

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

<b>FOR NPS USE ONLY</b>
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC SANTA FE TRAIL RUTS

AND/OR COMMON

Santa Fe Trail Ruts

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 9 miles west of Dodge City, Kansas on U.S. 50

CITY, TOWN

Dodge City

VICINITY OF

1st

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Kansas

CODE

20

COUNTY

Ford

CODE

057

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

The Boothill Association (Mr. George Henrichs)

STREET & NUMBER

500 Wyatt Earp Street

CITY, TOWN

Dodge City

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds, County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Dodge City

STATE

Kansas

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Santa Fe Trail Ruts located 9 miles west of Dodge City, Kansas are remains of the once major thoroughfare of westward expansion. Much of the remains have been lost. However, a splendid specimen of some approximate 140 acres have been preserved by the Boothill Association. This section contains a major arch of the trail as it curved across the Kansas countryside. Also on this parcel are several separate sections of the ruts (see accompanying photograph). The ruts at this point stretch some 400 feet in width. When one of the ruts would become too deep, wagons would be shifted and new troughs would be dug into the earth.

There have been a number of intrusions which have severed the trail in various locations. These intrusions include U.S. 50, a railroad and irrigation ditch built in the 1890's which winds back and forth across the ruts. Cattle grazing on the ruts have also greatly impaired sections of the trail.

In addition to the above mentioned intrusions, the Arkansas River has shifted as much as half a mile to the south from its original channel. Despite these alterations in the historic scene, the well defined ruts retain a great deal of their historic integrity.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1821-1873

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

On January 29, 1822, four trail-worn men rode into Franklin, Missouri. Forty-eight days before, they had left San Miguel--fifty miles southeast of Santa Fe. In their packs were the fruits of their journey to New Mexico. As townspeople gathered to welcome Captain William Becknell and his companions, the packs were opened. Not the furs of an Indian Trader spilled out, but heavy rawhide sacks. One of the traders held high a sack and slashed its thongs. Silver pesos tumbled to the ground and rolled into the gutter. Thus the expedition of William Becknell begins a period of western migration, commerce and communication all using one of the major thoroughfares of the day--the Santa Fe Trail.

The Santa Fe Trail Ruts are owned by the Boothill Association which has purchased 140.38 of the original property for the purpose of preservation. This parcel of land is located nine miles west of Dodge City, Kansas on U.S. Route 50.

HISTORY

The adventure of Captain William Bucknell saw the first successful Missouri to Santa Fe trading expedition and set the state for enterprising men to throng the trail to the City of Holy Faith. In this apparently simple act was summed up much that lent to the Santa Fe Trail and its namesake city an air of El Dorado. It was partly this that caused early traders to gamble their lives and fortunes against distance, terrain, weather, hostile Indians and the caprice of Mexican customs officials.

The Santa Fe trail was more than an escape valve for high spirited men, or simply the route by which the mule came to Missouri. It was a commercial and cultural link between the borderlands of the United States and Mexico. Manifest Destiny would travel this trail. At its end was an empire of mesa and mountain, of canyon and river and of vast distances and desert, all ripe for the picking. The trail then became a military highway clogged with the freight and banners of war.

After the Army of the West had done its bloodless duty, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had sealed the conquest, this empire had to be administered and protected and provisioned. Thus men and material for this gigantic task came over the Santa Fe Trail. For two decades after the Mexican War, the Santa Fe Trail held undisputed position as truckline to the Southwest. It was the road and the tie by which civilization and sovereignty filtered into this wild

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gregg, Josiah. Commerce of the Prairies. (Norman, Oklahoma, 1954).  
 U.S. Department of Agricultural aerial photograph, CHD-IHH-194, 5/17/67.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 140.38

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 4	3 9 5 2 6 0	4 1 8 3 5 4 0	B	1 4	3 9 5 1 4 0	4 1 8 2 6 4 1 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1 4	3 9 3 8 9 0	4 1 8 3 1 2 0	D	1 4	3 9 3 9 0 0	4 1 8 3 9 4 1 0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Joseph Scott Mendinghall (original form submitted by Donald Dosch)

