

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register Listed
July 17, 2013

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 Finney County Point of Rocks
other names/site number Archeological Site #14FY405, KHRI #055-1957

2. Location

street & number Mansfield Road

X

 not for publication
city or town Pierceville vicinity
state Kansas code KS county Finney code 055 zip code 67868

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

See File

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:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

5. Classification

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

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

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail (2012)

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

AGRICULTURAL/agricultural field

LANDSCAPE/natural feature

LANDSCAPE/natural feature

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

foundation: N/A

walls: N/A

N/A

roof: N/A

other: N/A

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Finney County Point of Rocks (14FY405) is located 4.8 kilometers (3 miles) northwest of Pierceville, Finney County in southwestern Kansas. The natural rock formation acted as a navigational aid for Santa Fe Trail traffic and is a good example of a Transportation Site property type, as defined in the *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised multiple property nomination. The nominated site is located within a vast rock outcropping that parallels the Arkansas River, approximately 1/2 mile to the south; that portion of the rock in sections 3, 4, 9, & 10 of Township 25 South, Range 31 West are included in this nomination because they are the highest along Mansfield Road, which is located along the surveyed route of the Santa Fe Trail. This site contains 304.79 acres.

Narrative Description

Finney County Point of Rocks is located along an approximately 85-mile stretch of the trail between the Lower and Upper crossings of the Arkansas River (Figure 1). At this location in Finney County, the trail paralleled the north bank of the Arkansas River.

General Landscape¹

The nominated site is located at the southern edge of the High Plains section of the Great Plains province of the Interior Plains division of North America where it meets the Arkansas River Lowlands section of the Central Lowland province of the Interior Plains of North America.² The High Plains section consists of a relatively featureless plain that covers most of the western quarter of the state and extends in a peninsula-like projection into south central Kansas as far as Kingman and Reno counties. Although heavily dissected along its eastern periphery, the High Plains is essentially a plateau with broad reaches of flat uplands and poorly developed surface drainage. The major river valleys – mainly the Smoky Hill, Arkansas, and Cimarron – are broad and have gentle side slopes, which extend downward to relatively narrow flats. Minor valleys are also present, often in the form of short, steep-sided, narrow canyons leading into the larger river valleys, and numerous shallow depressions or basins of various shapes and sizes can be found scattered throughout the uplands. Overall, however, the landscape is one of "phenomenal flatness and uniformity."³ Geologically, the High Plains consist of Pleistocene-aged loess (wind-blown silt deposits) overlying the sands and gravels of the widespread Ogallala formation. The loess ranges up to 100 feet or more in thickness; nevertheless, it is only a surface veneer in comparison to the massive and much thicker Ogallala formation, which underlies it. Because of the loess, surface exposures of the Ogallala are confined to dissected or otherwise eroded areas, mainly along the edges of the major stream courses. In those locations, seeps and springs are common.

The natural vegetation of the High Plains consists of a vast expanse of prairie cut through by narrow, discontinuous ribbons of riverine forest. The potential natural vegetation of the region includes short grass prairie and floodplain forest or savanna.⁴ The prairie contains a growth of blue grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) and buffalograss (*Buchloë dactyloides*) along with a few other grasses and forbs. The forbs are most common in the southern part of the state.

Point of Rocks

Finney County Point of Rocks is an example of a Transportation Site (Navigational Aid subtype), as defined in the revised multiple property nomination. The nominated site is part of a vast hard caliche bluff running in a northwest-southeast orientation, overlooking the Arkansas River to the southwest. The bluff rises

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): 280, 292-296, 311-330.

³ Waldo R. Wedel, "An Introduction to Kansas Archeology," *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (1959): 8.

⁴ A.W. Kuchler, "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas," *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 586-604.

from an elevation of 845.8 meters (2775 feet) at the southern boundary to an elevation of 868.7 meters (2850 feet) generally along the northern boundary of the site. In his 16 October 1988 site report, retired Kansas State Historical Society archeologist, Randy Thies, explains that part of the formation contains a small cave just large enough to accommodate three to four people, though it is not tall enough to allow standing.

