

THE SANTA FE TRAIL.

Prior to 1818 all of the explorers, traders and many trappers made St. Louis the place from which to outfit and start. Most of the early traders were of Spanish or French descent.

James Mackey, a Scotchman, was in St. Louis between 1790 and 1800. About 1797 he traded some west of the mouth of the Kaw river. He afterwards marked off the streets of early St. Louis, and his son, Zeno Mackey, laid off Carondelet and part of St. Louis.

Manuel Lisa, a native of Cuba, and of Spanish descent, was one of the early traders, and active in establishing posts on the Missouri. He established a trading post on the Yellowstone in 1807 near where is now the town of Custer.

In 1806 Capt. Pike passed Lisa's trading post on the Osage near where the present town of Papinville now stands.

Pierre Chouteau was also one of the chief of the early fur traders. He, with Lisa, Clark and others, formed the Missouri Fur Co., and the American Fur Co. The object of these early traders was to secure furs, and in those days the fur trade was extensive. Buffalo, bear, deer, and beaver were numerous and their furs valuable.

After 1810 other traders went west and southwest to New Mexico. Merchandise was taken to Santa Fe, and there sold for good prices, and for thirty-five years there was an extensive trade to Santa Fe.

In 1804 William Morrison of Kaskaskia sent Baptiste La Lande, a creole, with a lot of goods to sell. La Lande took them to Santa Fe, sold them and kept the money he received and remained in Santa Fe (1) Morrison authorized Dr. Robinson to collect the money from La Lande—Dr. Robinson went out with Capt. Pike and in February, 1807, was in Santa Fe, but could do nothing with La Lande. La Lande acted as guide to Capt. Pike between Santa Fe and Albuquerque.

1. Pike's Expedition, Phil., 1810, p. 195.

Lieut. Zebulon Montgomery Pike (who was Gen. Pike in War of 1812) left the post at Belle Fontaine on the 15th of July, 1805. July 28 he reached the Osage. On the 14th of August he arrived at trading post of Manuel Lisa (near the present village of Papinville). About the middle of October he reached the Arkansas. On the 27th of November he came in sight of the snow capped mountain, later known as Pike's Peak. He found that its height above the plain was 10,581 feet. Pike soon after found himself on the Rio Grande, and for awhile was under guard of the Spaniards, and brought to Santa Fe, where he arrived on March 2, 1807. On March 7 he reached Albuquerque. Still guarded by Spanish guards he reached Natchetoches, La., July 1, 1807.

In 1812 McKnight, Beard and Chambers following Capt. Pike's directions, succeeded in safely reaching Santa Fe. (2) At this time Hidalgo, who had failed in forcing Mexico from Spanish rule, had been defeated and executed. The royalists felt that they had regained their power and people from the United States were received with suspicion. So McKnight and those with him were seized as suspected spies, their goods were confiscated and the men thrown into prison, and most of them confined for nine years.

When the Republican forces under Itrubide gained power McKnight and his men were liberated. Some of them, on their return, met Glenn at his trading post at mouth of the Verdigris. Glenn was from Cincinnati, Ohio. The stories these men told Glenn induced him to venture. He passed up the Arkansas encountering much trouble and reached Santa Fe in 1821. Some accounts say that Glenn was here several years before.

Tales of wealth of gold and silver attracted the traders to Santa Fe and other companies were formed. Prior to 1815 most of the companies organized in St. Louis, but as boats began to navigate the Missouri, Franklin, on the river, in Howard County, became the starting point, and between 1820 and 1830 many companies were outfitted at that place. Steam-

2. Gregg in Commerce of Prairies, p. 19.

boats being more abundant on the river, Independence next became the starting point for the Santa Fe trade.

In the spring of 1822 two parties left Franklin for Santa Fe. (3) A party under Col. Cooper met with disaster and was robbed by the Indians. Jumel of the Missouri Fur Company brought the news to Gen. Atkinson at Council Bluffs. Mr. Glenn came in from Santa Fe and reported that he met the Cooper party at the bend of the Arkansas, and he believed that Cooper would soon fall in with parties of Indians, and the meeting might result in disaster to Cooper, as Glenn had been stopped by the same Indians, and it was difficult to get clear of them. At this time there were fifty persons in Franklin from St. Louis en route to Santa Fe.

Capt. Wm. Bicknell and his company started from Franklin to Santa Fe, crossing the Missouri river near Arrow Rock the 1st of September, 1821. (4) On his route he crossed the Petite Osage plains, passed Fort Osage, crossed the Osage and reached Santa Fe about the middle of November.

On 22d May, 1822, Bicknell and party returned to Santa Fe. He was 48 days on his return trip from Santa Fe. Bicknell states that an excellent route may be made from Fort Osage to Santa Fe.

