sup> Remnants of a manmade, dry-laid stone retaining wall, presumably reflective of the 1901 terracing, are extant on the east bluff approximately 50' east of Belfry Street at or near the east boundary of the public right-of-way. Today the hillside slopes approximately 45 degrees from the east curb of Belfry Street over the 50' right-of-way with no formal terracing in place. Other physical reminders of past improvement projects are evident on the hillside as daylilies and vinca vines line the road in select locations, but no navigable paths remain on the hillside.

Contributing to the change in the overall appearance of hill was the paving of Belfry Street in 1929. Preparation of the roadway undoubtedly required cut and fill and changes to the earlier grade of the hill in order to prepare a suitable road bed. The road was constructed on top of portions of the stone bluff, providing important vehicular access to the Hermit's Cave tourist site. Natural features, such as Sunrise Rock, a feature captured in early photographs and mentioned in early 20<sup>th</sup> century accounts is difficult to discern on today's landscape, and may have been impacted by the 1929 road development. When Belfry Street was paved in 1929, a series of square concrete posts approximately three feet in height were placed along the east street curb. A metal chain spanning between posts serves as a sort of guardrail or fence along this portion of the street overlooking the east face of Belfry Hill. The fence (with posts and chains) remains in place today, and is considered a contributing object. In some locations, the ground has washed beneath the piers and roadbed, and some piers are deteriorated at the base.



Main Street with Belfry Hill in the Background, Circa 1888

*Upper Right: 1873 view of buildings on Main Street looking northwest with Belfry Hill visible on right side of photo in distance. The hill was bare of trees. Courtesy: Ken McClintock.*

*Center Right: c. 1888 view of Main Street with the tree-lined Belfry Hill in background. Courtesy: Mark Brooks.*

*Lower Right: "Bird's Eye View from Belfry Hill" (Council Grove) c. 1895 downloaded at Kansas Memory <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/307630>*



<sup>2</sup> 1901 improvements were made by hill residents including, the Aplingtons, Stewarts, and Jacobs who lived on the west side of Belfry Street in the blocks between Columbia and Conn.

Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill

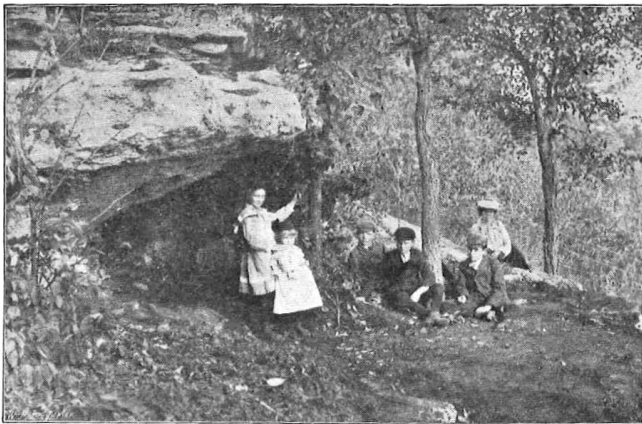
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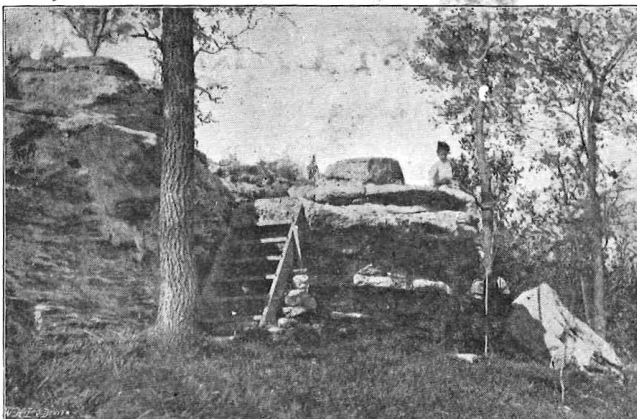
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*Crowned rocks on Belfry Hill  
described by J. W. Me. Carter in  
his book "The Pica of the Prairie"*



THE HERMIT CAVE



THE SUNRISE ROCK

*These historic views were published in the 1901 article entitled "Historic Council Grove with a sub-title Belfry Hill, a Natural Park" by Kate Aplington. The article was published in a variety of Kansas newspapers. Digital images were provided by the Kansas State Historical Society from their Kansas Photos Collection.*

Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill

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Hermit's Cave

Hermit's Cave is located on the east bluff of Belfry Hill east of Belfry Street and north of the intersection with Hays Street. It is a blending of natural and manmade elements. At street level, atop the east bluff, there is a modern-day interpretive panel at the staircase entrance accessing the site.<sup>3</sup> A set of stone steps (1921) access the site, which is best described as a stone outcropping that provides a shallow indentation beneath an overhanging ledge. The ledge forms a sort of roof over an area approximately 7 feet deep and 13 feet wide in the face of the bluff. The space beneath the overhang is just over six feet high.

The stone steps that access the site form the north wall of the enclosure, a mortared wall that has been re-laid and modified over the years. The tale of the hermit suggests he crudely fashioned a dry-laid wall of some sort in his shelter, and the first documented attempt to re-create this feature occurred in 1901. It wasn't until later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps with the construction of the steps in 1921, that the wall was rebuilt with mortar. The existing north wall was last rebuilt in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1953, a new mortared stone wall was built along the east face to enclose the outcropping, leaving only a door-like opening to access the "cave" interior. This enclosing wall was reconstructed again in the 1970s. This non-historic wall was recently removed returning the site to its early 20<sup>th</sup> century appearance. In recent years, the steps have heaved and settled and are dislodged in some locations. Generally, they are in need of repair or replacement.

The area immediately around the Hermit's Cave has recently been cleared of encroaching trees and brush. Historic views of the stone outcropping illustrate an area with a few mature trees and a more spacious flat area that was used for picnics and recreation activities.

*Upper Right - Postcard view of Hermit's Cave (undated) Source: Ken McClintock, Council Grove*

*Lower Right - McKinley/Old Bell Monument- Bird's Eye View overlooking downtown from Belfry Street – Undated but prior to 1929 paving of Belfry Street; Source: Morris County Historical Museum.*



McKinley/Old Bell Monument

Another important manmade feature on Belfry Hill is the McKinley Monument, also known as the Old Bell Monument. It, too, is on the east side of Belfry Street and is approximately one block south of the Hermit's Cave site and one-and-a-half blocks north of Main Street. The area south of the monument was recently cleared of encroaching trees and brush. The site is marked with a modern metal sign located just north of the monument at the street curb.

Rising nearly nine feet in height, the tapered round limestone obelisk is capped by the remains of a bell – the original bell first installed on Belfry Hill in 1863. The obelisk rests on a square stone base made of massive natural-faced limestone blocks, each spanning over seven feet in length. A secondary mortared limestone retaining wall forms a level rectangular base for the monument.



<sup>3</sup> The National Park Service installed the interpretive panel in 1997 (and reinstalled in 2013) along its Santa Fe National Historic Trail. The marker conveys the story of Giovanni de Agostini (aka Father Francesco) the so-called hermit priest, noting his brief stay in 1863 in Council Grove before continuing westward along the Santa Fe Trail.

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In addition to the broken bell at its crown, a distinguishing characteristic of the monument is a course of cut stones with the carved initials of the local schoolchildren who raised funds for the monument's construction in 1901. (The children reportedly brought stones inscribed with their initials, for the monument.) Additionally, there are two panels – one stone and one bronze. The stone panel on the southeast side of the monument refers to the original bell and reads: ALARM BELL - Erected 1863 - Broken Down 1884 - Placed Here 1901. The bronze panel, which replaced another stone panel, is located on the southwest face of the monument and reads: OLD BELL 1863 USED TO WARN SETTLERS OF INDIAN RAIDS.<sup>4</sup>

The only known alteration to the monument is the replacement of the southwest stone panel in 1929 with the existing bronze plaque. The original stone panel read: The Corner Stone of this Monument was laid on September 19, 1901, the Day of the Burial of PRESIDENT MCKINLEY. It is not known why the stone panel was replaced. The monument is in fair condition, but is in need of some masonry repair and repointing. The McKinley/Old Bell Monument generally reflects its appearance when it was erected in 1901, and it continues to serve as a sort of entry marker for Belfry Hill and the Hermit's Cave site.

*Postcard views of McKinley/Old Bell Monument: Upper— c.1920s view Monument has original stone panel on SW and "historic markers/signs" that were placed in 1921; Lower- Dated 1929, existing bronze plaque had replaced original stone panel on SW side of monument. Source: Ken McClintock.*

Integrity

It is important to note that this nomination argues in the following section the significance of this site and these features as elements of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century tourist attraction. The features are not nominated for any association with the community's mid-19<sup>th</sup> century history, and therefore integrity must be evaluated for this 20<sup>th</sup> century association.

There is no shortage of written accounts and local recollections of Belfry Hill describing its wandering paths and Hermit's Cave itself as the site of endless childhood play. It is a place that has evolved and developed over time. However, a portion of Belfry Hill remained mostly undeveloped and in its natural state until 1901 when it became the backdrop for stories of the community's earliest days, stories that might be of interest to visitors. The resulting development included the construction of the McKinley/Old Bell Monument, improvements making Belfry Hill accessible to pedestrians and automobiles, and the terracing and making accessible the area around the stone outcropping known as Hermit's Cave. The more substantial improvements to the site occurred in stages, beginning in 1901, again in 1921, and again in 1929. The result of the development that occurred during these years is largely what we see today.

