

BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY



Artist's conception of workers unloading Santa Fe Trail freight wagons in Santa Fe, Spanish New Mexico.
National Park Service illustration

SPECIAL ISSUE

Opening of the Santa Fe Trail

Impacts of the Trail on Missouri's Economy

AN EARLY SANTA FE BUSINESS VENTURE

VOL. 20 No. 3 — FALL 2021

BOONSLICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY PERIODICAL

The Santa Fe Trail and Transcontinental Connections

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE OF *BOONE'S LICK HERITAGE QUARTERLY* commemorates the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Santa Fe Trail by William Becknell. In searching the archives of the *Quarterly*, we found a number of articles on the Santa Fe Trail have been published during the past 28 years. They tell a nearly complete story of the Trail, one to which we could not add anything significant. So we've made a selection of the best of these articles to reprint for this special edition. The lead article in this issue is William Becknell's journal of the first two expeditions to Santa Fe as originally published in the *Missouri Intelligencer*, April 22, 1823. This article was reprinted in the *Quarterly* in the March 1997 (Volume 4, No. 1) dedicated to the 175th anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail. Then editor, Bob Dyer, felt that it deserved reprinting because of its special significance to the origins of the Santa Fe trade in the Boonslick bottoms. Punctuation and spelling in Becknell's Journal were left as presented in the *Intelligencer*.

We are also reprinting two articles relating to the economic impacts of the Santa Fe Trail and one of the early traders, Missouri's eighth governor, Meredith Miles Marmaduke. Both were featured in the *Quarterly* Winter 2013 (Vol. 12, No. 4) issue. They are still relevant.

The early 19th-century history of the Missouri Territory and then the state is a story of trails—the Santa Fe Trail, which began at old Franklin in 1821, and its connection to the Mississippi River by the Boone's Lick Trail-cum pioneer roadway, which dates to circa 1805. The defining artifacts of 19th-century expansion of United States territory, transcontinental trade and migration are foot paths, horse trails and wagon tracks etched into—and slowly fading from—the terra firma. Howard County, Missouri, encompasses the geographical intersection of these two historic trails. After cessation of the War of 1812 and enactment of treaties that brought a halt to hostilities from Native Americans in Missouri Territory, much of the push west from east of the Mississippi River first followed the Boone's Lick Road from St. Charles to Franklin in Howard County, connecting it with the Santa Fe Trail. Recognition of the Boone's Lick Road as a National Historic Trail—as with the Santa Fe Trail—is being pursued by the Boone's Lick Road Association, which was established in 2011 by Columbia resident David Sapp.

The Santa Fe Trail eventually became a link at the western edge of Missouri with other historic trails that carried the bulk of migrating Americans westward: the California and Oregon Trails—trails the Mormons also followed partway as they sought final refuge from persecution in the Midwest by settling in the Great Salt Lake Basin of Utah. The economic importance of the Santa Fe Trail, especially to the state of Missouri during the early to mid-19th century, is documented in the article (page 9) by historian Michael Dickey and by a sidebar (page 14) by author Lee Cullimore; it recounts the Santa Fe Trail trade expeditions mounted by Boonslick businessman Meredith Miles Marmaduke, who later became governor of Missouri (1844). As a military approach and supply route, the Santa Fe Trail also played a key role in the expansion of United States into the Southwest after the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and subsequently through the Gadsden Purchase in 1853.

The more than 800-mile-long Santa Fe Trail also made possible transcontinental trade connections between the United States and Spanish Mexico, linking Howard County to the latter through the *El Camino Real de Terra Adentro*, Royal Road of the Interior Lands, that extended south



Map of the Santa Fe Trail from Franklin, Missouri, to Santa Fe, originally part of Spanish Mexico.

from Santa Fe for 1,600 miles to Spain's colonial capital at Mexico City. Today, *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* is recognized and maintained by the U.S. Department of Interior as a National Historic Trail. It runs from the *Espanola-Santa Fe*, New Mexico, area to El Paso, Texas, where it originally connected to the Mexican portion of *El Camino Real*.

For many centuries before the Santa Fe Trail reached New Mexico from Missouri, *El Camino Real* and connecting branches served tribes of indigenous peoples as trade routes. Mesoamericans sent northward exotic feathers, live macaws, copper bells and shells used to adorn tribal ceremonial dress. Other items commonly exchanged between tribes in Mexico and North America (above the Rio Grande River) included slaves, salt, animal hides, peyote, minerals, pigments and turquoise. Many of these artifacts—and much of this early history—is now presented at the *El Camino Real* International Heritage Center Museum (www.elcaminoreal.org) located between Socorro and Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, along Interstate 25.

— Don B. Cullimore

Boone's Lick Heritage Quarterly is published four times a year by the Boonslick Historical Society, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233.

We encourage our members and others interested in history to contribute articles or other information of historical interest, including family histories, pertaining to the region. Please address all contributions and correspondence related to the periodical to the editor, Don B. Cullimore, 1 Lawrence Dr., Fayette, MO 65248, or email to: don.cullimore40@gmail.com. Editorial guidelines may be obtained from the editor. Publication deadlines are February 1 for the March (Spring) issue; May 1 for the June (Summer) issue; August 1 for the September (Fall) issue; and November 1 for the (Winter) December issue.

The Boonslick Historical Society was founded in 1937 and meets several times a year to enjoy programs about historical topics pertinent to the Boonslick area. Members of the Society have worked together over the years to publish historical books and brochures and to mark historic sites. They supported the founding of Boone's Lick State Historic Site, marked the sites of Cooper's Fort and Hanna Cole's Fort and have restored a George Caleb Bingham painting of loan to The Ashby-Hodge Gallery of American Art at Central Methodist University, Fayette, Mo.

Membership dues are \$15-Individual, \$25-Family, \$50-Sponsor, \$250-Patron, \$500-Life. The dues year is January through December. Receive our quarterly publication, *Boone's Lick Heritage*, and attend annual Society events highlighting the region's history. To become a member, send a check made out to the Boonslick Historical Society, P.O. Box 426, Boonville, MO 65233.

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By 1880, nearly six decades after the start of the Santa Fe Trail, the "Iron Horse" brought an end to the historic freight wagon trail.

*Illustration courtesy of Missouri DNR,
Division of State Parks.*

Opening Of The Santa Fe Trail

William Becknell's First Two Expeditions from Franklin to Santa Fe—1821-22



Map drawn by Alden Orr, Colorado Springs, Colorado ©1972



The following is the journal of Capt. William Becknell, of two expeditions from Boon's Lick to Santa Fe, in the Empire of Mexico, which we long since promised our readers. It is an unvarnished relation of the circumstances, and perhaps may not present the reader with that entertainment and gratification of his curiosity which his fancy may anticipate. — Considering, however, that national views are strongly turned toward the occupation of the territory adjacent to the mouth of the Columbia river, and that this tour embraces a part of the route; that individual enterprise is again inducing many of our worthy citizens to push their speculations into the same quarter, and that probably new scenes of adventure will appear, and new sources of wealth be opened beyond their promise of these little beginnings, we trust the subject will excite an interest separate from the bare statement of facts and carry the mind to the contemplation of future re-

sults and benefits. It will open a free intercourse, acquaint us with their soil, climate and peculiarities of the interior of that interesting country, and give a new, unexplored & profitable source of trade to Missouri. The adventurous enterprise and hardy habits of this frontier people will soon penetrate beyond the mountains, compete for trade on the shores of the Pacific, and investigate the advantages of that immense country which extends to the south. It is pleasing, also to observe the great change which republican ideas and institutions have already effected in that country. — Monarchy bound in chains and threw into prison all those of our unfortunate countrymen whom accident or business brought within its reach; while republicanism extends the hand of friendship & receives them with the welcome of hospitality. The one did not wish its people to be informed by an intercourse with those of other nations, because it would enable

them to comprehend the wickedness, corruption, folly and illiberality of its administration; while the other cheerfully affords the means of diffusing intelligence, knowing that it contributes to the happiness of its people, the prosperity of its institutions and the permanence of its government. The circumstance, also, of taking waggons over an untraced wilderness of nearly one thousand miles, is a novel one, and will impress distant readers with an idea of the boldness and activity of their western brethren.

