

## AN INTERVIEW WITH SYLVIA MOONEY

Interviewer: Harold Smith - May 29, 1998 - FINAL by Ross Marshall 6/15/20  
(proofed by Mary Conrad)

- S: This is part of the Trails Head oral history project. Sylvia, I'm going to start out asking you to give your full name, names of your parents, and where and when you were born.
- SM: Oh, okay. It's Sylvia Diane Mooney and my maiden name was McGaugh. And I was born in Kansas City, MO, at the old General Hospital. My father was Everett McGaugh and my mother was Theresa Garrett McGaugh.
- HS: You say born in Kansas City? So you know what the address was?
- SM: It's Hospital Hill. It's right behind Hallmark Cards. That's about 27<sup>th</sup>.
- HS: (unclear)
- SM: Yes, it's nearly right next to it.
- HS: Near the historic cemetery.
- SM: That's right.
- HS: How about education?
- SM: All right. I went to school in Kansas City. We lived out in the northeast part of the city and I went to James School for my elementary education. I went to Northeast Junior High for my seventh, eighth, and freshman years. I went to Northeast High School for my sophomore, junior, and senior years. I graduated from there and then went on to Washington University in St. Louis. I had a full tuition honor scholarship and majored in advertising illustration.
- HS: That's interesting. Let me get your birth date.
- SM: January 9, 1936.
- HS: You went into advertising illustration.
- SM: No, I went into marriage and had children.
- HS: When were you married?
- SM: In 1957.
- HS: To whom?
- SM: Charles E. Mooney.
- HS: How about children?
- SM: We have five. The oldest is 40 and the youngest is 30. Two boys and three girls.
- HS: Do you want to run down their names?
- SM: Christopher O'Neal is the oldest and then Holly Brand is the second. April Leeann is the third and fourth is Ted (Theodore) Christian, and the fifth is Wendy Lynn.
- HS: All right. Did you get a bachelor's?
- SM: Yes.
- HS: Then you got married so you didn't practice.
- SM: Well, I did freelance work while we were in St. Louis. I did freelance work for one of the instructors at Washington U. Then we moved back to Kansas City in the summer because my husband then went to Washington U. and continued there until he got his Ph.D. in economics. So I did a little bit of art and then I'd do a lot of child rearing and having babies. I taught school at Whitfield School in St. Louis County. I taught art. I loved the art department. I really enjoyed it. It was a private school and had children...When I first started there they were as young as third grade and up to high school. But when I left they had pretty much eliminated the lower grades. I was teaching seventh grade and on up. I just loved seventh and eighth graders, and sixth graders.

They knew how to do everything. They were neat. And they were respectful. It was a different time then.

HS: I taught eighth grade for three years and dabbled in art myself. I burned out in three. Your husband got a Ph.D. in economics at?

SM: Washington University. And I kept thinking, "I'll go back and get my master's." But you know how raising children somehow overwhelms you. You get involved in child rearing, so I did that pretty much full time, doing some painting from time to time to be in local art shows. You know, like shopping center art shows. And I joined the Raytown Art Association in 1968 and started exhibiting then.

HS: Did you take history courses at all?

SM: Very little, but I guess what influenced me about history is we grew up in the northeast. It was a blue collar community. We didn't have a lot of extra funds. We were a one-car family. My dad took the car to work. The Kansas City Museum was out there. And we could ride our bicycles up to the Kansas City Museum. And I loved to go to that. You could go free. As a matter of fact, you can still go free if you are a Kansas City resident. But they don't want anybody to know that. But that is in the arrangements made when Mr. Long left the museum to the city, that all citizens would be able to go free. So anyway we went up there and I just loved the museum. I loved looking at anything they had on exhibit. It wasn't nearly as outstanding as it is now. But it started as a child, my passion for history and my love of museums. Then when I was in high school my mother took me on one or two vacations where we went out and saw the Huntington Library and took in as many museums out in California as we could. You know, like a week trip or something like that.

Then once I married my husband, he worked for the government, and I was able to travel with him. So then I was able to really see museums big time because he'd go to business meetings and I'd go to the local museum. And it's a good thing you mentioned that because that's how I got caught up in the trail history. There wasn't much of anything here. There was, what was that, a concrete Conestoga out at Westport at the shopping center. It wasn't anything real authentic. And there was no museum that had anything about trail history, like a Conestoga wagon or much about travel to the West. But I went to the Portland Oregon Museum in Portland and it was a state museum actually. And it has a fabulous story line and display about the Oregon Trail. And there is where I saw that first picture of the emigrant wagon and the families sitting out in front and the lady with the hod carrier. It just blew me away. And I came back to Kansas City and I don't know what year that was. That must have been in the late 60's or early 70s. And I thought, "We really need a museum about the history of the Western expansion." And this is all just by visiting museums and getting inspired.

So when the bicentennial came along, I was president of the Raytown Art Association at that time. Doug Hall, the mayor of Raytown, came to our meeting and asked if we had any ideas about how we could spend federal money for the bicentennial celebration. And of course I am never short on ideas. I mean I may be short on the energy to carry them all out, but ideas I always have. I thought, "A mural in the Raytown City Hall would be fabulous." It was a new building and had these greatly huge walls, just perfect for a mural. So I said, "Yes, I have an idea." The funny thing was the guidelines for getting the money were so obscure that not many people qualified for the money. And I talked to the gal in Washington about this. But we got the mural in the Raytown City Hall. And

that was my first community effort where I had a community profile. Before then I was volunteering with the school, the PTA, and the school nurse. Worked on the playground, all that kind of thing. And I was active in the Art Association.

But then I became a member of the bicentennial commission in Raytown. And I was the cultural arts chairman. I ran a statewide contest for the mural to be painted in the city of Raytown. A local artist, Bob Barley from Independence...Are you familiar with him?

HS: (unclear)

SM: He paints very, very super realistic paintings. He won the contest. I contacted Jeanette Lee with Hallmark and asked her if she could recommend a judge. She recommended Dr. Joshua Taylor, who was the director of the portrait gallery for the Smithsonian. And he came all the way to Raytown to judge our contest. The city of Raytown agreed to pay \$5,000 to the artist who won the contest to paint the mural. Then the Jaycees floated us a loan, the Bicentennial Commission, to pay for the transportation of Dr. Taylor. After we did this I can remember (unclear) saying, "You didn't have anything in writing about his accommodations and what he would fly, first class or whatever?" I said no. "I'm doing this all for the first time. I'm just flying by the seat of my pants." He said, "Oh, my God. This could be more money than we ever imagined." It did not turn out to be at all. I mean not at all. The gentleman was very cognizant that we were just this little town. He also had a trip down to the Johnson Ranch. Lady Bird Johnson was having him come there for something. So he prorated the charge. He charged us for the trip to Missouri. So Lady Bird Johnson and the Johnson foundation picked up the rest of the tab. They knew we couldn't. It was so marvelous, I will tell you. So I was in charge of all this. So that's kind of the beginning of the beginning.

By that time I had moved to where I lived now, 7120 Harecliff St. and began to learn about the significance of this historic site next to my house. There were about 39 acres that were undeveloped. There were some chimney roof remains on this acreage. So when I worked on the bicentennial committee—Roberta Bonnewitz was also very active on the bicentennial from Raytown. So she told me the historical significance of Cave Spring. She had written a book about this for Raytown and researched the Jackson County Archives for over 10 years to write her book. And all of this was based on archival documentation, county documentation, of land, title to land, and people buying and selling land. She didn't use any word of mouth documents to write her book. Everything was in the courthouse documents.

So she said that Jesse Barnes used to own the land where I live, actually adjacent to it. He called it Barnes Enclosure. At that time it was a campsite on the Santa Fe Trail. That would have been like 1844, the trail actually beginning in 1820s. But Jesse Barnes actually had deed to the land by 1844. However, he moved there before that. He was there before that time.

