

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 13001039

Property Name: Upper Wakarusa River Crossing

County: Douglas State: Kansas

Multiple Name:

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

fn Alexis Abernethy
Signature of the Keeper

1-8-14
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

In Section 3 on the National Register of Historic Places nomination the levels of significance of Local and State have been added in the area Historica Archeology-Non-Aboriginal.

In Section 8 of the National Register of Historic Places nomination the area of signifince of Historic Archeology-Non-Aboriginal has been added as an area of signifince to correspond with the Criterion D and Euro American has been added as Cultural Affiliation.

The State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



1039

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Upper Wakarusa River Crossing

other names/site number KHRI# 045-4522

2. Location

street & number 1180 E 1400 Road not for publication

city or town Lawrence vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Douglas code 045 zip code 66046

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

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

11-19-13
Date

DSHP
Title

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:) _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

1-8-14
Date of Action

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input 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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	district
1	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION / Road-Related

LANDSCAPE / Natural Feature

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE / Unoccupied Land

LANDSCAPE / Natural Feature

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: N/A

7. Narrative Description

Summary

The nominated property features two visible remnants of the combined route of the Oregon and California trails as it crossed the Wakarusa River south of present-day Lawrence in central Douglas County, Kansas (Figures 1 & 2). The Wakarusa River is a tributary of the Kansas River, and its main branch flows generally eastward joining the Kansas River near Eudora in eastern Douglas County. What remains of the trail crossing at the Wakarusa River are two distinct cutdowns along the north bank in the NW¼ of Section 19, Township 13 South, Range 20 East. These two cutdowns are approximately 320 feet (97.5 meters) apart, each measuring approximately 20 to 30 feet (6 to 9 meters) wide and 60 feet (18 meters) long (Figures 3 through 5). There are no associated remnants of the crossing on the opposite banks of the river. The total nominated site equals 4.5 acres.

Elaboration

Although it is likely the exact location of the crossing varied depending on climate, soil conditions, and river flow, the General Land Office (GLO) survey maps note the path of the trail within approximately 328 feet (100 meters) of the extant cutdowns in the north river bank (Figure 1). Additionally, this general path, as indicated on the GLO maps, became known as the Belton-to-Lawrence Road that connected Belton, Missouri to Lawrence, Kansas.

*General Landscape*¹

The Upper Wakarusa Crossing is located within the Kansas Drift Plain division of the Dissected Till Plains section of the Central Lowland province of the Interior Plains division of North America.² The Dissected Till Plains are essentially a formerly glaciated northerly extension of the Osage Plains which cover all of the rest of eastern Kansas. Due to the glaciation, glacial drift either conceals or mantles much of the cuesta topography prevalent throughout the Osage Plains. The glaciated section is roughly bounded by the Big Blue and Little Blue rivers on the west and the Kansas River on the south. Bedrock in the western part of the Dissected Till Plains consists of Permian sedimentary rocks, while bedrock formations throughout the rest of the area are of Pennsylvanian age. The formations are made up of interstratified beds of limestone, sandstone, and shale, covered over by glacial deposits of varying thickness. Loess is also present, occurring as a thin upland mantle over most of northeastern Kansas but in thicknesses of up to 100 feet in bluffs along the Missouri river, but narrowing rapidly away from the river to a thin upland mantle over most of northeastern Kansas.

Local topographies of the Dissected Till Plains relate directly to the degree of glaciation that particular area underwent. The heavily glaciated Kansas Drift Plain (except for the loess-covered bluffs along the Missouri river) has a gently undulating erosional drift-controlled surface. In contrast the less glaciated Attenuated Drift Border division, lying along the periphery of the Dissected Till Plains (where the Upper Wakarusa Crossing is located), is more rugged, with an erosional rock-controlled surface similar in most respects to that of the Osage Plains. Throughout most of the Kansas Drift Plain, inter-stream areas or divides remote from major drainages are smooth, broad, and well rounded; topographic distinctions are derived from the original uneroded ground moraine landscape left by the retreat of the glacial ice. Approaching the major stream courses, the country becomes more dissected, the surface is reduced to gentle slopes, and the valleys are wide and open. Adjacent to the larger streams the land is highly dissected, rough, and hilly. In many cases, the river bluffs are too rough for cultivation and the bedrock has been exposed by erosion.

Judging from early historical accounts and soil survey data, the vegetation of northeast Kansas at the time of initial white settlement consisted almost entirely of prairie, cut through by narrow ribbons of riverine

¹ The following three paragraphs are adapted from standard language used in reports written by Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Archeology Department.

² W.E. Schoewe, "The Geography of Kansas, Part II: Physical Geography," *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 52, no. 3 (1949): 280, 291.

forest. The potential natural vegetation of most of the area consists of tall grass prairie, composed of dense stands of tall and medium tall graminoids, predominately big and little bluestem. This prairie vegetation covered the western uplands with little or no forest vegetation. Moving east, the prairie/forest transition was marked by mosaic situations, in which prairie with islands of woods changed gradually into woods with islands of prairie. The forest vegetation, which followed water courses, was made up of medium tall to tall broadleaf deciduous trees, often containing dense undergrowth and many lianas, and occasionally interrupted by freshwater marshes with graminoid communities. Hackberry, cottonwood, willow, and elm were the dominant forest species;³ although oak, black walnut, linden, sycamore, locust, hickory, pecan, and other hardwoods could also be found along with smaller forms such as Osage orange, persimmon, papaw, elderberry, serviceberry, chokecherry, and wild grape.⁴ At the eastern margin of the Dissected Till Plains, and most pervasive on the Missouri River bluffs, the potential natural vegetation was medium tall multilayered broadleaf deciduous woodland, with various forms of hickory and oak being the dominant species.⁵

A large variety of animals were supported by these vegetation communities. The faunal assemblage of the Dissected Till Plains closely paralleled that of the Osage Plains to the south. Both areas contained such big game animals as bison, elk, deer, antelope, and black bear of forest⁶. Predators such as cougar, wildcat, timber wolf, coyote, and fox were present as well, along with raccoon, opossum, the gray, fox, and flying squirrels, beaver, otter, muskrat, badger, jackrabbit, cottontail rabbit, and various other smaller mammals. Wild turkey, prairie chicken, ruffed grouse, and quail were plentiful, while the larger streams yielded an abundance of edible fish and shellfish.

Upper Wakarusa River Crossing

The Upper Wakarusa River Crossing is defined by the river's place in the landscape. At the crossing, the river has migrated to the south edge of its valley, thus creating a situation where high ground (preferable for camping) is present on the south side [approximate elevation: 850 feet (259 meters)]. The north side is much lower floodplain [approximate elevation: 810 feet (247 meters)], a distinction that is clearly visible today. During the time when the trail was in use, the area was generally dominated by tallgrass prairie, with narrow bands of trees present only along streams and river. The Wakarusa River floodplain was low and wet, though still dominated by grasses. Today, the river's southern edge is an area of cultivated fields, wooded areas, houses, and roads. The floodplain was cultivated for many years, though extensive drainage features were necessary in order to keep the fields dry. Today, it is known as the Baker Wetlands and has been allowed to return to grasses and wooded areas. The modern Wakarusa River is controlled by Clinton Dam, situated just a few miles upstream. The river is deeply entrenched in the crossing area, and exhibits a clear rock bottom. Periods of high water now coincide with releases from the dam but were much more unpredictable during the trail period.

The two cutdowns are clearly visible on the river's north bank. They are each approximately 20 to 30 feet (6 to 9 meters) wide and 60 feet (18 meters) long. Though the landscape changes around the crossing area are considerable, the changes have not substantially encroached upon the nominated site itself. The area is more densely forested than it would have been when the trail was in use, but one can still clearly see the higher southern bank, the river's rock bottom, and the places where the wagons would have crossed and been pulled up the north side

Related Archeological Sites

Although outside the boundary of this nomination, two recorded historic archeological sites (both post-dating the period of significance) are situated on the south side of the river (Figure 1). The first (14DO341) is recorded as a series of petroglyphs and rock carvings on a west-facing sandstone cliff overlooking a possible Oregon Trail campsite. The only readable carving on the cliff is the name Matthew Gannon (Figure 6).

³ A.W. Kuchler, "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas," *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 600-601.

⁴ Waldo R. Wedel, "An Introduction to Kansas Archeology," *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (1959): 14.

⁵ Kuchler, 599.

⁶ Wedel, 16.

Research suggests that Gannon was a soldier in the Civil War and may have been stationed in this area and camped here.⁷ The site boundary includes the likely location of the Oregon Trail campsite mentioned in travelers' journals on the river's south bank. The area has been cultivated and is now covered with grass thus affording no surface visibility. No archeological investigations have been conducted, so the purported campsite area has yielded no physical evidence of the Oregon-California Trail period.

The second archeological site (14DO328) is situated upstream to the west and contains a stone ruin that post-dates the period of significance of the Oregon-California Trail. It is situated in the general vicinity of a later river crossing (known as Blanton's Crossing). The area surrounding the later crossing has seen considerable recent disturbance, including establishment of a trailer park and flood-control levees along the river. As a result, there are no extant physical remains of Napoleon Bonaparte Blanton's bridge, which was completed in the summer of 1855.⁸

⁷ Timothy Weston and Marsha King, *Kansas Archeological Site Inventory: 14DO341* (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2001). According to historic sources accessed through Ancestry.com, 73-year-old Matthew Gannon died June 7, 1894, and was buried in grave 882 at Fort Leavenworth Cemetery. Gannon was an immigrant from England settling in St. Louis where he joined the military. He served in Company B of the 7th Missouri Infantry from 1861 to 1864. Company B was split from the regiment on November 21, 1861 and ordered to Kansas City. One of this unit's missions was to protect the anti-slavery farmers along the western border of Missouri and into Kansas.

⁸ William E. Connelly, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, Vol. 1* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918), 495.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

1840-1855

Significant Dates

1843, 1855

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.

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Criteria Considerations

n/a

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance selected begins in 1840 with the first pioneers headed to Oregon Country. It continues until the building of a bridge upstream at Blanton's Crossing in 1855, which shifted traffic away from this location.