The area surrounding Point of Rocks is agricultural. To the north, east, and west is pasture. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (ATSF) Railroad, which is in use now as the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), cuts through the southern portion of the rock outcropping through sections 9 and 10 between the rock outcropping and Mansfield Road. Across Mansfield Road to the south is that Arkansas River and cultivated fields. The only other visual interruption to the setting includes power transmission towers, which also parallel the river and are installed on top of Point of Rocks.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with the initiation of trail traffic over this segment in 1821 and ends with the abandonment of this section of the trail by March 1870 when the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad (Kansas Pacific) reached Kit Carson, Colorado.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation _____

Commerce _____

Period of Significance

1821-1870 _____

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

N/A _____

Statement of Significance

Summary

Finney County Point of Rocks is one of at least four similarly named sites along the Santa Fe Trail network that aided travelers in their navigation of the road. The trail passed to the immediate south of this formation and became the foundation for modern-day Mansfield Road; the ATSF (now BNSF) Railroad, generally following the Mountain Route of the trail throughout western Kansas, is located between Mansfield Road and Point of Rocks. Because of its navigational role, Finney County Point of Rocks is nationally significant as a historic resource of the Santa Fe Trail under Criterion A for its association with the transportation and commerce along the trail from 1821 to 1870. The natural feature retains a good degree of integrity in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association required for registration. The site 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 Civil War and the Santa Fe Trail, 1861-1865; and The Santa Fe Trail and the Railroad, 1865-1880, as well as the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Traffic along the 1200-mile Santa Fe Trail followed various minor routes to and from Santa Fe that were part of either the Cimarron or Mountain routes.⁵ Finney County Point of Rocks is located on a stretch of the trail that connected the Lower and Upper Arkansas River crossings. The Upper Arkansas River Crossing was the last major opportunity to decide between the Cimarron and Mountain routes; thus, travelers who passed this rock formation included those going to Lower Cimarron Spring via the Upper Arkansas River Crossing (Cimarron Route) and those going to Bent's Fort in Colorado (Mountain Route).

Finney County Point of Rocks is one of at least four similarly named sites along the Santa Fe Trail. The formation near Springer, New Mexico, listed in the National Register in 1994, is probably the most well-known of the four. This outcropping is mentioned in several itineraries.⁶ Another Point of Rocks formation was located on the north side of US-50 Highway, 2.3 miles west of Dodge City, Ford County, Kansas, until a road-widening project in 1931 destroyed it. The fourth known Point of Rocks is located 7 miles northwest of Elkhart within the Cimarron National Grassland in Morton County, Kansas. This formation helped travelers along the Cimarron Route find their way to Middle Spring, one of the few reliable water sources in that area. Each of these Points of Rocks aided travelers as they navigated along the Santa Fe Trail.

William Becknell initiated travel to Santa Fe in 1821. In Kansas, his expedition generally followed what later became the Mountain Route, so most likely he would have passed this site on his way to New Mexico. The first recorded travelers to pass Finney County Point of Rocks were George Sibley and Joseph Brown during their 1825 survey of the trail. Though neither recorded this site, Brown's map indicates they did travel this section of the trail (Figure 2).

The name Point of Rocks occurs in no known references to this site along the Arkansas. The known references, however, are to what became known as Pawnee Fort(s). One of the earliest mentions of Pawnee Forts occurred in the 1850 memoir of Lewis Gerrard, who in 1846 at the age of 17 joined a caravan to Santa Fe via the Mountain Route.⁷ According to Gerrard, his party passed "Pawnee Forts; a grove of timber in which a war party of Pawnees some years before fortified themselves when besieged by a hostile tribe. Nothing now remains but a few crumbling logs to mark the sight of this Indian bulwark."⁸ Santa Fe Trail historian Stanley

⁵ William G. Buckles, "The Santa Fe Trail System," *Journal of the West* 28 (April 1989): 79; Otis E. Young, "Military Protection of the Santa Fe Trail and Trade," *Missouri Historical Review* Vol. XLIX (October 1954): 20.

