

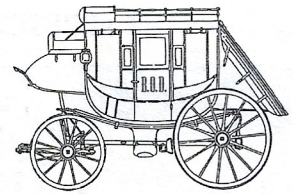
OVERLAND DESPATCH

SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY

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REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL

AUTUMN 2013



"CHOOSE FOR YOURSELVES WHICH ROUTE YE SHALL FOLLOW" – WILLIAM N. BYERS AND THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL

by Michael L. Olsen

[Mike Olsen has served on the SmHTA board, served a term as president, presented programs at conferences, and written much about the historic trail. He received the Howard C. Raynesford Lifetime Achievement Award at the Colorado Conference.]

THE first stagecoach of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express crossed the prairies of Kansas and present Colorado (it was all Kansas Territory in 1859) from Leavenworth to Denver in the spring of 1859. On board was Horace Greeley, the editor and publisher of the *New York Tribune*, the most influential newspaper in the United States at the time.

Greeley booked this maiden voyage over the plains to investigate the news of gold in Colorado and to report on his findings and experiences in the *Tribune*. He rolled into Denver on May 7, having been 20 days on the road, and observed, "As to gold, Denver is crazy. . . . The stories of days' works, and rich leads that have been told me to-day - by grave, intelligent men - are absolutely bewildering. I do not discredit them, but I shall state nothing at second-hand where I may know if I will. I have come here to lay my hand on the naked, indisputable facts, and I mean to do it." He then proceeded to the gold mines and, eventually, traveled on to San Francisco that summer.¹

Given this auspicious start, it would seem that the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express and the Smoky Hill Trail would become the default route to the Colorado gold fields from towns along the Missouri River. But it did not. In fact, the Smoky Hill Trail became the least used of the routes across the central plains. Even today, this historic trail remains in the shadows and is little recognized as a historic American trail. This essay will ask why this is the case - and point a finger at William N. Byers, the editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*, which he established in Denver in April 1859.

As with any historical development there are, of course, various reasons for the "failure" of the Smoky Hill Trail to gain prominence in the "rush to the Rockies." Perhaps most importantly, it was eclipsed by the Santa Fe Trail and the Platte River Road - Oregon Trail. The Santa Fe Trail had been a major highway of trade and conquest since the 1820s. Beginning in the 1840s, the great tide of emigration to Oregon surged west along the Platte River.

(continued on page 3)

PHOTOS FROM COLORADO CONFERENCE

by Jane Whiteley



Melvin School

First stop on the Saturday bus tour was the Melvin Schoolhouse. Lunch was provided by the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society.



Four Mile House

A tour of the 1859 Four Mile House stage stop was included in the activities at Four Mile Historic Park.



Otero Gravesite

At Riverside Cemetery, Mike Olsen told the history of Miguel Otero, famous merchant on the Smoky Hill Trail.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



President Elton Beougher

The 2013 annual meeting of the SmHTA at Parker, Colorado, was a great success. Attendees expressed positive response to the programming and facilities. The committee who selected the site and the programming events are to be congratulated on a job well done. This was my first look at the Colorado section of the Smoky Hill Trail. The presenters provided interesting and valuable information. All in all it was up to the usual high standards of our annual meetings.

I am honored to be elected President of the Association. The Board is well qualified to provide excellent leadership during the coming year. It was a bittersweet moment when Mike Baughn retired from the Presidency. He has provided a guiding hand for us during the formative years of the Association. He has earned our respect and gratitude. Mike, job well done. Your steadfastness is admirable. Relax and rest on your laurels.

Discussions around tables and in meetings led me to see directions we need to go in the future. I have selected the following goals for the next year.