BECKNELL'S JOURNAL

Our company crossed the Missouri near the Arrow Rock ferry on the first day of September, 1821, and encamped six miles from the ferry. The next morning, being warm and cloudless, we proceeded on our journey over a beautiful rolling prairie country, and travelled 35 miles, crossing the Petit Osage Plain, which is justly accounted one of the most romantic and beautiful places in the state. The traveller approaches the plain over a very high point of adjoining prairie; suddenly the eye catches a distant view of the Missouri on the right, and a growth of lofty timber adjoining it, about two miles wide. In front is a perfectly level, rich and beautiful plain, of great extent, and diversified by small groves of distant timber, over which is a picturesque view of nearly twenty miles. On the left it is bounded by a branch of the La Mine river, which is handsomely skirted with timber; while still further in this direction the view is bounded by the fanciful undulations of high prairie. Description cannot do justice to such a varied prospect, or the feelings which are excited in beholding it.

This being about the time of equinoctial storms, we suffered some inconvenience for two or three days on account of rains and a cool and humid atmosphere. Arrived at Fort Osage, we wrote letters, purchased some medicines, and arranged such affairs as we thought necessary previous to leaving the confines of civilization. The country several days travel from Fort Osage, is very handsomely situated, being high prairie, of exceeding fertility; but timber, unfortunately, is scarce.

On the fourth day after leaving the Fort, I was taken sick

in consequence of heat and fatigue induced by chasing two elk which we had wounded the day before, but which had strength sufficient to elude our pursuit. Some others of the company complained of illness about this time; but determining not to surrender to trifles, or indulge in delay, until it became absolutely necessary, we continued to travel slowly. On the 20th we crossed the main Osage, being nearly all sick and much discouraged. It rained severely, and we were under the necessity of stopping to dry our baggage. On the second day after crossing the Osage, we saw many buffalo, one of which we killed; we also saw several goats, but they were so sharp sighted and wild that we could not shoot them. This day we encamped on the waters of the Arkansas, after travelling over much uneven prairie, almost entirely covered with flint rock. About this time we encountered two days

incessant rain. We halted in a small grove to refresh ourselves, rest our horses and wash our clothes. — We sent out two hunters who killed a deer, and saw some goats and large herds of buffalo.

Late in the evening of Monday the 24th, we reached the Arkansas, having travelled during the day in sight of buffalo, which are here innumerable. The Arkansas at this place is about three hundred yards wide, very shallow, interrupted by bars, and confined by banks of entire sand — the water has every appear-

ance of being as muddy as that of the Missouri; we, however, crossed one of its branches whose waters were limpid and beautiful, and which was one hundred yards wide a mile from its mouth. We gave this the name of Hope Creek. These streams afford no timber except a few scattering cottonwoods. It is a circumstance of surprise to us that we have not seen Indians, or fresh sign of them, although we have traversed their most frequented hunting ground; but considering their furtive habits, and predatory disposition, the absence of their company during our journey, will not be a matter of regret.

The next day we crossed the Arkansas at a place where it is not more than eighteen inches deep, and encamped on the south bank. We left our encampment early the next morning, and about noon came to a large settlement or town of prairie dogs, which appeared to cover a surface of ten acres. They

NOTICE

A Company of 17 men met at Ezekiel Williams's on the 4th of August destined to the westward. W. Becknell was chosen by a unanimous vote as Captain of the company. On the 18th inst. we are all to meet at Mr. Shaw's in Franklin, where two Lieutenants will be elected. We have concluded that thirty men will constitute a company sufficiently strong to proceed as far as we wish to go. All those who signed their names to the first article, and did not appear on the 4th of this month, are excluded from going in this company, and excused from paying any fine. On the first day of September, the company will cross the Missouri at Arrow Rock. Any persons who wish to go will do well to meet at the place appointed on the 18th. No signers will be received after that day.

W. BECKNELL

Missouri Intelligencer, August 14, 1821

burrow in the earth, are of a dark brown color, about the size of a pup five or six weeks old, which they nearly resemble in every respect except the ears, which are more like those of the opossum. Having a desire to taste its flesh, I killed one, a small part of which I roasted, but found it strong and unpalatable. Their sense of hearing is acute, and their apprehension of danger so great that the least noise of approach frightens them to their holes, from which they make continual and vehement barking until a person approaches within fifty or sixty yards of them; they then take to their holes, with their heads elevated above the ground, and continue barking until the approach is very near, when they disappear instantaneously. They often sit erect, with their fore legs hanging down like a bear.

We found here a ludicrous looking animal, perfectly unknown to any one of our company; it was about the size of a raccoon, of a light grey color, had uncommonly fine fur, small eyes, and was almost covered with long shaggy hair; its toe nails were from one and a half to two inches in length, its meat was tender and delicious. We also killed one of the rabbit species as large as our common fox; it was of a grey color, but its ears and tail were black. It exhibited agility in running a short distance after it was shot which exceeded anything of the kind we had ever witnessed. We regret the deficiency of our zoological information, which prevents our giving a more scientific and satisfactory account of those animals.

The evening of the 28th brought us to some very high hills for this country, composed entirely of sand, which had been in sight all day, exhibiting at a distance a luminous' or whitish appearance; they are very extensive, and entirely destitute of vegetation. We encamped here, substituting buffalo manure for fuel. Our lodging was very uncomfortable, in consequence of being exposed to torrents of rain, which poured upon us incessantly till day. The next morning we started early, and killing a buffalo for breakfast, proceeded again on our journey. — At about one o'clock found ourselves on the celebrated salt plain of the Arkansas. It was about one mile wide; its length we did not ascertain; its appearance was very different from the idea I had formed from the several descriptions which I had seen. This, however, might have been owing to the late heavy rains, that had covered the earth three inches deep with water, which we found to be a strong brine. Under the water was an apparent mixture of salt and sand; and in dry weather I have no doubt the appearance of the salt would be much greater. So far as the eye can reach, on every side, the country here appears alive with buffalo and other animals.

About this time we saw five wild horses, being the first we had seen. They had the appearance, at a distance, of being fine large animals. Some difficulties now presented themselves, especially the scarcity of food for our horses,

and timber for fire.

A continual and almost uninterrupted scene of prairie meets the view as we advance, bringing to mind the lines of Goldsmith,

*"Onward where Campania's plain, forsaken, lies
"A weary waste, extending to the skies."*

The immense number of animals, however, which roam undisturbed, and feed bountifully upon its fertility, gives some interest and variety to the scenery. The wolves sometimes attack the buffalo; and whenever an attack is contemplated, a company of from ten to twenty divide into two parties, one of which separates a buffalo from his herd, and pursues him, while the others head him. I counted twenty-one wolves one morning in a chase of this kind.

