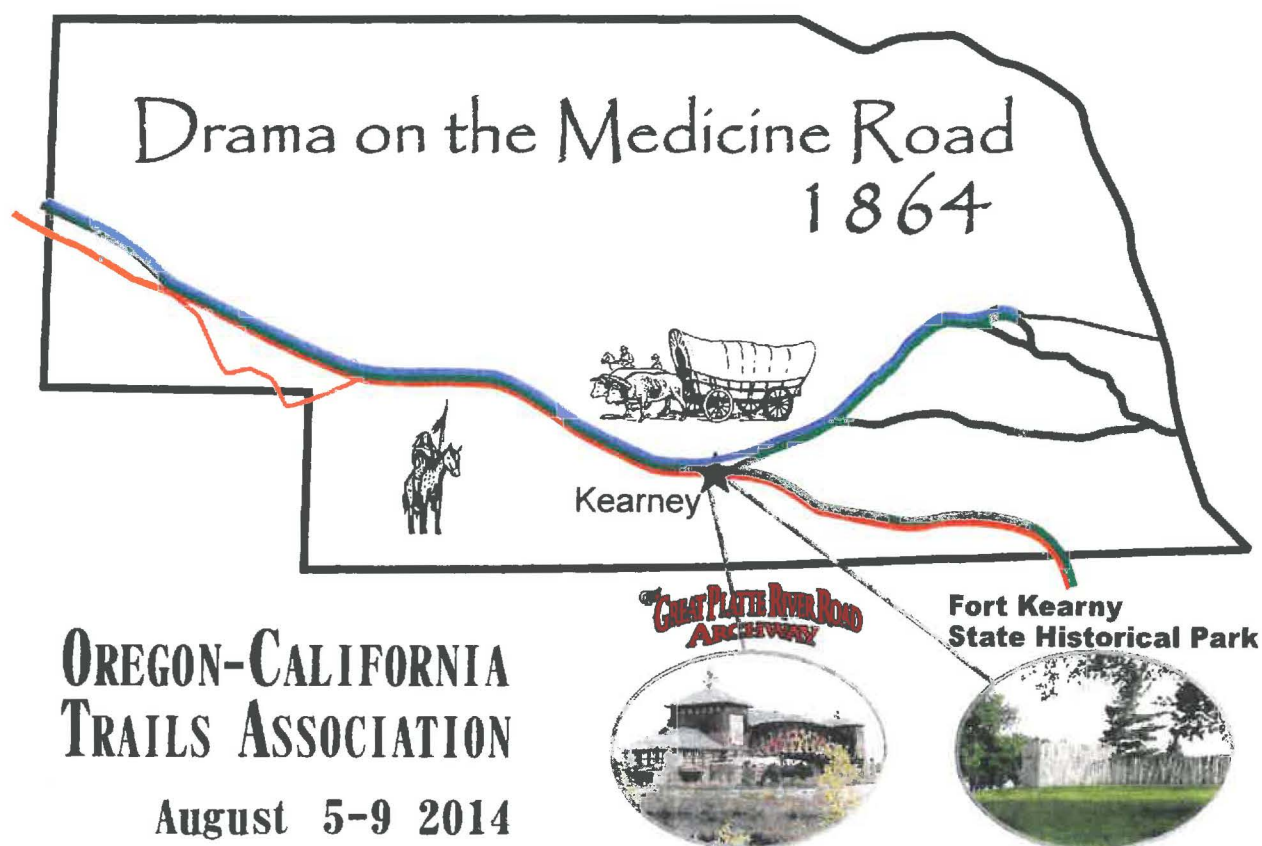




# OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

National Historic Trails in Central Nebraska:



OREGON-CALIFORNIA  
TRAILS ASSOCIATION

August 5-9 2014

HOSTED BY NEBRASKA OCTA CHAPTER

[www.octa-trails.com](http://www.octa-trails.com)

## **Martin Brothers, Genoa Indian Industrial School, Mormon Trail Sites Tour**

This tour follows the Mormon/Overland Trail on the north side of the Platte River with a short detour to the south side for some sites. Highlights of the tour are: the Murdock Site with trail ruts (now owned by the Hall County Historical Society), the Martin Brothers Monument, the Campbell Graves, Junction of Ox Bow and Fort Kearny Cut-Off Trails, Black Island (sacred to several Native American Tribes) and the Lone Tree Station Site. The tour will cross the divide between the Platte and the Loup Rivers to visit historic Genoa and the Indian Industrial School. The tour continues west to the John Dunbar Mission Site, the upper ford of the Loup River and the Mormon Camp Site.

Length: 230 miles      Duration: varies but at least 10 hours  
Starting and Ending Point: Kearney

### **Townsley-Murdock Site**

Directions: Travel east on I-80 from Kearney exit 272 to Alda exit 305. Turn left (north on NE 40C Link. Travel north NE 40C Link 4.3 mile to Guenther Road. Turn left (west) on Guenther Road. The Townsley- Murdock Site is immediately on the right.

The Mormon Trail Interactive Panel sign is just inside the south entrance at the Townsley-Murdock Site. This site was originally settled by Marshal Townsley about 1860. The property was later occupied by Phineas and Catherine Murdock in 1866.

Walk north of the Interactive panel; you immediately step down into the Mormon/California Trail swale that runs from northeast to southwest along the Wood River. Straight north of the entrance is a path down to the river, and a dam wall is visible on the north side of the river. This is where Murdock had his saw mill on the river. To the west, there are two depressions in the ground. They were used for shelter during the trail years. Depression supposedly instrumental in buffalo killings, as Native men would jump up out of the holes to make the buffalo veer toward the river. They would then kill the buffalo as they went over the edge. Two graves have been "witched" at the far east end of the property. To the east, you can follow the swale to the Ezra Meeker marker at the east edge of the property. You can see an arrow on the top of the marker that point the way of the swale. Eight of these markers were erected in Hall County in 1923 after Ezra Meeker came through, encouraging all of the counties in Nebraska to mark the trails. This is the only marker in Hall County in its original location. Looking across the road to the east, a grain bin can be seen along the Wood River, ½ to ¾ mile to the northeast. This is the point of the Wood River crossing, established by the Mormons in 1847. You can still clearly see the crossing from one side of the river to the other, as the pounding of oxen hooves compacted the ground to the point that no trees will grow in its path. In the southeast

corner of the property is a large depression where Murdock had his home. The narrow ridge you are on is between the Wood River to the north, and the ridge to the south of the gravel road drops off into the wetlands of the Platte, which was usually flooded during the trails era. Every wagon that passed on this trail had to travel on this narrow ridge between the two rivers. A mile or two to the east is where the Wood River joined the Platte during the trails era.

### **Martin Brothers Incident**

Directions: Return back to I-80 and cross over Exit 305 to the south past the Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center. Travel south 1.5 mile on S. Alda Road and W. Platte River Drive

A very nice stone marker is on the west side of road, where the two Martin Brothers were attacked by Southern Cheyenne and Lakota warriors during the first week of August, 1864. George Martin came to the Nebraska Territory in 1862 with his three sons—Nathaniel, Robert, and William – and settled on a place south of the German Settlements (Grand Island) and 30 miles east of Ft. Kearny. George later returned to Nebraska City to pick up his wife and his two daughters. The Martin children were very comfortable with the Pawnee who camped near the Martin Ranch. By 1864, the Martin family was operating a successful road ranch and had been busy that first week of August putting up hay. On either August 8 or 9 a group of nine warriors attacked the two older boys as they were hitching up the wagon filled with hay to return home. The father armed with a repeating rifle hurried toward home but was wounded in the neck with an arrow. His wife Anne ran outside and brought her husband inside and treated his wound. The warriors were cautious of the rifle but still interested in capturing the horses. The boys could see what was happening. They jumped on horse together to try to make it home. One of the warriors noticed them and shot both boys with an arrow that pinned them together. George and Anne believed their sons had been killed so they loaded up their three remaining children and headed toward Ft. Kearny. The next day George and his family returned to their home and discovered the boys were still alive and decided to head for Nebraska City. The boys were so badly wounded that the Anne was left with the children at Beaver Creek while George went for help. It was two weeks before George returned to find the boys were doing better. The Martins return to their sod house. Three years later the Martin children were again attacked by Cheyenne warriors but they were able to run to safety.





## Campbell Graves

Directions: Turn left (east) on the W. Platte River Drive. This road will jog east and north, following the south side of the Platte River for 4.5 miles, until you come to the corner of W Platte River Dr. and Amack Ave. Turn left (north) on Amack Drive in Amack Acres and you will find the Campbell graves. On July 24, 1867 Peter Campbell and his son, who lived just 5 miles east of the Martin Ranch, were out harvesting wheat when they learned that Indians were raiding in the neighborhood and decided to return home. On the way, the Campbells found Mrs. Thurston Warren shot to death in her doorway, holding the body of her infant son. They hurried home and found their house ransacked and the children gone.

## Warren Incident

Directions: Continuing east on W Platte River Dr. one mile, on the right (south) side is an historical marker for the "Warren Incident" of 1867.



## CONFLICT OF 1867

Near here are graves of pioneer whites caught up in the conflict between Native Americans and white settlers. On July 24, 1867, Indians attacked the home of Peter Campbell near here. Campbell and his eldest son were helping a neighbor with his harvest. The Indians, Sioux and Cheyenne captured two of Campbell's daughters, aged 17 and 19, and his twin sons, aged four. A nine-year-old daughter escaped. The Indians killed Mrs. Thurston Warren at her home a half mile away and wounded one of her children.

In mid-August of that year, the Pawnee Scouts, led by Frank North, fought a Cheyenne band near Plum Creek and took a woman and a boy prisoners. The boy was a nephew of Turkey Leg, a Cheyenne Chief.

A month later, a meeting was held in North Platte between a government peace commission and Sioux and Cheyenne leaders. Turkey Leg recognized Major Frank North, commander of the Pawnee Scouts, and offered to exchange some white prisoners for the two Indian captives. The children were exchanged unharmed in late September, 1867, at North Platte. The following spring the Campbell family moved east to Saunders County for safety.

Hall County Historical Society  
Nebraska State Historical Society  
West of Doniphan along Hwy. 34 & 281  
Hall County  
Marker 259

## Junctionville Ranch

Directions: At Doniphan, cross US 281, continuing east on 6th Street, which will become Giltner Road. You are now on the old US 281, a mile east of town the road curves north and becomes S. Locust Street. 2 mile north of the corner at S Locust St and E Schultz Road, is a marker for Junctionville Ranch. This ranch was at the junction of the Ft. Kearny Cutoff and the Ox Bow Trail. After 1864, an outpost called "Fort Junction" was established here.

## Seedling Mile

Directions: Continue on S. Locust Street 5 miles until you reach US 34. Turn right (east) on US 34 and travel 2 miles to Shady Bend Road. Turn left (north) on Shady Bend Road and travel 3 miles north on Shady Bend Road to Seedling Mile. Go 1 mile on Seedling mile to Gunbarrel Road.

The Lincoln Highway was the first transcontinental highway across the US. It began in 1913, and was much like the Oregon Trail was to all of the other trails. A lot was learned about how to build future highways, speed limits, gasoline stations, repair garages, etc, from this first highway. The national centennial celebration for the Lincoln Highway was in Kearney in 2013. "Seedling Milles" was a concept introduced by the LH Assoc. and the Portland Cement Company to encourage cities to pave a mile of dirt road on the outskirts of town, encouraging towns to put in more cement roads. The projects were ½ funded by Portland Cement. Grand Island has the only piece of original Seedling Mile left in the US. It was also among the first communities in the United States to complete a Seedling Mile.

## The Seedling Mile

Here is a section of an original Seedling Mile on the Lincoln Highway. It was completed November 3, 1915. Grand Island was the second city in the United States to build such an example of concrete roadway. The original Seedling Mile extended from the corner of Willow Street one mile east, ending near the Seedling Mile School.

By 1913 the route of the Lincoln Highway had been chosen and dedicated nationwide by the newly formed Lincoln Highway Association. The association's main goal was to develop a paved, toll-free, transcontinental highway from New York City to San Francisco. To help meet this goal, the association conceived the Seedling Mile program. Seedling Milles would be the "seeds" from which paved roads would extend across the nation.

