United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register Listed
January 8, 2014

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 Oregon and California Trail – Pacha Ruts

other names/site number 14MH322

2. Location

street & number Address Restricted [x] not for publication

city or town Bremen [x] vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Marshall code 117 zip code 66412

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 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)

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
0	0	district
2	2	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
2	**2**	**Total**

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

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

This trail segment is located [REDACTED] south of Bremen, Marshall County in northeast Kansas.[1] The nominated property [REDACTED] contains swales that were part of the St. Joe Road, an eastern branch of the Oregon and California trails' corridor in Kansas (Figure 1). The property is situated near a drainage divide along the upper reaches of Hop Creek and consists of a native pasture on the west side of the creek (Figure 2). Included within the 33.9-acre site are two sets of six intact swales at the property's northern and southern ends. The swales (especially those in the northern set) can be followed on the ground and have been marked by OCTA, the Oregon-California Trail Association. Between these sets of swales are two stone cairns, and a farm pond is located at the east end of the site's boundary (Figures 3 & 4). The cairns and the farm pond are non-contributing resources to this site.

Elaboration

General Landscape[2]

The nominated site is 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.[3] 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.

Judging from early historical accounts and soil survey data, the vegetation of northeast Kansas at the time of initial white settlement 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;[4] although oak, black walnut, linden,

[1] A swale is a linear depression in the ground surface, often deep enough to have sloping sides. A swale is not an individual wheel track; rather, it is a broad depression created by large numbers of animal-drawn conveyances. For the purposes of this nomination, a segment is defined as a group of two or more swales or depressions within a single nominated boundary.

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

[3] W.E. Schoewe, "The Geography of Kansas, Part II: Physical Geography," *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 52, no. 3 (1949): 280, 291.

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

sycamore, locust, hickory, pecan, and other hardwoods could also be found along with smaller forms such as Osage orange, persimmon, papaw, elderberry, serviceberry, chokecherry, and wild grape.[5] 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.[6] 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,[7] and finally into prairie with little or no upland forest vegetation.

Landscape of the Nominated Site

The 33.9-acre site [REDACTED] is located within a rural area of Marshall County characterized by a gently undulating topography. The landscape within the nominated boundary begins at an approximate elevation of 1380 feet (420.6 meters) at the southeast corner of the site and rises to an elevation of approximately 1420 feet (432.8 meters) along the western edge.

While the surrounding sections of land are mostly used for cultivated crops (along agricultural terraces which follow the natural contours), the land within the nominated site has never been cultivated (Figure 5).[8] This is primarily due to the presence of the trail remnants. Instead, the native prairie is used as pasture for cattle. A 1.5-acre pond was constructed within the 1390-foot contour area along the eastern margin of the site. A two-track access road parallels the eastern boundary and curves south across the northern set of swales.

A tree line, mostly comprised of Osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*), is found along the quarter section line, which makes up the western boundary of the site. A dense swath of trees generally follows the 1390-foot contour to the south of the nominated property, separating the swaled land from a cultivated area, and along the south portion of the east boundary to the farm pond. Another hedgerow extends about 460 feet (140 meters) to the northwest from the north side of the pond, following an intermittent creek. Paralleling this tree row is a fence line that separates the pasture from another cultivated area. This fence line creates the northeast boundary of the nominated site. [REDACTED]

North Trail Swales

The northern segment contains a set of at least six parallel trail swales. The segment averages about 180 feet (55 meters) in width and is oriented east-southeast to west-northwest. Two swales are visible at the fence line along the northeastern boundary, heading almost due west to the creek for approximately 190 feet (58 meters). On the west side of the creek, six swales are evident, heading about 500 feet (152 meters) west-northwest uphill to the fence marking the beginning of cultivation (and the western boundary of the site). While there are at least six parallel swales, only two are prominent enough to follow easily. Their surface expression is most clear on the west side of the creek, where they have been deepened by erosion (Figure 4).

South Trail Depressions

The southern segment is oriented southeast to northwest but is much less prominent than the northern set of swales. This segment also averages about 180 feet (55 meters) in width and is about 870 feet (265 meters) long. The depressions are first visible south of the pond dam but may extend to the fence line at the property's eastern margin. They then run uphill across the pasture to the fence along the western boundary.

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

[6] Kuchler, 599.

[7] Ibid., 588.

