

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**Listed in the National Register
April 5, 2016**

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 First United Methodist Church of Lawrence Oregon-California Trail Segment

other names/site number First United Methodist Church Swales ; 14DO361; KHRI #045-5673

2. Location

street & number 867 US-40 Highway not for publication

city or town Lawrence vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Douglas code 045 zip code 66049

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

See File. _____
Signature of certifying official Date

Title 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
0	0	district
1	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
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

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION / Road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE / Unoccupied land

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: N/A

walls: N/A

roof: N/A

other: N/A

Narrative Description

Summary

The nominated property consists of a well-preserved set of two Oregon and California Trail swales, situated along an east-west ridge top in the NE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 31, Township 12 South, Range 19 East (Figures 1 and 2). This portion of the Oregon and California trails network is located at the western edge of the Lawrence metropolitan area where most intact trail segments have been destroyed by cultivation and residential/commercial development. The segment survived in an un-grazed pasture south of old US Highway 40 (US-40) overlooking the Wakarusa valley to the south (Figure 2). However, only less than one acre at the western end of the segment is being nominated, as the property to the east is currently being developed (Figure 3). The nominated 0.64-acre portion is nominated as part of a Section 106 compliance agreement between the First United Methodist Church and the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office. Since the swales are situated on a ridge top and have presumably not been deepened by erosion, they are indistinct in places. Despite being surrounded by modern development, the First United Methodist Church swales comprise one of the few intact segments in this portion of the trail.

Elaboration

General Landscape¹

The First United Methodist Church Swales are located within the Attenuated Drift Border division of the Dissected Till Plains section of the Central Lowland province of the Interior Plains division of North America.² The Dissected Till Plains is a formerly glaciated northerly extension of the Osage Plains that covers all of the rest of eastern Kansas. Most of the Dissected Till Plains is taken up by a glaciated area known as the Kansas Drift Plain. The less heavily glaciated Attenuated Drift Border lies along the southern and western periphery of the Dissected Till Plains in a 25-35 mile wide strip roughly marked by the Kansas, Big Blue, and Little Blue rivers. Bedrock in the western part of the Dissected Till Plains consists of sedimentary formations of Permian age, while bedrock formations throughout the rest of the area are of Pennsylvanian age. The formations are made up of interstratified beds of limestone, shale, and sandstone, covered over by glacial deposits of varying thicknesses. Loess is also present, occurring as a thin upland mantle over most of northeastern Kansas but in thicknesses of up to a hundred feet in the bluffs along the Missouri river. The loess thins rapidly away from the river.

The topography of the region is directly related to the degree of glaciation. The heavily glaciated Kansas Drift Plain has a gently undulating erosional drift-controlled surface, while the lightly glaciated Attenuated Drift Border is more rugged, with an erosional rock-controlled surface similar in most respects to that of the Osage Plains. Unlike the latter, which was never glaciated, the Attenuated Drift Border is covered by isolated patches of glacial till and outwash along with scattered boulders, cobbles, and pebbles of ice-transported materials, including quartzites, granites, and diorites brought in from locations well to the north of the state. The resultant topography is less bold than that of the Osage Plains but decidedly rougher and of greater relief than the Kansas Drift Plain.

The prehistoric vegetation of the northeast Kansas region consisted almost entirely of prairie cut through by narrow ribbons of riverine forest. The natural vegetation of most of the area was tall grass prairie consisting of dense stands of big and little bluestem. The prairie was cut through by riverine forest vegetation consisting of broadleaf deciduous forests often containing dense undergrowth and many vines, occasionally interrupted by freshwater marshes. Hackberry, cottonwood, willow, and elm were the dominant forest species;³ although oak, black walnut, linden, sycamore, locust, hickory, pecan, and other hardwoods could also be found along with smaller forms such as Osage orange, persimmon, papaw, elderberry, serviceberry, chokecherry,

¹ The following three 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, 291.

³ A.W. Kuchler, "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas," *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 600-601.

and wild grape.⁴ Prairie vegetation covered the uplands in all but the eastern edge of the Dissected Till Plains, where forested conditions prevailed. The natural vegetation of that area consisted of medium tall multilayered broadleaf deciduous forest, with various forms of hickory and oak being the dominant species.⁵ The forest was most pervasive on the bluffs along the Missouri river. To the west, the forest/prairie transition was marked by a "mosaic" situation in which forests with islands of prairie gradually changed westward into prairie with islands of forest,⁶ and finally into prairie with little or no upland forest vegetation.

Trail Segment

The trail segment within Section 31, Township 12 South, Range 19 East is located in a semi-rural area of north central Douglas County, approximately four miles south of the Kansas River and ¼ mile west of K-10 Highway. To the immediate east of this highway are new housing and commercial developments. To the west of the highway, the landscape remains a mixture of agriculture parcels and large-acre residential properties. This section of the Oregon and California trails network lies approximately seven miles northwest of the Upper Wakarusa River Crossing and nine miles southeast of Big Springs.

The boundaries of the nominated site are drawn to include the two swales roughly centered within a 0.64-acre box. The western boundary is formed by the grounds of the Celebration Center of the First United Methodist Church of Lawrence, while the eastern limit is formed by ongoing commercial development. A new road is proposed to run within 25' of the eastern boundary (Figure 3). From north to south, the box measures 130' with the northern and southern boundaries defined by agricultural disturbance. These boundaries incorporate the remaining section of the trail segment in Section 31.

The nominated swales are located on an upland ridge (1070 feet) overlooking both the Kansas River (to the north) and Wakarusa River (to the south and east) valleys; the topography drops to the immediate south of the boundary. The two swales are visible heading west-northwest from the southeast corner of the nominated boundary to the center of the western boundary.

Current aerial photography does not show the swales clearly, given the growth of woody vegetation in the pasture where they are situated. However, they are clearly visible in older (2002) imagery with US-40 to the north and K-10 to the east (Figure 4). By 2006, the pasture was more overgrown and construction of the First United Methodist Church building had begun, but the swales were still visible (Figure 5). Given their setting along a relatively level upland ridge, they have not been substantially deepened by erosion. Nevertheless, they can be easily followed on the ground. The swales' true extent can be seen by utilizing LiDAR (Light Distance and Ranging) imagery (Figure 6). LiDAR can be an excellent tool for locating and/or defining the extent of subtle trail remnants. Such images are produced with systematic laser aerial data acquisition. The greatest advantage of LiDAR is its ability to see through vegetation and to produce shaded images that enhance subtle features on the ground. LiDAR images of the First United Methodist Church swales show their full extent (including the more subtle features) along with the nominated portion (Figures 7 and 8). Though subtle, the swales are visible on the ground (Figures 9 and 10).

⁴ Waldo R. Wedel, "An Introduction to Kansas Archeology," *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (1959): 14.

⁵ Kuchler, 599.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 588.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Transportation _____
- Exploration/Settlement _____
- Archeology (Historic—Non-aboriginal) _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1841- ca.1860

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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 selected for this property includes the years the Oregon and California trails were active in Kansas, beginning in 1840 with the first pioneers headed to Oregon Country and ending by 1860 when the majority of emigrants departed from Nebraska river towns.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

This remnant of the Oregon and California trails network is part of the eastern (beginning) section of the combined trail, which the emigrants passed over on the first few days of their journey (Figure 11). One of the most important resources in this initial portion of the trail was Big Springs, a reliable water source lying approximately nine miles west of this First United Methodist Church Swales. Active between 1840 and circa 1860, these swales are nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for their association with transportation and exploration/settlement along the combined route of the Oregon and California trails. This site's associative significance and similarity to related trail sites suggest that associated artifact assemblages may be present; they are therefore also nominated under Criterion D.

Elaboration

Trail Overview⁷

The Oregon Trail began as a network of Indian trade and migration routes that crisscrossed the American West. British, French, and American fur trappers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries found and followed those paths as they scoured the country for beaver. By the 1820s, caravans of pack trains, carts, and wagons were beating a rough "fur trace" from the Missouri River to the annual trappers' rendezvous in the Rocky Mountains of today's Wyoming and northern Utah. Pack trails ran west from the Rockies, following the Snake and Columbia Rivers to Hudson's Bay Company headquarters at Fort Vancouver in the Oregon Country.⁸

When the first family of covered wagon pioneers joined a fur caravan heading to the Rockies from Missouri in 1840, the Oregon Country was jointly occupied by the fledgling United States and powerful Great Britain. Over the next several years, Britain watched uneasily as a low but steady tide of American emigrants surged along the developing, 2200-mile Oregon Trail and emptied into the Pacific Northwest. As the number of American settlers grew, so did the pressure for British withdrawal. In 1846 the two nations signed a treaty giving the U.S. control of lands between California and the 49th parallel, today's border between the United States and Canada.⁹ The emigration swelled in the early 1850s as homesteaders flocked to Oregon to stake their claims under the Donation Lands Act. By 1860, some 53,000 covered wagon emigrants and hundreds of thousands of livestock had followed the Oregon Trail to the Pacific Northwest.¹⁰

The California Trail, too, began at the Missouri River and stretched more than 2000 miles across plains and mountains, then branched out to end at various towns and camps in and beyond the Sierra Nevada. Much of that distance was part of a shared corridor with the Oregon Trail through Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, and eastern Idaho. Near today's Soda Springs, Idaho, the 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson Party split away from the Oregon Trail and turned south to blaze a new emigrant route across the unmapped Great Basin and along the Humboldt River to California, part of Mexico at that time. Against all odds, the entire party survived the trip, and

⁷ Trail overview written by Lee Kreutzer, National Trails Intermountain Region, National Park Service.

