



JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

EARLY BLUE RIVER CROSSING IN SWOPE PARK

Jacob Fowler

1822 July 5

“Friday 5th July ...Sot [sic] out Early and at five miles Crossing a large Crick [the Blue River] 50 yds Wide Runs north the Bottoms and Hill Sides are Well Covered with timber- We Heare [sic] Went up a High Steep Hill over some rocks and continu [sic] over High Roleing [sic] ground....”

*****This describes the crossing of the Big Blue for one of the two earliest Santa Fe Trail routes in the Kansas City area. This crossing dates to an 1820s route, and is in the vicinity of Gregory Boulevard in Swope Park. One still can see a large steep hill to the east of the crossing. **Source:** Marshall, Ross, unsigned. “Review of June 6 Bus Tour,” *Trails Head Tidings*, 7(3): (July 2009), 2-4, quote on p. 4.

George Sibley

1825 July 30

“Very fine Morning. Started early. Rode about ½ mile and entered a Prairie—The Wagon Road very plain—then 8 miles and Crossed Big Blue. ...”

*****Sibley was in charge of surveying the Santa Fe Road from south of Fort Osage to the Southwest. Since Sibley says “The Wagon Road very plain”, this indicates that many travelers already had driven over the same route so that a worn path was visible in the vegetation. **Source:** Crease, Craig. “Becknell, Sibley, the Osage Trace, and More: Original & Early Routes of the Santa Fe Trail in Jackson & Lafayette Counties, Missouri: 1821 to 1832, *Wagon Tracks*, 32(4): (August 2018), 18-27, quote on p. 20.