8. Statement of Significance

Summary

The Upper Wakarusa River Crossing on the combined route of the Oregon and California trails is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and Exploration/Settlement. It is nationally significant as an intact river crossing of the mid-nineteenth century Oregon-California Trail. This crossing is also nominated under Criterion D for potential to yield additional significant information, since the intact cutdowns are a rare feature illustrating methods employed for bringing wagon trains across rivers. Though the Oregon and California trails had different destinations, in Kansas, both Oregon- and California-bound travelers generally used the same routes. As major waterways were encountered, multiple crossings were often available to use, depending on weather and soil conditions. This particular crossing, the Upper Wakarusa River Crossing, occurs early in the westward journey – about 35 miles from the Kansas-Missouri border.

Elaboration

Trail Overview⁹

The Oregon Trail began as a network of Indian trade and migration routes that crisscrossed the American West. British, French, and Americans fur trappers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries found and followed those paths as they scoured the country for beaver. By the 1820s, caravans of pack trains, carts, and wagons were beating a rough “fur trace” from the Missouri River to the annual trappers’ rendezvous in the Rocky Mountains of today’s Wyoming and northern Utah. Pack trails ran west from the Rockies, following the Snake and Columbia Rivers to Hudson’s Bay Company headquarters at Fort Vancouver in the Oregon Country.¹⁰

When the first family of covered wagon pioneers joined a fur caravan heading to the Rockies from Missouri in 1840, the Oregon Country was jointly occupied by the fledgling United States and powerful Great Britain. Over the next several years, Britain watched uneasily as a low but steady tide of American emigrants surged along the developing, 2200-mile Oregon Trail and emptied into the Pacific Northwest. As the number of American settlers grew, so did the pressure for British withdrawal. In 1846 the two nations signed a treaty giving the U.S. control of lands between California and the 49th parallel, today’s border between the United States and Canada.¹¹ The emigration swelled in the early 1850s as homesteaders flocked to Oregon to stake their claims under the Donation Lands Act. By 1860, some 53,000 covered wagon emigrants and hundreds of thousands of livestock had followed the Oregon Trail to the Pacific Northwest.¹²

The California Trail, too, began at the Missouri River and stretched more than 2,000 miles across plains and mountains, then branched out to end at various towns and camps in and beyond the Sierra Nevada. Much of that distance was part of a shared corridor with the Oregon Trail through Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, and eastern Idaho. Near today’s Soda Springs, Idaho, the 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson Party split away from the Oregon

⁹ Trail overview written by Lee Kreutzer, National Trails Intermountain Region, National Park Service.

¹⁰ William E. Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1812-1848*, vol. 1, *Overland West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 77, 80; Hulbert, Archer Butler ed., *Where Rolls the Oregon: Prophet and Pessimist Look Northwest*, vol. 3, *Overland to the Pacific* (Colorado Springs: The Steward Commission of Colorado College & the Denver Public Library, 1933), 52, 91, 105, 136, 149-154, 156-159; Bernard De Voto, *Across the Wide Missouri* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947), 47, 59, 69; Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie*, (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), 4; Merrill J. Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives: A Descriptive Bibliography of Travel over the Great Central Overland Route to Oregon, California, Utah, Colorado, Montana, and Other Western States and Territories, 1812-1866* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 1-5.

¹¹ Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous*, 290-291.

¹² John D. Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 60, 84-85.

Trail and turned south to blaze a new emigrant route across the unmapped Great Basin and along the Humboldt River to California, part of Mexico at that time. Against all odds, the entire party survived the trip, and some of the successful pioneers set to work recruiting other emigrants to California. A trickle of over-landers followed over the next several years, developing a more direct trail across Idaho and Nevada to the Humboldt River and better routes through the Sierra Nevada.¹³

As a result of the 1846-1848 Mexican-American War and annexation of Texas, the United States gained a tremendous swath of territory that stretched from the Gulf of Mexico across the Southern Plains, Southwest, and Great Basin to the Pacific coast. Emigration to California continued at a dribble despite the change of government. Few Americans were tempted to make the arduous trip until news of the gold discovery at Sutter's Mill reached the East and opened the emigration floodgates. In the spring of 1850 some 44,000 Argonauts and entrepreneurs rushed along the California Trail to seek their fortunes in the gold camps. As a result of the influx, California gained statehood the following year, and by 1860 over 200,000 emigrants had followed the long trail west to the Golden State.¹⁴

Starting in 1847, Oregon- and California-bound travelers shared the trail corridor with some 60,000 members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who followed the Mormon Trail across Nebraska and Wyoming to the Great Salt Lake Valley of Utah. Total emigration along the multi-trail corridor to Oregon, California, and Utah between 1840, when the pioneer Joel Walker led his family west, and 1869, when completion of the transcontinental railroad brought the overland trails era to a close, is commonly estimated at 350,000 to 500,000 persons.¹⁵

Across the three decades of the emigration, the trail experience evolved. As historian John Unruh observed, "The emigrant experience was ever changing; each travel year evidenced distinctive patterns, unique dramas of triumph and tragedy, new contributions to the mosaic of western development."¹⁶ In the 1840s, emigrants were on their own once they left Missouri and entered "Indian Territory." During those years, many suffered extreme hardship and even death as they trudged across Nevada's Forty-mile Desert, struggled through the Sierra Nevada, dodged the fierce rapids of the Columbia River, or tried untested new routes across the western mountains and deserts. Military and trading posts were few along the way and usually had little food to spare; emigrants were unable to resupply if their provisions ran low. But as the emigration progressed, explorers, military expeditions, and other travelers gradually opened shorter, safer routes. Towns and road ranches sprang up along the way. Businessmen established ferries, bridges, and toll roads, hauled water into the desert to sell to thirsty travelers, and built trading posts where travelers could resupply or exchange worn out draft animals for fresh ones. Meanwhile, as the years passed, the vast buffalo herds that 1840s emigrants had encountered in eastern Nebraska retreated farther and farther west, dwindling to near-extinction; hungry campfires and livestock consumed the woodlands and grasslands along the trail; and once-friendly native peoples, alarmed by the never-ending march of emigrants and embittered by the usurping of their lands and resources, were driven to armed resistance. As a result of these changes, travelers of the 1860s experienced the overland trails much differently than those who had gone west in the 1840s.

Not just the experience but the trails themselves changed, as well. For example, Independence and Westport, Missouri, at the eastern edge of the frontier, were the original Oregon and California trailheads. There emigrants could purchase supplies, wagons, and livestock and make repairs before merging with the great freight caravans rolling west along the Santa Fe Trail into Kansas. Near the present-day town of Gardner, the Oregon-California trail corridor branched off to follow the "Independence Road" across northeastern

¹³ George Stewart, *The California Trail: An Epic with Many Heroes* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 18, 27-28; Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., *The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure: The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers* (Santa Cruz, CA: Western Tanager Press, 1991), 39, 125, 149; Dale L. Morgan, *The Humboldt: Highroad of the West*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 67-78.

¹⁴ Stewart, 217; Unruh, 84-85; William E. Bagley, *With Golden Visions Bright Before Them: Trails to the Mining West, 1849-1852*, vol. 2, *Overland West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 15, 17-18, 388.

¹⁵ Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives*, 5.

¹⁶ Unruh, 321-322.

Kansas toward Nebraska's Platte River. Through the 1840s and 1850s, new military roads were developed to connect Fort Leavenworth, Kan., to Fort Riley in central Kansas, Fort Gibson, Okla., and Fort Kearny, Neb., and emigrants quickly adopted these and other new trails in making their way to the Platte River. Also during those years, especially following outbreaks of cholera, emigrants began outfitting and "jumping off" onto the trails farther and farther north, gradually shifting the bulk of the emigration traffic upriver to Fort Leavenworth, St. Joseph, Nebraska City, and Omaha/Council Bluffs.

By the close of the 1850s, the Nebraska river towns had largely replaced Independence, Westport, Fort Leavenworth and St. Joseph as outfitting and jumping-off places, and the flow of Oregon-California traffic across Kansas had nearly dried up.¹⁷ Riding a steamboat up the Missouri River to Nebraska City and Council Bluffs saved emigrants several difficult stream crossings and many days of driving across northeastern Kansas. Starting farther north also enabled travelers to avoid the Kansas-Missouri border troubles of the mid-1850s and allowed them to take advantage of substantial trail improvements made by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to help its Mormon emigrants cross Nebraska.

Farther west, significant new alternates were developed, including Sublette's, Hudspeth's, and Goodale's cutoffs across Wyoming and Idaho, the difficult Hastings Cutoff through Utah's Wasatch Mountains and over the Great Salt Lake Desert, the Raft River route to the Humboldt, and several Oregon dry-land alternatives to the dangerous Columbia River passage. New wagon roads punched through the Sierra Nevada and commercial ferries, bridges, and other improvements increasingly aided the emigration as the years passed.

But the greatest improvement to western emigration by far was completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. The driving of the ceremonial golden spike that linked the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads at Promontory Summit, Utah, was a stake in the heart of the covered wagon era. The laborious, dangerous overland trip that once took five to six months, killed hundreds of thousands of draft animals, and tested the endurance of the most determined emigrants could now be made safely in a matter of weeks. Some emigrants who could not afford train passage continued to use the old Oregon and California trails, but long-distance wagon traffic gradually dried up. The last documented westbound covered wagon on the Oregon-California Trail crossed Wyoming in 1912.¹⁸

The mid-nineteenth century emigration of hundreds of thousands of people, rich and poor, free and slave, along the Oregon and California trails is unparalleled in world history. The trails they traveled opened the door for the Pony Express, the transcontinental telegraph, the transcontinental railroad, and parts of the modern interstate highway system, all of which followed the Oregon and California trails corridor. The overland emigration fulfilled the nation's "manifest destiny" to stretch from Atlantic to Pacific, spurred economic development and security, and directed the course of American history. At the same time, however, it disrupted hundreds of indigenous cultures, destroyed traditional lifeways that had developed over millennia, and contributed to extinctions and significant shifts in native plant and animal populations. Today's West is largely the product of the California and Oregon emigrations and the events that flowed from those movements. Extant trail remnants, including wagon swales and ruts, stream crossings, graves, campgrounds, and associated forts, are touchstones to that iconic place and period in the nation's history.

