

Present-day Pathfinders



Santa Fe, Oregon, and California National Historic Trails

National Park Service
3 - Trails West, Inc.
Board of Parks and Recreation
Commissioners - Kansas City, Mo.

Early travelers through the undeveloped land between Missouri and Santa Fe followed foot paths and horseback trails. Later, heavily loaded wagon trains sometimes detoured along easier routes, creating new trails.

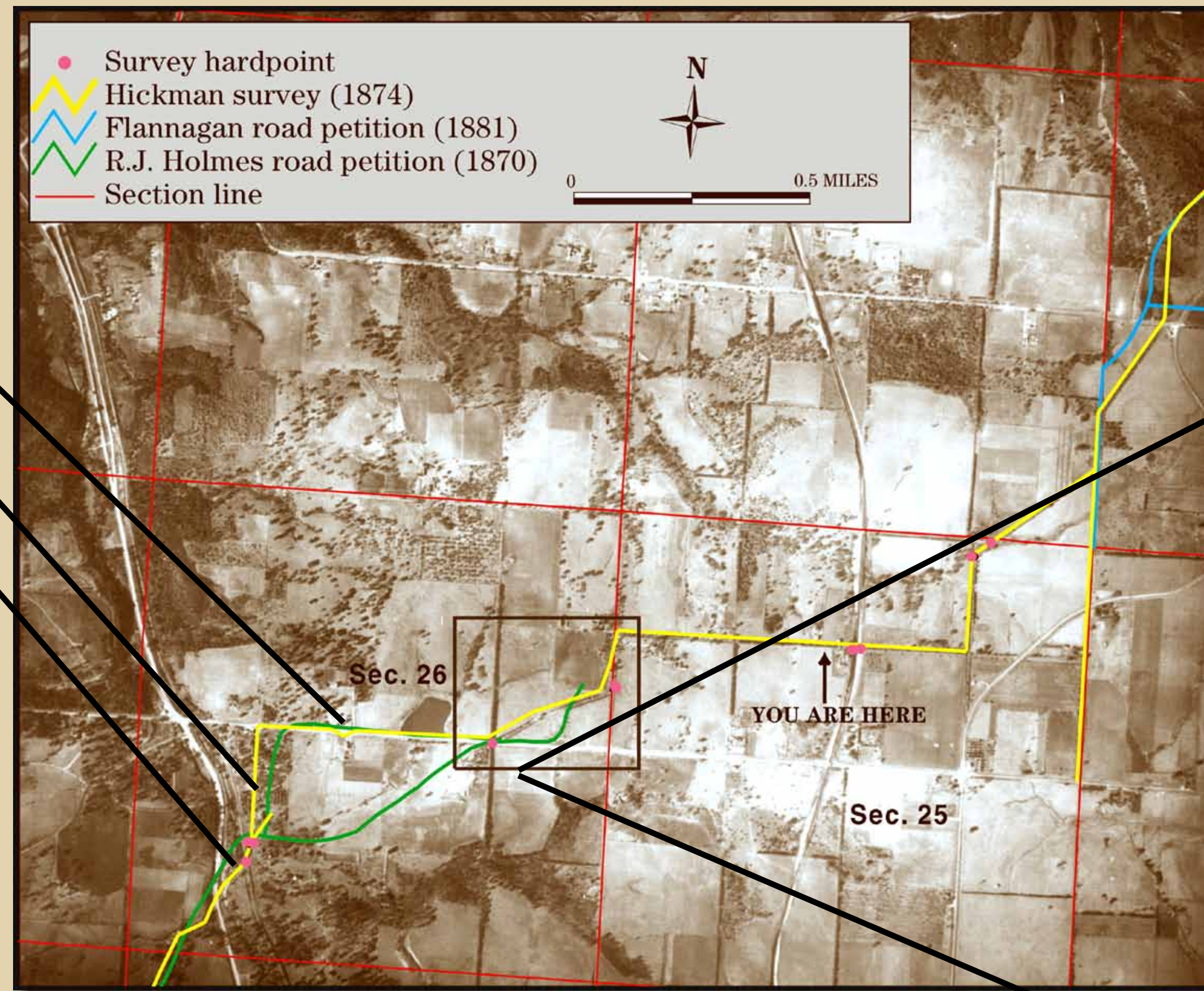
Once Jackson County became established, land began to fall into private ownership. Informal wagon trails became legal roads. Landowners could petition the court to move roads so they skirted their properties rather than running across them. Due to modern-day developments, few traces of early roads remain in Jackson County today.

Trail detectives must sift through old maps, surveys, court petitions, property records, written accounts by trail travelers, and other documents to accurately locate routes. Through painstaking research, a route shared by the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California Trails was discovered close to where you now stand.

