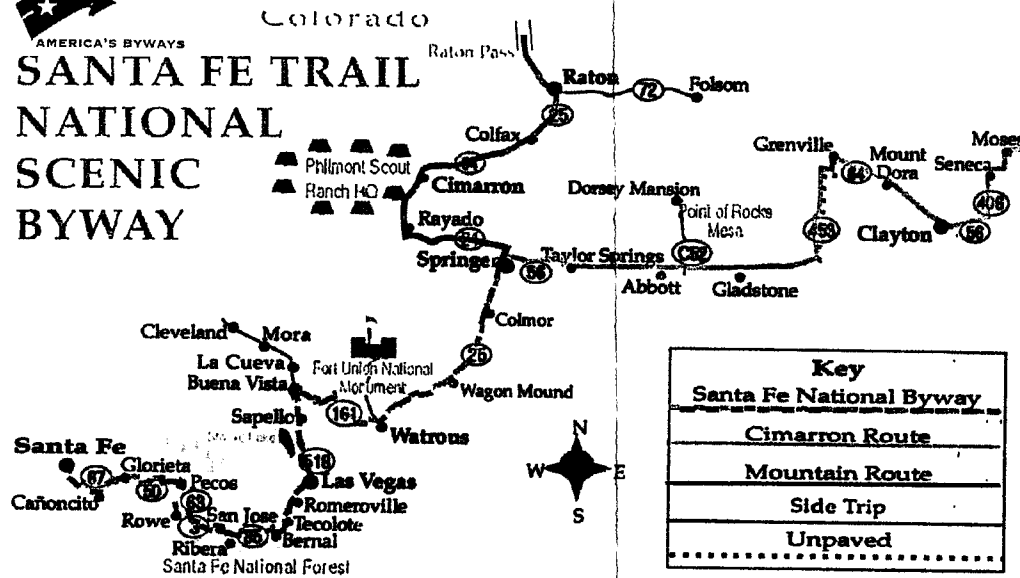




AMERICA'S BYWAYS

SANTA FE TRAIL NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY



A Brief History

Since about 10,000 BCE northeastern New Mexico has been inhabited by Clovis, Folsom, pre-horse Apache and other nomads. Evidence of a trade relationship between Pueblo and Plains Indians in the area exists as early as 1,200 BCE.

Less than 50 years after Columbus landed in the New World, Coronado traveled in 1541 from Pecos Pueblo to the plains. Spanish expeditions of Oñate (1601), Vargas (1696), Ulibarrí (1706), Hurtado (1715), and Valverde (1719) and Mexican Ciboleros (buffalo hunters) crossed the Sangre de Cristos along rivers. Expeditions noted the Jicarilla Indian villages in the vicinity of Cimarron. In 1739, the French Mallet brothers, the first recorded party from the east, entered Santa Fe by way of the Mora river valley.

Spain's colonial policy restricted trade and, all foreigners who came to New Mexico were jailed. Tired of a meager supply of very expensive goods, Mexico revolted against Spain and achieved independence in 1821. That same year Missourian William Becknell and five others were met just south of Las Vegas by Capitan Don Pedro Ignacio Gallego and over 400 troops.

Becknell was sent to Governor Melgares in Santa Fe. Starved for goods, New Mexico welcomed the traders, joined in the trade, and by the 1840s played a significant role.

Las Vegas became the last town eastward in 1835, born of the Santa Fe Trail and the lush meadows for which it was named. The Maxwell Land Grant was deeded by Mexican Governor Manuel Armijo to Charles Beaubien and Guadalupe Miranda in 1841. The United States, under Kearny, invaded in 1846. New Mexicans revolted against the occupation in Taos and Mora. By 1849 the Territory was subdued, but encroachment onto Indian lands enraged the Native Americans. That year the J. M. White party was killed near Point of Rocks, and in 1850 ten men of the mail train were killed at Wagon Mound.