1. Continue the pursuit of National Historic Trails designation. Great work has been already done, thanks to the efforts of previous Boards and hard work by Association members. We need to build on that. Continue surveys of trail evidence. Perhaps we need to establish specific guidelines of what we want to accomplish with the surveys, or revisit such if these are already established.
2. Increase membership at least to the level of two years ago. Then plan to increase to higher levels in future years.
3. The membership is aging. We need to establish a new generation of members. Broaden the membership by establishing new categories of members, e.g., youth, and providing activities that are attractive to those. Pursue establishment of joint memberships in SmHTA and associations of similar interest.
4. Publish the proceedings of the annual conferences.

The content of presentations is excellent. We need to "capture" it. I found it difficult to listen and take notes. The proceedings could be sold to provide a source of income.

5. Continue to pursue nonprofit status. Perhaps retain legal counsel to guide us in this endeavor.

REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL!

—Elton Beougher

SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES, PARKER, COLORADO, OCTOBER 12, 2013

President Mike Baughn called the meeting to order at 7:45 PM

1. The minutes of the October 20, 2012 meeting were approved as read.
2. SmHTA Treasurer Sam Chestnut reported a balance of \$25,983.83 in the association's checking and savings accounts and the two association

OVERLAND DESPATCH is the official publication of the Smoky Hill Trail Association, Inc., a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), corporation chartered in the State of Kansas. Primary missions of the Association are to preserve, protect, promote, and interpret the Smoky Hill Trail for the benefit of present and future generations, and to promote awareness of the historical legacy associated with remnants and locations that represent the historic trail and Butterfield's Overland Despatch (BOD) and its successors as well as the railroad that replaced the overland trail. Letters and articles are welcome, and they become the property of SmHTA and may be edited or abridged at the editor's discretion. All rights reserved.

Membership in the Association is open to all individuals, families, institutions, and businesses. Annual dues are \$25.00 for individuals, \$30.00 for families, \$40.00 for nonprofit organizations, \$50.00 for businesses, and \$100.00 for patrons. Life membership, individual or family, is \$500.00 (may be paid in quarterly installments during one or two years). Membership fees should be sent to Smoky Hill Trail Association, PO Box 322, WaKeeney KS 67672. Other donations are always welcome.

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certificates of deposit. It was moved and seconded that the treasurer's report be accepted. Motion carried.

3. President Baughn thanked the three presenters at the morning session of this annual conference for their timely and informative talks. Lee and Jane Whiteley were recognized for their outstanding Saturday afternoon tour of Smoky Hill Trail sites in the Denver area.

4. There being no old business to discuss, the next item on the agenda was considered.

5. President Baughn reviewed two items of new business.

A. In 2015 the Smoky Hill Trail Association will celebrate the 150th anniversary of Butterfield's Overland Despatch. President Baughn issued a call for volunteers to form an anniversary committee. Some ideas which the SmHTA Board of Directors are considering for this celebration include sponsoring a stagecoach and/or wagon ride along the length of the Butterfield route and special observations in communities along the route.

B. The Board of Directors has authorized a call for nominations to the board and for association officers from the general membership, to be publicized in the *Overland Despatch* in an effort to broaden the field of candidates in the future.

6. Vice President Kay Homewood presented the list of candidates for election to office, per the association bylaws:

President - Elton Beougher

Vice President - Kay Homewood

Secretary - Jody Zeman

Treasurer - Sam Chestnut

Board of Directors -

Jim Gray (two years)

Lem Marsh (two years)

Joanne VanCoevern (two years)

Bob Wilhelm (completing the term of Elton Beougher)

A motion was made and passed to accept the report of the nominating committee. President Baughn then called for nominations from the floor. There being none, a motion was made and passed that nominations cease. The slate of candidates was then approved by acclamation.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Following the General Membership business meeting, President Baughn presented the association's annual awards. Those recognized were:

Award of Merit - Sam Chestnut

Award of Merit - Lem Marsh

Award of Merit - Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society

Award of Merit - Elbert County Historical Society

Donna Malsom Memorial Ambassador Award - Jody Zeman

Heritage Preservation Award - Maarten & Kees Vanzoeren

Heritage Preservation Award - Frasier Farms/River Bend Ranch

Howard C. Raynesford Lifetime Achievement Award - Mike Olsen

At this point, Board member Lem Marsh concluded the proceedings by recognizing Mike Baughn's many years of service as President of the Smoky Hill Trail Association, presenting him with a Damascus Bowie Knife. President Baughn received a standing ovation and heartfelt thanks from the SmHTA members present.

