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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Vermillion Creek Crossing of the Oregon trail, the Louis Vieux cemetery, the site of Vieux's toll bridge across the Vermillion and the cholera victims' cemetery are all located in close proximity to each other in an area encompassing about 20 acres.

The Louis Vieux Cemetery is located on a hill several hundred yards east of the Vermillion and just north of where Vieux had his cabin, blacksmith shop and stable. The cemetery is now fenced off from the surrounding pasture and is accessible to visitors by means of a turnout from an east-west rural road about 100 yards to the south. Towering over 30 grave stones in the enclosure is the monument for Louis Vieux. Many of the markers, including Louis Vieux's, have been broken and otherwise damaged over the years by weather, grazing cattle and vandals. Vieux's marker has been repaired but a number of the stones which have broken into several pieces are lying flat.

The road south of the cemetery continues west to an old iron bridge, now declared unsafe and closed to traffic. The site of the toll bridge erected by Louis Vieux is believed to be at that same spot.

The Vermillion crossing (or Vieux crossing) of the Oregon trail is 30 to 40 yards upstream from the bridge. At that spot the river bed is solid rock. (Crossings could still be made there if the creek banks were not so steep.) The river is probably wider and its banks are in all likelihood much steeper now than in Louis Vieux's time. Many large trees line both banks of the river.

Looking to the east, back up on the hill, from the area of that crossing one can see on the hillside a depressed area which might have been made by wagons approaching the crossing area. A short distance north of the crossing, on the east bank and just east of an old lane road, is the cholera victims' cemetery. Only three stones remain to mark the area and only one has a legend, which reads "T. S. Prather, May 27, 1849". Construction of that road, vandalism and time had accounted for removal of the other stones prior to 1928.

Both above and below the crossing area the Vermillion was channelized in the 1930's, but not at the spot of the crossing. The proposed Onaga dam and lake, which the Corps of Engineers plans to construct, will further alter the area. The dam will be built a mile or more upstream from the area of the nomination, but the Corps has stated its intentions of acquiring the area surrounding the crossing and cemetery for recreational/historical development.

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PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	🔲 16th Century	🔲 18th Century	20th Century
15th Century	17th Century	🔀 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicab	le and Known)		
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The Vermillion Creek Crossing was a well-known campsite for travelers on the Oregon trail.

Louis Vieux, who was half-French, half-Pottawatomie, was born in 1809 where the city of Chicago now stands. Originally his name was Louis Jarveau, but it was changed to Louis Vieux on the government's tribal roll. He moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa, in 1834 and was there elected a tribal chief. In 1846 they were moved to Indianola, Kansas, the site of present day North Topeka. And in 1847 or 1848 Vieux received his allotment of reservation land, which was located on the Oregon trail, just east of where it crossed the Vermillion river. He built a log cabin on his allotment, and then constructed a toll bridge over the Vermillion near the spot where emigrants and travelers had forded the river for many years. The Vermillion was the third major crossing faced by the emigrants, after the Wakarusa and the Kansas.

Vieux charged \$1.00 for each outfit that crossed his bridge, sometimes making \$300.00 a day. He also sold hay and grain to the travelers, and some accounts mention that he had a blacksmith shop for wagon repairs and also ran a general store. The Vieux crossing was a popular resting place for users of both the Oregon trail and the Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley road since it had good water, good wood and good grass. (The Oregon trail after crossing the Vermillion ran west for one mile and then angled northwest; at that point the Fort-to-Fort road separated and continued westerly.) There was a stage stable located on the Vieux farm where horses were changed for the stage line running on the Fort-to-Fort road. At least one tragedy is known to have occurred at the Vermillion crossing; in May, 1849, approximately 50 people from a large outfit died there of Asiatic cholera and were buried on the east bank of the Vermillion. A stone was placed at the head of each grave with the name and date of burial.

Louis Vieux was an important man to his tribe, serving as business agent, interpreter and chief. He made a number of trips to Washington in behalf of the Pottawatomies. He owned much land and became very wealthy. At one time he owned the site of the town of Louisville, which was named in his honor. Louis Vieux died on May 6, 1872, and is buried, with two of his wives and several of his children, in what is known as the Louis Vieux cemetery. It is located several hundred yards east of the ford and a short distance north of where his old cabin stood.

Early History of Pottawatomie County (n.p., 1954), pp. 5, 8. Franzwa, Gregory M., The Oregon Trail Revisited (St. Louis, Patrice	9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES					
Pranzwa, Gregory M., The Oregon Trail Revisited (St. Louis, Patrice Press, Inc., 1972), pp. 149-152. South 24-152. Manhattan Mercury, December 3, 1972. St. Marys Chief, January 12, 1978. Smith, William E., "The Oregon Trail Through Pottawatomic County," Kansas Historical Collections, v. 17 (1926-1928), pp. 435-464. South Press, Southere, South Press, South Press, South Press, So	Society, 1972), p. 931.	_		0 <		
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Form	10-300a
(July	1969)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

 Owner of the nominated area in NE 1/4, Sec. 24 is Clarence Tessendorf, Wamego, Kansas

Owner of nominated area in NW 1/4, Sec. 24 is Robert Kersey, Wamego, Kansas

- The .8 acres of Louis Vieux Cemetery was deeded to Pottawatomie County.
- 8. The area of the ford and cemeteries is just below the proposed Onage dam and lake. The Corps of Engineers has indicated an intention to acquire this property and to develop it as a historic site in connection with the reservoir.

The Vermillion Creek Crossing was one of the early major river crossings for westward travelers on the Oregon trail. Many thousands of Oregon and California bound emigrants camped here and then crossed the Vermillion. Louis Vieux was a significant figure to the Pottawatomie tribe and he also provided needed services to countless pioneer travelers.

9. Sutterlin, John Floyd, <u>Historical Outline of Pottawatomie County</u> <u>1803-1935</u>, <u>Manuscript in Kansas State Historical Society Library</u>. Thoburn, Joseph B., <u>A Standard History of</u> <u>Oklahoma</u>, v. 5 (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1916), p. 2169. Topeka <u>Journal</u>, July 10, 1954. Westmoreland Recorder, July 19, 1906; June 3, 1954.