We still continue meandering the Arkansas, but travel very slowly in consequence of the continued ill health of some of the party. Our horses here for the first time attempted to leave the encampment, and one strayed off which we never saw afterwards.

The water of the river is here clear, although the current is much more rapid than where we first struck it. Its bed had gradually become narrower, and its channel consequently deeper. The grass in the low lands is still verdant, but in the high prairie it is so short that a rattlesnake, of which there are vast numbers, here, may be seen at the distance of fifty yards; they inhabit holes in the ground.

On the 15th, we discovered a lake, which had every appearance of being strongly impregnated with saltpetre. Our horses having become very weak from fatigue and the unfitness of their food, we encamped three days to recruit them and dress some skins for moccasins; during which time we killed three goats and some other game.

On the 21st we arrived at the forks of the river & took the course of the left hand one. The cliffs become immensely high, and the aspect of the country is rugged, wild and dreary. On the evening of the 23rd we heard the report of a gun, which is the first indication of our being in the neighborhood of Indians. As yet we have encountered no 'difficulty for water, but have been destitute of bread or salt for several weeks. On the 26th we saw large flocks of mountain sheep, one of which I killed. It had long thick hair; its color was a dirty blue, with a very fine fur next the skin; a black streak extended from its head to its tail, which is short, and of a lighter color than the body; its rump and hams were very similar to those of our domestic sheep.

We had now some cliffs to ascend, which presented difficulties almost insurmountable, and we were laboriously engaged nearly two days in rolling away large rocks, before we attempted to get our horses up, and even then one fell and was bruised to death. At length we had the gratification of finding ourselves on the open plain; and two day's travel brought us to the Canadian fork, whose rugged cliffs

again threatened to interrupt our passage, which we finally effected with considerable difficulty.

Nov. 1st, we experienced a keen northwest wind, accompanied with some snow. Having been now traveling about fifty days, our diet being altogether different from what we had been accustomed to and unexpected hardships and obstacles occurring almost daily, our company is much discouraged; but the prospect of a near termination of our journey excites hope and redoubled exertion, although our horses are so reduced that we only travel from eight to fifteen miles per day. We found game scarce near the mountains, and one night encamped without wood or water.

On the 4th, and on several subsequent days, found the country more level and pleasant, discovered abundance of iron ore, and saw many wild horses. After several days' descent toward Rock river, on Monday the 12th we struck a trail, and found several other indications which induced us to believe that the inhabitants had here herded their cattle and sheep. Timber, consisting of pine and cottonwood, is more plentiful than we have found it for some time.

On Tuesday morning the 13th we had the satisfaction of meeting a party of Spanish troops. Although the difference of our language would not admit of conversation, yet the circumstances attending their reception of us, fully convinced us of their hospitable disposition and friendly feelings. Being likewise in a strange country, and subject to their disposition, our wishes lent their aid to increase our confidence in their manifestations of kindness. The discipline of the officers was strict, and the subjection of the men appeared almost servile.

We encamped with them that night, and the next day about 1 o'clock, arrived at the village of St. Michael, the conduct of whose inhabitants gave us grateful evidence of civility and welcome. Fortunately I here met with a Frenchman, whose language I imperfectly understood, and hired him to proceed with us to Santa Fe, in the capacity of an interpreter. We left here early the next morning. During the day passed another village named St. Baw, and the remains of an ancient fortification, supposed to have been constructed by the aboriginal Mexican Indians.

The next day, after crossing a mountainous country, we arrived at Santa Fe and were received with apparent pleasure and joy. It is situated in a valley of mountains, on a branch of the Rio del Norte or North river and some twenty miles from it. It is the seat of government of the province, is about two miles long and one mile wide, and compactly settled. The day after my arrival I accepted an invitation to visit the Governor, whom I found to be well informed and gentlemanly in manners; his demeanor was courteous and friendly. He asked many questions respecting my country, its people, their manner of living, &c., expressed his desire that the American would keep up an intercourse with that coun-

try, and said that if any of them wished to emigrate, it would give him pleasure to afford them every facility.

The people are generally swarthy, and live in a state of extreme indolence and ignorance. Their mechanical implements are very limited, and they appear to know little of the benefit of industry, or the advantage of the arts. Corn, rice and wheat are their principal productions; they have very few garden vegetables, except the onion which grows large and abundantly; the seeds are planted nearly a foot apart, and produce onions from four to six inches in diameter. Their atmosphere is remarkably dry, and rain is uncommon, except in the months of July and August. To remedy their inconvenience, they substitute, with tolerable advantage, the numerous streams which descend from the mountains by damming them up, and convey the water over their farms in ditches. Their domestic animals consist chiefly of sheep, goats, mules and asses. None but the wealthy have horses and hogs.

Like the French they live in villages; the rich keeping the poor in depredation and subjection. Laborers are hired for about three dollars per month; their general employment is that of herdsmen, and to guard their stock from a nation of Indians called Navohoes, who sometimes murder the guards and drive away their mules and sheep. The circumstance of their farms being wholly unfenced, obliges them to keep their stock some distance from home. The walls of their houses are two or three feet thick, built of sun-dried brick, and are uniformly one story high, having a flat roof made of clay, and floors of the same material. They do not know the use of plank and neither chairs nor tables, although the rich have a rough imitation of our settee, which answers the treble purpose of chair, table and bedstead.

My company concluded to remain at St. Michael, except Mr. McLaughlin, and we left that village December 13, on our return home, in company with two other men who had arrived there a few days before, by a different route. At the time we started the snow was eighteen inches deep, but the quantity diminished as we reached the high lands, which we thought an extraordinary circumstance.

On the 17th day of our journey we arrived at the Arkansas, & thence shaped our course over the high land which separates the water of that and the Caw rivers. Among the Caw Indians we were treated hospitably, purchased corn from them, and in forty-eight days from the time of our departure reached home, much to our satisfaction. We did not experience half the hardships anticipated, on our return. We had provisions in plenty, but Boreas was sometimes rude, whose unwelcome visits we could not avoid, and whose disagreeable effects our situation often precluded us from guarding against. We had, however, but one storm of snow or rain on our return, but we sometimes went three or four days without a stick of timber. In such exigencies we again had recourse to buffaloe mahure, which is a good substitute

for fuel, and emits great heat.

The Second Trip To Santa Fe, 1822

Having made arrangements to return on the 22nd day of May, 1822,¹ crossed the Arrow Rock ferry, and on the third day our Company consisting of 21 men, with three wagons, concentrated. No obstacle obstructed our progress until we arrived at the Arkansas, which river we crossed with some difficulty, and encamped on the south side. About midnight our horses were frightened by buffalo, and all strayed—28 were missing. Eight of us, after appointing a place of rendezvous, went in pursuit of them in different directions and found eighteen. Two of this company discovered some Indians, and being suspicious of their intentions, thought to avoid them by returning to camp; but they were overtaken, stripped, barbarously whipped and robbed of their horses, guns and clothes. They came in about midnight, and the circumstance occasioned considerable alarm. We had a strong desire to punish these rascally Osages who commit outrages on those very citizens from who they receive regular annuities.

One other man was taken by the same party to their camp, and probably would have shared like treatment had not the presence of Mr. Chouteau restrained their savage dispositions. He sent word to me that he had recovered the horses and guns which had been taken from our men, and requested me to come on the next morning and receive them. On our arrival at his camp we found it evacuated, but a short note written on bark instructed me to follow him up the Autawge river. This we declined thinking that his precipitate retreat indicated some stratagem or treachery. These Indians should be more cautiously avoided and stricdy guarded against than any others on the route.