Respectfully submitted:

Mike Olsen, Secretary Pro-tem

BOARD ACTIONS

Secretary Jody Zeman reports the two main things coming out of the board meeting at the conference:

1. Nametags - These were made for board members and spouses before the conference. We are now offering these to members. These are made of wood and lasered with the person's name, city, and state. They are either magnetized or pin variety. An order form is included in this issue of *Overland Despatch*.

2. Future Conference Locations and Dates:

8th Conference, October 17-19, 2014, Russell, KS

9th Conference, October 16-18, 2015, Atchison, KS
(150th Anniversary of the B.O.D.)

10th Conference, October 14-16, 2016, Hays, KS
(10th Conference of the Smoky Hill Trail Association)

BYERS AND THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL

(continued from page 1)

Neither of these routes, of course, led directly to the gold fields of present Colorado. However, gold seekers on the Santa Fe Trail could go as far west as Pueblo and then head north for 100 miles or so to Denver. Those taking the Platte River Road turned south at the confluence of the South Platte and followed it to the Rockies. Many an emigrant must have thought, "Why hazard the unknown when these two well-trod options are available?"

It has also been suggested that the merchants of various communities in Missouri and Kansas, such as Independence, Westport, Kansas City, and Leavenworth, initially failed to recognize the potential of the Rocky Mountain gold trade. After all, they had long-standing, lucrative connections with New Mexico and the Southwest, freighting for the U. S. Army and various commercial enterprises. Only too late, into the 1860s, did they realize the opportunity they had missed. By then the Platte River Road was acknowledged as the primary thoroughfare to Colorado.²

These explanations aside, William N. Byers - as noted above, the editor of the *Rocky Mountain News* - can also be "blamed" for the avoidance of the Smoky Hill Trail. He rarely passed up a chance to discourage the use of the Smoky Hill route. In column after column from 1859 on into the mid-1860s he highlighted its inconveniences, dangers, and horrors. His readers in Denver and at the gold

fields naturally passed on his attitude in their letters to friends and family in the East. Also, as was then common, newspapers in Kansas and the Missouri River towns, as well as others throughout the United States, "reprinted" Byers's reports.

William N. Byers had a quintessential nineteenth century American entrepreneurial career, rising from humble beginnings to wealth and influence. Born in Ohio in 1831, he moved to Iowa with his parents in 1850. There, after a stint working with a surveying party, he moved on to Nebraska as the first deputy survey of Nebraska Territory. He was closely tied to the evolution of the city of Omaha, drawing up its first official plat map, publishing the first map of the town, and serving as a member of the first city council. He invested in property and business ventures there with a partner, Andrew J. Poppleton, in the firm Poppleton and Byers. In 1855 he was elected as a member of the first Nebraska Territorial Legislature.

The gold fields of Kansas Territory then beckoned Byers in 1859, but as a businessman, not as a miner. He shipped a printing press via oxcart to Denver and published the first issue of the *Rocky Mountain News* on April 23, 1859. He also co-authored, with J. H. Kellom, an influential guidebooks to the mines, the *Handbook to the Gold Fields of Nebraska and Kansas*. He prospered, building in 1883 one of the great mansions of early Denver, now the Byers-Evans House Museum, maintained by History Colorado, the state historical association. He died in 1905.³

What evidence is there of Byers's bias for the Platte River Road and against the Smoky Hill Trail, or for that matter, also against the Santa Fe Trail? As the following excerpt from this author's recent book-length study, *That Broad and Beckoning Highway: The Santa Fe Trail and the Rush for Gold in California and Colorado*, demonstrates, this bias dated from the opening pages of the *Rocky Mountain News*:

