

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



151

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 Point of Rocks-Middle Spring Santa Fe Trail Historic District

other names/site number 14MT53 -153, -174, -1110, -1111, -1112, -1113; KHRI #129-169; NPS Master Plan #117-118

2. Location

street & number 2.5 mi. S. of K-51 Hwy and 2 mi. W. of K-27 Hwy not for publication

city or town Elkhart (Cimarron National Grassland) vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Morton code 129 zip code 67950

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

Patrick Zolner
Signature of certifying official

2-11-13
Date

DSHPO
Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

[Signature]
Signature of commenting official

11-9-12
Date

District Ranger
Title

USDA Forest Service, Cimarron National Grassland
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

4/10/13
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	district
6	0	site
0	0	structure
1	0	object
7	0	Total

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

Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail (2012)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- TRANSPORTATION/road-related
- LANDSCAPE/natural feature
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/marker

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- LANDSCAPE/ conservation area
- LANDSCAPE/ natural feature
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/marker

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 (marker)

Narrative Description

Summary

The Point of Rocks-Middle Spring Historic District is located eight miles north of Elkhart in Morton County, Kansas. It is situated two miles west of K-27 Highway and 2.5 miles south of K-51 Highway completely within the Cimarron National Grassland. The contiguous district contains seven contributing resources, including a navigational aid (Point of Rocks), a natural amenity (Middle Spring), four trail segments, and a monument (DAR marker), as defined in the *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised multiple property nomination. The entire district contains approximately 467.5 acres, 34 acres of which are the resources themselves. The area within this district is located in Section 31, Township 33 South, Range 42 West; sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, and 12 of Township 34 South, Range 43 West; and sections 6 and 7 of Township 34 South, Range 42 West.

Elaboration

The roughly W-shaped Point of Rocks-Middle Spring Historic District is located along the Cimarron River's north bank. From east to west, the district begins with a trail segment in the center of Section 31, Township 33 South, Range 42 West that heads south through the center of Section 6, Township 34 South, Range 42 West to Middle Spring at the north portion of Section 7, Township 34 South, Range 42 West. Another segment cuts southwest from Middle Spring to Point of Rocks, located at the center of the eastern edge of Section 12, Township 34 South, Range 43 West. From here, two trail segments diverge. One heads northwest, exiting the NW1/4 of the section and entering the SW1/4 of Section 1, Township 34 South, Range 43 West where it ends in the NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 2, Township 34 South, Range 43 West; the other heads west into Section 11, Township 34 South, Range 43 West, continues northwest through the northeast tip of Section 10, Township 34 South, Range 43 West and terminates in the SE1/4 of Section 3, Township 34 South, Range 43 West.

The Point of Rocks-Middle Spring Historic District is comprised of seven contributing resources in total. Six of these played key roles in the transportation of travelers and goods along this length of the Cimarron Route in Morton County between 1822 and 1868. The importance of Point of Rocks and Middle Spring is evidenced by the multiple trail segments throughout the Grassland that lead to and away from these natural landmarks. This district also contains one resource that post-dates the initial period of significance (1822-1868). This later resource has a period of significance (1906-1914) that spans the years the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) commemorated and marked the trail in Morton County and is represented by the Point of Rocks (Mesa Blanco) DAR marker. Also included within this district is a 50m (164ft) contributing land area around the segments and between resources that contribute to the continuity of the district.¹

Landscape²

Morton County is located within the High Plains section of the Great Plains province of the Interior Plains division of North America. The natural vegetation of the High Plains consists of a vast expanse of prairie cut through by narrow, discontinuous ribbons of riverine forest. The potential natural vegetation of the region includes short grass prairie and floodplain forest or savanna.³ The prairie contains a growth of blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) and buffalograss (*Buchloë dactyloides*) along with a few other grasses and forbs. The forbs are most common in the southern part of the state. The overall terrain surrounding this site in Morton County is prairie, having intermittent patches of yucca (*Yucca spp.*) and buffalograss throughout the

¹ A note about archeological sites not mentioned in this nomination: there are several recorded archeological sites within, overlapping, or immediately adjacent to this district. The majority of these sites need further investigation to determine the ethnic and cultural groups associated with them and the exact time periods. Because of the ambiguity concerning the relationship of these sites to the Santa Fe Trail period, SHPO staff chose to exclude mentioning them within this nomination; however, information on these sites is on file with SHPO. Further research and archeological investigation of these sites has the potential to further inform and enlighten the context of this district.

² The following paragraph is adapted from standard language used in reports written by Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Archeology Department.

³ A.W. Kuchler, "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas," *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 586-604.

area. In the Cimarron National Grassland, sand sagebrush (*Artemisia filifolia*) and prickly pear (*Opuntia spp.*) are also prevalent. Dust storms produced a minor shift in vegetation during the Dust Bowl, with the most severe erosion in Morton County taking place between 1935 and 1938.⁴ Despite the landscape changes, this district maintains a similar visual landscape to that of its periods of significance.

The overall terrain of this district is rocky with scattered patches of buffalograss and yucca. The Middle Spring site has slightly more buffalograss cover to the east where Trail Segment 14MT1113 cuts through. Moving west, the rest of the district maintains a consistent level of scattered grass cover with patches of yucca. Areas that have no grass are exposed dirt with scattered rocks. Some of the rocks are due to gravel from the unimproved Forest Service roads throughout the district. However, others are larger rocks that are native to the area. There are intermittent patches of trees throughout the district, especially at Middle Spring. For the most part the terrain remains flat with few major hills except for Point of Rocks.

Individual Resources

Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc. conducted a reconnaissance survey of several potential Santa Fe Trail swales in the Cimarron National Grassland for the USDA Forest Service in 2000. The purpose of this investigation was to determine the validity of proposed trail sites identified in 1990 by William Buckles and Kathie Arwood of the University of Southern Colorado.⁵ Horn's report provides the basis for the following trail segment summaries.

- Resource:** Trail Segment 14MT1113
Lat.,Long.: 37.132969,-101.925689 WGS84 (northernmost point of segment)
Classification: Contributing Site
Associated Property Type: Transportation Site
Associated Property Subtype: Trail Segment
Description: 14MT1113 is an intermittent trail segment that begins 130 feet northeast of the fence line located east of Middle Spring. Beginning as a single swale at an elevation of 1083 meters (3555 feet) in Section 31, Township 33 South, Range 42 West, the trail descends to the southeast and curves slightly in a southwesterly direction (where multiple parallel swales are evident) and ends as a single swale at an elevation of 1050 meters (3445 feet) at the northeastern boundary to the Middle Spring site in the center of the south half of Section 6, Township 34 South, Range 42 West. The trail segment is about 2.1 kilometers (1.3 miles) in length and has a variable width of 4 meters to 6.1 meters (13 feet to 20 feet). Its visibility varies throughout and is frequently filled with yucca and buffalo grass.

Trail Segment 14MT1113 maintains a good level of continuity and is undisrupted by any major county or unimproved park roads. However, a north-south two-track road crosses the segment and disrupts its visibility in the N1/2 of Section 6, Township 34 South, Range 42 West. A Coastal Field Services Company sign located alongside the two-track road indicates a pipeline may run parallel with the road crossing under the swale. (About 100 feet from the north end of the swale a gas well sits about one quarter of a mile west of the trail corridor with a northwest-southwest two-track road crossing the swale from the site of the well.) Farther north another two-track road crosses the swale in an east to west direction.⁶

- Resource:** Middle Spring (14MT153)
Lat.,Long.: 37.113214,-101.926973 WGS84
Classification: Contributing Site
Associated Property Type: Travel and Trade Site
Associated Property Subtype: Natural Amenity

⁴ Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 28, 30.

