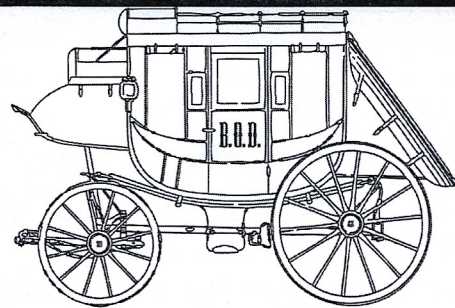


OVERLAND DESPATCH



Volume XII No. I

Remember the Smoky Hill Trail

Fall 2019

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Greetings from the officers and directors of the Smoky Hill Trail Association. Your officers and directors have been busy putting final touches on the 13th annual conference to be held October 18 – 20 at Fort Wallace, Kansas. If you have not already registered, please do so today.

A registration form was included in the prior Overland Dispatch newsletter and can be found on the association's website. The conference kicks off on the afternoon of Friday, October 18 with a bus tour lead by Mike Baughn to the German family massacre site, Smoky Valley Ranch, and other places of interest. The day concludes with a tour of Fort Wallace cemetery.

If you are unable to join us on Friday, please do so for Saturday and Sunday. The scheduled programs are outstanding and diverse. Topics range from personalities at the Fort, events occurring on or around Fort Wallace, the life and culture of the native people in the area, and a look into some prehistoric life around the Fort prior to human civilization.

The theme of the conference is "Fort Wallace – The Fightin'est Fort on the Smoky Hill Trail". We wish to give a special thanks to Jerry Thomas, a western artist, who has graciously permitted us to use images of some of his artwork for promotion of the conference and our association.

This year's conference is dedicated to the memory and spirit of Dr. Elton Beougher, who

passed just months after assisting with the replacement of some BOD posts and attending our annual conference in Manhattan. He was a man of many talents and interests and your association's past president.

It is a one step process to both register for the conference and renew your membership. The conference registration form includes a membership renewal option. If you are unable to join us at the annual conference, please do take the time now to renew your membership in the association. The conference registration form can be used for membership renewal only by completing the items under 1 and 3 and mailing the form with your

payment to address shown on the form. Our association membership year is the calendar year so that for all members, other than life members, renewal dues are due January 1, 2020.

The officers and directors of your association look forward to seeing you at the annual conference.

Next Stop Fort Wallace!
Ken Cole, President
Smoky Hill Trail Association



EXCITING NEWS FOR CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

This year the Smoky Hill Trail Association is honored to be offering two beautiful 18" x 24" posters by western artist, Jerry Thomas of Jerry Thomas Gallery and Collection.

One poster will be Jerry's well-known pairing "Get 'em Boys," which commemorates the June 26, 1867 battle between U.S. Seventh Cavalry troops and Cheyenne Indians, near Fort Wallace, Kansas. Captain Albert Barnitz and his bugler, Edward Botzer, are seen urging the men forward towards the attacking Cheyenne. In the ensuing battle, six soldiers were killed and six wounded.

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 the 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 can be sent via email to the newsletter editor at <rjwilh@gmail.com> or via USPS at **Smoky Hill Trail Association, PO Box 978, Hays KS 67601**. 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**, at the address above. Other donations are always welcome.

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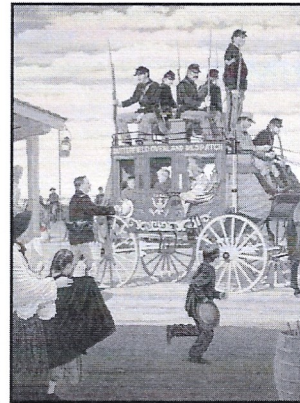
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Shortly thereafter, their comrades dedicated a A monument in their honor. The monument still stands today in the Fort Wallace



Memorial Cemetery, more than 140 years after the battle. The second poster, "Farewell", depicts a cavalry officer bidding his family "farewell", as friends and onlookers watch the departure of the Butterfield Overland Despatch stagecoach at Fort Wallace, Kansas. Fort Wallace was founded in 1865, to guard the Smoky Hill Trail, protecting westward migrants from Indian attacks, as settlements encroached upon Native American hunting grounds. The military post helped to secure the peace and witnessed the coming of the railroad to the Plains and the West.