As a result of these early 20<sup>th</sup> century developments, the nominated property is a mix of natural and manmade elements. The landscape has evolved naturally, with periodic episodes of brush-clearing and tree-thinning. The natural elements and neighborhood setting of the site have changed little since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The obvious exceptions to this include the construction of a water tower later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century north of the nominated site and the construction of two mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, single-family residences between the McKinley/Old Bell Monument and the site of Hermit's Cave.

Manmade changes to the site largely occurred within the period of significance. Even with the changes marking the site and making it accessible to visitors, the area has retained its character as a natural hillside park. This setting on Belfry Hill remains one of the town's prominent landmarks, and it retains its integrity as an early tourist attraction touting the community's early history.



<sup>4</sup> This inscription, which is discussed further in Section 8, is not historically accurate.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

OTHER: Tourism

**Period of Significance**

1890 – 1929

**Significant Dates**

1890, 1901, 1921, 1929

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Owned by a religious institution for purposes.

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

NA

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins in 1890 with the publication of John Maloy's story "The Hermit Priest of the Old Santa Fe Trail," the first locally published story relating the romantic tale of the hermit and his time in Council Grove in the spring and summer of 1863. The 1890s-1910s also reflect the earliest development of Belfry Hill into a natural park. The period of significance includes the community-wide commemorative events of 1921 recognizing the centennial of the opening of the Santa Fe Trail. The centennial marks the beginning of the town's heritage tourism efforts and the first marking and promotion of the local historic sites for visitors. Finally, the period of significance terminates in 1929 with the last significant improvements in making Belfry Hill and Hermit's Cave accessible to both residents and visitors.

**Criteria Considerations (justification)**

Criteria Consideration F: Commemorative Properties-The McKinley/Old Bell Monument meets the registration requirements for Criteria Consideration F: Commemorative Properties because it derives its primary significance as an expression of those who erected it and the period in which it was erected. It does not derive its primary significance from the individual (McKinley) or object (old bell) it memorializes.



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## Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

### Summary

Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation and (Other) Tourism. The nominated property, which is comprised of both natural and manmade features, is significant for its associations with early tourism in Council Grove and as a reflection of how local residents and historians promoted their community's history. Still today, the town's identity and heritage tourism efforts are rooted in these early 20<sup>th</sup> century efforts to promote the area's frontier and trail-era history.

Council Grove residents enthusiastically embraced their local history in 1921 when the nation commemorated the centennial of the opening of Santa Fe Trail. Council Grove was founded at the location of a trail-era campsite along the Neosho River. For years, it was the one of the few trading posts between Independence, Missouri and Santa Fe.<sup>5</sup> The centennial year marked Council Grove's debut as a community with history and sites attractive to tourists. Eleven local trail-related sites were officially marked in 1921. The nominated property, which includes part of Belfry Hill, Hermit's Cave, and the McKinley/Old Bell Monument, are physical manifestations of these early tourism efforts that are rooted in the town's trail-related past.

This nomination establishes the significance of this site and features as elements of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century tourist attraction. The resources are not nominated for any association with the community's early- and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century trail-era history.

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## Elaboration

### Local Historic Context

Council Grove has long promoted its history as a trail-era frontier town, a history that pre-dates the Civil War and Kansas statehood. This area is first mentioned in trail-era accounts of travelers, who passed through what is now Morris County as early as the 1820s. Their accounts generally recall a grove of mature trees along the Neosho River in which they could shelter located some 160 miles west of the Missouri River. In 1825 this grove of trees was the scene of a council between representatives of the United States government and the Plains Indians – a meeting that resulted in a treaty with the Osages to allow for passage across their lands. The U.S. government surveyed and marked a passage from the Missouri River to Santa Fe – the Santa Fe Trail. The site of this council, in a grove of trees, influenced the later naming of the community as Council Grove. Throughout its early years, Council Grove's economy was tied to its place as a trading center for the Kansa Indians, Santa Fe Trail freighters, and the U.S. government. It is that role as a trading point on the Santa Fe Trail that has long served as the basis for the town's identity.<sup>6</sup>

The town's trail days came to an end in 1866 when the Union Pacific Eastern Division<sup>7</sup> arrived in Junction City, and the Santa Fe Coach Line Company moved their headquarters from Council Grove to that town. East of Junction City the trail, which for almost 50 years had been the one great common carrier of trade between east and west, was all but abandoned for long-distance travel except for the occasional prairie schooners of home seekers. The dash and excitement of old trail days had gone and Council Grove settled down to the slower growth of a country town.<sup>8</sup>

Late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, locals began reflecting on the early history of Council Grove and the Santa Fe Trail. Several things happened concurrently and in succession during the late 1800s and early 1900s that contributed to the development of Belfry Hill that solidified the community's identity as an important trail-era trading post along the Neosho River. Local lawyer and newspaperman, John Maloy's story of the hermit priest emerged locally in 1890, and within a few years other trail-related publications were retelling and building upon his work. At about the same time, residential development

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<sup>5</sup> For historic context relating to the Santa Fe Trail, see: "Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail (Revised)," National Register multiple property documentation form (Topeka, KS: Kansas Historical Society, 2012). For additional information about the development of Council Grove, see: Brenda Spencer, "Council Grove Downtown Historic District," National Register nomination (Topeka, KS: Kansas Historical Society, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> In 1869, the Union Pacific Eastern Division changed its name to Kansas Pacific, in order to avoid confusion with the Union Pacific Railroad, which at the time was associated with corruption, fraud, and stock swindles. Source: "Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail (Revised)," National Register multiple property documentation form, E-64.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, "Through My Father's Eyes," 718.

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around Belfry Hill took place, hastening the call for sidewalks, graded streets, and general beautification of the scenic overlook. Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, local clubwomen, in particular Kate Aplington and Lalla Brigham, took an interest in both beautifying the area and promoting local history, an interest that carried through the 1910s. This early attention to Belfry Hill was particularly important during the commemoration of the centennial of the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1921, which resulted in the first comprehensive and community-wide marking of sites related to local Santa Fe Trail history.

It is this series of events, from 1890 to 1929, that shaped the development of Belfry Hill and to Council Grove's historic identity. Like many small Midwestern towns, Council Grove has been shaped physically by natural disasters and economic trends, but tourism, particularly related to the town's frontier roots, has remained an important part of its identity.

The Hermit Priest of the Santa Fe Trail

The story of the hermit priest who lived in a cave on Belfry Hill in Council Grove for five months in 1863 is a tale of which legends are made. The priest's arrival in Council Grove was documented in the April 27, 1863 edition of the *Council Grove Press*:

The Italian Hermit, Maria Gustianina, a Catholic Priest, is camped in a cave just west of town. He appears rather an intelligent man, speaks nine different languages. He has lived a hermit some thirty five years; thirty years of which he spent in Mexico, sleeping with tigers and other wild beasts, in caves. Five years he spent in a cave in Indiana. Last winter he lived five months in a hollow tree near Westport Mo. He refuses to eat bread or meat; his food consists of corn meal mixed with water or milk without cooking.

The hermit was later identified as Giovanni Maria de Agostini, but was known by several monikers including Matteo Bocalini, Father Francesco, El Solitario, and in Kansas lore as "The Hermit Priest of Belfry Hill" or "The Hermit Priest of the Santa Fe Trail." The above notation was the first and only reference to the hermit found dating to his time in Council Grove in 1863.

Many Council Grove residents likely first learned of the story of a hermit who had once lived in the bluffs overlooking the town when an account, written by local newspaperman John Maloy, was published in the *Council Grove Republican* in 1890, twenty-seven years after the priest's time in Council Grove.<sup>9</sup> (This article is included in its entirety in Figures 1a-c.)

Maloy's original romantic tale relates the hermit's arrival in Council Grove:

He came to Council Grove as the tramp has since come, but not to beg or demand bread at our doors, or to tell off his beads in the presence of the vulgar curious, but to go upon the hillside and into a cave, where for five months he lived accessible to but few, with whom, when he felt the quickened glow of a heart that recognizes the 'fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man,' he would talk in tenderest strains of everything that was good and true and beautiful.

In 1895, an account of the hermit penned by Colonel Henry Inman was published as two-page supplement to the *Council Grove Republican* that was dedicated solely to the story of the hermit.<sup>10</sup> Inman clearly relied upon Maloy's earlier writings as large portions of Maloy's text are included nearly verbatim in Inman's works. Inman expanded upon Maloy's earlier story to include the hermit's travel from Council Grove to New Mexico, including the following excerpts:

One day late in the month of October...the hermit priest saw walking through the streets of the little village [Council Grove], a dark visaged person whom he verily believed to be the lover of the woman he had wronged in his youth, and that he never would be persuaded Matteo was not wholly to blame for the life he had blasted.

