NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NAT REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Little Arkansas River Crossing

other names/site number KHRI #159-113; Archeological site #14RC1302; NPS Plan #87

2. Location

street & number NE intersection Ave P & 30th Rd [ ] not for publication

city or town Windom [X] vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Rice code 159 zip code 67491

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this __x__ 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 __x__ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

__x__ **national** ___ **statewide** __**local**

Patrick Zollner DSHPO 2-11-14
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

[X] 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:) _____

for Signature of the Keeper 4/5/14 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [x] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [ ] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [x] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
2	1	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
3	**1**	**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/unoccupied land
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field
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
N/A
roof: N/A
other: Stone (Marker)

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Little Arkansas River Crossing site is located in Rice County in central Kansas, approximately 5.5 miles southwest of Windom (in McPherson County). This site is in the SW ¼ of Section 13, Township 20 South, Range 6 West, 4.5 miles south of US Highway 56 and one mile west of the McPherson-Rice county line. The site contains three contributing resources, as defined in the *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised multiple property nomination: two Transportation Sites (Trail Segment subtypes) in the form of swales and a Monument & Memorial in the form of a Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) marker. The swales associated with this site are visible to the northeast and west of the river, while the DAR marker is placed along the north edge of the western swale. Also included in the site's boundaries is the location of the Stone Corral. Due to a lack of integrity, the site of the Stone Corral is noncontributing. This site has the potential to yield information pertaining to the exact locations of the river crossings. Together, the resources comprise 38.20 acres.

Narrative Description

The Little Arkansas River Crossing is located along the main route of the Santa Fe Trail, whose location in Rice County was verified by the General Land Office (GLO) survey in the summer of 1866 (Figure 1). The site consists of both visible features and known locations of historic resources. Visible resources include the upper crossing and DAR marker. The crossing site is located to the immediate north of Station Little Arkansas, across Avenue P. The site is surrounded by agricultural land to the north, east, south, and west. The Little Arkansas Crossing is located approximately 8 miles east of the Jarvis (Chavez) Creek Crossing and about 50 miles west of the Cottonwood Creek Crossing (Figure 2).

Landscape[1]

This site lies within the Great Bend Lowland division of the Arkansas River Lowlands section of the Central Lowland province of the Interior Plains of North America.[2] The Great Bend Lowland is an undulating plain of little relief extending in a 10-40 mile wide band along the great northerly bend of the Arkansas River from around Dodge City on the west through Great Bend and Wichita to Arkansas City on the east. It is a poorly drained area of sand dunes and sandy plains, among which are found salt marshes, ponds, and sloughs. The surface materials consist almost entirely of sands and gravels eroded from the Rocky Mountains during the Pleistocene and carried downstream by alluvial action of the Arkansas River, which flows through the area and to the east in a shallow channel bounded by a wide, flat, poorly drained river valley. The river is not confined to a single channel, but instead has a number of channels with intervening islands, which is a braided pattern characteristic of an aggrading or depositing stream. The Little Arkansas River is a tributary of the Arkansas River. Most of the stream flow of the Arkansas is underground; water is usually only barely visible on the surface except during times of flooding.

The vegetation of the Great Bend Lowland in prehistoric and early historic times apparently consisted of sand prairie cut through by a thin band of floodplain forest or savanna along the Arkansas River and a few of its tributaries. Archeologist Waldo Wedel noted that the "low grass-grown banks" of the Arkansas upstream of the Little Arkansas seem to have been "largely treeless except for occasional cottonwoods" and in his view this was probably true for most of the region west and south of the main stream.[3] The potential natural vegetation of the prairie mainly included big and little bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii* and *Schizachyrium scoparium*), sandreed (*Calamovilfa longifolia*), and switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum* L.), with the forested areas containing hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), cottonwood (*Populus deltoids*), willow (*Salix spp.*), and elm (*Ulmus spp.*) along

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

[2] W.E. Schoewe, "The Geography of Kansas, Part II: Physical Geography," *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 52, no. 3 (1949): 292-296.

[3] Waldo R. Wedel, "An Introduction to Kansas Archeology," *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (1959): 12.

with various shrubs and bushes.[4] The trees declined markedly in terms of numbers of species and overall abundance as one moved from east to west. Tall trees, dense undergrowth, and many lianas were present in the extreme east, but the forests became narrower and lower westward, and often less dense, the ground covered by an impoverished version of bluestem prairie, creating a savanna effect. And due to the shifting sand bottom of the Arkansas River channel, timber was often absent for long stretches. When Township 20 South, Range 6 West was surveyed in 1866, the surveyors described the landscape thus:

> The land in this Township, with the exception of the extreme Southern portion, which is sandy and barren, is of good quality and well suited to farming or grazing. The Township is watered by Little Arkansas river, a stream about fifty links wide, running South Easterly through the Eastern portion; and along the banks of which, timber of a poor quality is found. The varieties of Timber are Box Elder, Elm, and Cottonwood.[5]

Cottonwoods are still prevalent along this portion of the Little Arkansas River.

This 38.20-acre site is oriented on either side of the river, which crosses diagonally through the center of the site from northwest to southeast. The Little Arkansas River channel is approximately 30 meters (98 feet) wide. Flow in the channel varies considerably depending on environmental conditions. Despite erosion of the stream bank and subsequent tree growth along the river channel, the site remains largely unmodified and still retains its environmental integrity. Except for the river basin itself, the land in and around this site is flat, having an elevation of approximately 466.3 meters (1530 feet). Surrounding this site, which is unoccupied due to its natural characteristics, is cultivated land.

Contributing Resources

1. The Upper Crossing (38.310364,-97.940021)

Of the two known crossings at this location along the Little Arkansas, only remnants of the Upper Crossing are extant in the form of swales. These swales associated with the crossing are examples of Transportation Sites (Trail Segment subtypes), as defined in the revised multiple property nomination.

In his 1977 archeology report, Kansas State Historical Society archeologist Bruce Jones described the crossing:

> This element of the site may be represented by a rather deep three to four meter wide ravine which intersects the channel of the Little Arkansas from either bank in a generally northeast-southwest direction. ...a considerable concentration of unconsolidated limestone rubble could be seen in the west bank of the stream, suggesting the remains of an intentionally constructed low water crossing. [Local informant] Robert Gray reports that similar limestone material can be seen in the bottom of the channel at the intersection of the crossing when the Little Arkansas is dry. No archeological features were observed during the survey which might represent the remains of the toll bridge over the river, although the dense overgrowth along the stream may obscure stone pilings, etc.[6]

Observations made during a June 2012 site visit generally concur with this description. Stone bridge piers and the rock-bottomed ford, visible for many years, are now either gone or covered with silt, sand, and river debris. Aaron Johnson, who settled in the stone corral district in 1872, related that the bridge was burned prior to 1872 by American Indians attempting to interrupt transportation along the Santa Fe Trail.

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[4] A.W. Kuchler, "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas," *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 597.

[5] "Field Notes for Township 20 South, Range 6 West 6th P.M." (Leavenworth: General Land Office, 1866), Kansas Historical Society (Topeka): Florence McGlasson Gabelmann Memorial Library, microfilm, 20s6wn.

[6] Bruce A. Jones, *Archeological Investigations in the Upper Little Arkansas Watershed Ellsworth, Rice, McPherson, Reno and Harvey Counties, Kansas* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1977), 28. Copy on file with the Kansas Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Archeology Department.

The "ravine" mentioned by Jones is present on both the east and west sides of the Little Arkansas. On the east side of the channel, a swale starts immediately within the tree line separating a cultivated field from the river. This single swale is approximately 20 meters (66 feet) long and heads in a southwesterly direction toward the north of the old "Marker Cottonwood."[7] The swale ends before reaching the tree.

On the west side of the Little Arkansas, two swales are evident, leading southwest. The northernmost swale has a deeper profile closer to the river, most likely caused by erosion. These two swales parallel each other and are approximately 10 meters (33 feet) apart. The exact length of these features is unknown due to the amount of overgrowth present at the site, but they are no longer than 30 meters (98.5 feet).

2. Uvedale Chapter DAR Marker (38.309673,-97.940374)

The DAR marker that was placed at this site in 1929 is an example of a Monument & Memorial property type, as defined in the revised multiple property nomination. The marker, which denotes the Upper Crossing, sits on the west bank of the river between the swales on this side of the crossing. In its original location, facing southwest, the marker was placed by the Uvedale Chapter (Hutchinson, Kansas) of the DAR in 1929. The marker has a 2x2 foot concrete base with large rock aggregate. According to contemporary newspaper accounts from the dedication, the base contains a copper box containing newspaper clippings and other mementos from 1929. A gray granite marker rests atop the base with a bronze plaque on the face that reads "SANTA FE TRAIL / PIONEERS / CROSSED THIS FORD / FROM 1822 TO 1872 / ERECTED BY / UVEDALE CHAPTER / DAUGHTERS / OF THE / AMERICAN REVOLUTION / HUTCHINSON KANSAS / 1929." The DAR marker is in good condition, partially due to the extensive tree cover that has prevented excessive weathering over the years.