The national and regional significance of the Oregon and California trails has been identified through the work of many lay and professional historians and defined in numerous scholarly publications.¹⁹ Congress designated the Oregon and California National Historic Trails in 1978 and 1992, respectively, and the National Park Service in 1998 published a combined comprehensive management and use plan/environmental impact statement for the Oregon, California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails.

¹⁷ Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969) 104-105.

¹⁸ Mary Hurlburt Scott, *The Oregon Trail Through Wyoming*, (Aurora, Colorado: Powder River Publishers, 1958), 87-100, 122, 135.

¹⁹ See attached bibliography for a sample of these sources.

In Kansas, approximately 165 miles of wagon route are designated as part of the Oregon National Historic Trail and 290 miles are designated as California National Historic Trail. For a short distance from Missouri into eastern Kansas, the Oregon and California trails followed the same corridor as the earlier Santa Fe Trail, also a designated National Historic Trail.²⁰ Many more miles of historic wagon route, once traveled by emigrants to the far west, exist across Kansas, and many of these routes are currently under study for possible addition to the Oregon and California National Historic Trails (Figure 1).

Crossing the Wakarusa

The combined route of the Oregon and California trails entered the eastern portion of present-day Douglas County in Eudora Township. One branch (known as the Lower Wakarusa or Blue Jacket Crossing) crossed the Wakarusa River near its junction with Little Wakarusa Creek. It then continued east-northeast into what is now the City of Lawrence. The second branch continued westward on the south side of the river. After passing Blue Mound, and crossing Coal Creek, it turned abruptly northward and crossed the river at the Upper Wakarusa Crossing just south of present-day Lawrence. This ford across the Wakarusa River was a difficult crossing (Figure 7).

First-hand accounts written by travelers, emigrants, and military men provide the earliest descriptions of the crossings of the Wakarusa River. These accounts, several of which are noted below, were recorded during the period of significance and lend critical evidence in support of the site's significance. Although the nominated crossing may have been used many years earlier than the written record suggests, it was certainly in use by the time emigrant trains began heading west in the early 1840s. The use of this crossing diminished significantly in 1855 when Napoleon Blanton constructed a bridge near the Upper Wakarusa crossing and Charles Bluejacket established a ferry at the Lower Wakarusa Crossing.

Newspaper editor and historian George A. Root, who authored a series of articles on river crossings that were published in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly* in the 1930s, records a number of early references to the Wakarusa in the written record:

Wakarusa creek has been known by that name for considerably more than 100 years. It is a Kaw word. A literal translation of the word cannot be printed without offense, although in the Indian tongue there was no vulgarity and the definition is a perfectly proper one. In modern times the accepted version of this translation as handed down by those versed in the Kaw tongue, is "hip deep." Another and more modern definition is "River of Big Weeds."

The earliest printed mention of the stream we have located is that by Prof. Thomas Say, of Long's expedition of 1819-1820, who made a trip to the Kansas Indian village, and mentioned that the prairies about the headwaters of the "Warrerusa" abound in game. Isaac McCoy and his son John C. McCoy, in their survey of Cantonment Leavenworth and the Delaware reservations, in 1830, mentioned the stream as the Warkusa and also Wacharusa River. Joel Palmer, in his *Journal of Travels over the Rocky Mountains to the Mouth of the Columbia River*, in 1845 and 1846, mentions having crossed the Walkarusha. Among various spellings of the name we note the following: Wakaroosa, by J.W. Abert, in 1846; Wah-karrusi, by Abert in 1847.²¹

²⁰ Kansas State Historical Society, *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form (Topeka, KS: Kansas Historical Society, 1994, revised 2012).

²¹ George A. Root, "Ferries in Kansas, Part XII – Marmaton River, Part XIII – Wakarusa Creek, Part XIV – Turkey Creek," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 6 (February 1937): 14-20 [transcription online]; available at <<http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly-ferries-in-kansas-part-xii-marmaton-river/12706>> (accessed 3 February 2012). The first in Root's series of articles on ferries in Kansas was published in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1 (February 1933). See also Sondra Van Meter McCoy and Jan Hulst, *1001 Kansas Place Names* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 203.

When attempting to interpret the origin and meaning of the word “Wakarusa,” Kansas historians, including John N. Holloway, George W. Brown, Frank Blackmar, and others have passed down the same general legend that explains the origin of the name.²²

[The account]...told of an [American] Indian girl who rode her horse to the stream. She began to ford the river, going deeper and deeper until she was half immersed in the chilly water. She shouted wa-ka-ru-sa, supposedly meaning ‘hip-deep.’ Some say Wakarusa was an Indian word for ‘deep river’ or ‘river of weeds.’ Another explanation says the river derived its name from wild plants partly covered with a fine hairy fiber that once grew along the banks. Yet another explanation is that Wakarusa is an Indian name from the Sioux tribe in Kansas. White settlers used the name Wakarusa for a river, a valley, and a town in Shawnee County and for a township and valley in Douglas County.²³

Emigrant travel along the Oregon and California trails generally began in 1840 and significantly increased by 1844.²⁴ About this time, specific references to this particular crossing of the Wakarusa River began appearing more regularly in the historical record, as the following examples illustrate. Explorer and American military officer Colonel John C. Fremont led several expeditions along the trails through Kansas during the 1840s to 1850s.²⁵ On his second expedition, in 1843, he camped along the Wakarusa River just south of present-day Lawrence in Douglas County. His report of this expedition provides a detailed description of the route to Oregon and California and was used as a guidebook by later travelers.²⁶

During a tour of Methodist missions in Kansas, ministers William Patton and Wesley Browning of Independence, Missouri and Edward Perry, of the Delaware Mission in present-day Wyandotte County, traveled through the Kansas River valley in May 1843. According to historian Louise Barry, their account provides perhaps the first reference to two separate crossings of the Wakarusa River near Lawrence – so-called upper and lower crossings.

On May 15, Browning, Peery, and Patton, set out for Kansas Mission (present Shawnee county) 80 miles distant, camping that night near the “lower ford,” of the Wakarusa; and because of delays, stopping overnight on the 16th at the “upper ford.” Crossing the full stream early on May 17, they traveled some 55 miles to the Kansa station.²⁷

Another 1843 account of the upper crossing was recorded by ex-army officer and one-time fur trader John Gantt, who was leading a large caravan of emigrants. His account provides a clearer description of the terrain and steep slope of the crossing, which allows present-day historians and archeologists to better assess the integrity of the site. Still today, the east cutdown faces a very high bank on the south side of the river down which wagons presumably would have been lowered. About 100 yards separate the east cutdown from the west and, though the GLO maps are often impressionistic, the trail is depicted as descending a high bank at this location (Figure 1), as noted by Barry, “By May 24 [1843] the Oregonians were crossing the Wakarusa – letting their wagons down the steep bank with ropes, unaware that ‘a very practicable ford... [was] about one hundred yards above.’”²⁸

²² John N. Holloway, *History of Kansas from the First Exploration of the Mississippi Valley to Its Admission into the Union* (LaFayette, IN: James, Emmons & Co., 1868), 213. Electronic document accessed 3 February 2012 <www.books.google.com>; Correspondence from George W. Brown to George Martin, Secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, dated 8 July 1902; Frank W. Blackmar, ed., *Kansas: A Cyclopaedia of State History, Vol. II...* (Chicago: Standard Pub. Co., 1912), 854-855.

²³ McCoy and Hults, 203.

²⁴ Unruh, *The Plains Across*, 84.

²⁵ John C. Fremont and Samuel M. Smucker, *The Life of Col. John Charles Fremont, and His Narrative of Explorations and Adventures in Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon and California* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1856), 192-197. Electronic document accessed 3 February 2012 <www.books.google.com>.

²⁶ John C. Fremont, *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the e Year 1842...* (Washington: Blair and Rives, 1845).

²⁷ Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West 1840-1854* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 472.

²⁸ Barry, 476.

The year 1844 was an especially wet year in the vicinity of the Wakarusa River, and several travelers reported that the area along both sides of the Wakarusa River was dangerous and wet at times. They noted that considerable time and equipment could be lost along this portion of the trip. Ex-fur trapper James Clyman wrote:

From May 22 through May 25 (in continuing rainy weather), many of the emigrants were stalled at flooded Wakarusa river (present Douglas county). Their camp was "about 8 or 10 miles above its mouth. After the crossing was effected on May 26 it was "ascertained that there were about 92 men present"; but more travelers were coming behind them.²⁹

An indication of the amount of traffic over the trail and use of this crossing in the mid-1840s is provided in a detailed account of a California-bound wagon train under the command of William Henry Russell. On May 14, 1846 this wagon train camped along the Wakarusa.³⁰ The next morning a second wagon train arrived, making a combined group of 72 wagons, with 130 men, 65 women, 125 children, and nearly 700 oxen, 300 mules, as well as horses and small herds of cattle. Once across the Wakarusa River the wagon road headed due north, turned west to reach the top of Mount Oread, and then followed the ridge around the crest before continuing northwestward.³¹

An account of that same 1846 expedition, penned by former newspaper editor and traveler Edwin Bryant, provides a rich description of the area and recalls his experience crossing the Wakarusa after a rain:

May 14, 1846. – The rain of yesterday and last night has again so much saturated and softened the ground, as to render travelling with wheels very difficult.

The first mile and a half of our route was through the timbered bottom of the branch on which we had encamped. Our progress through this was very greatly obstructed by the unevenness of the ground and its soft and miry condition. We were frequently obliged to fell trees and to cut down large quantities of small brush and throw them into the muddy ravines, in order to enable our animals and wagons to pass over them. These difficulties operate as serious discouragements upon the energies of many, but I look for a better road before we advance a great distance. Throughout the day the travelling has been very fatiguing to our oxen, the wagons frequently stalling in the mud-holes and the crossings of the small branches. Three or four hours were occupied in fording a diminutive tributary of the Wakarusa creek. The banks on the eastern side are so steep, that the wagons were let down with ropes, and the teams were doubled, sometimes quadrupled, in order to draw them up on the other side.