It was the lost township. We're not sure why it was the lost township. But there's this township in Raytown that was not surveyed. There are various reasons. But we're not sure of the exact one. So it was resurveyed and done in 1844. The original surveys were like in 1821, when Missouri became a state. So I started from that, knowing Roberta, knowing I moved next door to an historic site. I started walking through the woods looking for my children one day and discovered the cave and discovered the pond. I thought, "Oh, this is so beautiful."

HS: How many acres was it?

SM: Thirty-nine. And I thought this should be preserved. So once I got involved with the bicentennial and with the mural thing at the same time I was talking to people about how I could save this area. So I went to some community development hearings where federal funds were going to be made available locally. They always have to have hearings to ask the public what they thought. So I stood up with my knees knocking together, I had never done anything like that in my life. So I said, "I think some of the money should be spent to save this historic area. (unclear) It was a campsite on the three trails. If we don't save it, it will be gobbled up in development and we will not have the open space or the opportunity to save it. So Mr. Manns was my councilman and I sat down and I heard this voice say, "I'd like to meet with you, Mrs. Mooney, after the meeting." I stood up again and said, "Who said that?" And it was Gerald Manns. And that was the beginning of a wonderful relationship. He became our attorney for the not for profit corporation. He wrote up our corporation papers and I got our neighbor, Whit Kirk, to go along with me and I invited other neighbors to participate. They wouldn't. Whit and I became real partners in this endeavor to save Cave Springs.

I guess the first thing I did was get some documentation through Senator Eagleton's office about the preservation funds and what funds were available and how they would be made available and what were the guidelines for saving an historic site. We had excellent help there and just built on that. We got the original law on saving historic sites. We were so early in this thing. We applied for federal funding to acquire Cave Spring even before Jackson County made an application. That was phenomenal. It was all a matter of timing. We went down to the state with this request for money. It was federal money that would come to the state and then the state would have to agree to this use of the money locally. And so Bill Landahl finally at the last minute agreed to put in the application to acquire it, and therefore the county became the entity that would own it. You could not get the federal funds for a not for profit. You had to get a city, state, or county government to acquire it. We got money from everywhere. We got money from Kansas City.

HS: Now was it Roberta Bonnewitz in her research that discovered that it had been a campsite on the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails?

SM: Yes. And it was Roberta who knew about the (unclear) connection. And she had the excerpt from the book that said this was a campsite on the trail.

HS: Are we talking now about 1975 when you were getting ready for this bicentennial celebration? That gets you into this Cave Spring purchase.

SM: Right.

HS: The proposal, the idea.

SM: I guess we started actually acquiring the land about 1977. But we got the applications in in 1976. Actually, the state gave us \$100,000 toward the purchase. Mr. Klein agreed to give 8.2 acres, which was a value of \$100,000 and the state matched it. Then we owned his land and the state purchased another 8.2 acres. So then we had 16.44 of the proposed 39 acres. Klein owned the land, owned Cave Spring.

HS: What was his first name, by the way?

SM: William Klein. He was a part of the Milgram grocery store business. He was married to Audrey Milgram Klein. We had to convince him that this was a valid thing, to save this area. Then later, like in 1971 or so, there was a proposal in the Kansas City Star to build apartments and town houses on this site. And they were supposed to save the cave and

create a beautiful lake. I had gone door to door selling World Books, and this is very germane to my information. About 79<sup>th</sup> and James A. Reed Road they had dynamited away this core area and put in apartments. And I sold World Books on a block adjacent to that corner. A lady told me when they dynamited how it damaged their basement, it damaged their home. It tore everything up. And I thought, "There's no way there's going to be any lake once they are through dynamiting the rock." Because it was a rock ledge and the cave came out of the rock ledge. It would destroy the cave. They would destroy the water source. They would just disrupt everything. And this was a beautiful, open space. So at that point I didn't think it was a very good idea to build townhouses and apartments.

And a big strike, a carpenters' strike or a construction strike, happened at about the same time this proposal came out in the newspaper. And it really just killed it dead. Nothing happened for that whole summer because of the construction strike. And then shortly after that, came the surge in interest rates. Remember when interest rates were about 5.75 percent to buy a home? And then they went up to eight percent. That's when we bought our home on Harecliff and had a hard time paying it. The interest rates soared at this point. So Mr. Klein couldn't go ahead with his development because of the high cost of borrowing money. As far as I am concerned, a higher power was in charge of that.

I guess I am at risk of sounding foolish, but I have to tell you when I knew that they might develop this townhouse and apartment complex this was before I was involved in the bicentennial and I was just a stay at home mom. I took a nap one afternoon because I was depressed at the prospect of all that being destroyed. And my dream when I took a nap, and I dream, I was told that I could do something about it. And I woke up and I thought, "I guess I can."

HS: So you did.

SM: Yes.

HS: So that is part of the story as to how you became involved with the local chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association.

SM: Well, I started saving this historic site of the Santa Fe-California-Oregon Trail first. And that was back in 1975 when we incorporated and I got state funds and I had broad political support from the county to the state to the city. Even Congressman James Bolling came out and looked at the site. I was able to build some really wonderful connections. Then jumping forward, by 1982 we had raised that money to build an interpretive center. It was very small, about 1,000 square feet. We had exhibits. We had classes. And we interpreted both history, the local history of the three trails, as well as nature in the area and kept it a natural, open space area with trails the Boy Scouts had wood chipped. Almost everything done through the park was done by volunteers.

HS: What was the acreage at this point?

MS: Thirty-six. We have never acquired the last three acres on the corner.

HS: But you started out getting what? Eight acres?

SM: Eight acres and then another eight. We got county funding to get another match and the city of Kansas City gave us \$50,000 toward buying another portion of land. So selling funnel cakes and taking pictures of kids on ponies, you name it, I've done it. Everything that you could do legally and in public we did to raise funds. And we did it and we had a strong community base helping us. So by 1982 I was pretty well known in the historic

community and I had connections with the Missouri Valley Room at KC Library). I had some connections to the Truman Library, not real concrete but some feelers.

HS: How about this County Historical Society?

SM: I was never a member of the Jackson County Historical Society. I joined the Raytown Historical Society. The reason I started my own not for profit was I discovered that every historical society has its own purpose, which was established when they began. And that's their purpose. And they are not too quick to take on another challenge or another purpose. So just about all you can do if you are going to save something is start your own not for profit and have that be the purpose of that organization. And the County Historical Society does wonderful things. And I have great admiration and support for it. But I never joined as a member or asked them to help me save Cave Spring because they had another agenda. And that's just kind of the way it is.

HS: Yes. When did you establish this not for profit?

SM: In September of 1975 we incorporated as a not for profit corporation, tax exempt, interstate and federal tax exempt. So jumping forward, we built our building in 1982 and had the dedication in July. And then Greg Franzwa came into the city to meet Barbara Magerl. And I had met Barbara Magerl and we had done some things historically, the Heritage League and other activities, and we were kind of like two peas in a pod. And she calls me and said, "This gentleman is coming into town, and he wants to have a national convention in the Kansas City-Independence region and I need help. Would you go with me and meet him?" I said, "Well, sure," you know. So I went with Barbara and met Greg Franzwa. I don't know if we ate lunch at the Adams Mark or ate at the courthouse restaurant, The Courthouse Exchange in Independence. But anyway we had lunch with Greg Franzwa.

HS: Was that in '82?

SM: It was prior to the incorporation. I don't know if it was '81 or what the timespan was, but it was before we had the convention. And the convention was here in August 1983. So it might have been in the spring of '82 that we did this (yes, probably). But Barbara will remember. I'm hazy about these dates.

HS: That would have been last minute planning.

SM: Well, she didn't have a whole lot of time to put it together. She called everybody she knew how and had contact with through the Heritage League, through the Jackson County Historical Society, through the city of Independence. She had done a lot of research, genealogical research, and she was much better known to the county people than I was. Sally Schwenk, Pat O'Brien were all people she felt comfortable approaching about getting involved and helping with this convention. But I'm going to give credit where credit is due. If Greg Franzwa had not connected with Barbara Magerl, I don't think the OCTA convention would ever have got on its feet. She was that instrumental in putting that first convention together. She knew everybody. She called in all her IOUs from everyone she knew to help make it a smashing success. And it was.