⁵ Jonathon C. Horn, *Santa Fe Trail Documentation on the Cimarron National Grassland, Morton County, Kansas* (Montrose: Alpine Archeological Consultants, Inc., 2000), ii. See William G. Buckles and Kathie Arwood, *Investigations of the Cimarron Branch of the Santa Fe Trail Cimarron National Grassland, Morton County, Kansas* (Pueblo: University of Southern Colorado, 1990) on file with the Kansas State Historical Society's Cultural Resources Division.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 38. Citation is for preceding two paragraphs.

Description: A small drainage channel, known as Spring Creek, flows into Middle Spring from the northwest and exits the site to the southeast. This intermittent channel does not contain water throughout the year, as evidenced at the time of a field investigation in October 2011. At the time of the site visit Middle Spring did contain water in the form of an elongated pool oriented northwest-southeast across the site. The USGS Elkhart North quadrangle map indicates that Middle Spring measures approximately 70.1m (230ft) as verified during field investigations. Intermittent cottonwood (*Populus deltoids*) and saltcedar (*Tamarix spp.*), sandsage, yucca, prickly pear, and other tall vegetation surround the spring to the east and north. Dense buffalograss covers much of the remainder of this site.⁷ These species demonstrate a slight shift in vegetation that took place during the 1930s Dust Bowl. Based on historic descriptions of Middle Spring, the area seems to have produced: hackberry, grapes, currants, and plums.⁸

The site is bounded by a fence and includes a seven-and-one-half acre recorded archeological site (14MT153) that is located in sections 6 and 7 of Township 34 South, Range 42 West. Just beyond the Point of Rocks/Middle Spring district, the terrain has been modified and possesses several manmade intrusions. The surrounding terrain has been leased for grazing and mineral rights. Unimproved Forest Service roads pass west, east, and south of this spring site, while a gas well and pump have been installed 600 meters (1968.5 feet) upstream along the intermittent drainage channel which flows into Middle Spring. The drainage channel is dammed approximately 100 meters (328 feet) south of the spring site. Post and wire fences outside the site boundaries prevent animals from wandering onto the site. Middle Spring retains its historic integrity and its immediate environs possess the appearance of the associated trail era, though vegetation changes have occurred.

The first archeological survey of Middle Spring occurred in 1975 and resulted in the surface collection of a few American Indian artifacts (cultural group unknown).⁹ A second investigation in 1990 by the University of Southern Colorado identified a front wagon bolster from a wagon with a wheel base of seven-and-a-half feet. This investigation also found a black bottle glass fragment dating to the trail period.¹⁰ Future intensive archeological investigations within the fenced-in boundary have the potential to yield further information that could inform on the prehistory and history of this site.

3. Resource: Trail Segment 14MT1110

Lat.,Long.: 37.104811,-101.932122 WGS84 (westernmost end of segment)

Classification: Contributing Site

Associated Property Type: Transportation Site

Associated Property Subtype: Trail Segment

Description: Segment 14MT1110 begins just east of the center in the NE/4 of S7-T34S-R42W and descends southwest for about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) and ends in the center of the south half of the section. This segment begins at Middle Spring as a single swale at an elevation of 1048.5 meters (3440 feet) and ends as three parallel swales at roughly the same elevation. The segment's width varies between 5 meters (16 feet) at its narrowest and 30.5 meters (100 feet) at its widest. The segment stretches between Middle Spring and Point of Rocks in a southwesterly direction.

Trail Segment 14MT1110 begins about 9.8 meters (32 feet) within the southwest boundary of Middle Spring and follows along the southern perimeter of the spring for about 61 meters (200 feet) before it is disrupted by Forest Service Road 600 (FSR-600) for about 40 meters (130 feet). The segment picks back up on the southeast side of FSR-600 and heads southwest as two divergent segments, spanning a width of about 18 meters (60 feet). The northernmost path parallels FSR-600 for about 160 meters (525 feet) before it vanishes for about the next 30.5 meters (100 feet). The trail then spreads out into four separate swales. Throughout its southwesterly descent, multiple swales have been identified; as few as two in the northern area

⁷ Kenneth Brown, *Prehistoric Cultural Resources of the Cimarron National Grassland, Morton and Stevens Counties, Kansas* (Lawrence: Kansas Museum of Anthropology, KU, 1976), 8-9. Copies available from the Kansas State Historical Society's Cultural Resources Division.

⁸ Ibid. Brown references Josiah Gregg.

⁹ Ibid., 89.

¹⁰ William G. Buckles and Kathie Arwood, *Investigations of the Cimarron Branch of the Santa Fe Trail Cimarron National Grassland, Morton County, Kansas* (Pueblo: University of Southern Colorado, 1990), 43-44.

and as many as four in the southern stretches. Aside from the slight breaks in the trail route, its presence is evident from its beginning to end points. Its continuity is only slightly disrupted. However, the ruts are marked with stones to help maintain its visibility.¹¹

4. **Resource:** Point of Rocks (includes 14MT53 and 14MT174)

Lat.,Long.: 37.103924,-101.938595 WGS84

Classification: Contributing Site

Associated Property Type: Transportation Site

Associated Property Subtype: Navigational Aid

Description: Point of Rocks, located along the Cimarron River's north bank in the western half of Section 7, Township 34 South, Range 42 West and most of Section 12, Township 34 South, Range 43 West, is a natural rock formation that served as a visual reference for travelers along the trail. The Point of Rocks formation has a rimrock of soft caliche and a base of harder limestone.¹² At an elevation of 1062 meters (3485 feet), the projection was recognizable for travelers because of its towering presence over the rest of the landscape, making it most visible to travelers approaching from the southwest. With the north side sloping, the projection was more visible from the south, east and west directions. The only modern intrusions at this site are an unimproved park road which enters the site to the north and west, three interpretive signs atop the summit of Point of Rocks, and pedestrian and cattle paths at the base of the formation. Few man-made features exist beyond the site boundaries apart from the remainder of the unimproved park road to the north and west of the site and fence lines to the south and east. The park road on the west and north and the Cimarron River to the south and east serve as the boundaries around this site.

Two archeological sites within the boundaries of the Point of Rocks formation are worth noting. Site 14MT53 is a "large open lithic scatter on the first terrace above the Cimarron River floodplain...covering approximately" 2 acres.¹³ Several prehistoric artifacts have been discovered in archeological investigations, ranging from pedestrian surveys to shovel testing.¹⁴ The site of the late-19th century ranch at the base of the Point of Rocks formation was identified in 1990 by the discovery of post-Santa Fe Trail era artifacts.¹⁵ The trail ruts leading to this site and the presence of prehistoric and post-trail artifacts support the hypothesis that this area was important to several ethnic and cultural groups. Further investigations of these sites and the adjacent contributing land area within the boundary of Point of Rocks will likely yield more data that will inform on the various uses of the landscape.