To assure security in the area and to provide a central supply point for the military in New Mexico, Fort Union was established in 1851. Supplying the army from Missouri was expensive, and the quartermasters at Fort Union reached out into the local communities for foodstuffs and forage. Mora, with its rich valley and gentle climate, supplied wheat, which its mills turned into flour. Ocate was the site of the post farm,

supplying vegetables and grazing for horses and cattle. Eventually Fort Union purchases helped turn the subsistence economy of New Mexico into a cash economy.

The Civil War in New Mexico ended in 1862 with a Union victory at Glorieta. Railroads began laying track from Kansas City westward in 1866, crossed Raton Pass into Willow Springs (Raton) in 1878, and reached Santa Fe (Lamy) in 1880, ending the era of wagon traffic.

The trail continued to be used, and traces survive today. The Santa Fe National Historic Trail was proposed by Governor Bill Richardson, designated by Congress in 1987, and is administered by the National Park Service. Remains of the Trail can be seen from Interstate 25 between Wagon Mound and Las Vegas, and along NM 21, US 64, and US 56.

Information

The Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway:
www.byways.org.

For a free *Vacation Guide*, please call the New Mexico Department of Tourism: 1-800-733-6396.
www.newmexico.org.

The Northeast New Mexico website has a wealth of information: www.NEnewmexico.com.

New Mexico Visitor Information Center, 100 Clayton Road, Raton, 505-445-2761.

Cimarron Chamber: 505-376-2417.

Clayton/Union County Chamber: 1-800-390-7858. www.claytonnewmexico.org.

Las Vegas-San Miguel Chamber: 800-832-5947.
www.lasvegasnm.org.

Mora Valley Chamber: 505-387-6072.

Raton Chamber: www.raton.info. 1-800-638-6161. Raton Hispano Chamber: 505-445-8242.

Springer Chamber: 505-483-2998.

The Corazón de los Caminos, Heart of the Trails, Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association was founded in 1990 to promote awareness of the Trail and its history, help preserve Trail sites, mark important Trail locations, and preserve the side trails, 505-454-0683. Other chapters include the End of the Trail Chapter, Santa Fe, and the Cimarron Cutoff Chapter, Clayton, 505-374-2977.

Trail Sites & Landmarks

CLAYTON

McNees Crossing (1), where young Missouri traders Robert McNees and Daniel Munro were ambushed and killed by Pawnee Indians in 1828, is just one of several SFT sites to visit near the city of Clayton. It's 22 miles northeast of town. The SFT also crosses the Kiowa National Grassland (2), seven miles west of McNees, before reaching Turkey Creek Camp (3), another SFT site. To the south is Rabbit Ears Mountain (4), a renowned SFT landmark Mount Dora (5) and Round Mound (6), two other SFT landmarks, and Rabbit Ears Creek Camp (7), another SFT site, are about 20 miles northwest of Clayton.

SPRINGER

The Santa Fe Trail crosses U.S. Highway 56 about 75 miles west of Clayton, past the turnoff to Point of Rocks (8), where another SFT landmark and campsite can be visited. The highway crossing is northeast of the Rock Crossing of the Canadian River (9). Far to the south, beyond the crossing is Wagon Mound (10), a dramatically distinct SFT landmark and campsite. It looms above Pilot Knob (11), another landmark, and Santa Clara Springs (12). From there, the frontage road along Interstate 25 south to Watrous lets motorists glimpse a seldom-interrupted stretch of wagon ruts.

RATÓN

Southwest of Fisher Peak (13), a noted SFT landmark, Uncle Dick Wootton's Toll Road (active in 1866-1879), marked the laborious ascent of 7,834' high Ratón Pass (14) on the Mountain Route of the trail. Worn ruts can be seen above the base of the pass, 11 miles north of the city of Ratón.

The SFT came into town down Railroad Canyon to the Willow Springs Forage Station site (built circa 1868). Southwest of Ratón, past the ruins of the Clifton House (operational in 1866-79), a stop famed for its food and lodging (15), and beyond Red River Peak (16), another SFT landmark, keen eyes can spot SFT ruts along the west side of U.S. Highway 64.