And the contribution that I made...It turned out I couldn't really be her right arm or Greg's right arm. I had to keep focused on Cave Spring because we had the building built. We were running exhibits, we were running educational programs. I think at this time we had a part-time paid volunteer for the education classes. But it was a job I got paid 20 hours a week for and it took me 60. On the bus tour for the first OCTA convention I put together the first stop at Cave Spring, because Cave Spring was on the

National Register of Historical Places. We had applied for that in 1978. And we were granted that recognition by the National Park Service. So it was only appropriate that that would be their first stopover as they were going down the trail all the way to Alcove Springs. The mayor of Raytown came, Doug Hall. He welcomed Greg Franzwa and the whole busload of tourists. I think there were two or three buses. We served homemade cookies, lemonade, and tea. It was just a wonderful festive occasion. And I believe the mayor even gave Franzwa a proclamation. It was a neat affair.

HS: How many people came to Cave Springs on that trek? Do you have any idea about how many there were?

SM: Well, we probably have a guest book. And those buses hold 40 to 50 people. And there were either two or three buses. So let's say...

HS: Eighty to 100? [at least]

SM: Yes. It was big turnout.

HS: You had met Greg Franzwa before the convention.

SM: I had met him when he came into town to meet Barbara Magerl, when he was here for the first time to ask someone to help him put a convention together.

HS: You went out to lunch or dinner with him?

SM: Lunch. Barbara and I met Greg. It was the first time she met him. She had talked to him on the phone.

HS: Remember anything specific about that event? The main purpose was to set up this first convention.

SM: Right.

HS: What made you feel it was important to have an Oregon-California Trails Association?

SM: Well, okay. I don't know that I am focused on that number one. I was already into historic trail preservation before I heard of OCTA. I subsequently bought Greg's book, *The Oregon Trail Revisited*. I already was committed to the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail, to interpreting that history. Independence hadn't done it. Kansas City hadn't done it. Leavenworth had something. They had some wagons and things in their museum. But here in Missouri, the state from which most of these pioneers went west, we didn't have any museum about it. So I was doing what nobody else was doing.

HS: So you were already interpreting the trails with the beginning of the Cave Spring interpretive center.

SM: That's right. And my plan was to eventually build a 6,000 square foot building and have a Conestoga and have it filled with the kind of artifacts that they would have had in a wagon taking it down the trail. I don't think many people have a clue what it was like, how they got everything they would need to make a living once they got to the Promised Land in a little bitty covered wagon. That influence seen in the museum in Portland, Oregon, was one of the driving forces. It was just kind of like the seeds of the idea were sown when I was traveling with my husband. Here was the bicentennial and here was my opportunity. I mean I was fully ready to build the definitive museum about the three trails at Cave Spring. I felt like I had enough land to do it. And, you know, I was on a roll.

But then something interesting happened in Independence. At this point in time the people who knew Harry Truman were beginning to die off. Okay? Independence began to see a loss of tourism at the Truman Library. And so a lot of Independence revenue is generated by tourists who come in to see the Truman Library. So suddenly some of these

folks, Pauline Fowler and some other people who have been big on the history of the trails all along, suddenly take notice that okay, we do have the three trails. We are the Queen city of the trails. We need to get a museum of national importance here. So I don't know the exact date when all the effort began. But Bill Bullard was involved in it and the former mayor, what's her name?

HS: Barbara Potts.

SM: So there was this formation of the effort, a political and community effort, to build the three trails center here. The National Frontier Trails Center began to take shape.

HS: Now did you become a member?

SM: Yes, I was involved in that too.

HS: Of the Oregon-California Trails Association?

SM: Oh, yes. I was one of the charter members. I guess I joined at the first convention.

HS: You hosted this gathering at Cave Spring.

SM: With Greg Franzwa's full blessing, although he hadn't mentioned Cave Spring in his book.

HS: So you told the group about Cave Spring existing.

SM: Oh, yes, I mentioned that to Greg Franzwa when we were in conversation at that first meeting with Barbara Magerl.

HS: When these people came out to Cave Spring at the convention you gave them kind of a lecture.

SM: Right. We told them about this being on the National Register of Historic Places. There was the cave and the spring. They could hike down to the cave. As you know, OCTA people love to hike. They love to take out in the countryside and see everything.

HS: Now Franzwa was very supportive.

SM: Franzwa was supportive of coming to Cave Spring and having this be the first stop with the bus.

HS: Where did you go from there?

SM: I think they saw the swales at Red Bridge [actually the swales are in Minor Park adjacent to the bridge]. That's really hazy in my mind, but I think they went to see the swales.

HS: So now you are a member of the national organization. But there is not a local organization.

SM: No.

HS: That doesn't happen until 1985. I notice in the record there's an announcement of a local chapter organizational meeting on November 12, 1985 at Cave Spring Interpretive Center. There you were to discuss the scope, purpose and name of the chapter, structure and election of officers. Do you remember anything about that?

SM: I remember that the meeting was there. I don't remember a lot of the details of the meeting. I remember there was quite a bit of controversy about the name. And I believe Rich Nolf was our first vice president and later was Gateway's first President from St. Joe who wanted a different name than what we ended up naming it. We came to the conclusion that Trails Head was all inclusive. It represented the Oregon Trail beginning here as well as St. Joe. Missouri is the trail center.

HS: St. Joe, was that sort of to include them? The ideas was that they were to be part of the local chapter?

SM: Oh, yes, very much. It was included and they were there at the meeting.

HS: Then they split off later.



SM: They split off and they named it the Gateway Chapter. And it's funny, you know, what's in a name? But apparently they thought that it was significant enough to form their own group. They called themselves Gateway. They wanted to call this chapter the Gateway.

HS: Now Trails Head. Was that selected or adopted at that meeting?

SM: I don't remember that. I can't tell you for sure.

HS: There was discussion about the name.

SM: There was active discussion about the name.

HS: I suppose the dues and the election of officers were other important points. I'm not sure that I have a list of those who attended. Do you any idea? Well, you mentioned this fellow from St. Joe, Rich Nolf.

SM: Nolf, yes.

HS: And of course Barbara Magerl and yourself. Do you remember any others who were there?

SM: No, because I just pulled this out of my stuff.

HS: I don't think we've been able to find minutes of that particular meeting.

Male voice: My personal recollection was that it was not a large turnout.

HS: Were you there too?

MV: HS (?) Yes, 10 or a dozen people. My wife was still mobile at that time and we went out there.

HS: About a dozen, do you think?

MV: That's my recollection.

SM: The minutes I have here were from September 1990, so that was a considerable time later. I have no idea.

HS: Was an executive committee chosen then to implement the organization, the local chapter?

SM: I can't even tell you that.

HS: There was an executive committee that met at the Rodeway Inn in Overland Park on January 22, 1986. See, this would be a follow up to the November meeting at Cave Spring. Present there were the chairperson, Mike Duncan, along with Elaine McNabney, Ross Marshall, Peggy Smith, Richard Nolf and Barbara Bernauer. Were these probably the same people who were there at Cave Spring?

SM: I believe Mike Duncan was. I can't say that with any certainty. He ended up being the president also later. I don't know what he's doing now. But Barbara Magerl was the first president (no – Mike Duncan was).

HS: Now this group I just mentioned, they invited OCTA members to an organization meeting at Cedar Roe Library in Roeland Park, on February 27, 1986. This apparently was the third meeting in preparation for establishing the local chapter. I don't have the agenda with me but we have discussed it with some other interviews. Do you recall yourself attending this meeting at the Rodeway Inn, Overland Park, 1986?

SM: I don't remember attending that meeting. (she did not)

HS: And the first issue of the Trails Head Tidings came out in July of 1987. What do you recall then after that meeting at Cave Spring in November of 1985? Do you recall what your next involvement was?

SM: Well I was the secretary in 1990.

HS: Of the Trails Head.

SM: As a matter of fact, you know what I think I need to do. I probably need to look through all of my boxes of stuff. I probably have a folder of minutes. I'll bet I do.