Mr. Heath's company on the same route joined us here. The hilarity and sociability of this gentleman often contributed to disperse the gloomy images which very naturally presented themselves on a journey of such adventure and uncertainty. After six days of incessant fatigue in endeavoring to recover all our horses, we once more left our camp, and after traveling eight days up the Arkansas, struck a southwest course for the Spanish country. Our greatest difficulty was in the vicinity of Rock river, where we were under the necessity of taking our wagons up some high and rocky cliffs by hand.

We arrived again at St. Michael in 22 days from the Arkansas. We saluted the inhabitants with 3 rounds from our rifles, with which they appeared much pleased. With pleasure I here state, that the utmost harmony existed among our company on the whole route, and acknowledge the cheerfulness with which assistance was always rendered to each other. We separated at St. Michael for the purpose of trading more advantageously. Some of the company, among whom

was Mr. Heath, remained there, and others I did not see again until my return. On our return we took a different course from that pursued on our way out, which considerably shortened the route, and arrived at Fort Osage in 48 days.

Those who visit that country for the purpose of vending merchandise will do well to take goods of excellent quality and unfaded colors, — an idea prevails among the people there, which certainly is a very just one, that the goods hitherto imported into their country, were the remains of an old stock and sometimes damaged. A very great advance is obtained on goods and the trade very profitable; money and mules are plenty, and they do not hesitate to pay the price demanded for an article if it suits their purposes, or their fancy. The administration of their government, although its form is changed, is still very arbitrary, and the influence which monarchy had on the minds and manners of the people still remains, which is displayed by the servility of the lower orders to the wealthy.

An excellent road may be made from Fort Osage to Santa Fe. Few places would require much labor to render them passable, and a road might be so laid out as not to run more than thirty miles over the mountains.

'The Road to Santa Fe' - A Convergence of Cultures PBS Documentary Tells Trail Story

The history of the Santa Fe Trail provides the focus of a new documentary being distributed to PBS stations throughout the US this Fall. Entitled "The Road to Santa Fe," this 90-minute program traces the main routes of the trail from Missouri to Santa Fe. Produced to coincide with the bicentennial of the trail, the documentary begins with the departure of a small group of traders from Franklin, Missouri in September of 1821 on the first successful trading expedition to Santa Fe. It proceeds through the six decades of the trail's active trading life, highlighting the main events and historical characters connected to it.

With the assistance of noted historians such as Leo Oliva, a founding member of the Santa Fe Trail Association, and Frances Levine, president of the Missouri Historical Society, the documentary reflects upon the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the westward expansion, its impact on US and Mexico, and its impact on the indigenous inhabitants of the region.

The documentary includes narrated excerpts from journals written by historical figures who traveled the trail, including William Becknell, George Sibley, Josiah Gregg, Susan Shelby Magoffin and Marian Sloan Russell. The producer of the documentary, Dave Kendall of Prairie Hollow Productions, tells of his family's connection to the trail as one of his ancestors gained employment as a teamster and subsequently settled on a farm near Council Grove, Kansas.

The broadcast premiered on KCPT — Kansas City PBS. It will be made available to other PBS stations across the country in November. More information is available on the website: www.prairiehollow.net.

Specie, Sweat and Survival: The Impact of the Santa Fe Trail on Missouri's Economy

By Michael Dickey, Arrow Rock State Historic Site

DURING THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY, THREE GREAT overland trails led from Missouri to the far west: the California, the Oregon and the Santa Fe Trails. The first two were immigrant trails whereas the Santa Fe Trail was a route of commerce. After 1848, the Santa Fe Trail did carry emigrant traffic but it was still first and foremost a commercial trade route. Missouri Governor John Miller emphasized the importance of the trade in 1830: "Our trade to the northern parts of New Mexico continues to be prosecuted by our citizens and is an essential and important branch of the commerce of Missouri."¹ The idea of commerce between Santa Fe and the Mississippi valley predates 1821, the official beginning of the Santa Fe Trade. Itinerant French traders from the Illinois Country reached Santa Fe sporadically throughout the eighteenth century. The Mallet brothers made the most serious attempt in 1739, but lost most of their trade goods in a river crossing.² Spanish officials were suspicious of foreigners and the French traders faced confiscation of their property, arrest and expulsion. Consequently none of these ventures resulted in the establishment of regular commerce.

At the conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763, France ceded the vast Louisiana Territory to Spain. Spanish dominion now stretched from New Mexico to the Mississippi River. Trade between Santa Fe and the new town of St. Louis appealed to some officials. The Governor of New Mexico sent Pedro Vial from Santa Fe to St. Louis in 1792 with the express purpose of opening a trade route. However, the Spanish government did not capitalize on his success. Spain still feared that trade would invite unwanted foreign influence into New Mexico, as the inhabitants of St. Louis were of French and now increasingly, American extraction.³

When the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory in 1803, interest in trade with Santa Fe was renewed. William Morrison of Kaskaskia, Illinois, sent Jean Baptiste

LaLande to Santa Fe with an unspecified amount of goods. LaLande apparently sold the goods but failed to return to Kaskaskia with the profits.⁴ St. Louis fur trader Manuel Lisa eyed the possibilities of trade with Santa Fe, but upon hearing the reports of the Lewis and Clark expedition turned his attention to the fur trade of the upper Missouri.⁵



Gov. John Miller
Missouri State Archives

The exploration of the Southwest by Lt. Zebulon Pike in 1806-1807 again piqued American interest in

Santa Fe.⁶ Spain continued its policy of isolation. Almost prophetically, they feared that American colonists would follow American traders resulting in the annexation of New Mexico. Like the French before them American trappers and traders entering New Mexico were subject to arrest, expulsion and the confiscation of their goods.

In 1809, Emmanuel Blanco led St. Louis traders James McLanahan, James Patterson and Ruben Smith to New Mexico. The party was imprisoned until early in 1812. In April of that year, another trading party under Robert McKnight left St. Louis for Santa Fe. The party was imprisoned until 1820 and did not return to St. Louis until the spring of



1821. When they got home, they described their ordeal, their disappointment in the government's half-hearted efforts to free them, but most importantly they speculated about the prospects of future trade in Santa Fe.⁷

The conclusion of the War of 1812 and the subsequent peace with Britain's Indian allies opened the way for a flood of emigration into the wilderness of central Missouri's "Boonslick Country." Towns literally sprang up in the wilderness overnight. The largest of these was Franklin, founded in 1816 on the banks of the Missouri River. By 1819, the town was second only in size to St. Louis and was the hub of trade, industry and commerce in the Boonslick Country. It was destined to play a crucial role in the development of the Santa Fe trade.

Excessive land speculation in the western states and territories led to price inflation by 1819. Nearly everyone was in debt as people rushed to buy on credit. Land was sold and resold over and over without actual payments being made. Finally, the bubble broke and the economy collapsed. The resulting depression known as the "Panic of 1819" was felt in Missouri Territory by the latter half of 1820. Emigration to the Boonslick Country halted, land was no longer marketable and farm produce had no buyers. Gold and silver coin or "specie" fled the country and prices fell. Merchants went bankrupt and many of the frontier boomtowns went bust, even disappearing off the map. Banks produced their own notes but most were unredeemable which led Missourians to distrust banks and their "soft money." Existing banks failed and no new banks were established in Missouri for another seventeen years.⁸

In this atmosphere of despair, one man in Franklin took desperate action to stave off prosecution for his debts. William Becknell took out an ad in the July 25, 1821, issue of the *Missouri Intelligencer* newspaper. It read in part, "An article for the government of a company of men destined to the westward for purposes of trading for Horses and Mules, and catching Wild Animals of every description, that we think advantageous to the company."⁹ Each man was to stake \$10.00 worth of merchandise for the trip. The ad was a first step in what would become the first successful trading venture to Santa Fe with lasting economic consequences.