Non-Contributing Resources

3. The Stone Corral (38.306136,-97.938649)

Though the location of the Stone Corral associated with this crossing is known, the site does not contain sufficient integrity to be considered a contributing resource. Jones described the site as follows:

> This complex [stone corral and Wheeler's ranch] reportedly lay on the west side of the river and may be represented archeologically by a scatter of limestone, glass, and metal fragments a short distance downstream from the [upper] crossing. A low earthen mound in the midst of the historic debris is probably related to the complex. A corral supposedly surrounded the [ranch] and a blacksmith shop.[8]

In 1981, a small rubbish heap at the east end of the field on the west side of the river, consisting of a few stones, tree branches, and debris taken from the field, suggested the corral was nearby (Figure 5). In a June 2012 site visit, this rubbish heap was all but removed. The only suggestion of its presence is a small rise in the terrain, though historic scatter was evident in the area surrounding the mound.

George Hodgson homesteaded in Rice County in 1870 near the corral. He called the work "an excellent example of dry masonry,...the walls being so perfectly laid and the sandstone slabs so carefully placed together that little or no light could be seen through any place." Hodgson also recalled that there was a small stone room built into one corner of the corral.[9]

J.W. Bean, whose father had bought the property, saw a portion of the wall in 1880 and described it:

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[7] This large cottonwood, known locally as the "Marker Cottonwood," is located on the east side of the upper crossing. According to a 1993 draft nomination for this property written by The URBANA Group, this marker cottonwood had been core-sampled. The sampling indicated the tree was around 130 years old. Assuming the sampling took place circa 1993, the tree would have started growing in 1863, making it unlikely that this tree served as a marker for the crossing during trail days, though perhaps it did mark the spot for later trail enthusiasts. The tree fell during a storm in the spring of 2012.

[8] Bruce Jones, 29.

[9] Horace Jones, *The Story of Early Rice County* (Wichita: Wichita Eagle Press, 1928), 57-58.

> At that time most of the north wall was still standing erect. It was about eight feet high and perhaps thirty inches thick. The wall was well built with many stones extending through the wall, binding it together. While the ends and the south wall had mostly been removed, the outlines could be plainly seen and to my best recollection the corral was 300 to 400 feet long east and west, or perhaps northeast to southwest, and about 200 feet wide.... The north wall had one or two openings about 10 inches up and town, and two feet long on the inside, tapering to about 10 inches square on the outside.[10]

A gateway at the southeast corner of the corral allowed wagons and livestock to enter.[11]

When settler Aaron Johnson first visited the site, he recalled that none of the original stone had been removed. A man by the name of Cowger owned the corral, according to Johnson, who described Cowger as a "man of rough character and a heavy boozer, who sold a good deal of whiskey...." Cowger lived in a stone house in one corner of the corral.[12]

[10] Rice County Clipping Book, Vol. 2, p. 92, Kansas State Historical Society, State Archives.

[11] *The Blazer*, Windom, Kansas, April 15, 1932, Published by the Lindell Lumber Company of Windom. Available in the Rice County Historical Museum, Lyons, Kansas.

[12] Leland E. Lindell, "The Stone Corral Crossing of the Little River is Historic," news clipping, no date. Available in the Rice County Historical Museum Archives.

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.)

- [x] 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.
- [x] 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.
- [X] 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
Archeology (Historic—Non-aboriginal)

Period of Significance
1821-1866
1929

Significant Dates
1825
1929

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 begins with the initiation of trail traffic by William Becknell in 1821 and ends with the arrival of the railroad in Junction City in 1866, which spelled the end of trail traffic east of Great Bend, as trail traffic then continued southwest from Junction City along the Butterfield Overland Despatch route to Fort Zarah. The period of significance also includes the year the DAR marker was dedicated and installed at the site.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
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.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Little Arkansas River Crossing is nationally significant as part of the *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised multiple property nomination under Criterion A for its association with transportation and commerce along the Santa Fe Trail from 1821 to 1866. Further, this site is significant under Criterion A for its association with the commemoration of the trail by the local Uvedale Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1929. This site is also nationally significant under Criterion D for its potential to yield information about the crossing and documented related resources, including the lower crossing and the stone corral. The swales and marker retain a good degree of integrity in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association required for registration. The Little Arkansas River Crossing 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 The Commemoration and Reuse of the Santa Fe Trail, 1880-1987, as well as The Santa Fe Trail in Kansas.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)[13]

Being on the main route of the Santa Fe Trail, 90 miles west of Council Grove, the Little Arkansas River was crossed by most trail traffic, including military traffic. William Becknell initiated trade with Santa Fe in 1821 and most likely crossed the Little Arkansas River at this site that year. Certainly, though, this crossing was used from the initiation of wagon traffic over the trail in 1822 to the advancement of the railroad to Junction City in 1866. Travelers bound for Santa Fe would take the train to Junction City then continue southwest along the Butterfield Overland Despatch route to Fort Ellsworth, then southwest on a connecting road to Fort Zarah, where they resumed the main trail. This new route from Junction City spelled the end of long-distance trail traffic east of Fort Zarah (near present-day Great Bend). The Little Arkansas, at least at the beginning of the Santa Fe trade, was a fairly reliable source of water, grass, and wood, as Sibley Expedition surveyor Joseph C. Brown noted in his 1825 journal.[14] The natural amenities offered at this site also made it an appropriate camping stop along the trail.

Evidence within the landscape and on historic maps indicates that there were two crossings located within a quarter mile of each other. When approaching the Little Arkansas Crossing, it was common for the caravan's scout(s) to determine which crossing was best to use based on water flow and the weather.[15] The scout would then direct the wagon train to whichever crossing was safest and least difficult to cross at that time. Because the banks of the Little Arkansas were steep, it was important for travelers to monitor the conditions of the banks. Descending into the bottom of the creek when the water was high or the banks were damp or wet would have been difficult and dangerous for the wagons. Because of this, the scouts would lead the travelers to whichever crossing was in the best condition at the time, in order to make crossing as easy as possible.

When weather and river conditions allowed the fording of the river, the caravans would encamp after crossing. The land on both the east and west sides of the Little Arkansas River was used as campground, with the west side being most frequently used. Crossing the channel prior to establishing camp meant that there would be no delay in departing the following day, allowing the wagon train's steady progress of approximately 12 to 15 miles per day.

Although a smaller water channel than the Arkansas River, the Little Arkansas River presented problems to travelers, as evidenced by the abundant first-hand accounts. The first recorded use of the crossing

[13] Much of the following analysis is from an Activity III report written by KSHS Research Historian, Larry Jochims and independent consultant Sondra Van Meter McCoy in March 1981. Report on file with KSHS, Cultural Resources.

[14] William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, Volume 1* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), 97.

[15] Marc Simmons, *Following the Santa Fe Trail: A Guide for Modern Travelers,* 3rd ed. (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 2001), 111.

was by the Sibley Expedition. Joseph C. Brown stated in his 1825 survey report that "it is important that the ford on the Little Arkansas be found, as it is generally impassible on account of high banks and unsound bed. The ford is perhaps half a mile below the mouth of the small creek, which runs into it on the east side."[16] Sibley's map indicates the expedition used the lower crossing (Figure 3). Brevet Major Bennet Riley, during his 1829 escort of the annual caravan—the first military escort on the Santa Fe Trail—commented that the Little Arkansas was ten feet wide with banks 15 feet high and very steep. The military detachment he led shoveled down the banks of the river to make it passable for wagons.[17] However, conditions were not much improved when traveler Josiah Gregg arrived here in the 1830s. In his 1844 book about his travels, *Commerce of the Prairie,* Gregg noted:

> We reached the Little Arkansas, which, although endowed with an imposing name, is only a small creek with a current but five or six yards wide. But, though small, its steep banks and miry bed annoyed us exceedingly in crossing. It is the practice upon the prairies on all such occasions for several men to go in advance with axes, spades, and mattocks and by digging the banks and erecting temporary bridges to have all in readiness by the time the wagons arrive. A bridge over a quagmire is made in a few minutes by cross-laying it with brush (willows are best, but even long grass is often employed as a substitute) and covering it with earth—across which a hundred wagons will often pass in safety."[18]

Military journals from the 1840s saw few compliments for the Little Arkansas Crossing. Marcellus Ball Edwards, a soldier with the Army of the West, wrote on July 5, 1846, "On arriving at the Little Arkansas, I was much surprised to find it a small, muddy stream scarce two feet wide, and in many places dry; and the water that it does contain is very unpalatable."[19] Another member of the Army of the West, John Hughes, wrote, "here the mosquitos and their allies, the black gnat, in swarms, attached to us in the most heroic manner, and annoyed us as much, if not more than the Mexican lancers at a subsequent period."[20]

By the end of the 1850s, the crossing was still "abominable,"[21] and the landscape was no longer a reliable source of water and wood. Augustus Voorhees, a member of the "Lawrence Party" of gold-seekers en route to Pike's Peak in 1858, commented that there was "little timber on the river and but little watter [sic]." William W. Salisbury, en route to gold fields in the west in 1859, also noted the absence of timber and water along the Little Arkansas River. What wood was available was cottonwood and box elder, the choicer timber having been harvested by 40 years' worth of travelers.[22]

Soon after Kansas Territory was opened to settlement in 1854, man-made amenities to accommodate travelers—such as bridges and road ranches—began to be established. The bad reputation of the crossing at the Little Arkansas River may have been the impetus behind the 1858 territorial legislature of Kansas granting E.F. Gregory and associates the privilege of building a bridge there.[23] Though "Lawrence Party" member, William Parsons, mentioned a bridge in the process of erection when he passed this crossing in 1858, Gregory (or whoever was constructing it) had not completed the task by 1859.[24] In February 1859, the territorial

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[16] Louise Barry, "The Ranch at Little Arkansas Crossing," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 38 (Autumn, 1972): 287.