"Byers featured a 'Map of the Gold Regions with the Routes Thereto' in the very first issue of the *News*, on April 23, 1859. It showed the Platte River Road in detail. The Santa Fe Trail was not named as such, but the route on the map said simply, 'To Santa Fe.' It located Fort Atkinson and 'BENTS FT' and indicated routes from the Santa Fe Trail via the 'Sandy Fork' [Big Sandy Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas River leading into El Paso County south of Denver] and the Cherokee Trail north from Pueblo, though it was not named as such on the map. Two weeks later, on May 7th, Byers reprinted the map with a 'Table of Distances,' although the latter denoted only the Platte River Road. These issues also had a plethora of advertisements for supply and outfitting businesses in Council Bluffs and Omaha, connected with the Platte River Road, but none for establishments in Kansas City, Westport, Independence or Leavenworth, connected with the Santa Fe Trail.

"On July 23rd, Byers devoted a full column to the

subject of the 'Road from the States to the Mines.' In it he stressed the major point he would echo over again and again - that the Platte River Road was the shortest route for emigrants coming through from the Midwest or taking steamboats up to departure points such as Nebraska City, Omaha and Council Bluffs. He used strong language: 'We have heard very many complaints from parties who have arrived from Northern Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, &c., at being deluded as to the southern routes, by the Arkansas river. . . . If not in the road, they have been sadly deceived in the distance, having traveled from two to four hundred miles farther than necessary.'

"Over a year later he was still emphasizing the shorter distance along the Platte, though he was willing to concede some superior attributes to the Santa Fe Trail. Writing on October 26, 1860 [in the *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, which began publication on August 27, 1860 - publication of the *Weekly News* also continued] in a column headed, 'Roads to the River' [Missouri River], he asserted, 'The Arkansas is without doubt the finest natural road leading to this region, as it has few hills, and none of them of any magnitude, and is comparatively free from sand. It is however much longer than either of the other routes [he included the Smoky Hill Trail] from the river to Pike's Peak, and this fact is quite an important one to all persons, whether coming or going, and to whom travel on the plains is not productive of rapturous enthusiasm in its favor. There is, too, upwards of a hundred miles [on the Santa Fe Trail], where there is not a human habitation. . . . To sum up, then, the Platte is the best known, and most sandy, the Arkansas is the longest, but the firmest. . . . "Choose for yourselves which ye will follow."⁴

In other issues, Byers concentrated even more on the disadvantages of the Smoky Hill Trail, characterizing anyone who supported it or used it as lacking in poor judgment, at best. Two examples are indicative of his attitude. The first is the earliest contemporary account of the now well-known story of Daniel Blue, who cannibalized his two brothers' remains as they all slowly starved to death on the Smoky Hill. The second suggests that proponents of the Smoky Hill route should be viewed as nothing but common murderers!

The headline in the May 14, 1859, issue of the *News*, detailing Daniel Blue's saga, simply read, "A Tale of Horror," and continued:

"Mr. Williams, Conductor of the Express [Leavenworth and Pike's Peak] informs us that he picked up on the plains, a man in the last state of exhaustion who had subsisted on the remains of his two brothers who had died of starvation. Three brothers set out from Illinois for the Gold Regions. From Kansas city they took the Smoky Hill Route, found the distance much greater than represented, ate up their provisions and when near to death, one of them, sinking more rapidly than the others, requested them to live upon his flesh and try to get through. He died and they commenced their horrible

feast - ate the body and again braved starvation - another died and the survivor lived upon his remains, but the same fate had reached him when he was found by an Indian, carried to his lodge and fed. The next day the express came along and took him in and brought him part way through but was obliged to leave him because of his feebleness and delirium. He will be brought up by the last coach and probably arrive today.

"Mr. Williams, after hearing the man's story himself and the Indian, search for and found the bones of the second one who died and interred them.

