

of the stops on their wild ride to escape to MO was at Elm Creek Station, where they paused to fire dozens of shots into the wooden door. Bill wanted revenge because he believed the station man to have had a part in the recent shooting death of Bill's father. The gang ended their barrage of bullets and rode on after hearing noise from a nearby wagon train.

Continue across the bridge, turn west on Rd. 380 for 2 miles, turn south on Rd. N. Pause just past the house; this affords a good view of the creek valley to the SW and its winding road. Ahead on Rd. N, rut swales show where wagons went down or up the hill. Turn west on Rd. 371 and pause before entering what was one of the busiest sites on the Santa Fe Trail.

The cemetery is on the small hill NE of the creek. South of the road, the house, store and cabins were along the general area where the fence is set back from the road. Note the history signs on each side of the creek; the DAR marker stone is west of the creek.

(7) 142 Mile Creek crossing was named for its distance from Ft. Osage, MO (east of North KC), as measured by the 1825 military survey. C. H. Withington had been a blacksmith, then gunsmith for the Sac & Fox tribes since 1838. He was Council Grove mail agent for Waldo, Hall & Co. stage line 1852-54. He preempted his claim here in June after Kansas Terr. was opened to settlement on May 30, 1854. His family built log cabins for their home and a trading post. He became postmaster of **Allen** PO in 1855. Business thrived; as traffic increased with settlers and the Pikes Peak gold rush (1858-late '60), so did the scope of the business. Expansions included stables and corrals for the stage horses, a row of cabin rooms to rent, and up to 10 forges that shod horses, mules & oxen, and repaired wagon parts. He often assisted settlers checking out property claims. The cemetery on the hill has perhaps 150 unmarked graves. A wooden bridge over the creek cost 25¢ toll per wagon. Those who chose not to pay could use the natural ford to the north. The store at Allen was closed in 1866, when traffic declined as the railroads in this region were built farther west.

Continue west, turn south on Rd. L, west on Rd. 350, then south on Rd. H2 to Hwy. 56. Turn west to Rd. F. Turn north up to the Trail rut sign, then west on Rd. 370, and pause near the bridge. The home was 1/4 mi. SW of the bridge; the cave in the story was nearer the bridge. **(8) Bluff Creek** meanders to the SW; its east bank has high rocky bluffs. Bill Anderson came with his family in 1857 to SW of the creek crossing; they ran a store and farmed. Bill found jobs, but with brother Jim began using a cave nearby to hide stolen horses. In late 1861 they went on a plundering raid with A. I. Baker of Agnes City. Conflict arose in 1862 when Baker called at the Anderson's to court Mary Ellen, age 16. Later they learned Baker was engaged to another. Her father went to Baker's May 12, 1862, intent on murder, but Baker killed him. Wanted by the local settlers for their thieving, Bill and Jim escaped east on the Trail, and the remaining family moved to Missouri.

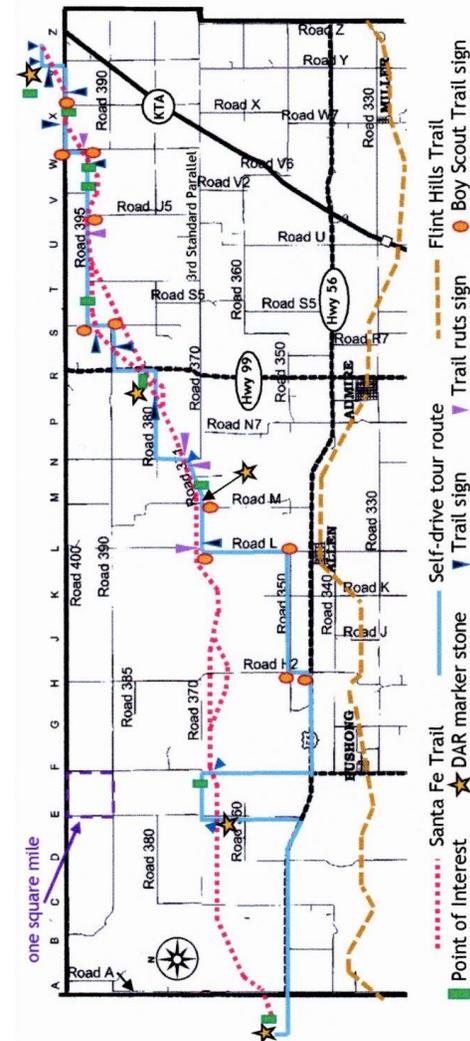
Continue on Rd. 370 to turn south on Rd. E.; the DAR marker is at the flagpole in Agnes City Cemetery. Turn west at Hwy. 56. One mile past Rd. A, turn north on (Morris Co.) S 200 Rd. Past the tree line & house is a gravel lot with the DAR stone & story-boards about the Rock Creek site. Visitors can walk a 3/4 mi. path with story-boards. In 1864, 2 miles off the west side of Lyon Co. were given to Morris Co., including this site.

