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## *Two Springs: Santa Fe Trail History and Gardner Lake*

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My first exposure to our Gardner history occurred late in my grade school time. The first Gardner historian was Virginia Armstrong Johnson. One day I was with a group with other Gardner kids, as I remember at a 4-H event! Virginia was there as a part of this event and gave a talk centered on the Santa Fe trails era! In this talk she related a story that the trail travelers would get water from a spring on our farm! Apparently, she had knowledge of this, but it was not in any of her publications that I had read. As I was aware of the trail history from first grade on, this was a very interesting nugget of history to me! We had two active springs on our 110 acres, one on the west side, the other on the east side.

The East Spring was the most active in those days and is located on the southwest corner of the Jim Lehman property, on the north bank of the small stream! When I was young, there was rock excavated lower than ground level, about 18 inches. At the bottom of this pit was a length of iron pipe, near the pit bottom, which was hammered between two layers of rock! This spring is visible from 16155 Gardner East Road!

The West Spring was behind the residence at 29210 162<sup>nd</sup> Terrace (this house was originally on East Main Street in Gardner and owned by R. K. Stockmeyer! This house was removed to make room for the sprint telephone office/ warehouse/operation center). The West Spring was more a rock seep with no visible signs of improvement for filling water containers! This spring had little water but would have a small flow unless it was a dry summer. In the summer of 1955(?), Dad was doing something near the spring with the tractor and became stuck! In the effort to get out, a lot of mud became packed in the spring, and permanently plugged it up! Dad walked to the house, got me and our other tractor, and we pulled the stuck tractor out of the spring. Later I returned to the spring with a pick and shovel but was unable to get the spring to flow again! We were hoping to restore the spring in the event we fully fenced the west side to pasture our dairy cows there!

Of the two springs, I feel the East Spring was the one used by the wagon travelers! In my opinion, there was a side trail off the main trail that brought the wagon trains by during dry weather! In wetter weather water from existing creeks was used!

*Ross M Bryan*

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