During November, 1824, Capt. Wm. Bicknell journeyed northwardly from Santa Fe to Green river for the purpose of trapping. (5)

A company of 30 left in May, 1823, on a commercial adventure to Santa Fe (6) They went by Fort Osage and thence direct. Each man had one or two pack horses and about \$200 worth of goods. Col. Cooper, who was in Santa Fe the preceding summer, accompanied them. All were well armed.

In August, 1822, Capt. Cole and his nephew were killed by the Navajoes on the banks of the Rio del Norte. The Navajoes discovered them in the evening and thought they were Spaniards. They watched, and in the night murdered

3. Missouri Intelligencer, Sept. 3, 1822.
4. Missouri Intelligencer, April 22, 1823.
5. Intelligencer, June 25, 1825.
6. Intelligencer, May 13, 1823.

them. Examining their rifles they found that they were Americans and were much grieved that they had killed them instead of Spaniards. They did not strip them and even left part of their baggage. They afterwards evinced much sorrow for what they had done, and said that the Americans had always treated them well.

Mr. Graham, Indian agent, appeared before the congressional committee and gave evidence regarding the Santa Fe trade. He spoke of it as a small trade, that the Spaniards at Santa Fe were miserably poor, and gave in exchange a small trade in furs. He recommended a trail and a post on the Arkansas. (7)

Maj. O'Fallon, Indian agent for the upper Missouri, had received verbal application from the commandant at Santa Fe desiring interference to restrain the Pawnees and other Indians from committing depredations, and advised that commissioners should be appointed on part of the constituted authorities at Santa Fe to meet at Council Bluffs and arrange terms of peace. (8)

A company of Americans and Mexicans who left Santa Fe the 1st of June arrived at Franklin with nearly 500 mules and horses. They fell in with Osages and were plundered and badly treated. (9) The company pursued a new route from Santa Fe. One hundred miles from St. Michaels they crossed the Canadian river at the foot of the great table land. Thence down along the north side of the stream for 300 miles until they passed the high knobs, thence northeast to the Arkansas river, which was safely crossed, and three days after they camped and sent out twelve or thirteen of the company for the purpose of killing buffalo to take to the settlements. Two hours later those in camp were aroused by the cry "Indians are among the horses." At this many of them ran among the horses endeavoring to check them, only one was mounted. At this time the Indians showed no hostility,

7. *Intelligencer* of May 8, 1824.

8. *Intelligencer*, June 5, 1824.

9. *Intelligencer*, Aug. 5, 1825

continually crying out, others frightening the horses by riding among them. In this way two-thirds of the animals were driven off. Six or seven men mounted and pursued. It was soon apparent that the animals were divided into four parties. The men separated, part after one drove, others after others. Both succeeded in catching a drove, one of 63 horses and mules, safely reaching camp. The other was retaken by the Indians and driven to their camp four or five miles off. In the meantime these Indians had fallen in with the party who went out hunting and forcibly took them all to their camp, robbing them and taking everything they wanted. The party which had pursued the horses reported that there were from 200 to 300 warriors in camp, many of whom seemed indisposed. During this and the next day many of them were continually in the camp endeavoring to steal. During the 14th and 15th the Osages moved to the camp and returned 50 or 60 animals which they had driven off. They kept the best, amounting to 130. The Indians were told that they would be made to pay.

Rumors that persons en route from Santa Fe to Franklin had been attacked by a band of Arapahoes on the Cimmaron river in the Mexican province and everything of value taken from them, and that three persons had been killed. (10)

Wm. Huddard, who went to Santa Fe with a trading company the preceding winter, returned in the spring. He left Taos January 12, 1825. (11) He said that on the 24th of August, 1824, he with fourteen others left Taos with the object of trapping beaver, and traveled west for thirty days on a river (probably Colorado), the company separated, nine ascending the river. Huddard and others remained, and in a few days they accidentally fell in with five other Americans, including Mr. Roubidoux. Ten days after a party of Arapahoes attacked them, killing one man named Nowlin, and robbed the others. The party of six then concluded to return to Taos and left Mr. Roubidoux and his men in the mountains with-

10. *Intelligencer*, April 5, 1825.

11. *Intelligencer*, April 19, 1825.

out a horse or mule. Three other Americans had been killed in New Mexico; Mr. Nance by a Spaniard, and Messrs. Foote and Hanley by the Indians.

The party which left Franklin in 1824 had met with reverses. (12) Geo. Armstrong, son of Mrs. Means of Franklin, was killed. The trade in furs and merchandise was still carried on with vigor.