Jerry will be available at the conference for signing these special masterpieces. To see his other works, please visit:

<https://www.jerrythomasartgallery.com>

Dee Saddler 

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

The editor welcomes any articles, comments, or suggestions to be included in the next or any subsequent editions of the Overland Despatch.

To be included in the December issue, please have admissions to the editor no later than **November 30, 2019**. It is requested that your submissions be sent to the newsletter editor either by US mail or E-mail by that date (addresses in box on page two). Thank you.

Bob Wilhelm
 Editor



PROPOSED AMENDMENT CHANGE VOTE DUE AT UPCOMING CONFERENCE

Some overdue business needs to be taken care of during the annual conference at Fort Wallace. It involves a change in the Bylaws of our Association that should have been taken care of in 2017 but was inadvertently missed. Below is a review of the amendment as provided by our treasurer Danny Lattin.

EXCERPT FROM OLD BUSINESS AT SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION (SmHTA) BOARD MEETING, AUGUST 13, 2016

“OLD BUSINESS

Danny Lattin presented a proposed amendment to the Bylaws of the Smoky Hill Trail Association to: AMEND PARAGRAPH D, SECTION 3, ARTICLE VI, A PARAGRAPH ADDRESSING TIMING FOR THE INSTALLATION/ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE FOR NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT: “EACH OFFICER AND DIRECTOR ELECTED SHALL TAKE OFFICE ON THE FIRST (1ST) DAY OF JANUARY FOLLOWING CONCLUSION OF THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP BUSINESS MEETING. THESE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS SHALL HOLD OFFICE UNTIL THE THIRTY-FIRST (31ST) DAY OF DECEMBER FOLLOWING CONCLUSION OF THE MEMBERSHIP MEETING WHEN THEIR TERM EXPIRES AND A SUCCESSOR SHALL HAVE BEEN DULY ELECTED, OR UNTIL DEATH, RESIGNATION, OR REMOVAL IN THE MANNER HEREINAFTER PROVIDED. THE NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND, WITHOUT VOTING PRIVILEGES, ALL BOARD MEETINGS

HELD BETWEEN THE MEETING AT WHICH THEY ARE ELECTED AND THE FIRST (1ST) DAY OF JANUARY WHEN THEY TAKE OFFICE.”

RATIONALE:

1. All officers and directors will assume responsibilities of their elected position and complete their term of office in the same fiscal year calendar as the SmHTA, e.g. January 1 through December 31 of each calendar year.

2. This will smooth the transition of responsibilities for the newly elected officers and directors, especially the office of Treasurer.

3. This amendment will provide at least one SmHTA Board meeting for the newly elected officers and directors to become better knowledgeable about their responsibilities.

It is proposed that this amendment will take effect immediately upon passage by vote of a majority of Association members at the SmHTA business meeting scheduled at the Annual Conference in October, 2016.

Motion by Kay Homewood, seconded by Danny Lattin, to present this amendment to the membership for adoption at the Annual Membership meeting at the 2016 Annual Smoky Hill Trail Conference to be held in Hays, Kansas, October 14, 2016. Motion carried.”

All Association members in attendance at our annual membership meeting at Fort Wallace will be able to discuss this amendment, if necessary, and should be prepared to cast their vote as to whether to accept or reject the amendment. It is being published in this newsletter in accordance with our Bylaws which state that all proposed amendments need to be announced or published for the benefit of all members, “not less than 30 or more than 60” days before the membership meeting. Since the membership general meeting will take place on the evening of Sunday, October 19, 2019, this means that you should each receive this notice prior to September 19.