⁸ Will Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1812-1848*, vol. 1, *Overland West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 77, 80; Hulbert, Archer Butler ed., *Where Rolls the Oregon: Prophet and Pessimist Look Northwest*, vol. 3, *Overland to the Pacific* (Colorado Springs: The Steward Commission of Colorado College & the Denver Public Library, 1933), 52, 91, 105, 136, 149-154, 156-159; Bernard De Voto, *Across the Wide Missouri* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947), 47, 59, 69; Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie*, (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), 4; Merrill J. Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives: A Descriptive Bibliography of Travel over the Great Central Overland Route to Oregon, California, Utah, Colorado, Montana, and Other Western States and Territories, 1812-1866* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 1-5.

⁹ Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous*, 290-291.

¹⁰ John D. Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 60, 84-85.

some of the successful pioneers set to work recruiting other emigrants to California. A trickle of over-landers followed over the next several years, developing a more direct trail across Idaho and Nevada to the Humboldt River and better routes through the Sierra Nevada.¹¹

As a result of the 1846-1848 Mexican-American War and annexation of Texas, the United States gained a tremendous swath of territory that stretched from the Gulf of Mexico across the Southern Plains, Southwest, and Great Basin to the Pacific coast. Emigration to California continued at a dribble despite the change of government. Few Americans were tempted to make the arduous trip until news of the gold discovery at Sutter's Mill reached the East and opened the emigration floodgates. In the spring of 1850 some 44,000 Argonauts and entrepreneurs rushed along the California Trail to seek their fortunes in the gold camps. As a result of the influx, California gained statehood the following year, and by 1860 over 200,000 emigrants had followed the long trail west to the Golden State.¹²

Starting in 1847, Oregon- and California-bound travelers shared the trail corridor with some 60,000 members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who followed the Mormon Trail across Nebraska and Wyoming to the Great Salt Lake Valley of Utah. Total emigration along the multi-trail corridor to Oregon, California, and Utah between 1841 and 1866 is commonly estimated at 350,000 to 500,000 persons.¹³

Across the three decades of the emigration, the trail experience evolved. As historian John Unruh observed, "The emigrant experience was ever changing; each travel year evidenced distinctive patterns, unique dramas of triumph and tragedy, new contributions to the mosaic of western development."¹⁴ In the 1840s, emigrants were on their own once they left Missouri and entered "Indian Territory." During those years, many suffered extreme hardship and even death as they trudged across Nevada's Forty-mile Desert, struggled through the Sierra Nevada, dodged the fierce rapids of the Columbia River, or tried untested new routes across the western mountains and deserts. Military and trading posts were few along the way and usually had little food to spare; emigrants were unable to resupply if their provisions ran low. But as the emigration progressed, explorers, military expeditions, and other travelers gradually opened shorter, safer routes. Towns and road ranches sprang up along the way. Businessmen established ferries, bridges, and toll roads, hauled water into the desert to sell to thirsty travelers, and built trading posts where travelers could resupply or exchange worn out draft animals for fresh ones. Meanwhile, as the years passed, the vast buffalo herds that 1840s emigrants had encountered in eastern Nebraska retreated farther and farther west, dwindling to near-extinction; hungry campfires and livestock consumed the woodlands and grasslands along the trail; and once-friendly native peoples, alarmed by the never-ending march of emigrants and embittered by the usurping of their lands and resources, were driven to armed resistance. As a result of these changes, travelers of the 1860s experienced the overland trails much differently than those who had gone west in the 1840s.

Not just the experience but the trails themselves changed, as well. For example, Independence and Westport, Missouri, at the eastern edge of the frontier, were the original Oregon and California trailheads. There emigrants could purchase supplies, wagons, and livestock and make repairs before merging with the great freight caravans rolling west along the Santa Fe Trail into Kansas. Near the present-day town of Gardner, the Oregon-California trail corridor branched off to follow the "Independence Road" across northeastern Kansas toward Nebraska's Platte River. Through the 1840s and 1850s, new military roads were developed to connect Fort Leavenworth, Kan., to Fort Riley in central Kansas, Fort Gibson, Okla., and Fort Kearny, Neb., and emigrants quickly adopted these and other new trails in making their way to the Platte River. Also during

¹¹ George Stewart, *The California Trail: An Epic with Many Heroes* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 18, 27-28; Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., *The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure: The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers* (Santa Cruz, CA: Western Tanager Press, 1991), 39, 125, 149; Dale L. Morgan, *The Humboldt: Highroad of the West*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 67-78.

¹² Stewart, 217; Unruh, 84-85; Will Bagley, *With Golden Visions Bright Before Them: Trails to the Mining West, 1849-1852*, vol. 2, *Overland West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 15, 17-18, 388.

¹³ Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives*, 5. Matte's estimate includes all western emigration, including that to Colorado, Montana, Nevada, etc.

¹⁴ Unruh, 321-322.

those years, especially following outbreaks of cholera, emigrants began outfitting and “jumping off” onto the trails farther and farther north, gradually shifting the bulk of the emigration traffic upriver to Fort Leavenworth, St. Joseph, Nebraska City, and Omaha/Council Bluffs.

By the close of the 1850s, the Nebraska river towns had largely replaced Independence, Westport, Fort Leavenworth, and St. Joseph as outfitting and jumping-off places, and the flow of Oregon-California traffic across Kansas had nearly dried up.¹⁵ Riding a steamboat up the Missouri River to Nebraska City and Council Bluffs saved emigrants several difficult stream crossings and many days of driving across northeastern Kansas. Starting farther north also enabled travelers to avoid the Kansas-Missouri border troubles of the mid-1850s and allowed them to take advantage of substantial trail improvements made by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to help its Mormon emigrants cross Nebraska.

Farther west, significant new alternates were developed, including Sublette’s, Hudspeth’s, and Goodale’s cutoffs across Wyoming and Idaho, the difficult Hastings Cutoff through Utah’s Wasatch Mountains and over the Great Salt Lake Desert, the Raft River route to the Humboldt, and several Oregon dry-land alternatives to the dangerous Columbia River passage. New wagon roads punched through the Sierra Nevada and commercial ferries, bridges, and other improvements increasingly aided the emigration as the years passed.

But the greatest improvement to western emigration by far was completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. The driving of the ceremonial golden spike that linked the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads at Promontory Summit, Utah, was a stake in the heart of the covered wagon era. The laborious, dangerous overland trip that once took five to six months, killed hundreds of thousands of draft animals, and tested the endurance of the most determined emigrants could now be made safely in a matter of weeks. Some emigrants who could not afford train passage continued to use the old Oregon and California trails, but long-distance wagon traffic gradually dried up. The last documented westbound covered wagon on the Oregon-California Trail crossed Wyoming in 1912.¹⁶

The mid-nineteenth century emigration of hundreds of thousands of people, rich and poor, free and slave, along the Oregon and California trails is unparalleled in world history. The trails they traveled opened the door for the Pony Express, the transcontinental telegraph, the transcontinental railroad, and parts of the modern interstate highway system, all of which followed the Oregon and California trails corridor. The overland emigration fulfilled the nation’s “manifest destiny” to stretch from Atlantic to Pacific, spurred economic development and security, and directed the course of American history. At the same time, however, it disrupted hundreds of indigenous cultures, destroyed traditional lifeways that had developed over millennia, and contributed to extinctions and significant shifts in native plant and animal populations. Today’s West is largely the product of the California and Oregon emigrations and the events that flowed from those movements. Extant trail remnants, including wagon swales and ruts, stream crossings, graves, campgrounds, and associated forts, are touchstones to that iconic place and period in the nation’s history.

The national and regional significance of the Oregon and California trails has been identified through the work of many lay and professional historians and defined in numerous scholarly publications.¹⁷ Congress designated the Oregon and California National Historic Trails in 1978 and 1992, respectively, and the National Park Service in 1998 published a combined comprehensive management and use plan/environmental impact statement for the Oregon, California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails.

In Kansas, approximately 165 miles of wagon route are designated as part of the Oregon National Historic Trail and 290 miles are designated as California National Historic Trail. For a short distance from

¹⁵ Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969) 104-105.

¹⁶ Mary Hurlburt Scott, *The Oregon Trail Through Wyoming*, (Aurora, Colorado: Powder River Publishers, 1958), 87-100, 122, 135.

¹⁷ See attached bibliography for a sample of these sources.

Missouri into eastern Kansas, the Oregon and California Trails followed the same corridor as the earlier Santa Fe Trail, also a designated National Historic Trail.¹⁸ Many more miles of historic wagon route, once traveled by emigrants to the far west, exist across Kansas, and many of these routes are currently under study for possible addition to the Oregon and California National Historic Trails.

