

FHR-8-250 (10/78)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Watrous (La Junta)

and/or common La Junta

2. Location

street & number U.S. Route 85 not for publication

city, town Watrous vicinity of

state New Mexico code 35 county Mora code 33

3. Classification

Table with 4 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Present Use. Includes options like district, building(s), site, public/private, occupied/unoccupied, agriculture/commercial/educational/government/industrial/military, museum/park/private residence/religious/scientific/transportation/other.

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. G. M. (Dogie) Jones (Sapello Stage Station & Fort Union Corral and Buildings)

street & number P.O. Box 72

city, town Watrous vicinity of state NM 87753

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mora County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Mora state New Mexico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title The Sante Fe Trail, Subtheme Report National Survey of Historic Sites & Bldgs has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1963 x federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of History, National Park Service

city, town Washington DC 20240 state

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Watrous (La Junta) National Historic Landmark includes all the routes of the Santa Fe Trail that came together in the La Junta Valley at the confluence of the Mora and Sapello Rivers, the surviving buildings and sites associated with the trail's period of active use, 1835 to 1879, and the open semi-arid rangeland that has historically provided the setting for the events and developments associated with the trail and that made the area a prime location for cultivation and grazing. The valley is enclosed on the east and west by hills and mesa escarpments and is coursed by the Mora and Sapello Rivers, which join in the northeastern corner.

It is in this valley that the Mountain and Cimarron Branches of the Santa Fe Trail merged. The various routes of the two branches spread out over the valley joining and interconnecting in several places. The Mountain Branch generally runs north to south connecting the valley with the trail leading to Raton Pass by way of Fort Union to the north. The earliest route of the Mountain Branch entered the valley through Puerto del Cañon at the north and followed the western side of the valley. Later routes passed through Tiptonville and Barclay's Fort and extended east to La Junta or directly south to the Sapello River crossing. The Cimarron Cutoff runs in a north-east to southwest direction, connecting with the Mountain Branch north of the Sapello River crossing. The trail crossed the Mora River at three major points -- at Puerto del Cañon where the river enters the valley, at Fort Barclay in the center of the valley, and at La Junta to the east near the confluence. The two branches merged at the southern end of the valley just before crossing the Sapello River on route to Las Vegas, New Mexico, and at the village of Tiptonville.

The valley retains its historic setting and integrity with the exception of U.S. Highway 85, which crosses the Mora and Sapello Rivers just west of their junction and parallels the route of the Cimarron Branch as it bypasses the town of Watrous. The town of Watrous, laid out in 1879 marking the end of the historic period of the Santa Fe Trail, lies outside the eastern boundary of the district. Trail ruts and wagon marks are visible today and mark the early routes, particularly those leading to Tiptonville. Some of these ruts have eroded into series of deep arroyos. A number of buildings and sites remain from the period of development that was associated with the Santa Fe Trail and reflect the commercial and agricultural activities that resulted. They are as follows:

1. Fort Union Corral, at the southern tip of the district, was constructed in the 1860's by the military garrison at Fort Union to contain the remount herd for the fort. The field stone walls of this structure are still standing and are visible.
2. Gregg Tavern-Stage Station, at the southern tip of the district where the Mountain and Cimarron Branches merge, is a complex of buildings that operated as a stage station for the Barlow-Sanderson Stage Line in the 1860's and 1870's. The main building is a log and adobe structure, 128 feet long. Originally this building had a flat roof; the shingled gable roof was added at least 70 years ago. The oldest portion of the house appears to be the the adobe room at the north end. Two small adobe buildings and a rock and adobe barn also on the property likely date to the historic trail period. A noncontributing 1939 rock pumphouse is also present.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600-1699	architecture	education	military	social/
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	exploration/settlement	philosophy	theater
1900-	communications	industry	politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		invention		other (specify)

Specific dates 1835-1879 Builder/Architect

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Mountain and Cimarron Branches of the Santa Fe Trail joined at the settlement of the La Junta de los Rios Mara y Sapello (The Juncture of the Mora and Sapello Rivers) which was known simply as La Junta, until 1879, when the Santa Fe Railroad laid out the present day town of Watrous to the east. The small farming community became an important camping place on the Sante Fe Trail, as the Mora River delineated the New Mexican frontier, separating the Rio Grande Mexican settlements from the arid plain homelands of the Apache and Comanche Tribes. East-bound traders and travelers stopped here to organize parties strong enough to undertake the journey back to Missouri after disposing of their trading goods in Santa Fe. And for the westbound caravans from Missouri, La Junta represented the first sign of civilization along the Cimarron Cutoff and meant they had left the arid plains behind. In the active years of the trail's use, the settlement at the confluence of the two rivers was accompanied by other development in the La Junta Valley including several ranches, a stage station, a corral for nearby Fort Union, a Jesuit mission, an early fort constructed by settlers, and the Village of Tiptonville.