[17] Fred S. Perrine, "Military Escorts of the Santa Fe Trail," *The New Mexico Historical Review* (July 1929): 276.

[18] Josiah Gregg, ed. Milo Milton Quaife, *Commerce of the Prairies* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1926), 44-45.

[19] Abraham Robinson Johnston, Marcellus Ball Edwards, and Phillip Gooch Ferguson, *Marching with the Army of the West 1846-1848,* Ralph P. Bieber, ed. (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936), 126-127, 302.

[20] William E. Connelley, *Doniphan's Expedition and the Conquest of New Mexico and California* (Topeka: Wm. E. Connelley, 1907), 158-159.

[21] William B. Parsons, as quoted in Barry, "Ranch," 288.

[22] Barry, "Ranch," 288.

[23] Kansas Territorial Legislature, fourth session, Chapter XVII in *Private Laws of the Territory of Kansas; Passed at the Fourth Session of the Legislative Assembly* (Lecompton, KT: S.W. Diggs & Co., 1858), 35.

[24] Barry, "Ranch," 288.

legislature passed an act to authorize William T. Williamson and others to build a bridge at the crossing.[25] They retained a 21 year exclusive privilege to the bridge if they completed the project within one year. The legislature set the toll rates as follows: wagon or vehicle, 50¢; each large animal, 10¢; each small animal and person, 5¢; man and horse, 10¢.[26]

Despite the legislature's act, it is a pair by the name of Gains and Wheeler that are credited as the builders of the bridge. In May 1859, gold prospector Charles Post wrote, "The bridge was built last season by Gains & Wheeler, the owners of it and the ranch, twenty-five cent toll and ten gallons of water or twenty-five cents for ten gallons and cross at ferry." Post examined the stone used in the bridge piers, noting that they were of very heavy lime granite. The log and lumber bridge spanned the narrow river on several stone piers. Post's party used the ferry and filled their water kegs "at a spring above one-fourth mile."[27]

A ranch was also mentioned in Post's journal.[28] The earliest known, somewhat permanent resident at the Little Arkansas Crossing was William D. Wheeler, likely the same man who helped build the bridge. Wheeler established a ranch on the west side of the river, but this was preceded by a small trading post, as noted by German traveler H.B. Mollhausen in 1858, "We camped on the right bank near a little log cabin which several adventurers had erected for the purpose of trading with the Kaw Indians."[29] William Parsons also mentioned a trading post there.[30] Wheeler traded whiskey to the Indians for ponies and robes.[31]

By 1861, Wheeler had shifted his focus to accommodating travelers. The Council Grove *Press* mentioned Wheeler in its newspaper of March 16, 1861. He and his neighbor A.I. Beach had come to spend several days in Council Grove, possibly to buy provisions for their respective ranches. Wheeler put the following ad in the *Press*, beginning March 23, 1861 and running through July 20, 1861:

LITTLE ARKANSAS RANCHE [sic]
The traveling Public are respectfully informed, that the undersigned is located on the Little Arkansas, where the great Santa Fe road crosses the same. I keep always on Hand,
PROVISIONS, GROCERIES AND LIQUORS
Also are prepared to accommodate travelers. I have several large corrals for penning stock. Also, have built a strong and substantial bridge across the Little Arkansas, for the accommodation of the traveling public. W.D. Wheeler.

Although no specific proof has been found, it is possible that William Wheeler, with the help of other men, constructed the stone corral that existed on the site of his ranch perhaps as early as 1859. Wheeler's advertisement of having corrals and plenty of animals on hand certainly indicated a capacity to handle all the livestock. Travel on the trail was particularly heavy in the late 1850s and until the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad reached Junction City in 1866. Large corrals for livestock would be welcomed by travelers. Also, a drought lasting from the fall of 1859 to the spring of 1861 provided excellent conditions for hauling the heavy stone overland from a quarry one mile away.

From 1861 to 1864, Wheeler is documented as still being at the Little Arkansas Crossing. The *Press* of May 26, 1861 reported: "our esteemed friend Wm. Wheeler of Wheeler's Ranche, Little Arkansas, reports all quiet on the plains.... The proprietor keeps always on hand, ponies, horses, cattle, mules, and other live stock

[25] Kansas Territorial Legislature, fifth session, "Chapter III: Act to authorize William T. Williamson and others to build a bridge across Little Arkansas River" in *Private Laws of the Territory of Kansas; Passed at the Fifth Session of the Legislative Assembly* (Lawrence, KT: Herald of Freedom Steam Press, 1859), 15-16.
[26] Kansas Territorial Legislature, fifth session, 15-16.
[27] Barry, "Ranch," 289.
[28] Ibid.
[29] H.B. Mollhausen, "Over the Santa Fe Trail Through Kansas in 1858," John A. Burzle, translator, *The Kansas Historical Quarterly* 16 (November 1948): 369.
[30] Barry, "Ranch," 288.
[31] Ibid.

[sic] to sell; besides the weary traveler can be entertained to heart's content...." Wheeler was mentioned again in the July 6, 1863 issue of the *Press*: "Poisoned—We learn that W.D. Wheeler and all his hands, at the Little Arkansas, where he has a Ranche and store, have been very sick. Supposed to be poison thrown into his well." Wheeler survived and was not mentioned again until May 28, 1864, when the newspaper reported Indian troubles at Charlie Rath's ranch on Walnut Creek. Because no news came in from Wheeler, the *Press* assumed all was safe with them. However, Wheeler was not mentioned after May 1864. He may have left because of increasing hostilities with American Indians and/or because of the establishment of Station Little Arkansas.

The military post, Station Little Arkansas was established at the crossing in 1865 as a result of the increased hostilities.[32] Late in April 1865, the Little Arkansas Crossing received Captain Theodore Conkey and Company G, Third Wisconsin Cavalry. Shortly after arrival, Captain Carter Berkeley was ordered from Fort Zarah, west of the Little Arkansas, to command the station. In early May 1865, approximately 93 men were based at the camp, most of them from the 2nd U.S. Volunteer Infantry. June 30, 1865 post returns (military correspondence) show that the officer in charge was Captain J.C. Shelley of the 13th Missouri Cavalry. In all there were 185 enlisted men and five officers from the 13th Missouri Cavalry and the 2nd U.S. Volunteer Infantry, along with 145 serviceable horses.[33]

The reason for the establishment of this post at the Little Arkansas River was likely two-fold. "The Little Arkansas River was considered the place to begin keeping a careful eye out" for hostile American Indians, as Santa Fe Trail historian Leo Oliva wrote in his *Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail*.[34] Further, the presence of a corral that could contain 145 horses was advantageous. Though corrals were documented at Wheeler's Ranch, it is possible that the stone corral was constructed or enlarged by the soldiers stationed at Station Little Arkansas from 1865 to 1867.

The year 1866 is conspicuously absent of military records for Station Little Arkansas. A likely reason is the removal of troops from the Little Arkansas in late 1865 as a result of the temporary abatement of hostilities between the traders and settlers and the American Indians due to peace talks and the signing of treaties from August to October 1865.

Post returns show that soldiers were again stationed at this site in 1867. At this time, the camp was called Camp Grierson in honor of Brevet Major General B.H. Grierson, U.S. Volunteers, who had been assigned to the general command of all the cavalry of the West Mississippi military division in 1865. Camp Grierson, in 1867, was commanded by Captain Edward Byrne, 10th Cavalry. He, another officer, and 67 enlisted men abandoned the camp on November 10, 1867 in compliance with special orders from the District of Kansas headquarters.[35] The abandonment of the camp most likely corresponded to the abandonment of the section of the Santa Fe Trail east of Great Bend when the UPED reached Junction City in 1866 and the decrease of hostilities between settlers and American Indians in this part of Kansas.