[8] Steven L. DeVore and Robert K. Nickel, *Geophysical Investigation of Four Suspected Pioneer Grave Locations Along the Oregon and California Trails, Marshall and Pottawatomie Counties, Kansas* (Lincoln, Nebraska: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service Midwest Archeological Center, 2003), 14. Copy on file with Kansas SHPO.

While earlier investigations documented at least six parallel swales in this area, they are shallow and very difficult to discern on the ground.[9]

Stone Cairns

Two subtle stone cairns are situated between the two sets of swales. According to the property's owner, no rock sources are located nearby. That, coupled with the cairns' location at the edge of an upland ridge, suggested the possibility that they might be the markers for trail period burials. Geophysical investigations were conducted around the cairns in 2001 by the National Park Service Midwest Archeological Center. While the work did detect magnetic anomalies, they could not be conclusively identified as the remains of graves.[10] The investigators ultimately recommended limited test excavations in the immediate vicinity of the cairns in order to determine their true function. Because at this time the relationship between these cairns and the trail cannot be correlated, these cairns remain non-contributing resources to the site.

[9] Devore and Nickel, 14.
[10] Ibid., 14-15, 59-60.

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.
- [ ] 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
Exploration/Settlement
Commerce

Period of Significance
1844-1861

Significant Dates
1844
1861

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 in 1844 when the first emigrants traveled along what became known as the St. Joe Road. By 1860 at the latest, Nebraska river towns had replaced the towns in Missouri and Kansas as starting points for the Oregon and California trails; however, this section of the St. Joe Road was used by the Pony Express until its demise in 1861.

Criteria Considerations (justification)
N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

This remnant of the Oregon and California trails' route is located on the western end of an approximate 133-mile branch known as the St. Joe Road, a connector route between St. Joseph, Missouri and the Independence Road. Active between 1844 and circa 1860, the St. Joe Road joined the Independence Road approximately 1.5 miles northwest of this nominated site (Figure 6). The trail remnants at this site were also used by the Pony Express riders in 1861. The Pacha Ruts (named for the family who owns the land) 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 and for its association with the commercial venture that was the Pony Express. This site's associative significance and similarity to related trail sites suggest that associated artifact assemblages may be present; it is therefore also nominated under Criterion D.

Elaboration

Trail Overview[11]

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.[12]

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.[13] 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.[14]

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

[11] Trail overview written by Lee Kreutzer, National Trails Intermountain Region, National Park Service.

[12] William E. 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; Archer Butler Hulbert, ed., *Where Rolls the Oregon: Prophet and Pessimist Look Northwest, v*ol. 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.

[13] Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous*, 290-291.

[14] 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.

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 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.[15]

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.[16]

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 1840, when the pioneer Joel Walker led his family west, and 1869, when completion of the transcontinental railroad brought the overland trails era to a close, is commonly estimated at 350,000 to 500,000 persons.[17]

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."[18] 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

[15] 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.

[16] Stewart, 217; Unruh, 84-85; William E. 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.

[17] Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives*, 5.

[18] Unruh, 321-322.

Kansas toward Nebraska's Platte River. Through the 1840s and 1850s, new military roads were developed to connect Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to Fort Riley in central Kansas, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, and Fort Kearny, Nebraska, and emigrants quickly adopted these and other new trails in making their way to the Platte River. Also during 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.[19] 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.

With the increase of settlement in the West came the necessity of reliable and fast mail service. In late 1859-early 1860, William Russell, of the freighting firm of Russell, Majors, & Waddell, met with California Senator William Gwin about improving the communication between the West and the rest of the country. Russell convinced his partners, Alexander Majors and William Waddell, to establish a horse-and-ride mail relay between Missouri and California. The first westbound Pony Express rider left St. Joseph, Missouri on April 3, 1860.[20]

With a few exceptions, the 2005-mile route of the Pony Express followed the pre-established route of the California Trail from St. Joseph to Salt Lake City, Utah. From there, the route diverged from this trail and headed southwest to Carson City, Nevada and on to Sacramento and San Francisco, California. The Pony Express route was divided into five divisions headed by a single superintendent. This superintendent did the majority of supplying and hiring. According to Alexander Majors, division riders rode between 65 and 100 miles in a day between home stations and stopping every few miles to change horses at relay or swing stations. Because of its shared use with the California Trail, several of the Pony Express stops were established at existing stagecoach stations along the California Trail. Because of the quickness of the horse-and-rider teams, the average time of delivery was 10 days.[21]