The Seedling Mile was constructed with locally donated cement and funds. Fred W. Ashton of Grand Island raised \$1,170 for the project. Realignment of the highway in 1931 allowed this section to be preserved. It is the only remaining original section of a concrete Seedling Mile that has not been widened or covered with asphalt.  
Nebraska Department of Roads



Nebraska State Historical Society, 2010  
 Highway 30 and Stuhr Road., east edge of Grand Island  
 Hall County  
 Marker 482

### James Vieregg

Jog north on Gunbarrel Road to Ft. Kearny Road, and turn right (east) onto Ft. Kearney Road. Harmony Hall is on the north and the California Trail marker is on right. You are now in Merrick County. You will now be following the route of the trail north of the Platte River from Grand Island to Riverside Park, which is south of Central City. As you continue heading east, you will jog north and east at almost every intersection for next 22 miles. Follow Ft. Kearny Road. In 2 miles is the marker for James Vieregg.

James Vieregg was the first settler in Merrick Co, 1858. His brother was here in Hall County, so he came here to settle after coming back from the gold fields of California.

James Vieregg staked the first claim in Merrick County September 5, 1859 on SE Quarter of 5-11-8. Vieregg, remaining in the county, was a successful farmer, livestock raiser and business man.  
 Merrick County Historical Society

### Goettsh and Thramm

Directions: Travel .25 mile. Turn left (north) onto 3 Road. Travel 1 mile. Turn right (east) onto C Road. Travel 1 mile to 4th Road, turn left (north). Travel 1 mile to D Road and travel east to 5th Road, turn left and right onto Ft. Kearny Road. Travel .25 mile.

Christian Goettsh and Christian Thramm were two young boys killed by Natives Americans on the Loup River in January 1868. The marker is on private property.

### Shoemaker Point

Directions: Travel 1 mile. Turn left (north) at the yield sign on to 6th Road. Travel 1 mile to E Road. Turn right and travel east .75 mile.

On the curve is a marker about Shoemaker Point where an 1862 telegraph was sent. Brigham Young and company came down to this point in 1847.

Jesse Shoemaker staked his claim, later Shoemaker's Point, in September 5, 1859. He built a blacksmith shop and ranch house. In 1861 Merrick County's first post office was established here, W.H. Michell, postmaster. This post office moved to Brewer's Ranch in 1864. In 1867 Lone Tree established a post office with Ed Parker as postmaster. The two consolidated in 1869.  
 Merrick County Historical Society

### Old Pawnee Trail

Directions: Travel .25 mile. Turn left onto 7th Road and travel 1 mile, turn right onto H Road and travel east 1 mile to Bader Park Road.

Site of the homestead of John L. Martin and Rebecca Martin. Mrs. Martin was the first and only doctor between Columbus and Fort Kearny from 1861 to 1866. Mr. Martin was a surveyor, political leader and examiner of teachers and County Superintendent.  
 Merrick County Historical Society

You are now sitting on the old "Pre-Pawnee Indian Trail." It was used by the Pre-Pawnee to go to their hunting grounds or to visit their friends, the Wichita to the southeast or to travel to their sacred site near Guide Rock, Waconda Springs or Manitou Springs.

Turn right (south) on the Bader Park Road and travel one mile. Here you will cross the Platte River and enter Hamilton County. On the corner of 21st Road and Bader Park Road, pull over at the larger T in the road. Here you are sitting on the Ox Bow Trail and Pawnee Indian Trail. The Pawnee, Omaha and Otoe Indians used this route to go to their hunting grounds in the Republican Valley. The Ox Bow travelers also used this trail because the bluffs to the south pushed them to the Platte River.

Travel east on 21st Road for about a half mile and look south to the top of the hill west of the house. This is the hill the Pre-Pawnee traveled up to get to higher grounds. There are ruts on the top of this hill and further south in the pasture. This is the trail Don Pedro de Villasur came up on in 1720. Paul and Pierre Mallet, French brothers, came down this trail from the north in 1739. Zebulon Pike followed this trail from the Kansas Border south in 1806. They traveled approximately 6-8 miles a day and usually that is how far it was to their next water source. They also stayed on higher ground to look for game or watch for enemies.

There is an old bridge abutment located .5 mile on the right side of 21st Road. On the northwest side of the creek you will see the swales where they crossed.

Turn around and go back north on Bader Park Road. One half mile north of Bader Park Road, look on the east side of the road south of the fence line dividing farm ground and the you will see ruts from the Mormon, California and Overland Travel.



## Grist Mill

Directions: Travel north on Bader Park Road 1 mile. Turn right (east) on G Road and travel 2 miles east. The road curves 90 degrees and heads north where the Wood River runs into the Platte. You are now traveling north on 10th Road. Travel 1 mile. Turn right (east) onto H Road (the Platte River is on the right). The trail pretty much follows the path of the power lines. At the curve in H Road, watch for the cut made for the grist mill, which is 3 mile east of this location. The cut follows the power lines. Travel 1 mile and turn right (east) onto I Road (now on Lone Tree road), and travel for 3 miles. The road curves to start following the path of the trail.

The first grist mill in Merrick County was built here in 1872 by J.G. Brewer on the NE-31-13-6. It was powered by water through a 2.7 mile canal from the Platte River. Using his land as collateral, the county loaned him \$6000.00 to finance the mill.

Merrick County Historical Society

## Lone Tree Monument

Directions: Now heading northeast on Lone Tree Road. Continue northeast 2.5 to the original Lone Tree site.

### LONE TREE

Lone Tree, a giant, solitary cottonwood, was a noted Platte River landmark as early as 1833. Standing on the north side of the river some three miles southwest of present Central City, the tree was visible at great distance. Several travelers estimated they could see it twenty miles away. The tree was especially prominent since timber was rare on the Nebraska prairies except in stream valleys, where it received protection from prairie fires.

The Mormon Trail passed by Lone Tree, as did the Omaha-Fort Kearny stage route. The tree also gave its name to a stage station and a town, later renamed Central City. Ten to twelve feet in circumference, the tree's total height was about fifty feet; its lowest branches were about twenty feet above the ground.

Passing travelers often camped beneath Lone Tree and carved their initials on its trunk. This probably hastened its end, for the tree was dead by 1863. A severe storm in 1865 brought it to the earth. In 1911 residents of Merrick County erected a stone in the shape of a tree trunk on the site once occupied by Lone Tree.



Merrick County Centennial Committee  
Historical Land Mark Council  
Hwy. 30, Central City  
Merrick County  
Marker 92

Merrick County was officially approved on Nov. 4, 1858. Nebraska, the 37th state, was approved on May 1, 1876. Western Stage Company erected the first building in the county in 1858 at the Lone Tree site. Mary Hilton operated the station from 1860-1861, then homesteaded across the road in 1862. The first white birth in the county was W.T. Burroughs, Oct. 4, 1863. The first white girl born was Mary Eatough, Aug. 25, 1864.

Merrick County Historical Society

## Riverside Park/ Dark Island

Directions: Just after Lone Tree, curve north onto 15 Road. Travel 1 mile and turn right (east) onto L Road. Go one mile north on NE 14 and turn right (east) onto M/28th Street. The park is on the corner, with restrooms available. Turn right (south) on to 17th Road. Follow 17th Road into Riverside Park.

This is a great place for a picnic. Some people call this location Dark Island and it is considered a sacred site for the Pawnee.

## Pawnee Lookout

Directions: Travel 1.5 miles north from Riverside Park on 17th Road to US 30. (There is a little jog just before US 30) Travel east from Central City on US 30 for 9 miles. Travel US 30 to the NE 92 junction. Turn right (east) on NE 92 (south of Clarks). At south end of NE 92, go off curve onto gravel to park.

The trail goes from the Loup River crossing southwest to Lone Tree. There was a lot of wagon traffic here. At mile marker 383 and along riverbank to south there were many encampments. Facing straight south looks much like the Old Pawnee Trail hill. Where you see the straggly cottonwood on the hill was a Pawnee Lookout. The Chaui "grand" village was to the east, and a burial hill is to the east. Turn around at the construction area, at end of the gravel road.

## Indian Industrial School at Genoa

Turn right (north) on 25 Road on "back" blacktop road to Clarks. (Off NE 92, a mile north of Pawnee Lookout) and get back on US 30. At Silver Creek turn north on NE 39 and travel 10 miles to Genoa.

After you reach Genoa go East on Willard Street and north on Cottonwood Street to the School.

One of the main attractions in Genoa is the United States Indian School. Between 1884 and 1934, the Genoa Indian Industrial School educated and taught trades to children of





Native American descent. Today the Indian School Museum is housed in the school building. Visitors can tour the school grounds and see murals painted by Indian children. Included in this museum is a pictorial exhibit depicting life on the campus of the Genoa Indian School. The Genoa Historical Museum is located on main street and houses the Allen B. Atkins Pawnee Indian Artifact Collection. Artifacts in this collection were found within a five mile radius of Genoa. Other features include collections of the Mormons and an exhibit of Genoa history. For more information, call 402-993-2330.

#### **GENOA: 1857-1859**

Genoa, named by the Mormon Pioneers, was among several temporary settlements established by the Church of the Latter Day Saints in 1857, along the 1000-mile trail from Florence, Nebraska to Salt Lake City. These settlements were to serve as way-stations for the Brigham Young Express and Carrying Company, which had the government mail contract to Salt Lake City, and as rest and supply stops for Saints traveling across the plains. Mormons from Street Louis, Florence, and Alton, Illinois were called to establish the Genoa settlement in the spring of 1857, and the Colony arrived here on May 16. During the first year, 100 families settled at Genoa and began to fence the land and plant crops under the direction of Brother Allen, Mission president. A steam powered mill was constructed and log, frame, and sod structures were erected to house the settlers and their livestock.



*Photo Credit: Nebraska State Historical Society*

In the fall of 1859, the Mormon Colony was forced to abandon Genoa when the settlement became part of the newly created Pawnee Indian Reservation. Genoa served as the Pawnee Indian Agency until 1876. When the Pawnee were removed to the Indian Territory and the reservation lands offered for sale.

City of Genoa  
Nebraska State Historical Society  
Nebr. 39, City Park, Genoa  
Dance County  
Marker 104

#### **Dunbar's Presbyterian Mission Site**

From Genoa, travel west on NE 22 toward Fullerton. The wayside exhibit is 6 miles west of Genoa on the north side of the highway. The trail goes through farmsteads on the left side of the Highway.

In the spring of 1841, Presbyterian missionary John Dunbar left Bellevue with the intention of establishing a permanent mission in the heart of Pawnee country. A site was selected on Plum Creek and several log buildings erected. Encouraged by Dunbar, many members of the Grand, Tappage and Republican bands of the Pawnee constructed a village near the mission in the spring of 1842. Dunbar's effort to convert the Pawnee met with only marginal success. The final blow came in the early summer of 1843 when a Sioux war party attacked the Pawnee village, burning twenty lodges and killing nearly seventy residents. The Pawnee moved following the attack, and the mission, located in the Genoa vicinity, ceased operation several years later.

#### **Mormon Bridge**

Directions: Continue traveling on NE 22 less than 2 miles until you come to a bridge on the highway. You can see the bridge abutment built by the Mormons to the south of the bridge.

#### **Loop River Ford**

Directions: 1 mile after the bridge the Loop River curves north. This was the "a crossing of the Loop", where the water slows down and was shallow and wide.

#### **Ferry**

Directions: Just before the junction of NE 22 and 273Rd Avenue, there is a ferry landing to the left. At the junction of NE 22 and NE 14, travel NE 14 south to Fullerton.

#### **Mormon Pioneer Campsite**

Directions: Travel 1 mile south of Fullerton on NE 14, just past Platte River Bridge



**MORMON PIONEER CAMPSITE**

In the early spring of 1847, several hundred pioneers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) camped near here on their historic trek to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake. Driven from their homes in Illinois and Missouri, more than 3,000 of the oppressed people had wintered near the present site of Omaha, housed in log cabins, sod houses and dugouts, preparing for the journey to their new Zion in the Rocky Mountains.