Becknell and several others with packhorses crossed the Missouri River near the Arrow Rock ferry on September 1, 1821. The expedition coincided with two events that would facilitate and foster regular trade between Santa Fe and the Boonslick Country: the admission of Missouri as a state and the establishment of Mexico as an independent republic. In contrast to earlier adventurers arriving in New Mexico, Becknell reported that on November 13th, "...we had the satisfaction of meeting a party of Spanish troops. Although the difference in language would not admit to conversation,

yet the circumstances attending their reception of us, fully convinced us of their hospitable disposition and friendly feelings."¹⁰ Becknell also reported that the Governor of Santa Fe "...expressed a desire that the Americans would keep up an intercourse with that country..."¹¹

Approximately two weeks after Becknell's arrival, St. Louis Merchants Thomas James and John McKnight arrived in Santa Fe via the Arkansas River. McKnight was primarily interested in finding his brother Robert who had failed to return from an ill-fated trade expedition of 1812. James however sought to dispose of surplus goods. Shortly after them, the Glenn-Fowler party, which had been trapping in the mountains, came into Santa Fe and did some trading.

Becknell recognized the opportunity at hand and returned to Franklin in January of 1822 planning a return trip

for the sole purpose of carrying trade goods to Santa Fe. Mr. H.H. Harris reminisced about Becknell's return. "My father saw them unload when they returned, and when their rawhide packages of silver dollars were dumped on the sidewalk, one of the men cut the thongs and the money spilled out clinking on the stone pavement and rolled into the gutter."¹² If the account is true, this would have been an electrifying sight in economically depressed Franklin.



William Becknell
Illustration, BHS Archives

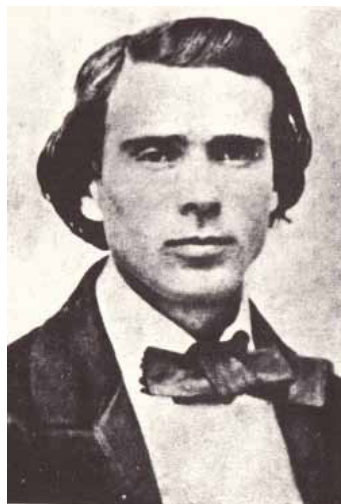
In the spring of 1822, three trading expeditions left Franklin bound for Santa Fe. Becknell's party took three wagons loaded with goods, the first of many wheeled conveyances to be used on the trail.

New Mexico's policy towards foreign traders had changed for several reasons. Spain had consumed the raw resources of the province while returning little to the inhabitants in the way of finished goods. The economic poverty of the people was exacerbated by the official policy barring foreign traders. With independence, New Mexicans were now free to utilize their own resources to purchase manufactured goods. For example, the silver mines within forty miles of Santa Fe could now benefit the local populace instead of just the ruling elite in Madrid, Spain.

Conversely, economically depressed Missouri finally had an outlet for the surplus merchandise that had accumulated as a result of the Panic of 1819. Geography and topography also fostered the growth of trade. The distance from Franklin to Santa Fe was about 800 miles and the Great

Plains was a relatively easy course to travel for most of the distance. This contrasted sharply with Vera Cruz, Mexico's official port of entry. It was nearly 2,000 miles from Vera Cruz to Santa Fe, all of it over rough and mountainous terrain.

The Boonslick Country being at the westernmost edge of American settlement was naturally poised to advantage of the new trade relations. Josiah Gregg reported in 1844 that,



Josiah Gregg
BHS Archives

"The town of Franklin on the Missouri River...seems truly to have been the cradle of our trade: and in conjunction with several neighboring towns continued to furnish the greater number of these adventurous traders."¹³ Records indicate that some residents of Columbia, Boonville, New Franklin, Fayette, Glasgow, Jonesboro (Napton) and Arrow Rock had investments and connections with the Santa Fe trade well into the 1850s.

For the first six years or so, two thirds of the men on the Santa Fe Trail owned their own trading goods. They were not necessarily involved in the trade full time and found it beneficial to sandwich a trip to Santa Fe between other enterprises, typically leaving in the early spring when traveling conditions across the Plains were optimal. Missouri merchants were the middlemen for goods purchased for the trade, usually at a 20- to 30-percent markup over Philadelphia prices. From the mid-1820s through the 1830s, St. Louis, Franklin and Independence merchants commonly advertised new shipments of goods in terms such as "expressly for the Santa Fe market."¹⁴

From 1822 to 1827, the yearly amount of merchandise taken to Santa Fe was approximately \$50,000 in eastern prices. From 1838 to 1843 the amount of merchandise exported was approximately \$200,000 annually.¹⁵ In 1824, Franklin trader Augustus Storrs reported that this merchandise consisted of "Cotton goods, consisting of course and fine cambrics, calicoes, domestic shawls, handkerchiefs, steam-loom shirtings, and cotton hose. A few woolen goods, consisting of super blues, stroudings, pelisse cloths and shawls, crapes, bombazettes, some light articles of cutlery, silk shawls and looking glasses."¹⁶

Twenty years later, these types of goods still composed the bulk of trade items. Josiah Gregg in 1844 advised traders that at least half of a "Santa Fe assortment" should be made

up of domestic cottons and about equally divided between "bleached and brown" with a fourth of the assortment to be composed of calicoes and miscellaneous articles compose the rest of the cargo.¹⁷

While Missouri benefited most directly from the trade, clearly the cotton growing states in the South and textile milling states in New England derived some benefit as well. Missouri politicians many times used this wider appeal of the trade in hopes of gaining federal legislative and military protection of the trade. They constantly sought "drawbacks," the elimination of taxes and tariffs on items imported for use in the Santa Fe trade. Maritime commerce frequently benefited from "drawback" legislation and Missourians simply saw the Santa Fe trade as a logical extension of that protection.

The principal articles that were returned to Missouri were furs, livestock, specie and small amounts of raw wool. Coarse Mexican blankets were occasionally in demand on the frontier.¹⁸ In some respects, the early Santa Fe trade was an off shoot of the fur trade. "Catching wild animals" or trapping had been one of the original reasons cited by Becknell's party for going west. The Glenn-Fowler expedition had returned to Missouri with beaver fur. Independent trappers operating in the southern Rocky Mountains used Santa Fe as a base of operations. For the first fifteen years of the trade, many returning caravans carried quantities of beaver and otter pelts. Plains Indian tribes sold raw buffalo robes to the New Mexicans, who in turn prepared them as robes for the Santa Fe trade. In 1843, Simeon Turley in Arroyo Hondo, New Mexico wrote to his brother Jesse in Arrow Rock, Missouri that he was shipping him "200 buffalo robes and a load of beaver."¹⁹

Of greater long-term consequence to Missouri was the livestock, consisting of horses, jacks, jennets, and mules. As early as 1823, the Cooper family of Howard County brought back over four hundred mules to Missouri. Those numbers increased in 1825 to 600 mules, in 1827 to 800 mules and in 1832 over 1,300 mules.²⁰ Missourians began crossing Mexican jacks with the fine mares they had brought with them from Kentucky and Tennessee thus establishing the mule industry in Missouri. By the 1850s, "Missouri mules" were widely shipped to the southern states for the use on the cotton plantations. Although large European jacks were being bred by this time, the mule industry clearly had its roots in the Santa Fe trade. By 1880 Missouri was the nations leading mule-producing state.