### History

It is not surprising that a settlement grew up at La Junta early in the history of the Santa Fe Trail. The soil of the Mora and Sapello river valleys was fertile and surrounding grasslands were perfect for stock grazing. The two branches of the trail joined here, and traders and travelers weary from the long journey across the plains made good customers. After 1843, therefore, La Junta replaced Las Vegas (which in 1833 had replaced San Miguel) as the first New Mexican settlement reached by the trader caravans from Missouri.

On March 27, 1843, John Scolly and nine others petitioned Mexican Governor Manuel Armijo for a grant of land at La Junta. The grant received, the Scolly grantees had colonized the triangular valley at the junction by November of 1843. In 1835 James Boney (Santiago Boné), an Englishman, and 30 others were given a grant of the same or similar lands for the purpose of establishing a town called Pueblo de Santiago to be laid out on the south side of the Moro River and the "public road from the United States to Santa Fe" was to pass through the center of the town from the north to south and cross the Sapello River by the most direct route. The location of this settlement is believed to be on the Phoenix Ranch property along the earliest route of the Mountain Branch, which lay on the western side of the valley and led through the Puerto del Cañon. By 1841, Boney and his Mexican wife had settled in this location in a small dugout with no windows on a rise of ground and had begun cultivating the land and building an irrigation ditch. Boney was killed by the Indians in 1846 and his family left the valley. None of the buildings associated with Boney and his settlement have survived.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

W.W.H. Davis, El Gringo, or New Mexico and Her People

W.H. Emory, Notes of a Military Reconnaissance (Washington, 1847).

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3580 acres

Quadrangle name Watrous, Loma Parda

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	3	5	0	1	8	3	0	3	9	6	0	8	6	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B 

1	3	5	0	1	6	7	0	3	9	6	0	9	4	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

C 

1	3	5	0	1	3	6	0	3	9	6	0	3	8	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

D 

1	3	5	0	1	5	6	0	3	9	6	0	2	9	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

E 

1	3	5	0	0	1	0	0	3	9	5	8	4	4	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

F 

1	3	4	9	9	3	2	0	3	9	5	8	4	2	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

G 

1	3	4	9	9	7	2	0	3	9	6	3	9	2	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

H 

1	3	4	9	8	6	2	0	3	9	6	3	9	2	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries of the landmark are delineated by the sides of the polygon drawn on the U.S.G.S. quadrant maps. The vertices of the polygon are identified by the UTM references given above for points A-N.

### 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 Richard Greenwood, Historian (2/10/75) Updated by Cultural Programs, SWRO, 12/30/81 and National Register Branch, 12/84

organization National Park Service date 12/18/84

street & number U.S. Department of the Interior telephone 343-9536

city or town Washington state DC 20240

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

date

6/17/85

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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Mr. & Mrs. James Doolittle (Watrous Ranch)  
Watrous, New Mexico 87753

Mr. Robert More III (Phoenix Ranch & Barclay's Fort)  
Phoenix Ranch  
Watrous, New Mexico 87753

Mr. & Mrs. John Wayne, Jr. (Gregg Tavern-- Stage Station)  
Watrous, NM 87753

Mr. James Bonney (Santiago Boné, Jr. House)  
1701 Utah, N.E.  
Albuquerque, NM

Mr. Albert (Skeet) Eggar (Bernardo Salazar House & Bone Cemetery)  
Watrous, NM 87753

Mr. Joseph Lopez ( Trinidad Lopez House, Foundations of the Sagrado Corazon Mission,  
Watrous, NM 87753 & West Tiptonville Cemetery)

La Jara Hereford Inc. ( William Tipton store, ranch building, & ranch house  
1220 Broadway # 810 foundations)  
Lubbock, TX 79401

Eloisa Sanchez & John T. Herburger (Carl Wildenstein Building)  
Mora Rt. Box 32 A  
Las Vegas, NM 87701