By October 1861, just 19 months after its establishment, the Pony Express stopped running. Several factors went into its demise, including financial problems and the beginning to the Civil War. The completion of the transcontinental telegraph in that month, however, ultimately made the express obsolete.[22]

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 was the greatest improvement to western emigration by far. 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 now could 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-

[19] Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road,* 104-105.
[20] William E. Hill, *The Pony Express Trail: Yesterday and Today* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Press, 2010), 1-2, 29.
[21] Ibid., 5, 24.
[22] Ibid., 71-72.

distance wagon traffic gradually dried up. The last documented westbound covered wagon on the Oregon-California Trail crossed Wyoming in 1912.[23]

The mid-19th 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.[24] 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; 290 miles are designated as California National Historic Trail, and 139 miles are designated as being part of the Pony Express National Historic Trail. For a short distance from 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.[25] 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.

Pacha Ruts

The Pacha Ruts are one of the few remnants of the St. Joe Road, a branch of the Oregon and California trails corridor, which was active from 1844 to circa 1860 and connected St. Joseph, Missouri (est. 1843) with the Independence Road, approximately nine miles northwest of Marysville, Kansas (Figure 7). The St. Joe Road was created by sections of at least three separate routes taken by traveling parties (one emigrant; two military). According to trail researcher, Morris Werner, this route was established as an alternative to the route from Independence and Westport, as it "was many miles shorter and eliminated the major hazard of the Kansas River crossing." This route was mainly utilized by emigrants from the St. Joseph and Weston, Missouri areas.[26]

The first party to depart St. Joseph bound for Oregon was led by Cornelius Gilliam in March 1844. Gilliam had advertised his plans to immigrate to Oregon during the previous summer, naming a rendezvous on the "Missouri's right bank 'opposite Owen's Landing, five miles west of Savannah,'" Missouri.[27] The party,

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

[24] See attached bibliography for a sample of these sources.

[25] 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).

[26] Morris Werner, "Blazing a Trail to Oregon: Jumping-Off at St. Joe," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 14 (Autumn 1991): 133.

[27] Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 503. Werner identifies this as present-day Amazonia, Missouri.

which consisted of 323 persons in 84 wagons, left their rendezvous location on May 9, 1844.[28] Gilliam's party, however, did not cross the nominated site, as they connected with the Independence Road at the Black Vermillion Crossing, about five miles southwest of present-day Frankfort, Kansas.[29]

The first group of travelers to pass over the location of the Pacha Ruts was likely the 1844 expedition led by Major Clifton Wharton. This expedition, which consisted of five First U.S. dragoon companies, left Fort Leavenworth on August 12 for the Platte River with the intent of impressing the Pawnee "Indians with the power of the U.S. government; and to reconcile, if possible, Pawnee-Sioux difficulties."[30] Wharton headed north on what was known as the Council Bluffs [Iowa] Road, intersecting with Gilliam's trail at the head of Wolf River, southwest of Fairview, Kansas. Wharton's company then followed Gilliam's trail to the South Fork of the Nemaha River (due east of Seneca) and from there, forged a new route west to present-day Marysville, across the nominated site, and to the junction with the Independence Road.[31]

The third portion of the St. Joe Road was established in 1845 with the help of Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny's expedition to the Rocky Mountains during the Mexican-American War. Kearny's group of 280 First U.S. dragoons left Fort Leavenworth on May 18, 1845, likely heading north along the Council Bluffs Road.[32] The expedition crossed Gilliam's route about five miles southeast of Fairview, but instead of heading west along Wharton's route, Kearny took his group "northwest to the rock bottom crossing later known as Baker's Ford on the South Fork" of the Nemaha River, near present-day Seneca.[33] From there, they arced southwest until they "intercepted Wharton's 1844 trace and camped at the same sulphur spring that Wharton had encountered the previous year."[34] After passing through what would become Marysville, Kearny's expedition crossed over the Pacha Ruts and met the Independence Road.