The importation of Mexican specie and bullion profoundly impacted Missouri's economic stability, far more than the importation of furs or livestock. There are no official statistics on the amount of bullion or specie imported into the state: traders fearing competition were reluctant to

report their profits. Letters from traders frequently reported poor conditions in the trade. "This trade is done as all will inform you" said one letter in the *Franklin Missouri Intelligencer*.²¹ The paper was quick to declare that the writer was a man with no motive for misrepresentation. Another letter published in 1825 read in part, "On the whole it appears that there is little prospect of successful trade being kept up between the United States and this Province, except on a very limited scale indeed. The country has but few resources... They are very poor but very contented."²²

The *Missouri Advocate*, a St. Louis paper criticized the *Intelligencer* for belittling what was obviously an important industry to Missouri. The editor of the *Intelligencer* replied, "Our own citizens were the first to explore the route and find the market, and in our opinion, ought to reap the advantages resulting from the discovery. We have generally stated plain matters of fact, in regard to this trade, abstaining from all unnecessary embellishments or exaggeration, which could only have a tendency to attract the attention of the other states, and induce large bodies to engage in it, to the injury of our own citizens and the annihilation of the commerce by the glutting of the market."²³ The *Advocate* got the point and to protect Missouri's interests also began printing articles describing the "ruinous embarrassments" of the Santa Fe trade.

The market in Santa Fe itself did in fact become saturated rather quickly. However traders often took their goods into the interior states of Chihuahua, Sonora or Coahila merely using Santa Fe as the port of entry. Often they acted in partnership with or sold to Mexican firms who in turn conveyed the goods in the interior Mexican states. As early as 1826, Mexican merchants began coming to Missouri to purchase trade goods directly. The *Franklin Missouri Intelligencer* reported, "Six or seven substantial built waggons [sic] arrived in this place on Tuesday last, heavily laden with merchandise, on their way to new Mexico owned by Mr. Escudero, a native of that country... This may be considered as a new era in the commerce between Mexico and this country, and it is probable the example of Mr. E. will be followed by others of his rich countrymen who will bring hither large portions of their surplus wealth for the same purpose."²⁴ Josiah Gregg reported that by 1843, over half of the merchants in the trade

were Mexican nationals.²⁵ Regardless of who conducted the trade caravans, the Missouri economy was being enriched.

Profit margins for the traders fluctuated greatly. Like all business endeavors, there were setbacks, losses and cyclical variations in the market. Mexico often imposed high tariffs on wagons arriving in Santa Fe, cutting into profits. American Indian tribes sometimes struck caravans, especially those returning with livestock. Trader Meredith Miles Marmaduke, later a governor of Missouri, lost nearly all of his investment in 1828 when Comanches stole the livestock he was returning to Missouri.²⁶ (see article, page 10) However, despite such individual losses, the trade overall grew in profitability.

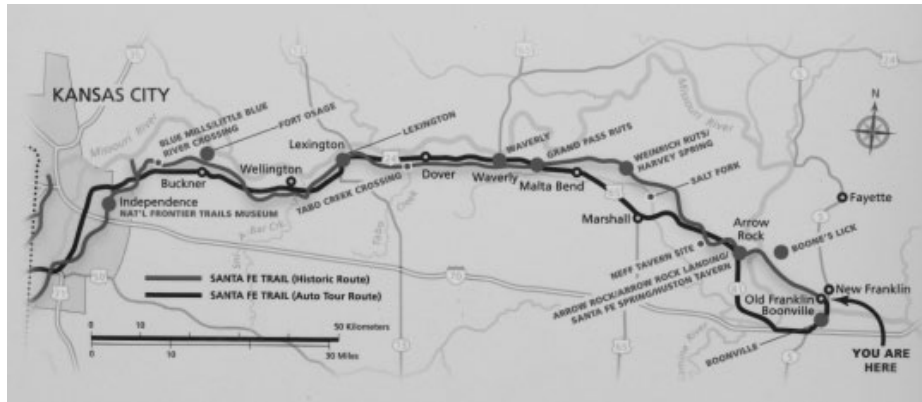
Alphonso Wetmore estimated that Becknell's second expedition made a profit of 2000 percent. In 1824, \$35,000 worth of merchandise netted \$200,000 for a profit of 300 percent. In 1832, Secretary of War Lewis Cass provided the Senate with a report estimating the profit margin of the trade averaging from 25 to 100 percent, dependent on conditions.²⁷ That same

year, Governor Miller reported that the trade, "...is believed to yield a greater gain than any other branch of industry employing the same amount of capital."²⁸

As early as 1828, Governor Miller had stated, "That trade [Santa Fe] is one of much importance to this State; the principal part of the silver coin in circulation, particularly in the western part of the State, is derived from that quarter..."²⁹ Spanish and Mexican coin continued to be legal tender in Missouri long afterwards. For example, in 1840 Dr. Glenn O. Hardeman was charged a "bit" or 12 ½ cents in Mexican coin for a nights stay in the Arrow Rock Tavern.³⁰

In 1824, Franklin merchant Augustus Storrs estimated the value of bullion and coin from Mexico at \$180,000 and furs worth \$10,000. Secretary of State Eaton reported profits from the Santa Fe Trade to include "at least \$200,000 in specie."³¹ William Bent brought back \$100,000 in coin in 1832 and similar amounts were reported in the *Missouri Intelligencer* for the next three years.³² Most of this money remained within the coffers of individuals or businesses.

By 1836, Missourians were demanding the creation of a bank in the state. The Bank of Missouri opened its door in 1837 as a specie-paying bank, refusing to issue paper notes



as many previously failed banks had done. It was soon recognized as one of the soundest banks in the nation and served as a bank of deposit for the United States Government. The bank with headquarters in St. Louis and branches in Fayette and Palmyra had intimate ties with the Santa Fe trade. The bank served as a place of deposit for the traders and simplified commercial transactions between the traders, merchants and eastern wholesalers. In 1839, a run on the bank was staved off when Santa Fe traders pumped \$45,000 of specie into it.³³ The *Arkansas Gazette* reported: "The state of Missouri is at this day the soundest in the Union in her monetary affairs. She is filled with specie; and the interior Mexican states have supplied it."³⁴

By 1829, Franklin had largely been washed away by the Missouri River and direct Boonslick involvement in the trade gradually began to wane. By 1831, Independence was the main outfitting center for Santa Fe commerce and after 1843; Westport increasingly assumed that role. Concurrently, with this geographic change in outfitting points, the nature of the trade itself began to change. The number of individual proprietors decreased while the number of men employed in caravans as teamsters, hunters or salesmen increased. The traders' average per capita investment of goods rose from \$3,000 in 1829 to \$6,000 in 1839 and to \$15,000 in 1843.

In conjunction with the brokering services provided by the Bank of Missouri, the larger traders hired agents to purchase directly from wholesalers in Philadelphia. Rural Missouri merchant began to be cut out of the Santa Fe trade. Even though they were no longer conducting the wagon caravans themselves, many Boonslick residents continued to invest capital in these large corporate trade ventures.