The first company of pioneers, led by Brigham Young, left Winter Quarters on April 14 with 143 men, three women and two children traveling in 73 wagons. They arrived in what is now Salt Lake City on July 24, 1847. Several other companies took the trail in the months and years that followed, traveling the same route, and many of them camping at or near this spot.

Between 1855 and 1860 several thousand made the 1300-mile journey on foot, pulling their worldly possessions in handmade two-wheeled carts. The dramatic and oftentimes tragic story of these Handcart Pioneers is one of the epics of American history. Overpowered by summer heat or caught in the cold of prairie blizzards, hundreds of them lie buried in unmarked graves along the trail.

Church of Latter-Day Saints

Nebraska State Historical Society

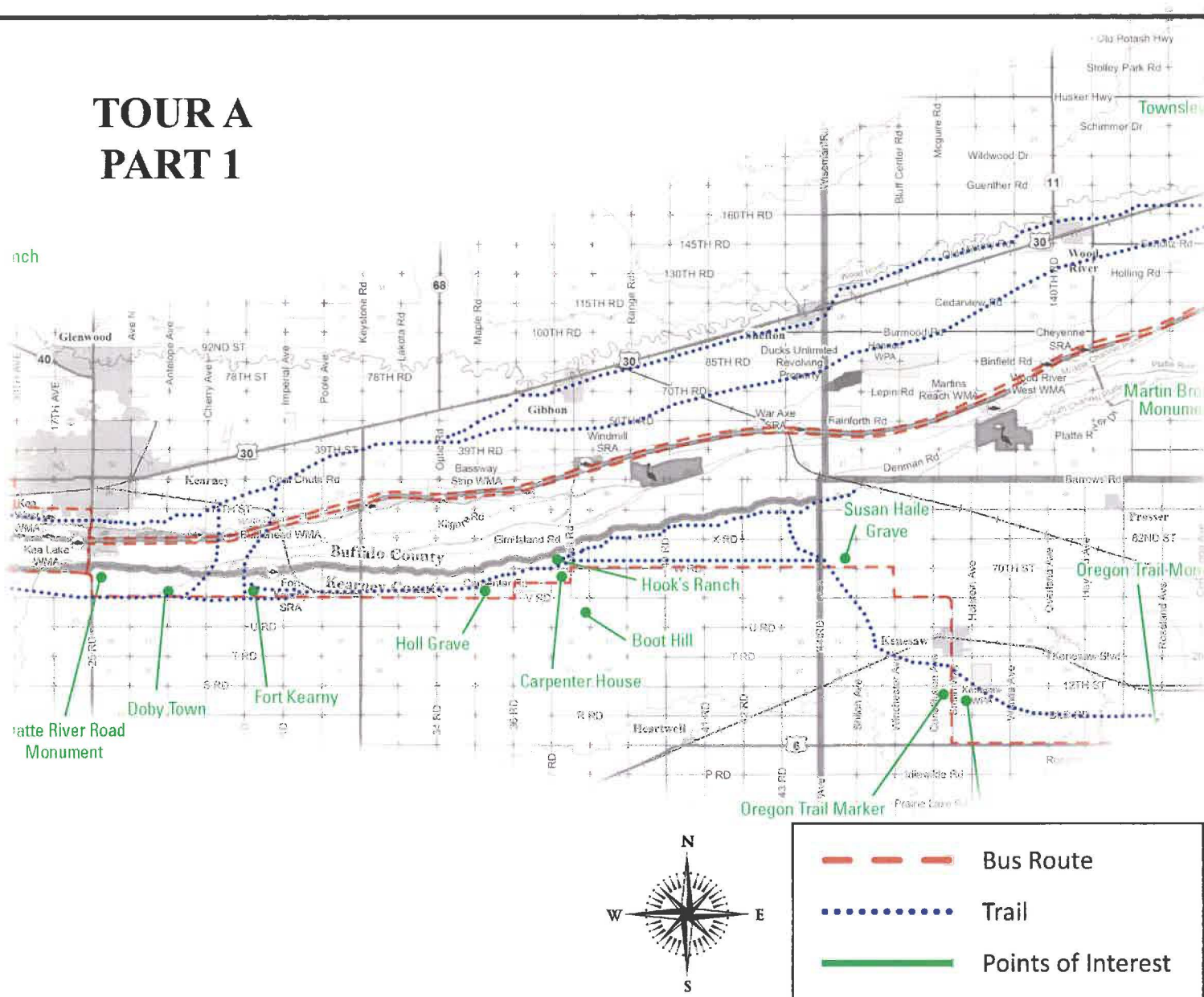
Nebr. 14, 2 1/2 miles southwest of Fullerton

Nance County

Marker 162

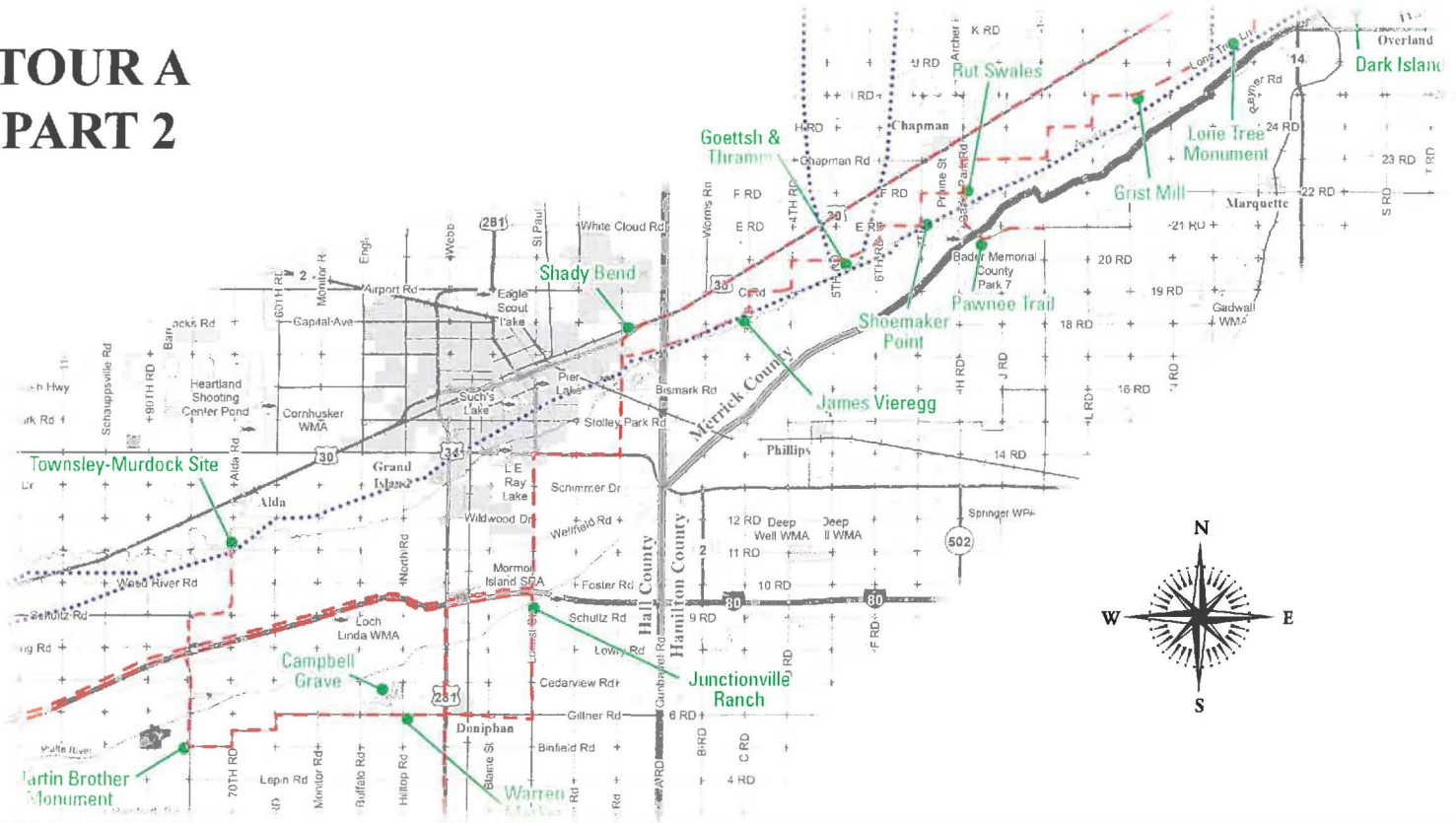
Continue south on NE 14 to Central City, west on US 30 to Shady Bend Road, south to US 34, west to Locust, south to 1-80, west to Kearney

## TOUR A PART 1

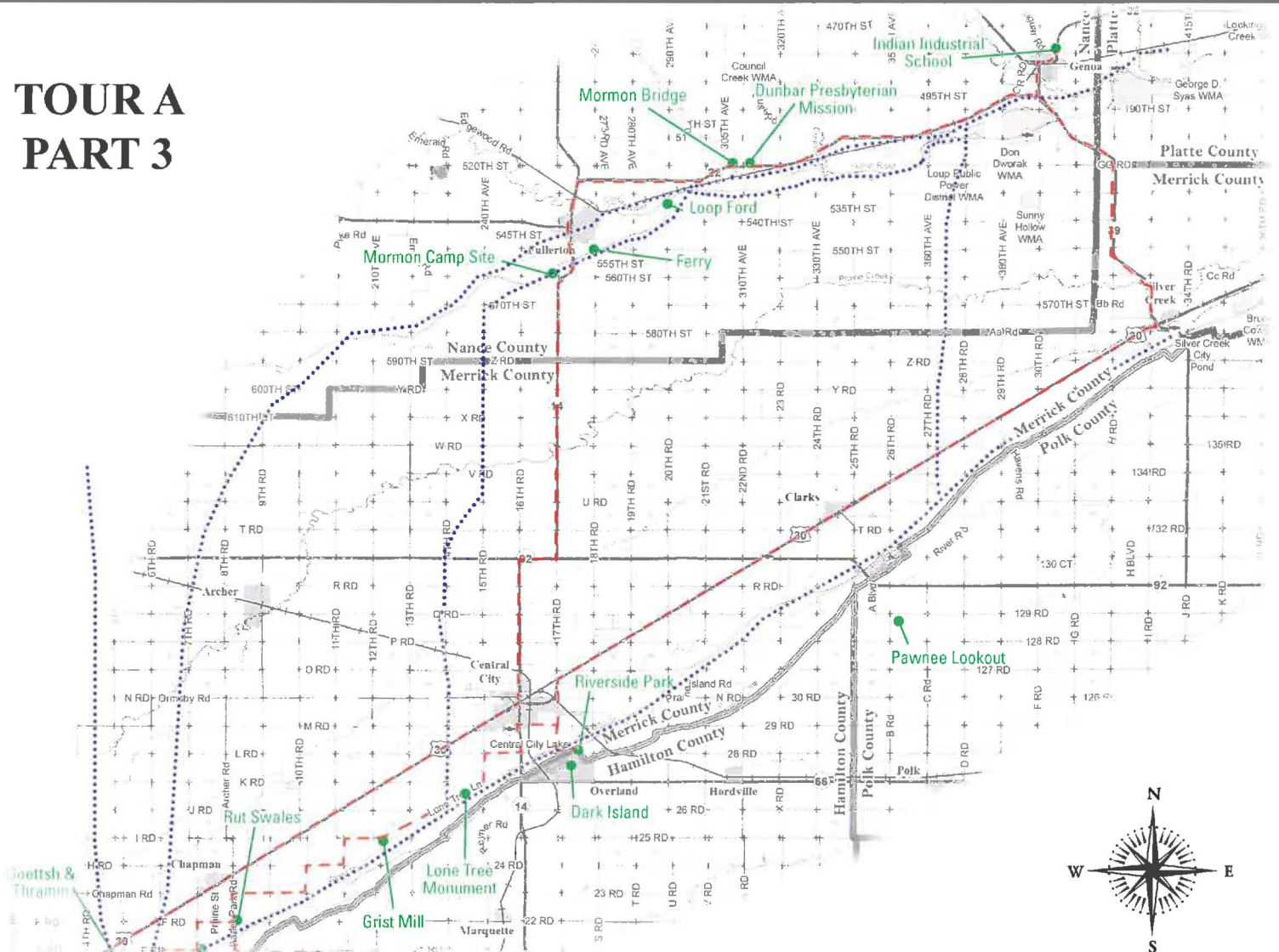




# TOUR A PART 2



# TOUR A PART 3





## Plum Creek Station, Midway Station, and Pony Express Station Tour

This tour travels near the trail west of Fort Kearny and will focus on the road ranches of the 1860s. The road ranches phenomenon started with the Colorado Gold Rush. Some of these started as stage stations for the various coach companies others were trading posts. The mass influx of ranches came with the Pikes Peak gold rush. Entrepreneurs found that there was more money to be made supplying the gold diggers than actually digging. Freight companies



*Photo Credit: Nebraska State Historical Society*

found that they could make several trips "out and back" during the year if there was feed for the draft animals. Hence, the ranchers squatted along the trail with hay making equipment and various supplies desired by the freighters and other travelers. Some were nothing more than a tent while others became quite elaborate. A study of the location and names of the road ranches west of Fort Kearny is confusing. The Pony Express added to the establishments. For the purpose of this tour, we will comment of the ranches and stations that are well documented. The tour also includes the Pony Express Station in Egan Park in Gothenburg, the Willow Island Pony Express building in Cozad, and the Dawson County History Museum in Lexington.