5. **Resource:** Point of Rocks (Mesa Blanco) DAR Marker¹⁶

Lat.,Long.: 37.103466,-101.938548 WGS84

Classification: Contributing object

Associated Property Type: Monument and Memorial (Marker)

Associated Property Subtype: n/a

Description: The Point of Rocks DAR marker is located in Section 12, Township 34 South, Range 43 West "on a rocky point about 50 feet above the river on the north bank of the Cimarron River, and about half

¹¹ Horn, 29. Citation covers entire paragraph.

¹² Willard Mayberry, "The Middle Spring and Point of Rocks Are along the Cimarron River," *Wagon Tracks: Santa Fe Trail Association Newsletter* 4 (February 1990): 8.

¹³ Alan D. Reed, *Reevaluation of Twenty-Three Prehistoric Sites On the Cimarron National Grassland, Morton County, Kansas* (Montrose: Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc., 2000), 16. Reed is quoting Kenneth Brown's 1976 archeological report mentioned in previous footnote. Both reports are available at the Kansas Historical Society, Cultural Resource Division.

¹⁴ Kenneth Brown, 81; Buckles and Arwood, 44-46; Reed, 16.

¹⁵ Buckles and Arwood, 46.

¹⁶ Early 20th century Kansas Society DAR historian, Almira Cordry, in her 1915 book *The Story of Marking the Santa Fe Trail by the Daughters of the American Revolution*, gave this marker the number 95. The KSDAR refers to this marker by its location, naming it the Point of Rocks (Mesa Blanco) Marker. See Shirley Coupal and Patricia Dorsch Traffas, *The Century Survey of the Kansas Santa Fe Trail DAR Markers, Placed by the Kansas Society Daughters of the American Revolution in 1906*, Unpublished report of the "Historical Preservation Project of the 'At Home on the Plains Administration,' Shirley S. Coupal, State Regent, Patricia Dorsch Traffas, Honorary State Regent and Project Coordinator, 2007-2010" (2011).

way up the Bluff that constitutes the 'Point of Rocks.'¹⁷ The red granite marker originally sat atop a roughly six inch concrete slab that bore a Masonic emblem and the inscription "Missouri River, 550 Miles; Santa Fe, 226 Miles. Surveyed September 1825."¹⁸ This marker was relocated sometime after 1915 to the top of the Point of Rocks formation, but was returned to its approximate original location in 1997.¹⁹ This marker was lithographed during a 2007-2010 restoration effort by the DAR.

6. **Resource:** Trail Segment 14MT1112
Lat.,Long.: 37.118061,-101.955037 WGS84 (northernmost point of segment)
Classification: Contributing Site
Associated Property Type: Transportation Site
Associated Property Subtype: Trail Segment
Description: Beginning at the base just west of Point of Rocks at an elevation of 1051 meters (3450 feet), Trail Segment 14MT1112 is an intermittent set of one to two swales that head in a northwesterly direction. The trail spans 1.8 kilometers (1.1 miles), ending just west of the Cimarron River valley at an elevation of 1082 meters (3550 feet) in the NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 2, Township 34 South, Range 43 West. The continuity of Trail Segment 14MT1112 is disrupted by a number of features. These include an unimproved park road running in a slightly northeast direction along the western edge of the boundary to the Point of Rocks formation, erosion control furrows that cut into the visible trail, and natural land features. The segment's width varies from 3.7 meters (12 feet) at its narrowest to 15 meters (50 feet) at its widest.²⁰
7. **Resource:** Trail Segment 14MT1111
Lat.,Long.: 37.115906,-101.980515 WGS84
Classification: Contributing Site
Associated Property Type: Transportation Site
Associated Property Subtype: Trail Segment
Description: At 3.5 kilometers (2.2 miles), Trail Segment 14MT1111 is the longest of the four segments within this district. Its eastern terminus begins at the southwest base of Point of Rocks at an elevation of 1045.5 meters (3430 feet) and heads in a west-northwesterly direction to end at an elevation of 1104 meters (3620 feet) in the SE1/4 of Section 3, Township 34 South, Range 43 West. At its beginning in Section 12, the multiple swales intermittently ascend the terrain to the northwest then level off through the eastern half of Section 11, Township 34 South, Range 43 West. In the western half of the same section the segment makes a sharp northwestern curve and cuts through the far northeastern tip of Section 10, Township 34 South, Range 43 West and terminates a two track road in the southeastern quadrant of Section 3. The width of the trail corridor is 5 meters (16 feet) at its narrowest and expands to 30.5 meters (100 feet) at its absolute widest. Numerous disruptions in the trail's continuity are due to drainage, heavy grass and yucca, a two track road, natural erosion, and a graded area.²¹

¹⁷ Letter from E.M. Dean to the DAR, 26 November 1914, as quoted in Daughters of the American Revolution, Kansas Society (Shirley S. Coupal and Patricia Dorsch Traffas), *Ninetyeth Anniversary Survey of the Santa Fe Trail DAR Marker in Kansas* (Kansas: Kansas Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1998), 119.

¹⁸ Almira Cordry, *The Story of the Marking of the Santa Fe Trail By the Daughters of the American Revolution in Kansas and the State of Kansas* (Topeka: Crane & Company Printers, 1915), 131.

¹⁹ Daughters of the American Revolution, 119. The concrete base is no longer extant.

²⁰ Horn, 35, 38. Citation covers entire paragraph.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 32. Citation covers entire paragraph.

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

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Transportation _____
- Commerce _____
- Social History _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

- 1822-1868 _____
- 1906-1914 _____

Significant Dates

- 1914 _____
- _____
- _____

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

N/A _____

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance, 1822-1868 was selected because it spans the years the Santa Fe Trail was active in this part of Kansas as a route of transportation and commerce. A later period of significance, 1906-1914, spans the years of commemoration of the trail in Kansas, specifically at this site where the marker was installed in 1914.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

As discussed in the revised MPDF, the commemorative DAR marker is eligible because the age, intent, and symbolic value of this resource contribute to the marker's own historical significance. This significance is in large-part directly tied to the effort to memorialize the trail by those who were associated with the trail. This object also provides the location of a Santa Fe Trail swale, and in this way helps to confirm and illuminate the history of the trail itself.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Point of Rocks-Middle Spring Historic District is nationally significant as a collection of historic resources of the Santa Fe Trail under Criterion A for its association with transportation and commerce along the Santa Fe Trail from 1822 to 1868 and for its association with the commemoration of the trail by the Kansas Society Daughters of the American Revolution from 1906 to 1914. The associated trail segments, landmark Point of Rocks, and Middle Spring are also nationally significant under Criterion D for their yielding of and potential to yield information on the use of the trail during the district's initial period of significance. This district's trail segments, navigational aid (Point of Rocks), natural amenity (Middle Spring), marker, and contributing land area retain a good degree of integrity in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association. The period of significance begins with the initiation of wagon movement over this segment of the Cimarron Route in 1822 and ends with the arrival of the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad at the town of Sheridan, Kansas in June 1868. This site materially reflects important historic events outlined in the historic contexts International Trade on the Mexican Road, 1821-1846; The Mexican-American War and the Santa Fe Trail, 1846-1848; Expanding National Trade on the Santa Fe Trail, 1848-1861; The Effects of the Civil War on the Santa Fe Trail, 1861-1865; The Santa Fe Trail and the Railroad, 1865-1880; and Commemoration and Reuse of the Santa Fe Trail, 1880-1987, as well as The Santa Fe Trail in Kansas.