HS: How about these conventions? Have you attended?

SM: I attended the conventions for, oh gosh, I attended for about five straight years.

HS: During the 80's after that 1983 convention?

SM: Let's see. I went to Oregon ('84) for that convention. I went to Scottsbluff –1985 convention. There are some real important things that happened at the Scottsbluff convention that I could tell you about that tie into the beginning of the Santa Fe Trail Association, the formation of the organization. And then after the Scottsbluff convention I don't remember where we met next. But we went out to Sacramento and I was at Sacramento in 1999. We went to Idaho and I went to Idaho. I was all over the western United States going to these conventions.

HS: You two were partners?

SM: Yes. Well, sometimes Barbara's husband went. But when he didn't go, Barbara and I went together. And I flew to one convention. I think I flew to the Oregon convention. We flew to a couple of things that were so distant.

HS: Did you ever give any papers or presentations?

SM: No.

HS: Articles for the Overland Journal?

MS: No. I don't know the year for this but I was also in charge of publicity for OCTA.

HS: For the national organization?

SM: Yes, for the national organization. Barbara did that for the longest time. She did an absolutely super job. And so she finally resigned from being the publicity chairman. And when she resigned, she kind of handed the torch to me. And I took it sort of hesitantly. I think that is the best way to describe it. This is my publication report for 1989-1990. And it is dated August 6, 1990. So that was my term of office serving as the public relations chairman, '89-90. So if you want to look at that...

HS: Now you mentioned the Scottsbluff convention. What year was that?

MV: That was in '85, August of '85.

HS: You said that was very important.

SM: Well, this whole thing. I mentioned how strongly I felt about interpreting the trail history from Missouri. When I knew that OCTA had formed and formed so successfully, I thought, "We really need a Santa Fe Trail Association." I mentioned it to Greg. I came out and talked to find out when Dick Ackerman had the camp here, to find out when he would take the caravan of mobile homes out to Oregon. And I gave a slide show, pretty much the slide show I gave about Cave Spring. And Greg was there. And I chatted with Greg about how to start a national Santa Fe Trail Association and get the Santa Fe Trail on the National Register because it wasn't. It was kind of like the neglected step child. Here OCTA was born and their purpose was to save the trail left on the Oregon-California trail. But it didn't say anything about the Santa Fe Trail. And so Greg said, oh, he was going to take care of that. He was going to propose the legislation to Congress and we didn't need to start a national organization. He was going to take care of that. Okay, fine. He had done a good job starting OCTA. So I went to the Scottsbluff convention and Tom Hunt was elected president at the Scottsbluff convention. At that time Tom had the Black Rock Historic Site in California that he wanted to preserve. I believe that's correct, Black Rock. And that was like his

pet project. So he proposed to the OCTA board that they nominate this Black Rock site that was on the California Trail to be preserved. He nominated it as a historic site to be preserved. So the gentleman who was the leader and who helped Franzwa incorporate, he's still the lawyer for OCTA (James P. Johnson). And he said, "Absolutely not. That is not included in our purpose. We have not finished our job on the Oregon Trail. We shouldn't take on another project when we haven't finished our work on the Oregon Trail." So he persuaded the other people on the board to go along with him. And they basically turned Tom Hunt down.

I thought that at this point Greg was going to introduce the Santa Fe Trail and introduce legislation to make it a national historic trail. Well, when the Black Rock thing was turned down and Tom Hunt had become president, they would sure turn down any approach about the Santa Fe Trail making it a national historic trail. So I was just up in arms. I thought, "Greg Franzwa had promised that he would do this. And now the OCTA organization has said no." So I talked to Tom Hunt afterwards and said, "What do you think I should do?" Barbara was there also. And Tom said, "Well, start it yourself. You know, go for it yourself." And John Latschar was the secretary for OCTA at that time and had been for quite a while. He was with the National Park Service and he was stationed in Denver.

And at this point in time, let's see, we are up to '85 and I had Cave Spring going 10 years now, since '75. I met Marc Simmons, who is the grand historian of the Santa Fe Trail, because I had gone to these Santa Fe Trail symposiums down in Larned, Kansas, put on by the County Historical Society. They have a wonderful museum down there, the Santa Fe Trail Center. So I met Marc there and Marc is helping me and giving me advice and suggestions. I think Tom suggested that I have John Latschar come to this training symposium for the Trinidad Convention, the Trinidad Symposium on the Santa Fe Trail, which was going to be held, I guess, in '86. I'm pretty sure it was '86. So I invite John Latschar to come and speak and I don't really have the authority to do this. But I guess I checked with Marc Simmons about it. I had gotten an okay to bring John Latschar to talk about the formation of a Santa Fe Trail group.

Now these people that we were meeting with they're bureaucrats. For the most part they are people who graduated from college and have been hired with the Colorado State Historical Society and the New Mexico State Historical Society. And they'd never started a not for profit. They don't even have a clue what we are talking about. John Latschar comes on and talks about why the Santa Fe Trail had not been made into a national historic trail. And the reason it had not was that they tried to make it into a scenic trail first. A scenic trail meant that the federal government bought all the land along the route (not true). Well, the farmers down in New Mexico wouldn't hear of it. And I believe that was proposed prior to 1975 to make it a scenic trail. I don't know the dates. But it had been turned down. But John Latschar said, "All you have to do is make it a national historic trail like the Oregon Trail and I think it will pass. You would form a not for profit Santa Fe Trail Association. You could introduce it to Congress and spearhead the effort." All of these people were just sitting there looking at each other. It was the funniest thing, except for Joy Poole. Joy Poole was the person who had wanted to do the Trinidad Symposium. And she was working for the state historical society there in Trinidad at the time. So she thought it was a great idea. So there was not a whole lot of discussion about it. Latschar gave his presentation and then he left. Everybody kind

of looked at each other. But Joy Poole really latched onto it. When the planning for the symposium for the next year which was to be held at Trinidad was over, and we all went back to our respective states, Joy went back to Trinidad and told the Junior College about the idea of starting a Santa Fe Trail Association and pushing for legislation to make the Santa Fe Trail a national historic trail. And they loved it. The junior college jumped on it like that and they talked to Marc Simmons and started in motion incorporation for the Santa Fe Trail Association. And it just worked right in with having that first symposium at Trinidad. And that's how it all began. [All this is mostly true]

And then they took a strange twist because I'm not sure I know what happened. I was talking with Barbara and keeping on this communication with Barbara about what should we do. I think we should still introduce the legislation and move forward. And she said, "Greg's talking about it. I think we're going to have a midterm board meeting and maybe we can get the group to agree to let Greg and some OCTA people go to Washington to introduce the legislation now." I believe that was '86. So OCTA does make a decision at the midterm meeting to send Greg, pay his way, send Barbara, pay her way. Marc Simmons was invited to go. Tom Hunt was invited to go. And I offered to go and I paid my own way.

So we went to Washington. Greg basically took the legislation that was written for OCTA and put Santa Fe Trail in there. And that's what we introduced. And we went to the respective Congressmen's offices and we talked to them. Whoever is now with the state, Bill Richardson from New Mexico, he was the congressman from New Mexico who insisted upon introducing the legislation. He said, "The Santa Fe Trail is named for the state I represent. I will introduce the legislation." And then we had to get a senator to co-sponsor it. So we kind of discounted Bob Dole because his office was just the busiest place anybody could ever imagine. So we approached Senator Kassebaum and went to her office and talked to her aide. We didn't ever see her in person. But we talked to her aide. Grace said, "As long as there is no money attached to this, I'm sure she will go along with it." And of course the Santa Fe Trail crosses some 400 miles across Kansas. She would be supportive. So we got her to introduce it in the Senate. And that's the way the legislation was introduced. And then Reagan was happy to sign it into law. He signed it into law, I think, in '87, in the spring, like May 20<sup>th</sup> or something.