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Chain	Notes	Distance
1	Hence West	59.50
2	S 9 1/2 N	6.00
3	S 17 1/2 N	4.70
4	S 6 1/2 N	12.00
5	S 37 N (To a point 30 links S of cor. 25 1/2 N 26)	9.00
6	West	22.50
7	S 6 1/2 N	2.30
8	S 6 1/2 N	3.30
9	West	12.65
10	(To a point 30 links S of cor. 25 1/2 N 26)	
11	N 71.5 N. sec 26	20.00
12	South (To a point 30 links S of cor. 25 1/2 N 26)	
13	(From which 24 links S of cor. 25 1/2 N 26)	4.00
14	S 15 1/2 N To monument E. of R.	5.00
15	S 4 1/2 N To West. line	4.00
16	S 2 1/2 N	4.00
17	S 1 1/2 N	3.00
18	S 5 1/2 N	4.00
19	S 2 1/2 N	7.00
20	S 2 1/2 N	5.00
21	S 37 1/2 N	8.90
22	To a point 15 links S of cor. 25 1/2 N 26	25.70
23	West	
24	To Harrisonville Rd. West of Bann.	1.00
25	S 8 1/2 E	18.00
26	S 3 1/2 E	
27	To road from Sherman's Mill	1.30
28	West	
29	To a point 10 links N of cor. 25 1/2 N 26	3.50
30	S 3 1/2 N	21.00
31	S 4 1/2 N	30.15
32	S 4 1/2 N	13.00
33	S 37 1/2 N	2.00
34	S 6 1/2 N	4.50
35	S 8 1/2 N	3.50
	Total in chains	354.38
	Links	4000

1874 Hickman Survey notes.



Courtesy U.S. National Archives

1936 aerial photograph.

Using computers, historical records can be superimposed on modern maps and aerial photographs to help locate the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California Trail routes today.

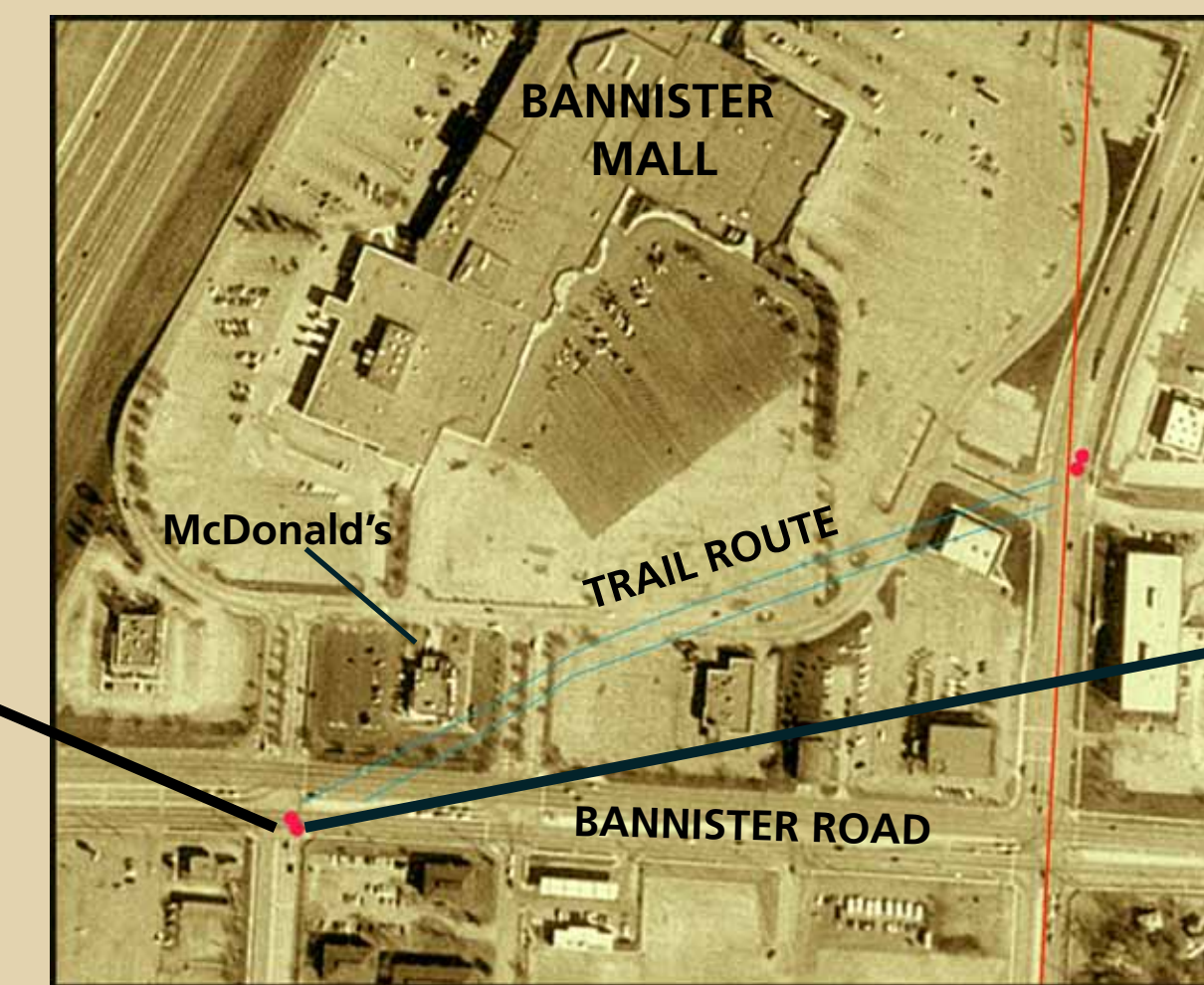
Above, an 1874 survey showing the location of the Santa Fe Trail is compared to alignments from several other documents.