Thank you for your attention to his matter.

The Smoky Hill Trail Association Board



Note from the Despatch Editor: In the Bayard article that appeared in our last issue of the newsletter, I neglected to indicate the date it was originally published in the Junction City Union. It originally appeared in the July 28, 1866 issue. Your editor regret the error. The following companion article appeared in the August 4, 1866 issue of the same newspaper.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM BAYARD TAYLOR

His Trip Across the Plains to Denver.

Correspondence of the N.Y. Tribune.
Denver, C.T., June 18, 1866

At Fort Ellsworth I was informed that the military station between Fossil Creek and Big Creek had been discontinued; yet this is not the case. Toward sunset the driver handed me a mail bag, asking me to pick out the letters for Fort Fletcher, the name given to this post, and the assortment had scarcely been made, before the coach was surrounded by a crowd of soldiers (apparently new recruits,) [sic] clamoring vociferously, first for tobacco and then for newspapers. It was difficult to decide which want was the keener. I gave them what cigars I had in my pocket, but was destitute of papers, and could only inform them that the Fenians had not yet taken Montreal. I felt no less disappointed than the poor fellows themselves, that I could not better supply their wants.

My companions were no less interested than myself in the projected railroad routes to Colorado, and we therefore scanned the Smoky Hill Valley from every elevation, with regard to two considerations—settlement and railroad ties. So far, everything was favorable. The Smoky Hill was everywhere marked by a line of timber, and we noticed that at each junction with its numerous affluents, there were large groves. The bluffs on the

southern side were frequently covered to their summits, with a growth of red cedar. All the bottom land is exceedingly rich and well adapted for farming, while the broad, rolling uplands furnish the finest pasturage in the world. Near Big Creek, coal has been found, and there are also rumors of tin and copper. With sufficient force the road may extend from Fort Riley to Big Creek in a years time, and carry permanent settlement with it.

At Big Creek station, which we reached after dark, we took on board Mr. Scott, the Superintendent of the Middle Division of the road. There was still no moon, and, fortunately, no musketoes [sic] also. The night was fresh, yet scarcely cool enough to require the blankets I had procured for the journey. Half-asleep and half-awake, now lulled into slumber by the slowness of our progress, now bumped into angry wakefulness in crossing some deep



Bayard Taylor, 1877



Fort Fletcher (sketch by Theodore Davis)

gully, we dragged through the night, and in the morning found ourselves at Downer's, 44 miles further. Here an empty coach had just arrived from Denver, the third I had met going eastward without passengers. The Colorado people, it seems, are still afraid of this route.

Our breakfast here was another "square meal"—pork fat and half-baked biscuits. At all the stations the people complained of lack of supplies: some were destitute of all but beans. They gave us what they had, and we were very willing to pay a dollar rather than go hungry; but one would naturally suppose that where a stage goes, decent food can be transported. As there is but one change of teams at the stations, we were obliged to take the same mules which had just arrived from Cornell Springs, 20 miles further: hence our progress was very slow and discouraging. On arriving there a second tired team was harnessed to carry us 30 miles to Monument Station; so that we lost full four hours during the day's journey.

The driver of the down coach informed us that the Cheyennes had appeared at Monument Station the day before, but they had committed no depredations, and appeared to be friendly. The chief had even invited him, on account of his red hair, to join their tribe. Mr. Scott, however, who has had eight years' experience of the Indians of the Plains, seemed to place little faith in their professions. They are reported to have declared that they must and will retain the Smoky Hill country, as it is the best range for game between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains.