Elaboration

From 1821 to 1880, the Santa Fe Trail was a significant trade route between Missouri and New Mexico. Unlike other trails such as the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails, which served as highways for emigrants bound for new homes in the far West, the bulk of traffic along the Santa Fe Trail consisted of mainly civilian traders and military personnel. The Cimarron Route, which passed through what is now the Cimarron National Grassland, traversed 294 miles between its departure from the Mountain Route near Ingalls, Kansas and its reunification with the Mountain Route at La Junta (Watrous), New Mexico; 88 miles of the Cimarron Route were in Kansas, including a portion of the 60-mile waterless stretch known as *La Jornada*.

Trail Traffic (1822-1868)

Although William Becknell initiated travel to Santa Fe in 1821, his expedition entered New Mexico using pack animals through Emery Gap on the present-day Colorado-New Mexico border, not through this portion of Morton County. Becknell's second trading expedition in the spring of 1822, however, likely did pass through this area of Morton County. This expedition included 21 men and three wagons – the first American attempt to use wagons on the trail.²² The use of wagons required the party to adopt a trail route that avoided the mountains Becknell used during his first trip; this new route followed what became the Cimarron Route in Morton County, Kansas (Figure 1).²³ From 1822 to the start of the Mexican-American War in 1846, the Cimarron Route was known as *the Santa Fe Trail* (in its various naming iterations) by traders between New Mexico and Missouri. During the Mexican-American War, users of the Cimarron Route were predominately the United States military. This route continued to see commercial and military traffic, albeit at a reduced level, after the war until the Union Pacific Eastern Division reached the short-lived town of Sheridan, Kansas, in June

²² Larry M. Beachum, *William Becknell, Father of the Santa Fe Trade* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1982), 34; Larry M. Beachum, "To the Westward: William Becknell and the Beginning of the Santa Fe Trade," *Journal of the West* 28 (April 1989): 9; William E. Brown, *The Santa Fe Trail: National Park Service 1963 Historic Sites Survey* (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1988), 8; William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans Vol. I* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918-1919), 89.

²³ According to Josiah Gregg's 1844 "Map of the Indian Territory Northern Texas and New Mexico Showing the Great Western Plains," the "First Wagon Route" left Cool Spring (in present-day Oklahoma) and headed farther south of the Cimarron Route, crossing Arroyo de los Yutas and the Canadian River before arriving in San Jose, New Mexico where it rejoined the Cimarron Route into Santa Fe. The map is viewable on the University of Tulsa's website: <http://www.lib.utulsa.edu/speccoll/collections/maps/gregg/Gregg%20%20complete.jpg> (accessed 29 February 2012).

1868. Santa Fe-bound freight was shipped to this rail-end town approximately 140 miles north of Elkhart where it was then loaded onto wagons and hauled along the Mountain Route (Figure 2). The portion of the trail represented in this district was completely abandoned by 1874. The General Land Office surveyors reached this area of Morton County in 1874 but did not include the trail on their survey maps.

Point of Rocks and Middle Spring were crucial to trail travel along the Cimarron Route. Middle Spring was the next reliable water source west of the Lower Cimarron Spring at the western end of the waterless *La Jornada*.²⁴ Even though the trail paralleled the Cimarron River for some distance, the river was not a guaranteed water source, especially in the summer when the river channel often dried out. At other times, the river only contained small pools of water after heavy rains.²⁵ Almost all travelers looking for the water promised at Middle Spring would have used neighboring Point of Rocks as a navigational aid. This large light-colored rock formation with a high flat surface, referred to as Mesa Blanco (literally, white table) by Mexican freighters, could be seen for several miles, especially from the southwest.²⁶ In evidence of the role this natural landmark played, visible trail segments curve around Middle Spring and directly to the south of Point of Rocks.

Both Point of Rocks and Middle Spring also served as campsites for travelers. Documented use of these sites in Morton County occurred throughout the trail's history. Though he did not call it Middle Spring, traveler Josiah Gregg mentions this area in the Cimarron Valley in his 1824 journal of the trail.²⁷ In 1825 surveyors George Sibley and Joseph C. Brown both referenced Point of Rocks to describe the location of Middle Spring and its vicinity. On 3 October 1825 after leaving Middle Spring, Sibley wrote, "Started at 20 Minutes past 6—traveled on the high bench under the Hill...3/4 Mile to a perpendicular rocky Bluff [Point of Rocks]."²⁸ Sibley further described these natural sites in the following entry:

I traveled up the Valley, for the purpose of noticing more particularly the character of this curious Creek [Cimarron River]. First I rode...6-1/2 M[iles] to a high rocky Bluff Point on the No[rth] side. Then...3 Miles to the mouth of a brisk, running branch which enters the Creek from the North. I coursed this branch up for ab[ou]t 3/4 of a Mile to a pretty good Spring, issuing from a high bank on the West Side. This, from the signs near it is a common Camping place of the Indians...the valley up which I rode is about 3/4 of a Mile wide generally; it is probably an [sic] Hundred feet below the common level of the Plain...The Semerone [sic] meanders thro' this valley from side to side and is so extremely crooked in its course that in a distance of 6-1/2 Miles, upon a direct line, I crossed it not less than a dozen times; and in that distance the Stream was completely lost in its dry sandy bed for several intervals of nearly a Mile each.²⁹

Joseph C. Brown also described Middle Spring and Point of Rocks in his field notes, writing, "Middle Spring is near a half mile from the creek, on the north of it, near a mile below is sort of a rock bluff at the point of a hill."³⁰

During the Mexican-American War, US Captain Alexander B. Dyer mentions Middle Spring in his field notes, which were published in *Stryker's American Register and Magazine* in July 1850.³¹ In 1865, Kansas settler Frank Stahl was employed by Leavenworth contractor James Kerr to drive over 1100 head of cattle to

²⁴ Lower Cimarron Spring is a National Historic Landmark (12/19/1960) and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (10/15/1966). Both the NHL and NR nominations are on file with the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office.

²⁵ William Brown, 113.

²⁶ Cordry, 131.

²⁷ See Appendix B in the multiple property nomination.

²⁸ Kate L. Gregg, ed. *The Road to Santa Fe: the Journal and Diaries of George Champlin Sibley and Others Pertaining to the Surveying and Marking of a Road from the Missouri Frontier to the Settlements of New Mexico, 1825-1827* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1952), 92.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 258.

³¹ See Appendix D in the multiple property nomination.

Fort Union, New Mexico for the US military.³² Stahl crossed Middle Spring on 15 September 1865, noting in his travel journal, "In no hurry this morning. Want to let the trains get ahead. Drove two miles and crossed the Middle Springs [sic]. Here we struck an old wagon road that follows up the river. We took it."³³ This old wagon road was likely trail segment 14MT1110 that leads from Middle Spring to Point of Rocks.