We thought it was going to be a June date. We were going to get a Stetson hat from St. Joe and have it there for the ceremony. He put it in under the wire and got ahead of us. We couldn't put an appropriate ceremony together. But by that time I was working with Mike Vitelle from New Mexico to have a really big ceremony. Reagan signed it into law early. But it became law. It was very exciting. So then the thing that followed was the formation of the Santa Fe Trail Association, which went on to form from that Trinidad symposium. It has grown.

Another step, another area that I tried to be a part of was I wanted a local chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association, much like Trails Head. So I don't remember the year I proposed this (1989). But I proposed that the Trails Head Chapter be both a chapter for OCTA and a chapter for the Santa Fe Trail Association. And I was on the Santa Fe Trail Association board of directors at that time. I was one of the founding board members. It didn't fly. The OCTA people took it back to the OCTA board and the attorney (Bob Berry? He was on the board) said it wouldn't work. It would be too complicated. It would open us up for all kinds of whatever. So it bombed. So later on I think Jane

Mallinson and some others formed the local Santa Fe Trail Missouri Outfitters Chapter. But my purpose—I had so little time to attend all these meetings because I was active in Cave Spring, the Heritage League, and OCTA and the Santa Fe Trail Association. I was just meeting myself coming and going and trying to raise some grandchildren. So for me it would have been appropriate. It would have been simplified. And the same people belonged to both anyway.

HS: The issue, of course, is all these chapters overlap or these organizations overlap. You've got The Friends of the National Frontier Trail(s) Center, which Harold and I are very much involved in. We are members of Trails Head and the Missouri River Outfitters. But there is no way we can be doing all those meetings. So you kind of have to choose. I think one of the things we are talking about now is having more joint meetings and joint programs.

SM: That makes sense, doesn't it?

HS: It does.

SM: That probably is a good solution. If the bylaws of the parent organizations don't allow for the overlap, there wouldn't be any problem in you having joint meetings and having very good speakers. So that sounds like a good solution.

HS: Okay, you were a charter member of the Santa Fe Trail Association national organization.

SM: I was actually the person who came up with the idea to have the organization. [Could be, but Joy Poole was the early leader in the 1984-86 formative period— and Mark Simmons]

HS: Right. In fact, probably you were even more instrumental than Franzwa in the Santa Fe Trail.

SM: Oh yes. He wasn't really fundamental in starting that. It came from John Latschar going with me. He was stationed in Denver. It was from him coming to that Denver meeting where we were planning for the Trinidad symposium. And there was no Santa Fe Trail Association at that time. So Joy Poole took the idea and ran with it. And of course Marc Simmons was a close friend of hers too. And she talked to Marc about it. And then that laid the groundwork to actually start the Santa Fe Trail Association. I don't even know if Franzwa was interested in a Santa Fe Trail Association. But I know that Marc did talk to Greg to ask him about things, you know, guidelines, because he had been so successful.

HS: Was Marc Simmons a member of OCTA?

SM: Yes. He was at that first meeting in 1983. But I had met him before then. So I was happy to see him there. He made some comments. I never will forget what he said when Greg was running the first meeting, after it was over. And it did take quite a bit of time because everybody was able to express themselves. And so Mark said, "I think he is running a much more democratic meeting than I would ever run." You know, of course, that Marc was very democratic, being the president of the Santa Fe Trail Association. So that's pretty much...

HS: So you got the local chapter started as well as the national. And you're a member of the local chapter, I suppose. Now as far as the Trails head chapter of OCTA, what has been your main involvement would you say in the last 10 years?

SM: Well, I would just say I came as a practicing member. I was the secretary for a brief period of time [1990]. At that time I think the chapter was having the meetings at his (Jim Lee's) house. I wasn't secretary for very long. I tried to keep abreast of what is going on.

HS: Have you participated in the trail treks?

SM: Not very many. I think about one. But I've tried to do some other things. Barbara's been really good about promoting the local chapter at historic events. So when she's been able to do that and the things that the city of Kansas City is having about tourism, we've gone and set tables up and had display material. I've done that on occasion.

HS: How about the Cave Spring Interpretive Center? Are you still involved out there?

SM: I'm not involved in any official capacity. But I'm going to help them with trying to start an endowment fund there.

HS: What was your title out there?

SM: Well, I was the founder. I started the whole not for profit and became the president of the not for profit. Then prior to 1982, I think they hired me in 1980, to become the director and that's when Whit became the president. So I resigned from the board and became the director of Cave Spring.

HS: Now that was the only paid position?

SM: That I had. But we did have a paid position for a part-time naturalist and education director. She was there when I retired in 1988.

HS: Oh, you did retire in 1988.

SM: Just an interesting aside about that. I can't remember what meeting it was at, but Greg Franzwa was still on the board of OCTA, but they were right in the position of hiring him as director and they were having a discussion about it. Well, I knew he had to resign as a board of directors member, so I made the suggestion that Greg resign from being on the board and being president of the board so that they could hire him as the executive director of OCTA, which they did. So that was kind of fun, too, to be a part of that.

HS: Remember that episode when he resigned, was that as executive director?

SM: He resigned because they wanted to keep the legislation. The board of trustees wanted to keep the condemnation clause in the legislation for the trail, the Oregon Trail. I know it was over the condemnation. Greg did not want the condemnation clause, that you could condemn farm land, ranchers' land, to acquire the land. The board of trustees wanted to keep the condemnation clause. So Greg couldn't convince them of his position, and so he resigned. [The above two paragraphs are a little confusing. Greg was OCTA President until August, 1985 when Tom Hunt replaced him. Greg remained on the board until the next year, when he resigned and became a non-paid OCTA Executive Director. He resigned OCTA completely in June, 1987 because of his disagreement with the condemnation clause and he was about to begin his work for the NPS on mapping the new Santa Fe National Historic Trail and writing his Santa Fe Trail Revisited which he did all through 1988.]

HS: Who took his place?

SM: They didn't really replace him. Jean Watson then became the first office manager. But they didn't hire a person to replace Greg. And it was his publishing company that was putting out the.....

HS: The Trails press (Patrice Press – Greg's publishing company, which also served as OCTA HQ in those early years). Were they the headquarters of OCTA until he resigned?

SM: Yes.

HS: Then they had to find a new headquarters. They had to find a new office.

SM: Right.

HS: Well, that was a bit of a problem, wasn't it, because it was sudden?

SM: It was very sudden.

HS: Records had to be transferred elsewhere.

SM: I don't really know the inside scoop about that. I have no idea. It was kind of like I was always there to participate as a member and have ideas and suggestions. And I even came to be hearing about the building of this complex, when the companies were proposing their designs and the state was present and the city of Independence was present. And I came to several of those. Then I was involved in the celebration of the opening of the Frontier Trails Center (the dedication of the National Frontier Trails Center was in late March, 1990) and participated in that wonderful production, the California program. Do you remember that?

HS: Oh, yes.

SM: The guy from California. I even sang a song in that. That was so funny.

HS: We were there.

SM: That was a lot of fun.

HS: Were you here for the first gathering before the building was converted into the museum here? (unclear) was in charge of the ceremonies.

SM: Yes, I was here. I pretty much came to those key meetings and then the whole process went on. And remember I'm also competing with you for state funds at this point. And we had gotten my local representative, Jim Barnes and (unclear) to go for \$700,000 from the state legislature. We got it approved by the legislature. We got it approved by the Senate. And then Ashcroft vetoed it. So he vetoed us getting \$700,000.

HS: Cave Spring.

SM: Right, to build a big building. But everyone here had put a lot of effort into getting the state funds to rebuild this building. (The tape had to be turned over.) I don't know that anybody here ever thought they were taking Cave Spring's place. But you can see how my thought process was. When I started Cave Spring, nothing was happening in Independence, nothing. I guess no one really anticipated Harry's friends passing on and less people coming to the Truman Library. But, you know, the times change. It's all timing, isn't it?

HS: They have a spring here too. (although covered up with a lot of dirt)

SM: This is an appropriate site and an appropriate place to have saved, and it's wonderful.

HS: There's been this connection between the National Frontier Trails Center and Cave Spring. Of course most people aren't aware of it. You know how these things come about.