Routes through Lawrence and Big Springs Areas

This segment of the Oregon and California trails network was situated along the middle of the roughly 15-mile route between the Wakarusa River and Big Springs. When the emigrants passed through this area, they had recently crossed the Wakarusa River, (Figures 11 and 12) and were heading to a camping area, Big Springs, nine miles west. This section of the emigrants' route was described by Kansas historian William Connelley as follows:

The trail passed up Mount Oread [where the University of Kansas is now located] and followed the "back bone ridge" which divided the waters of the Kansas from those of the Wakarusa. Six miles west of Mount Oread, on a fine elevation, there was a noted spring. At that point Judge John A. Wakefield, who arrived in the Territory on the 8th day of June, 1854, made home. Another noted place on the trail was Big Springs, within a mile of the west line of the county. A settlement was made there.¹⁹

This portion of the trail was surveyed by the General Land Office in 1856, with the results appearing in 1860 (Figure 12). That map, along with one produced in 1857, illustrates the trail routes (Figure 13). The passage of 30 years brought many changes, and by 1887 a landscape dominated by section line roads in place of trails was depicted (Figure 14).

Big Springs

For the emigrants passing through this area, a key landmark and water source (Big Springs) was the immediate destination. Although the Oregon and California Trail only passes a short distance through Kansas, there were three well-known water sources in the form of springs: Big Springs in Douglas County, Alcove Spring in Marshall County, and Scott Spring in Pottawatomie County. Alcove Spring and Scott Spring retain a higher degree of integrity than Big Springs, which has been significantly impacted by the construction of Interstate 70.²⁰ Although Big Springs no longer reflects its trail-era appearance, trail-era swales in the vicinity of Big Springs are intact.

There are only a few references to Big Springs in the historical record that pre-date 1850. The earliest reference to the area was noted by Rufus B. Sage, a writer who was traveling with a caravan led by Lancaster P. Lupton, which left the Shawnee reserve in present-day Johnson County, Kansas bound for Fort Platte, Wyoming, in September of 1841. In his account, which was published in 1846 under the title *Scenes in the Rocky Mountains*, he recorded that Lupton's caravan had camped by the Wakarusa River and, after traveling twelve miles, stopped overnight "at a place known as the Springs."²¹ A few years later in 1844, trader David Adams noted in his diary that his small outfit had camped at the Wakarusa on September 5th and at the "the

¹⁸ Kansas State Historical Society, *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form (Topeka, KS: Kansas Historical Society, 1994, revised 2012).

¹⁹ William E. Connelley, *Standard History of Kansas and Kansans* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), 356.

²⁰ Rex Buchanan, Robert Sawin, and Wayne Lebsack, "Water of the Most Excellent Kind: Historic Springs in Kansas," *Kansas History* 23, 3 (Autumn 2000): 130. Accessed online 1 October 2012 <http://www.kshs.org/publicat/history/2000autumn_buchanan.pdf>

²¹ Rufus B. Sage, *Scenes in the Rocky Mountains* (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1846), 23. 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), 435-436.

spring” on the 6th. He was delayed three days at the springs while searching for lost horses.²² Both Lupton’s and Adam’s parties would have crossed the nominated land.

Several years later and shortly before Kansas Territory was opened for settlement, a group of Italians led by Count Leonetto Cipriani set out for California from Westport, Missouri, also crossing the nominated swales. They were driving cattle, and their caravan included “11 covered wagons (carrying more than 20,000 pounds of freight), one ‘omnibus,’ 24 hired hands, 500 cattle, 600 oxen, 60 horses, and 40 mules.” The group may have had a scientific mission as one man in the group reported in the count “three secretaries and a draughtsman, one engineer, one mathematician, a physician, a number of servants and many wagons to carry provisions, instruments, etc.”²³ Cipriani kept a diary that was translated and edited by Ernest Falbo and published in 1862. According to Barry, Cipriani noted having camped the night of June 12, 1853 “near a cold-water spring surrounded by giant oak trees...a veritable oasis,” which was Big Springs.²⁴

Later that same June, Captain John W. Gunnison led an expedition tasked with surveying parts of the West for future railroad development. Gunnison recorded setting out for the Wakarusa River on June 26, 1853 and passing the “conspicuous landmark ‘Wahkarrussi [Blue] mound,’ the ‘wooded dell, called Coon Point,’ [and] the 21-mile march from Coon Point to ‘Big spring’ (‘situated in a hollow, and there are several small jets from the bank.’)”²⁵ This is the first known mention of the name Big Spring.

Several trail-era accounts of this area were written after Kansas Territory was opened for settlement in 1854. A small settlement – known as Big Springs – grew up around this natural source of water in the mid-1850s. In his *History of the State of Kansas*, author William Cutler noted the first residents as William Harper and John Chamberlain, who settled there in the fall of 1854. Big Springs was less than ten miles from the pro-slavery leaning settlement of Lecompton, and during the late 1850s this area buzzed with political fervor. Within a year Big Springs’ founding, the settlement hosted a convention of Free-staters as they attempted to win political control over the territory (Figure 15).

It was shortly after this initial settlement that traveler and writer William Tomlinson, who spent time in Lawrence in 1858, described the surrounding countryside from atop Mount Oread:

I followed a winding path leading from the town to the summit, and in a few minutes was standing on the crest of Mount Oread. Seldom have I gazed on a fairer, or more glorious scene than the one presented. To the south and eastward was a perfectly level and beautiful plain, dotted over with farm-houses and cultivated fields to the dense belt of timber skirting the Wakarusa, and opening again with a similar landscape beyond, until a bold, high promontory, known as ‘Timber Mound,’ closed the eastward view. Westward towards Lecompton could be seen for miles and miles the winding Kaw; while northward, miles away, upwards toward the May heaven from the wilderness of trees, rose the thin smoke from the village of the Delawares.²⁶

A few days later, he traveled to Topeka by stagecoach likely passing through the Big Springs area according to the road network delineated on Stuck’s 1857 map (Figure 13):

I took a stage-coach ride up the Kaw to Lecompton and Topeka. They are both flourishing towns, but small compared to Lawrence. Topeka is about fifteen miles west of Lawrence, on the same side of the

²² Barry, *The Beginning of the West*, 526-527.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1163.

²⁴ Cipriani as quoted in Barry, *The Beginning of the West*, 1163.

²⁵ Gunnison as quoted in Barry, *The Beginning of the West*, 1167-1168.

²⁶ William P. Tomlinson, *Kansas in Eighteen Fifty-Eight* (New York: H. Dayton; Indianapolis: Dayton and Asher, 1859), 43. Accessed online 13 December 2012 <<http://archive.org/details/kansasineighteen00toml>>

Kansas. The route lay for the most part through a fine country, and we passed many fields of wheat and oats, which promised a yield far in advance of the best lands of the north-west.²⁷

Early Kansas settler Julia Lovejoy provides another account of the Big Springs area at about the same time as Tomlinson, "On we jog, and fifteen miles from Lawrence we reach the town of Big Springs, so called from several large springs, from which beautifully clear water in abundance gushes forth. The place was too destitute of trees and shrubbery to suit our taste."²⁸ Both Tomlinson's and Lovejoy's accounts document the dual use of the Oregon-California Trail in this part of Kansas at this time. Not only was it used for long-distance travel, but also it was used for more local traffic between these developing cities. Certainly by 1861, the year of Kansas' statehood, the Oregon and California trail was used almost exclusively by local traffic.

Archeological Potential

Archeological prospection, geophysical survey, and metal detector survey of similar trail segments have been shown to reveal associated artifact assemblages, sometimes buried and sometimes not, that can inform on the use of the trail during its period of significance. Though no such surveys have been undertaken on this trail segment, there is every reason to believe that the presence of such an assemblage is possible. This segment and its immediate landscape have the potential to yield important information to understanding the use and nature of this section of the trail, including patterns of use and change over time, evolving trade patterns, and cultural interactions. Study of both the remnant trail swales and adjacent archeological features can provide valuable insight into the evolving patterns of historic development in this region. This site likely contains data which may be vital to any wider study of 19th-century trade and economic development. Further investigation could address key questions regarding trade and transportation variability and change. Excavation could also provide additional social data including better estimates of the frequency of use during various phases of history, the role played by the military, various ethnic and social groups, and the nature of trail users, material culture and the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities.²⁹ Though isolated from other trail segments, this property has the potential to yield additional information. Archeological survey at this property (including metal detector investigations and remote sensing) might produce trail period artifacts. Their distribution, if plotted precisely, could yield additional significant information regarding issues (in addition to those mentioned above) such as discard patterns or wagon repair activities.

²⁷ Tomlinson, 45.

²⁸ Julia Louisa Lovejoy, "Letters of Julia Louisa Lovejoy, 1856-1864, *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 14 (November 1947): 376-377.

²⁹ "Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail," F116. Citation covers paragraph.