Length: 180 miles      Duration: varies but at least 8 hours      Starting and Ending Point: Kearney

### Platte Pony Express Station

Directions: Travel south from Kearney on NE 44 across I-80 and the Platte River. Travel .3 mile and turn right (west) on Kearny County W Road. Travel 3 miles. The Platte Pony Express Station was just south of this point. It is marked by a Joe Nardone post, named for the Historian for the National Pony Express Association, and with a Pony Express Logo Sign.

The Pony Express was founded by William H. Russell, William B.



Waddell, and Alexander Majors. The Pony Express consisted of relays of men riding horses carrying saddlebags of mail across a 2000-mile trail. The service opened officially on April 3, 1860, when riders left simultaneously from St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California. The first westbound trip was made in 9 days and 23 hours and the eastbound journey in 11 days and 12 hours. The pony riders covered 250 miles in a 24-hour day.

Eventually, the Pony Express had more than 100 stations, 80 riders, and between 400 and 500 horses. The service lasted only 19 months until October 24, 1861, when the completion of the Pacific Telegraph

### 17 mile Station

Direction: You are now in Phelps County and the name of the road changes to 747 Road.

The 17 mile Station was a Pony Express and Stage Station. It was also called Sydenham's and possible referred to as Gardener, Garden, or Shakespeare. The station was called 17 mile because it was 17 miles from Fort Kearny. This station was operated by the family of Moses Sydenham a well-known Englishman, printer and postmaster from Fort Kearny. The location is marked by a National Historic Trails local tour route sign and another Joe Nardone post.



### Fred Smith's Ranche

Directions: Continue traveling west 8 miles on 747 Road.

Fred Smith Ranche was at the 25 mile point and was operated by Fred Smith and wife. Smith was listed in the 1860 censuses as a laborer at Fort Kearny.

On the morning of August 8, 1864, James Green was traveling east and observed Fred Smith arguing with his wife about going to Dobytown, a collection of stores and saloons, west of Ft. Kearney. She wanted to go along. He wanted her to stay and help the hired man at the ranche. She must have won out because when Col. Summers arrived in the evening from the Fort, he found the ranche in ruins and the hired man dead.

### Mass Grave/Massacre Site

Directions: Turn right (north ) on to Road G and travel one mile to Road 748 and the follow the curve heading west. In two and one half miles is the location of the Moton, Kelley, and Marble trains. It is not marked.



On August 7, 1864 this area served as the camp site of the ill fated trains of Morton, Kelley, and Marble. James Green was camped here also and left, east bound, before sunrise. The three combined train moved west at sunrise and in about one and one half miles came under attack by 100 warriors of Cheyenne lead by Big Crow. Within moments, all 13 males were dead and Nancy Jane Morton and Danny Marble were captives. Mrs. James Smith hid in the cat tails. Lt. Bone, at the telegraph office, witnessing this and receiving reports of an east bound ox train, sent the telegraph to Col. Summers at Fort Kearny.

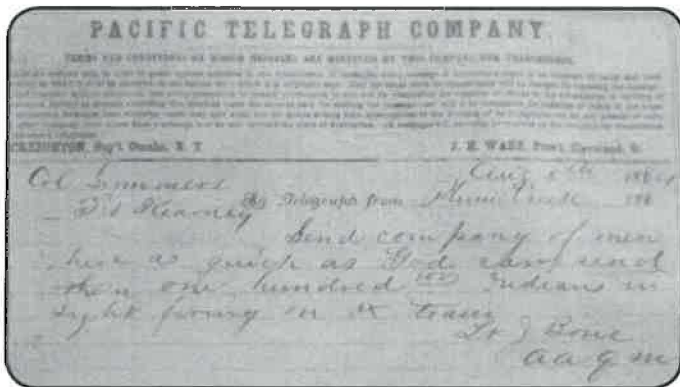
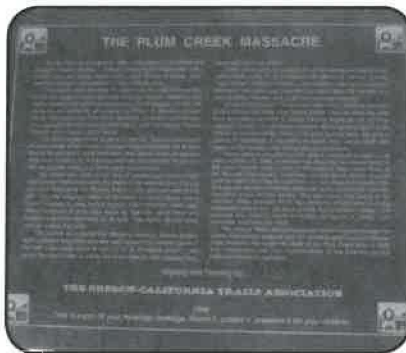


Photo Credit: Nebraska State Historical Society

There is a OCTA interpretive pedestal near the mass grave site. The burial of eleven men is just south east of the pedestal, two other graves are, unmarked to the north west.



Col Summers arrived after dark. Too late to do anything except locate Mrs. Smith and take her to the Thomas Ranch. There is an OCTA interpretive panel near the mass grave. (insert script) Plum Creek had two stores and stage station. The east store was Louis Wisecamb and Bernard Blondeau. In **Indian Wars 1864**, Eugene F. Ware refers to stopping at Blouneau's. Further to the west was Thomas ranch with Post Office and Telegraph office. On west near the creek crossing was the stage station.

## Plum Creek Memorial Cemetery

The Plum Creek Memorial Cemetery was created in the 1930's. The Dilworth family had found the head stone of Sarepta Gore Fly on their property, broken and partially buried in a rodent burrow. Sarepta had died suddenly on an east bound trip in 1865. William Fly returned later with the head stone. It is unknown if he was able to locate the exact grave or if it is at the location the Dilworths found it. Local tradition claims numerous unmarked graves here. To the north of the cemetery, Fort Plum Creek was built in the fall of 1864.

Leaving the cemetery, travel west on 748 Road and turn north on A Road. Watch for the Pony Express Logo sign. Here is another Joe Nardone post for the Plum Creek Pony Express Station.

Near the intersection of Road A & 749 Road is the approximate location of the Plum Creek Bridge. Within a few years this area will probably be under a 1000 acre lake constructed by Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation.

On 749 Road is a arch sign for the 1874 Historic Robb Ranch. The Mart Bowler's ox train was camped here the night of August 7, 1864. They came under attack before dawn and fended off the attackers. They arrived at Plum Creek in time to witness the attack on the wagons. Crossing the canal bridge to the south, is the "upper Plum Creek ford", preserved by Joe and Dianne Jeffrey.

## Daniel Freeman Rancho

Directions: Continue west on 749 Road, turn north to Pass the Canaday Steam Plant, Turn west on 750 Road.

Daniel Freeman's road ranche was in this area and it was destroyed in the 1864 raids. His wife made good money selling bread and other baked goods. In the fall of 1864 Freeman rebuilt his ranche near Post Plum Creek. There were four Daniel Freemans in Nebraska Territory at the time. None were related.

## Willow Island

Directions: Turn north on 433 Road. Turn west on Plum Creek Parkway, Turn west on 752 Road, Turn north on 429 Road. Turn west on 753 Road. Turn north on 427 Rd.

On 427 Road (south of 755 Road), there are several monuments for Willow Island Ranche. The ranche was operated by Pat Mullaly and was forty seven miles from Fort Kearny. Mullaly was probably the most misspelled name on the frontier. The log cabin Pony Express Station was moved to Cozad in the 1930's.



### Miller and Peniston

Directions: Turn west on 755 Road and north on NE 21. Near the brick country school is a Pony Express marker.

NE 21 is on the 100th Meridian, the point where the climate becomes dryer and wagon wheels came apart. At the intersection with 759 Road is a 1912 Oregon Trail marker under a small tree.

Dan Smith's east ranche was a few miles north west of here. In 1864, it was operated by Miller and Peniston. The ranche was destroyed in the raids.

### Midway Station

Directions: Turn west on 759 Road. Turn north on 414 Road. Turn west on 761 Road. Turn north on NE 47. Turn east on 763 Road.

Midway Station was a stage stop and some claim it was also a Pony Express Station. It was located on the '96' Ranch, one mile east of NE 47 on 763 Road. It may have been named Midway as it was located is half way from the Missouri River and Fort Laramie or half way to Denver City. In 1874 this became known as the Lower 96 Ranch. The Sam Machette's log cabin was at Upper 96 Ranch. Both were owned by Nichols, Beach and Company. Over the next 30 years, the 96 Ranch came to be owned by the Henry Laurens Williams family. The Lower 96, now 96 Ranch, is still owned and operated by descendants of H. L. Williams.



*Photo Credit: Nebraska State Historical Society*



### Pony Express Station in Ehman Park at Gothenburg

Directions: Return to NE 47 and travel north into Gothenburg, follow the signs to Ehman Park and the Pony Express Station. Turn east on 15th Street. For more information, call 308-537-3671.

The log cabin on the Sam Machette's Upper 96 Ranch was donated to the American Legion Post in Gothenburg in 1931. They disassembled the building and rebuilt it as a

single story structure and advertized it as a Pony Express Station.



*Photo Credit: Nebraska State Historical Society*



### Willow Island Pony Express in Cozad

Directions: From 15th Street, turn right (south) on Ave. F and left (east) on US 30 towards Cozad. In Cozad turn north on Meridian Ave and east on 9th Street.

By 1859 most commercial traffic was crossing the Platte River at Fort Kearny. This resulted in very few road ranches on the north side trail. The log cabin, purported to be, the Willow Island Pony Express Station was acquired and moved to the city park in Cozad.



### Turkey Leg

Directions: Proceed east on 9th Street and south on Ave D to return to east on US 30.

Four miles west of Lexington, formerly Plum Creek Station, is a monument to the Turkey Leg attack of 1867.

Cheyenne Chief Turkey Leg managed to de-rail a train, cut the telegraph wire and kill several train men. One of the victims was scalped but, survived. The Pawnee Scouts were summoned from the end of track and arrived two days later. Meanwhile, Turkey Leg had returned with his whole band to pilfer the train. They fled south across the Platte. At the Plum Creek Bridge, the Cheyenne took a stand and were defeated by the outnumbered Pawnee Scouts.



### CENTRAL PLATTE VALLEY

Here in Dawson County, much of the early history is concerned with the pioneer trails to the west. The Mormon Trail to Utah and the first transcontinental railroad passed through here on the north side of the Platte River; the Oregon Trail and the Pony Express followed the south side of the Platte.

Indian trouble was not uncommon here in the early days of settlement. The Plum Creek Massacre occurred in 1864 when Sioux Indians attacked a wagon train, killing several men and taking prisoners at a site near here in Phelps County. Also near here, in 1867 a group of Cheyenne led by Chief Turkey Leg cut the telegraph line, derailed a locomotive, and killed several Union Pacific Railroad employees.

The town of Cozad, near here, lies directly on the 100th Meridian, considered an important goal in the building of the first transcontinental railroad. When the tracks reached this point in 1866, some 250 businessmen, senators, congressmen and other notables came here to celebrate. The 100th Meridian is often cited as the "line of aridity," west of which rainfall is usually insufficient to support non-irrigated agriculture.

Dawson County Historical Society

Nebraska State Historical Society

180 Rest Area, West

Dawson County

Marker 181

### Dawson County Museum

Directions: At Lexington turn north onto Taft Street to Dawson County Museum. For more information, call 308-324-5340.