After the Trail

After Camp Grierson was abandoned in 1867, the property surrounding the Little Arkansas River Crossing saw a number of residents. Anyone living at the stone corral before 1870 did so without benefit of official ownership since the county was not organized until August 18, 1871. Before that time the land belonged to the State of Kansas, who gave it to the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railroad in November 1870. The first person to officially settle at the stone corral site was W.A.C. Bean in the 1870s. When he first moved there, he

[32] For more information on Camp Grierson/Station Little Arkansas, see The URBANA Group, *Station Little Arkansas*, National Register of Historic Places nomination, May 1993. Station Little Arkansas was listed in the National Register on May 11, 1995.

[33] Barry, "Ranch," 292.

[34] Leo E. Oliva, *Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 16.

[35] Post Returns, Camp Grierson, November 10, 1867. (On microfilm in ms. Box 680, Kansas State Historical Society).

lived in the stone corral for several months. Even then there was considerable travel over the old Santa Fe Trail by land seekers. Bean recalled that "during his occupancy there was seldom a night when from eight to as high as thirty wagons did not camp in the enclosure."[36]

E. Pierce of Saxman, a community just west of the stone corral, who carried mail between Lindsborg and Hutchinson by way of the stone corral in 1872 and 1873, said that at that time there were no trees or shrubs within a mile of the corral. The wood had been cut by travelers and soldiers for various uses.[37]

The stone corral was in fair condition in 1871.[38] However, when W.A.C. Bean moved there in the early 1870s, he began selling stone from the walls to the school district to build a school a mile to the south. He also sold stone to construct the railroad roundhouse at Nickerson, Kansas. Farmers nearby used stone to line water wells. As a result, within just a few years, nearly all of the stone was gone from the site, and the bottom land cleared and leveled for crops.

Thirty years after the closing of the Santa Fe Trail, Mrs. Fannie Geiger Thompson, State Regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), suggested that the trail be marked. In total, the Kansas Society DAR and the State of Kansas placed 96 markers throughout the state between 1906 and 1914. The DAR placed one along the trail in the NE/4 of Section 23, Township 20 South, Range 6 West, approximately ¾ mile west of the Stone Corral and Lower Arkansas Crossing.

In 1929, the Uvedale (Hutchinson) and Sterling chapters of the Kansas Society DAR decided to erect two markers at the Little Arkansas Crossing site. The Uvedale Chapter's marker was to be placed at the Upper Crossing; the Sterling Chapter's marker was to be placed to the west of the stone corral site where remnants of the trail leading from the Upper Crossing met the county road.[39] The *Little River Monitor* from Thursday May 30, 1929 informed its readers that the unveiling would occur on "the Bean farm, Saturday afternoon, June 1st, at 3 o'clock."[40] The *Lyon's Daily News*, however, indicated on Saturday June 1st that due to heavy rains and flooding, the dedication would be postponed. Throughout the summer of 1929, columns were included in the *Lyons Daily News* that explained the history of the site. However, the local papers made no mention of when the dedication might take place. Finally, on October 11, 1929, the *Lyons Daily News* reported, "After several attempts which failed, last summer, because of high waters, Santa Fe trail markers at the Little Arkansas river crossing will be formally dedicated Saturday afternoon, October 19."[41] Though the weather appeared to be wet on the 19th, the ceremony presumably still occurred. The program, which took place at the Upper Crossing marker, was outlined by *The Hutchinson Herald*:

> Bugler at [Crossing] marker, answered by Bugler at Sterling marker / Songs: Kansas. / Song of the Kansas Emigrant, Quartet. / Salute of the Flag, led by Miss Nelle Hoagland. / Invocation, Chapter chaplain. / America—Sung by all as marker is unveiled by Virginia Pettibon and Mabel Louise Whitford. Remarks—Regent, Mrs. W.S. Kerr / Address—John S. Simmons. / Placing of Copper Box in foundation—Mrs. A.M. Ward, assisted by Betty Brownlee and Billy Brownlee. / Placing of Wreath—Miss Lucile Albright. / Star Spangled Banner, by all. / Taps—Mr. J. Weiss.[42]

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[36] *The Blazer* 1 (May 2, 1932).
[37] Ibid.
[38] Mr. Dan Bell as quoted in Mrs. T.A. [Almira] Cordry, *The Story of the Marking of the Santa Fe Trail* (Topeka: Crane & Co., 1915), 119.
[39] *Lyons Daily News* (June 4, 1929): 4. These swales are no longer extant.
[40] "Will Unveil Old Santa Fe Trail Markers, Saturday June 1," *Little River Monitor* (May 30, 1929): 1.
[41] "To Dedicate Markers," *Lyons Daily News* (October 11, 1929): 1.
[42] "Granite Markers to Be Dedicated," *The Hutchinson Herald* (October 19, 1929): 7. The *Lyons Daily News* from October 11, 1929 also mentioned the program order. The only difference is that the address was to be given by Senator E.E. Frizzell not John S. Simmons. Senator Frizzell was also listed as the speaker in the spring papers, making it most likely that the *Daily* simply copied the old article.

Archeological Potential

The known history of this site as it relates to the Santa Fe Trail has inspired several archeological investigations to determine the extent of cultural material extant at the site. The earliest investigation was in 1976-1977 by the Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS). This investigation identified features including "the remains of a small cemetery, a short system of apparently military trenches, a large stone corral, a trading post, a series of dugout structures along the river bank, and trail ruts in the vicinity of a stone rubble low water crossing of the river."[43] (Figure 4)

The military trenches and cemetery, located to the south of Avenue P, were considered the best preserved features of the archeological site by KSHS archeologist Bruce Jones and subsequent archeologists. In May 1993, The URBANA Group prepared a National Register nomination for these features, and the site was listed in the National Register in May 1995 as Station Little Arkansas.

Not included in the nomination for Station Little Arkansas was the northernmost (or upper) crossing of the Little Arkansas River. This crossing site was also identified by Jones, et al. A site visit by KSHS staff in June 2012 confirmed the remains of the northernmost (or upper) crossing of the Little Arkansas River.

The boundaries of the Little Arkansas River Crossing site are drawn to incorporate the known crossing site, as well as the area within which other archeological features associated with the crossing are located. Jones explained in his 1977 report of his investigation, "The exact temporal and spatial relationship of these features is not yet clear due to the fact that all but the cemetery and trenches have apparently been either scavenged for building material, adversely affected by farming practices, or at least partially eroded by the river."[44] This site has the potential to yield information which will enlighten the relationship of the two crossing sites with the stone corral, Station Little Arkansas, and Wheeler's trading post/road ranch. This site also has the potential to yield material evidence related to the toll bridge that was known to be in place. The 1977 land owner identified possible bridge piers that subsequent investigations have not been able to pinpoint due to weather conditions and/or overgrowth (Figure 6).

Summary

The crossing remained in use as part of the Santa Fe Trail from 1821 to 1866, when the arrival of the railroad in Junction City ended long-distance travel along this road east of Fort Zarah. The site itself holds a substantial amount of history due to the volume of travelers that utilized this crossing over the years. Both the natural features and some man-made features are still in existence, including the DAR marker.

[43] Bruce Jones, 23.
[44] Ibid., 23-24.

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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 # _____
___recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___Other State agency
___Federal agency
___Local government
___University
___Other
Name of repository: **Kansas State Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): n/a

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 38.20 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates **See attached map.**
Datum = WGS84

A	38.310457	-97.940614		C	38.310364	-97.940021	
	Latitude	Longitude			Latitude	Longitude	
B	38.304335	-97.938649		D	38.30953	-97.940433	
	Latitude	Longitude			Latitude	Longitude	

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
This 38.20-linear site in the SW1/4 of Section 13, Township 20 South, Range 6 West is centered around the Little Arkansas River. The southern boundary is the right-of-way for Avenue P. The northern boundary is created by a 50-meter (164-foot) buffer north of the upper crossing. The east and west boundaries parallel the river, 50 meters (164 feet) beyond the tree lines lining the channel.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The boundaries for this site incorporate the known location of the Upper Crossing, as well as the probable location of the Lower Crossing and Stone Corral Site.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title KSHS Staff

organization Kansas Historical Society date August 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:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

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

Name of Property: Little Arkansas River Crossing
City or Vicinity: Windom vicinity
County, State: Rice County, Kansas
Photographer: John Barry
Date Photographed: 29 June 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 12. Upper Crossing. Looking E, showing swale/cutdown leading to river (person is standing in it).
2 of 12. Uvedale Chapter DAR marker.
3 of 12. Upper Crossing. Standing on west bank of river, looking SE at river, showing location of rocks.
4 of 12. Upper Crossing. Looking NE toward probable location of east side of crossing.
5 of 12. Upper Crossing. Looking SSE at east bank.
6 of 12. Upper Crossing. Looking south at fallen Marker Cottonwood.
7 of 12. Upper Crossing. On east bank, looking SW across river to probable location of crossing on west bank.
8 of 12. Upper Crossing. On east bank, looking SW across river toward probable location of crossing on west.
9 of 12. Upper Crossing. Looking NE at swale to NE of Marker Cottonwood.
10 of 12. Upper Crossing. Looking SW along swale; Marker Cottonwood in background.
11 of 12. Stone Corral Site. Looking east toward location of lower crossing at area of corral.
12 of 12. Lower Crossing. Standing on west bank of Little Arkansas, looking north at trees and condition of crossing area (no visible evidence of crossing).