<sup>9</sup> "The Hermit Priest," *Council Grove Republican*, 7 February 1890, page 8. Maloy's account was later included in a book written by his daughter, Lalla Maloy Brigham, and published in 1921 with the title *The Story of Council Grove on the Santa Fe Trail*. An introduction (written by George P. Morehouse) to Maloy's story of the hermit in Brigham's book, states that Maloy wrote the story in the 1880s, obtaining his information from early settlers, especially from Captain Jacob Stenger who became friendly with the hermit.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Inman, "'El Solitario;' or The 'Hermit Priest' of the Old Santa Fe Trail," a two-page supplement to the *Council Grove Republican*, 5 April 1895. Inman also penned an 1898 publication entitled *Tales of the Trail*. Although Inman does not credit John Maloy as the source of his story on the hermit, an introduction (written by George P. Morehouse) to Maloy's story of the hermit in Lalla Maloy Brigham's book, states that Maloy wrote the story in the 1880s, obtaining his information from early settlers, especially from Captain Jacob Stenger who became friendly with the hermit. According to Morehouse, Maloy loaned his manuscript of the hermit story to Inman, who then told the hermit story in his works. Although Inman's story includes Maloy's earlier version nearly verbatim, Inman expanded the tale to include details of the hermit's travel from Council Grove to New Mexico and his time in that state.

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He told his friends he could no longer tarry; he would go away to the mountains of New Mexico, seek another cave...

The next morning after the sudden appearance of the stranger whose presence had so discomposed the usually calm priest...Father Francesco gathered up his few precious relics, and, accepting the escort of a caravan just ready to start for New Mexico, left Council Grove, his cave, and the warm friends he had made there forever.

...There [Santa Fe] he parted company with his escort, and for nearly a year afterward, wandered all over that portion of the territory of New Mexico and into Arizona... he arrived in the valley of the Sappillo, where he at last found an humble class and his coveted cave on the summit of the mighty mountain...

There content after so many years of unsatisfied wandering, he commenced that life of religious ministration, and those unselfish acts of kindness and love whose remembrance is imprinted so tenaciously in the hears of his devoted followers...

One day, after his familiar and beloved face had been missed by his devotees for more than a week, a sorrowful party found him dead...a poisoned dagger in his heart, by the hand of an assassin...

Thus passed away...the eccentric but holy Matteo Boccalini – the Hermit Priest of the old Santa Fe Trail, and the "El Solitario["] of the New Mexico mountains.<sup>11</sup>

Inman's tale ends with the following paragraph, which is particularly important to any discussion about the hermit's cave in Council Grove:

For years after his departure from Council Grove, the hermit priest's cave was an object of much interest. Until within a very short period when the quarrymen<sup>12</sup> tore down its last vestige, upon its time-worn walls could be traced, rudely carved, his name "Matteo Boccalini," a cross, "Jesus Maria" and "Capri," all so dear to the lonely and sad man's heart.

This last paragraph lends considerable ambiguity to the claim that the existing Hermit's Cave site is indeed where the hermit lived while in Council Grove, although locals would soon question Inman's account of the cave's demise.<sup>13</sup> Within three years of this tale's publication in Kansas newspapers, Inman published a book entitled *Tales of the Trail*, which included this same tale of the hermit.<sup>14</sup> The story was republished in numerous newspapers across the country between 1898 and 1903.<sup>15</sup> Importantly, the stories penned by Maloy in 1890 and Inman in 1895 appear to be the basis for the tale of the hermit in Kansas, and specifically the basis for the recognition of this site in Council Grove as Hermit's Cave.

It is during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that residents on Belfry Hill in Council Grove began cleaning up the overgrown hillside, including the area known as Hermit's Cave, and discussing with city leaders its potential for visitors.<sup>16</sup>

Kate Aplington and Belfry Hill

For years, area residents had been urging the city to make accessible and clean up Belfry Hill, a place that takes its name from the old bell atop the ridge since 1863.<sup>17</sup> In 1894, O.S. Munsell urged the City Council to appropriate \$100 to clean up the unsightly face of Belfry Hill. He asked "Can we have a handsome boulevard on the face of Belfry Hill even if it is not in our power to have a park?"<sup>18</sup> Another similar call came the following year when Judge Jacobs, a resident of Belfry Hill,

<sup>11</sup> Inman, "El Solitario; or The 'Hermit Priest' of the Old Santa Fe Trail," a two-page supplement to the *Council Grove Republican*, 5 April 1895, page 2.

<sup>12</sup> A stone quarry was formerly located on the east bluff of Belfry Hill south of the cave site.

<sup>13</sup> Kate Aplington, "Historic Council Grove," *Topeka Mail & Breeze* (December 1901). Kansas State Historical Society Archives: Morris County Clippings Vol. 1, page 90.

<sup>14</sup> Henry Inman, *The Old Santa Fe Trail: The Story of a Great Highway* (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1897).

<sup>15</sup> *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), 19 June 1898, page 6; *The Inter Ocean* (Chicago, Illinois), 19 June 1898, page 34; *Pittson Gazette* (Pittson, Pennsylvania), 15 December 1902, pages 3-4; *The Marion Star* (Marion, Ohio), 5 January 1903, page 5; *El Paso Herald* (El Paso, Texas), 23 January 1903; *The Wellsboro Gazette* (Wellsboro, Pennsylvania), 4 February 1903, page 7.

<sup>16</sup> "Mayor and City Council Entertained," *Council Grove Republican*, 23 August 1901.

<sup>17</sup> Belfry Hill was originally known as Fountain Hill, named after its productive spring.

<sup>18</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 6 April, 1894.

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said he would contribute \$50 toward the construction of a sidewalk and roadway up the hill.<sup>19</sup> Finally, these calls gained momentum in 1901 when Kate Aplington focused her attention on the hill. She was a Belfry Hill resident, an active clubwoman, and her husband was city attorney (and later Judge) John Aplington.

Although owned by the city, the east bluff of Belfry Hill was privately developed by local residents. Leading this effort to clean up Belfry Hill were the Aplingtons, who lived at 225 N. Third/Belfry (N. Belfry and W. Conn). They developed the area in front/east of their home as a park installing pathways, a retaining wall, and even a fountain on Belfry Hill. The area was sometimes referred to as Aplington's Park. Around the same time, Hugh Stewart, who lived at 406 W. Hays (the current Essington House) south of the Aplington's residence, reportedly removed tons of stone and had dirt hauled into the area east of his home. Stewart set out shade trees and seeded grass and even paved the area of North Third Street in front of his home. The same year (1901), Third Street (which became Belfry Street in 1916) was first graded, providing access up the hill. Walkways were laid along Third Street, from Main Street to Hays Street (just short of the cave).<sup>20</sup> Improvements by hill residents continued. In 1908, the paper noted that Stewart was terracing the area east of house including that area around Hermit's Cave.<sup>21</sup>



*Undated photo of fountain in Aplington's yard on Belfry Hill c.1905 looking east/northeast;  
Source: Morris County Historical Society.*

The *Council Grove Republican* covered and praised the efforts, "The new park is a sure thing and does not necessitate the buying of valuable ground. An equal amount placed in the hands of the park committee will give Council Grove an up-to-date park we can well be proud of."<sup>22</sup>

The earliest printed references to this specific place on Belfry Hill being identified as Hermit's Cave occurred in 1901, the same year neighboring residents began beautifying the hillside. Kate Aplington led this effort, too. Perhaps taking cues from the popularity of Inman's hermit story circulating in newspapers all over the country, Aplington produced her own newspaper feature entitled "Historic Council Grove: Belfry Hill, A Natural Park," which was published in a variety of Kansas newspapers in 1901.<sup>23</sup> Hermit's Cave, named for the Italian priest who had lived in the bluffs overlooking Council Grove, was a major part of her story. Aplington referenced Inman's earlier tale, which she suggested was perhaps too romantic in its depiction of the priest, also calling into question his account of the hermit's cave:

There are certainly mistakes in that story for it says the cave was destroyed in quarrying stone, whereas the stone quarry was many rods to the south of it. The only change the cave had suffered is the falling of the walls and sifting in of the dirt. The dirt has been dug out, the stones of the old wall found, and the wall has been rebuilt on the north side of the cave so as to make a sheltered grotto.

Aplington's account revised the story and provided a place that people could associate with the tale of the hermit. And, it is the earliest known documentation of this area being cleaned up and identified as a place to visit – a natural park. Importantly, this cleanup was conveyed to the public as a project that "placed [the cave] in the same condition as when [it

<sup>19</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 5 April 1895.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* Walkways also were laid on Fourth Street and on Hays Street between Third and Fourth Streets.

<sup>21</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 16 April 1908.

<sup>22</sup> "Seen From Belfry Hill," *Council Grove Republican*, 27 September 1901, page 1. Also, *Council Grove Republican*, 31 May, 23 August 1901, and 26 March 1908.

<sup>23</sup> Kate Aplington, "Historic Council Grove," *Topeka Mail & Breeze* (December 1901). Kansas State Historical Society Archives: Morris County Clippings Vol. 1, page 90.