Juan Yara Estate (Chandler Building)  
(Henry Yara)  
Watrous, NM 87753

Carlos or Lillie Locato (Marcelino Trujillo Buildings)  
Watrous, NM 87753

Mr. Leo Montoya (Luciano Salazar Building)  
612 Freidman Ave.  
Las Vegas, NM 87701

Mrs. David Archuleta (Briggs & Robert Building #11)  
Watrous, NM 87753

Mr. David Archuleta (Briggs & Robert Building #10)  
Watrous, NM 87753

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Bennie Trujillo (Andres Salazar Building)  
2960 S. Willow St.  
Denver, CO 80231

Mr. James Conway (Juan Romero Building & Selas Martinez Building)  
Watrous, NM 87753

Watrous Community Cemetery (Tiptonville Cemetery)  
Watrous, NM 87753

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3. The Fort Union Corral Buildings, at the southern tip of the district, include three small log and rock structures and a larger rock structure, probably built as a barn. These buildings are believed to be associated with the operation of the corral and the "mule skimmers" who cared for the cavalry horses.

4. The Santiago Boné, Jr., House, West Tiptonville, was built by the son of the valley's first settler, James Boney, in 1865. It is a modest rock and adobe house. Behind the house is a small square building built in the early 20th century as a chapel. Also a horno of undetermined age lies south of the house.

5. The Bernardo Salazar House, West Tiptonville, was built by Salazar who was married to Maria Rafaela Boné, the daughter of James Boney, in 1865. It is an adobe brick building with Territorial Style trim. A rock addition was added shortly after construction. It is currently vacant and deteriorated.

6. The Trinidad Lopez House, West Tiptonville, was built by Lopez who was married to Maria Cleofas Boné, the daughter of James Boney, in the late 1860's. It is an adobe brick building with interior woodwork in the Territorial Style.

7. The William Tipton Store, south of the village of Tiptonville, was built by Tipton in the 1860s to serve caravans on the Santa Fe Trail which passed in front of it. It is adobe brick and log with later rock additions. It served as the post office for Tiptonville and as a stable.

8. The Carl W. Wildenstein Building, Tiptonville, is an adobe brick building built about 1870 at the main intersection of the Mountain and Cimarron Branches. It is vacant and deteriorated; the northern end is in ruin.

9. The H. Chandler Building, Tiptonville, is an adobe building built about 1870. It is vacant and deteriorated.

10. The Marcelino Trujillo Buildings, Tiptonville, are two adobe buildings with small farming sheds built about 1870. They are vacant and deteriorated.

11. The Luciano Salazar Building, Tiptonville, is an adobe building built about 1870. It is vacant, but in good condition.

12. The Briggs and Roberts Building, Tiptonville, is an adobe building with Territorial Style trim probably built about 1870. Built on Church Street, the entrance of the Cimarron Cutoff into the village, it may have served as a store or saloon. It is occupied and in good condition.

13. The Briggs and Roberts Building (#2), Tiptonville, is an adobe building of about 1870. It is occupied and in good condition.

14. The Andres Salazar Building, Tiptonville, is an adobe house with Territorial Style trim. It is vacant and deteriorated. It was built about 1870.

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15. The Juan Romero Building, Tiptonville, is an adobe building of about 1870. It is vacant and deteriorated.

16. The Selas Martinez Building, Tiptonville, is an adobe building of about 1870. It is vacant and deteriorated.

17. The Phoenix Ranch south of the Mora River and west of the settlement of La Junta was built in the 1860's by William Kroenig. The ranch house is a two-story square plan house with a two-level gallery extending around all four sides. It is adobe with wood members and has Greek Revival details on the window and door surrounds. It is one of the finest Territorial period residences in New Mexico. Several outbuildings, including a rock barn, are believed to date to the same period as the house. Several board and batten barns are more recent in age. The site of James Boney's Pueblo de Santiago is believed to be on the ranch property. The foundations of Barclay's Fort close to the Mora River are visible. The fort was a large rectangular structure made of adobe with towers at the northwest and southeast corners. Two adobe buildings postdating the trail period are also present on the property.

18. The Samuel B. Watrous Ranch House and Store, built about 1849 by Watrous, one of the early settlers, is a large one-story adobe building reflecting the Territorial Style. It is an important architectural landmark in New Mexico. Located north of the Mora River near the junction with the Sapello River, it was the nucleus of the settlement of La Junta.