From the first rise after leaving Downer's, we saw, far away to the right, a long range of chalk bluffs, shining against a background of dark blue cloud. They seemed like a stretch of the southern coast of England, breasting the rolling green ocean of the Plains. Over great swells, covered with the short sweet buffalo grass, and starred with patches of crimson anemone, pink verbena, unknown orange and salmon red flowers, we drove for two hours, watching the isolated towers and fantastic masses of rock detach themselves from the line of the bluff. They assumed the strangest and most unexpected forms. Here was a feudal castle of the Middle Ages; there a shattered, irregular obelisk, or broken pyramid; and finally rising alone from

the level of a meadow, we beheld three perpendicular towers, 80 feet high, resting on a common base. The crests were of a bright orange hue, fading downward into white. Beyond them extended the shattered battlements of a city, sparkling in the sunshine. The blue ridges beyond the Smoky Hill, ten miles away, formed the background of this remarkable picture.

The green of the plains here began to be varied with belts of dark purple, which we found to be what is called "bunch grass," a very fine and wiry growth, but said to be excellent forage. At a distance it resembled the heather bloom on the English moors. Over these brilliant green and purple tints, the snowy fortresses of chalk started up with a dazzling effect. There is not the least approach to monotony in the scenery of the Plains—but continual, inspiring change.

We were to have another new experience that day. Our route, for some distance lay over an elevated plateau, around which for an hour or two, dark thunder-clouds collected. Out of one of these dropped a curtain of rain, gray in the centre, but of an intense [*sic*] indigo hue at the edges. It slowly passed us on the north, split, from one minute to another, by streaks of vivid rose colored lightning, followed by deafening [*sic*] detonating peals, when, just as we seemed to have escaped, it suddenly wheeled and burst upon us.

It was like a white squall on a tropic sea. We had not lowered the canvass [*sic*] curtains of the coach before a dam gave way over our heads, and a torrent of mingled wind, rain, hail and thunder overwhelmed us. The driver turned his mules as far as possible away from the wind, and stopped; the coach rocked and reeled as if about to overturn; the hail smote like volleys of musketry, and in less than fifteen minutes the whole plain lay four inches under water. I have never witnessed anything even approaching the violence of this storm: it was a marvel that the mules escaped with their lives. The bullets of hail were nearly as large as pigeons' eggs and the lightning played around us like a succession of Bengal fires. We laid the rifles in the bottom of the coach, and for half an hour sat in silence, holding down the curtain, and expecting every moment to be overturned. Then the tornado suddenly took breath, commenced again twice or thrice, and ceased as suddenly as it came.

For a short time the road was a swift stream and the tufts of buffalo grass rose out of an inundated plain, but the water soon found its level and our journey was not delayed, as we had cause to fear. Presently Mr. Scott

descried a huge rattlesnake, and we stopped the coach and jumped out. The rattles were too wet to give any sound, and the snake endeavored to escape. A German frontiersman who was with us, fired a revolver which stunned rather than wounded the reptile. Then, poisoning a knife, he threw it with such a secure aim that the snake's head was pinned to the earth. Cutting off the rattles, which I appropriated, we did him no further injury.

Monument Station is so called from a collection of quadrangular chalk towers, which rise directly from the plain. At first sight, they resemble

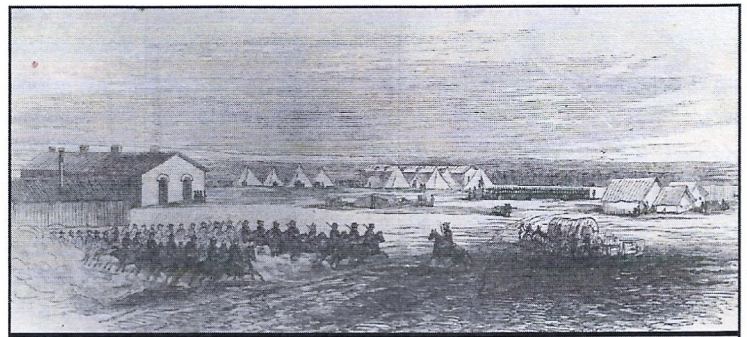


Approaching Monument Rocks (from *Kansas Memory*)

a deserted city, with huge bastioned walls; but on a nearer approach they departed into detached masses, some of which resemble colossal sitting statues. It is almost impossible to divest one's mind of the impression that these are the remains of human art. The station house is built of large blocks, cut out with a hatchet and cemented with raw clay. Here we found stoneware instead of pewter, although the viands were about as "square" as those at the preceding stations. The Indians had not again made their appearance. They professed to have a camp four or five miles further down the Smoky Hill, and I was a little disappointed that, after so many rumors and warnings, I was likely to get over the Plains without seeing a single redskin.