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name On file with SHPO.

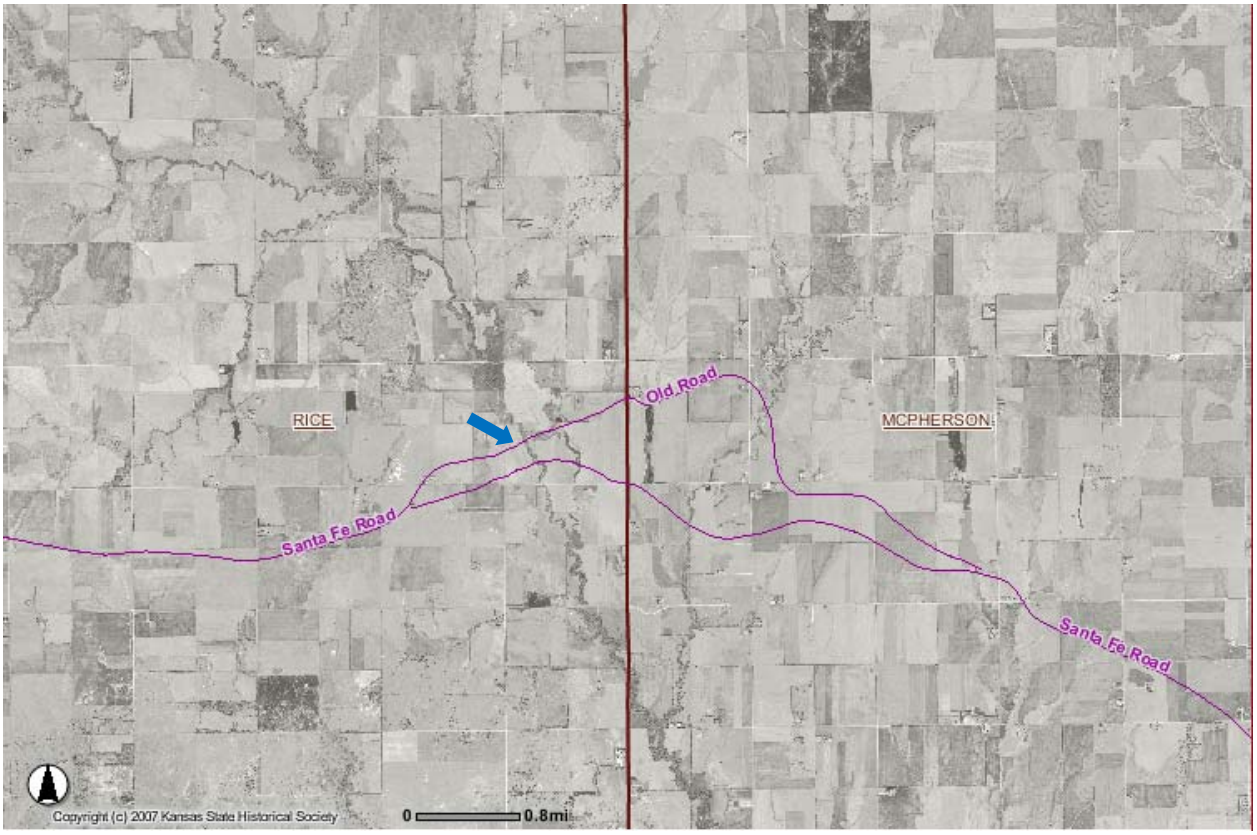
street & number _____ telephone _____

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.).

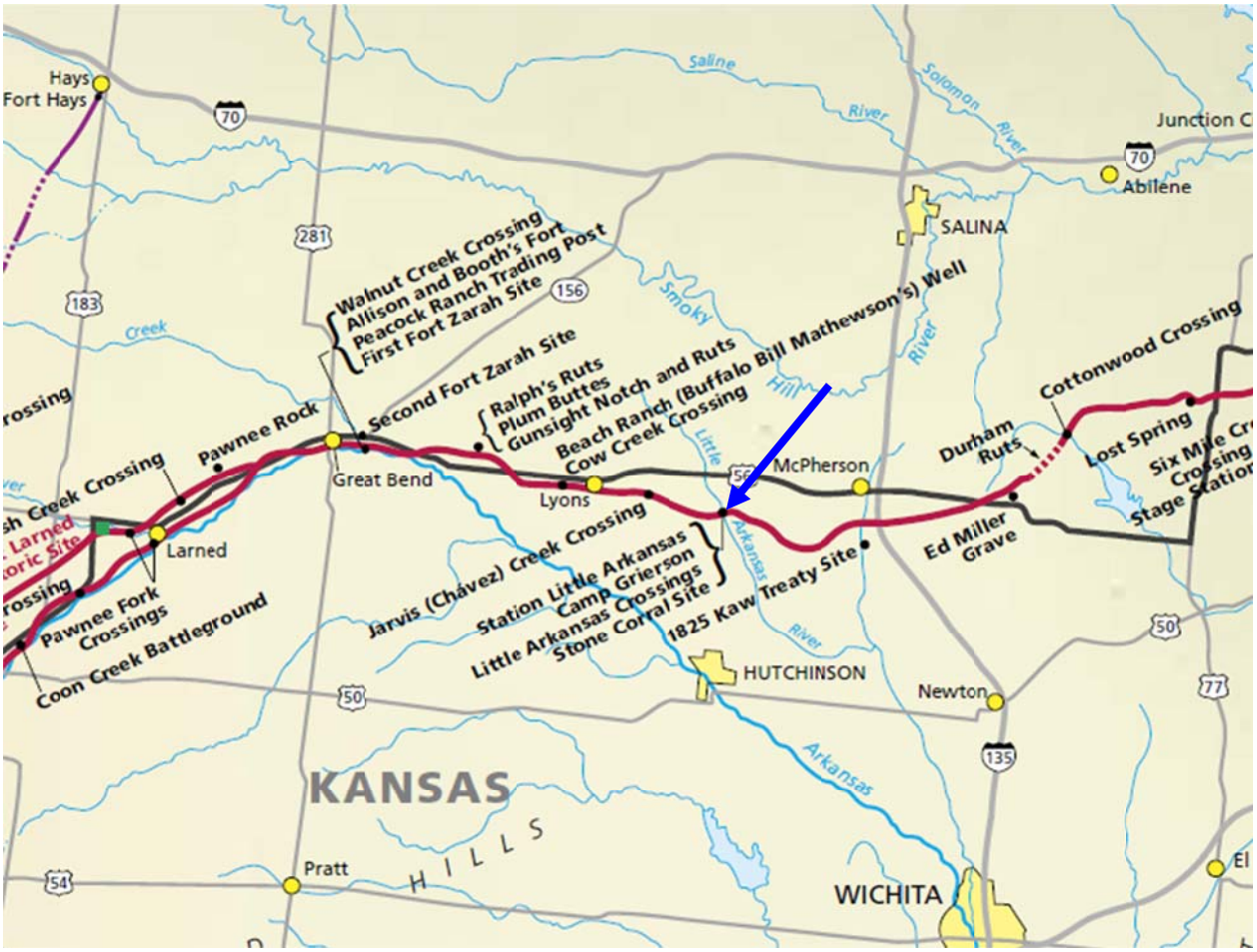
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Figure 1.