The depressions worn into the ground from continuous use from 1822 to 1868 were visible by 1834 – an unusually wet year during which wagons left imprints in the landscape that would be replicated and reinforced by wagon trains in the succeeding years.³⁴ Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc. concluded that the swales associated with this district are impressions left by the traffic that traveled along the Cimarron Route to and from Santa Fe. The remaining pattern of traffic left within this landscape tends to support the fact that west of Council Grove the wagons traveled in four parallel columns. Archeological prospection, geophysical survey, and metal detector survey of similar trail segments 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 no such surveys have been undertaken on these trail segments, there is every reason to believe that the presence of such an assemblage is possible. This district has the potential to yield important information to understanding the use and nature of the Cimarron Route through Morton County, including patterns of use and change over time, evolving trade patterns, and cultural interactions. Study of both the remnant trail swale and further study of adjacent archeological features can provide valuable insight into the evolving patterns of historic development in this region. The resources within this district likely contain data which may be vital to any wider study of the 19th-century trade and economic development. Further investigation could address key questions regarding trade and 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 by the military, various ethnic and social groups, and the nature of trail users, material culture and the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities.³⁵

Commemorating Point of Rocks (1906-1914)

Between 1880 and 1898 all of the land located within the district boundaries and much of it beyond was owned by the Beaty Brothers where they built their ranch just below Point of Rocks.³⁶ The Beaty Brothers moved to Kansas from Colorado and raised cattle at Point of Rocks Ranch located at the south-southwestern base of the rock formation. Originally occupying the area with no legal title to the land, the Beatys applied for a deed in 1882 and were finally granted official ownership of the land in 1884.³⁷ The cattle ranchers from Colorado sold 1200 head of cattle and their 18,000 acres to H.S. Boise in 1898. Boise then sold the land to the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company around 1910-1911.³⁸ By 1914, Mr. Perry Brite was listed as the resident at the ranch.³⁹

Efforts to mark the Santa Fe Trail through Kansas by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) began in 1904. Five markers were shipped to Morton County in 1907. The County Commissioners paid for the markers to be hauled the almost 60 miles from the ATSF railroad to Morton County and for the markers to

³² William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans* Vol. III (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918-1919), 1316.

³³ Francis (Frank) M. Stahl, John Meredith, trans., *Santa Fe Trail Diary: Cattle drive from Leavenworth, Kansas to Fort Union, New Mexico* (Unpublished, 1865, 2008), 12 [electronic transcription on-line]; available from <http://www.frankstahlbio.net/Frank%20Stahl%20Santa%20Fe%20Trail%20diary%20transcription.pdf>; Internet; accessed 21 June 2012.

³⁴ Oliva, Leo E. *Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 17.

³⁵ Kansas State Historical Society, *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail Multiple Property Documentation Form (Revised)*. August 2012, F116.

³⁶ Rev. R.L. Wells, "Point of Rocks Ranch." *Elkhart Tri-State News*, 16 February 1961, n.p. Copy of clipping in Point of Rocks file in the Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ E.M. Dean, quoted in Cordry, 131.

be set by county residents.⁴⁰ Though three of the five markers sent to the county were installed in 1907, the Point of Rocks marker was not installed until the spring of 1914.⁴¹ In a 26 November 1914 letter to the DAR, Mr. E.M. Dean of nearby Richfield wrote:

These markers were sent to Morton county several years ago, and three of them were placed; the other two – that is, the one at Point of Rocks and the one on the State line – were not placed until last spring (1914), when myself and a few others in this county interested themselves in getting them properly located. The citizens of Morton county who were active in this matter were: Mayo Thomas, of Elkhart; Perry Brite, who lives at Point of Rocks; Lee Moore, Ernest Wilson, and John Bartholemew [sic], of Richfield, and myself.⁴²

Dean also mentions that the Masonic emblems added to the concrete base were added “for the reason that we men who set it are all Masons.”⁴³ That the marker was set at Point of Rocks is no doubt due to the fact that it was a key landmark of the county and to the fact Mr. Brite, who was on this ad-hoc committee, owned the rock formation. This marker is believed to be the last one placed in Kansas that was part of this initial project.

The marker was placed in April 1914 just before the Cimarron River flooded the Point of Rocks ranch on May 1, 1914. The flood was so severe that it destroyed hay and numerous buildings. Tragically, two of the daughters of the Brite family drowned in the flood as well.⁴⁴

Point of Rocks and Middle Spring were both key stops along the Cimarron Route for Santa Fe Trail travelers. These sites not only proved extremely important for travelers along the route, but are still central components to the associated trail segments throughout the Cimarron National Grassland. All trail segments through the Grassland flowed directly in and out of Point of Rocks and Middle Spring. Logistically and physically the Point of Rocks and Middle Spring area offered a good campsite for travelers near a reliable water source. Point of Rocks also allowed travelers to see for miles in all directions, which allowed them to keep lookout and protect their campsites. The trail segments associated with these two sites are prime examples of the routes that wagons traveled during the Santa Fe Trail era.

⁴⁰ Cordry, 141.

⁴¹ Ibid., 130.

⁴² As quoted in Cordry, 131 and Daughters of the American Revolution, 119.

⁴³ Cordry, 131.

⁴⁴ Wells, n.p.

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- Stevens, Michelle N. *Cultural Resources Report 12-2998: Class II Cultural Resources Inventory for the Middle Springs Prescribed Fire Project, Cimarron National Grassland, Morton County, Kansas*. USDA Forest Service, 2008.
- Wells, Rev. R.L. "Point of Rocks Ranch." *Elkhart Tri-State News*, 16 February 1961, n.p. Copy of clipping in Point of Rocks file in the Cultural Resources Division, Kansas Historical Society.

Point of Rocks-Middle Spring Historic District
Name of Property

Morton 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 # _____

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

Acreage of Property 467.49 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Map Datum: WGS84

Please see attached Boundary Map for all coordinates; letters correspond to map.

A: 37.116088,-101.980694 E: 37.104061,-101.932645
C: 37.117103,-101.954335 L: 37.133225,-101.925752

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

This district is located entirely within the Cimarron National Grassland and includes 467.49 acres within the following: SW/2 Section 31, Township 33 South, Range 42 West; Section 6, Township 34 South, Range 42 West; W/2 Section 7, Township 34 South, Range 42 West, Section 12, Township 34 South, Range 43 West; SW/4 Section 1, Township 34 South, Range 43 West; NE/4 SE/4 Section 2, Township 34 South, Range 43 West; N/2 Section 11, Township 34 South, Range 43 West; NE/4, NE/4 Section 10, Township 34 South, Range 43 West; and SE/4 Section 3, Township 34 South, Range 43 West. Included in this area is the Middle Spring site in Sections 6 and 7 of Township 34 South, Range 42 West that is within a fenced-in area. The Point of Rocks formation in Section 12, Township 34 South, Range 43 West is bounded on the west and north by the Forest Service Road and on the south and east by the Cimarron River.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The contiguous district boundaries were drawn to include as many related Santa Fe Trail resources as feasible within one area. Recorded trail segments necessitated the development of linear boundaries that take in a 50m (164ft) contributing land area around the sites, as required in the multiple property nomination. The boundary around Middle Spring was logically determined by a pre-existing fence line around the site for its protection. The boundary for the Point of Rock formation takes in as much of the natural feature as possible to add a logical contributing land area to tie the segments to the rock formation.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John R. Barry & Amanda K. Loughlin
organization Kansas Historical Society date July 2012
street & number 6425 SW 6th Ave telephone 785-272-8681
city or town Topeka state KS 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:** (Historic images, maps, etc.)