19. The William Tipton Ranch Building is an adobe plastered rectangular building with vigas and a gabled roof. A cement adobe garage was added to the south end in 1969. This building is believed to be an enlargement of Tipton's early log house and is labeled "shops" on the 1870 map of Tiptonville. It is occupied and in good condition.

20. The Foundations of William Tipton's Ranch House consist of stone foundations from the two-level galleried plantation style house in the Territorial Style that Tipton had built in the 1860's and that was destroyed by fire in recent years.

21. The Foundations of the Sagrado Corazon Mission, West Tiptonville, consist of the foundations of the church, rectory, and school that were built in 1870 by Jesuit priests as the parish church to serve parts of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

The district also includes the Boné Cemetery, West Tiptonville Cemetery, and the Tiptonville Cemetery. These cemeteries are integral parts of the landmark.



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La Junta was on firm footing by 1846 when the Army of the West camped in the valley near the Sapello Crossing. It was described as, "the first settlement we had seen in 775 miles," wrote Emory.<sup>1</sup> Though Kearny's soldiers were not overly impressed with the dirty town whose houses resembled brick kilns, they found its cheese, milk, and other produce, including whiskey, a welcome change from the fare of the road.

In 1849 Alexander Barclay, an Englishman, and J. B. Doyle, an American, came to La Junta. They had been Indian traders on the Platte and Arkansas Rivers, and planned to build a trading post at the Mora Crossings to engage in the Indian trade and sell produce to passing travelers on the Santa Fe Trail. During the 1850's Barclay's Fort on the Mora was a well-known stopping place on the trail and a relay station for the Independence-Santa Fe Trail. W. W. H. Davis, enroute to Santa Fe to become Attorney General of New Mexico, described the post as it appeared in November, 1853:

It is a large adobe establishment, and, like the immense caravansaries of the East, serves as an abode for men and animals. From the outside it presents a rather formidable as well as neat appearance, being pierced with loop-holes and ornamented with battlements. The rooms within were damp and uncomfortable, and all the surroundings looked so gloomy, the hour being twilight, that it reminded me of some old state prison where the good and great of former times have languished away their lives.<sup>2</sup>

Samuel B. Watrous, who had come to New Mexico from Vermont in 1837, settled with his family at La Junta in 1849. He bought a one-seventh interest in the Scolly Grant and built a great adobe ranch house and store at the junction of the Mora and Sapello Rivers. He amassed large herds of cattle, which grazed the grasslands north of the Mora, and sold merchandise to the troops at Fort Union and travelers on the Santa Fe Trail. One of Watrous' daughters in 1849 married William Tipton, who went into partnership with his father-in-law and settled on the north side of the Mora a mile from Barclay's Fort. The village of Tiptonville grew up around his ranch. Another daughter married George Gregg, who managed the Barlow-Sanderson Stage Station, at the juncture of the two trails during the 1860's and 1870's. This was a "home station" where stages made half hour meal stops.

1. Emory, Notes, 24; 2. Davis, El Gringo, 51

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William B. Tipton had come to New Mexico in 1846 with General Kearny's army and went into partnership with his father-in-law, Samuel Watrous, until 1862 when Tipton purchased an interest in the Scolly grant and erected a large galleried ranch house on the Mountain Branch north of Barclay's Fort. He raised beef for sale to Fort Union, which had been founded 10 miles north of the Mora River along the Mountain Branch in 1851. Adjacent to his ranch, Tipton laid out the Village of Tiptonville in 1870, which became a gathering place for caravans on the trail and today has visible ruts and arroyas fanning out into the rolling hills. The town was laid out in a grid pattern by surveyor W. R. Shoemaker on the north bank of the Mora River. Although Tipton's house was destroyed by fire, its foundation and the buildings used for his store, post office, and stable have survived. Of the town that had stores and saloons to serve the wagon trains as well as soldiers from nearby Fort Union, a church and a school, ten largely unaltered buildings remain and reflect the adobe brick construction characteristic of the Territorial period.

William Kroenig, a German who came to New Mexico in 1849, purchased Fort Barclay in 1856 and acquired additional land in the vicinity. In 1864 he constructed the Phoenix Ranch House. A handsome two-story galleried plantation-type house in the Territorial Style, it is one of the most significant examples of its type in New Mexico. Kroenig was a rancher, operated a flour mill on the Mora River that supplied Fort Union, and held mining interests. In 1868 he sold the Phoenix Ranch and left the valley, returning in 1883 to build a home upstream from Sapello crossing.