"This we fear is one of a hundred tales of horror yet to be told of the Smoky Hill route - which will bring sorrow to many a hearthstone." (Emphasis added)

Nearly a year later, Byers was still at it. He devoted a full column to the "Smoky Hill Route," as the headline read, on March 21, 1860, avowing:

"A writer in the Leavenworth daily *Register* of March 1st devotes considerable space to a recommendation of the above somewhat notorious route. Among other statements, he asserts that the distance from Leavenworth via the Smoky Hill, Denver, South Park, &c., to Salt Lake City, is only '375 miles.' Putting this down as a typographical, as its absurdity would seem to indicate, we cannot conceive how any respectable journal can have the effrontery to recommend a route which has so recently proved so universally fatal and disastrous to those who have been duped into venturing upon it. We think the past summer's melancholy experience is too indelibly fixed upon the minds of hundreds of unfortunates, to again permit any considerable number of emigrants to be misled into an attempt to traverse a region of barren desert and waterless sand hills; at least until it is conclusively and indisputably demonstrated that there is really a practicable route. The idea of inducing emigrants totally inexperienced and dependent for their safety and success upon information gained from others, to launch out upon an unknown plain to make personal explorations at their imminent peril, for the benefit of speculators and lot owners, in prospective towns along the line of travel, has been tried once over this fated Smoky Hill route with only too lamentable success, *and its instigators stand today, in the sight of heaven, guilty of manslaughter, to say the least.*" (Emphasis added)

Byers's choice of verbs and colorful language in these reflections on the Smoky Hill Trail is telling and for him, and by extension his readers, condemns that trail in the court of public opinion. Travelers have been "sadly deceived;" "many a hearthstone," - the mothers, wives and children of the "unfortunates" who choose the Smoky Hill - will be shadowed by "sorrow." God himself will sentence those who so foully lead innocent emigrants to their death. . . .

There is no hint in anything that Byers wrote, of course, that he himself was one of that breed of "speculators and lot owners" he so soundly condemned - albeit in his case benefitting from the success of the Platte River Road. And perhaps an

ultimate irony here for us today is that, just a decade later, in 1870, the Kansas Pacific Railway arrived in Denver - having been built along the infamous Smoky Hill Trail.

NOTES

1. Horace Greeley. *An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999): 114. First published in New York: C. M. Saxon, Barker, 1860. See also the "bible" of Smoky Hill Trail studies, Wayne C. Lee and Howard Raynesford, *Trails of the Smoky Hill* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, 1980, 2008).
2. Two excellent and thorough considerations of the relationship of eastern Kansas merchants and towns with the Smoky Hill Trail are: Thomas D. Isern. "The Making of a Gold Rush: Pike's Peak, 1858-1860." Master's thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1975, and Calvin W. Gower, "Aids to Prospective Prospectors: Guidebooks and Letters from Kansas Territory, 1858-1860," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 43.(Spring 1977): 67-77 (accessed online November 5, 2013 at <<http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly/13286>>).
3. There are a number of biographical sketches of Byers online; a good place to start is with the website of History Colorado, <www.historycolorado.org>.
4. This study can be accessed online at <www.nps.gov/safe/historyculture/trailwide.htm?>.

MUSEUMS ALONG THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL EMPHASIS ON TRANSPORTATION

Compiled by Mike Olsen

Atchison

Amelia Earhart Birthplace - <<http://www.amelia-earhartmuseum.org>>.

Atchison County Historical Museum - <<http://www.atchisonhistory.org>>.

Atchison Rail Museum - <http://nekr.tripod.com/ATCHISON_RAIL_MUSEUM.htm>.

Leavenworth

National Fred Harvey Museum - <<http://www.firstcitymuseums.org>>.

Frontier Army Museum - <<http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/csi/FrontierArmyMuseum.asp>>.

Topeka

Kansas State Historical Museum - <<http://www.kshs.org/museum>>.