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: Point of Rocks-Middle Spring Santa Fe Trail Historic District
City or Vicinity: Elkhart vicinity
County/State: Morton County, Kansas
Photographer: Laura Groves (LG) and Dr. Michelle Stevens (MS)
Date of Photos: 11 October 2011 (LG) and 2 March 2012 (MS)

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 13: Point of Rocks (Mesa Blanco) DAR marker, looking NW (MS).
- 2 of 13: Point of Rocks DAR marker at the base of Point of Rocks, looking N (MS).
- 3 of 13: Point of Rocks, looking SE from Trail Segment 14MT1112 (LG).
- 4 of 13: Trail Segment 14MT1112, looking NW; stone markers show general location of shallow swale (LG).
- 5 of 13: Point of Rocks in background, view looking ESE from Trail Segment 14MT1111 (LG).
- 6 of 13: Looking NW along Trail Segment 14MT1111 (LG).
- 7 of 13: Trail Segment 14MT1113, looking SW across shallow swale evident between people in photo (LG).
- 8 of 13: Middle Spring in background, looking SW along Trail Segment 14MT1113 (LG).
- 9 of 13: Middle Spring area, looking SW (LG).
- 10 of 13: Trail Segment 14MT1110, looking SW (LG).
- 11 of 13: Trail Segment 14MT1110, looking ENE (LG).
- 12 of 13: View SW from top of Point of Rocks; Cimarron River is denoted by trees (LG).
- 13 of 13: Point of Rocks, looking W from Middle Spring (LG).

Property Owner:

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

name On file with SHPO.
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.

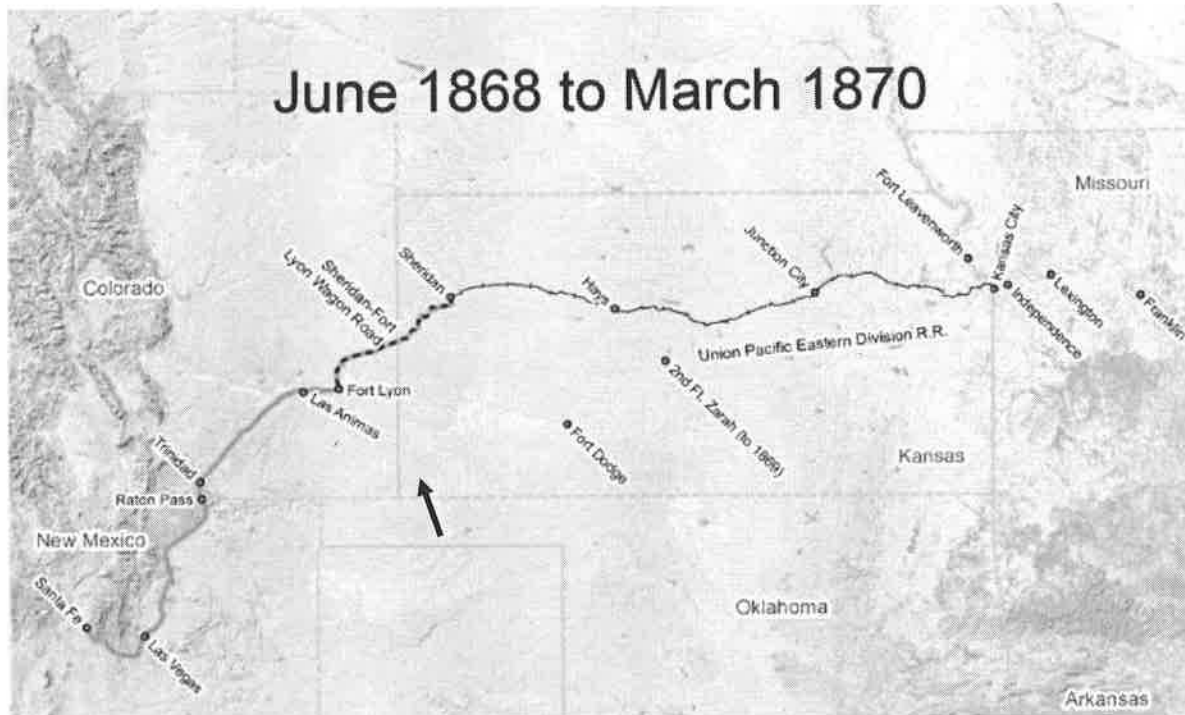


Point of Rocks-Middle Spring Santa Fe Trail Historic District.
Detail of "Map of the Indian Territory Northern Texas and New Mexico Showing the Great Western Plains." Box indicates area around the nominated district.

Josiah Gregg.
1844.

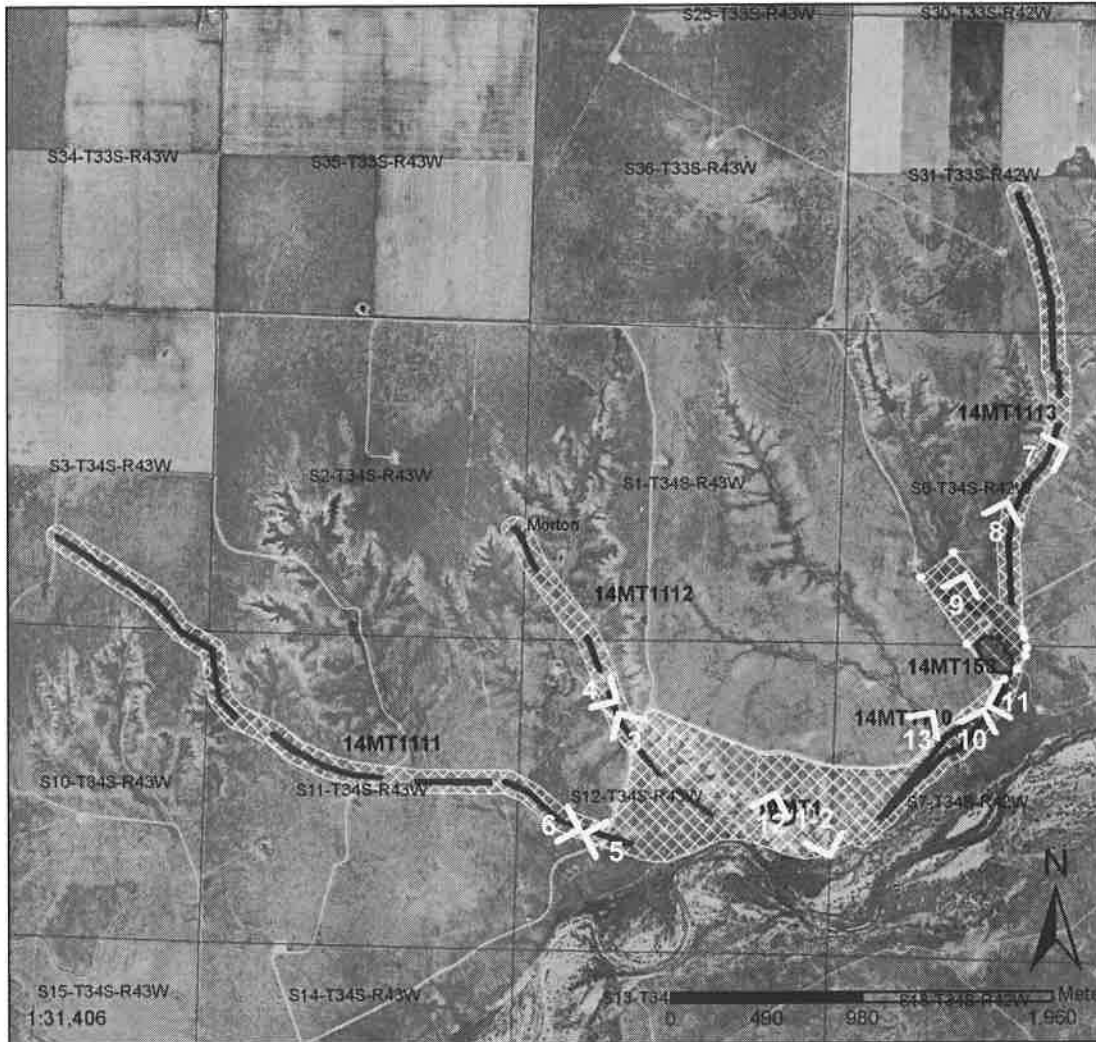
The University of Tulsa's website:
<http://www.lib.utulsa.edu/speccoll/collections/maps/gregg/Gregg%20%20complete.jpg>
(accessed 29 February 2012).