The largest portion of our train reached the banks of the Wakarusa about 5 o'clock, and encamped on a sloping lawn in a curve of the stream, carpeted with verdant and luxurious grass. A grove of small trees (oak, hickory, dogwood, and willows) nearly surrounds our camp. Their foliage is of the deepest green, and flowers of all the brilliant, and the softer and more modest hues, enliven the landscape around us...

...A number of wagons being behind at dark, a party was formed and returned on the trail to their assistance. We found two or three of the wagons stalled in the deep mud, and the tongue of one of them, belonging to some highly worthy young men from Lexington, Ky., named Putnam, was broken.

²⁹ Ibid., 510. Barry is referencing accounts recorded by ex-fur trapper James Clyman who was part of a company of 358 people. Calculating the distance today shows that the crossings are about 10 miles above the mouth of the Wakarusa, close to what was reported in 1844.

³⁰ Ibid., 584. The location of this campground has been speculated, but no comprehensive examination or archeological testing has been completed to verify its location. The presumed location of this campground is a cultivated field covered with dense pasture grasses that obscure the ground surface. Surface archeological survey is therefore not possible. Techniques that might define the campground should any artifacts or cultural features remain, such as subsurface testing and metal detector survey, have not been conducted.

³¹ Timothy Weston, Ph.D., *Phase II Investigations South of and Adjacent to the Wakarusa River Associated with the K-10 South Lawrence Trafficway South of Lawrence in Northern Douglas County Project Number 10-23 K-3359-01* (2001): 23-24. On file with the Archeology Department, Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society.

After great exertions they were all drawn out and up to the camp, but it was near midnight before this was accomplished...³²

Not only did rain and weather-related incidents cause problems for travelers, but so did the general topography of the area. This area is part of the greater Kansas River valley and the area north of the crossing consists of a wetland, known today as the Baker Wetlands. A historic account by writer and traveler William P. Tomlinson published in 1859 reveals the area around the bridge built by Napoleon Blanton, which replaced the troublesome upper crossing, was "low and marshy, so much so that it is almost impassable for wagons at particular seasons of the year..."³³ The steep river embankments and the surrounding marsh areas encouraged travelers to seek other areas for crossing such as Blanton's bridge and Bluejacket Crossing farther down the Wakarusa River between present-day Lawrence and Eudora.

Archeological Potential

Archeological prospection, geophysical survey, and metal detector survey of similar trail properties have been shown to reveal associated artifact assemblages, sometimes buried and sometimes not, that can inform on the use of the trail during its period of significance. Though only small-scale surveys and testing projects have been undertaken in the Upper Wakarusa Crossing vicinity, there is every reason to believe that the presence of such an assemblage is possible. This property and its immediate landscape have the potential to yield important information to understanding the use and nature of this section of the trail, including patterns of use and change over time, evolving emigrant patterns, and cultural interactions. Study of both remnant trail swales and adjacent archeological features can provide valuable insight into the evolving patterns of historic development in this region. This site likely contains data which may be vital to any wider study of 19th-century settlement, exploration, and transportation. Further investigation could address key questions regarding transportation variability and change. Excavation could also provide additional social data including better estimates of the frequency of use during various phases of history, the role played various ethnic and social groups, and the nature of trail users, material culture, and the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities.³⁴

The Upper Wakarusa Crossing was a well-known landmark in the initial section of the trail, containing a campground and river crossing. Today, only two cutdowns on the north side of the river remain as intact resources. Despite recent disturbance, this property has the potential to yield additional information. Its location is well known, yet it has not been mapped or defined with precision. For example, the location and depth of the surviving cutdowns relative to the surrounding landscape could yield significant information regarding the nature of preservation relative to variables such as slope and underlying geologic structure. While it is generally accepted that cutdowns are deeper and more visible in areas where river banks are steep, careful mapping could provide supporting data. Despite its high visibility among Oregon and California trails sites, no systematic archeological survey of the Upper Wakarusa Crossing property has been undertaken. Only small-scale surveys related to development projects have been conducted nearby. The nearest archeological excavations were undertaken at a stone ruin near the location of Blanton's Crossing, which post-dated the trail period.³⁵ More intensive archeological investigations at this property (including metal detector investigations and additional remote sensing) might produce period trail period artifacts and cultural features.

³² Edwin Bryant, *What I Saw in California*, 3rd edition (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1849), 35-36 [electronic book online]; available from <http://books.google.com/books/about/What_I_Saw_in_California.html?id=A3gUAAAAAYAAJ> (accessed 25 May 2013). Edwin Bryant, a former newspaper editor from Kentucky, traveled to California in the mid-1840s, served in the Mexican War, and briefly lived in San Francisco prior to the Gold Rush of 1849. He returned to Kentucky and published an account of his experiences in *What I Saw in California*, which became popular among gold seekers and emigrants heading west. Unruh, *The Plains Across*, 1979, 29

³³ Tomlinson's account of the conditions at the crossing was recorded May 18, 1858. William P. Tomlinson, *Kansas in Eighteen Fifty-Eight: Being Chiefly a Recent History...* (New York, H. Dayton; Indianapolis, Ind., Dayton & Asher, 1859), 49.

³⁴ Adapted from *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail*, F116. Citation covers paragraph.

³⁵ Gagne, Frank R., *Phase III Archaeological Investigation at 14DO328. Testing and Excavation of the Rock Structure Located in the Area Known as Blanton's Crossing.* (2001) Report Submitted to the City of Lawrence. Copies on file with the Cultural Resources Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

Their distribution, if plotted precisely, could yield additional significant information regarding issues (in addition to those mentioned above) such as campground use, discard patterns, and wagon repair activities.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Sources Cited in this Nomination:

- Bagley, William E. *Overland West: The Story of the Oregon and California Trails*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010.
- Bagley, William E. *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California 1812-1848*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009.
- Barry, Louise. *The Beginning of the West; Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540 – 1854*. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972.
- Blackmar, Frank W., ed., *Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History, Vol. II...* Chicago: Standard Pub. Co., 1912 [transcription online]; available at <<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/archives/1912>> (accessed 6 February 2012).
- Bryant, Edwin. *What I Saw in California*. 3rd edition. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1849 [electronic book online]; available from <http://books.google.com/books/about/What_I_Saw_in_California.html?id=A3gUAAAAYAAJ>.
- Connelly, William E. *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, Vol. 1*. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918.
- De Voto, Bernard. *Across the Wide Missouri*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947.
- Franzwa, Gregory M. *Maps of the California Trail* (Third Edition). Tucson, AZ: Patrice Press, 1990.
- Fremont, John C., and Samuel M. Smucker. *The Life of Col. John Charles Fremont, and His Narrative of Explorations and Adventures in Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon and California*. New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1856. Electronic document accessed 3 February 2012 <www.books.google.com>.
- Holloway, John N. *History of Kansas from the First Exploration of the Mississippi Valley to Its Admission into the Union*. LaFayette, IN: James, Emmons & Co., 1868). Electronic document accessed 3 February 2012 <www.books.google.com>.
- Hulbert, Archer Butler ed. *Where Rolls the Oregon: Prophet and Pessimist Look Northwest*. Vol. 3, *Overland to the Pacific*. Colorado Springs: The Steward Commission of Colorado College & the Denver Public Library, 1933.
- Kansas State Historical Society. *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form. Topeka, KS: Kansas Historical Society, 1994, revised 2012.
- Kuchler, A.W. "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas." *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 586-604.
- Mattes, Merrill J. *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie*. Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969.
- Mattes, Merrill J. *Platte River Road Narratives: A Descriptive Bibliography of Travel over the Great Central Overland Route to Oregon, California, Utah, Colorado, Montana, and Other Western States and Territories, 1812-1866*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- McCoy, Sondra Van Meter, and Jan Hults. *1001 Kansas Place Names*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989.
- Morgan, Dale L. *The Humboldt: Highroad of the West*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985.
- Nunis, Jr., Doyce B. *The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure: The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers*. Santa Cruz, CA: Western Tanager Press, 1991.
- Root, George A. "Ferries in Kansas, Part XII, Marmaton River; Part XIII, Wakarusa Creek; Part XIV, Turkey Creek." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 6 (February 1937): 14-20 [transcription on-line]; available at <<http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly-ferries-in-kansas-part-xii-marmaton-river/12706>> (accessed 3 February 2012).

Schoewe, W.E. "The Geography of Kansas, Part II: Physical Geography." *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 52, no. 3 (1949): 283-286.

Scott, Mary Hurlburt. *The Oregon Trail Through Wyoming*. Aurora, Colorado: Powder River Publishers, 1958.

Stewart, George. *The California Trail: An Epic with Many Heroes*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962.

Tomlinson, William P. *Kansas in Eighteen Fifty-Eight: Being Chiefly a Recent History...* New York, H. Dayton; Indianapolis, Ind., Dayton & Asher, 1859.

Unruh, John D. *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982.

General Oregon & California Trail Sources:

Akin, James. *The Journal of James Akin, Jr.* Edited by Edward Everett Dale. University of Oklahoma Bulletin 9 (Norman, 1919). [online: <http://archive.org/details/journalofjamesak00akinrich>]

Bain, David Haward. *Empire Express: Building the First Trans-continental Railroad*. New York: Viking Press, 1999.

Blair, Roger P. "'The Doctor Gets Some Practice': Cholera and Medicine on the Overland Trails." *Journal of the West* 36 (January 1997): 54-66.

Borneman, Walter R. *Ri val Rails: The Race to Build America's Greatest Transcontinental Railroad*. New York: Random House, 2012.

Brady, William. *The Santa Fe Trail in Johnson County Kansas*. Topeka KS. Kansas Historical Collections. Vol. 11. 1909-1910. Accessed on microfilm reel # LM 937 at KSHS Library/Archives.