(9) Rock Creek crossing was claimed by A. I. Baker for his home, store, and proposed town of **Agnes City**. Lyon Co.'s first judge, he was prominent in organizing co. government, obtaining real estate titles for settlers, and helped create Americus. After dark on July 3, 1862, Bill and Jim Anderson were seeking revenge. An ally lured Baker to go to his store cellar for whiskey. Returning, he was met with a hail of bullets and kicked into the cellar. The trap door was weighted with a barrel, then the killers set all the buildings afire and fled back to Missouri. His city gone, Baker's legacy remains in Lyon County's foundations.

This concludes the tour. More at nlchsmuseum.com.

© 2022 North Lyon County Historical Society of Lyon Co, KS and its representatives. All rights reserved.

Self-Drive Auto or Bicycle Tour of the **SANTA FE TRAIL** IN LYON COUNTY, KANSAS



The Trail crossed the Flint Hills, 78 miles thru Lyon, Morris & Marion counties. In Lyon Co., Flint Hills meet the Osage Cuestas (*pron. Kwestas, means hills*). No definite line between these regions, it is grassland hills with arable land suited to crops, and the Flint Hills with hard flint rock near the surface. **35-mile BIKE TOUR:** Admire to Miller—Rd. Y to Wilmington—tour to Rd. L—Allen to Admire.

Please respect landowners' property and stay on the public roads. This tour may be taken from either east or west. *This guide starts from the east* at Wilmington in Wabaunsee Co. and ends at the Rock Creek crossing in Morris Co., with nine points of interest. Total length about 33 miles, most of it on gravel roads. **Public restrooms** at Admire Jones Park (not winter), Allen businesses, and Flint Hills Trail at Miller, Admire, & Bushong.

the **SANTA FE TRAIL** IN LYON COUNTY, KANSAS

Trail Ruts – Often more than one swale, most are diagonal to the roads. Look for wide, curved troughs across ground in pastures that haven't been plowed, and ruts are most visible in late April-May after old grass is burnt off. Ruts are best seen at these points:

*Rd. W, east side fence posts curve with the rut
*Roads E and F *east-west of 142 Mile Creek

THE TRAIL to Santa Fe, Mexico was initially used in 1821 by Wm. Becknell from Franklin, MO. Mexico had just won independence from Spain, and traders were welcomed; he had a profit of 1,500% on the sale of his goods. U.S. military surveyed the Trail in 1825. By the early 1830s the eastern terminus had shifted up the Missouri River to Independence; by the 1840s it was Westport Landing at Kansas City. In 1848 Americans won the Mexican War, and Santa Fe was in the U.S. In Lyon County the heyday of overland traffic was ended when the Trail was bypassed by railroads in 1866.

This guide starts from the east. Good places to **start this tour** at its east end: north on Rd. Y from Hwy 56, **or** take Hwy 31 to where it turns — east to Burlingame or north to Harveyville — go south there on the gravel Santa Fe Trail Road. Take this road south, turn west on Wilmington Rd. Slow down and look for Trail signs, and DAR marker in front of the school. The Daughters of the American Revolution of Kansas started placing markers in 1906 and Okla., Colo., & N. Mex. DARs followed. Kansas stones were refurbished in 2006.