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was] inhabited by the lonely hermit."<sup>24</sup> Local newspaper articles reinforced the significance of this place with statements such as, "Many do not know what a valuable piece of land, from a historical standpoint, the new city park is. Within sight of its limits are the scenes of some of the most important events in the state's history."<sup>25</sup>

As part of the cleanup efforts, Aplington organized a fundraiser with local school children to build and dedicate a monument to the President William McKinley, who died from an assassin's bullet on September 14, 1901 – when all the improvements were being made to Belfry Hill. The monument included an old bell that had once sat atop the hill. Thus, the monument represents an interesting blend of marking local and national history.

The bell has a colorful history, part of which Aplington recounted in her 1901 article about Belfry Hill. The story of the bell was again told in *Kansas: A Guide to the Sunflower State*, a travel-oriented book published in 1939 as part of the New Deal-era Federal Writers Project.<sup>26</sup> According to the 1930s version of the story, the bell was purchased for nine dollars from the Plymouth Congregational Church of Lawrence in 1863 after the church rejected it because it was cracked. Council Grove reportedly needed a church and school bell, "as well as an alarm bell to warn settlers of Indian raids or prairie fires," though the accuracy of this last point has long been disputed as untrue. A bell tower was constructed on Belfry Hill, and it was made "of native lumber and a couple pieces of block house lumber which belonged to the government."<sup>27</sup> Over the years, the bell called children to school and families to church. Its tolling numbered the years of those who died. It rang out in celebration on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and tolled continuously for half a day when President James Garfield died in September 1881.<sup>28</sup>

The bell tower was reconstructed in 1884, but was destroyed by a wind storm that same year.<sup>29</sup> The bell dislodged when the tower collapsed in the storm. It rolled down the hill and was further damaged by vandals. Dr. A.G. Campbell, who lived at the base of the hill (121 N. Mission Street), reportedly took the bell, turned it upside-down, and for years used it as a flower pot,<sup>30</sup> at least until Kate Aplington came calling.

Aplington led the school children of Council Grove in a fundraiser to erect this stone monument that would include the remains of the old bell. The local newspaper announced, "On last Thursday the city park received a valuable addition to its already promising beginning, in the McKinley monument."<sup>31</sup>

In her 1901 feature article about Belfry Hill, Aplington tells the story of the monument. She states, "...the cornerstone of the monument was laid on the day of the burial of President McKinley and a tablet to his memory is set in the monument. In the eastern side of the monument is a tablet giving the history of the bell. When coming generations shall ask why is Belfry Hill so called, the answer will be evident for the monument with the bell stands in almost the same spot as the Belfry tower stood in years gone by."<sup>32</sup>

This account makes clear that the monument was built in the wake of the president's assassination as a memorial to him. The tablet dedicating the memorial to McKinley, however, was replaced by the existing bronze plaque that instead recalls the well-known legend that has long been determined untrue that the bell atop the monument was used to warn against Indian raids, a point Aplington refutes in her 1901 feature article yet is repeated in later sources like the New Deal-era guide to Kansas.<sup>33</sup>

Locals Host Activities at Belfry Hill

With the completion of the various Belfry Hill projects in 1901, local residents used the city-owned natural and historical park as a gathering spot. In 1906, the local 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration included fireworks from Belfry Hill.<sup>34</sup> In 1908, the local newspaper announced the following in its club news section:

<sup>24</sup> "Seen From Belfry Hill," *Council Grove Republican*, 27 September 1901, page 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> James Shortridge, ed., *The WPA Guide to 1930s Kansas* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1984), 378.

<sup>27</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 12 February 1897.

<sup>28</sup> Aplington, 89-90.

<sup>29</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 11 April 1884.

<sup>30</sup> Aplington, "Historic Council Grove," 89-90. The 25<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, President McKinley died September 14, 1901 after he was fatally injured by an assassin's bullet on September 6.

<sup>31</sup> "Seen From Belfry Hill," *Council Grove Republican*, 27 September 1901, page 1.

<sup>32</sup> Aplington, 89-90.

<sup>33</sup> James Shortridge, ed., *The WPA Guide to 1930s Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 378.

<sup>34</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 26 June 1906.

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The Nimble Nine Club girls stroll in Aplington Park - The Nimble Nine club was entertained Saturday afternoon with a porch party at the home of Louise Jacobs. The club is composed of nine bright high school girls. They meet every two weeks at their various homes and spend an afternoon in conversation, music and needle work. After a 6 o'clock dinner Miss Louise invited her guests for a stroll in Aplington's Park, where they spent a restful hour viewing the town and breathing the luxurious Belfry Hill air.<sup>35</sup>

*"Club Picnic at Hermit's Cave" undated photograph from Kansas State Historical Society - Morris County Groups.*

Most of these early activities on the hill included local residents, but out-of-town visitors made their way to the site, too. In October 1907, for example, the Fourth District Federation of Women's Club held their annual meeting in Council Grove and the program featured historical talks culminating with a carriage ride tour of local historic sites including Belfry Hill and Hermit's Cave.



The Story of the Old Bell was presented by Mrs. Lee Brigham and Mrs. Kate Aplington hosted a house party in the park, overlooking the city. The Commercial Club lined up a score of carriages and gave the long planned "Ride of Historic Landmarks," including the old mission, council oak, hermit's cave, and the old bell.<sup>36</sup>

This event, led by clubwomen with a particular interest in history, is an early example of organized tourism efforts, featuring the sites and stories of Council Grove's early days as a trading post on the Santa Fe Trail. This above-noted account is particularly important because it links Aplington and Brigham in their efforts to document the town's past. While Aplington was particularly instrumental in the 1901 development of Belfry Hill and the subsequent marking of important places, Brigham would carry on this effort in the 1921 commemoration of the centennial of the Santa Fe Trail and the publication of her book *The Story of Council Grove on the Santa Fe Trail*.

The trail remained an important part of the town's identity as long-distance auto-touring emerged after the first highways were built. A new bridge over the Neosho River was dedicated in 1913, with ceremonies highlighting the town's important places like Belfry Hill and Hermit's Cave.<sup>37</sup> Local commercial clubs all over Kansas, reinvigorated in part by the opportunities brought by good roads, promoted their communities with enthusiasm.<sup>38</sup> Council Grove was no different. What began as a neighborhood effort to clean up Belfry Hill grew to include the community's clubwomen and children, who partnered to develop the natural park and mark the town's history. By the 1910s, town leaders and businessmen became involved and broadened the effort to mark the community's history as plans for a regional road network gained momentum.

Road Development and Auto-Tourism

The Good Roads Movement brought new promise to history-rich Council Grove. Fueled by record-high grain prices, the number of automobiles in Kansas ballooned from 10,490 to 134,000 between 1910 and 1917.<sup>39</sup> The development of roads and increasing numbers of reliable autos coincided with a new interest in history and an increase in leisure time. For the first time, Kansans had the means and time to more easily access the places that interpreted the state's early history.

<sup>35</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 25 June 1908.

<sup>36</sup> *Council Grove Republican* 24 October 1907 and *Emporia Gazette*, 7 October 1907. Brigham, the daughter of John Maloy who penned the 1890 tale of the hermit priest, would later publish the story in her 1921 book, *The Story of Council Grove on the Santa Fe Trail*.

<sup>37</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 8 July 1913.

<sup>38</sup> Examples from other Kansas communities include: "Wamego and Her Trade District," *The Wamego Reporter*, 12 September 1911; and *Anthony, Kansas: New and Nifty, May 1910* (N.P.: n.d.). (KSHS Archives: K/978.1/-H23/Pam.v.1/no.6).

<sup>39</sup> James R. Shortridge, *Cities on the Plains: The Evolution of Urban Kansas* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 288.

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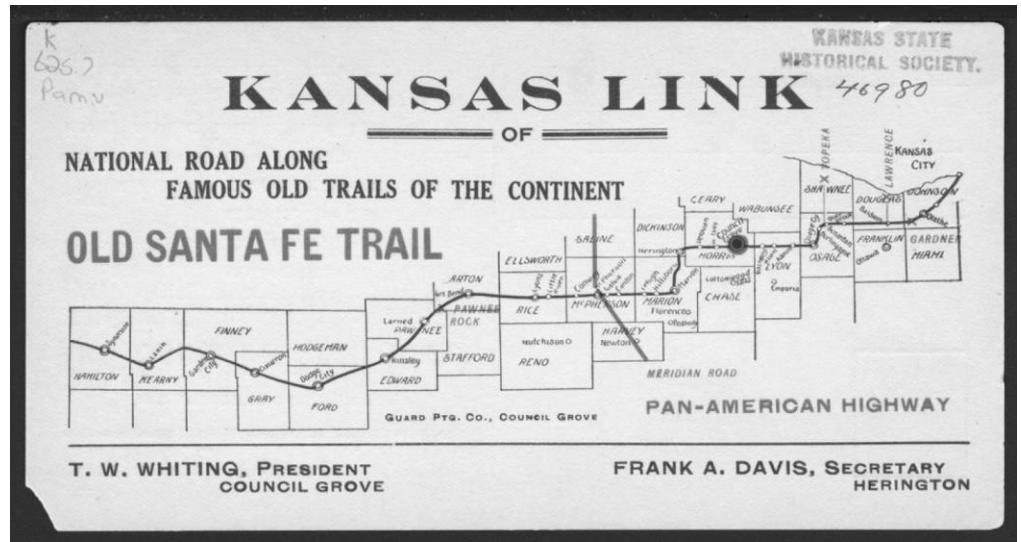
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The National Old Trails Highway Association formed in 1912 with the primary mission of “garner[ing] political support of the creation of a new national highway system that would follow and commemorate routes such as the Santa Fe Trail...”<sup>40</sup> In the summer of 1914, the organization’s secretary, Frank A. Davis, accompanied M. B. Faidley, a motion picture photographer from Kansas City, on a journey over the old trail across Kansas to the west coast. They stopped in Council Grove and photographed historic and scenic points, including the Old Council Tree, the Mission, and Belfry Hill.<sup>41</sup> This same year local writer, booster, and owner of the telephone company, G. Bill Coffin, penned a piece that circulated in regional newspapers on the efforts to create a highway and the town’s trail history, inviting visitors to come share that history.<sup>42</sup>