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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 # _____

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 Less than one
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>15S</u> Zone	<u>297196</u> Easting	<u>4316061</u> Northing	3	<u>15S</u> Zone	<u>297257</u> Easting	<u>4316061</u> Northing
2	<u>15S</u> Zone	<u>297215</u> Easting	<u>4316023</u> Northing	4	<u>15S</u> Zone	<u>297294</u> Easting	<u>4316020</u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)
The property is located in the NE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 31, Township 12 South, Range 19 East. It consists of two swales, bounded on all sides by areas of recent disturbance. The western boundary is formed by the grounds of the Celebration Center of the First United Methodist Church of Lawrence, while the eastern limit is formed by ongoing commercial development. The northern and southern boundaries are defined by agricultural disturbance.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)
The boundaries were selected so as to encompass the visible trail swales.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rick Anderson, Amanda Loughlin, Tim Weston, Sarah Martin,
organization Kansas Historical Society date November 2015
street & number 6425 SW 6th Avenue telephone (785) 272-8681
city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66615
e-mail cultural_resources@kshs.org

Photographs:

Name of Property: First United Methodist Church of Lawrence Oregon-California Trail Segment
City or Vicinity: Lawrence **County/State:** Douglas County, Kansas
Photographer: KSHS
Date of Photos: April 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number:
001 of 002: View Northeast
002 of 002: View West

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name First United Methodist Church
street & number 946 Vermont telephone (785) 841-7500
city or town Lawrence state KS zip code 66044

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.
2013 Aerial image of the area surrounding the First United Methodist Segment.
Location is denoted by X. North is up.
(Kansas Historic Resources Inventory, kshs.org/khri)



Figure 2.
Location of the First United Methodist Church Oregon-California Trail Swales
The "California Road" is depicted by the GLO line to the south of the nominated area.
North is up; (USGS 7.5' Lawrence West Quadrangle Map)

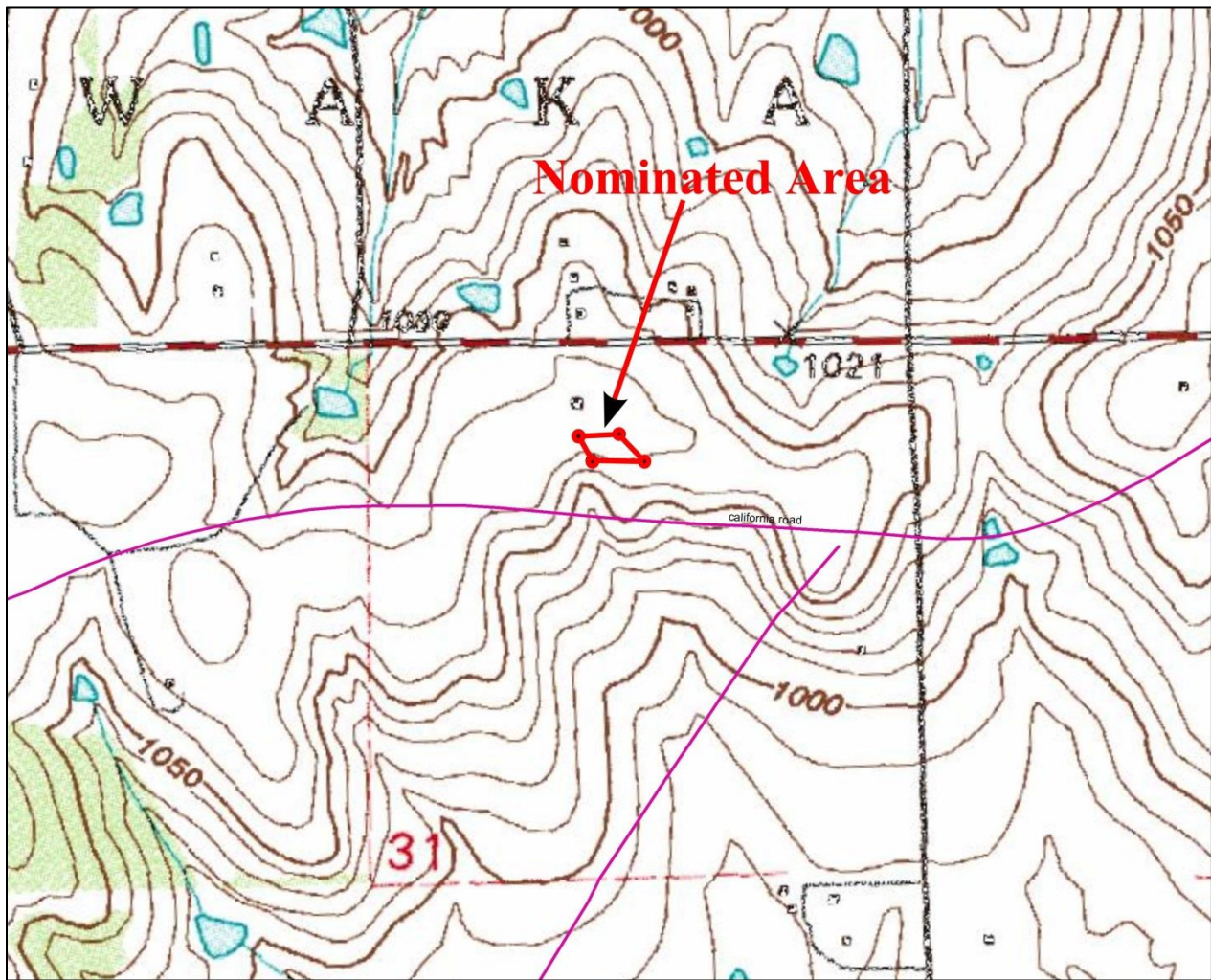
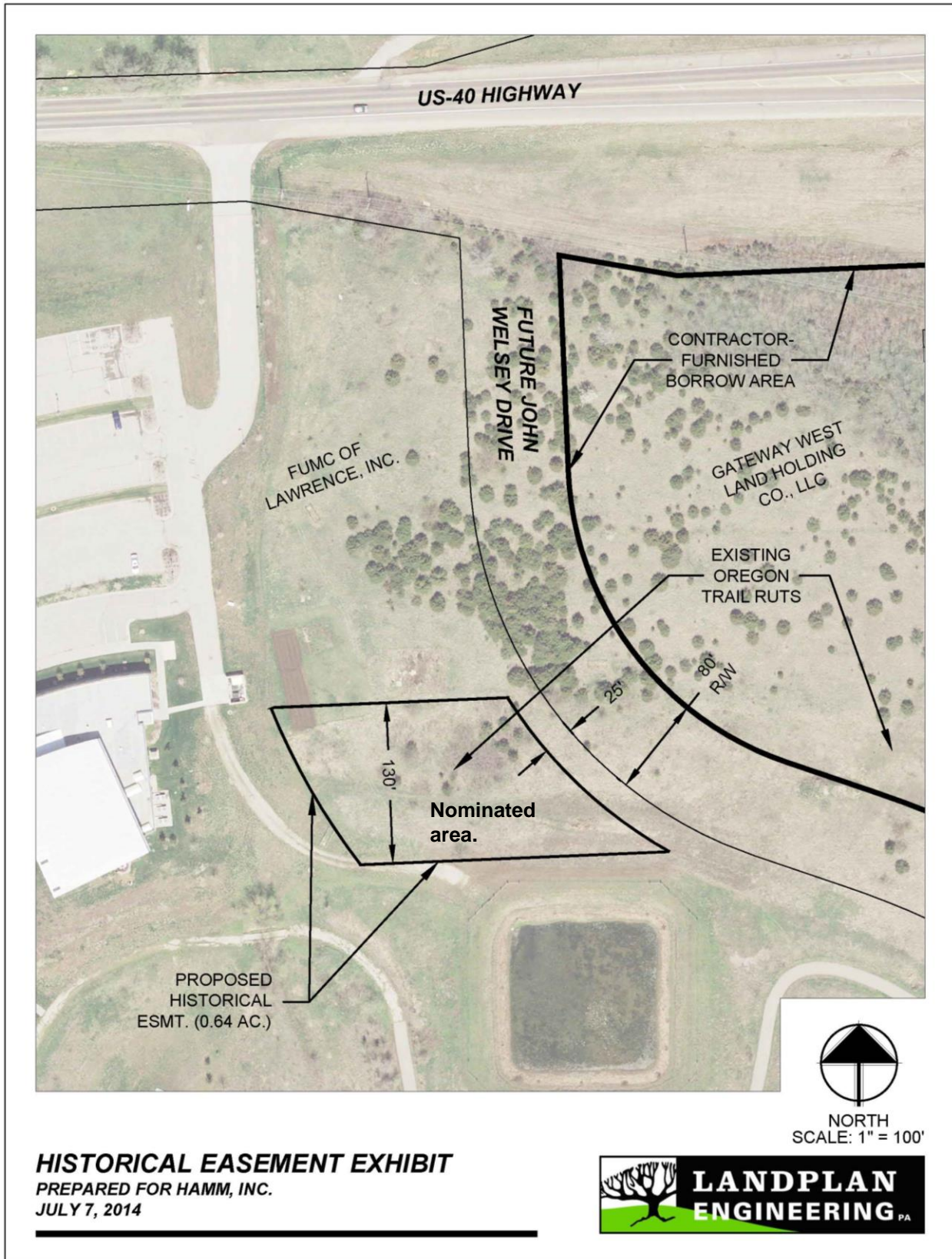


Figure 3.
Aerial view of the First United Methodist Church Oregon-California Trail Swales
Showing Planned Development to the east of the nominated area.