Alma

Waubunsee County Museum - <<http://kansastravel.org/waubunseehistoricalmuseum.htm>>

Wamego

Wamego Historical Museum - <<http://www.wamegohistoricalmuseum.org>>.

Manhattan

Riley County Historical Museum - <<http://www.rileycountyks.gov/328/Historical-Museum>>.

Fort Riley

U.S. Cavalry Museum - <<http://www.riley.army.mil/UnitPage.aspx?unit=dptms.museum>>.

Junction City

Geary County Historical Society Museum - <<http://>>

www.gchsweb.org/museum.htm>.

Chapman

Kansas Auto Racing Museum - <http://www.kansasautoracingmuseum.org>>.

Abilene

Dickinson County Historical Museum - <http://www.heritagecenterdk.com>>.

Salina

Smoky Hill Museum - <http://www.smokyhillmuseum.org>>.

Kanopolis

Fort Harker Guardhouse Museum - <http://kansas.travel.org/fortharker.htm>>.

Ellsworth

Hodgden House Museum - <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/towns/Ellsworth/museums.html>>.

Marquette

Kansas Motorcycle Museum - <http://www.ksmotorcyclemuseum.org>>.

Dorrance

Dorrance Historical Museum - <http://russellks.org/attractions.html>>.

Russell

Fossil Station Museum - <http://russellks.org/attractions.html>>.

Hays

Fort Hays State Historic Site - http://www.kshs.org/fort_hays>.

Ellis County Historical Museum - <http://www.elliscountyhistoricalmuseum.org>>.

Ellis

Chrysler Boyhood Home Museum - <http://www.chryslerboyhoodhome.com>>.

Ellis Railroad Museum - <http://www.ellis.ks.us/rrmuseum.html>>

WaKeeney

Trego County Historical Society Museum - <http://tregohistorical.org>>.

Oakley

Fick Fossil and History Museum - <http://www.kansastravel.org/fickmuseum.htm>>

Russell Springs

Butterfield Trail Museum - <http://www.windyplains.com/butterfield>>.

Wallace

Fort Wallace Museum - <http://www.ftwallace.com>>.

Hugo

Hedlund House Museum - <http://www.ourjourney.info/MyJourneyDestinations/LincolnCountyMuseum.asp>>.

Kit Carson

Kit Carson Museum - <http://www.ourjourney.info/MyJourneyDestinations/KitCarsonMuseum.asp>>.

Limon

Limon Heritage Museum and Railroad Complex Park - <http://www.limonmuseum.com>>.

Kiowa

Elbert County Historical Museum - <http://www.elbertcountymuseum.org>>.

Aurora

Aurora History Museum - <https://www.auroragov.org/ThingsToDo/ArtsandCulture/AuroraHistoryMuseum/index>>.

Denver

Byers-Evans House Museum - <http://www.historycolorado.org/museums/byers-evans-housemuseum>>

Forney Museum of Transportation - <http://www.forneymuseum.org>>.

Four Mile Historic Park - <http://www.fourmilepark.org>>.

History Colorado Center - <http://www.historycolorado.org>>.

Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society - <http://www.cherrycreekvalleyhistoricalsociety.org>>.

Golden

Colorado Railroad Museum - <http://coloradorailroadmuseum.org>>.

PHOTOS FROM COLORADO CONFERENCE

(continued from page 1)



Bus tour members gather at the unusual Lester Drake monument in Riverside Cemetery in Denver.



Kiowa Museum

Joe Martell, president of the Elbert County Historical Society, detailed the new Smoky Hill Trail exhibit at their museum in Kiowa. This was the first stop on the Sunday car caravan.

TRAIL TREASURES

—DOCUMENTS—

Food Used by Travelers of the Oregon Trail

[The following article was submitted by Lem Marsh. It was originally printed in the St. Joseph, Missouri, Gazette, March 19, 1847.]