### Lincoln Highway

A short distance east of Overton, Nebraska on US 30 (Lincoln Highway) is a Lincoln Highway Bridge preserved in original location.

### Tobin Raid

Directions: At Road 446 is the Tobin Indian Raids State Historical Marker. An incident in 1868 when several railroad workers and family members were killed.

### THE TOBIN INDIAN RAID

Railroads played an important role in the settlement of the Great Plains. Their construction was particularly damaging to the Indian way of life, since railroads helped the military to patrol rapidly along their lines, and villages and farming communities soon grew up along the rights-of-way. The Union Pacific was built across Nebraska between 1864 and 1867. On May 10, 1869, the U.P. tracks joined those of the Central Pacific at Promontory Point, Near Ogden, Utah. Section crews were stationed along the railroad to keep the tracks and telegraph wires repaired. The Sioux and

Cheyenne, knowing the importance of maintenance work, attacked working crews. Several such raids took place in present Dawson County.

Mrs. Timothy Tobin and Mrs. William Costin, wives of section foremen, and their families were threatened by an Indian raiding party on April 29, 1868. Shortly afterward the warriors attacked and killed Mr. Tobin and section hands Schultz and McCarthy. A third employee named Williams, though seriously wounded, escaped to the section house. Hearing for her husband and his crew, Mrs. Costin bravely set out to warn them of the danger. A passing train picked up the survivors; the two slain workmen were buried near her.

Overton American Legion Post 277

Nebraska State Historical Society

Hwy. 30, approx. 1 1/2 mile east of Overton

Dawson County

Marker 221

### Covered Wagon

At Dove Hill Road is the Covered Wagon, once souvenir shop, point of interest. Great place to stop for a photo-op.

### Watson Ranch

Directions : At 62nd Avenue Place is a State Historical Marker for the Watson Ranch.

### THE WATSON RANCH

In 1888, H. D. Watson established the historic Watson Ranch, at one time containing 8,000 acres, reaching from the fertile Platte Valley on the south to the rolling hills on the north and from downtown Kearney to a point five miles west.

During its existence, the ranching operations were devoted to grains, poultry, vegetables, and a 250-acre fruit orchard primarily of cherry, plum, and apple trees. Watson planted thousands of other trees of numerous varieties.

Resembling a huge experiment station, the ranch included such crops as wheat, rye, barley, corn, potatoes, sugar beets, squash, and asparagus. In the 1890's, Watson introduced alfalfa into the Platte Valley. In part to demonstrate the value of alfalfa as a feed, Watson constructed a dairy barn in 1900. Standing 650 feet northwest of this sign, it measured 500 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 56 feet high. Attached to an immense silo, it contained stanchions for 400 cows, huge hay lofts, and wagon and machinery storage.

Because it was located 1,733 miles from both Boston and San Francisco, it later became known as the "1733 Ranch," and the huge barn remained a landmark until it was down in 1935.

Buffalo County Historical Society

Nebraska State Historical Society

Hwy. 30, west of Kearney

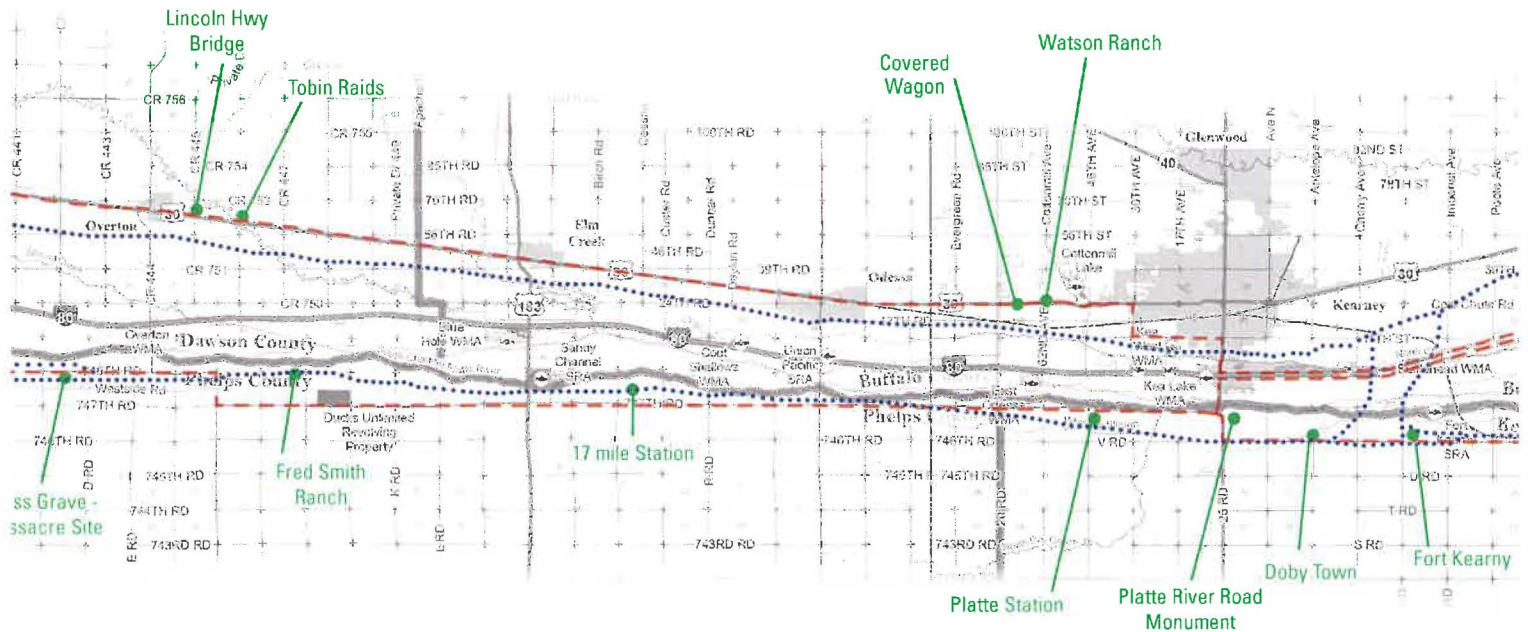
Buffalo County

Marker 178

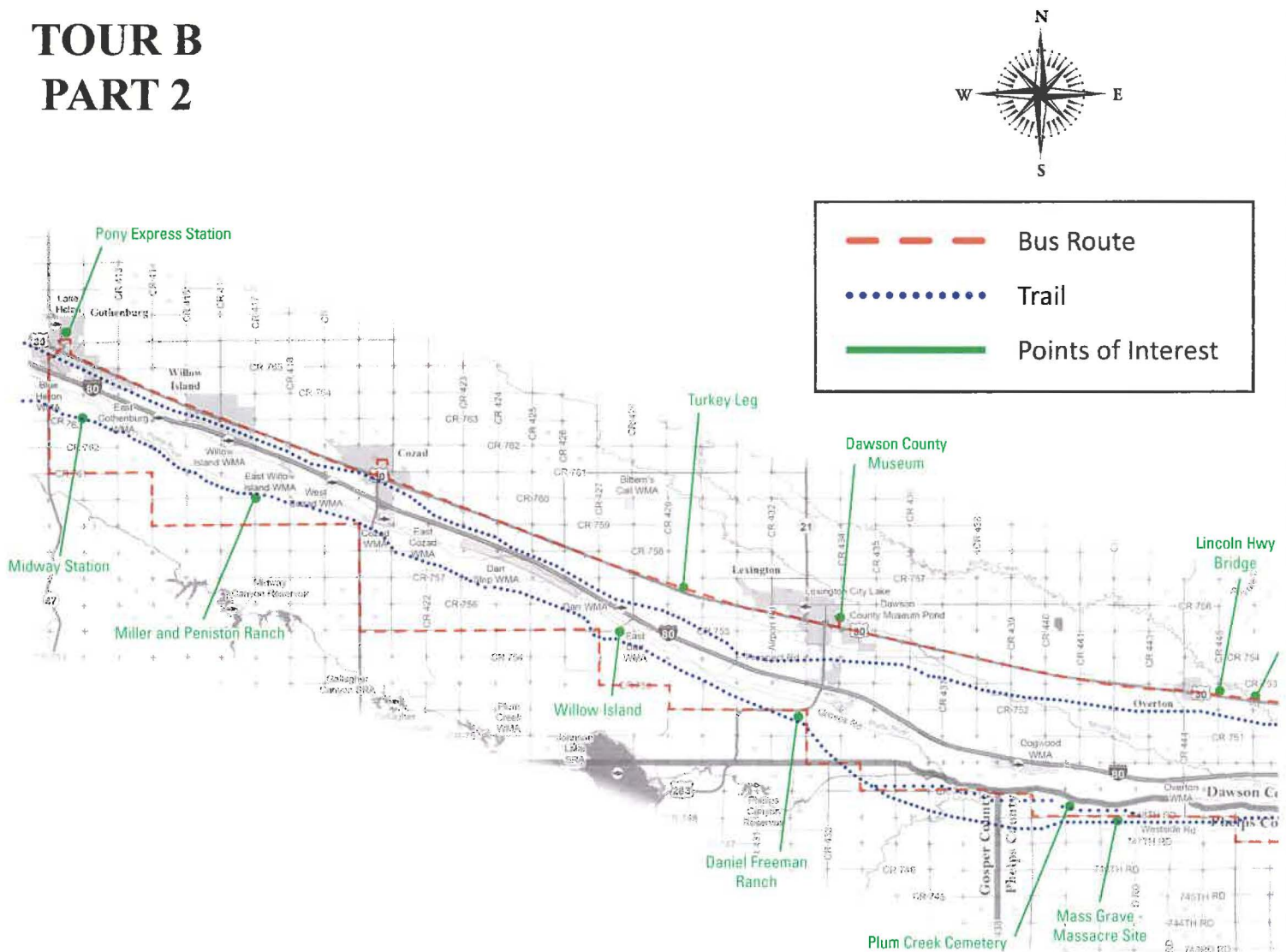
Enter Kearney and turn right (south) on 30th Avenue, turn left (east) on 11th Street and then to 2nd Avenue



# TOUR B PART 1



# TOUR B PART 2





## Oak Grove and Narrows Tour

This tour takes the trail east of Fort Kearny and across the divide into the Little Blue River Valley. You will visit the sites of Susan C. Haile Grave and ruts, Junction with Fort Riley Trail, and Fremont 1842 Camp. A highlight of the tour is seeing the locations of the 1864 Raids on the Little Blue River beginning August 7, 1864 in an area called the Narrows, Oak Grove/Comstock Ranch, Thirty-Two Mile Station, Indian Hollow (Smith-Simonton Site), Lone Tree, Bainter's Spring Ranch, Pawnee Ranch Site, and Liberty Farm. On the return trip, you might want to pass through the abandon Ammunition Depot and stop at Hastings Museum to view the Martin Brothers Monument.

Length: 215 miles      Duration: varies at least 10 hours  
Starting and Ending Point: Kearney

## Great Platte River Road

Directions: Travel south on Second Avenue / NE 44, cross over I-80 and Platte River about .5 miles south from the Platte River Bridge is the Nebraska State Historical Society Monument on the left (east) side of highway.

### THE GREAT PLATTE RIVER ROAD

The trail which followed the south side of the Platte River was the main route to Oregon and California. Fur traders going to the Rocky Mountains took the first wagons over the trail in 1830. Oregon-bound missionaries followed in the mid-1830s, and the first group of settlers embarked for Oregon in 1841. The number of emigrants reached 40,000 in 1849 after gold was discovered in California.

Most emigrants traveled in ox-drawn wagons averaging about fifteen miles a day. In the 1850s and 1860s, freight wagons and stagecoaches carrying passengers and mail used the road. From April 1860 until October 1861, the Pony Express carried mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California.

Fort Kearny (1848-1871), east of here, provided protection and supplies for travelers. Supplies could also be purchased at nearby Dobytown. One of many road ranches along the Oregon-California trail was located just southeast of this marker.