Buchanan, Rex, Robert Sawin, and Wayne Lebsack. "Water of the Most Excellent Kind: Historic Springs in Kansas." *Kansas History* 23, 3 (Autumn 2000): 128-141. Accessed online 1 October 2012 at: http://www.kshs.org/publicat/history/2000autumn_buchanan.pdf

Burton, Richard F. *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California*. New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1862.

Clark, John Hawkins. "Overland to the Gold Fields of California in 1852: The Journal of John Hawkins Clark, Expanded and Revised from Notes Made During the Journey." Edited by Louise Barry. *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 11, 3 (August 1942): 227-296. Transcription online at: <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly-overland-to-the-gold-fields-of-california-in-1852/12906>

Cutler, William. *History of the State of Kansas*. Chicago: Andreas Publishing Co., 1883. Transcription accessed online 25 September 2012 at: www.kancoll.org.

Faragher, John Mack. *Women and Men on the Overland Trail*, 2d ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.

Forster, Emma Elizabeth. *History of Marshall County, Kansas: It's People, Industries, and Institutions*. Indianapolis: B. F. Bowen & Company, Inc., 1917.

Franzwa, Gregory M. *The Oregon Trail Revisited*. Tucson, AZ: Patrice Press, 1997.

Greeley, Horace. *An Overland Journey, from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859*. New York: C.M. Saxton, Barker and Co., 1860. [online at: <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/AFK4378.0001.001>]

Hill, William E. *The Oregon Trail: Yesterday and Today*. Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1987.

Holliday, J.S. *The World Rushed In: The California Gold Rush Experience*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.
Holmes, Kenneth L., editor. *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries and Letters from the Western Trails 1840-1980*. Eleven volumes. Spokane, WA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1983-1993.

- Hoobler, Dorothy N. *The Oregon Trail, the Jesuit Mission and the Town of St. Marys*. Manhattan, KS: Ag Press, 1993.
- Lavender, David. *Westward Vision: The Story of the Oregon Trail*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963. Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985.
- MacGregor, Greg. *Overland: The California Emigrant Trail of 1841-1870*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.
- Meldahl, Keith. *Hard Road West: History and Geology Along the Gold Rush Trail*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Morgan, Dale. *Overland in 1846: Diaries and Letters of the California-Oregon Trail*. Georgetown, CA: Talisman Press, 1963. Reprint Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.
- National Park Service: National Historic Trails. *Comprehensive Management Use Plan Final Environmental Impact Study: California, Pony Express, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1998. Accessed online 25 September 2012 at <http://www.nps.gov/cali/parkmgmt/upload/CALI-CMP-SM-updated.pdf>.
- National Park Service: National Trails Intermountain Region. *Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails Long-Range Interpretive Plan*. Harper's Ferry Center, 2010. Accessed online 27 September 2012 at: http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/ip/NationalHistoricTrails_LRIP.pdf.
- Parkman, Francis. *The Oregon Trail: Sketches of Prairie and Rocky-Mountain Life*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1849. Reprint, Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1983.
- Pritchard, James A. *The Overland Diary of James A. Pritchard from Kentucky to California in 1849*. Edited by Dale L. Morgan. Denver: The Old West Publishing Company, 1959.
- Ravage, John W. *Black Pioneers: Images of the Black Experience on the North American Frontier*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1997.
- Smith, William E. "The Grave of Sarah Keyes on the Oregon Trail." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 5 (May 1936): 208-212. Transcription online at: <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly-the-grave-of-sarah-keyes-on-the-oregon-trail/12680>
- Stookey, Walter M. *Fatal Decision: The Tragic Story of the Donner Party*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. 1950.
- Tate, Michael L. *Indians and Emigrants: Encounters on the Overland Trails*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006.
- Tompkins, James, editor. "Reminiscence of Abraham Henry Garrison--Over the Oregon Trail in 1846." *Overland Journal* 11 (Summer 1993): 10-31.
- Trail Mapping Committee. *Mapping Emigrant Trails (MET) Manual*. Independence MO: Office of National Trails Preservation and the Oregon-California Trails Association, 2002.
- Werner, Emmy E. *Pioneer Children on the Journey West*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995.
- Weston, Timothy, and Marcia King. *Kansas Archeological Site Inventory: 14DO341*. Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2001.
- Weston, Timothy. *Phase II Investigations South of and Adjacent to the Wakarusa River Associated with the K-10 South Lawrence Trafficway South of Lawrence in Northern Douglas County: Project Number 10-23 K-3359-01*. Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2001.

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: **Kansas Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 4.5

UTM References

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

A 15 305965 4309416
Zone Easting Northing

C 15 306105 4309275
Zone Easting Northing

B 15 306115 4309395
Zone Easting Northing

D 15 305955 4309285
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

The 4.5-acre site is located in the NW 1/4 of Section 19, Township 13 South, Range 20 East. The property consists of two physically separate Oregon-California Trail cutdowns enclosed by an arbitrary rectangular boundary. They are situated on the north site of the Wakarusa River in an area historically known as the Upper Wakarusa Crossing.

Boundary Justification

The rectangular boundary provides a logical means for, encompassing the two cutdowns that make up the only known intact remains of the Oregon-California Trail Upper Wakarusa Crossing (Figures 2 & 3). While documentary evidence suggests that cutdowns and a campsite are present on the river's south side, recent disturbance is such that no extant evidence remains.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rick Anderson, Tim Weston, and Sarah Martin
organization Kansas Historical Society date June 2013
street & number 6425 SW 6th Avenue telephone (785) 272-8681
city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66615-1099
e-mail cultural_resources@kshs.org

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Upper Wakarusa River Crossing
City or Vicinity: Lawrence
County/State: Douglas County, Kansas
Photographer: Rick Anderson
Date: January and March, 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 001 of 005:** View east on Wakarusa River (east crossing) cut down bank on left, gravel bottom crossing on right.
002 of 005: View north (east crossing) cut down bank, north side above gravel bottom crossing.
003 of 005: View southwest (east crossing) cut down bank.
004 of 005: View west (west crossing) cut down bank.
005 of 005: View southwest (west crossing) cut down bank.

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Newton (Fred) & Lillian Six
street & number 1180 E 1400 Road telephone (785) 843-8445
city or town Lawrence state Kansas zip code 66046

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 18 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

Figure 1.

Upper Wakarusa Crossing Vicinity on the Lawrence East U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle, showing the locations of the two cutdowns, the Oregon-California Trail route as depicted in the General Land Office (GLO) maps, and nearby archeological sites.

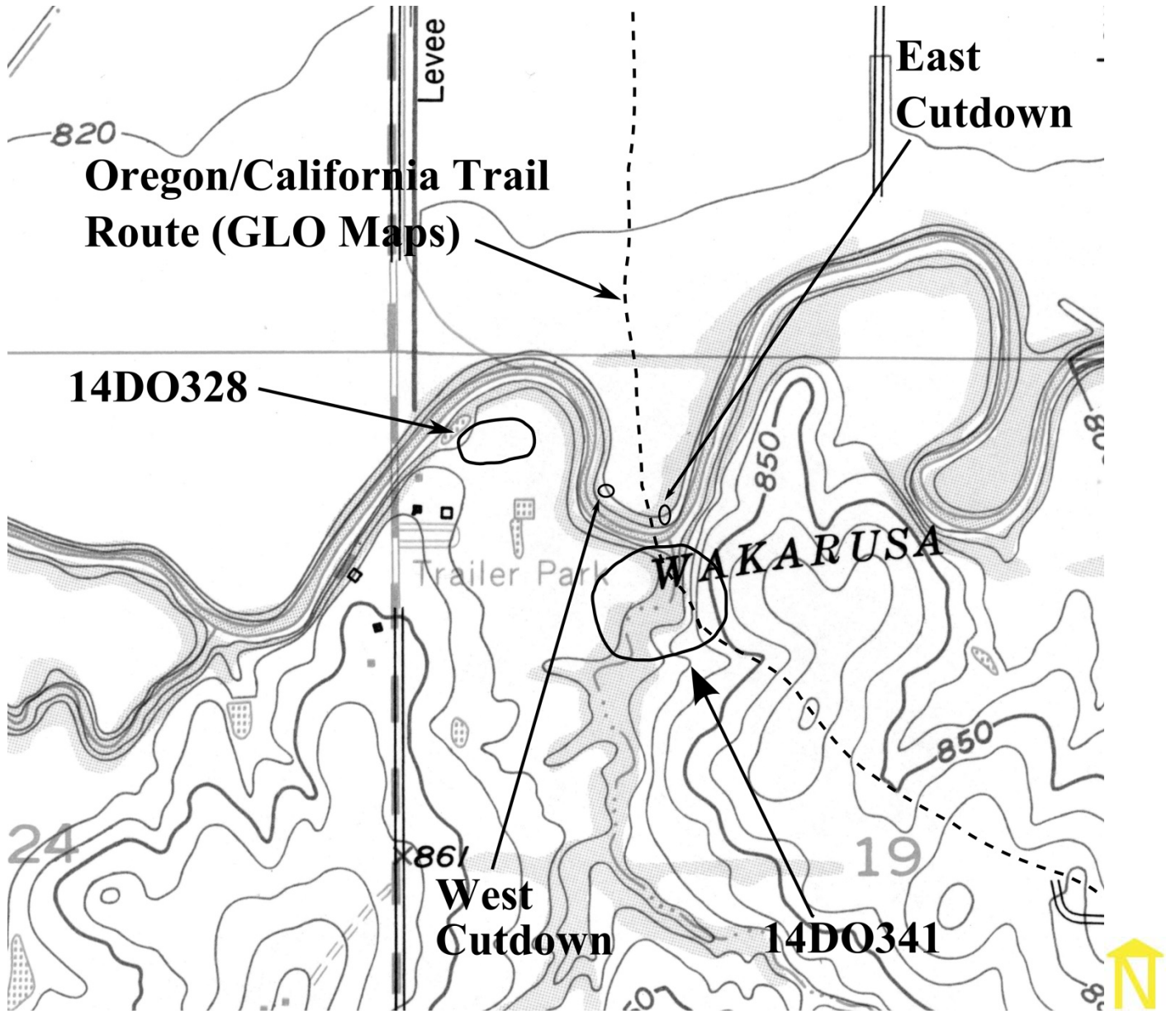


Figure 2.