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

(202) 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington, D.C. 20240

STATE

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

Landmark

MAY 23, 1963

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Boundary Certified:

*Joseph Mendinghall*

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

Feb 14, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*W. S. Mendinghall*

DATE

4/24/79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

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expanse, tamed it, and fused it to the Nation. All that followed, the Mexican War, the gold rush, the Civil War, stagecoach and emigrant train and the constant plod of oxen hauling tandem freighters was part of this task of consolidating the conquest of 1846-48.

Finally, the railroad came, pushing the eastern terminus of the trail ever westward, until by 1880 there was no more trail. Like the bearded trader and the fabulous crew which followed the trail, it too faded into the annals of legend and conversation of glorious days past. Something grand was lost. Days of adventure and great accomplishment as well as the times of trials and defeat were gone forever. But the products of those years are yet apparent through a booming subcontinent of the modern Southwest. This is the true significance of the Santa Fe Trail, the first great trail of the West.

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For numerous reasons, as indicated in the description of this report, much of that area which contains remains of the trail has been impaired. The best section of ground to be designated the historic landmark is owned by the Boothill Association. This acreage is established exclusively for the preservation of the historic property. Other lands on which the ruts are located are in commercial use as grazing lands for cattle. Moreover, plans call for agricultural use.

The State of Kansas has built a highway turn-off for access to the ruts by visitors. The site lacks any interpretive facilities, though the landmark plaque sits on a stone marker. The boundary, marked in red on an accompanying plat map titled the Santa Fe Trail Ruts and also the USGS map, is described by deed as follows:

PART OF THE WEST ONE-HALF OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER AND PART OF LOT 1, SECTION 17, TOWNSHIP 26 SOUTH, RANGE 26 West, FORD COUNTY, KANSAS.

Beginning at the Northwest corner of Section 17, Township 26 South, Range 6 West, Ford County, Kansas; thence South 0°11' East along the West line of U.S. Highway 50, as the Right of Way now exists; thence Southeasterly along the existing Right of Way line of U.S. Highway 50 for a distance of 1403.8 feet to a point on the East line of Lot 1, Section 17, Township 26 South, Range 26 West; thence North 0°09' West for a distance of 479 feet; thence North 46°50' West for a distance of 1306.8 feet; thence North 0°11' West for a distance of 1320 feet to a point on the North line of Section 17, Township 26 South, Range 26 West; thence North 89°55' West for a distance of 363.6 feet to the point of beginning. Containing 35.28 acres, more or less.  
AND,

PART OF THE NORTH ONE-HALF OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER AND PART OF LOTS 3 AND 4, SECTION 18, TOWNSHIP 26 SOUTH, RANGE 26 WEST, ALL IN FORD COUNTY, KANSAS.

Beginning at the Northeast corner of Section 18, Township 26 South, Range 26 West, Ford County, Kansas; thence North 89°55' West along the North line of said Section 18 for a distance of 2631 feet to the Northwest corner of the Northeast Quarter of said Section 18; thence South 0°01' East along the West line of said Northeast Quarter for a distance of 1286.7 feet to a point on the North Right of Way line of U.S. Highway 50, as the Right of Way now exists; thence Southeasterly along the existing North Right of Way of said U.S. Highway 50 along a curve to the Right for a distance of 1010 feet; thence continuing Southeasterly along the existing North Right of Way line of U.S. Highway 50 for a distance of 1794.2 feet to a point on the East line of Lot 4, said Section 18; thence North 0°11' West along the East line of said Section 18 for a distance of 2208.1 feet to the point of beginning. Containing 105.1 acres, more or less.  
Total acreage, 140.38 acres, more or less.

LOCATION MAP

Dodge City Complex, with notes  
on crossings by noted travelers.  
Descriptive phrases attributed  
to first-listed traveler.

Kansas