OUTFIT FOR OREGON

Mr. Editor; Subjoined you will find a list of the principle articles necessary for an outfit to Oregon or California, which may be useful to some of your readers. It has been carefully prepared from correct information derived from intelligent persons who have made the trip.

The wagons should be new, made of thoroughly

seasoned timber, and well ironed and not too heavy; with good tight beds, strong bows, and large double sheets. There should be at least four yoke of good oxen to each wagon – one yoke to be considered as extra, and to be used only in cases of emergency. Every family should have at least two good milk cows, as milk is a great luxury on the road.

The amount of provisions should be as follows; to each person except infants:

- 200 pounds of bread stuff (flour and crackers)
- 100 pounds of bacon
- 12 pounds of coffee
- 12 pounds of sugar

Each family should also take the following articles in proportions to the number as follows:

- From 1 to 5 pounds tea
- From 10 to 50 pounds rice
- From 1/2 to 2 bushels beans
- From 1/2 to 2 bushels dried fruit
- From 1/2 to 5 pounds saleratus (baking soda)
- From 5 to 50 pounds soap

Cheese, dried pumpkins, onions and a small portion of corn meal may be taken by those who desire them. The latter article, however, does not keep well.

No furniture should be taken, and as few cooking utensils as are indispensably needed. Every family ought to have a sufficient supply of clothing for at least one year after their arrival, as everything of that kind is high in those countries. Some few cattle should be driven for beef, but much loose stock will be a great annoyance. Some medicines should also be found in every family, the kind and quantity may be determined by consulting the family physician.

I would suggest to each family the propriety of taking a small sheet-iron cooking stove with fixtures, as the wind and rain often times renders it almost impossible to cook without them, they are light and cost but little. All the foregoing articles may be purchased on good terms in this place.

Kay Conn

• • • • •
Memoirs of Captain Richard Watkins Musgrove on the Smoky Hill Trail, 1865-1866: Part III

Musgrove's account picks up the story at Monument Station. He wrote:

At Monument we found one man belonging to the cavalry who had had his scalp taken by Indians. It seemed that a few days before our arrival two men were on the prairie hunting when they were fired on by Indians in hiding. One was killed outright and the other wounded. The wounded man feigned dead as the Indians, gloating over their fiendish work, came up. One Indian struck him on the spine with his tomahawk, but still he showed no signs of life. Then another passed his knife around the outskirts of his hair, and, with a quick, strong pull, stripped the scalp from his head, leaving the cranium entirely bare. Then they left him. After a little he got up and walked half way to the station, became bewildered, and going back, again laid down beside his dead

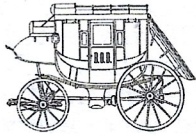
companion. In this position he was found later by comrades, taken to the station and his wounds dressed. Strange to say he was in a fair way to recovery when he took cold by his own carelessness and soon after died.

Preparations for the night were hastily made, a strong picket and guard stationed, and the men bivouacked for the night. Quiet had hardly rested on the encampment when the silence was broken by a picket calling, "Who comes there?" Every head was lifted from the knapsack pillow and every eye was turned toward an approaching object. "Halt," cried the picket, when, in response, the heavy bray of a mule sounded on the night air, and, paying no attention to the challenge, he trotted into camp. This mule had given out that day on the march and been abandoned, but rest and a few hours grazing had revived him and he concluded not to furnish a meal for the wolves.

Our camp was on the west bank of the Smoky Hill creek, a most erratic stream. At times, or at certain places, its waters were seen flowing over the bed of the stream; at other places the bed of the stream was on top and the waters beneath, making their way east through the sand. Extending to the north a mile or more was a stretch of rich bottom land covered with a rich growth of prairie grass, now dry. Beyond were the "monuments" from which the station took its name. These monuments appeared in the distance like a huge ruin. The water and winds had worn away the surrounding earth during the ages past, until the tops were fifty feet or more above the surrounding land, the walls being nearly perpendicular. These sides and tops resembled hard baked clay and contained the rude carvings of the red men. Near the base were strata of shells and other organic remains, showing that since the bed of the ocean had receded from here, fifty feet of earth had accumulated, and then the storms of untold centuries had worn away this same accumulation, leaving them in their present condition. On all sides bluffs and a rolling prairie limited the range of vision.