HISTORICAL EASEMENT EXHIBIT
PREPARED FOR HAMM, INC.
JULY 7, 2014



Figure 4.
2002 Aerial view of the First United Methodist Church Oregon-California Trail Swales
Image shows full extent of swales, before recent disturbance, in dashed line.
The remaining intact segment being nominated is shown in the bolded box.
(2002 Google Imagery)

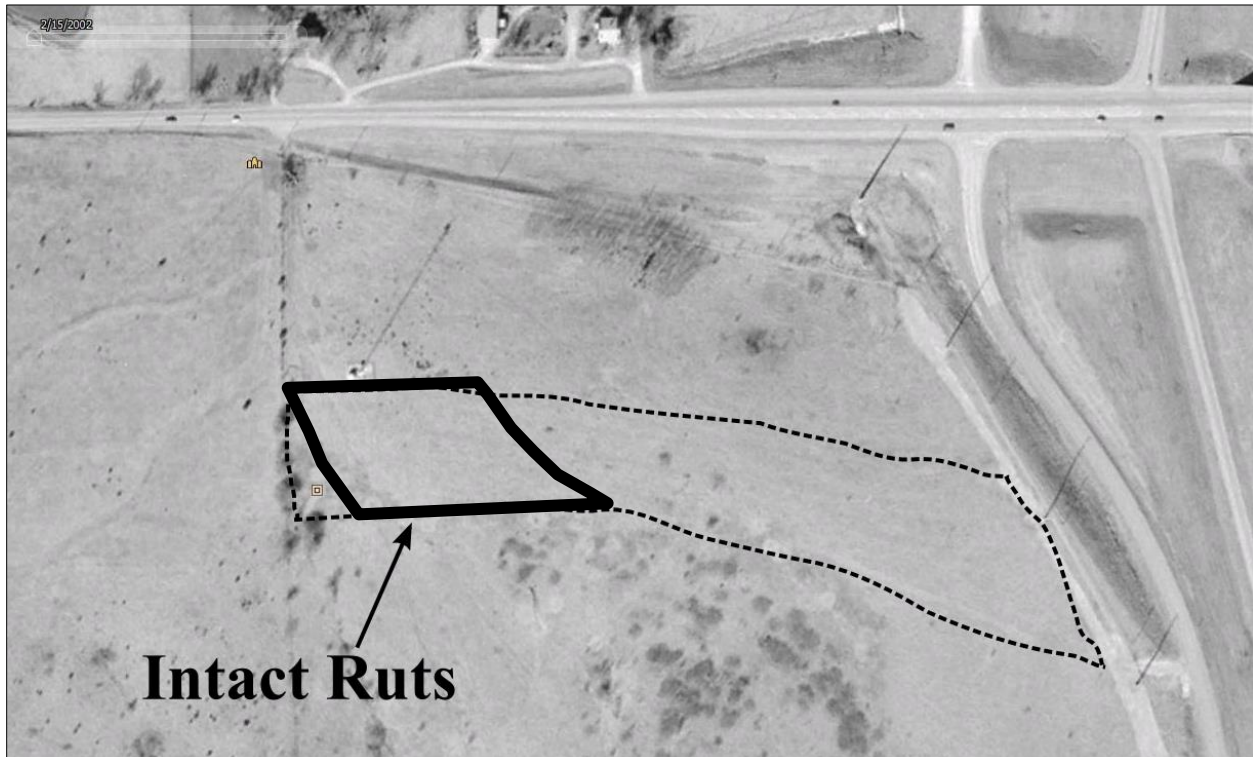


Figure 5.

Aerial view of the First United Methodist Church Oregon-California Trail Swales
Image shows full extent of swales, before recent disturbance, in dashed line.
The remaining intact segment being nominated is shown in the bolded box.
(2006 Google Imagery)



Figure 6.
LiDAR imagery of the First United Methodist Church Oregon-California Trail Swales.
Image shows full extent of swales before recent disturbance.

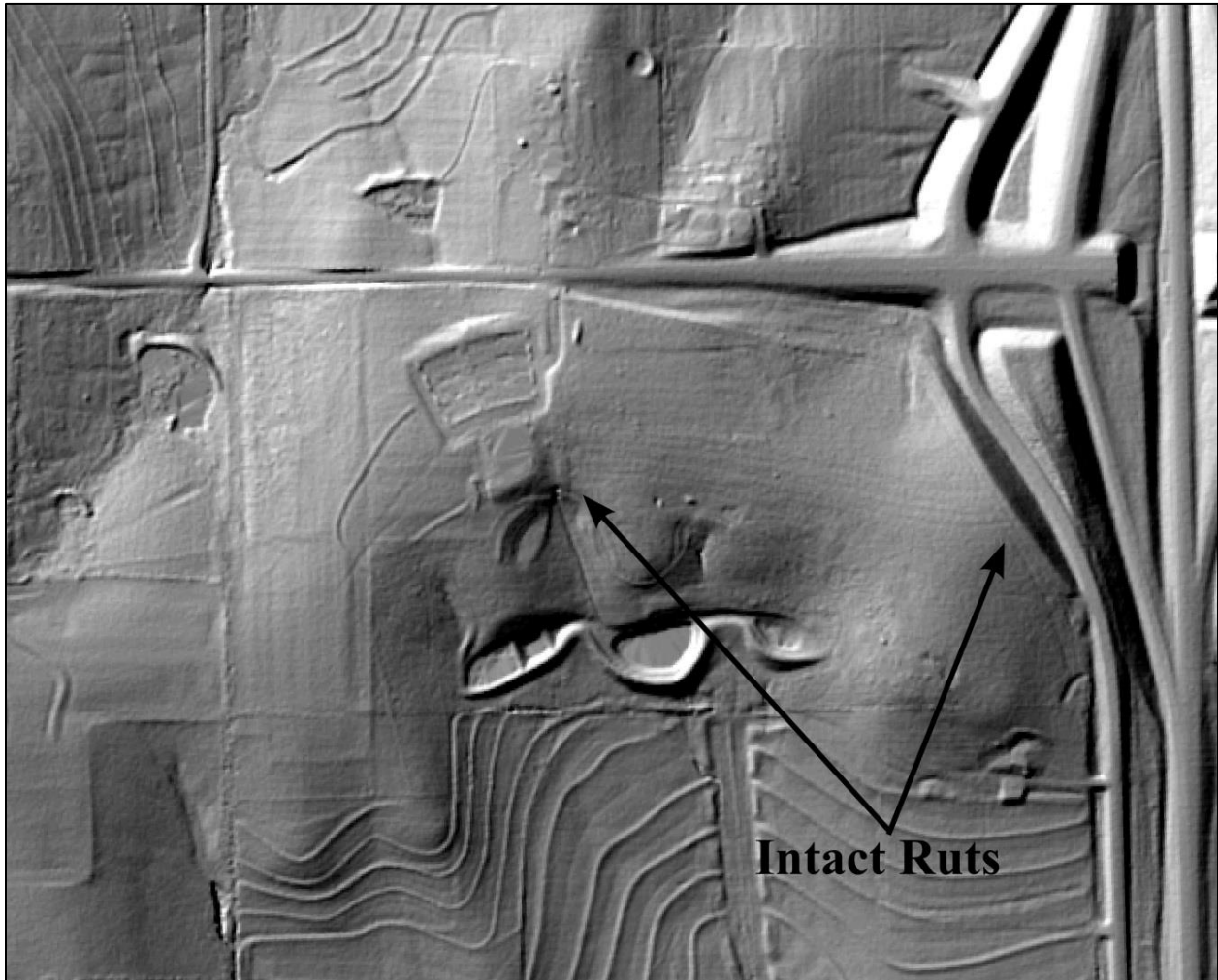


Figure 7.
LiDAR imagery of the First United Methodist Church Oregon-California Trail Swales
Nominated Area.