Figure 2.



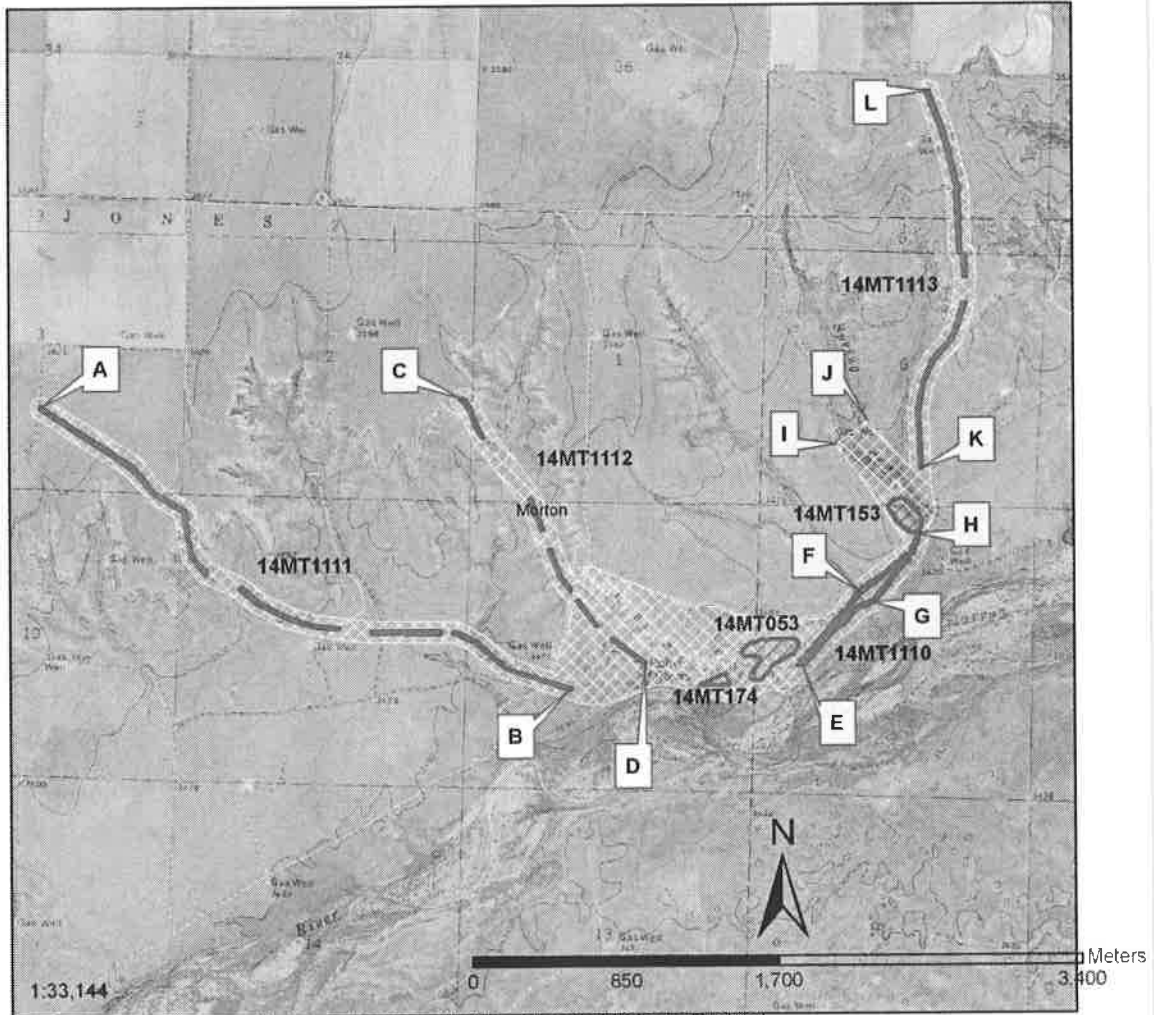
Point of Rocks-Middle Spring Santa Fe Trail Historic District.
Arrow indicates general location of nominated site.
June 1868-March 1870 Timeline Map of the Santa Fe Trail.
National Park Service GIS.
<http://www.nps.gov/safe/historyculture/map-timeline-3.htm>
Accessed 9 October 2012.

Photo Key Plan.



Numbers correspond to photograph log.

Boundary Map.



Point of Rocks - Middle Spring Historic District
Elkhart, Morton County, Kansas
Image shows boundaries in lighthatch with the recorded sites in darker hatch.

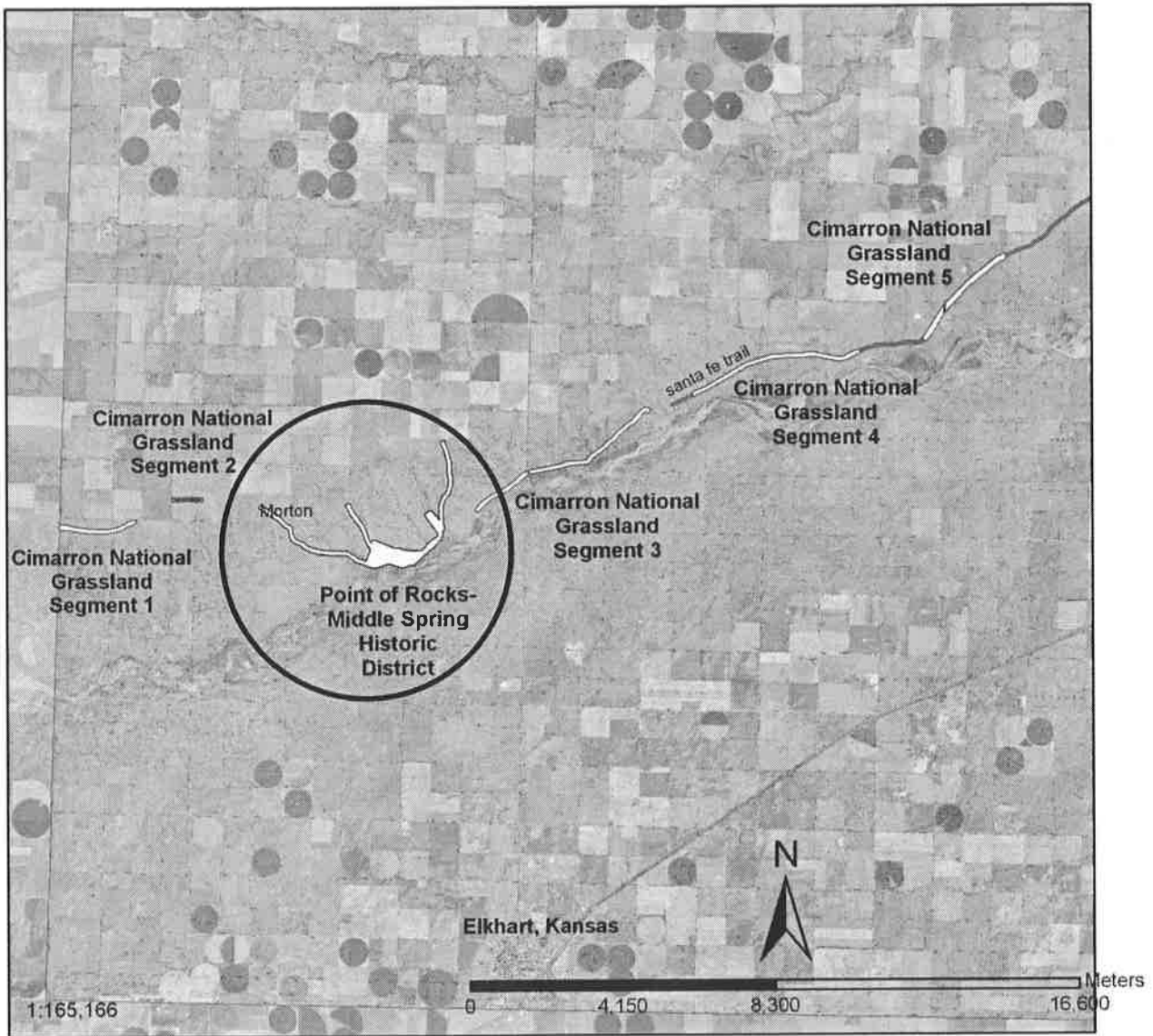
Site Coordinates (Datum = WGS84):