⁶ See the Appendices in the *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* multiple property document for a few examples.

⁷ Lewis H. Garrard, *Wah-To-Yah & The Taos Trail* (Palo Alto, California: American West Publishing Co., 1968), introduction.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

Vestal explains this crude “fort” was built by the group of Pawnee in order to take refuge from a group of Cheyenne or Comanche during a siege in the early 19th century.⁹ On 22 July 1846 Col. Stephen Watts Kearny and the Army of the West passed “Pawnee Fort, an old decayed stockade” after camping near the Caches in Ford County.¹⁰ William Salisbury, a young gold-seeker from Ohio, also mentioned this site in his diary entry from Saturday 28 May 1859:

We were on our road at the usual time this morning. [N]othing occurred of any account. [I]t is clear and pleasant. [F]ound road very good except some sandy hills. Came to Pawney [sic] fort about 3 ock P M Saw up under the shelving rocks [Point of Rocks] where an Indian had been buried and had been dug up by the Woolves.¹¹

Further, Maj. Wickcliffe Cooper was commanded by Gen. Winfield Hancock to “Patrol the roads – westward as far as the Pawnee Forts....” in April 1867.¹²

Late 20th century Santa Fe Trail historian Gregory Franzwa places Pawnee Forts across Mansfield Road from Point of Rocks.¹³ His estimation is likely based on published itineraries from the trail-period. According to Dr. John Locke and W. Wrightson’s 1864 itinerary, Pawnee Forts was located roughly 38 miles west of Fort Mackey (which later became Fort Atkinson) and 39 miles east of Chouteau’s Island.¹⁴ Similarly, the Sanderson Overland Stage Company placed Pawnee Forts 38 miles east of Chouteau’s Island.¹⁵ By today’s estimations, Point of Rocks is approximately 35 miles from the site of Fort Atkinson and just under 40 miles from Chouteau’s Island.

William Salisbury was not the only witness of this mound of rocks containing human remains. Local informants from the Pierceville area say that at least two human burials were recovered from the rock crevasses at Point of Rocks – like those described by Salisbury above – in 1893 and the 1930s. Though subsequent site visits by archeologists from the Kansas State Historical Society have yielded no further remains, a 1997 osteological analysis of remains from the 1930s removal indicate the person was between 1.5 to three years old.

In the late 1860s, the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad (who changed their name to the Kansas Pacific in 1869) approached the Colorado state line, truncating the length of the wagon route to Santa Fe. The Barlow & Sanderson Stage Company continued to use this truncated route of the trail from 1866 to June 1868.¹⁶ When the Union Pacific Eastern Division reached the short-lived city of Sheridan (near Fort Wallace in Wallace County, Kansas) in June 1868, the eastern terminus of the trail shifted to this area approximately 100 miles north-northwest of Point of Rocks. That portion of the trail east of Sheridan was subsequently abandoned. By March 1870 the railroad had reached Kit Carson, Colorado, spelling the end of trail traffic along the Santa Fe Trail east of this town.

⁹ Stanley Vestal, *The Old Santa Fe Trail* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1939), 204.

¹⁰ John T. Hughes as quoted in Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 621.

¹¹ William Salisbury, “The Journal of an 1859 Pike’s Peak Gold Seeker,” David Lindsey, ed., *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 22 (Winter 1956), 330.

¹² Transcription of correspondence in archeological site file 14KY405 on file with the Kansas State Historical Society.

¹³ Gregory Franzwa, *Maps of the Santa Fe Trail* (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1989), 110.

¹⁴ “Council Trove-Documents: Table of Distances, 1864,” *Wagon Tracks* 13 (February 1999): 23-24.

¹⁵ “Mileage on Mt. Branch” *Wagon Tracks* 1 (August 1987): 10.

