Emma Hills Stanley

(1858 - 1939)

MRS. WILLIAM EUGENE STANLEY.

Emma Hills Stanley, fifth KSDAR State Regent and named first honorary KSDAR State Regent, was born in Covington, Indiana, April 4, 1858, and came to Wichita with her parents in a stage coach in 1870, two years before the railroad reached Wichita. In 1876, she married William Eugene Stanley, who became Governor of Kansas in 1899. She had the honor of being mistress of Kansas' first executive mansion.

The outstanding achievement of Mrs. Stanley's administration was the completion of the project suggested by the previous State Regent, Fannie Geiger Thompson, of the marking of the Santa Fe Trail. From 1906-1914, the Santa Fe Trail, in its entirety through Kansas (a distance of more than five hundred miles), was marked with ninety-five granite markers at a cost of $1546.29.

Using Sibley's 1825 survey map, recollections of Trail travelers and old settlers, Roy Marsh traced the Trail across Kansas for the DAR and the Kansas State Historical Society. In 1905, the Legislature appropriated $1,000.00 to the Daughters for this project. Another $584.00 was collected from school children on Trail Day - Kansas Day, 1906. Across the state, children brought at least a penny to school that day to help mark the Santa Fe Trail. With additional donations, this money would eventually buy 89 red granite engraved stones. In addition, six special Markers were purchased, some costing as much as $300.00, by DAR Chapters and Old Settlers Associations.

The initial plan was to place composite stones (a concrete mixture with embedded pebbles) with a bronze plaque. Mrs. Stanley, contemplating her crumbing sun dial, wrote to Grace Meeker, "the composite stone just would not do". For the final plan, Isabelle Cone Harvey, solicited a quote for $16.00 for each marker which came from red Osage granite in Oklahoma. Each would be hand engraved with "Santa Fe Trail marked by the State of Kansas and the Daughters of the American Revolution 1906." Emma Hills Stanley died on Kansas Day, January 29, 1939