

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Rabbit Ears (Clayton Complex)

AND/OR COMMON
Clayton Complex

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Union County, east, north and west of Clayton

CITY, TOWN Clayton VICINITY OF 1st

STATE New Mexico CODE 35 COUNTY Union CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A BEING CONSIDERED	<input 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 State of New Mexico (little Rabbit Ear Mountain)
(See Continuation Sheet)

STREET & NUMBER
Capitol Building

CITY, TOWN Santa Fe VICINITY OF STATE New Mexico

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Registry of Deeds, ETC. Union County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN Clayton STATE New Mexico

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> _EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> _UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> _GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> _RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> _MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> _UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Clayton Complex consists of the two major landmarks along this portion of the Trail--Rabbit Ears Mountain and Round Mound (Mt. Clayton), as well as the three camp sites located between the two landmarks--McNees Crossing, Turkey Creek Camp, and Rabbit Ears Creek Camp.

The terrain in the Rabbit Ears vicinity varies between level plain and abrupt ridges and ravines with the ground ranging from firm to loose and sandy. Due to the occasional irregularities, the wagon trains did not adhere closely to preexisting trails from camp to camp, but veered as the lay of the land and the appearance of water holes dictated. The location of the camp sites was determined by the availability of water and the profusion of grass for the teams, both of which commodities were found only in creek bottoms, generally. Thus these three sites are all situated on creeks--McNees on Corruppa (McNees) Creek, Turkey Creek Camp on the present-day Alamos Creek, and Rabbit Ears Creek Camp on present-day Cienequilla Creek. Each of the creeks is usually dry except in spring, with the water appearing only in springs and pools, and sometimes disappearing under rocks or sand. As traffic on the Trail increased, wagoners often found that a former camp ground had already been foraged by a preceding caravan, and as a result moved further down the creek bottom.

The sites on the Corruppa and Alamos Creeks are in valleys now in grazing lands and as a result are largely undisturbed. The Rabbit Ears Creek Camp, to the north of Mount Dora, is situated on the banks of the creek, just below the rocky bluffs which mark the northern terminus of Mount Dora. This site is presently used for grazing purposes and consequently, as in the other sites, there are well preserved trail remains, most notably where the Trail dropped from the higher ground down to the creeks. All three of the sites are accessible, McNees by State Route 18, Turkey Creek Camp by State Route 370, and Rabbit Ears Creek Camp by a ranch road leading north off U.S. Route 64-87, at Mt. Dora.

Rabbit Ears, with its two irregular prominences, is still an outstanding landmark, with no evidences of nonhistoric intrusions within its immediate proximity, as is the case with Round Mound, just south of Grenville and twenty odd miles east of the Rabbit Ears. The remains of the trail, where it passed just to the north of Round Mound have been largely eradicated by cultivation, however, except near where the Trail crossed the present route of U.S. 64-87.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" 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 1823-1868

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

No landmark on the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail was more important than the Rabbit Ears, the conspicuous, doublepeaked mountain which for four days of the journey guided the wagon trains from the Upper Spring of the Cimarron across the Oklahoma panhandle to the series of camp sites that promised constant water and fine meadows. These camps and landmarks are conveniently grouped as the Clayton Complex and they still exist in a well-preserved condition just to the east, north, and west of the present town of Clayton, New Mexico.

HISTORY

To the travelers on the Cimarron Cutoff, Rabbit Ears was the sole guiding landmark across more than thirty miles of trail, slashed by ravines and broken by abrupt ridges. As they labored across the arid plains, where springs were about a day's journey apart, they knew that the Rabbit Ears promised camp sites with plentiful water, wood, and grass. Frequently at the Rabbit Ears Creek Camp, the trains would lay over for a day to refresh the animals after the long water scrape and poor forage during the march from Middle Crossing. It was also customary upon reaching the Rabbit Ears area to send runners ahead to Santa Fe to scout the market and make arrangements with Mexican customs officials.

Seldom did a train pass through this country without at least one Indian alarm, and although the traders and Indians generally met and parted peaceably, at McNees Crossing occurred one of the first fatal incidents between the two races, on the Trail. In the fall of 1828 two young traders, McNees and Monroe, who had gone in advance of a returning caravan, were shot here by Indians, almost in sight of the lagging caravan. After burying McNees, the traders carried the expiring Monroe to Cimarron, where he finally died. As the burial service for McNees ended, six or seven Indians, probably not of the hostile party, appeared on the opposite bank and the revengeful traders shot down all but one of them. This incident sparked the retributory outrages on the Trail that led to military escorts in 1829.