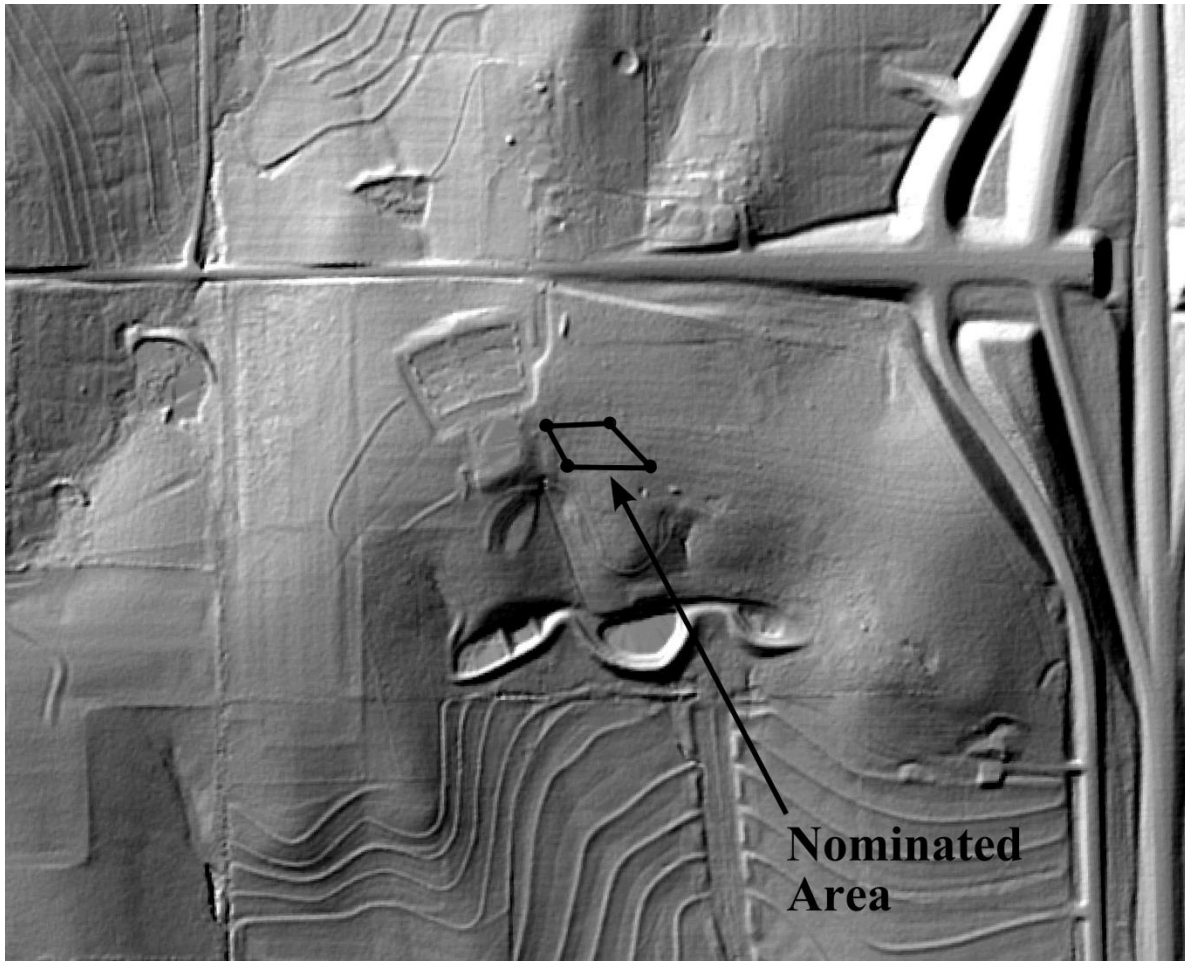


Figure 8.
Aerial view of the First United Methodist Church Oregon-California Trail Swales
(2015 Google Earth Imagery)

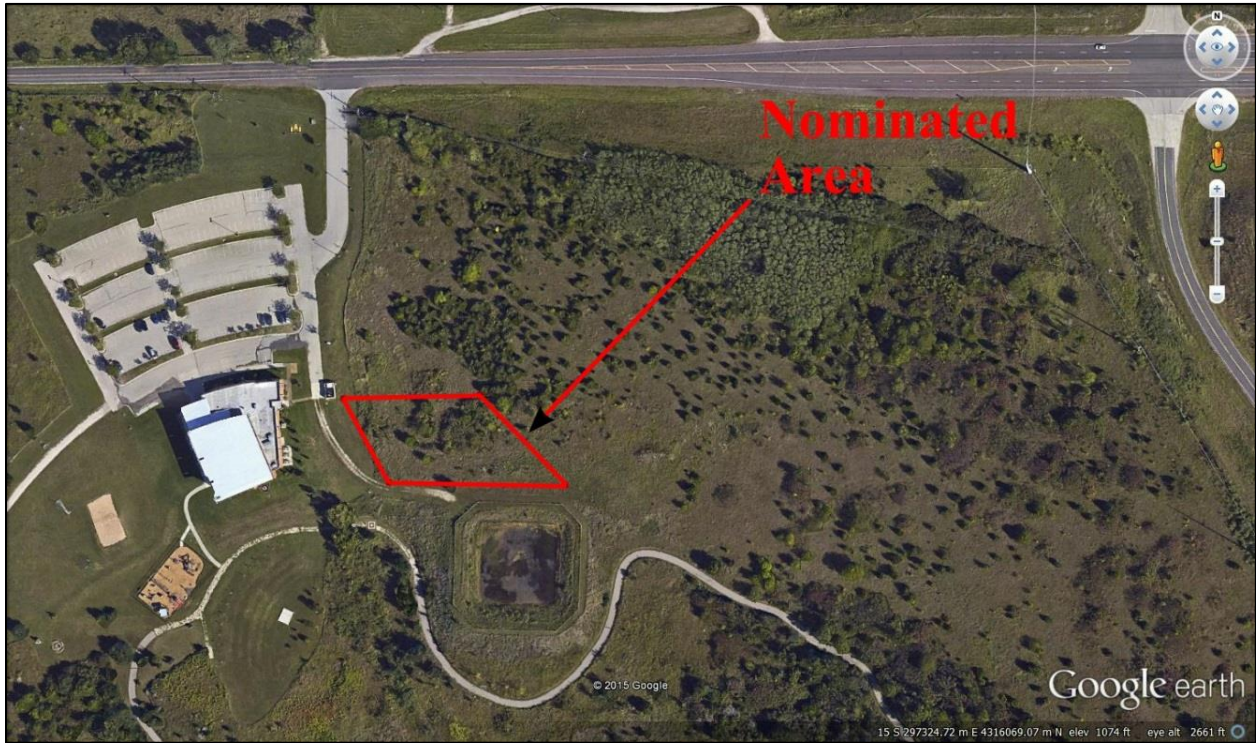


Figure 9.
View Northeast at the First United Methodist Church Oregon-California Trail Swales.



Figure 10.

View West at the First United Methodist Church Oregon-California Trail Swales.



Figure 11.

Location of the nominated area along the combined route of the Oregon and California trails in Kansas. US Department of the Interior National Park Service (NPS) California National Historic Trail Map. (<http://www.nps.gov/cal/planyourvisit/upload/CALmap1-web.pdf>).