Courtesy U.S. National Archives

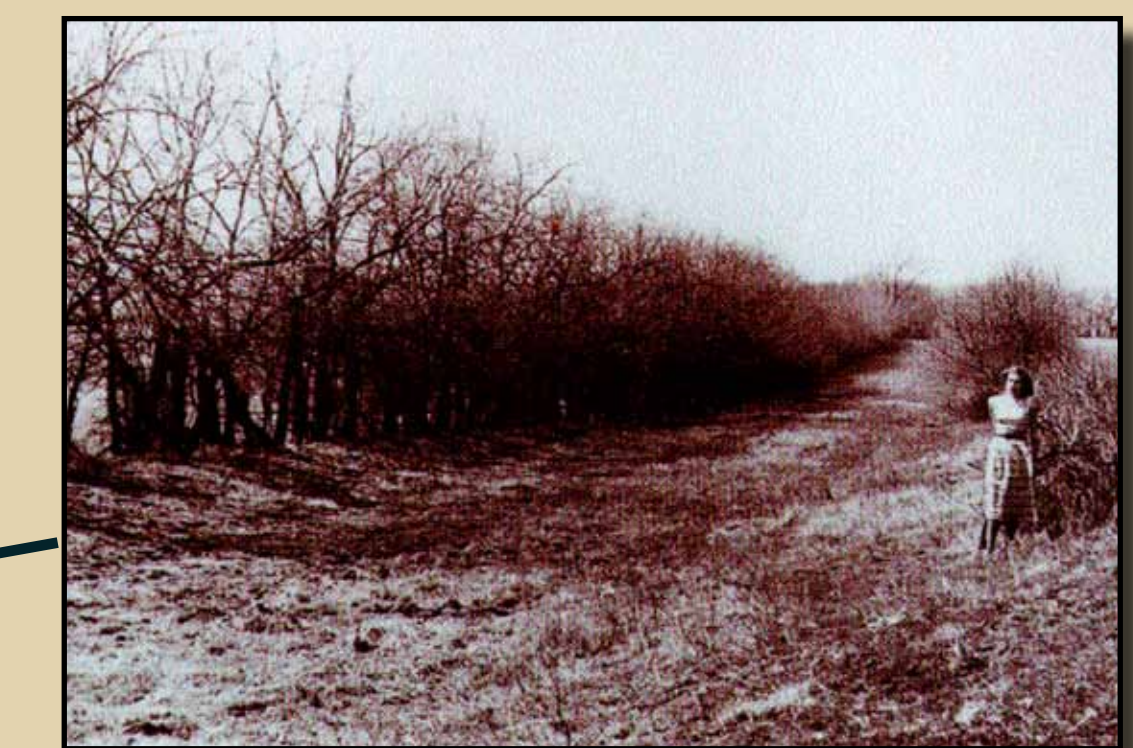
1936 aerial photograph.

The photograph above shows the Bannister Mall area in 1936 when the route of the trails was still visible. The photograph below shows the same view in 1995.



Courtesy U. S. Geological Survey

1995 aerial photograph.



Courtesy Jackson County Historical

Thousands of Santa Fe, Oregon, and California Trail wagons created a trail across the land. The photograph above, looking northeast from Bannister Road, shows the trail in the 1940s when it was still visible. From the same location today, as shown in the photograph below, you see the Bannister Mall parking lot.