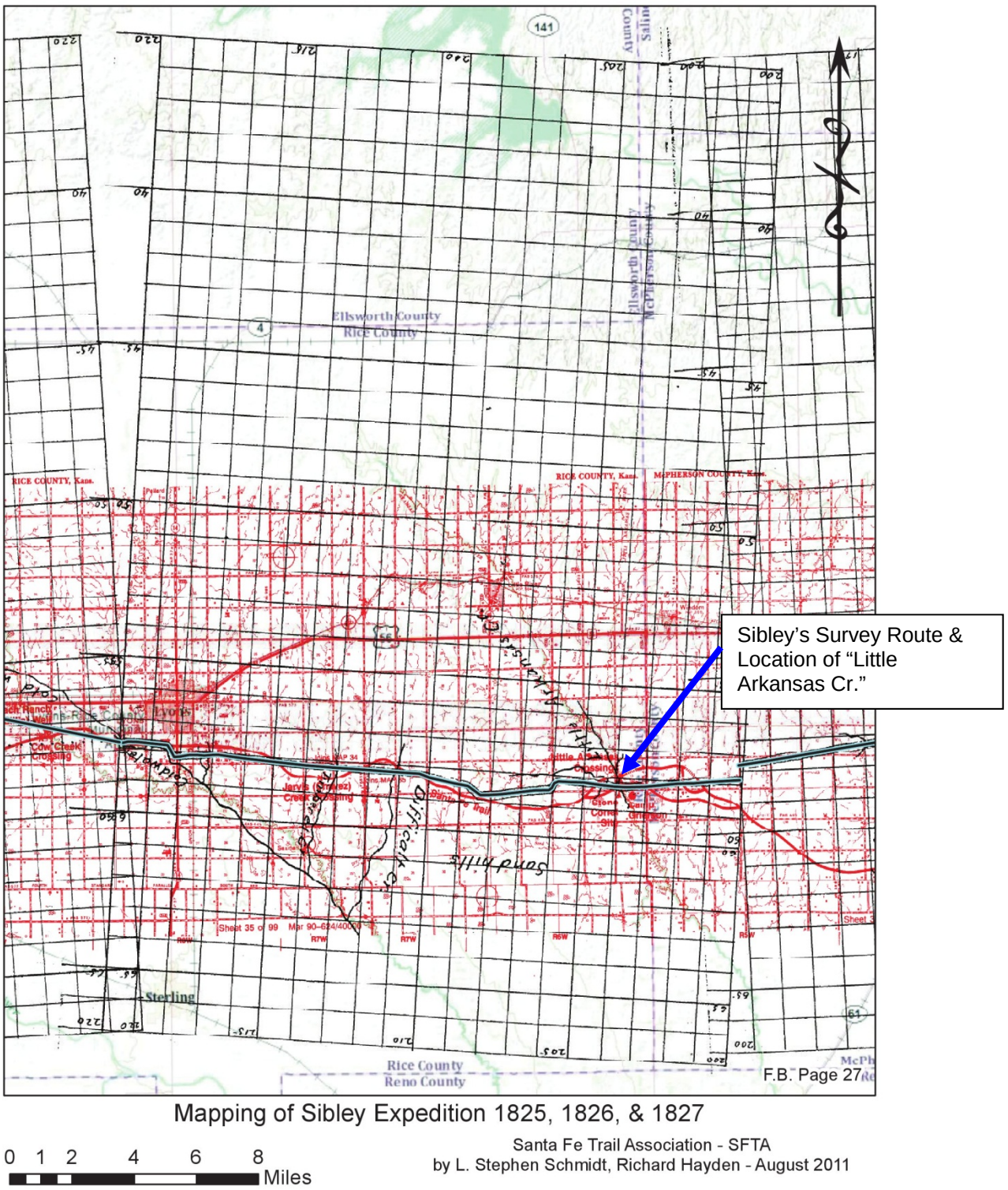
Little Arkansas Upper Crossing
1866 GLO Survey lines. Arrow is pointing to location of Upper Crossing.
Kansas Historical Society Archeological Inventory map.

Figure 2.



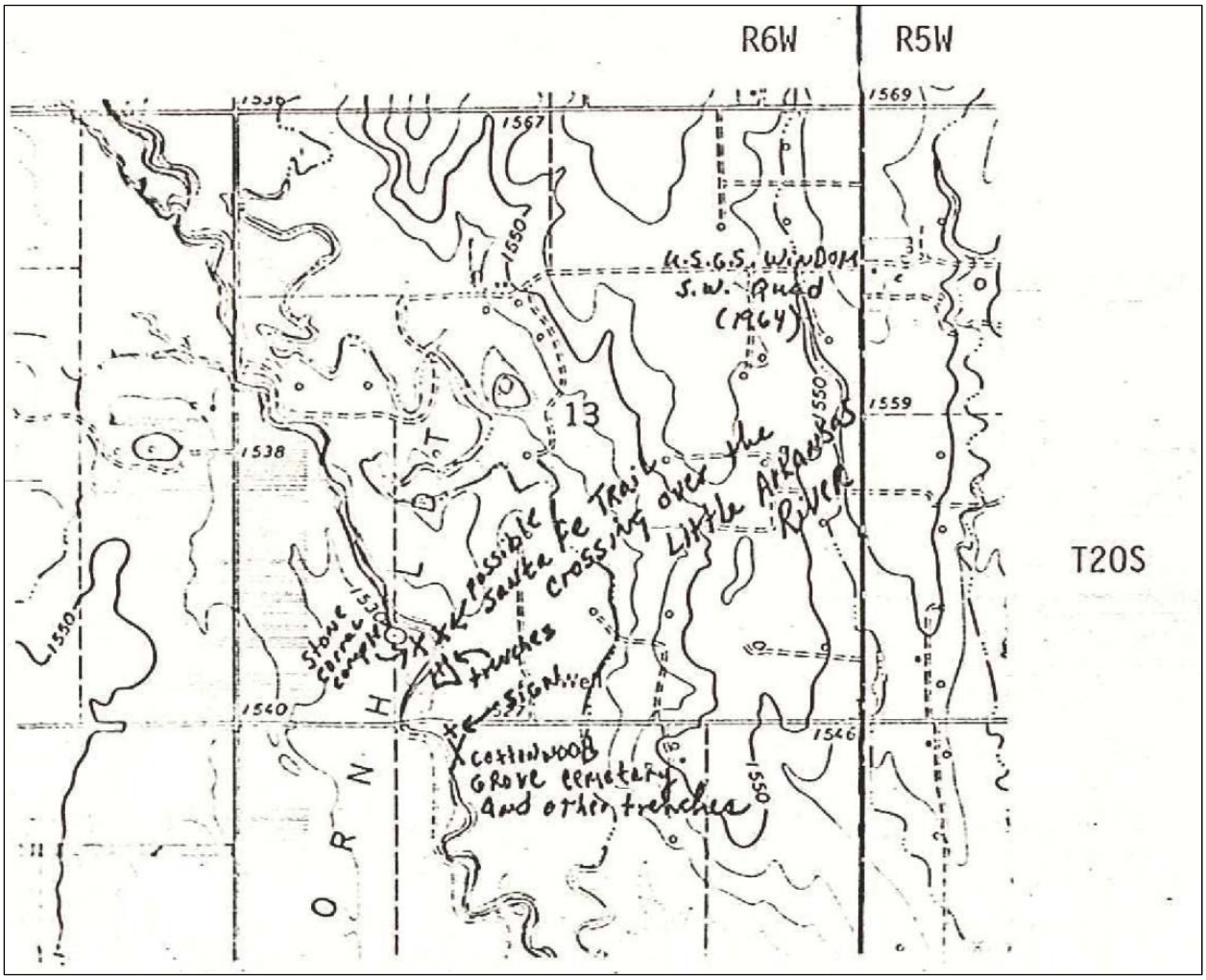
Santa Fe National Historic Trail brochure, National Park Service Official Map and Guide.
Arrow indicates location of site.

Figure 3.



L. Stephen Schmidt and Richard Hayden, "Field Book Page 27," in "Appendix G: Plots of the Survey Route on Modern Maps," *The Survey and Maps of the Sibley Expedition 1825, 1826, & 1827*, Santa Fe Trail Association Grant Report, August 2011[electronic copy on-line]; available from *Santa Fe Trail Association Online*, <http://www.santafetrail.org/about-us/scholarly-research/sibley-survey/Appendix_G.pdf> (accessed 4 December 2012). Schmidt & Hayden overlaid Brown's survey maps onto modern road maps.

Figure 4.