Wagon travel on this overland route declined following the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

Nebraska State Historical Society

Citizens of the Area

Hwy. 44, near the junction of Hwy. 50A

Kearney County

Marker 364

The trail is about one mile south of this point. Near this point is believed to be the first ford for the Western stage coach and emigrant crossing. At this point a town call Central City was laid out in 1857 by Colonel Scott, C. A. Phouts, Alex Constant, John A. "Jack" Morrow, and John Holland. In 1859 Kearny City or "Dobytown" was laid out by

a group of men from Omaha. Since Dobytown was closer to Fort Kearny, Central City soon faded away, leaving only the "Dirty Woman Ranch" where it once stood. This was one of those notorious enterprises that usually accompany a military post.

## Dobytown

Directions: Re-enter Route 44, travel (south) .6 mile to 50A link. Turn left (east) on NE 50A Link and travel 2 miles.

The trail passed Dobytown on both north and south sides. With the 1859 survey entrepreneurs found a narrow strip between the Fort Kearny boundary and Dobytown (Kearny City). John Talbot, an Irish emigrant join the U.S. military in 1856 and was stationed at Fort Kearny. His wife, Mary, was a laundress at the fort. In 1859 Mary bought out John's enlistment. Laundress must have been a good business. John was a stone mason by trade. He built a store, saloon and billiard hall of sun-dried adobe bricks. John became famous in Eugene F. Ware's *Indian Wars of 1864*. Ware writes of Talbot's ability to hit 11 out of 12 telegraph poles between the fort and Kearny City with his revolvers from horseback. He later became a Major in the volunteer cavalry. John and Mary's daughter, Lucy was the first white female born at Fort Kearny. Governor Black appointed John as Probate Judge of Kearney precinct in 1860. Kearny City was the first county seat of Kearney County.



Photo Credit: Nebraska State Historical Society

## Fort Kearny

Directions: Continue east on 50 A Link for 2.5 miles to the Visitor Center

Ft Kearny was established in 1848 as Fort Childs. The name was changed to Fort Kearny in honor of Steven Watts Kearny a hero of Mexican War. No story of Fort Kearny is complete without information about Moses Sydenham. An English emigrant, he came to Fort Kearny in 1856 as a teamster for Russell, Majors and Waddell taking freight to Fort Laramie. Leaving Fort Laramie in November they were caught in a blizzard at Ash Hollow. A tribe of Sioux were camped nearby and took the teamsters in. These were probably part of those in the Battle of the Blue Water a year earlier. When the weather cleared they went on to Fort Kearny and were in another blizzard. Moses was in a tent and was buried for a full day. The clerk of the post sutler became lost in the snow and froze to death. Moses was hired as clerk. In 1858 he was appointed as Postmaster at the fort. He held that position until 1871 when the fort closed. He move to Kearny City, opened a



post office and named it Centuria to save confusion with the town of Kearney. He published a newspaper called The Central Star promoting the idea of moving the nation's capital to Nebraska. The nearby state recreational area has a number of small lakes or sand pits that were formed by mining gravel for construction of the Navel Ammunition Depot. Besides fishing and swimming in the lakes, many people enjoy the walking trail down to the Platte River on the old B&M Railroad grade and bridge.



*Photo Credit:  
Nebraska State Historical Society*

### Albert Holl's Grave

Direction: After stopping at the sign at NE 10, travel 2 miles east on V Road.

The grave of Albert Holl is on the left side of the road. Albert was a young boy of an early settler family. Local farmers found the head stone and preserve the site.

### Carpenter House

Directions: Continue traveling east on V Road for 1 mile until you come to a T on the road. Turn left (north) on 36 Road and travel .5 miles. Turn right (east) on Carpenter and travel .75 miles.

The Carpenter House was built by E.E. Carpenter in 1915. It is on the National Registry of Historic Places. Story has it that Mr. Carpenter and family spent several years making concrete blocks to build the house. The truth is what appears to be blocks were hand mixed cement poured into forms to look like blocks. It is a beautiful house at any rate. This is also the east boundary of Fort Kearny Military Reservation which was a 10 miles by 10 miles square (100 square miles).

### Lowell

Directions: Continue traveling east on Carpenter Road 1.5 until it intersects with Lowell Road.

In 1870, the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad sent four men to the projected end of track. They selected the center of section near the fort boundary and built a four room house. One room being in each  $\frac{1}{4}$  section, thus making claim to the four quarter sections (640 acres) of land under the Homestead Act. They laid out the town of Lowell which became the second county seat of Kearney County.

In 1872 Lowell had a population of 2500 and was a shipping point for some Texas cattle drives. They promoted settlement in the area in eastern newspapers. One add read "Come to Lowell. The area is so healthy we had to

shoot seven men to start a cemetery."

Homesteaders thronged to the area. Lowell had a government land office until it was move to Bloomington in Franklin County. This and the removal of the county seat to Minden started the slow demise of Lowell.

### Hook's Ranch

Direction: Turn left (north) on Lowell Road at the Lowell Nebraska State Historical Marker and travel 1 mile.

This is the site of Hook's Ranch and sometimes known as Valley City, Dogtown, or Junction. This was the junction of the Oregon, Fort Kearney Cut-off, and Oxbow trails. It was also a Pony Express Station

In 1857 a band of Cheyenne were camping on the island to the north on their way to extract more vengeance on the Pawnee. Two of the men decide to flag down the stage coach to ask for some tobacco. The stage driver got excited and fired on them. They, in turn, launched a few arrows at the coach slightly wounding the driver. The coach continues to Fort Kearny and a troop of cavalry was sent. They located the Cheyenne who were unaware of the situation. The cavalry attacked without warning, killing eleven Indians. They then, as was the procedure, destroyed all the bands equipment. Any wonder hard feelings were building?

### Boot Hill

Direction: Turn around and travel .5 miles. Turn left (east) on W Road and travel for .5 miles. Turn right (south) on to 38 Road and travel 1.5 miles to Boot Hill. The last .5 miles is on a Minimum Maintaince Road if you do not have four wheel drive, you might want to enjoy a walk.

Southeast of Lowell at a cedar tree on top of the sand hill is Boot Hill. The story has it that 25 men and one woman are buried here after being caught in the cross fire during the range war between settlers and drovers. A concrete Monument was placed for Boot Hill during the Lowell Centennial in 1972. Two other victims of violence in the early pioneer years were also buried here and then years later re-interred at Liberty Cemetery to the south but the rest remain nameless.



### Susan C. Haile's Grave

Directions: Turn around and travel north on 38 Road 1.5 miles. Turn to the right (east) on W Road. Travel 6 miles to Denman Avenue in Adams County. W Road changes to 70th



Street at the county line. Travel .5 miles on 70 street to the grave site on the left (north) side of the road.

To the left on Denman Avenue are Historical Monuments for Susan O. Hail and Sand Hill Pony Express Station. The panel on the monument is in error as her name was actually Susan C. Haile. The actual information is on the OCTA panel at the grave site just over the hill to the east. As you top the hill, watch to the left. There are several rut swales on the east side of hill. The main swale is marked with an OCTA carsonite post in the fence line. Stop at the Grave Site. You are now on John C. Fremont's "Coast of Nebraska".

### Oregon Trail Marker

Directions: Travel east 1.5 miles on 70th Street Road. Turn right (south) on Winchester Ave and travel 1 mile. Turn left (east) on to Lockland Road and travel 1.5 miles. Curve right (south) on Smith Way and travel through Kenesaw and the travel 1.5 miles.

The trail crosses the area near the cemetery. At the next intersection is a trail marker. Albert Brookings, founder of Hastings Museum, states in his field notes of 1930's that this marker was moved from its original location ½ mile to the east.

### Summit Station

Directions: Turn left (east) on 12th Street and travel .5 miles to Holstein Street. Turn right (south) and travel .25 miles. Watch for the marker on left side of the street.

At this location is an Adams County Historical marker for the Summit Station.

### Oregon Trail Monument

Direction: Continue to travel south on Holstein Street to NE 6/US 34. Turn left (east) on NE 6 /US 34 and travel 4.75 miles west. The Monument is on the left (north) side of the highway.

### THE OREGON TRAIL

The most traveled of the overland routes passed this point in its way to the great Platte Valley, highway to the west. The Oregon Trail started from Independence, followed the Kansas River west, and then the Little Blue north into Nebraska. It crossed this divide to reach the Platte near Fort Kearny.

In the 1830's trappers and missionaries recognized the Platte Valley as a natural roadway. The first wagon train followed the 2,000 mile trail to Oregon in 1841.

An estimated quarter of a million travelers used this route in the twenty-five years after those first wagons. Moving slowly, only 10 to 20 miles a day on the three-month trip, thousands of hooves, shoes, and wheels pounded a wide trail into the prairie sod.

Oregon was an early goal. The '49'ers went this way to California. Settlers, stage coaches, freighting wagons, Pony Express riders, and military expeditions all used this prairie highway.

With completion of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1869, this route fell into disuse, but the Oregon Trail had earned a permanent place in our history.

Historical Land Mark Council

West of Hastings on U.S. 6

Adams County

Marker 9

This site provides a good view of the rolling terrain the "undulating little hills" from Francis Parkman's, *The Oregon Trail, 1846*.

### 32 mile Station

Directions: Re-enter U.S. 6 & 34 east bound. Travel 2 miles east. Turn right (south) on Juniata Road. Turn left (east) on to Oak Ridge and travel 1.5 miles. Turn right (south) to Osage Avenue and stop at the monument on the left side of the road.

Thirty-two mile Station, was so named as it is 32 miles from the flagpole at Fort Kearny. It was a Pony Express and Dinner Station for the Overland Stage. In 1864 the station was operated by George Comstock, eldest son of Erastus Comstock. George lived here with his wife, Hanna, four children, John Mary, Charles, and Mack, his brother Ansel, two hired girls Elisabeth and Jane Artist, and two stage company employees Mike Connelley and Frank Baker.

#### *The Story of Mr. Comstock and his Neighbors*

*Erastus Comstock was visiting his sons at Thirty-two Mile Station on August 7, 1864. He was up early facing the long ride back home to Oak Grove. Son George and Mike Connelley and the Artist girls rode part of the way with Erastus.*





## Elm Creek Station

Directions: Continue to travel south on Osage Avenue .75 mile to Assumption Road. Turn (left) east on Assumption Road. Travel 3.5 miles and turn right (south) on Marian Road. Travel 1.7 miles to the marker for Elm Creek Ranch.

*Mr. Comstock and his companions passed Elm Creek Ranch, operated by Andrew Hammond, rode through Indian Hollow and on to Lone Tree Station operated by James Billingsley. Here the riders left Erastus and returned to Thirty-Two Mile Station.*



## Indian Hollow/Simonton-Smith Train

Directions: Continue traveling south on Marian Road to Saddlehorn Road. Turn left (east) on Saddlehorn and travel 1.5 miles crossing US 281.

*Frank Baker, returning from a fishing trip to the Little Blue, passed the wagons of Horace Smith and his five teamsters before reaching Indian Hollow and passed through and on to Thirty-Two Mile Station.*

*The Artist sisters and Mike Connelley on their return trip found the Smith wagons burning and five of the men dead and scalped. They hurried on to warn the people at Thirty-Two Mile Station.*

*The next morning, August 8, George Comstock and others returned to Indian Hollow. They located the fifth teamster in the sunflowers. He lived long enough to relate what had happened. They buried all six in a common grave near the west side of Indian Hollow.*

The grave is about 300 yards south, just west of the building, marked by posts. The rut swales are farther south. The grave was originally near the swale. In 1931 erosion had exposed some of the bones. They were re-interred on higher level ground with concrete slab cover. OCTA's interpretive pedestal is in the ditch near the gate.



## Fremont's 1842 Camp Site

Directions: Continue traveling east on Saddlehorn Road for .5 mile. Turn right (south) onto Wabash Avenue and travel 1 mile. Turn left (east) on Sundown and travel 1 mile. Turn right (south) on Palomino and travel 1 mile. Turn left (east) on Pony Express Road and travel .25 mile.

John C. Fremont was called the "Great Pathfinder" for his work as a military officer in the Corps of Topographical Engineers. He led a successful expedition to explore the country lying between the Missouri River and Rocky Mountains. He traveled with 25 men (including Kit Carson) through the Platte River Valley and South Pass area. His reports were published widely and excited the country. If you look south there is a grove of pine trees that are growing at the location of John C. Fremont's 1842 camp.

## Lone Tree Station

Directions: Continue traveling east on Pony Express Saddlehorn Road for .5 mile.