Historian and 1846 Oregon Trail traveler, Francis Parkman, Jr., indirectly wrote about the St. Joe Road in his narrative *The California and Oregon Trail*, indicating that

> The great medley of Oregon and California emigrants, at their camps around Independence [Blue River crossing near Alcove Spring, Marshall County] had heard reports that several additional parties were on the point of setting out from St. Joseph's [sic], farther to the northward. The prevailing impression was, that these were Mormons, twenty-three hundred in number….[35]

While the established route was in use as early as 1846, the years 1849 to 1852 saw the St. Joe Road's heaviest traffic. Trail historian Merrill Mattes explains, "The St. Joe Road was rivaled only by the Council Bluffs Road as a prime feeder line to the Platte River, and during the period 1849-1852 this could with propriety have been dubbed the 'Gold Rush Alley,' so dense were the emigrant throngs" mostly to California.[36] In 1849, St. Joseph was the most popular jumping-off point for trails to the West, tying with Council Bluffs in 1850.[37] St. Joseph continued its association with the Oregon and California trails well into the late 1850s, but by 1860, steamboat traffic up the Missouri River to Nebraska City and Council Bluffs-Omaha had shifted the majority of emigrant traffic away from Kansas.

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[28] Barry, 508.
[29] Barry, 509; Werner, 142. Werner includes a map of the estimated routes.
[30] Barry, 524.
[31] Werner, 135, 142-143. The Council Bluffs Road ran northerly from Fort Leavenworth along the west bank of the Missouri River, to the area of present-day Atchison, Kanas, and from there continued northwesterly to Council Bluffs, Iowa.
[32] Barry, 545.
[33] Werner, 137, 142-143.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Francis Parkman, Jr., *The California and Oregon Trail: Being Sketches of Prairie and Rocky Mountain Life* (New York, NY: George L. Putnam, 1849), 49 [digitized copy on-line]; available from http://archive.org/stream/californiaoregon00park#page/n15/mode/2up; Internet; accessed 8 August 2013.
[36] Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, 113, 142.
[37] Ibid., 104.

The St. Joe Road, as well as the Independence Road, continued to be used even after the emigrants abandoned the routes. Portions of the St. Joe Road—including the Pacha Ruts—were utilized by Majors, Russell, and Waddell's Pony Express, though the majority of the Pony Express route in Kansas used the 1850 Fort Leavenworth Road (also known as the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Kearny Military Road) laid out by Brevet Major Edmund A. Ogden.[38] From St. Joseph, the riders followed the Oregon and California Trail to present-day Wathena, Kansas, about five miles west. At Wathena, the Pony Express riders diverged from the Oregon and California Trail, heading west along an old Pottawatomie trail for 42 miles to Kennekuk (about 2 miles southeast of Horton) where it joined the Fort Leavenworth Road, re-converging with the St. Joe Road at Marysville.[39] Thus, riders along the Pony Express route would have crossed over the Pacha Ruts on their way to Hollenberg Station—the next relay station from Marysville—and farther west until October 1861, when the Pony Express ended that year.

Archeological Potential

Archeological prospection, geophysical survey, and metal detector survey of similar trail properties 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 only small-scale surveys and testing projects have been undertaken in the Pacha Ruts vicinity, there is every reason to believe that the presence of such an assemblage is possible. This property 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 emigrant patterns, and cultural interactions. Study of both 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 settlement, exploration, and transportation. Further investigation could address key questions regarding 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 various ethnic and social groups, and the nature of trail users, material culture, and the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities.[40]

The Pacha Ruts are a remnant of an upland section of the trail, and were not a well-known landmark. When the emigrants passed through the area on the St. Joe Road, they had recently crossed the Big Blue River at Marysville, and were within a few miles of the Cottonwood Creek crossing. At that point, they would have access to an established campground and the Hollenberg Pony Express Station. Today, only two sets of ruts at the north and south ends of the property remain as intact resources. Despite recent disturbance, this property has the potential to yield additional information. Its location is well known, yet it has not been mapped or defined with precision. For example, the location and depth of the surviving ruts relative to the surrounding landscape could yield significant information regarding the nature of preservation relative to variables such as slope and underlying geologic structure. While it is generally accepted that ruts are deeper and more visible in areas where slopes are steep, careful mapping could provide supporting data. Despite its high visibility among Oregon and California trails sites, no systematic archeological survey of the Pacha Ruts property has been undertaken. Only small-scale surveys, including remote sensing at the location of a cairn in the central portion of the property, have been conducted. More intensive archeological investigations at this property (including metal detector investigations and additional remote sending) might produce period trail period artifacts and cultural features. Their distribution, if plotted precisely, could yield additional significant information regarding issues (in addition to those mentioned above) such as campground use, discard patterns, and wagon repair activities.