Points of Interest, green on map: (1) In July, 1850 the first stagecoach left Independence, MO for Santa Fe, with a one-way fare of \$250. **Wilmington** was a stage station; the town dates from 1856 at the junction of the Santa Fe Trail and the Leavenworth Military Rd. On the 100-ft-wide Trail in the corner of Wabaunsee Co., its stores and wagon shop catered to Trail traffic; in 1858 a stone hotel was built, a school district in 1861, and in 1870 a church & stone schoolhouse, the only remaining structure from that busy period of growth and commerce. Its post office dated from 1857-1906.

From Wilmington school turn south, then turn west on Rd. 400 for 1 mile and start to continue west on the paved Rd. 400. At this farm the grave site may be glimpsed just past the west side of the farmyard, in a field bordered by trees 150 yds. south of Rd. 400.

(2) Mexican graves – Reported graves have long been the subject of speculation and legend. One version, known to be a tall tale, says a band of outlaws here in 1842 killed 27 Mexican traders and stole 500 mules and a treasure-box with \$75,000 in gold. The true history of this incident near Lyons, KS – not Lyon Co. – was an 1843 attack by Missourians on the wagons of a wealthy merchant from Santa Fe, and five Mexicans were killed. The possible burial site here may actually have been the final resting place of Mexican traders. Like many who risked the perils of travel in that era, their gravesites lie in the quiet beauty of the hills near the Santa Fe Trail.

Continue on Rd. 400 one mile, turn south on Rd. W. On the east side between the rut sign and fence gate, the fence posts follow the curve of the wagon rut as it angles across the road; look for parallel ruts here. This is one of the easiest places to view the ruts, and think about what made them. Continue and turn west onto Rd. 395. Pause here at the east end of Buttermilk Lane, between Rd.s W & S, and note on the map that the Trail went south, probably to ford Log Chain Creek, then back north to the ford across Onion Creek.

(3) In the section of the Trail that became known as **Buttermilk Lane (or Street)**, local lore says it was so bumpy and “washboarded” that if a wagon had cream on it, the bouncing would churn it and separate the butter and buttermilk. Farmsteads were close here and travelers could buy farm produce. The farm community of **Waushara** had a post office in a private home 1858-95, also a grocery store, school in 1863, then a church, all at Log Chain Creek crossing. The store bartered for butter, eggs and hides; excess could be taken by wagon to trade at Topeka, growing port city on the Kaw River. The Waushara Cemetery to the SW was later renamed Pleasant Ridge Cemetery.

(4) Road 395 crosses several streams that join Elm Creek to the SW. On the Trail, **Log Chain Creek and Onion Creek** were streams to be forded that had no known stage station. Flat rock streambed crossings were a luxury; Log Chain was known for its muddy bottom where loaded wagons often got stuck in the deep mud. Heavy log chains were frequently used to pull the wagons out, and sometimes the chains broke under the strain. Onion Creek is about a mile west (*many today call this Log Chain*), subject of an 1867 diary entry: “Oct. 23—Daughter returned from the (*post*) office with a paper says a man was murdered at Onion Creek....” Local lore states that a carved rock marks an incident at this crossing: A little girl wandered away from the family wagon and they searched for her, but found only her bonnet. They sadly moved on, leaving the rock to mark her passing.

Continue on Rd. 395 to the only bridge on this road, at Chicken Creek. The Trail is nearby to the south, and runs parallel to the modern road here. **(5) Chicken Creek** stage station, NW of the stream crossing, was operated for a few years by Ben O'Dell's family of 14. Owned by the stage line co. which had the mail contract, stations supported the coaches that hauled mail, goods and people on regular schedules. Each station had an operator who kept fresh horses to replace the teams coming in, and spent horses would be fed and rested until needed for another coach. One diarist said the ride was “bouncing” along the road.

Continue on Rd. 395 to Rd. S, turn south 1/2 mile, then turn west on Rd. 390 over to Hwy 99. Turn south on Hwy 99. On the roadside just before the bridge, the highway is widened for a pull-off for the DAR marker on a pedestal nearby at the end of the tree line.

(6) Elm Creek was established NW of the crossing by Waldo, Hall & Co. in 1855, an Overland Mail Station for the stage; it was not a post office. Henry Jacoby was station operator 1857-62. He and family were there the night of 7/3/1862 when A. I. Baker was murdered at Agnes City by Bill Anderson's gang. One