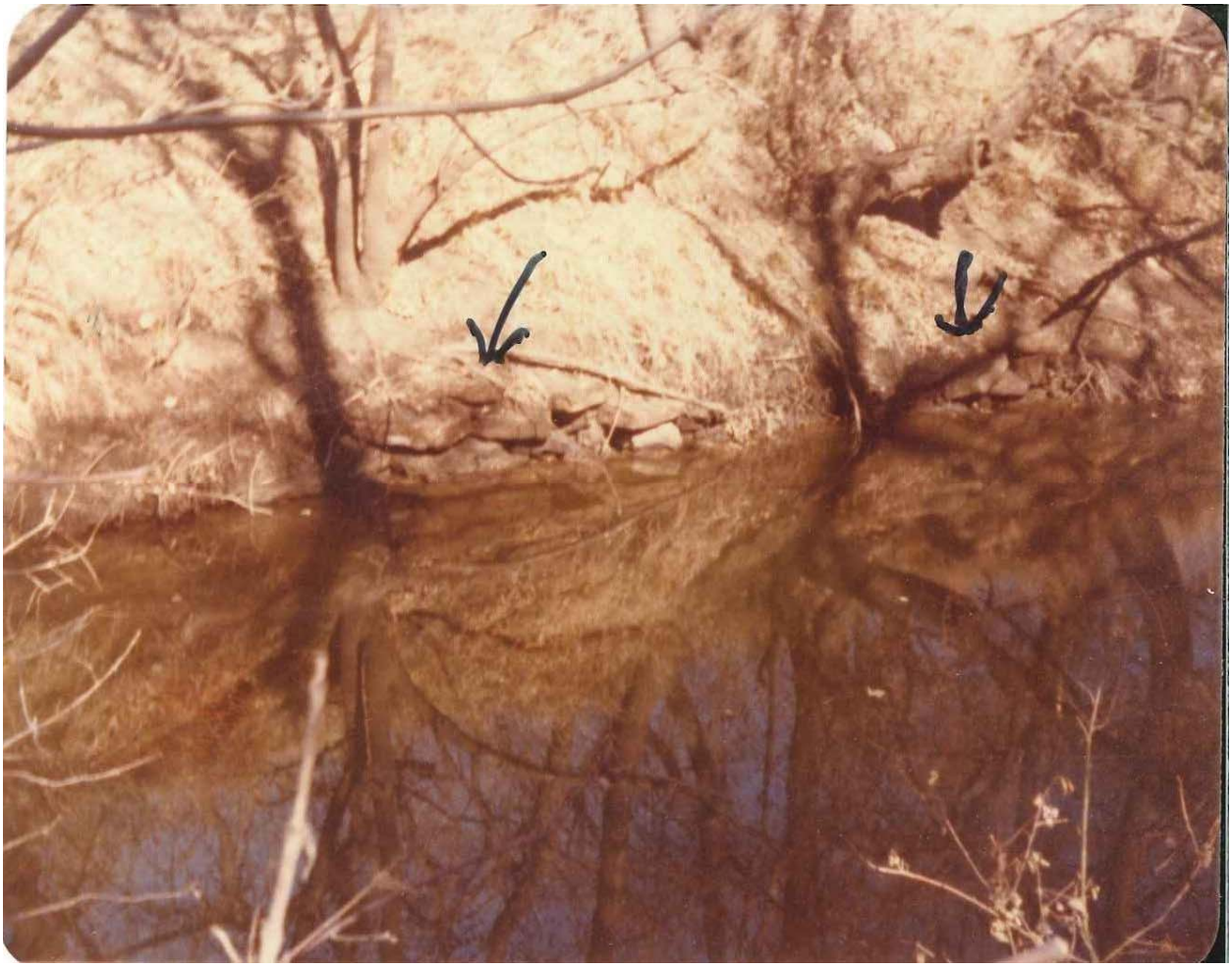


Approximate locations of resources associated with the Little Arkansas River Crossing.
Source: William T. Brogan, *Phase II Archeological Field Survey Investigations of Secondary Road Projects 80-SOS-534(1) and 80-RS-1288(4), Rice County, Kansas* (Topeka: Archeology Department, Kansas State Historical Society, 1981), 5. Copy on file with the Kansas Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division.

Figure 5.

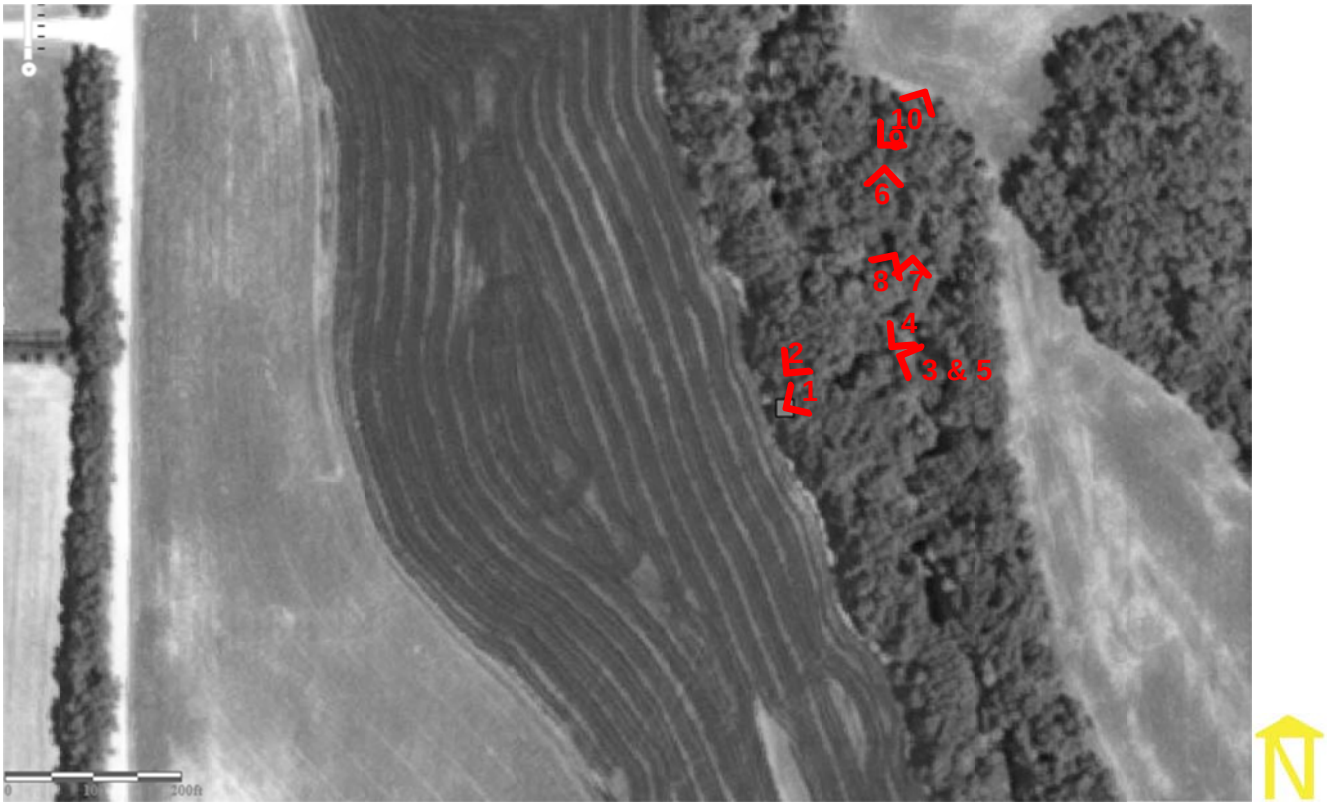
Mound containing rocks and field debris. Located approximately 200 feet northwest of Avenue P. Looking northwest.
Stone Corral located on or near this mound.
Larry Jochims, 1981.

Figure 6.

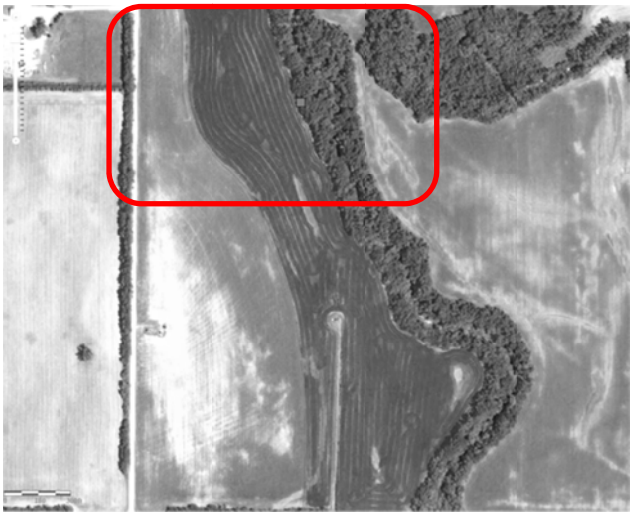


Possible stone abutments from toll bridge.
Robert S. Gray, 1977.
Photo is in site file 14RC304, on file with the Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division.

Photograph Key (Upper Crossing Area).



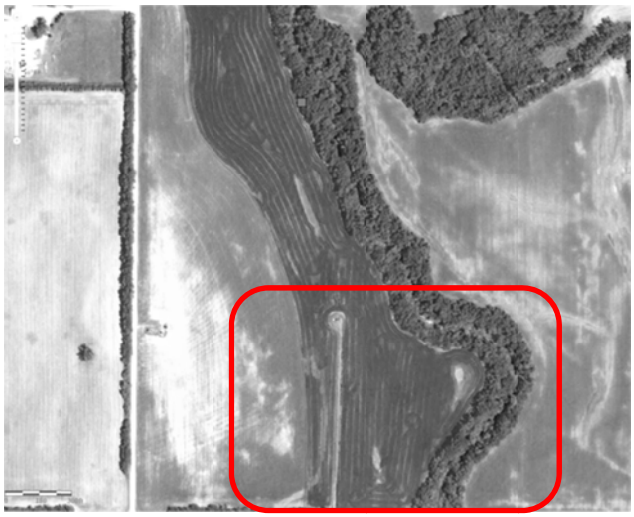
Numbers correspond with photographs.