On July 4, 1831, a memorable Independence Day celebration, recorded by Josiah Gregg, was held at McNees Crossing--the first documented Fourth of July observance on the plains.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies (Norman, Okla., 1954).
 Kate Gregg, ed., The Road to Santa Fe (Albuquerque, 1952).
 _____, Field Notes of Government Surveyor Joseph C. Brown, reprinted in
 Kansas State Historical Society (n.p., n.d.).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ca. 15,250 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 13	6 7 8 4 6 10	4 10 6 6 10 4 10	B	1 13	6 7 8 5 3 10	4 10 6 2 3 2 10
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1 13	6 3 15 3 12 10	4 10 4 7 9 5 10	D	1 13	6 3 15 2 15 10	4 10 5 1 3 10 10
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

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

Richard Greenwood, Historian (Revised Cultural Programs, SWRO, NPS)

ORGANIZATION

State and Local Affairs, SWRO, NPS

DATE

12/31/81

STREET & NUMBER

5000 Marble NE, Rm 211

TELEPHONE

FTS 474-5944

CITY OR TOWN

Albuquerque

STATE

New Mexico 87110

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL XX

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

9/12/81

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

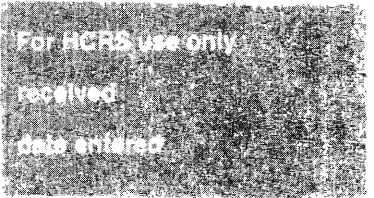
DATE

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 4

Page 1

Carl & Gary Butt (Rabbit Ears Camp)
Box 55
Clayton, New Mexico 88415

Mr. Raymond Mock (McNees Crossing)
416 Maple
Clayton, New Mexico 88415

Mr. Billy Mitchell (Round Mound)
Route 5, Box 359
San Antonio, Texas 78211

Mr. C.M. Bell (Turkey Creek Camp)
2318 Windsor Road
Abilene, Texas 79605

(Local contact for Turkey Creek Camp is Mr. R.V. Bell, 221 Washington,
Clayton, New Mexico 88415)

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Clayton Complex

CONTINUATION SHEET

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After passing from camp to camp above Rabbit Ears, while heading for Round Mound, the Trail passed just to the north of Round Mound which the traders often climbed for the splendid view its summit afforded of the mountains and plains surrounding it. From Round Mound, the Trail then headed west for Point of Rocks and beyond it to the Canadian Crossing, then south to Wagon Mound and La Junta.

With the closing of the Cimarron Cutoff by the railroad advancing from Kansas in 1868, the Rabbit Ears area was developed primarily as ranch and farmland, with Clayton evolving as the local town. Today, the landmarks and trail route remain relatively open and untouched within ranch properties.

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Continuation sheet

Rabbit Ears

Item number 10

Page 1

The Rabbit Ears (Clayton Complex) National Historic Landmark consists of three camp sites (McNees' Crossing, Turkey Creek Camp and Rabbit Ears Camp) and two natural features (Rabbit Ears Mountain and Round Mound) of the Santa Fe Trail. The campsites are bound together by the remains of the Santa Fe Trail and form one elongated parcel, while the two natural features consist of two separate parcels south of the campsites and trail.

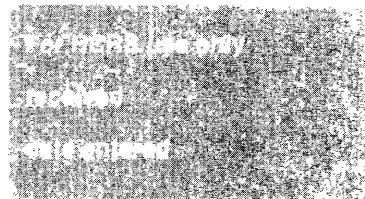
Parcel #1, is shaped like a parallelogram running from the Oklahoma-New Mexico border in a southwesterly direction, across three USGS maps. Within the parallelogram the actual NHL boundary is delineated in blue pen. The three campsites are bound together by a corridor centered on the Santa Fe Trail (as it is indicated on the enclosed USGS maps). The boundaries of the corridor run parallel to the Trail, at a distance of 150' on either side of it. This corridor becomes thicker in the area of the three campsites. In the area of McNees' Crossing (Moses Quad) the corridor is expanded to include both segments of the Cimarron Cutoff. In the area of the Turkey Creek Camp, along the Alamos Creek (McLaughlin Bridge & Bible Top Butte Quads) the northern part of the boundary runs parallel to the Santa Fe Trail, while the southern part of the boundary follows the creek bottom area of Alamos Creek, which served the travelers as a stopping place. An arbitrary line was used for the southern boundary of the Turkey Creek Camp because there was not a convenient contour line to utilize and the on-site inspection selected this area as that area most likely to have served as the camping site. The expanded boundary for the Rabbit Ears Creek Camp has its northern boundary paralleling the Santa Fe Trail, and its southern boundary consisting of the 5600' contour line. These north and south boundaries and the arbitrary west and east lines enclose a broad flat valley which encloses the general camp site area of the Rabbit Ears Creek Camp. (See Mount Dora Quad.)

Parcel #2, encloses the prominent double-peaked Rabbit Ear Mesa (Bible Top Butte & Rabbit Ear Mountain Quads). Starting at Point E the boundary runs southeast to Point F, thence straight south to Point G. From Point G the boundary goes southwest to Point H, thence straight west to Point I. The boundary from Point I follows the right-of-way of State Highway 370, as not to include the highway itself, to Point J. From Point J, the boundary runs northeast to Point K and thence due east to Point E. This boundary is to enclose those parts of Rabbit Ear Mesa which are considered significant within the most succinct boundary.