Upper Wakarusa Crossing Nominated Area on the U.S.G.S. Lawrence East 7.5' Quad Map.

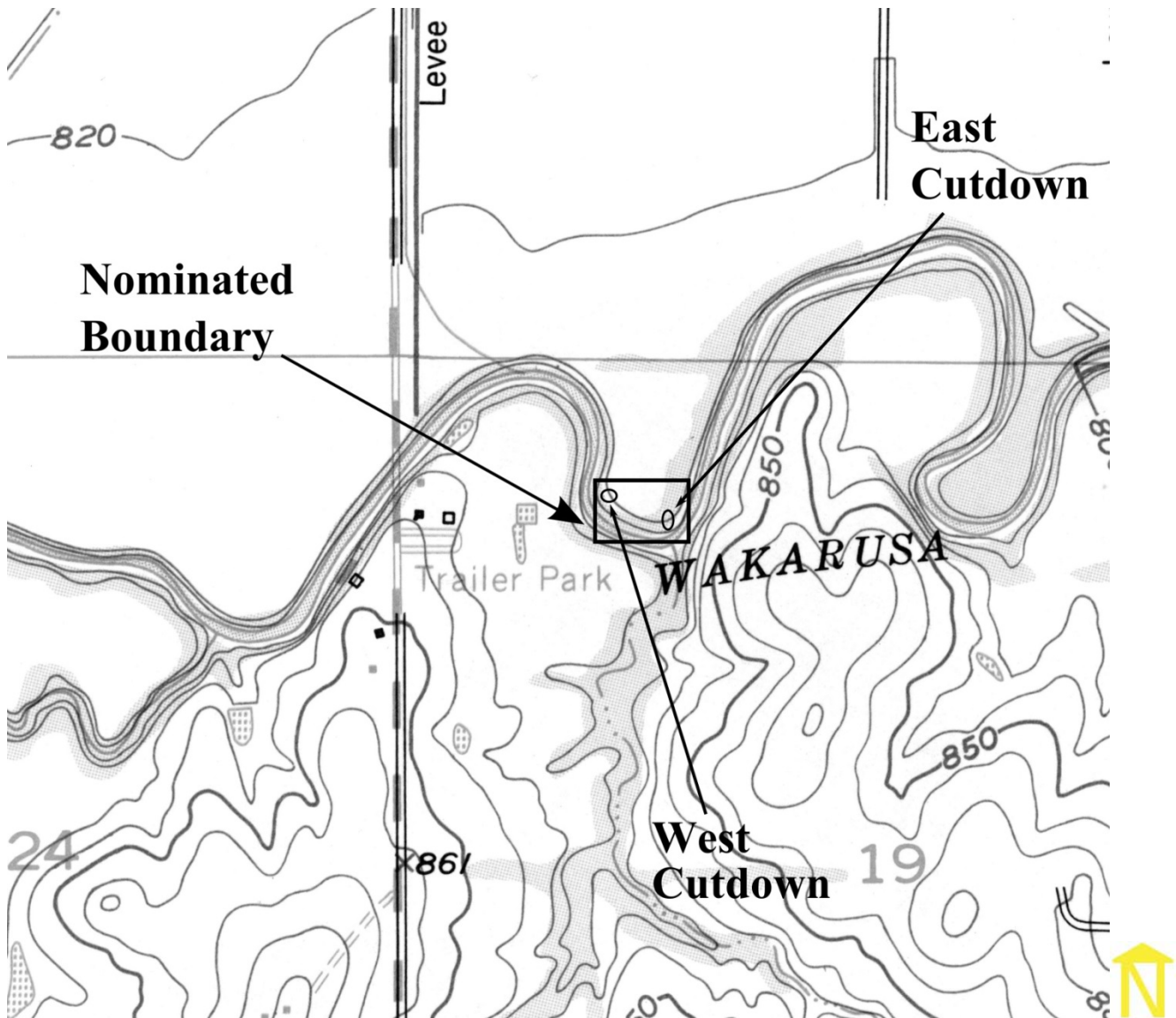


Figure 3.
LiDAR imagery showing the locations of the two extant cutdowns and the nominated area at the Upper Wakarusa Crossing. (no scale)

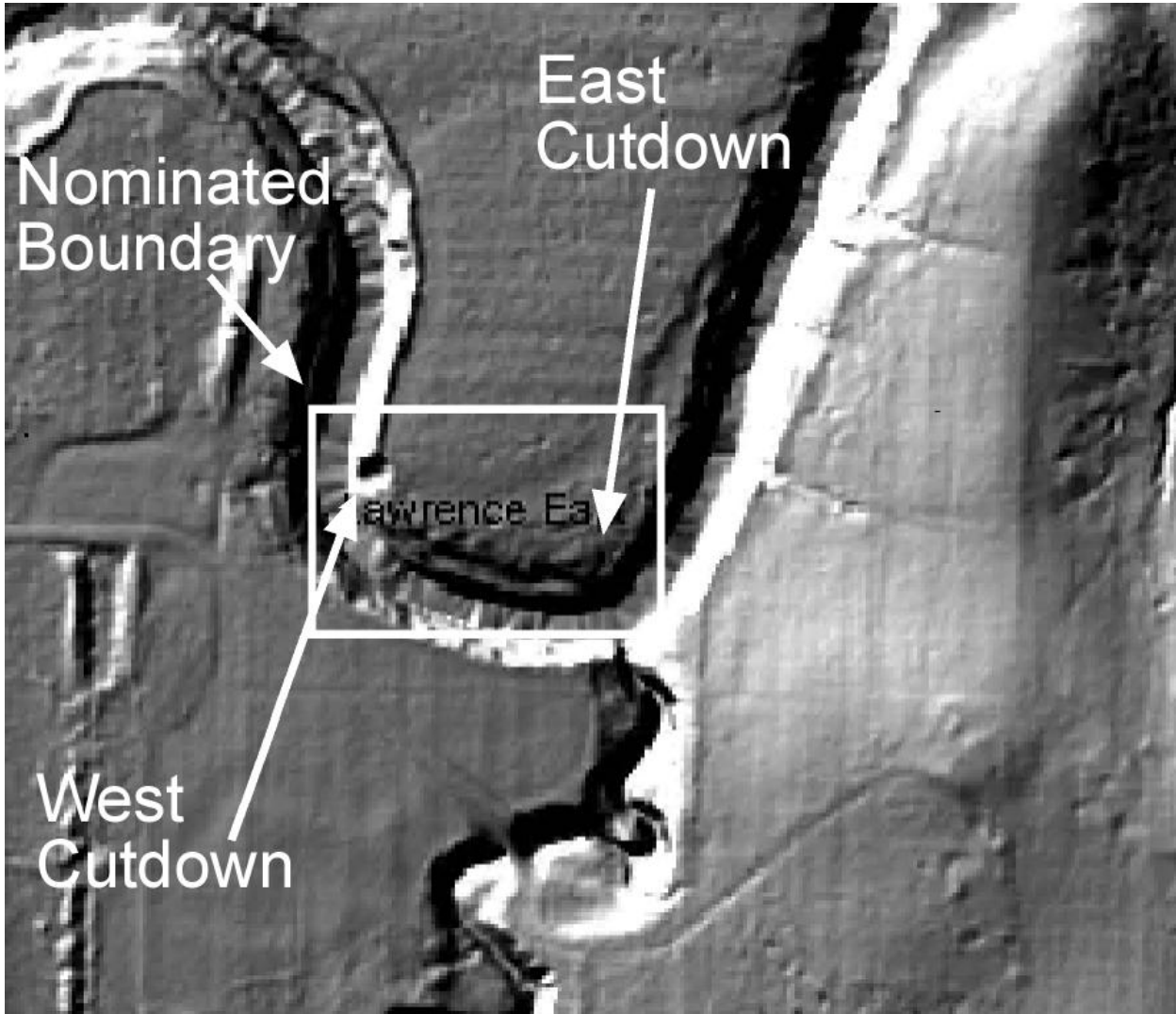


Figure 4.

Modern aerial photo showing the locations of both Upper Wakarusa Crossing Cutdowns in relation to the river and the Oregon-California Trail route as depicted in the GLO maps. (Map datum = NAD83)