During the War with Mexico from 1846 -1848, large freighting firms such as the Aull brothers of Lexington, Waldo and Hull of Independence and Alexander Majors in Westport were contracted by the U.S. government to supply the Army of the West. These and other large firms began dominating the commerce on the Santa Fe Trail. The days of the individual trader supplying three or four of his own wagons on credit from local merchants were practically over.

In 1846, approximately 414 wagons left Missouri carrying \$1,752,000 worth of goods. In 1850, over 500 wagons

went out from Kansas City alone and the total value of the trade was estimated at \$5,000,000. The Civil War seems to have created only a minor disruption to the trade. Colonel J.F. Meline who was touring New Mexico in 1866 said, "In 1865 there came into New Mexico from the States three thousand wagons belonging to traders alone exclusive of government transportation. This year there will be from five to six thousand wagons...Most of the large trains return empty."³⁵ These caravans were supplying United States military posts and the new American settlements in the southwest rather than trading with a foreign nation as in years past.

Despite this phenomenal post-war growth, the singular importance of the Santa Fe trade to Missouri was in fact declining. The state's post-war agricultural and industrial production had diversified and grown to the point that the Santa Fe trade no longer had a singular dynamic impact on the state's economy. The burgeoning cities of St. Louis and Kansas City were scarcely the specie starved Boonslick towns of forty years earlier. Furthermore, trail heads and outfitting points followed the advancing line of the railroads across Kansas, annually decreasing both the length of the Santa Fe Trail and the amount of Missouri commerce carried on it.

Technology and transportation spelled the end of the trade. In August 1867 this editorial appeared in the *Junction City Union*, "A few years ago the freight wagons and oxen passing through Council Grove were counted by thousands, the value of merchandise by millions. But the shriek of the iron horse has silenced the lowing of the panting ox and the old Trail looks desolate. The track of commerce of the plains has changed and with the change is destined to come other changes and more blessed."³⁶ On February 9, 1880, the railroad reached Santa Fe and the last vestiges of the Santa Fe trade were swept away.³⁷

It is difficult to pinpoint the end of Missouri's commercial involvement in the Santa Fe trade. The diminishing of the trades' singular economic importance to the state was gradual, perhaps even indiscernible. However, it can be stated with certainty that the Santa Fe Trade helped lift the new state of Missouri from economic depression and provided a solid financial base on which to build for its future. Boonslick citizens were at the core of laying that foundation.



Replica of a Santa Fe Trail freight wagon located on the north side of Arrow Rock State Historic Site. Photo by David Sapp

NOTES

¹Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of the State of Missouri, edited by Buel Leopard and Floyd Shoemaker, The State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri 1922, Vol. I, p.151

²The Beginning of the West, Louise Barry, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka Kansas, p.21

³The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, edited by John F. McDermott, University of Illinois Press, 1974, p.100

⁴The History of Missouri, Vol. I, David S. March, Lewis Historical Publishing, New York, 1967, p. 476

⁵Ibid

⁶Commerce of the Prairies, Josiah Gregg, edited by Max Moorehead, University of Oklahoma Press, 1954

⁷Ibid. p. 477-478

⁸March, History of Missouri, p. 375-377

⁹Missouri Intelligencer, July 25, 1821, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia

¹⁰Diary of William Becknell, Missouri Intelligencer, April 23, 1823, State Historical Society of Missouri

¹¹Ibid.

¹²The Santa Fe Trail, R.L. Duffus, Longmans, Green & Co. N.Y. 1931, p. 68

¹³Commerce of the Prairies, Josiah Gregg, p.

¹⁴Santa Fe Trade in Missouri, F.F. Stevens, Missouri Historical Review, Vol. XI pp. 300

¹⁵Ibid p. 297

¹⁶Augustus Storrs to Senator Benton, Senate Document 7, 18th Congress, 2nd Session, New Mexico University archives.

¹⁷Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies p. 80

¹⁸March, History of Missouri p. 483

¹⁹Simeon Turley to Jesse Turley

²⁰Missouri Historical Review, Vol. XI p. 304

²¹Missouri Intelligencer, June 4, 1825, SHSM

²²Missouri Intelligencer, Nov. 5, 1825, SHSM

²³Missouri Intelligencer, June 4, 1825, SHSM

²⁴Missouri Intelligencer, June 9, 1826, SHSM

²⁵Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, p. 332

²⁶Thomas Hart Benton to M.M. Marmaduke, Feb. 2, 1829, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Sappington Papers

²⁷Missouri Historical Review, Vol. XI p. 301

²⁸Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Missouri, p. 171-172

²⁹ibid p. 137

³⁰Arrow Rock, the Story of a Town, Its Tavern and Its People, by Charles Van Ravenswaay, Missouri Historical Society, 1959

³¹Missouri Historical Review, Vol. XI, p. 306

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid. p. 312

³⁵Duffus, p. 255

³⁶Ibid p. 258

³⁷Ibid p. 267

Michael Dickey is administrator of Arrow Rock State Historic Site in Saline County and the Boone's Lick State Historic Site in Howard County and the author of Arrow Rock: Crossroads of the Missouri Frontier.

An Early Santa Fe Business Venture

By Lee Cullimore ©

LEAVING BEHIND THE DISMAL ECONOMIC CLIMATE OF Virginia in late summer of 1823, Meredith Miles Marmaduke, businessman, farmer, and a future governor of Missouri, reached Franklin, Missouri, that October and spent the coming winter months preparing to “make a fortune” in the Santa Fe trade.ⁱ In the spring of 1824 he and Samuel McClure, also a recent transplant from Virginia, formed a partnership bearing their names for the purpose of trading in New Mexico. The terms of the partnership are unknown, but it’s likely that each man pledged to invest a specified amount of money with the profit from the venture to be divided in proportion to the investment. That was a considerable amount for the two to raise (both men lacking deep financial pockets), with payments going for goods to be traded, a wagon to transport them, horses and mules for draft animals and for riding, provisions taken along for sustenance, the tariff to be paid on the trade goods once they reached New Mexico, and a license to trade they would purchase from the Spanish governor. Their total investment probably approached three thousand dollars. An estimate of their expenditure for trade goods alone can be surmised from a partial list of merchandise on hand that was compiled after the partners had been in Santa Fe for seven weeks, goods that were taken to El Paso del Norte for sale there.ⁱⁱ Marmaduke placed the cost

of those goods at \$210.50 (anticipating a return of nearly \$700). Merchandise valued at that amount or more had probably already been sold by this time, with a greater amount likely retained in Santa Fe for continued trade there and in the outlying villages. In addition, soon after arriving at Santa Fe the partners acquired another trader’s stock for \$703,ⁱⁱⁱ bringing their total investment for trade goods close to two thousand dollars.

In early May, before joining the summer caravan, the partnership expanded the scope of their Santa Fe venture. Marmaduke, whose Virginia background in the civil court system gave him considerable knowledge about legal documents, drew up a contract for Washington Sydnor that established Sydnor both as an individual trader and as an agent working in behalf of the firm of McClure & Marmaduke. The partners agreed to furnish Sydnor with \$250 worth of goods that he would select and buy in Franklin. They also agreed to “convey from this place to New Mexico all the cloathing [sic] & provisions which may be necessary,” or which Sydnor asked them to take, and to “. . . furnish him with provisions from this place onward in his journey, in such quantity and quality as is agreed upon by the Company generally [the ‘Company’ being the group of eighty-one traders and others leaving for Santa Fe in a few weeks], and



Meredith Miles Marmaduke
BHS Archives

that they will on this journey render the said Sydnor such assistance from time to time as may be in their power. . . .” Sydnor was to provide transportation for himself and his trade goods. By this move McClure & Marmaduke acquired a third salesman, allowing them to trade in Santa Fe and at the same time in outlying villages, which were numerous in the region, where they would hopefully be ahead of their competitors.