- A: 37.116088,-101.980694 (Western terminus of 14MT1111) / B: 37.102522,-101.947106 (Eastern terminus)
- C: 37.117103,-101.954335 (Northern terminus of 14MT1112) / D: -37.103960,-101.942458 (Southern terminus)
- E: 37.104061,-101.932645 (Western terminus of 14MT1110) / H: 37.110843 -101.925580 (Eastern terminus)
- F: 37.107840,-101.929132 (Center of northern route of 14MT1110)
- G: 37.107344,-101.928357 (Center of southern route of 14MT1110)
- I: 37.115272,-101.930819 (NW corner of Spring) / J: 37.116463,-101.928931 (NE corner of Spring)
- K: 37.114140,-101.925530 (Southern terminus of 14MT1113) / L: 37.133225,-101.925752 (Northern terminus)

- 14MT053: 37.104662,-101.934637
- 14MT174: 37.103139,-101.937891
- 14MT153: 37.111758,-101.926343

Total area: 467.49 acres (1.89 sqkm)

Contextual Map.



The Santa Fe Trail in
the Cimarron National Grassland
Elkhart vicinity, Morton County, Kansas



SANTA FE TRAIL
1822-1872
MARKED BY
THE DAUGHTERS
OF THE
AMERICAN
REVOLUTION
AND THE
STATE OF KANSAS
1906







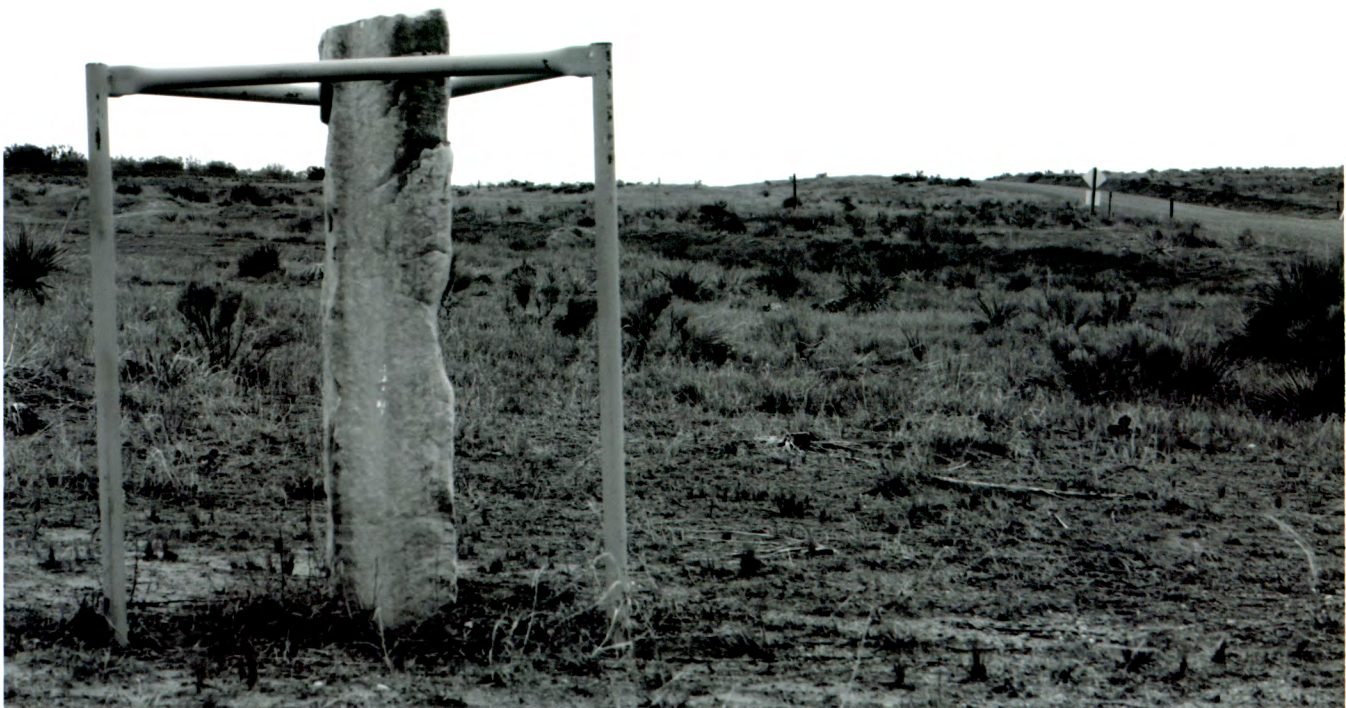


















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Point of Rocks--Middle Spring Santa Fe Trail Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME: Santa Fe Trail MPS

STATE & COUNTY: KANSAS, Morton

DATE RECEIVED: 2/22/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/21/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/05/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/10/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000151

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: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 4/10/13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA 1

REVIEWER Abernethy

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.

6425 SW 6th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66615

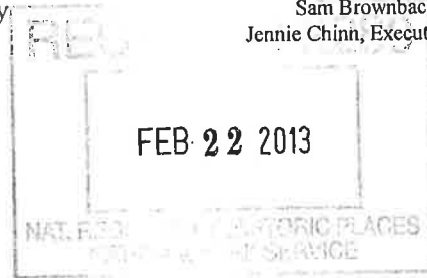


phone: 785-272-8681
fax: 785-272-8682
cultural_resources@kshs.org

Kansas Historical Society

Sam Brownback, Governor
Jennie Chinn, Executive Director

February 14, 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 nominations (new submissions):

- Point of Rocks – Middle Spring Santa Fe Trail Historic District – Morton County, KS
- Harry Keith Barn – Graham County, KS
- Oakley High School Stadium – Logan County, KS

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