In the southern end of the district, north of the Sapello crossing and in the area where the two branches of the trail joined, George Gregg operated a stage station in the 1860's and 70's serving the Barlow-Sanderson Stage Line. When the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad reached Colorado in 1878, the stages from Colorado to Santa Fe were discontinued, although buckboards continued to run twice a day from Alamosa to Santa Fe. Gregg owned the station from 1866 to 1882. He also served as Justice of the Peace and Postmaster of La Junta from 1868 to 1879.

Descendents of James Boney returned to the Valley in the 1860's and resettled the area along the earliest and westernmost route of the Mountain Branch in the area known as West Tiptonville. In 1865, Santiago Boné, Jr., built a rock and adobe home near or on the site of his father's home. The same year Boney's eldest daughter, married to Trinidad Lopez, settled nearby in an adobe home at the junction of the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail and the mail road to Mora. Trinidad Lopez served as Justice of the Peace in 1871 and as sheriff in 1875-6. According to descendents, they donated land to the Jesuit priests for a church, school and cemetery, the Sagrado Corazon Mission, which was built in 1870 and ministered to a parish extending from Las Vegas, New Mexico, to Trinidad, Colorado. A second daughter married to Bernardo Salazar, who served as County Commissioner in 1881-2, also settled in the same area. The homes of Boney's descendents have survived and represent the modest and crude frontier structures erected along the Santa Fe Trail. Only the foundations and cemetery of the mission remain.

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By 1868, the railhead from Kansas had advanced beyond Fort Dodge and wagon freighting on the Cimarron Cutoff had virtually ceased, although trade over the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail continued, as did commerce between La Junta and Fort Union.

Finally, in 1879, the chief engineer of the Santa Fe Railroad laid out a new town to the east of La Junta to service the railroad which had arrived, and named it Watrous, after one of the early pioneers of the area, Samuel Watrous. In the same year, the Santa Fe Railroad also breached the Raton Pass with its rails bringing to an end the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Shortly thereafter, the population moved away from La Junta to the new town of Watrous.

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Kenyon Riddle, Records and Maps of the Old Santa Fe Trail, revised (Stuart, Florida, 1963)

Betsy Swanson, "Study of the Watrous National Landmark for the National Park Service and the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office" (Santa Fe, New Mexico, June 1982).

"The Santa Fe Trail," The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, Subtheme Report, 1963.

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UTM References

I. 13 497730 3964050  
J. 13 497730 3964320  
K. 13 498430 3964370  
L. 13 498320 3965000  
M. 13 500600 3964060  
N. 13 502220 3961540

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Watrous National Historic Landmark encompass those portions of the La Junta Valley that retain historic integrity from the period associated with the Santa Fe Trail. The boundaries include all the routes of the Cimarron Cutoff and Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail which came together in the Valley, the surviving buildings retaining architectural integrity, the four river crossings that were significant to the valley's pattern of development, and the open semi-arid rangeland that has historically been associated with the trail and unites the significant features within the valley.

The eastern boundary has been drawn west of the 1879 town of Watrous and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad tracks to exclude development that occurred after the period associated with the Santa Fe Trail. It extends southwest to the southern portion of the valley, turning west at the boundary of Mora and San Miguel Counties. The southern boundary roughly follows the county line to include the Sapello River Crossing and the Fort Union Corral and Buildings. The western boundary roughly follows the hills and escarpments of the valley to include the earliest route of the Mountain Branch and the properties associated with James Boney's descendents. Along the southern bank of the Mora River the boundary extends west to the location of James Boney's dam, which is also the western boundary of the Boney and Scolly land grants. Crossing the Mora River at this point, the boundary then proceeds east along the northern bank to the edge of the valley and north to encompass Puerto del Cañon, where the earliest route of the Mountain Branch entered the valley. The northern boundary extends from a point northwest of the Puerto southeast along the northern edge of the valley to encompass the 1870 village of Tiptonville, which was the meeting point of the trail's various routes and an important commercial center during the late history of the Santa Fe Trail. The northern boundary extends southeast to the area settled as La Junta and marked by the Watrous Ranch and the junction of the Mora and Sapello Rivers. It is here that one of the routes of the Cimarron Cutoff entered the valley and crossed the Mora River. At a point east of the Watrous Ranch the boundary turns south toward the edge of the town of Watrous.