SM: I've got to bring up one other thing that happened. I think it's one of the things that set up another series of events in regard to Greg. Mark Simmons really respected Greg a great deal and relied on his suggestions. Greg did a wonderful color publication for the Santa Fe Trail Association very early. And of course Mark Simmons was very indebted to Greg for doing this. So it was just off the wall. We had no idea this was coming. Greg came to the meeting of the Santa Fe Trail Association and I can't even remember where we were. This was the Santa Fe meeting when we met in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1989. I'm sorry. I can't recall the location. But anyway Mark Simmons introduced Greg and said that Greg had a proposal to make to the Santa Fe Trail Association. The other board members didn't have any idea. It was not on the agenda. It was some kind of a thing that had been discussed between Mark Simmons and Greg Franzwa. And it was introduced in this way. So we all sat down and Greg went to the podium and he said,

“I believe that although I am a very busy man, and I have more on my plate than I can handle, I am willing to take out the time to go to Washington to seek funds to build a national interpretive center at the head of the Santa Fe Trail at the site of old Franklin.” And my quotes are “in the flood plain of the Missouri river.” I said that, not Greg. And I sat there and I nearly thought I would cheer. The rest of the people didn’t quite know what to say. I mean this has been arranged between Mark Simmons and Greg. And Greg is telling us he’s willing to go to Washington for the Santa Fe Trail Center and seek national funds to build this wonderful big trail center for the Santa Fe Trail. Well, I’m on the board and I tend to speak my piece and after he had finished his presentation I said, “Well, you know in the past I’ve worked with Greg Franzwa and I know one of the things that you’ve said repeatedly is you don’t want to ask for federal funds. He didn’t want to ask for federal funds for the Oregon Trail. He didn’t want condemnation of land that we would force farmers to have to sell. He was totally in sync with keeping the feds on our side and working side by side, not getting their money.” I didn’t know what this turnabout was all about. But I said, “If we all do this, start a new organization and go to the federal government for funds, that’s why we won’t have any money.” When I spoke up and said that, the rest of the people on the board pretty much nodded in agreement and they took a vote and they voted it down.

Now subsequent things happened after that. And one of them was that in the Kansas City Star it appeared that the National Park Service said Cave Spring was not a site on the Santa Fe Trail. It was a newspaper article and I’ve got a whole folder of documentation, original documentation, about the Santa Fe Trail and Cave Spring. I’ve come up with subsequent information confirming it, being on the Santa Fe Trail through the Glasgow brothers’ book by Mark Gardner and through Susan McGoffin’s book. And both of them state (unclear) on the Santa Fe Trail. It didn’t really seem like an accident to me that we became suddenly discredited as a site on the Santa Fe Trail. We are still on the National Register of Historic Places, but we have been set aside by the Santa Fe Trail National Park Service branch for consideration as a site. They have a different site designation than the National Historic Sites. It’s a Santa Fe Trail Site designation. They have several of them in the city of Independence and Lou Schumacher’s place was the first one in Missouri that was made a site. Subsequently, after this came out in the paper that Cave Spring was not a site I called to Rolla, where all the surveys are recorded. And they are on record in Rolla, a survey of the Santa Fe Trail. And the survey of 1844 is the survey from which all the surveys and all the land ownership has been determined. In that survey that ran right along Cave Spring and the Trail is running right beside Cave Spring under the bridge at that location. If that survey is wrong, which is the survey of 1844, all the land ownership in the whole area is up for grabs. Well, that just isn’t so. That land is owned the way it is recorded. It is a site on the Santa Fe Trail. It is an historic site, a campground on the trail. And it will prove the test of history. But, you know, things get in the paper and they make for good news. But people don’t know what’s behind it.

HS: Now in the diaries that have been transcribed, those that have been analyzed, is there mention of Cave Spring?

SM: They don’t call it Cave Spring because Barnes lost the site, like in 1852. They became bankrupt and the site went up for sale on the courthouse steps. So during the Trail days it was known as Barnes’ Place or Barnes’ Enclosure. We haven’t any reference to Cave Spring, the name Cave Spring, until the DAR put the markers there in like 1909. They



started the process in 1911 and put some more in. But it just blew my mind when it came up for some sort of discussion that this wasn't what it was supposed to be. And the Kansas City Star did make a retraction of that article that was about this big. And the article saying it wasn't on the trail was about this big. And then even in the Trail Tidings there was a very complete article, and I believe Mary Conrad wrote it. And it was about the Kansas City Star making mention of that and here's the Trail Tidings article on both sides of that documenting it and the Star's retraction.

HS: This is Trails Head Tidings Vol. 4, No. 4, June 1990. So this is the most complete write up that has been done?

SM: Well, that was in rebuttal to the Kansas City article. Mary itemized each thing.

HS: This is Mary Conrad's article? [This whole issue deals only with the Cave Spring name and the park with it not being a named location in the above two diaries in 1846. There is no doubt about the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California going down Blue Ridge Boulevard and past the Barnes farm and the spring area. Also no doubt about it all being a camping ground location. It was just about the name of "Cave Spring".]

SM: When the National Park Service came in and they were proposing sites that would be mentioned on the Santa Fe Trail, Cave Spring was included. And then through some manipulation it was dropped. And then when I talked to Jere Krakow, who is with the National Park Service, he made the statement, "Well, we know ~~the~~ that the trail is close to Cave Spring but close to could be a mile away or a half mile away." I said, "No. There is no way that it is a half mile away. It defines the eastern border of the Cave Spring property. It is the defining road."

HS: Blue Ridge has the trail following the ridge.

SM: For the most part. You probably know that there is a lot of controversy about what year it went where and when it was moved from this location to another location.

HS: A tributary trail.

SM: But there is documentation of it turning by the Rice house and then proceeding in a south direction from the Rice house. When they started the trail in 1844 (the trail went through here before 1844) it tells that the survey line intersected with the trail. So it is very precise that the trail was at that location.

HS: Now in '88 you said you resigned as director of Cave Spring.

SM: I have now changed careers. I am now back to being a full time artist and seeking my master's degree. I'm working on my master's degree right now in sculpture and ceramics.

HS: Where?

SM: At CMSU in Warrensburg. I'm not the director any more. I'm not there, but I could take time out to make a phone call to Rolla about the survey and is the survey accurate. And of course it is. I'm not out there tooting my horn about it. But I just want it recorded and the facts and how this whole thing unfolded. Because a lot of times people don't have a clue. I mean where did this come from? How did this start? What even brought up an issue of it not being a site? From that point on when there was an article in the paper about it not being a site it coincided with Lou Schumacher making a lot of noise about his being a site out there on 93<sup>rd</sup> Street.

HS: Now you are between the Rice homestead and Lou Schumacher's area?

SM: Yes.

HS: The Palestine Cemetery. Do you know where that is?

SM: Truman said there was evidence of a swale or a trail or ruts there. This was back in the 30s. I have been out there and it was hard to even see, but he claimed that there were.

HS: Would that be in line with Cave Spring?

SM: Cave Spring is before the Palestine Cemetery.

HS: That's on the north side. Have you been involved with the Rice Homestead project?

SM: Yes, but I'm not on the board now. I had to resign from that too in order to go to school. But I am still very supportive of it.

HS: What is that organization called?

SM: It's the Friends of the Rice-Tremonti House.

HS: When did you get involved with that?

SM: In the beginning. We got in on the National Register in either '78 or '79. It was very close to when we got Cave Spring on the National Register.

HS: That they started this organization.

SM: Actually, Bob Griffin, who was the mayor of Raytown at the time, was the person instrumental in our holding meetings. And we had a dialog with Mrs. Tremonti and we had it set up so that the city of Raytown would buy the property. The state had money to match. Should the city pay part of it, the state had matching funds. Mrs. Tremonti would not agree to sign a statement saying she would give us, the city, the first right to buy the property. She would not sign it. Then after that, her brother-in-law died. Then her sister died. All the people she trusted died. And so she backed off. Then the interest kind of died with her brother-in-law's death. She just wouldn't talk to us anymore. So in 1987 was the time it started because I became treasurer. That's the only time I have been treasurer of an organization. I won't do that again.