CIMARRON

Several SFT sites can be visited on foot in Old Cimarron (17). Begin at the St. James Hotel (built in 1872-80). Just minutes away are the Aztec Mill (1864-70), Lucien Maxwell Mansion site (1864-85), the Old Plaza & Well, the Dahl Brothers Trading Post & Warehouse (circa 1848), the National Hotel (1858), Schwenk's Gambling Hall (1854), and the Sanderson, Barlow & Co. Stagecoach Line Office (1873).

South of town, distinct Santa Fe Trail ruts ascend a hill about a mile south of the late Tulsa oil baron Waite Phillips' mansion, Villa Philmonte, the headquarters of Philmont Scout Ranch. Seven miles south of the ranch are other sites in the hamlet of Rayado (18), founded by land baron Maxwell in 1848. Two miles south are more SFT ruts. Some 23 miles farther south is Ocate Crossing (19).

LAS VEGAS

SFT ruts encircle massive Fort Union National Monument (20), once (1851-91) the largest and most important fort on the Trail, 29 miles north of the city of Las Vegas. In the nearby village of Watrous (21), where both branches of the SFT joined, are other sites, among them SFT merchant Samuel Watrous' Home & Store (1849). Nearby are Tiptonville (22), founded by Watrous' brother-in-law, circa 1850; the site of Alexander Barclay's Fort (23), an adobe trading post (circa 1849-54), and Sapello Stage Station (24), also known as Gregg's Tavern (circa 1860).

On the west side of Old Town Plaza in Las Vegas (25) is the one-story building that Brig. Gen. Stephen W. Kearny climbed to declare U.S. dominion over New Mexico in 1846.

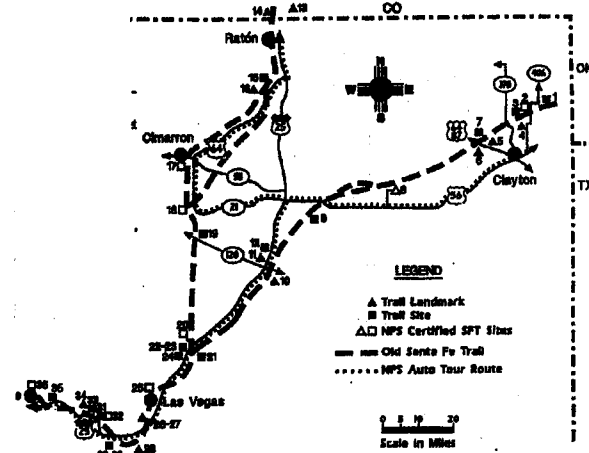
Via the local frontage road to Pecos, Santa Fe Trail ruts can be seen in Kearny's Gap (26), five miles southwest, and at Puertocito Pedregosa (27), another pass nearby. Beyond them are Bernal Springs, a campsite just northeast of I Starvation Peak (28), and river crossings outside the villages of San Miguel del Vado (29) and nearby San Jose del Vado (30).

SANTA FE

Southeast of the city of Santa Fe and less than three miles south of the village of Pecos, the SFT reached Kozlowski's Spring (31). It passed less than a mile south of another SFT landmark, the 17th-century Spanish mission ruins in what is today Pecos National Historical Park (32), and crossed the 1862 Civil War battlefield of Glorieta at Pigeon's Ranch (33). The SFT ascended nearby 7,409' high Glorieta Pass (34), and headed for the Johnson's Ranch site (35) in the village of Cañoncito.

Traces of the SFT can be found in Santa Fe just northwest of the parking lot at the state Museum of International Folk Art, three miles south of Santa Fe Plaza (36), the end of the trail.

On the Plaza are the Soldiers' Monument (erected in 1867), and Palace of the Governors (1609-10). Among the many other trail sites within walking distance are the former homes of trail merchants Felipe Delgado (built in 1890), Pinckney R. Tully (1851), Roque Lobato (circa 1785), Roque Tudesqui (1841), Gregorio Crespin (1747), and James Johnson (1849); the former Ft. Marcy Officers' Quarters (circa 1870); plus Sena Plaza (circa 1828), St. Francis Cathedral (1869-92), Loretto Chapel (1874-78), and San Miguel Mission (1610).



Text and map courtesy of Michael E. Pitel and the New Mexico Highway Department.