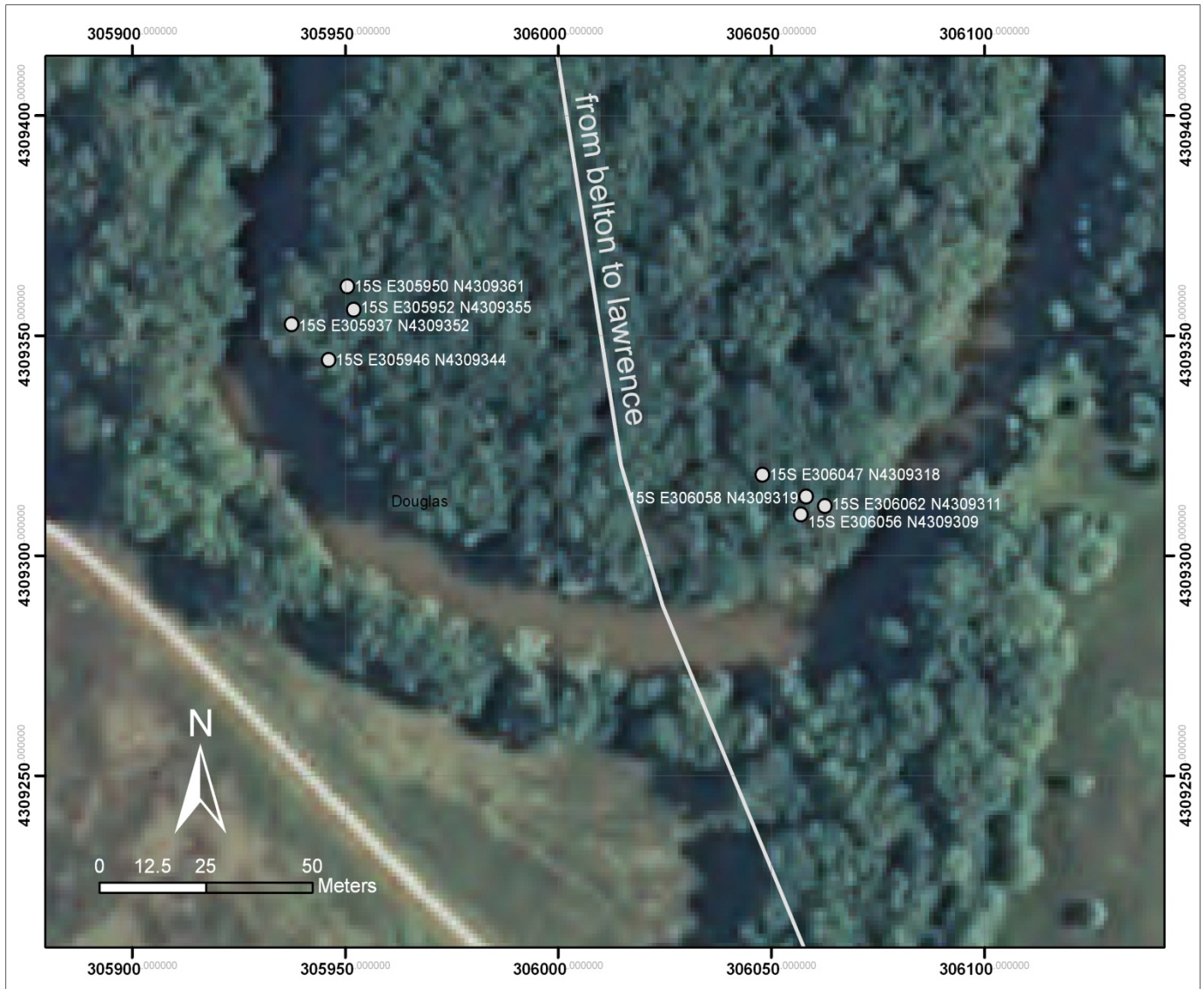


Figure 5.

Locations of the two crossings with reference to a detailed topographic view (map datum = NAD83).

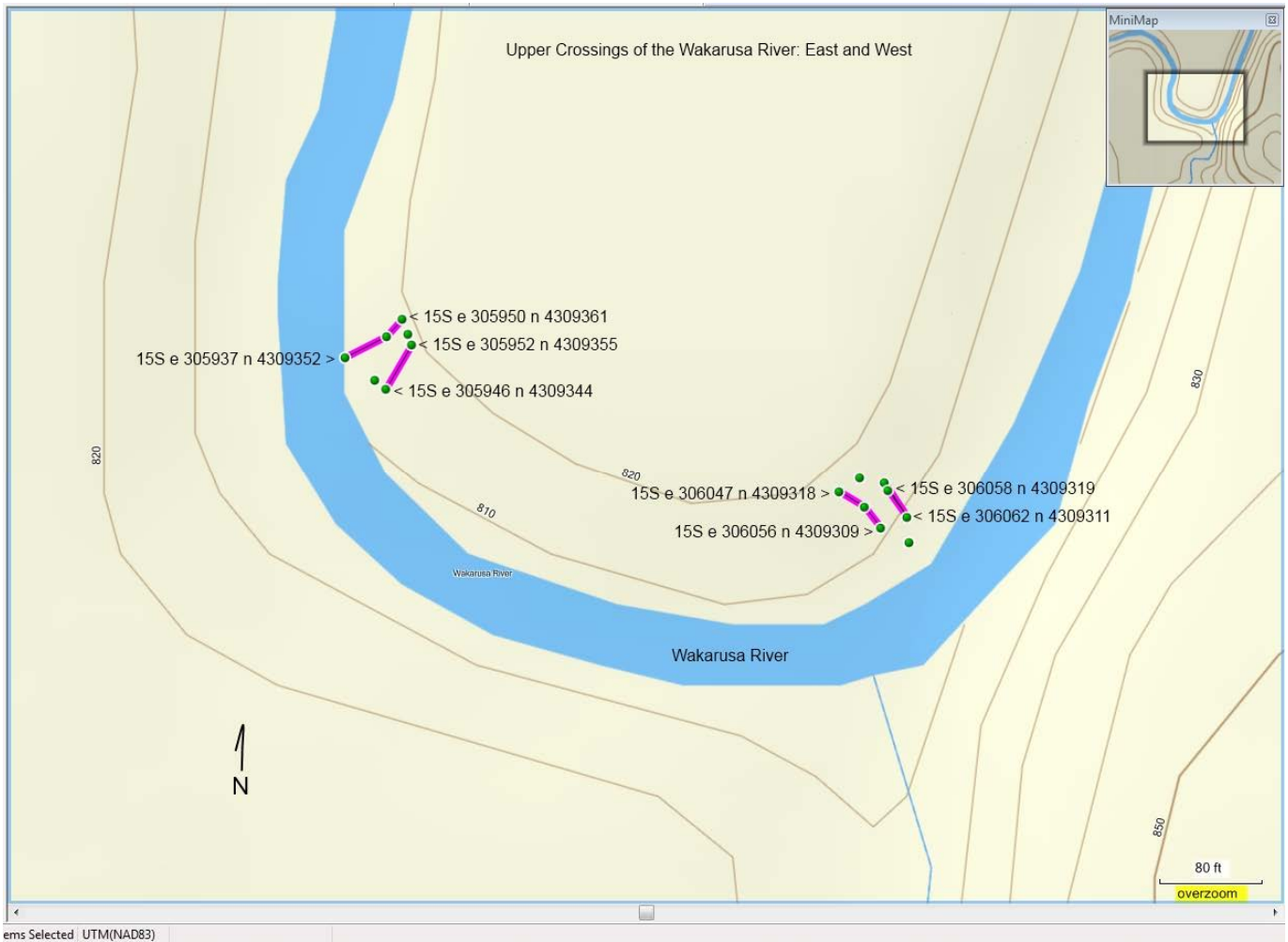
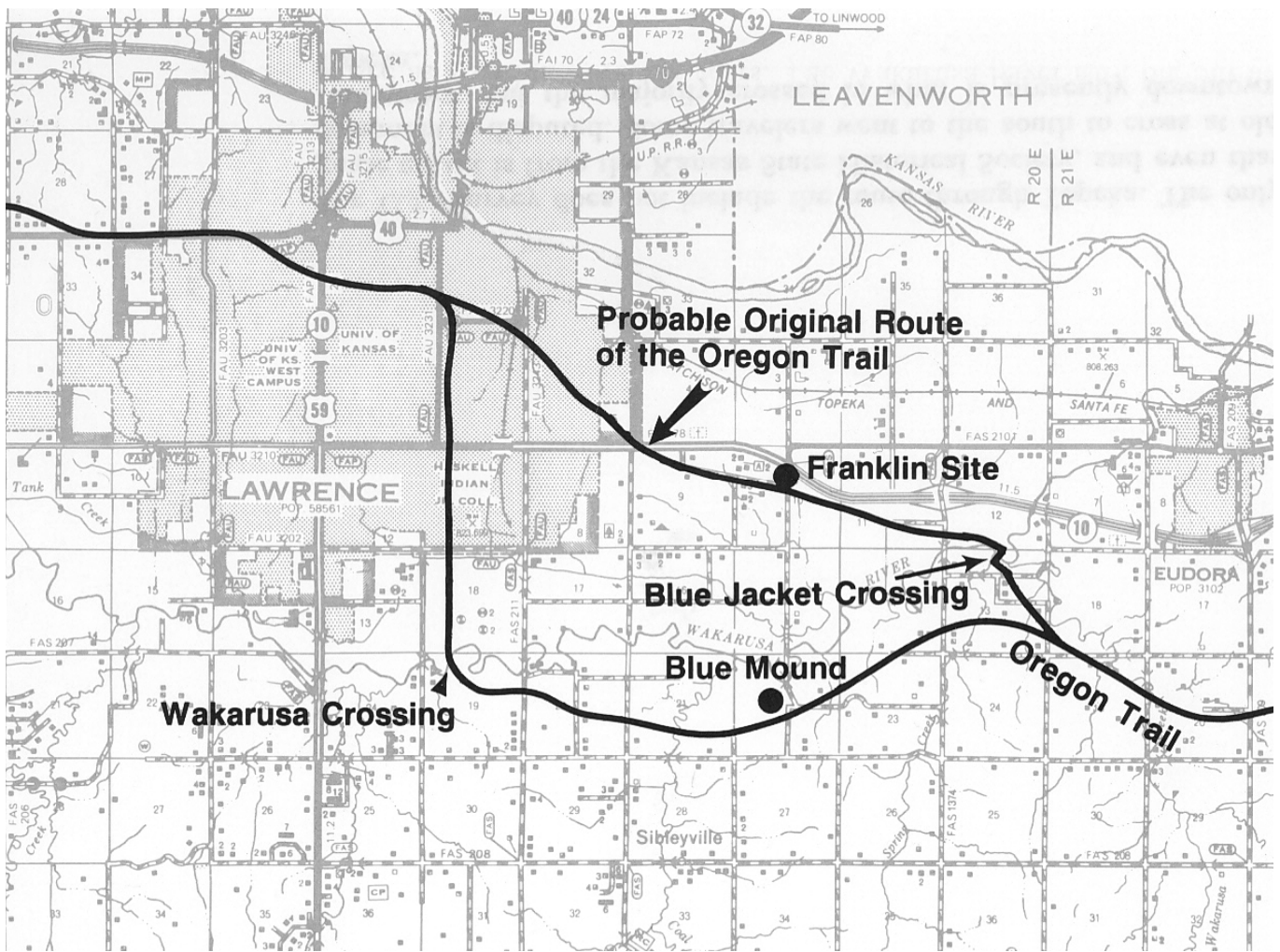