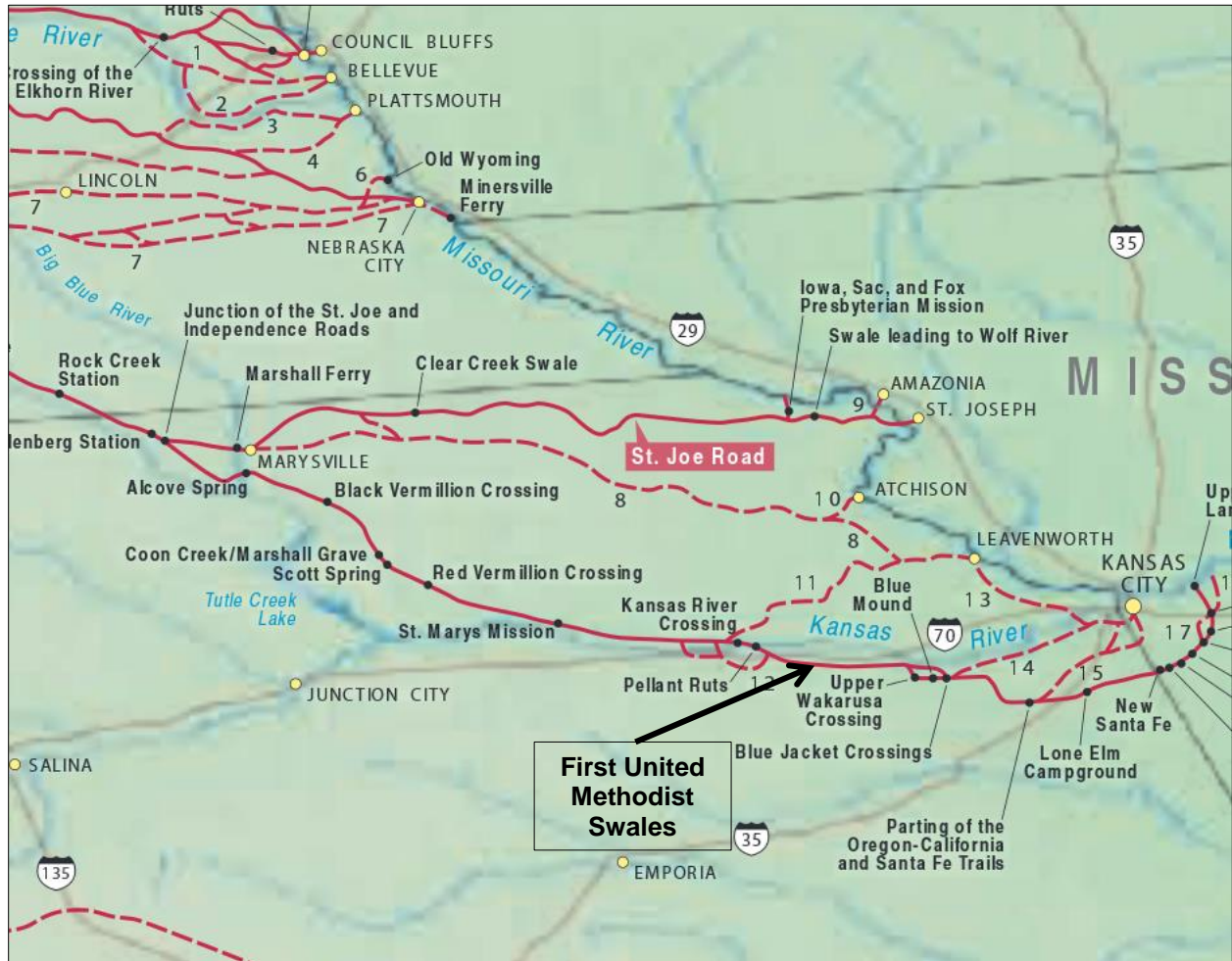
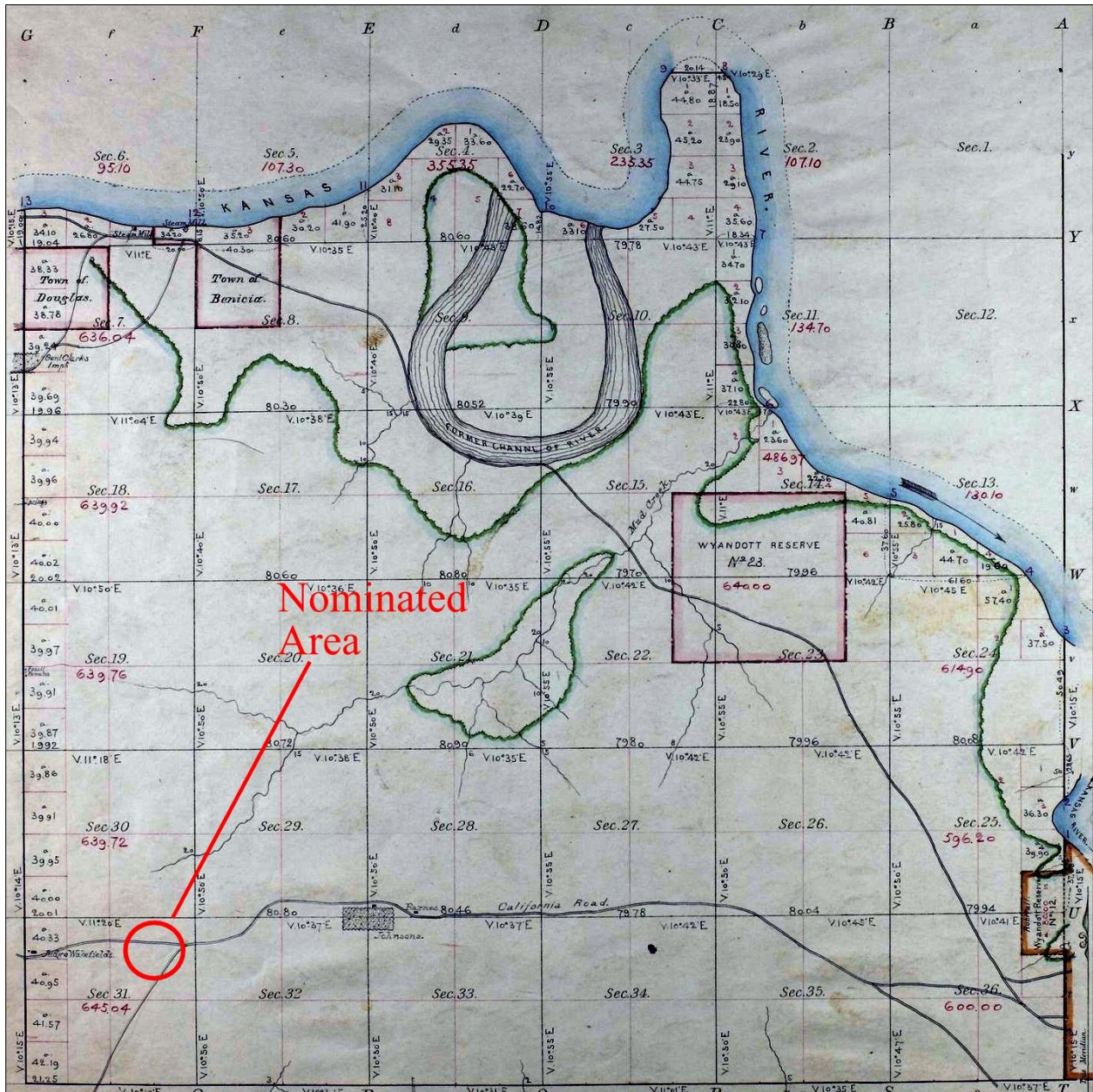


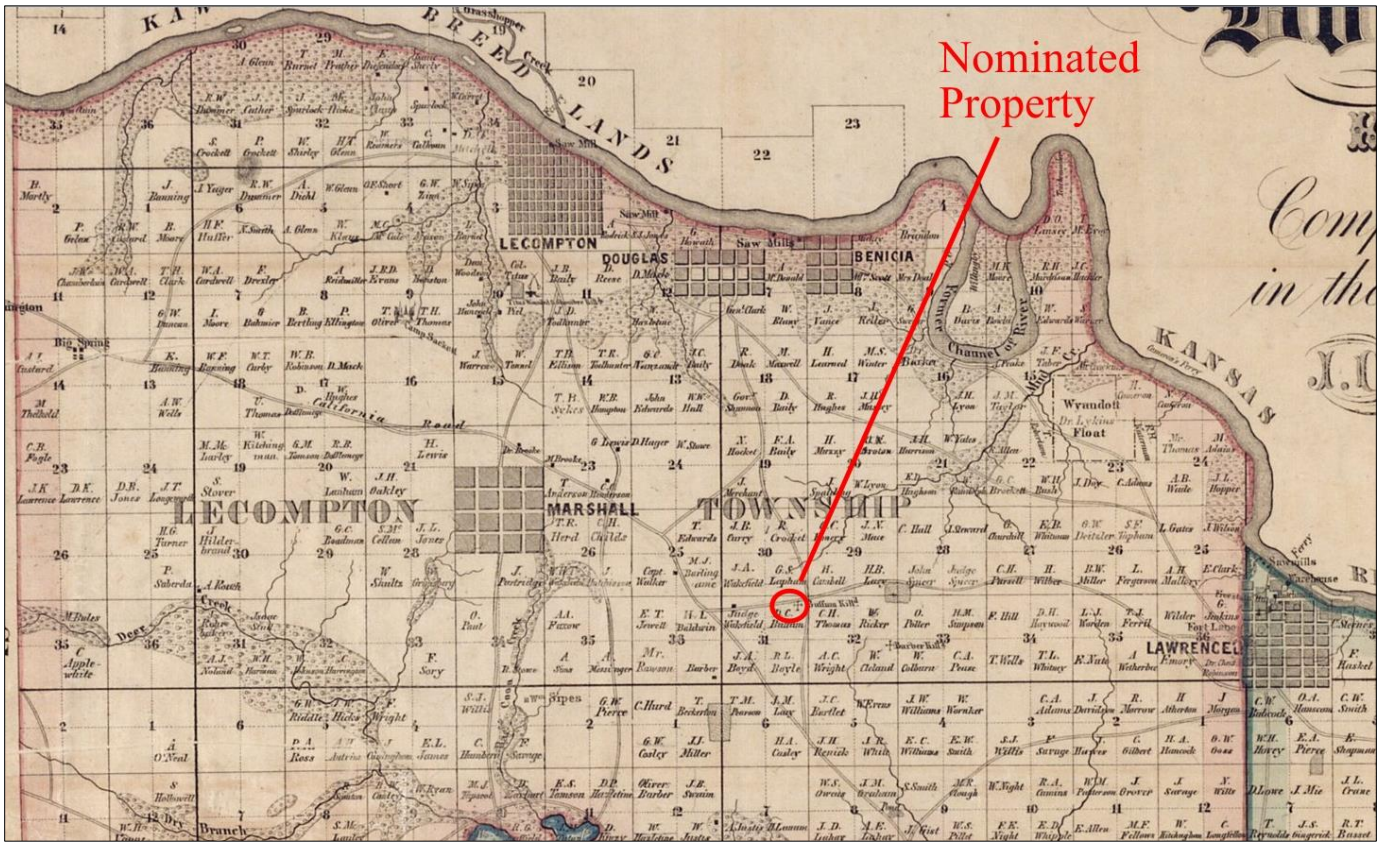
Figure 12.
Partial view of 1860 General Land Office survey map of
Township 12 South, Range 19 East.



Source: <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/223914/page/13> (accessed September 4, 2015).