¹⁶ Morris F. Taylor, *First Mail West: Stagecoach Lines on the Santa Fe Trail* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), 130-131.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

“Council Trove-Documents: Table of Distances, 1864,” *Wagon Tracks* 13 (February 1999): 23-24.

“Mileage on Mt. Branch” *Wagon Tracks* 1 (August 1987): 10.

Barry, Louise. *The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854*. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972.

Buckles, William G. "The Santa Fe Trail System." *Journal of the West* 28 (April 1989): 79-87.

Franzwa, Gregory M. *Maps of the Santa Fe Trail*. St. Louis: Patrice Press, 1989.

Garrard, Lewis H. *Wah-To-Yah & The Taos Trail*. Palo Alto, California: American West Publishing Co., 1968.

Kansas State Historical Society Archeological Site File 14FY405.

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

Salisbury, William W. "The Journal of an 1859 Pike's Peak Gold Seeker." Edited by David Lindsay. *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 22 (Winter 1956): 321-341.

Schoewe, W.E. "The Geography of Kansas, Part II: Physical Geography." *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 52, no. 3 (1949): 280, 311-330.

Taylor, Morris F. *First Mail West: Stagecoach Lines on the Santa Fe Trail*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971.

Vestal, Stanley. *The Old Santa Fe Trail*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1939.

Wedel, Waldo R. "An introduction to Kansas archeology." *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (1959): 8.

Young, Otis E. "Military Protection of the Santa Fe Trail and Trade." *Missouri Historical Review* Vol. XLIX, No. 1 (October 1954): 19-32.

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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: **Kansas Historical Society**

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 304.79 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Map Datum WGS84

1:	<u>37.902914 / -101.728314</u>	3:	<u>37.909199 / -101.716431</u>
2:	<u>37.895663 / -101.711651</u>	4:	<u>37.909376 / -101.723177</u>

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The irregularly-shaped boundary is centered around the intersection of sections 4, 3, 10, & 9 of Township 25 South, Range 31 West. On the west, north, and east, the boundary generally follows topographic lines, locations of access roads, and the northern property boundary. A livestock fence parallels the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, forming the southern boundary.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was drawn to encompass the rock formation visible from Mansfield Road, which, according to the 1872 General Land Office Survey, is the location of the Santa Fe Trail.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>John R. Barry & Amanda K. Loughlin</u>		
organization	<u>Kansas Historical Society</u>	date	<u>August 2012</u>
street & number	<u>6425 SW 6th Ave</u>	telephone	<u>785-272-8681</u>
city or town	<u>Topeka</u>	state	<u>KS</u> zip code <u>66615-1099</u>
e-mail	<u>cultural_resources@kshs.org</u>		

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: Finney County Point of Rocks
City or Vicinity: Pierceville vicinity
County, State: Finney County, Kansas
Photographer: John Barry
Date Photographed: 13 October 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 5. Looking NE along road leading to formation.
- 2 of 5. Looking N at railroad in proximity to rock formation.
- 3 of 5. Looking NW at railroad and rock formation.
- 4 of 5. Looking NW from east side of formation.
- 5 of 5. Looking W along road leading to formation.

Property Owner:

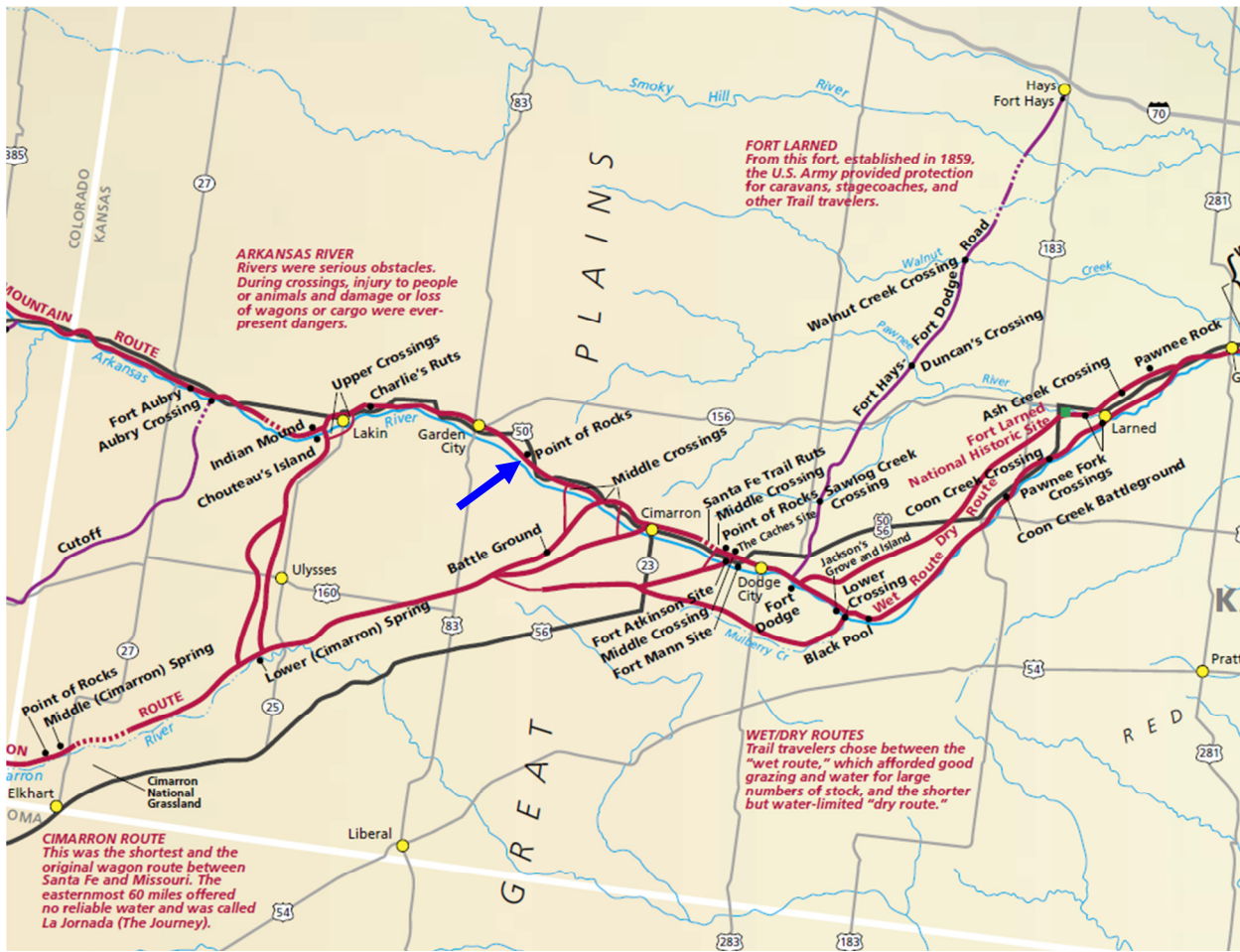
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

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.).