Upwards of 100 who left Franklin in the spring of 1825 reached Franklin in the fall. (13) Forty others were expected within a few days. A number remained in Santa Fe expecting to stay there during the winter. Among them was Augustus Storrs, who was appointed consul at that place. About twenty returned by way of Louisiana. About twenty of the Tennessee company came back a good part of the way with the Missourians, and then went direct through Arkansas. The small party which left Franklin a few weeks ago were met about 300 miles out and were in company with the Santa Fe Road Commissioners. (14) The *Intelligencer* of June 25, 1825, gives an account of another tour of Capt. Wm. Bicknell.

Three commissioners were to be appointed to survey the road to Santa Fe. The commissioners were Benj. H. Reeves of Howard County, Mo.; George C. Sibley of St. Charles, and Thomas Mather of Illinois. They employed J. C. Brown of St. Louis as surveyor. (14) The survey began at Fort Osage (now town of Sibley), Missouri, 17th July, 1825, (15) and arrived at the boundary line of the United States and Mexico on 11th September, distance from Fort Osage 416 miles, and remained there until September 20th. The approach of winter made it necessary to prepare for it. Maj. Sibley and a small party set out for Santa Fe. Col. Mather and Col. Reeves started back locating and working the road; they had experienced no difficulty for want of wood and water. A most excellent route could be had as nature has opened it. Col. Reeves said "the route is entirely practicable for the heaviest

12. *Intelligencer*, June 11, 1825.

13. *Intelligencer*, October 1, 1825.

14. *Missouri Intelligencer*, March 1, 1825.

15. *Intelligencer*, Oct. 28, 1825.

vehicle, that the Indians had manifested great friendship and readily consented to the unmolested use of the road through any part of their territory, and guaranteed every protection in their power.”

The commissioners met a deputation of the Osages soon after they started on their survey, and the Osages gave them the privilege to survey and establish a road through their territory, for which they were given a certain amount of money. The place where they and the Osages met was then and has ever since been known as Council Grove a name given it at that time by the commissioners.

During 1826 the commissioners obtained authority from the Mexican Government to examine routes in their territory and a survey was begun at Fernando de Toas and ran to connect with survey of the year before. Their table of distances began at Fort Osage, 25 miles east of the west line of Missouri. Their distances, counting from Fort Osage were, Council Groves 139 miles; Diamond Spring 115 miles; Arkansas river 255 miles; Mexican boundary 416 miles; Silver Cimaron Spring 477; Middle Cimaron Spring 514; Upper Cimaron Spring 553; Canadian river 668; Foot of Mountains 710 miles; Summit 727 miles; San Fernando de Taos 745 miles; Santa Fe 810 miles, or 795 miles from Independence.

A map of the survey was placed in the office of the War Department at Washington City and was seen there only a few years ago. The maps made by Jos. C. Brown, surveyor employed by the commissioners. The first map, dated October 27, 1827, shows the trail from Fort Osage to Santa Fe. This map is endorsed by Col. John I. Abert of corps of engineers in 1844, who states that it is the original plat of survey, Fort Osage to Santa Fe. Another map shows survey from Fort Osage to Santa Fe. A third map shows survey from U. S. Boundary to Santa Fe. A manuscript atlas in handwriting of Geo. C. Sibley shows route from boundary of Missouri to Fernando de Taos, with notes and directions for travelers. There are thirty-seven leaves of manuscript and drawings. making seventy-four pages in all. The Santa Fe railroad has

approximately followed the route of the survey excepting beyond Trinidad, where it turns towards Las Vegas. So have done most of the traders to Santa Fe.

Harpers' Monthly, Vol. 21, for June 1860, contains an interesting account of the trials and adventures of Sylvester Pattie and his son James, who started out from St. Louis in 1824, passed up the Missouri to St. Joseph, crossed the Missouri on 20 June, 1824, thence to the headwaters of the Platte and to Santa Fe. There they remained awhile, trapped on the Gila and mined in the copper mines, made \$30,000, but it was all stolen from them. Afterwards they trapped on the Colorado and got many furs. They then went to San Diego California, and were put in prison and kept there nearly a year, during which time the elder Pattie died. The son, James, after getting out of prison went to San Francisco, and was probably the first person from the United States who crossed the continent and saw San Francisco. From here he went to Vera Cruz, then to New Orleans and back to St. Louis after a six years' journeying.

Alphonso Wetmore states that trade to Chihuahua and Sonora amounted to \$2,000,000 per annum. On the whole distance forage was scarce and high, and brackish water was often encountered, and sometimes for six days there was no grass. Grass and water was found to the head of Missouri streams. (16) In 1830 a caravan brought in \$200,000 to Fayette, Missouri, also some merchandise. (17) Some persons got wealthy in the Santa Fe trade. David Waldo came to Missouri from Virginia in the early part of the nineteenth century. (18) He cut and handled pines on headwaters of the Gasconade. In 1826 he went to Lexington, Kentucky, and attended medical lectures. Returning to Missouri he acted as clerk of the circuit court of Gasconade County, also of the county court, deputy sheriff and postmaster. At that time Gasconade included a half dozen other counties lying to the

16. *Intelligencer*, Jan. 19, 1829.

17. *Intelligencer*, Feb., 1830.

18. *Darby Recollections*.

south of the Missouri, and people spoke of "State of Gasconade, David Waldo, Governor."

David Waldo crossed the plains in 1827 and in 1828 he and Charles Bent went across the plains to Santa Fe. On account of Indian troubles Maj. Bennett Riley marched from Council Bluffs and escorted them part of the way. Bent established forts on the upper Arkansas which became points on the route to Santa Fe about 1833. David Waldo amassed some wealth in the Santa Fe trade. Afterwards he had a store at Independence, Missouri, and in his latter days had a bank there. William Waldo, a brother of David, dwelt in Texas and traded to Mexico.

Josiah Gregg crossed the plains between Independence and Santa Fe three times between 1831 and 1838. The articles he brought to the United States were gold (in dust), silver bullion, coarse blankets, mules and asses, buffalo rugs, goods, chiefly from Chihuahua. He made the return trip in 38 days.

Indians were sometimes troublesome to those going across the plains. They were Pawnees and Comanche chiefly. In 1829 Maj. Bennett Riley was detailed for awhile to watch these Indians. In one of Gregg's trips he had an escort part of the way.

In 1839 Gregg made arrangement to go again to Santa Fe. To this end he had goods shipped up Arkansas river to Van Buren, and started from that place early in April with \$25,000 worth of goods. His route was up the Canadian, thence via Tucumcari, thence to San Miguel and Santa Fe, where he arrived on 25th of June. He then passed on to Chihuahua and beyond. He returned to the States the next year. Gregg spent most of nine years on the plains and in the Santa Fe trade. He afterwards wrote an interesting book of two volumes entitled "Commerce of the Prairies."

In 1852 I was in Independence, Missouri, and saw goods for the Santa Fe trade and many persons preparing to start to that place.

As stated above, many persons sought the Santa Fe and Mexican trade between 1820 and 1840. Before Missouri became a State expeditions for exploring the plains and mountains to the west were sent out by the Government. In 1819 Maj. Stephen Long was sent west; he stopped at Franklin thence west by Fort Osage to Glenn's fort on the Arkansas north to the Platte and back.

In 1842 J. C. Fremont went west with Kit Carson as guide. He passed up the Missouri to the north of Kansas river, thence along Santa Fe road nearly to Arkansas, thence to St. Vrain's fort on the Platte, up Sweet Water to South Pass, returned down the Platte, and there losing most of his equipment.

In 1846 people crossed the plains to Oregon and California. The gold discoveries in California in 1849 turned attention of every one to California.

Just after the Mexican War, or before it was ended, people were attracted to California. In 1846 Col. Emory by direction of Gen. Kearney, journeyed from Fort Leavenworth southwest by Council Grove to Pawnee Fork, 288 miles up the Arkansas, across the Canadian and the Cimarron by Las Vegas to Santa Fe, thence west to San Diego—Doniphan was with him prior to reaching Santa Fe. The country is well described, first the prairies with tall grass and trees on streams, then grass more scanty and only a few cottonwoods on streams, then only a little of the buffalo grass on uplands and a few bushes on streams, and water often scarce. No trees scarcely beyond 200 miles from Missouri.

Felix X. Aubrey of St. Louis made frequent trips between Independence and Santa Fe. In 1848 he rode horseback from Independence to Santa Fe without making any stops. He had relays of horses on the route and in fact had one or two alongside all the time. I have heard that he made the trip in four days. The Encyclopedia of Missouri History says that it took him nine days and a few hours. He slept tied to his horse.

The proper Santa Fe trail undoubtedly ran from Fort Osage, Jackson County, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Certain roads in Missouri were feeders to it, more particularly the road from Old Franklin, Howard County, to Fort Osage. The main tributary road to Old Franklin was the Boonslick road from St. Charles to Boonslick, Howard County, with a short branch to Old Franklin. This road passed from St. Charles via Pauldingville, Warrenton, Camp Branch, Jonesburg, Danville, Williamsburg, Concord, Thralls Prairie to Boonslick, passing six to eight miles north of Fulton and about same distance north of Columbia. Fulton and Columbia were both laid off in 1822, the Boonslick road had been used for six years previously. The road was the main thoroughfare of persons going to Boonslick for salt, just as the Salt river road from St. Charles to Palmyra was the road to the salt springs of Pike and Ralls Counties.

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