Area in box is represented in image above.

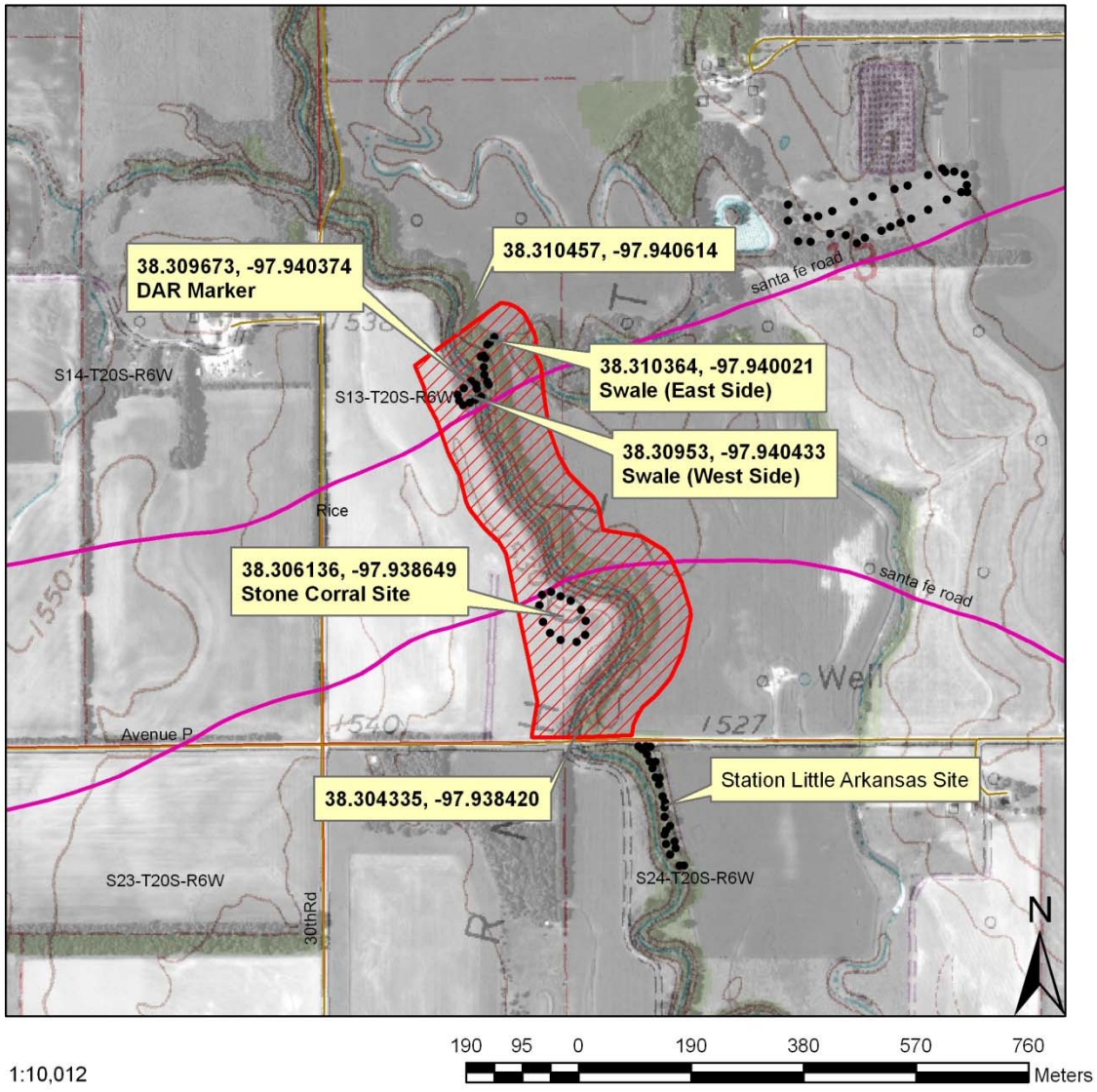
Photograph Key (Stone Corral and Lower Crossing Area)

Numbers correspond with photographs.



Area in box is represented in image above.

Boundary Map.



Little Arkansas Crossings on the Santa Fe Trail
Windom vicinity, Rice County, Kansas

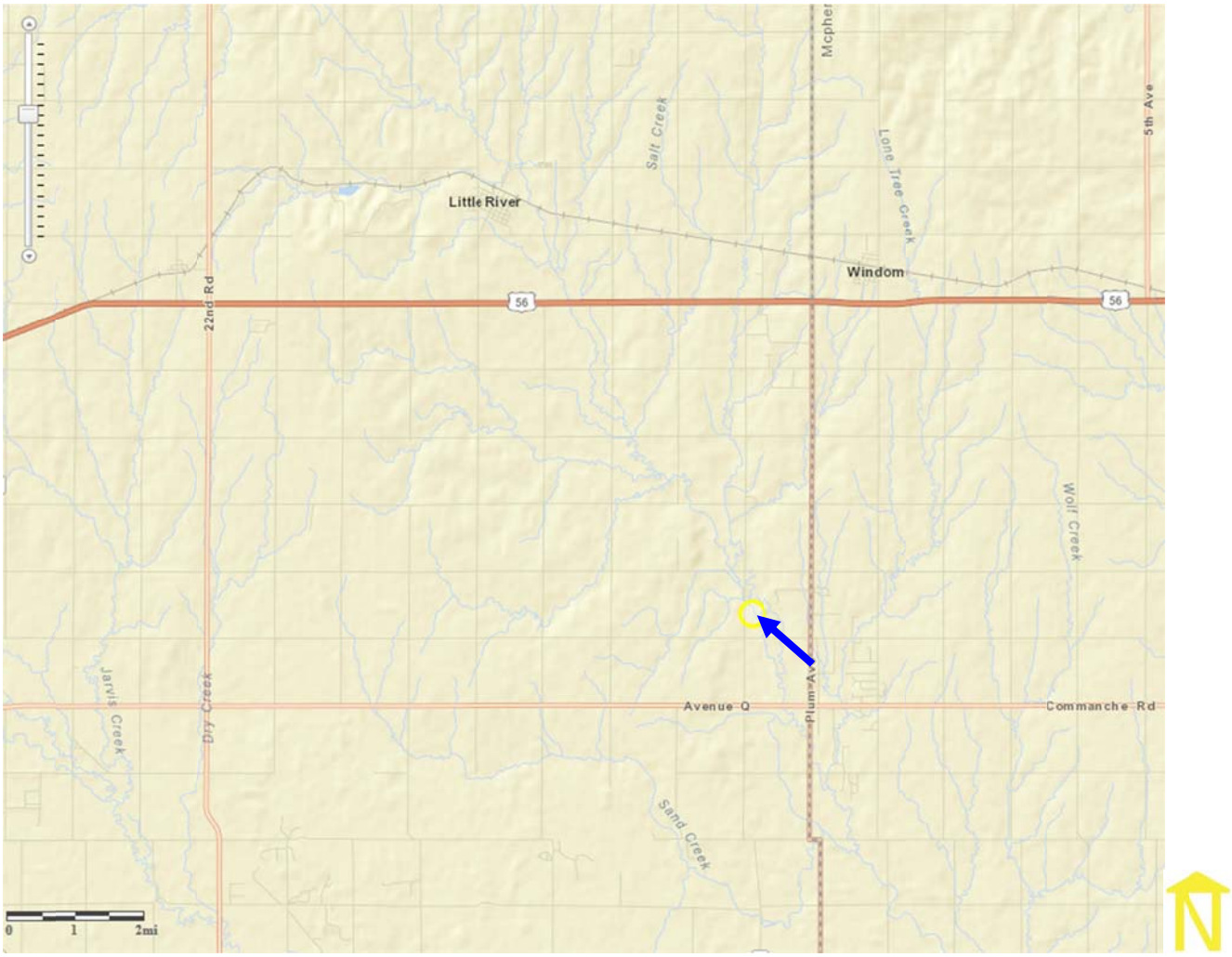
Boundary is within hatched area on either side of the Little Arkansas River.
Boundary extends 50m (164ft) beyond the treeline on either side of the river.
Black dots are locations of GPS coordinates taken during site visit.

1866 GLO survey lines run through this site.

Site Coordinates Datum = WGS84

Total area: 38.20 acres (0.15 sqkm)

Contextual Map.



SANTA FE TRAIL
PIONEERS
CROSSED THIS FORD
FROM 1822 TO 1872
ERECTED BY
UVEDALE CHAPTER
DAUGHTERS
OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION
HUTCHINSON KANS
1929