The next day after our arrival was spent in unloading the stores that were to be left here. During the day our number was augmented by the arrival, from the east, of a stage coach, containing General Brewster, the general superintendent of the eastern division of the Overland Dispatch company's line, R. A. Davis, a special artist for Harper's Weekly; a correspondent for the New York Times; and one or two other correspondents of New York papers. These correspondents were the guests of General Brewster and had come out here at his invitation to report on the beauties of this new line across the plains. They passed the night with us and then proceeded on their way to Denver, notwithstanding the experiences of the last few days with the Indians. Dr. Whipple, who was stationed at Pond Creek but who had come to Monument to dress the wounds of the man scalped by the Indians, had left Monument with General Brewster to return to Pond Creek. As they thus had a party of six or eight and were well armed, they thought themselves equal to any attack that would be made upon them.

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This party had been gone but an 'hour or so when Indians were again reported as being seen. Looking toward the east, with the aid of my glass, I saw, a mile or more distant, a body of Indians riding in a circle while, from inside the circle, was seen an occasional puff of smoke. This said that white men were there surrounded by Indians, and making a fight for their lives. These facts were reported to Capt. Strout, who hastily took a portion of his company and went on the double quick to the scene of action, and he arrived none too soon. The party consisted of two men, employees of the Overland Co., in a buggy. They had been attacked an hour before and had kept the red men at bay in a running fight, but just west of the spot where Capt. Strout rescued them, and between them and us, was a deep ravine through which the party must pass and here, without doubt, they would have fallen victims to the savages. Indeed, when Capt. Strout arrived at the ravine, the Indians had already commenced to dispose of themselves there, ready for the attack when the party should arrive.

Baffled in their attack on this party, many of the savages turned their attention to the herd of mules feeding near the river. Anticipating this movement I had taken a portion of my company and gone on the double quick to the relief of the 'herders. It was a race for the mules if not a race for life between us and the Indians. The Indians were mounted and we were not, so they had the better of the race and reached the vicinity of the herd first. It was then or never, so I gave the order to fire and the boys promptly dropped on their knees, raised the sights of their muskets at one thousand yards' range and sent a shower of cold lead into the dusky savages. The result was highly satisfactory, and to veterans of the hard fought battles of Virginia extremely ludicrous. The savages instantly whirled, threw themselves on the sides of the ponies farthest from us and were off with even greater speed than they had come. When out of range they stopped, and the attention given one or two of

their number indicated that the bullets had done some execution.

The mules were driven to camp and secured, and this was done none too soon, for the Indians increased in numbers rapidly. They seemed to come from every direction, and soon surrounded our encampment, but although they outnumbered us four to one they did not dare make a stand-up fight. Occasionally they would make a dash as though about to sweep all before them, and then as soon as they came within easy range of our rifles would turn and make a hasty retreat. At times they appeared on every side and then, without any apparent reason, every Indian would disappear and none would be seen for half an hour. At one time when no Indians were in sight a black bear was seen slowly making his way through the grass. Some of my men were anxious to go out and shoot it, but this I did not allow, a ruse being suspected. I watched this "animal" with my glass and finally saw it rise and walk off on two feet.

Thus the hours wore away till the latter part of the afternoon when, failing to entice us from camp, they sought to burn us out. The tall dry grass on the bottom spoken of before was set on fire on the west which, fanned by a strong western wind, burned with great fury, rolling up great volumes of black smoke. But fire must be met with fire, so a fire was set by us to meet theirs, and some of the men, armed with empty grain sacks, prevented the flames from running into camp, while the rest stood ready to meet the wily savages should they come down upon us under cover of the smoke. Our fire met theirs and no damage was done.

(continued next issue)

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