*Below: Pan American Highway Postcard downloaded from Kansas Memory, Kansas State Historical Society online at [www.kansasmemory.org/item/1498](http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/1498)*

Once built, the highway would bypass the historic trail and Council Grove, instead opting for a route through Ottawa, Emporia, Newton, Hutchinson and Dodge City.<sup>43</sup> In 1926, the New Santa Fe Trail became a part of U. S. Highway 50. Being bypassed upset some in Council Grove prompting Mayor W. L. Young to comment in 1929 that, “Council Grove was being discriminated against...by tourist agencies.” He predicted that, “within two years the superiority of the National Old Trails would bring tourists over this route despite misrepresentation.”<sup>44</sup> These remarks came as Council Grove was vying for funding to improve what became the highway’s northern branch, Highway 50-N, which is now Highway 56.



Many street improvement projects were taking place in and around Council Grove in 1929. Main Street through the downtown was being widened and accommodations were being made for parking on adjacent side streets. Residents of Belfry Hill, who had been seeking road improvements for years, grew frustrated and demanded that Belfry Street receive gravel. Concern about flooding and washouts prompted the City of Council Grove to take a closer look at options for paving the street with curbing and gutters instead of laying new gravel. The months-long process finally resulted in the re-grading and paving of Belfry Street. As part of this project, concrete posts with draping chains were installed lining the east side of Belfry Street atop Hermit’s Cave. The 1929 fence/guardrail remains today.

Lalla Maloy Brigham and the Santa Fe Trail Centennial

Interest in Council Grove’s past grew in 1921 when the nation commemorated the centennial of the opening of the Santa Fe Trail. Local boosters turned their attention to the Belfry Hill and Hermit’s Cave once again. Stone steps were installed providing direct and easier access from the graded roadway and sidewalk down to the cave. The new steps formed the north wall of the cave and the hand-laid stone wall of the cave was repaired.<sup>45</sup> (This wall was again re-laid in the 1950s by the Jaycees. A 1953 newspaper article noted, “The Junior Chamber of Commerce will soon start on a project to put

<sup>40</sup> “Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail (Revised),” National Register multiple property documentation form, E-74-75. For more information on this topic, see: Elizabeth Rosin, *Roadside Kansas* National Register multiple property documentation form (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2011); and L. Robert Puschendorf, “Trails of the Twentieth Century: John C. Nicholson and Newton, Kansas.” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 32: 3 (Autumn 2009), 154-167.

<sup>41</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 17 July 1914.

<sup>42</sup> G. Bill Coffin, *Council Grove*, Morris County Clippings Vol. II, Kansas State Historical Society, 108-108A. *Council Grove Republican*, 4 December 1914.

<sup>43</sup> Puschendorf, 161.

<sup>44</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 16 July 1929.

<sup>45</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 24 February 1921.

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Hermit's Cave back in shape as a tourist attraction."<sup>46</sup> This mid-century project not only re-laid the north wall but added a second mortared wall on the east face from the south end, framing a rectangular opening to the cave. The wall was again re-built in the 1970s. This later, mid-century mortared wall was recently removed to return its appearance to what it was in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.)



*Hermit's Cave Postcard with view from Belfry Street, undated but c.1930s with paved street and steps);  
Source: Ken McClintock, Council Grove*

Council Grove embraced the centennial spirit expanding their annual old settlers' homecoming event into a week-long celebration (June 26 to July 2, 1921) replete with concerts, pageants, and four nights of dances. In many ways, this event marked Council Grove's emergence as a full-fledged tourist town.

Planning for the event was led by Lalla Brigham, who served as Chairman of Homecoming Week. She led a committee from the community's Civic Club to develop the program of activities and mark the various "spots of interest."<sup>47</sup> Brigham found time to compile a history of Council Grove, with "several stories about landmarks of the city, including John Maloy's story of the Hermit Priest, which alone is worth the price of the book."<sup>48</sup> It was advertised and made available during the event, and a second edition was published later in the year with a section devoted to the celebration.<sup>49</sup> Assisting the committee was former Council Grove resident George Morehouse, who had authored works on the Santa Fe Trail and had served as president of the Kansas Historical Society.<sup>50</sup>

Plans called for an admission fee of 25 cents into the various events, with proceeds going to the Civic Club to build a restroom at the cemetery in honor of local soldiers who had served in World War I. Brigham offered proceeds of her book to the Civic Club as well.<sup>51</sup> Excerpts of articles in local and regional newspapers below further illustrate the plans for the event:

*Plan Homecoming Here*

The old settlers are taking a great interest in this event. The Civic Club started the movement of marking Council Grove historic shrines and a committee consisting of T.W. Whiting, J.J. Rhodes and Clarence White has taken charge of the making and placing the markers...<sup>52</sup>

*Markers are Placed – Historical Spots in Vicinity of Council Grove to be Preserved*

Work on historical points of interest in the city is going forward this week... Hermit's Cave is being restored and the steps leading to it have been put in. It is planned to have an electric light placed over the old bell on Belfry Hill. Markers for other spots of interest will soon be ready to place.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 22 April 1953.

<sup>47</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 5 May 1921.

<sup>48</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 5 July 1921.

<sup>49</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 27 December 1921.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 28 June 1921.

<sup>52</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 17 February 1921.

<sup>53</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 24 February 1921.



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*Plans for Homecoming*

Big plans and preparations for the Old Settlers Homecoming in June are being made at this time... Entertainment of various kinds, a parade depicting a history of the trail that passed through Council Grove from 1821 to the present time will be one important feature, reunions, and an old settlers' picnic for the last day... Mrs. L.H. Brigham is writing a history of Council Grove covering a period of 100 years, from 1821 to present. This will be read in two parts, two evenings at the Stella Theater featuring one hundred and twenty slides of scenes and old residents.<sup>54</sup>

*Mark Eleven Historic Spots in Council Grove to record story of town's making*

Persons visiting Council Grove readily will recognize the eleven historic spots in the city. Metal markers were placed recently here and there to record for succeeding generations the story of the making of Council Grove. The eleven sites are: The Kaw Mission, The Council Grove Oak, Hayes House, South Methodist Church site, The Brown Jug little brown school, Last Chance Store, Gilkey House, Custer Elm Tree, Freemont Spring, Hermit's Cave, and the Old Stone Store (Conn Mercantile). Marking of the historic sites was brought about by the Civic Club.<sup>55</sup>

*Take Your Breakfast*

The breakfast on Belfry Hill next Wednesday morning, under the auspices of the women's clubs of the town, is intended to be an open affair. Everyone is cordially invited to attend. Take your own sandwiches and bacon and eggs. Coffee will be provided on the grounds. Go and enjoy an early morning view of the Neosho valley.<sup>56</sup>

Businesses and social organizations alike came together for the Old Settlers' picnic and parade was held on July 1, a day the local newspaper called "a big day in Council Grove history."<sup>57</sup> The results of the event, particularly relating to the marking of local historic spots, had long-lasting effects. Other events highlighting the town's trail history were organized within just a few years. In 1925, the community gathered for another centennial with similar pageantry and state-wide promotion – the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the council between representatives of the U. S. government and the Plains Indians that resulted in a treaty with the Osages.<sup>58</sup> The event was billed as Council Grove's Birthday. In 1928, locals led by the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) hosted dedication services for the unveiling of the "Madonna of the Trail" monument. One monument was erected in each of the twelve states along the National Old Trails Road, an early ocean-to-ocean highway that covered the route of the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri to Santa Fe.<sup>59</sup>

Legacy of Early Tourism in Council Grove

The stories of Belfry Hill, Hermit's Cave, the Old Bell, and the other local Santa Fe Trail-era sites were retold in local histories and tourism literature for years. By the time Council Grove hit its stride as an early tourist town, the nation was falling into economic depression. An important and widely circulated travel guide emerged from this era, the Work Projects Administration's *Kansas: A Guide to the Sunflower State*, which was a part of the American Guide Series that included a travel volume of each state. These guides are "a legacy of the Federal Writers' Project, a New Deal enterprise begun in 1935 to employ needy writers and research workers."<sup>60</sup> The compilation of the Kansas volume was very much a group effort in which "field workers interviewed older residents and local experts" while "others checked data sources, photographed, and took mileages."<sup>61</sup> After editing, it was published in 1939.