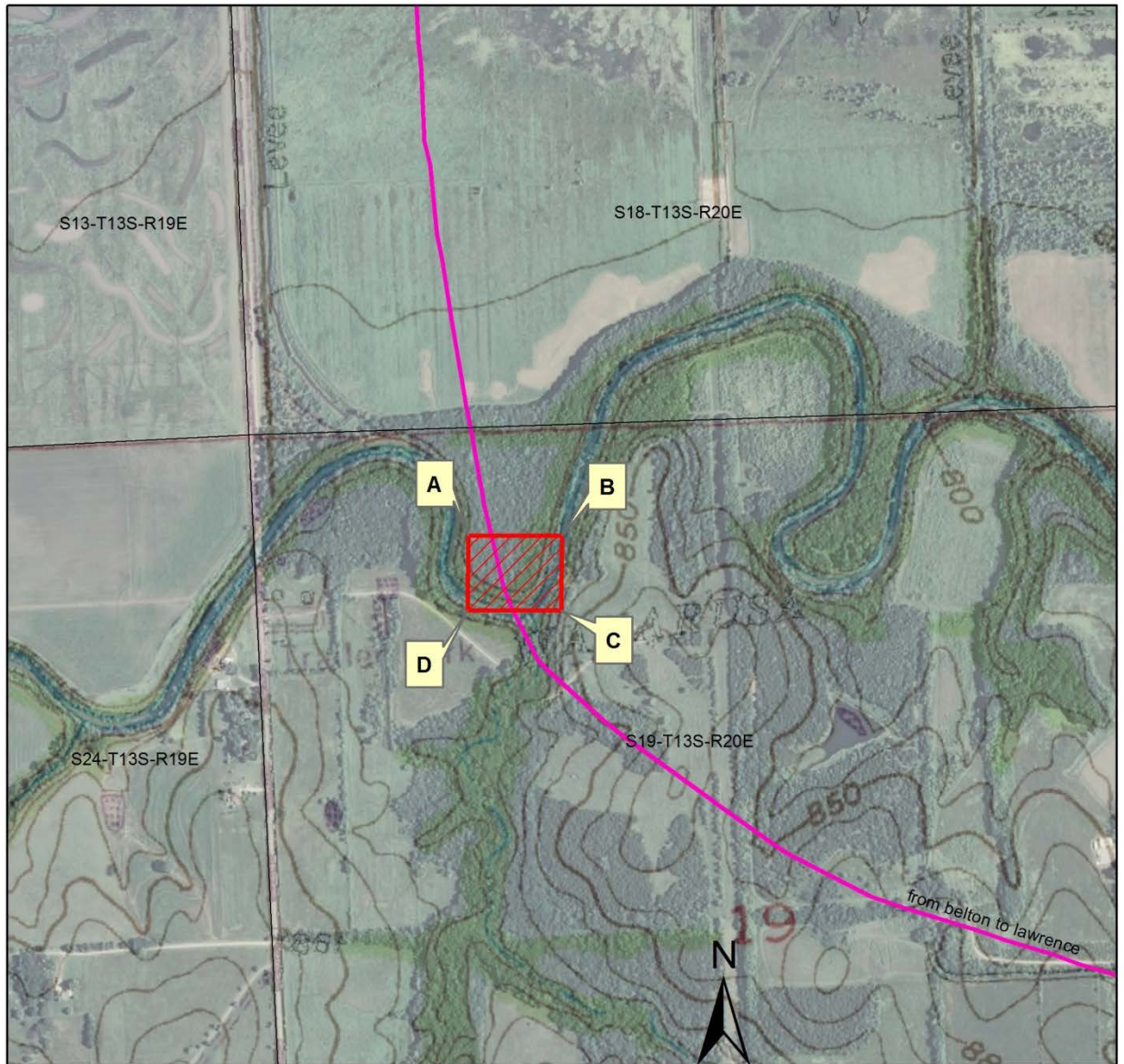
Figure 6.
Signage of Matthew Gannon in cliff above the Wakarusa River crossings area
(highlighted) within the boundaries of archeological site 14DO341.



Figure 7.
Locations of the Upper Wakarusa Crossing south of Lawrence and the Lower Wakarusa or Bluejacket Crossing in eastern Douglas County (Franzwa, 1990: Map 14).



Boundary Map.



1:10,000



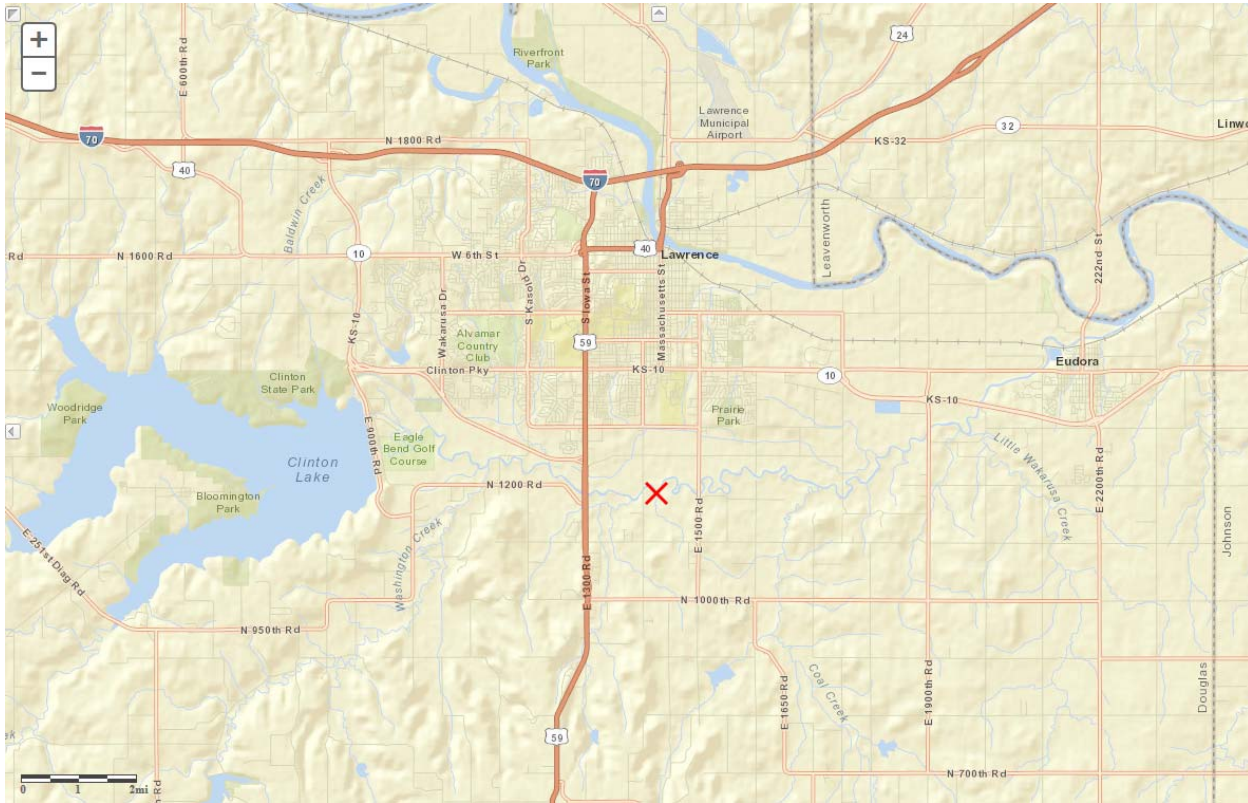
Upper Wakarusa River Crossing
Lawrence vicinity, Douglas County, Kansas

Nominated site is within hatched area.
1856 General Land Office Survey line goes through site.

Map Datum: NAD83
A: 15S 305965 4309416
B: 15S 306115 4309395
C: 15S 306105 4309275
D: 15S 305955 4309285

Total Acres = 4.5

Contextual Map.
"X" indicates location of site.













UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Upper Wakarusa River Crossing
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KANSAS, Douglas

DATE RECEIVED: 11/22/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/24/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/08/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/08/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001039

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: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1-8-14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER W. R. R. R. R.

DISCIPLINE 1g

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 1-8-14

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

Sam Brownback, Governor
Jennie Chinn, Executive Director

November 20, 2013

Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, N. W.
8th Floor (MS 2280)
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to submit for your consideration the following National Register documents:

- **University of Kansas East Historic District – Douglas County (new nomination)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination and 2 disks (with nomination, GIS, and photo files)
 - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.

- **Clearfield School District #58 – Douglas County (new nomination)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination and 2 disks (with nomination, GIS, and photo files)
 - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.

- **Upper Wakarusa River Crossing – Douglas County (new nomination)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination and 2 disks (with nomination, GIS, and photo files)
 - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.

- **Cedar Manor Farm – Montgomery County (new nomination)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination and 2 disks (with nomination, GIS, and photo files)
 - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.

- **Bluemont Youth Cabin – Riley County (new nomination)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination, USGS map, and 2 disks (with nomination, GIS, and photo files)
 - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.

- **Ingraham, Jesse, House – Riley County (new nomination)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination and 2 disks (with nomination, GIS, and photo files)

- The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
- **Trout, George & Virginia, House – Pottawatomie County (new nomination)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination and 2 disks (with nomination, GIS, and photo files)
 - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
- **City Square Park Bandstand – Allen County (new nomination)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination and 2 disks (with nomination, GIS, and photo files)
 - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
- **Simmons Funeral Home – Wyandotte County (new nomination)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination and 2 disks (with nomination, GIS, and photo files)
 - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
- **Oregon and California Trail – Pacha Ruts – Marshall County (new nomination)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination and 2 disks (with nomination, GIS, and photo files)
 - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination.
- **Lake of the Forest – Wyandotte County (boundary increase)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of amendment and 2 disks (with amendment, GIS, and photo files)
 - The enclosed disk #1 contains the true and correct copy of the amendment.
- **Doney-Clark House – Kingman County (request for removal)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of request for removal
- **Clear Creek Trail Segment – Nemaha County (request for DOE)**
 - Enclosed: Signed copy of nomination and 2 disks (with notarized owner objection, nomination, GIS, and photo files)
 - 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.

Sincerely yours,



Sarah J. Martin
National Register Coordinator

Enclosures