There is the Adams County Historical Society marker and Joe Nardone post for the Lone Tree Station operated by James Billingsley in 1864. Directly north on Pawnee Creek is a large cottonwood tree believed to be a descendant of the lone tree. During trail days there were several places called Lone Tree.



## Spring Ranch

Directions: Continue east on Pony Express .5 mile to Showboat Blvd. Turn right (south) on to Showboat Blvd and travel 1 mile. Turn left (east) on NE 74/Monument Road and travel 5.5 miles east. Just east of (Pawnee Avenue is an Oregon Trail marker.) Turn right (south) onto Road C and travel 1.75 miles. The ranch marker is on private property and not available for visiting.

You have been traveled up and down several hills since leaving Indian Hollow. If you had been able to drive on the trail, it would have been nearly level.

*Spring Ranch was operated by James Bainter, his wife Elizabeth, and son Jacob. On the morning of August 7, 1864, the Bainter Family had the company of Reverend Wells and his brother who had contracted to cut some hay for the Bainters. Being Sunday, the Reverend would not be working. He took his brother and Jacob Bainter to Pawnee Ranch to visit the Metcalfs.*



### Spring Ranch Cemetery

Continue on Road C until you get to a T intersection and the turn right. Cross the bridge, turn right on the dirt road heading west, travel .5 mile. If muddy, don't go.

The Spring Ranch Cemetery is an old county cemetery. There are interesting tombstones. The graves of Tom Jones and Elizabeth Taylor are side by side. They were victims of a lynch mob in the 1880's.

### Pawnee Ranch

Directions: Return east to C Road (T intersection you left). Head (east) Road 3045 and travel 1 mile to the Intersection (another T) of 3045 and Road D. Turn right (south) on Road D and travel .3 miles

Stop and read the OCTA pedestal and stone marker. This panel has information about the graves that are about 300 yard west on the bank of Pawnee Creek. You are now at Pawnee Ranch which was west of the large barn. The ranch was built by Fordyce Roper and J. B. Weston.

*In 1864 the ranch was operated by Newton Metcalf, his wife, and his brother George. On August 7, 1864 Erastus Comstock stop on his way to Oak Grove and decided to stay for dinner. After dinner he continues on toward home. Just as he passed the Fort Riley Junction, he met Patrick Burke with his load of shelled corn for Fort Kearny.*

*Burke continued on to within sight of Pawnee Ranch. Here, in full view of those at the ranch he was shot by Indians. The Wells brothers rode out and the Indians fled. Burke had been shot in the back of the neck. The bullet went through neck and out of his mouth. They returned to the ranch and came back with a wagon. Charles Emory and his hired man, riding up from Liberty Farm assisted in loading Burke into the wagon and rode back to Liberty in time to see nine warriors butchering one of Emory's cow and driving off the rest. They got Burke to Pawnee Ranch where he died later that evening. The rest of the day at Pawnee Ranch was spent preparing for a siege.*

### Junction Ft. Riley Trail

Directions: Continue traveling Road D until Road 3045. Turn left (east) on Road 3045 and travel 1 mile. Turn right (south) on Road E. Cross the Little Blue River and turn left (east) on Road 303. On the next bridge, stop. Look up a short distance north on the river bend to the north is a concrete slab marking the junction of Fort Riley and Oregon Trails. There had been a stone marker near here that is inscribed with directions to the junction. Someone moved it .75 mile east and 200 yards south rendering the directions useless.

### Liberty Farm

Directions: Continue traveling east on Road 303. Turn left (north) to F Road and travel .5 mile. Turn right on Road 304

and travel 2 miles. Turn right (south) on H Road and travel 1 mile. Turn left (east) on Road 303 and travel 1 mile. Turn right (south) on J Road and travel 1 mile. Turn right on NE 18C.



*James Lemmon built Liberty Farm in 1859 and in 1860 it became an important Pony Express and stage stop. In March of 1864 Lemmon sold out to Charles Emory for \$ 3,000 and moved his family to Marysville, Kansas. On August 8, 1864, with news of the atrocities at Oak Grove and the Narrows arriving with the west bound coach, the Emorys packed what they could and headed to Pawnee Ranch for mutual protection.*

On the west side of 18C is a marker for Liberty Farm. It was west of this marker site about where a small red barn is today.

### Buffalo Ranch

Directions: Turn around on 18C for 3 miles.

Buffalo Ranch site was south on Buffalo Creek. It was operated in 1864 by the partnership of Milligan and Mudge. It survived the raids. It is on private property.

### Indian Raids Monument

Directions: Turn right (south) on to NE14 and travel 2 miles. In the curve is a Pony Express Rider on the hill and to the right is a stone Oregon Trail marker. Across the Little Blue River is a Nebraska State Historical monument about the Raids of 1864.

#### 1864 INDIAN RAIDS

During the Civil War many regular troops were withdrawn from Plains military posts to fight in the east. The Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho, seizing this opportunity, attempted to drive white settlers from their land.

Beginning on August 7, 1864, the Indians made concerted attacks on stage stations and ranches along the Oregon Trail, hitting nearly every settlement for 400 miles from Julesburg to Big Sandy. Travel ceased for two months. The most severe attacks were along the upper Little Blue River where about 100 people were killed. Several died



at Oak Grove but others escaped and Pawnee Ranch was successfully defended. At "the Narrows" the Eubanks families were attacked and seven killed. Mrs. Eubanks, two children and Miss Laura Roper were taken prisoner and held captive for months. Teamsters were killed, wagon trains burned and ranches were smashed or burned. Settlers fled east to Beatrice and Marysville or northwest to Fort Kearny on the Platte for protection. Troops and local militia companies attacked and drove back the Indians in the battle of the Little Blue on August 17, 1864. Major raids ceased but skirmishes continued through the fall.

Civil War Centennial Commission  
Historical Land Mark Council  
Nebr. 14, north of Nelson  
Nuckolls County  
Marker 28



Photo Credit: Nebraska State Historical Society

## The Narrows

Directions: Continue south on NE 14 for 1 mile. Turn left (east) on NE 4 and travel 8 miles. Turn right (south) on 4400 Road and travel 3.9 miles.

You will come to the gate to the Narrows. Permission is required to enter. Just north of the gate is an OCTA interpretive panel with information about the capture of Laura Roper and Lucinda Eubank and the two Eubank children.

*On Sunday afternoon on August 7, 1864 William and Lucinda Eubank, along with 3- year- old Isabelle and 6-month-old Willie were walking west from the Eubank home escorting Laura Roper to her home west of the Narrows. Screams from the Eubanks' home alarmed William and he started back. He was confronted by Indians and ran to the river where he was killed. Lucinda, Laura, and the children hid in the brush along the river bank, but were found by the Indians and taken captive. They took the captives to the Eubank home, where they had to watch as the Indians destroyed and looted. Dora Eubank was dead and scalped. Brother Henry was also dead. Some more Indian appeared with Ambrose Asher captive. They all mounted and rode south up Elk Creek.*

Down the hill is an Oregon Trail stone marker. This is the area that Joseph Eubank Sr. and James Eubank were killed and Ambrose Asher was captured.

*After dinner at the Comstock on August 7, 1864, some Indians arrived stating that they were returning from a battle with the Pawnee and were hungry. This was not unusual. Shortly there were about 20 Cheyenne milling around. One of them asked Jonathan Butler how the rifle in his wagon worked. As Butler was showing him, the Indian grabbed the rifle and shot Butler point blank. Pandemonium broke out. George Hunt was hit in the thigh by another shot from the rifle. Marshal Kelly was hit in the chest by an arrow and died in seconds. Nelson Ostrander was hit in both arms by arrow and was stabbed in the back. Just as suddenly as they appeared, the Cheyenne were gone.*

*On the evening of August 7, Erastus Comstock on his return trip from Thirty-Two Mile Station to find the destruction at the Eubank's. He rode up onto the bluff and made his own trail to Oak Grove.*

## Oak Grove/Comstock Ranch

Directions: Travel the road into Oak. Oak was once a thriving community and its citizens are proud of their history. From Oak, turn east on Pine Street. Travel S Road east. Note the Pony Express Rider and stone Oregon Trail marker in the curve of the highway. A left turn is necessary to stay east on S Road. A short distance from that turn is the site of Comstock Ranch/Oak Grove. There is a fine monument here naming the survivors and those who died during the trying times in 1864.

*After dark Erastus Comstock rode down from the bluff north of his house to find more grief. It had been a tragic day.*

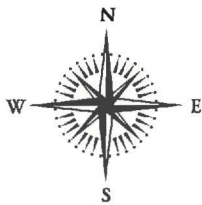
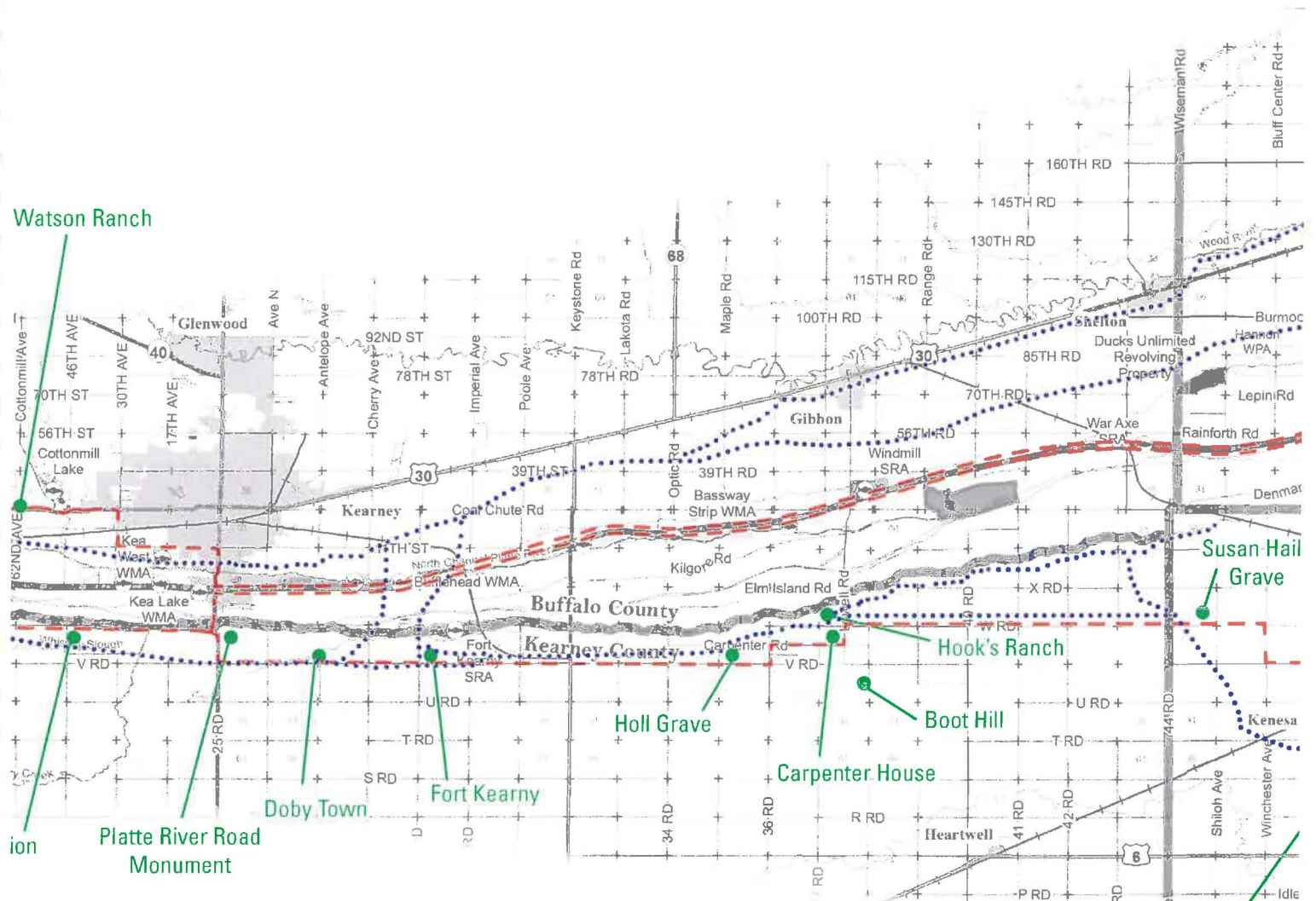
Before returning to Kearney, you might enjoy driving by the USDA Animal Research Center, the Abandon Navel Ammunition Depot, and the Hasting Museum. For more information, call 402-461-2399.