Historian and geographer James R. Shortridge suggests "tourism was not a major industry in 1939," and "people traveled more slowly and not as frequently." The guide, he explains, has an "unmistakable sense of...neighbors sharing their heritage with neighbors," and the lack of a "promotional tone was partially the result of a Federal Writers' Project policy, but it also was a product of the era." And, "each town...is described in terms of its historical background, economic base, notable buildings, important events, and the like."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 31 March 1921.

<sup>55</sup> *Topeka Daily Capital*, 6 April 1921.

<sup>56</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 24 June 1921.

<sup>57</sup> *Council Grove Republican*, 5 July 1921.

<sup>58</sup> "Is 100 Years Old' Council Grove Will Celebrate its Birthday Next Month," *Topeka Journal*, 21 July 1925; "Past Stirs Council Grove," *Kansas City Times*, 11 August 1925.

<sup>59</sup> "Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail (Revised)," National Register multiple property documentation form, E-75.

<sup>60</sup> Shortridge, ed., *The WPA Guide to 1930s Kansas*, introduction.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* Citation covers entire paragraph.

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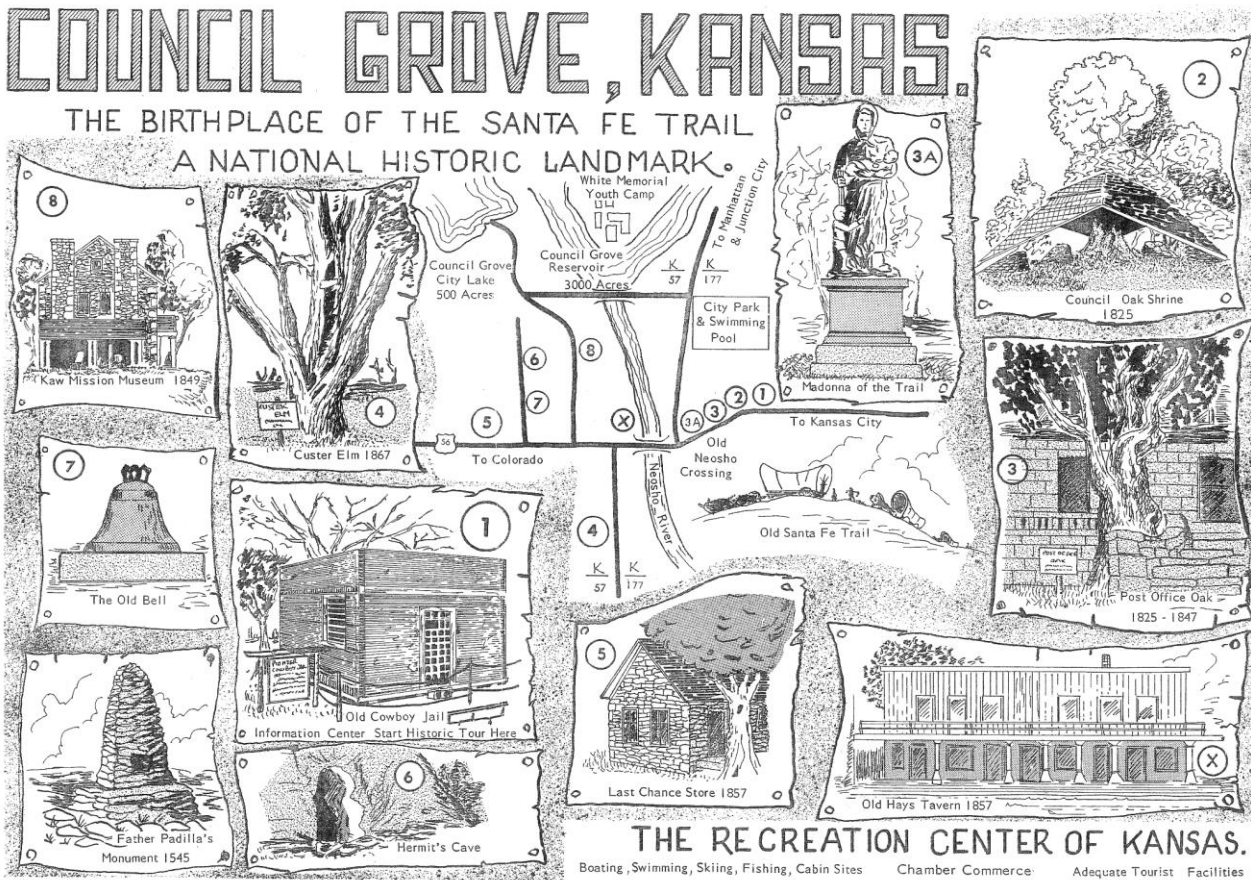
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The guide highlights Council Grove near the beginning of Tour 4, noting the town's population (2,998) and its various points of historical interest, including the new Madonna of the Trail monument, the Council Oak, the Hays Tavern, the Kaw Mission, the Last Chance Store, the Hermit's Cave, the Old Bell Monument, the Post Office Oak, and Custer's Elm – many of the same sites first marked for the Santa Fe Trail centennial in 1921.<sup>63</sup> As Shortridge suggests, the writers likely talked with local experts and used Inman's book *Tales of the Trail* and Brigham's *The Story of Council Grove on the Santa Fe Trail*, as many of the same tales are retold.

New life was breathed into local tourism efforts in 1951 with the opening of the Kaw Mission State Historic Site. In 1954, the new site welcomed 5716 visitors from "thirty-seven states and nine foreign countries."<sup>64</sup> A fitting book-end to the story of the development of the Belfry Hill and the marking of the community's various Santa Fe Trail-related places is the early 1960s effort to nominate several of those places as one of the state's first National Historic Landmarks. This successful nomination in 1963 came three years prior to the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, which created the National Register of Historic Place and established the framework of the State Historic Preservation Offices. Today, there are 22 Morris County listings in the National Register of Historic Places, including the Downtown Council Grove Historic District. Capitalizing on their historic associations with the Santa Fe Trail remains a key component of current-day Council Grove. Belfry Hill, Hermit's Cave, and the McKinley/Old Bell Monument are important parts of the story.



c.1970s Tourism Brochure listing cave and bell; Source: KSHS files

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 376-379.

<sup>64</sup> "The Annual Meeting," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* v. 21, no. 4 (Winter 1954), 300.

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Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill  
Name of Property

Morris County, Kansas  
County and State

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**  
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: Morris County Historical Museum

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre

**Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.**  
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |   |                               |                                 |   |                               |                                 |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | <u>38.662854</u><br>Latitude: | <u>-96.494248</u><br>Longitude: | 3 | <u>38.663259</u><br>Latitude: | <u>-96.494595</u><br>Longitude: |
| 2 | <u>38.662310</u><br>Latitude: | <u>-96.494065</u><br>Longitude: | 4 | <u>38.663259</u><br>Latitude: | <u>-96.494864</u><br>Longitude: |
|   |                               |                                 | 5 | <u>38.661639</u><br>Latitude: | <u>-96.493912</u><br>Longitude: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)  
The nominated site is proposed with a discontinuous boundary defined by the natural topography, man-made features, and property lines. The main portion is a strip of the public right-of-way approximately 50' in width on the east side of Belfry Street on the eastern bluff of Belfry Hill. The area is bounded by the south curb of Hays Street on the south, the centerline of Conn Street on the north, the east curb of Belfry Street on the west, and the east property line of the Belfry Street right of way on the east. The second area, is an approximately 10' x 20' area around the McKinley/Old Bell Monument located at the east curb of Belfry Street, between Columbia and Hays Streets.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)  
The boundary is discontinuous because the related sites/resources are about a block apart from one another with non-historic development in between. The site boundary encompasses the east bluff of Belfry Hill that is included in the Belfry Street public right-of-way and generally accessible from N. Belfry Street – which was developed into a natural park in 1901 and includes both Hermit's Cave and the McKinley/Old Bell Monument (separated by two modern residences).

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Brenda R. Spencer, with Sarah Martin (KSHS)  
organization Spencer Preservation date November 14, 2014  
street & number 10150 Onaga Road telephone 785-456-9857  
city or town Wamego state KS zip code 66547  
e-mail Brenda@SpencerPreservation.com

Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill  
Name of Property

Morris County, Kansas  
County and State

**Property Owner:** (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name City of Council Grove (Danny Matthews, City Administrator)  
street & number 205 Union telephone 620-767-5417  
city or town Council Grove state KS zip 66846

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photograph Log**

Name of Property: Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill  
City or Vicinity: Council Grove  
County: Morris State: Kansas  
Photographer: Brenda Spencer  
Date Photographed: November 7, 9, and 14, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Number	Direction	Description
1 of 24	NW	View of Belfry Hill from downtown Council Grove at Mission and Columbia Streets
2 of 24	NW	View of Belfry Hill from Mission and Conn Streets; Conn dead ends at base of hill
3 of 24	N	Looking up Belfry Street from Main Street/US Highway 56
4 of 24	NE	SW corner of site boundary at Columbia and Belfry Street with Bell Monument
5 of 24	SE	Looking SE down Belfry Street with Bell Monument on east (left)
6 of 24	E	McKinley/Old Bell Monument from Belfry Street
7 of 24	NE	Bronze plaque on southwest side of bell monument and stone's with children's' initials
8 of 24	NW	Original inscribed stone panel on southwest side of monument
9 of 24	NW	View of Bell Monument with stone base, from southeast
10 of 24	NE	Curbside area on east side of Belfry Street above Hermit's Cave
11 of 24	SE	Curbside area on east side of Belfry Street above Hermit's Cave, from Belfry Street
12 of 24	E	National Park Service <i>Santa Fe National Historic Trails</i> Marker at curb above cave
13 of 24	S	View of stone steps and concrete piers/railing at access point to cave, from Belfry St.
14 of 24	S	Looking south down Belfry Street from Conn Street with Belfry Hill on east (left)
15 of 24	N	Looking NW at Belfry and Conn Streets (northwest boundary of Belfry Hill Site
16 of 24	SW	East bluff of Belfry Hill, immediately east of Belfry Street at Conn – north boundary

**Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill**

**Morris County, Kansas**

Name of Property

County and State

17 of 24	S	Large stone outcroppings located on east bluff north of cave
18 of 24	W	Large stone outcroppings located on east bluff north of cave
19 of 24	S	Section of man-made stone wall, likely remnants of 1901 terracing by hill residents
20 of 24	S	Looking south on east face of Belfry Hill immediately north of Hermit's Cave
21 of 24	NW	Hermit's Cave in stone outcropping on east bluff of hill
22 of 24	NW	Cave with hand laid stone wall on north end and steps to street above
23 of 24	S	Looking south along stone outcropping at Hermit's Cave
24 of 24	N	Looking north on east face of Belfry Hill immediately south of Hermit's Cave

**Figures**

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.



Aerial View of Context from Google.com 2014  
Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill, Council Grove, Morris County, Kansas

Latitude/Longitude: Datum WGS84

1	38.662254, -96.494248
2	38.662310, -96.494065
3	38.663310, -96.494595
4	38.663259, -96.494864
5	38.661639, -96.493912

Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill  
Name of Property

Morris County, Kansas  
County and State



Aerial View of Site Boundary from Google.com 2014  
Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill  
Council Grove, Morris County, Kansas  
Latitude/Longitude: Datum WGS84

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | 38.662254, -96.494248 |
| 2 | 38.662310, -96.494065 |
| 3 | 38.663310, -96.494595 |
| 4 | 38.663259, -96.494864 |
| 5 | 38.661639, -96.493912 |

Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill

Name of Property

Morris County, Kansas

County and State



Aerial View of Site Boundary  
On Plat Map with lot lines (Morris County GIS Office)  
Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill  
Council Grove, Morris County, Kansas

NOT TO SCALE



Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill

Name of Property

Morris County, Kansas

County and State



PHOTO KEY

Aerial View of Site/Plat Map from Morris County GIS Office  
Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill  
Council Grove, Morris County, Kansas

NOT TO SCALE

Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill

Morris County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

FIGURE 1a – John Maloy's story of the Hermit Priest, first published in the *Council Grove Republican*, 7 February 1890. Continued on 1b and 1c.

<p><b>THE HERMIT PRIEST.</b></p> <p><b>"Matteo Bocalini," or Father Francesco.</b></p> <p>BY JOHN MALOY.</p> <p>About the time of the first open hostilities that led to our late civil war; when men were hurrying hither and thither and preparing for the great events that were soon to transpire and make or mar the destiny of this republic, a strangely mysterious character made his advent into Council Grove, then the extreme frontier, rendezvous and outfitting post for the freighters and <i>voyageurs</i> to Mexico and the western mountains. He attracted much attention, for he was in our frontier town as mysterious a personage as the "man in the iron mask" or the awkward Kaspar Hauser whose appearance at the gates of Nuremberg startled the inhabitants of that staid and quiet town, hoary with the conservatism of centuries. He talked little, and it was no easy matter to engage him in conversation, so profoundly did he believe in some</p> <p>IMPENDING DANGER.</p> <p>Enough was gathered, however, to enable us to furnish an outline of his history, extracted at odd intervals of communicativeness. Matteo Bocalini, at the time of which we are writing was about fifty-five years of age, and was a native of Capri, the charming and romantic island of Italy, situated in the Mediterranean sea, at the entrance of the Bay of Naples, about twenty miles south of the city of Naples. His early life was spent there, and there in the city of Capri, the seat of a bishopric, he received his early education, devoted himself to the church and made his first com-</p>	<p>everything that was good and true and beautiful. He had, of earthly possessions, so little that he could have almost vied with the lowly Nazarene in the splendor of his poverty. Of crucifixes, religious mementos and other trinkets</p> <p>SWEETLY SUGGESTIVE</p> <p>of better and happier days, he had a few. His solace was in a half dozen small volumes, between the lids of which none peered but himself. He was regular at his devotions, for, notwithstanding he had sinned, he was contritely striving to outlive its memory and undo the injury it had done his Master's cause. He possessed one other article of personal property, the only circumstance that tinges his stay among us with anything bordering on the romantic. It was a rude mandolin and on evenings he would sweep the strings with fingers as light and deft and soulfully tender as a maiden whose heart had just been touched by its first breath of love. To those who were fortunate enough to hear—and they were few—his vesper hymns were solemn as the holy hush of a young girl's prayer and his neapolitan songs and gondola airs were sweet as the chant of the angels he invoked.</p> <p>There he lived with—</p> <p>"The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell "His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well." he, the once gay and gallant Matteo Bocalini, then "Father Francesco" the hermit priest of the Santa Fe trail. He was loyal to the Catholic church, but hated and feared the Jesuits whom he believed had plotted to destroy him. No one here spoke a language he did not understand. Once when a stabbed and dying Mexican wanted a service for the repose of his soul, he hastened to his side and administered the last sacrament in the dying man's own tongue. One day he saw a stranger whom he took to be a Jesuit emissary, and said he could not tarry here longer; that he would go to the</p> <p>MOUNTAINS OF MEXICO,</p>
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Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill

Morris County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

FIGURE 1b – Continued from 1a above  
Continued on 1c

mencement in the theological studies that were at last to be the cause of his sorrows, his wanderings and his death. The island of his birth was historic as well as

ROMANTIC AND BEAUTIFUL,

for it was there that the Roman Emperor Tiberius, spent the last ten years of his life, and it was there he reared twelve palaces, the ruins of which, it is said, are still visible. The island of Capri is remarkable for a cavern called the "Grotto of the Nymphs" or the "Blue Grotto" in which, it is possible the subject of our sketch first learned to love the companionship of solitude and the home of the cave. At the age of eighteen Matteo Boccalini left his native isle and the patronage of his good bishop and perfected his education under the shadows of St. Peter's dome, and took holy orders at the age of twenty-one and then began with him the life of stormy passion and sorrowful pilgrimage that eventually led to a tragic death in the far off occident. He was called "Father Francesco" and was, although so young, noted for his eloquent preaching, subtle philosophy, and boldness and bravery of his political utterances. Nevertheless the Pope named him as one of his secretaries, but the college of the propagandists denounced him, and he was not confirmed, but was placed under interrogation and discipline. He denounced them as inquisitors and Jesuits and incurred their eternal enmity. The discipline over, he was assigned a place in the purlieus of the

"ETERNAL CITY"

and thenceforth was watched as only the disciples of Ignatius Loyola can watch.

In time his sunny nature and warm passions caused his disgrace. He became charmed with a fair devotee, one of his charge, furnished no doubt

seek another cave, rear a cross and live in solitude. He thought much of solitude and argued that it was the "muse of enthusiasm, and that enthusiasm was the parent of genius;" that in all ages solitude had been called for—flown to.

One bright spring morning, when the breeze was billowing the grass upon the virgin prairies, he left his cave, as he had years before left his cloister, and conveyed by a passing train he set out for New Mexico. We learn he was last seen at Santa Fe, the city of "Holy Faith," where his stay was short. From there to the mountains and he was lost sight of, and it was but a couple of years till the news came that

A HERMIT PRIEST

had been living in a mountain cave over which a rudely shaped wooden cross was standing and that soon after he was found dead and that a poisoned dagger in the hand of a Jesuit assassin had at last done its work—that at last he had met the fate which had been his lifetime fear.

The hermit had the eye of an artist, a head that was shapely with a classic mold, and notwithstanding his age, his hair was as black and lustrous as the raven's wing. His form betokened that in his earlier days he had been a sinewy athlete.

For years after his departure the "hermit cave" was an object of much interest. Upon the time-roughened rocks were scratched his name, a cross, "Jesu Maria" and "Capri," all dear to the hermit's heart.

Thus ends the story of this solitary man—a man of sorrows and griefs but with as much repentance and as many penances as sins—one of those ethereal spirits, who might become physically dirty but never spiritually unclean.

Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill

Name of Property

Morris County, Kansas

County and State

FIGURE 1c- continued from 1b above

by his enemies for the occasion, and he fell in a most earthy and fleshly way, charged, prosecuted, persecuted and denounced, he was despoiled of his sacerdotal functions and he fled— became a wanderer upon the face of the earth—and supped with sorrow and despair throughout all the remainder of his earthly career. He for a short time campaigned with the heroic Garibaldi, but his utterances for liberty of thought, action and theory of divine and human government soon brought again upon his track the enemies who had insured his downfall, and with

TEARS AND SIGHS

he turned his steps and began his journeyings to this continent. No more was he to behold his place of birth or see the chalky outlines of fair, beautiful Capri, which begems the blue Mediterranean and the phosphorescent Bay of Naples. The sky, sunshine and vintage of dear old Italy was never more to warm his impulsive nature or stir into life the numbness of his heart. The years went by and having passed from place to place, and visited one Indian tribe and another, in the hope of finding some tribe or people near unto nature's heart; some people that might receive him in the simplicity of his severe and pious penance; he came, a few weeks prior to the time of the opening of this sketch, among the Kaw or Kansas Indians whose reservation was in the Neosho valley a few miles below Council Grove. The Kaws, very superstitious and suspicious and not remarkable for a reverence for any sort of religion, did not take kindly to the solitary wanderer. His pious zeal, abstinence and self-control made them fear to approach him, for they did not understand that

"When holy and devout religious men

"Are at their beads, 'tis hard to draw them  
thence

"So sweet is zealous contemplation."

They said he was "bad medicine" and so he was not more at home in the tepees of the Kaws than he would have been in the Vatican. He came to Council Grove as the tramp has since come, but not to beg or demand bread at our doors, or to tell off his beads in the presence of the vulgar curious, but to go upon the hillside and into a cave, where for five months he lived accessible to but few, with whom, when he felt the quickened glow of a heart that recognizes the "fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," he would talk in tenderest strains of ev-







Handicap Accessible

1000

STOP

1000



COLUMBIA



OLD BELL  
1863  
USED TO WARN  
THE SETTLERS  
OF INDIAN RAIDS





OLD BELL

- 1863 -

USED TO  
WARN SETTLERS  
OF  
INDIAN RAIDS

OLD BELL

ALARM BELL

Erected 1863.

BROKEN

Down 1884.

Placed

here 1901.









## Hermit's Cave

Down the steps and under the rock in front of you is a small recess. For a few months in 1863, it was home to religious mystic Giovanni de Agostini. Born in 1801 in Novara, Italy, he was the son of a nobleman and received a fine education in preparation for the priesthood, but reportedly was forced to leave Italy after falling in love with a young lady. Here, in Council Grove, he was known as Father Francesco.

He left Council Grove with a Santa Fe Trail wagon train owned by Don Eugenio Romero and captained by Dionicio Gonzalez, walking the entire 550 miles to Las Vegas, New Mexico. There, he is said to have performed miracle cures, which attracted crowds. He retreated to a nearby mountain.

Initially called the Hermit of El Porvenir (the future), he lived in a cave on what came to be known as Hermit's Peak. The citizens of Las Vegas soon built him a small cabin, where he carved religious emblems, which he traded in town for cornmeal. The Hermit left for southern New Mexico and the Organ Mountains in 1867. He was mysteriously murdered in 1869.

*He appears rather an intelligent man, speaks nine different languages. He has lived a Hermit some thirty five years.... Last winter he lived five months in a hollow tree near Westport, Mo. He refuses to eat bread or meat; his food consists of corn meal mixed with water or milk without cooking.*

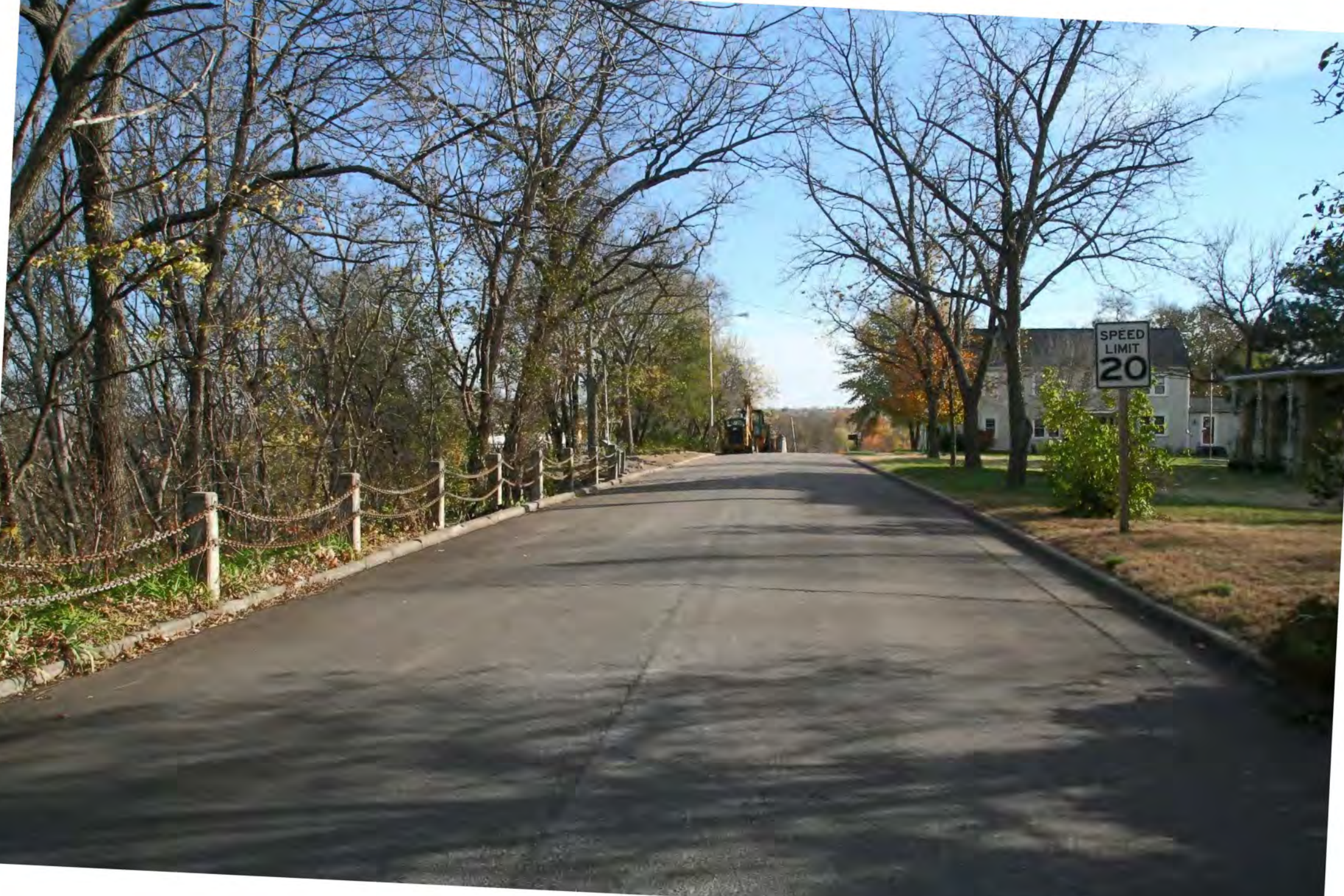
Council Grove Press, April 27, 1863



In his travels through Europe and the Americas, the hermit used several names, including Father Francesco, Matteo Boccalini, and his birthname, Giovanni Maria de Agostini.







SPEED  
LIMIT  
20























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KANSAS, Morris

DATE RECEIVED: 2/27/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/30/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/14/15      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/14/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000148

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    4/14/15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*An interesting concrete property during  
the early transpotation era*

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

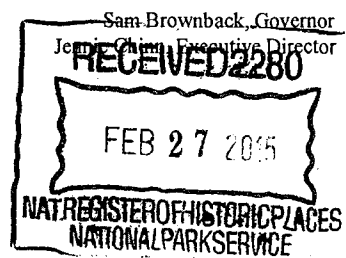
REVIEWER Abraham      DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

Kansas Historical Society



February 23, 2015

Paul Loether, National Register Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, N. W.  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor (MS 2280)  
Washington, DC 20005

Re: National Register documents – New Nomination

Dear Mr. Loether:

Please find enclosed the following National Register documents:

- **Kansas Route 66 Historic District – Cherokee County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Signed copy of the document and 2 disks with a PDF of the nomination, mapping file, and photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
  
- **Girl Scout Little House – Ashland, Clark County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Signed copy of the document and 2 disks with a PDF of the nomination, mapping file, and photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
  
- **Strother Field Tetrahedron Wind Indicator – Cowley County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Signed copy of the document and 2 disks with a PDF of the nomination, mapping file, and photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
  
- **Bown-Corby School – Marion, Marion County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Signed copy of the document and 2 disks with a PDF of the nomination, mapping file, and photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
  
- **Washington School – Independence, Montgomery County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Signed copy of the document and 2 disks with a PDF of the nomination, mapping file, and photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.

- **Hermit's Cave on Belfry Hill – Morris County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Signed copy of the document and 2 disks with a PDF of the nomination, mapping file, and photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
  
- **Fix Farmstead – Wabaunsee County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Signed copy of the document and 2 disks with a PDF of the nomination, mapping file, and photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
  
- **The Parsonian Hotel – Parsons, Labette County, Kansas (new nomination)**
  - Enclosed: Signed copy of the document and 2 disks with a PDF of the nomination, mapping file, and photographs
  - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I may be reached at 785-272-8681 ext. 216 or [smartin@kshs.org](mailto:smartin@kshs.org).

Sincerely yours,



Sarah J. Martin  
National Register Coordinator

Enclosures