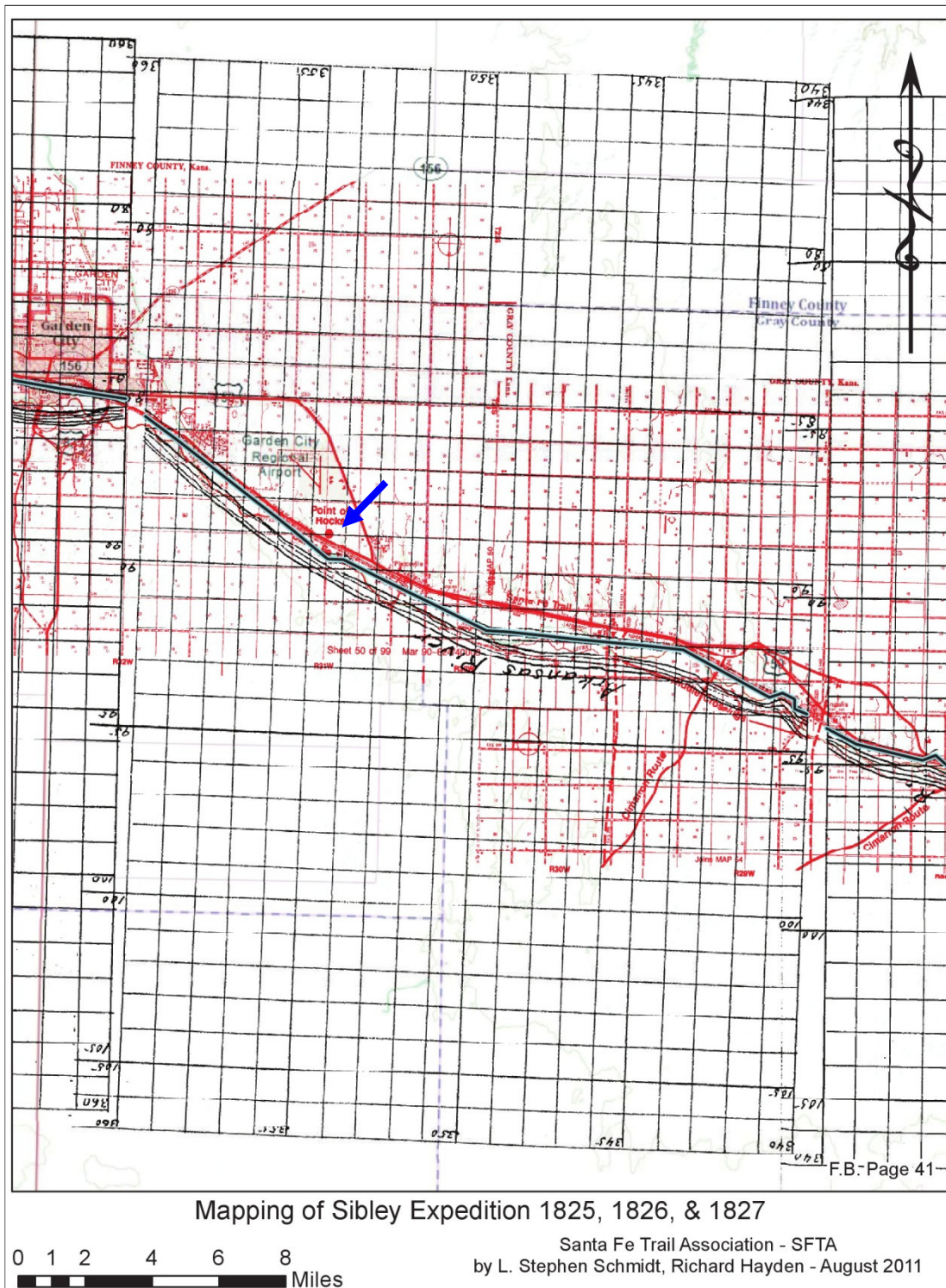
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to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

Figure 1.



