



## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

### FT. OSAGE

#### **William Becknell**

##### **1821 September**

“Arrived at Fort Osage, we wrote letters, purchased some medicines, and arranged such affairs as we thought necessary previous to leaving the confines of civilization.”

\*\*\*\*\*Becknell and the few men that accompanied him were the first Missouri traders to successfully return from the Mexican city of Santa Fe. Since the Province of Mexico had won independence at the time Becknell was on his southwestern journey, Mexico needed American goods. In 1821 when Becknell traded in the Southwest, the town of Franklin was the farthest western Missouri town. Thus Fort Osage was in the Missouri wilderness at that point. While the Santa Fe Trail was to the south of the fort, trail travelers frequently left the trail to visit George Sibley, the factor of the fort. **Source:** Crease, Craig. “Becknell, Sibley, the Osage Trace, and More: Original & Early Routes of the Santa Fe Trail in Jackson & Lafayette Counties, Missouri: 1821-1832”, *Wagon Tracks*, 32(4): (August 2018), pp. 18-27, quote on p. 20.

#### **Archibald Gamble**

##### **1825 July**

“The road [to Santa Fe] commences a mile or two south of Fort Osage, upon a line run some years ago as the boundary of the Indian lands.... It follows the neighborhood road until it crosses the Little Blue Creek....”

\*\*\*\*\*Gamble was the secretary of the 1825 Sibley survey charged with surveying the Santa Fe Road, that is, the road to the Southwest that had been forged by William Becknell in 1821 and 1822. Gamble clearly states that the Santa Fe Road does not go to the fort, but rather is to the south of the fort. **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.

#### **Thos. Talbot, William Wolfskill, Elisha Stanley, James Collins, Solomon Houck, Edwin M. Ryland, James Fielding**

##### **1826 August through October, from 1827? letter**

“... The Petition of [names of the above seven], all citizens of the state of Missouri and of the United States, ...being desirous of participating with their fellow citizens in trade carried on between the citizens of the United States especially those of Missouri, and the inhabitants and leading towns, and villages of Taos, Santa Fe [,] etc. in the province of New Mexico, in the



Republic of Mexico, did for that purpose make outfits in lawful merchandize [sic] suited to said leading towns and villages and having associated themselves together with sundry others for the purpose of safe handling [,] mutual assistance and self defense, whilst passing from the State of Missouri Taos and Santa Fe through the Indian Countries between Missouri and Mexico, your Petitioners in company with a number of other traders left Fort Osage, a point on the Missouri River, sometime in the month of August in the year of 1826, on their journey to Taos and Santa Fe ... pursued the beaten trace along the route lately surveyed and laid out by George C. Sibley and other commissioners of the United States, to survey and lay off a public road from Fort Osage in Missouri to Santa Fe, without any material deviation from the same.... ...arrived safely...in Taos and Santa Fe...and bartered and sold...for horses, mules, asses, and specie...left Santa Fe on their journey homeward [and while camping for a night,] the said Indians immediately succeeded in scaring the stock of your Petitioners in such a manner as to cause them to run off all together....”

\*\*\*\*\*Early in the Santa Fe trade, traders saw the opportunity to bring mules and horses from the Southwest to trade in Missouri. Various Plains Indians also saw opportunities in the volumes of driven animals along the Santa Fe Road. These seven traders were returning from the Southwest with 169 animals. On October 12, 1827, about 30 Pawnee Indians drove off 166 of the stock at the trader’s camp about 25 miles “...west from the place where said [Santa Fe] road crosses the Panis fork of the river Arkansas....” After a chase, the traders gave up, but the next day they found 66 abandoned animals. Shortly after returning to Missouri, the seven traders petitioned the U.S. Congress for payment of the loss of 100 animals. The request was denied. **Source:** Covington, James W. “A Robbery on the Santa Fe Trail, 1827”, *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, 21(7): (Autumn 1955), 560-563, letter on p. 561.