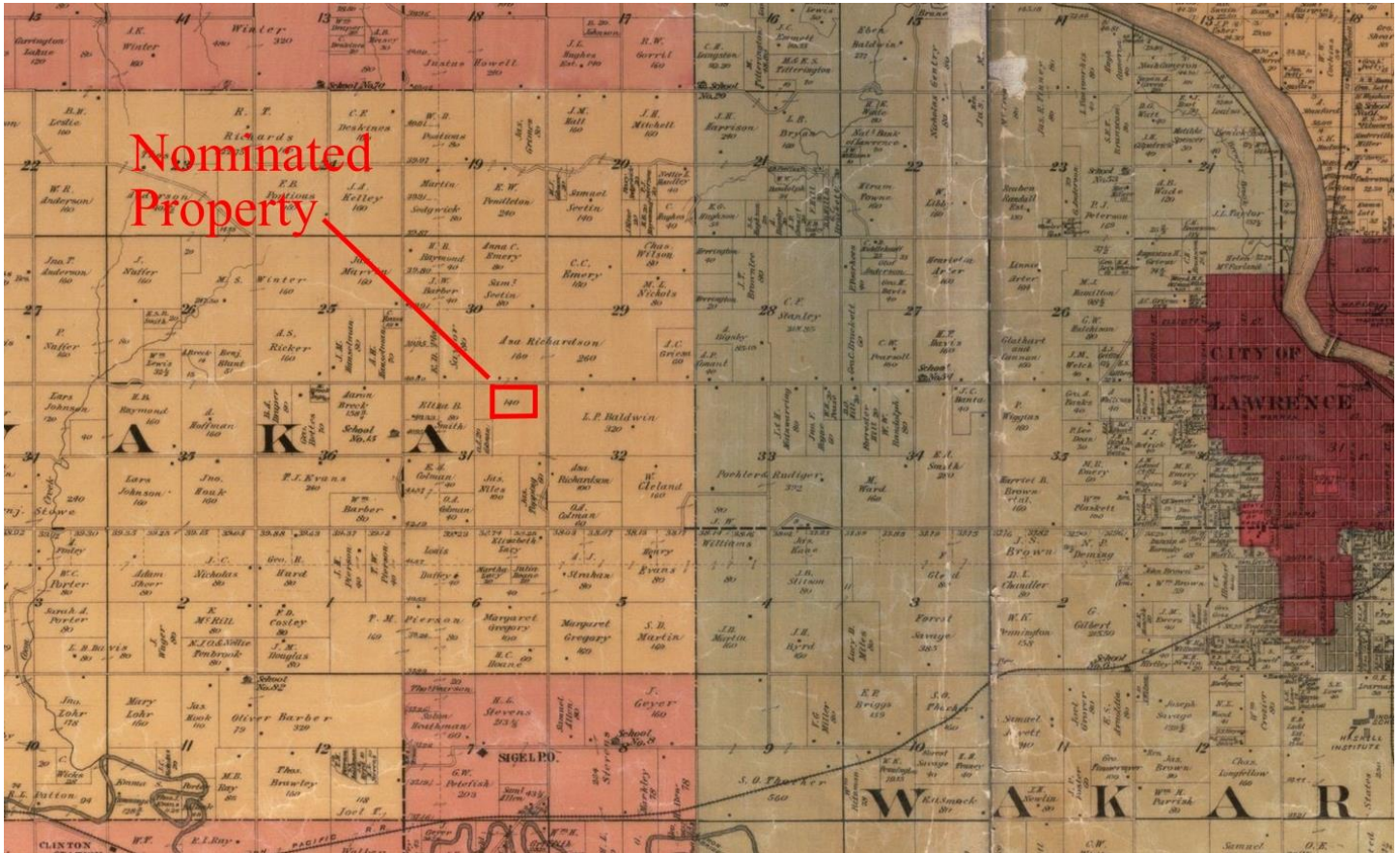
Note: Nominated property is highlighted.

Figure 13.
Map of Douglas County, Kansas Territory. J. Cooper Stuck, 1857.



Source: <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/208420> (accessed September 4, 2015).
Note: Nominated property is highlighted.

Figure 14.
Map of Douglas County, Kansas Territory. John P. Edwards, 1887.



Source: <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/217197> (accessed September 4, 2015)
Note: Property with swales is highlighted.

Figure 15.

Election of Delegates to the Free State Convention. Joel K. Goodin, August 1855.

975-1- C.S., v.1.
Cal.
1855

1065

FREE STATE CONVENTION!

All persons who are favorable to a union of effort, and a permanent organization of all the Free State elements of Kansas Territory, and who wish to secure upon the broadest platform the co-operation of all who agree upon this point, are requested to meet at their several places of holding elections, in their respective districts on the 25th of August, instant, at one o'clock, P. M., and appoint five delegates to each representative to which they were entitled in the Legislative Assembly, who shall meet in general Convention at

Big Springs, Wednesday, Sept. 5th '55,

at 10 o'clock A. M., for the purpose of adopting a Platform upon which all may act harmoniously who prefer Freedom to Slavery.
The nomination of a Delegate to Congress, will also come up before the General Convention.
Let no sectional or party issues distract or prevent the perfect co-operation of Free State men. Union and harmony are absolutely necessary to success. The pro-slavery party are fully and effectually organized. No pars nor minor issues divide them. And to contend against them successfully, we also must be united—Without prudence and harmony of action we are certain to fail. Let every man then do his duty and we are certain of victory.
All Free State men, without distinction, are earnestly requested to take immediate and effective steps to insure a full and correct representation for every District in the Territory. "United we stand; divided we fall!"
By order of the Executive Committee of the Free State Party of the Territory of Kansas, as per resolution of the Mass Convention in session at Lawrence, Aug 15th and 16th, 1855.

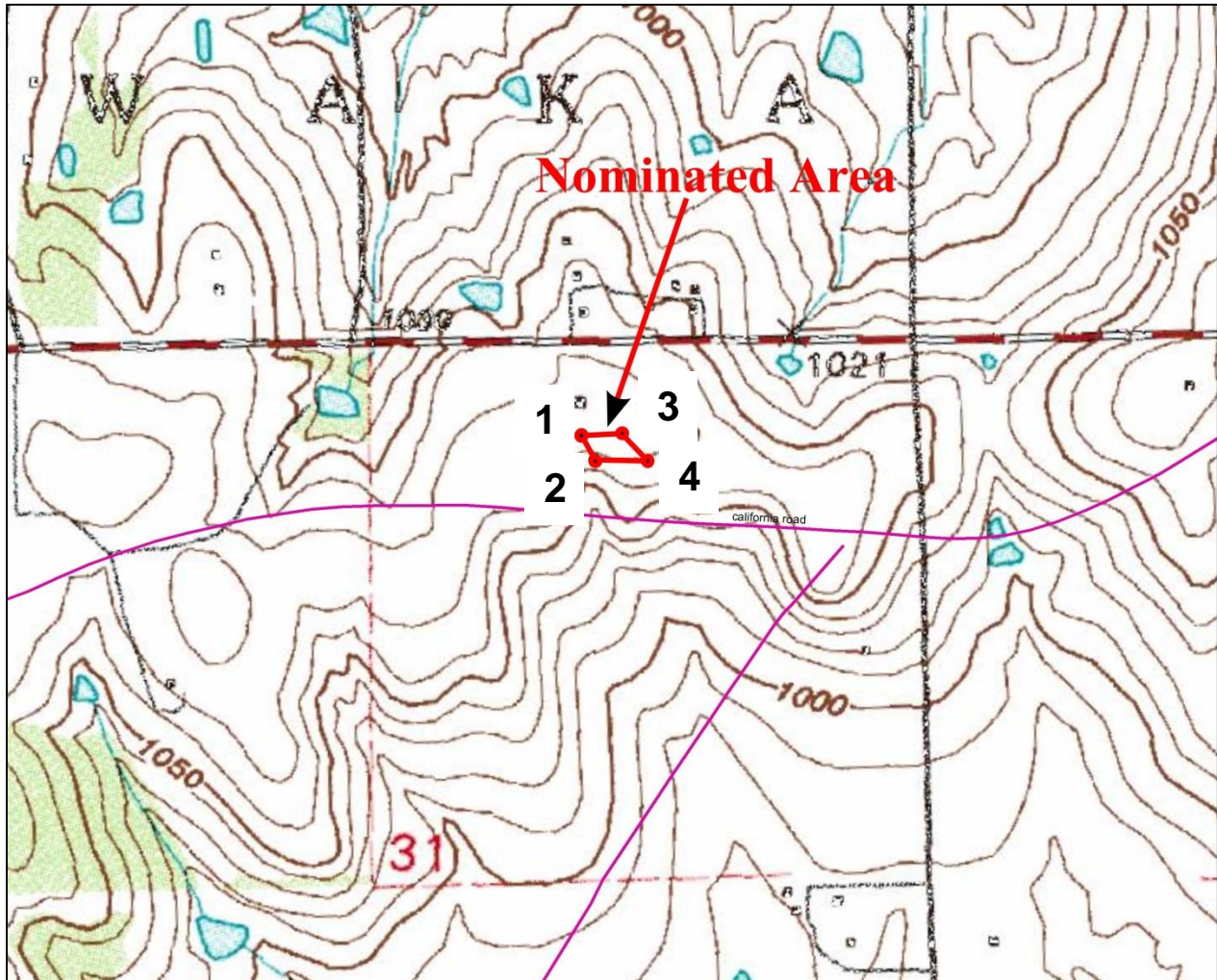
J. K. GOODIN, Sec'y.

C. ROBINSON, Chairman.
Herald of Freedom, Print.

Big

Source: <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/90318> (accessed December 13, 2012).

Boundary Map.
USGS 7.5' Lawrence West Quadrangle Map
North is up; no scale.



1	<u>15S</u>	<u>297196</u>	<u>4316061</u>	3	<u>15S</u>	<u>297257</u>	<u>4316061</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>15S</u>	<u>297215</u>	<u>4316023</u>	4	<u>15S</u>	<u>297294</u>	<u>4316020</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing