

April 15, 1990

Dear Joanne VanCoevern:

I am afraid I can't be too much help in your quest for the trail location near your farm. I know the route in general, as I outlined it in my book FOLLOWING THE SANTA FE TRAIL: A GUIDE FOR MODERN TRAVELERS. But usually local experts are the ones you need to contact in specific cases. I met a man at the last Rendezvous at the SFT Center, Larned, who was well-acquainted with the location of the Dry and Wet routes, but unfortunately I don't have his name. You should try to attend the next Rendezvous, coming up the last day of May and the first of June, and among the couple of hundred trail buffs attending you might make contact with someone. Perhaps Ruth Olsen, Center Director, can put you in touch. Our best authority on that area of Kansas, archeologist Earl Monger, died several years ago. Unfortunately, I have a conflict and won't be able to attend the Rendezvous this year. But the next time I'm going to Larned, perhaps we can get together and you can show me your country.

I'm supposing you have checked the archive-library at the Larned SFT Center for sources and maps. They also should have a copy of Greg Franzwa's new book THE SANTA FE TRAIL IN MAPS. The Dodge City Public Library and (across the street on 2nd) the Kansas Heritage Center are both good research sources.

We frequently publish newly found mileage charts in WT to aid trail buffs, and no two list exactly the same sites and camps. Rock Hollow and Arroyo Blanco are newly revealed place-names and hence not yet fully identified as to location. Maybe they are near your farm! If there is a Soil Conservation district in your area, or some other federal agency, it might have aerial photos going back to the 1930s when the trail was more clearly visible from the air than now. Such photos are best for definitely establishing the route of the trail. We still lose ruts ever year so it is important to save the few left.

Your friend, - Mare Simmon
PS A number of SFTA members take horse-drawn vehicles on the trail for a week in June out of Council Grove. Don Cress, listed in our roster, is in charge.