A stranger called Roberta Bonnewitz and was very concerned about the Rice house being lost and someone buying it and developing it and tearing it down. We never even knew her. She just came out of nowhere. And she was the manager of apartments down on 87<sup>th</sup> Street. So we called Whit. We called Bob Grissam. We called Roberta and, I think, Joanne Caesar, some leading people who had been at those first meetings. Bob Grissam came and we began having meetings with this young woman and elected her president. I can't remember who was vice president. After she left, and she didn't stay there long, I think Whit became the president. Again, it was one of those things that you're not in control of it. There's someone else running the show. This perfect stranger comes in and says, "We'll lose this property if you don't do something." So then we regrouped and started the not for profit. We'd not become a not for profit before. We were going to let the city buy it, which would have been a good deal, like the city runs this. It just didn't happen that way, but we're still working to raise the money. And I think we're down to some kind of deadline on the money, like by 1990 (?) we have to have it.

HS: The Raytown city government has been supportive.

SM: Yes. They just don't give us money. They've been supportive but without funds.

HS: Sophie's cabin, that log cabin on the site. What do the prospects look like?

SM: I think we'll save it, but I have no idea how. I mean, win the lottery and give us \$300,000 and we'll have it, okay. I don't know how, but I really do think it will be saved. And we've had money coming from Nations Bank, which used to be named something else. Now it has been changed into some other name. I think they came up with either \$25,000 or \$50,000. So it's a trickle. The other big thing, the owner, Mrs. Tremonti, died so her cousins stand to inherit the place. And there would be big taxes for

the value of it. I think her sister had quite a bit of money, which she left to Mrs. Tremonti, so these cousins are inheriting more money than they can handle. There's going to be a big tax bite. So they waived all of the interest. The interest was eating us up. We just couldn't stay ahead of it. It was like \$25,000 in interest a year. We were just raising around \$25,000 to fix the roof and fix the furnace and fix the electricity and rebuild the foundation. We were really hurting for money. But there the fundraising stands right now.

HS: So your involvement with that lasted until...

SM: I just retired from there.

HS: Then you retired from the Cave Spring Interpretive Center in '88. Are you still a member of OCTA?

SM: I'm still a member of OCTA. And I'm still a member of the Santa Fe Trail Association.

HS: But you're not an officer or have official positions.

SM: No.

HS: Your attention now is on your art training and art work. But you still have a finger in the trails.

SM: I love history. It's a passion.

HS: Of course you've seen Charlie Goslin's murals here.

SM: Isn't it wonderful.

HS: Have you done any illustrating of western themes or trails themes? Are you interested in doing that kind of illustration?

SM: Actually, what I would like to do is a beautiful sculpture on the wall out here of the trail. I would like to do that. I've got an idea and I've got a design in my mind. Jim Budde kept saying, "Why don't you volunteer to do some art work for us, Sylvia?" So John Mark Lambertson and I went out front and he told me what he would like to see on that curved surface. I would love to do a beautiful mural of the trails west from Independence to the West.

HS: You know they have that mural in connection with the statue over at Westport.

SM: It wouldn't be the same.

HS: But they finally did something with that spot, that site there at Westport, which attracts a good deal of attention. So there's more to be done here.

SM: Oh, sure. I can just see it. I hope I'll be able to. We've got to come up with some money, because I can't go out of pocket for the expenses of the materials. But I would still really like to.

HS: Do you do research? I suppose you do reading. Do you do special research on trails history?

SM: I'm not doing anything. It's just impossible. You either have to be an artist or you have to be these other things. I just finished a 20<sup>th</sup> century art class that just knocked me for a loop. I really had to pour every bit of my concentration on getting through that class. It was just all memorization. Do you remember that? Back when you had to memorize all this stuff. I had to do that. Then I took my graduate studies this semester too and I wrote my paper for my proposal for my graduate show. See when I did historic preservation there were a lot of people who didn't even know I was an artist. They didn't have a clue. My gosh, they didn't know I was an artist. That's why I do what I do. I mean I wouldn't have saved Cave Spring if I wasn't an artist. I mean it's a love of history, it's a love of nature, and it's a love of the past. It's a love of the present and how do we live in

- harmony with our environment. That's all part of who I am. But I can't really serve two masters any more. I have to do this. I sit at the meetings and listen to other people run the show.
- HS: Now the interpretive center at Cave Spring, there's a lot about nature there, of course. Do they still have that historical part?
- SM: Oh, yes. And they've been really successful working with Annabelle Cartwright at National Frontier Center here and the Laura Ingalls Wilder exhibit. And she's loaned them things from the collection that you have here. And it's so successful. They do a Laura Ingalls Wilder week or two weeks. They have lots of children that come to it, and they love it. They even take a bus trip down to where she lived in southern Missouri. It's been a great thing. So I know they have worked with Annabelle Cartwright on that.
- HS: We've been to DeSmet, South Dakota, which is the setting for some of her books, including this little country schoolhouse that she attended. As far as the local Trails Head chapter and your involvement in it, what do you think it has been the most successful at doing? And what do you think it could do that it hasn't done?
- SM: Well, they've done a lot of treks, you know. And I love treks, but I mostly save my trekking for when I am on one of the national conventions. Maybe that's because, not that I know all the area around here, I don't, but I've been on a lot of the area just on my own. When we started Cave Spring, one of the ways I learned about the Santa Fe Trail was my husband and my children and I got in the car and we drove the Santa Fe Trail and we stopped at all the markers. Then I can't even tell you how many times I have been down to Santa Fe now. Then we did the same thing up the Oregon Trail, drove up the Oregon Trail the same way.
- HS: Took a lot of photographs?
- SM: Took a lot of photographs, slides. You just can't believe how many slides I have. So I pretty much tried to do that kind of thing, not read in-depth research, which I had to do to document Cave Spring history. But not for the rest of the area. I really did not focus on that. And I loved what I learned. I do like the ones where we go to other states and we get to go along the trail and see other states and other localities.
- HS: What has been done in regard to teaching local students and local schools or teachers themselves? Do they ever call on members of the local chapter?
- SM: All I know is I've gone to give presentations about the Santa Fe Trail when I was at Cave Spring, some schools, not a lot of schools. To a lot of Girl Scout Troops, to a lot of DAR groups. And then I know later, connected with OCTA, Elaine McNabney was doing this part, like a 12-year-old girl, and she was doing that presentation at schools and at Girl Scout organizations. I don't know how much Trails Head had pushed trying to do outreach to schools, but it is certainly an area, I think, that could be explored and promoted in a much more meaningful way. We haven't done much of that at all. As a matter of fact, I don't think Trails Head has done a lot of PR to let the public know about it. It seems to me it is pretty much a good secret.
- HS: The National Frontier Trails Center has an educational coordinator. Do you think that because the Trails Center is focusing to some extent on outreach and educational type programs that the local chapter feels they don't have to because the Trails Center is already doing it?
- SM: It may be that. Maybe no one has approached them about it. I do know that Ross Marshall has been big on the trail treks and so has John Leamon. Jim Budde likes to do

the trail treks. I think it's been the influence of the people who have been in charge that have given it that direction. And it is fun to do trail treks. That's the truth. Doing more outreach, I think, is maybe an area where they are lacking. If they really want to promote OCTA and build membership and they want to get the word out about historic trails here, they've got to do more educational outreach.

HS: Now there has been progress, I suppose, in map making, hasn't there?

SM: No. Kansas has done well. There's such controversy on the Missouri side about what year the trail went where. And that controversy has not been resolved. And don't wait and hold your breath for the National Park Service to resolve it because they are not going to. It will come about through some avid researcher who wants to get at the truth and wants to justify it based on first hand documents written by the pioneers. That's how it will come about.

HS: Now Lou Schumacher is interested in that research.

SM: He didn't do anything based on the diaries of the pioneers and the journals.

HS: Surveys and minutes of township meetings.

SM: He did survey information. It was my understanding that he talked about land vacations. They petitioned the court to vacate the land so the road could go through there. That's how he based his documentation on land vacations.