[38] Barry, 908, 1067.

[39] Merrill J. Mattes and Paul Henderson, *The Pony Express: From St. Joseph to Fort Laramie* (St. Louis, MO: The Patrice Press, 1989), 21.

[40] Adapted from *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:

__x__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 33.9
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates [REDACTED]
Datum = WGS84

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

[REDACTED]

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries were selected so as to encompass all visible intact trail swales and associated remains.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title KSHS Staff, with Lee Kreutzer (NPS)
organization Kansas Historical Society date
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

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:** (Historic images, maps, etc.)

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: Pacha Ruts
City or Vicinity: Bremen vicinity
County/State: Marshall County, Kansas
Photographer: Rick Anderson
Date of Photos: 14 October 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:
1 of 6 View SE at southernmost swale of north set of swales.
2 of 6 View SE at one of the prominent swales in the property's northern portion with the upper end of the pond in the background.
3 of 6 View SW across one of the prominent swales in the property's northern portion, crossing the photo from left to right behind the vehicle.
4 of 6 View WNW along swale toward west boundary.
5 of 6 View SE at lower end of 4th swale from the south (north set of swales).
6 of 6 View SE from upper end of northernmost swale (north set of swales).

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. Location of the Pacha Ruts along the St. Joe Road, part of the California Trail system in Kansas. U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service (NPS) California National Historic Trail Map. (http://www.nps.gov/cali/planyourvisit/upload/CALImap1-web.pdf).

Figure 2.
[REDACTED]

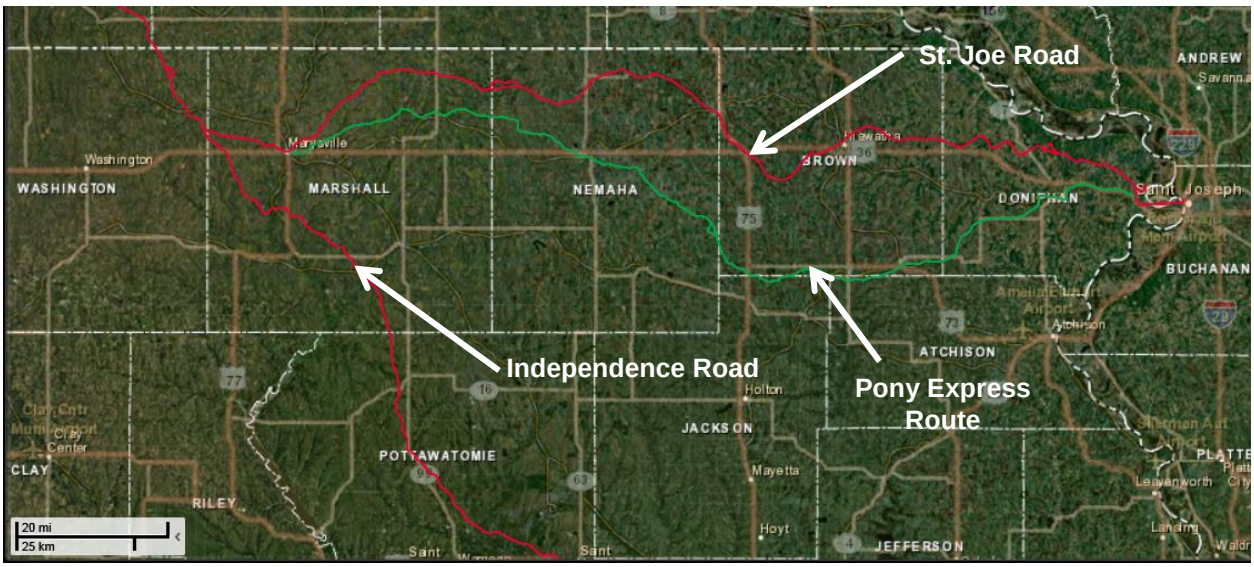
Figure 3.
[REDACTED]

Figure 4.
[REDACTED]

Figure 5.
[REDACTED]

Figure 6.
[REDACTED]

Figure 7. Map showing the routes of the Oregon-California Trail and the Pony Express through Kansas. (National Historic Trails Map Viewer, http://imgis.nps.gov/#Trails)



Photograph Key.
[REDACTED]

Boundary Map.
[REDACTED]

Contextual Map.
[REDACTED]