The terms of the contract with regard to Sydnor’s responsibilities were very specific:

“... Washington Sydnor . . . agrees . . . that he will select, receive and convey the said two hundred and fifty dollars worth of goods from this place (Franklin Mo.) to New Mexico . . . and that he will travel with . . . McClure and Marmaduke from this place to that and that he will render to them all the assistance that may be required of him on this journey thro’, or that it may be in his power in promoting and facilitating the movement of the said McClure & Marmaduke from this to that place. . . . Sydnor on his part further . . . agrees that he will continue and remain with them, from and after his arrival in the said Country of Mexico, until he shall have succeeded in selling to the best advantage the goods which he . . . shall have conveyed thither. And that during all the time which he may be thus bound to remain and continue with . . . McClure and Marmaduke, that he . . . will render unto . . . [them] all the assistance that he possibly can, in endeavoring to aid them in selling and disposing of their goods, in every way that he can, both as interpreter of their Language, so far as he knows and also as relates to the

travelling [sic] and moving about from place to place after their arrival there [emphasis added].”^{iv}

Sydnor also agreed that as soon as he sold the last of his merchandise he would reimburse the partners for the goods which they furnished him, and that he would “divide equally in half the whole amount of profits which may have accrued upon the sale of the aforesaid goods, and that he will then, at the same time, pay over to . . . McClure and Marmaduke the one half of the aforesaid profits, retaining to himself the other remaining half of the profits owing upon the sale of the goods. . . .”

Few documents from the early days of the Santa Fe trade exist and the contract shown above between Meredith Marmaduke, Sam McClure and Washington Sydnor is unique for its detailed description of the responsibilities of the parties. The success of their strategy, establishing Washington Sydnor as Marmaduke & McClure’s agent, isn’t known since nothing more is heard of Sydnor. The McClure and Marmaduke partnership remained active in the Santa Fe trade through the summer of 1827, as both became wealthy despite some losses. The two men continued to be close friends for the remainder of their lives.

NOTES

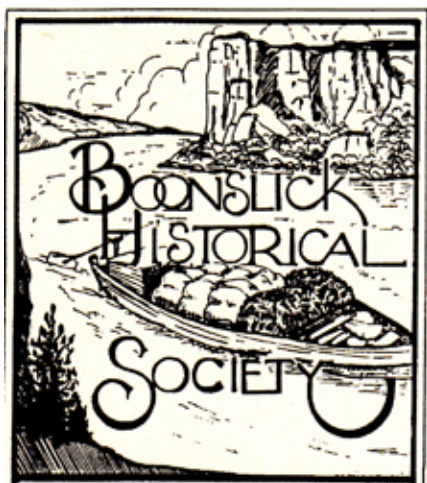
i. In the spring of 1824, Marmaduke wrote to his friend, Henry Hungerford, in Virginia, suggesting that he join him in Marmaduke’s business venture to Santa Fe. Hungerford responded saying, “The want of capital in this country, and enterprise, will prevent me from engaging with you in your proposed project to make a fortune. I should like very much to be rich, but being deficient in the aforesaid [sic] requisites, together with a dreadful apprehension of the Indians, tomahawks & scalping knives, induces me at once, to say, I cannot accept of your proposition.” Henry Hungerford to Meredith M. Marmaduke, May 3, 1824. Missouri History Museum, Sappington and Marmaduke Collection, Box 1, Folder 2.

ii. Memorandum of goods in pack taken down the river Sept. 21st 1824 and ret. 10 Oct. 1824. State Historical Society of Missouri, Marmaduke Collection C1021, Folder 3. The river was the Rio Grande, and the trail over which the goods moved to El Paso is the Jornada del Muerto, Trail of the Dead, which parallels the river for much of the way. Vestiges of the old trail can still be seen in New Mexico today.

iii. The partners paid Francis P. Samuel \$703.73 for goods he had brought to Santa Fe, giving him \$500 in cash with the balance due the first day of January, 1825, in Franklin. Marmaduke to John Hardeman, August 5, 1824. Missouri History Museum, Sappington and Marmaduke Collection, Box 1, Folder 3.

iv. Attempts to trace Washington Sydnor have been unsuccessful, although there were Sydnor families living in Benton County, Missouri, in the 1830s. Memorandum of an agreement between McClure & Marmaduke and Washington Sydnor, May 5, 1824. Missouri History Museum, Sappington and Marmaduke Collection, Box 1, Folder 2.

Editor’s note: The manuscript presented here is an excerpt from a chapter in a new biography on Meredith Miles Marmaduke, How to Make a Fortune in Missouri, researched and written by Lee Cullimore.



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Boonslick News Briefs

BHS Fall Banquet Canceled due to Coronavirus Concerns

Within the few weeks between the day we penned the optimistic Editor's Page column in the summer issue of the *Quarterly* announcing BHS plans to hold a fall banquet ... and the first of September, the Delta variant of the coronavirus popped up and turned the world upside down again. Missouri has been experiencing high rates of new infections caused by Delta variant. Southern Missouri and rural counties in other parts of the state, including the Boonslick, are among places you may fall victim to the coronavirus.

A canvass of board members revealed that all were reluctant to cancel the fall meeting and banquet, but that they were equally reluctant to expose members to an epidemic that not only could make them extremely ill but also could be life threatening. It was felt that the only responsible course of action was to cancel the fall gathering and hope that the threat of the coronavirus will sharply diminish in the near future and allow for members to gather at annual meetings. —*The Editor*

Concerning Membership Dues for 2022

We urge members who have not yet paid their dues for the past two years to make a special point of renewing their membership for 2022 so they will be assured of receiving all the issues of the *Quarterly* for the coming year. This issue is being mailed to members even if they haven't yet paid dues for 2021, but we cannot continue sending the journal to members who have not kept up with their dues. The dues year runs from January through December, so it's time for all members to think about paying 2022 dues See pg.3).

BHS Member Harold Kerr Dies

Boonslick Historical Society member Harold Henry Kerr II, of New Franklin, passed away at his home August 7, 2021. He was 59 years old.



Harold was born in El Cajon, California, in 1962. His family moved to Missouri in 1972 and he attended school in Cole Camp and Centralia. He received his associate of arts degree from State Fair Community College and his bachelor of science degree from Central Missouri State University. Harold received his master's of Science degree in safety management from Central

Missouri State University in 1989 and worked in the industrial safety field for approximately seven years.

When Harold became disabled, he began a hobby of performing genealogical research. He enjoyed reading history. He was president of the Howard County Genealogical Society, and a member of the South Howard County Historical Society, the Cooper County Historical Society, the Civil War Preservation Trust and the Sons of the American Revolution M. Graham Clark Chapter.

Survivors include his sister, Mary Ellen Kerr and her two children, Morgan and Alexander. The family requests memorial contributions be made to the Howard County Genealogical Society, which has an office at the Howard County Library in Fayette. The Genealogical Society website is: <https://jymiller.net/HCGS.html>.