HS: But he used documents from Rolla.

SM: He used documents from the courthouse up here.

HS: Have you met Craig Crease?

SM: I know Craig.

HS: He is apparently doing, is doing, or has done thorough research on the trails.

SM: I think his emphasis has been more on the Kansas side. This is my opinion. I think Lou Schumacher's purpose was very self-serving. So if you have a personal thing to promote, you're going to promote your personal agenda as opposed to an honest and fair review of all the evidence. That's my opinion.

HS: So you're saying it's not final yet?

SM: I don't think it's final. I think you can influence people to do what you want them to do based on shaking their hands, meeting them at the airport and taking them to dinner.

HS: As far as Cave Spring is concerned, they don't have a covered wagon.

SM: No.

HS: Do they have any small things?

SM: Yes, we have some Indian slippers, some beaded Indian slippers that are authentic. We have several things that Mark Simmons donated to us for a campground display. They usually do a wonderful display about the Indians. One of our members is an artist and she did these marvelous portraits of the Missouri and Kansa Indians and the chiefs and their wives and children. We put that up when we have an Indian display.

HS: Are they building a library?

SM: No, we don't have any space for that. There is no room, unfortunately.

HS: So your involvement now is limited to attending public programs of Trails Head, Missouri River Outfitters or the Friends of Rice-Tremonti House.

SM: I'm not a member of the Missouri River Outfitters. I'm a member of the Santa Fe Trail Association. What activities I participate in locally with the Santa Fe Trail Association are through the Council Grove chapter. I usually do that trail ride every year. I completely forgot about riding down the Santa Fe Trail on horseback in 1988.

HS: How did that come about and how did that turn out?

SM: Well, I think the funny thing about it is it came about because of the bicentennial. I guess I just thought that would be the coolest thing that could happen, going down the Santa Fe Trail.

HS: That would be in 1976.

SM: It was in 1976. And coming by covered wagon. It was just so romantic and wonderful. I just thought, "I've got to do that." So I formed an organization and invited anyone who was interested to be a part of that organization. We actually incorporated as a not for profit for traveling on the Santa Fe Trail. And Anne Carter (Mallinson now) and her husband at that time, David Carter, were active in the organization and some other local historians that do reenacting. It was mainly some of the re-enactors. It all kind of fell apart and David and Anne and I went. We got all the way down...Oh my gosh, we had a memorable time at Bent's Fort. It was just fabulous at Bent's Fort. And then we got to La Junta and they were going to go on down to Wallsenburg and come into Taos and go the old route of the mountain men to Santa Fe. So they went that way. My husband joined me and we stayed on the Santa Fe Trail route and went down. Actually we stayed in Capulin for a few days because our truck broke down. It ended up I rode about 200 miles on horseback.

HS: Did you go on the Cimarron Road or did you go through Raton Pass?

SM: We went through Raton Pass. That's where the truck broke down. I wrote an article about it. It was through the Kansas City Star in six installments [when?]. And I wrote that Susan McGoffin and (unclear) were going over Raton Pass and their wagon broke down. And it took them like a day to build a new axle and get it road worthy again. Our truck broke down over the Fourth of July weekend. We had to pull off the road. The transmission died. And we were on the highway to Capulin because we were going to stay in Capulin with some friends that I had only met through planning this trail trip. So I get out of the car and I go get Rocky out of the horse trailer and lead him beside the road so he can graze and he doesn't get too hot. My husband Charles gets out to hitchhike. This lady went by in a white Porsche and she makes a U-turn and comes and picks my husband up and they turn and go on into Raton. So we ended up staying there for like three days, three or four days we stay at Capulin. And the people that we were staying with, they went off to Cimarron to a rodeo. We spent the Fourth of July in Capulin family style with the rest of the community, driving the other people's car. It was so funny. It was just really a wonderful adventure. We drove their truck. They came back from Cimarron. They loaned us their truck to take Rocky down. So we get down to Santa Fe to meet the mayor of Santa Fe on time. Anne Carter and David and their friends were riding down through the mountains coming to the Taos route. So I got there about a week ahead of them. I met the mayor and David Gaines. We had a wonderful time. It was a real adventure.

HS: You rode your horse mainly in Kansas.

SM: No. Actually I rode my horse mainly from Fort Osage to Kansas City and then from Independence we trailered up to 51<sup>st</sup> Street and rode through Kansas City to Cave Spring. Then we trailered from Cave Spring to Council Grove. And my horse broke down and had to be put out to pasture for six weeks. Then from Council Grove on I rode borrowed horses. I only learned to ride to do this ride. It's a good thing I was ignorant because riding borrowed horses is insanity. But I made it.

HS: McGoffin, did she ride side saddle?

SM: No, she carriaged. Someone drove the carriage. She talked about a wandering princess am I. At the end of the day the employees, Captain McGoffin employees would set up the tent. Her dressing table was around the pole of the tent. They had a bed. She writes one place where it was raining just cats and dogs and she and Captain McGoffin were curled up in the bed and the rivers of water were running under the tent and through the tent. She was a wandering princess. She tells about the blooming wild roses. The roses stuck their petals into the window of the tent. I sort of envisioned myself as Susan McGoffin, the wandering princess. It was fun.

HS: You didn't get injured or suffer ill health during that trip? Did the exercise and all that mountain air make you feel more invigorated?

SM: It was great. It really was. We were in the middle of the wheat harvest out near Larned and the temperatures were in the 90s. At night the temperature was just as cool as you would want it to be. It was wonderful. I had ridden down the trail the summer before setting up the sights where we would camp. It was just marvelous. I lost weight. That was a nice thing too that happened.

HS: Did you stop at Bent's Fort?

SM: We stayed all night there two nights. I actually slept on a buffalo rug in one of the rooms at Bent's Fort. And Anne played the hammered dulcimer by moonlight. I mean talk about being transported away to another time and another era. It was just like magic.

HS: You've written it all up and it's been published?

SM: It was in the Kansas City Star. I was going to write a book about it. But I haven't written a book. I don't know that I will. It's kind of old information now.

HS: Well, lots of books are written about things that happened longer ago than 10 years.

SM: Well, I did keep a diary of every day we were on the trail. And it was like about a total of six weeks that we were out. And I kept a diary. I didn't reconstruct the information the next day. I wrote it that very night after the day's events.

HS: That's the way to do a diary. Don't wait until you forget the details.

SM: That's easy to do. Then it's easy to reconstruct them the wrong way. Because after you forget one day, it all becomes a blur after that.

HS: Trying to get everything in sequence.

SM: When you're riding on horseback and you're not keeping track of the days or anything or the time, it's funny. I did have this. This is dated Santa Fe, New Mexico, Saturday, May 10, 1986. Santa Fe Trail bill promotes tourism and history. So this is an article telling that the bill was co-sponsored by 14 Congressmen from states along the trail. It was introduced by Representative Bill Richardson of New Mexico. It was introduced Thursday. It asked Congress to designate the Santa Fe Tail as a national historic site.

HS: This became quite a world figure.

SM: Isn't that the truth.

HS: This is great to know about your involvement and as kind of a prime mover. Is there anything else you would like me to put on the record here?

SM: No, I don't think I have anything to add.

HS: Once you get your master's in art, are you going to be more active or more involved with the trails again?

SM: I hope I can be involved designing monuments and designing art work to mark the trail.

HS: What do you think of The Madonna of the Trail?

SM: I think it's very nice. It's very beautiful. Did you see the other one that was considered, that was proposed by a gentleman who I know? He is Tom Beers. He was a cartographer for the government. His Madonna that he designed was just incredible. I'd like to see her at Cave Spring.

HS: He's a member of the Westerners, the Kansas City Posse.

SM: Yes.

HS: (unclear) member of the Kansas City Posse?

SM: No one has asked me. What all do you do?

HS: (unclear)

SM: That's fine.

HS: Okay. If there's nothing else at this time, we'll conclude this interview. Thank you again, Sylvia.

SM: It was a lot of fun. Thank you for inviting me.

HS: We'll, finish this at this time. We'll put all this together in a collection.