Return west on S Road to NE 65A, north to NE 4, west to NE 14, and north to Clay Center, west on Road 313/ NE 18 D to Road C, turn right to Road 316, to Technical Blvd, turn right to US 6, west to Showboat Blvd, north to 12th street to Hastings Ave and north to Hastings Museum, north to 1-80 and west to Kearney.

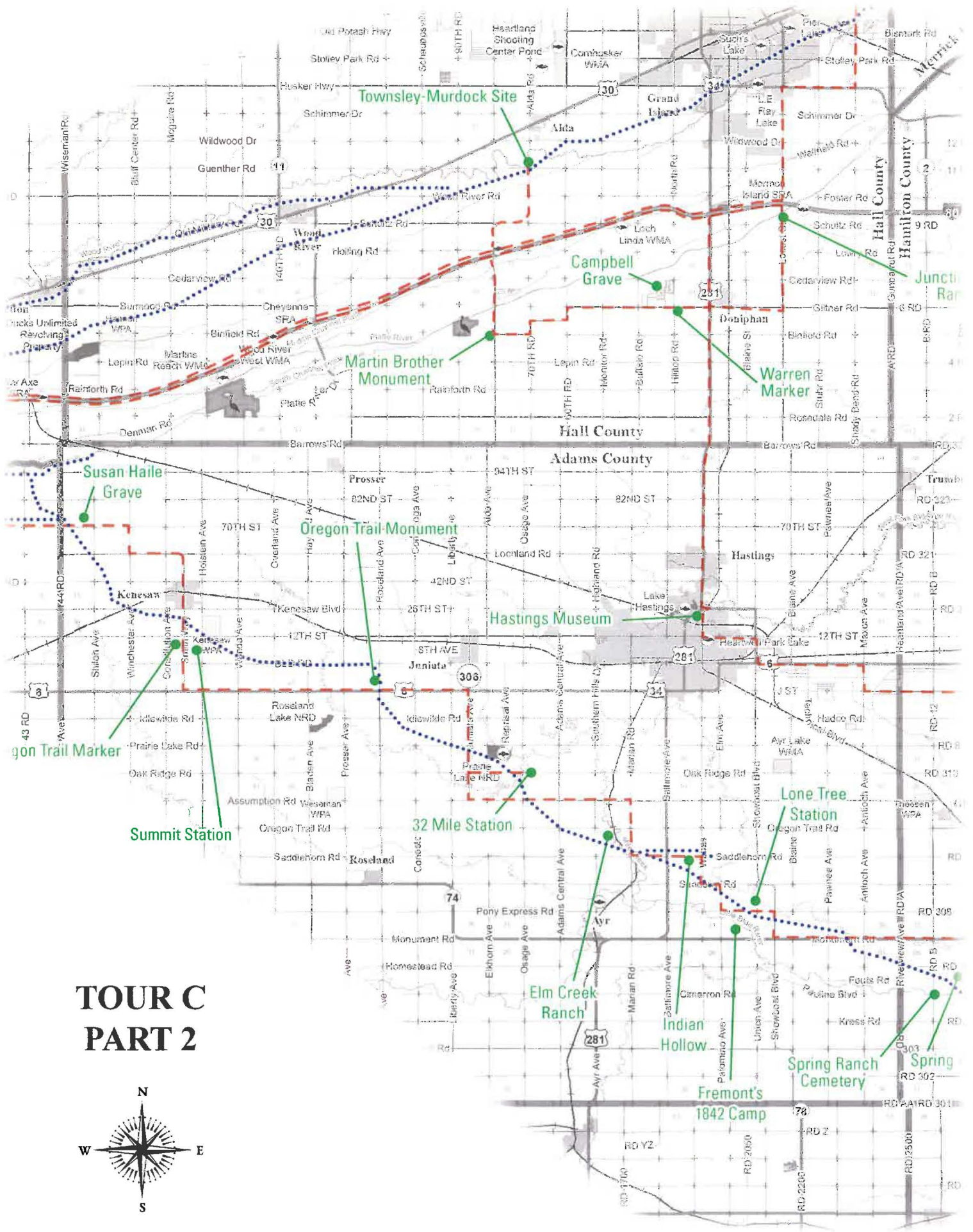


## Watson Ranch

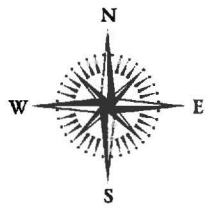


- 21



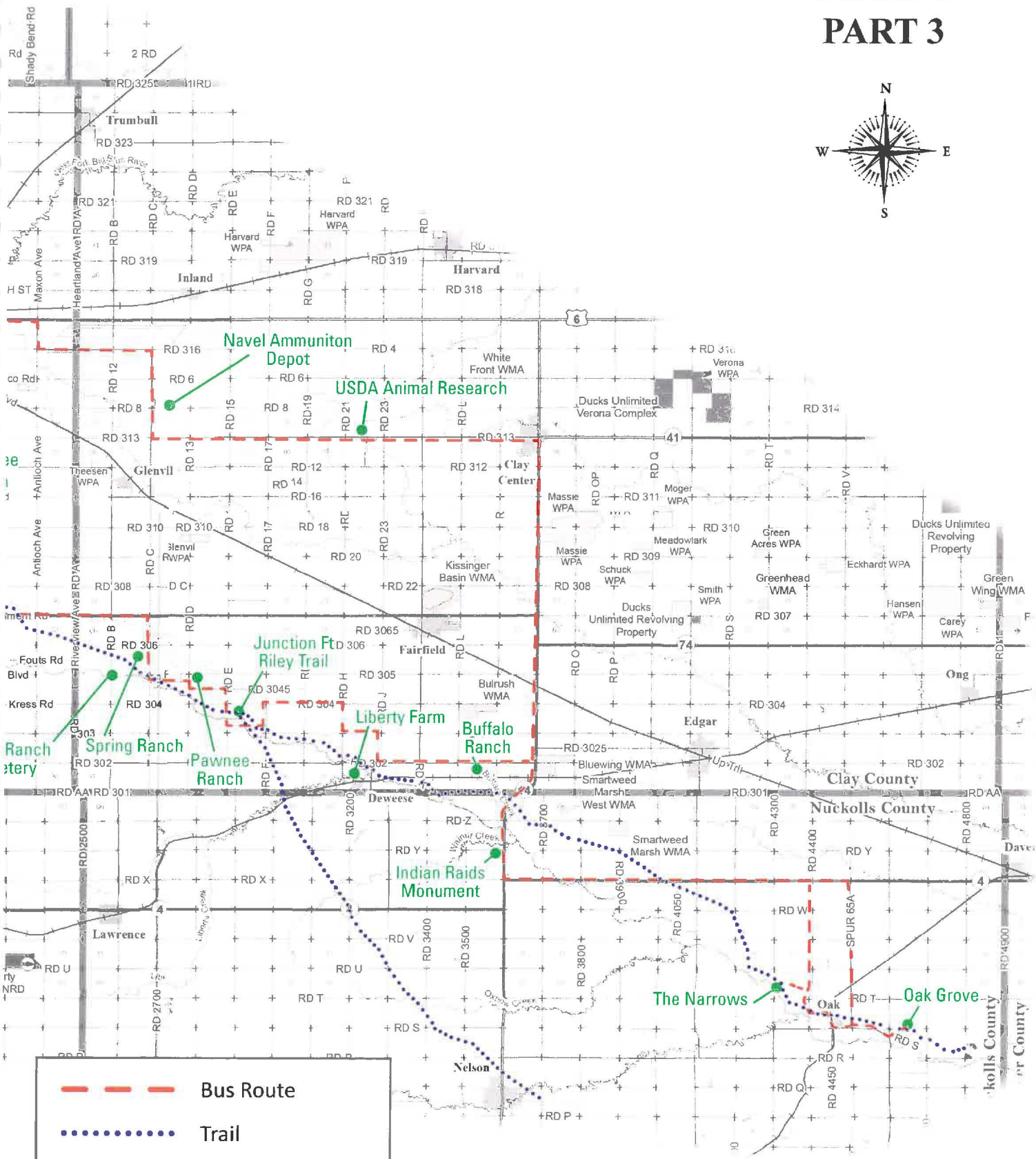
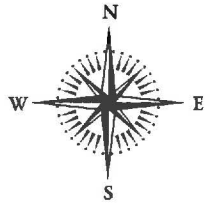


# TOUR C PART 2



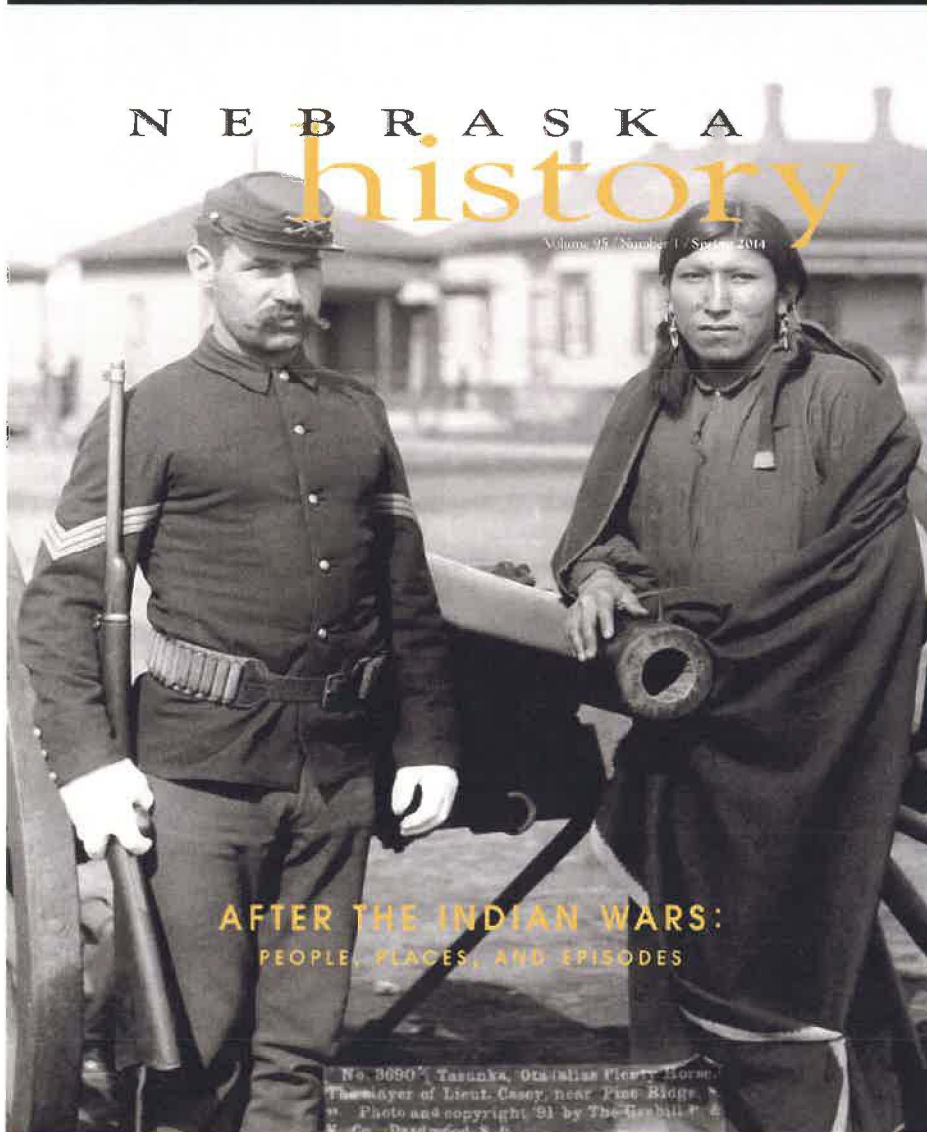


# TOUR C PART 3





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