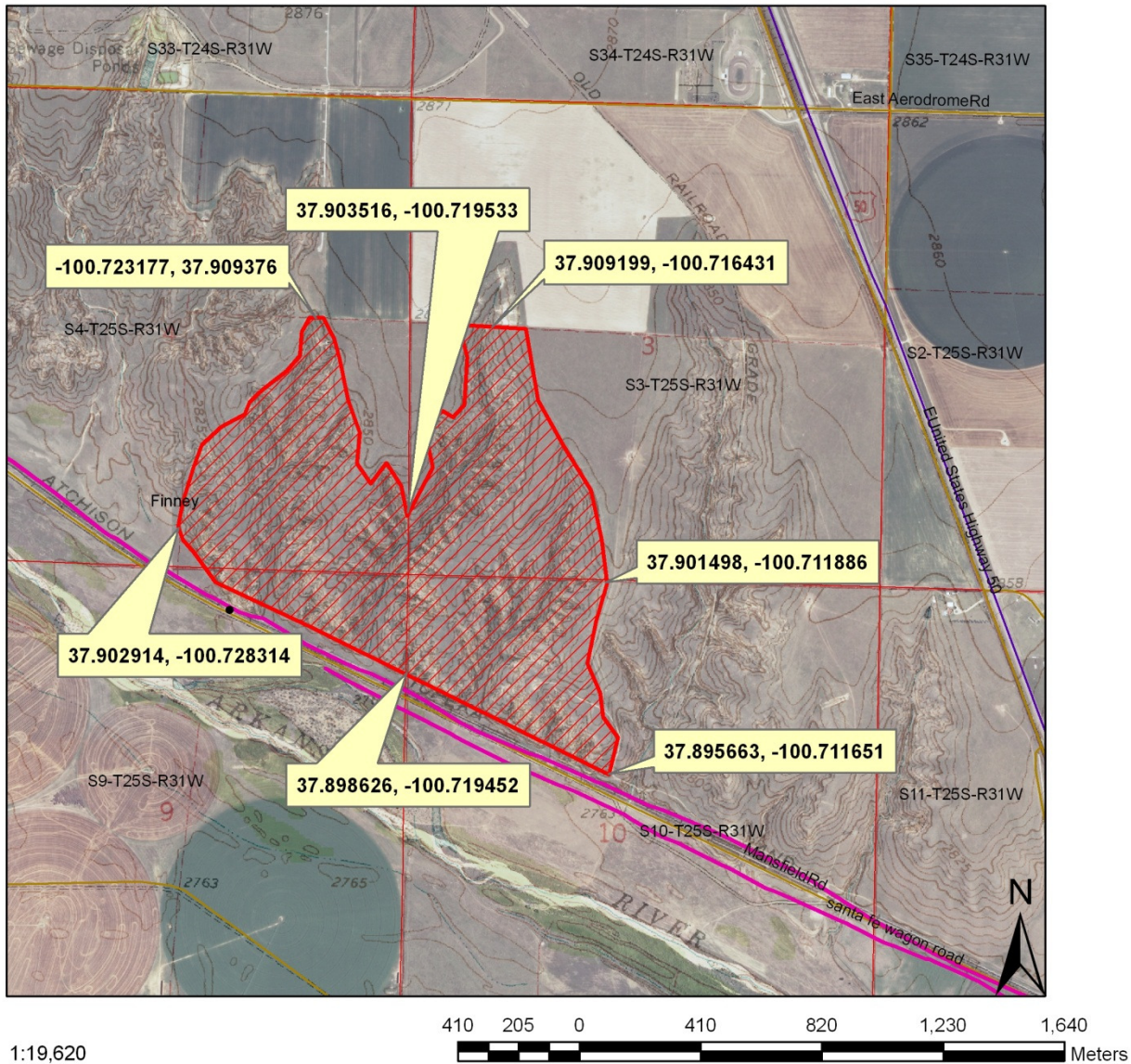
Finney County Point of Rocks.
Santa Fe National Historic Trail brochure, National Park Service Official Map and Guide.
Arrow indicates location of site.

Figure 2.



L. Stephen Schmidt and Richard Hayden, "Field Book Page 41," 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 3 October 2012). Schmidt & Hayden overlaid current maps of Kansas with the Sibley Survey maps to verify the route the expedition took.

Boundary Map.



Santa Fe Trail - Finney County Point of Rocks
Pierceville vicinity, Finney County, Kansas

Preliminary boundary is within hatched area. This boundary was drawn to encompass the rock formation visible from Mansfield Rd. The boundary was determined by the topographic lines, locations of access roads, and property boundaries. The southwestern boundary was determined by the railroad right-of-way.

1872 GLO Survey Line located along railroad.

Site Coordinate Datum = WGS84.

Total area: 304.79 acres (1.23 sqkm)

Contextual Map.