Parcel #3, Mount Clayton (Round Mound), consists of Sections 2 and 3 of T.26N., R.31E., and Sections 34 and 35 of T.27N., R.31E.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 10

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PARCEL #2

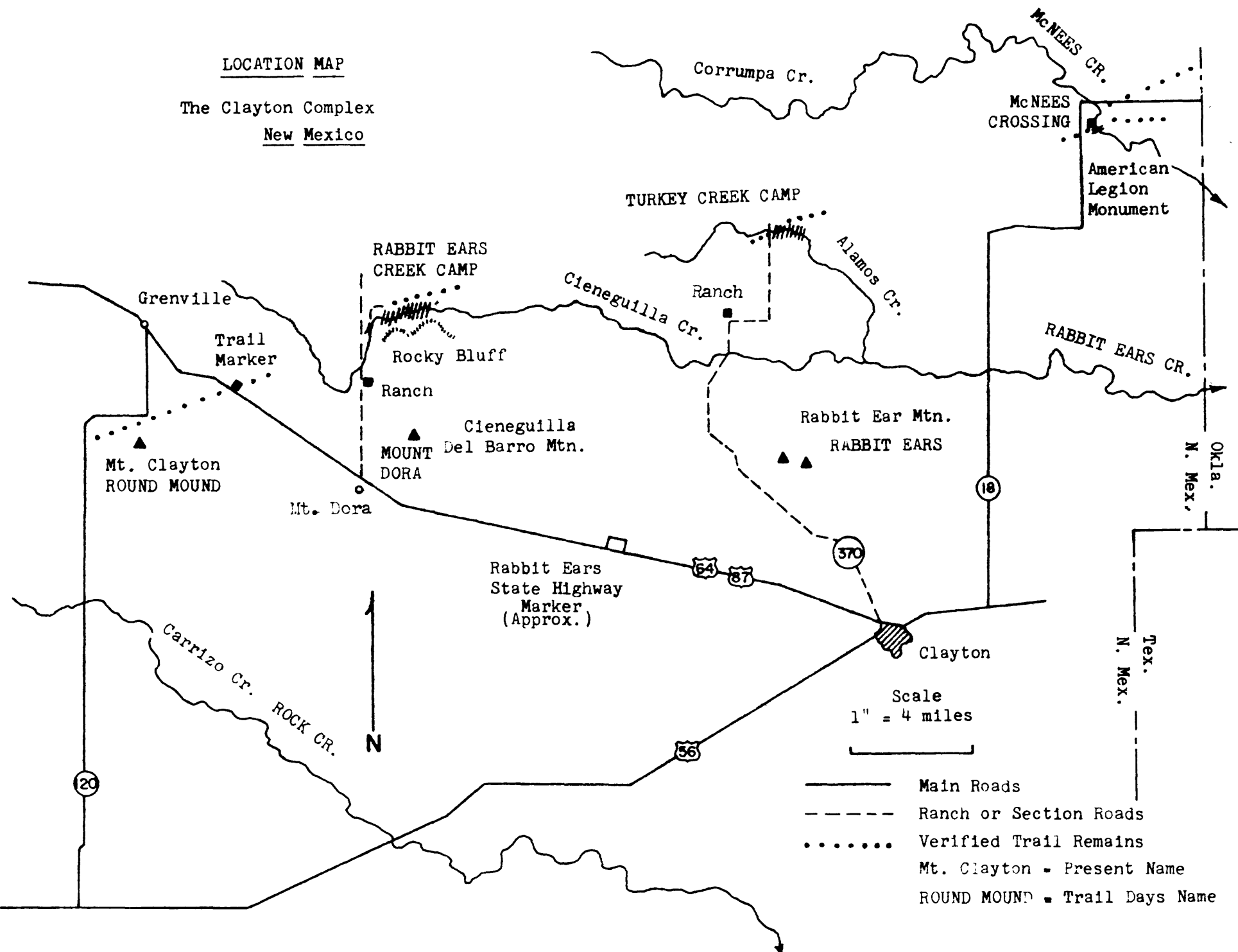
E 13 657 920 40 47 070
F 13 660 800 40 45 100
G 13 660 850 40 43 670
H 13 659 660 40 43 250
I 13 655 820 40 43 000
J 13 653 670 40 45 580
K 13 655 230 40 47 000

PARCEL #3 (Latitude & Longitude)

A 36°32'24"/103°35'48"
B 36°00'40"/103°35'48"
C 36°00'40"/103°37'52"
D 36°32'24"/103°37'52"

LOCATION MAP

The Clayton Complex
New Mexico



- Main Roads
- - - - - Ranch or Section Roads
- Verified Trail Remains
- ▲ Mt. Clayton - Present Name
- ROUND MOUND - Trail Days Name