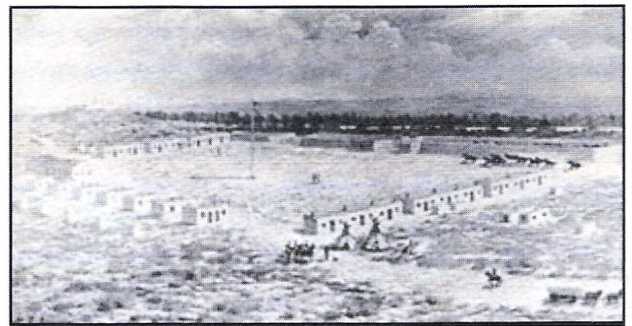
During this day's journey we kept more away from the Smoky Hill, but we still saw, from time to time, its line of timber and cedared bluffs in

distance. Near Monument Station we found it much diminished in volume, but with good arable bottom lands. Up to this point, 250 miles west of Fort Riley, we could not detect the least impediment to the construction of a railroad. Nor was there yet any indication of the Great American Desert. We had now shorter stations for some distance, and made the distance to Pond Creek, 46 miles, by 2 o'clock in the morning. It was scarcely possible to sleep, and yet we are too much fatigued to keep entirely awake. I have an indistinct impression that there was a two story frame house at Pond Creek, and that we were delayed there an hour or two. I know that Mr. Scott informed us as he took leave that we were 225



Fort Wallace, 1867

miles from Denver. At this point there is a new military post called Fort Wallace. Fort Lyon, on the Arkansas, is



Fort Lyon, Colorado

but 45 miles distant, in a south western direction, and the road thence to Santa Fe is about 400 miles further. If the Eastern Branch of the Pacific Railroad should follow the Smoky Hill route (which is certainly the shortest and most practicable,) [*sic*] Pond Creek will probably become for a while, the starting point of New Mexican travel and traffic.

We reached Willow Springs, 18 miles by sunrise. A forlorn place it was! The station men lived in holes

cut out of a high clay bank, and their mules had similar half subterranean lodgings. I saw no provisions, and they said they could give us no breakfast. The team was speedily changed, and we set out for Cheyenne Wells, 25 miles distant through a country more nearly approaching barrenness than any we had yet seen. The timber almost entirely disappeared; the lateral streams ceased and finally the Smoky Hill itself, now so near its source, became a bed of waterless sand. Still there was buffalo grass everywhere, and the antelopes were very abundant. The fresh, delicious air of the Plains—only equalled by that of the African Desert—refreshed us after the wearisome night and our appetites became keen with enforced fasting.

At Cheyenne Wells we found large and handsome frame stable for the mules, but no dwelling. The people lived in a natural cave, extending for some thirty feet under the bluff. But there was a woman, and when we saw her, we augured good fortune. Truly enough, under the roof of conglomerate rock, in the cave twilight, we sat down to antelope steak, tomatoes, bread, pickles and potatoes—a royal meal after two days of detestible [*sic*] fare. Here we saw the last of the Smoky Hill Fork. The road strikes across a broad plateau for twenty miles, and then descends to the Big Sandy, a branch of the Arkansas. It is a fine, hard, natural highway, over which we made good time. The country swarmed with antelopes, which provoked several shots from the coach, but without effect. Two of them, to our surprise, appeared to be pursuing a large gray wolf. They made boldly after it as often as it stopped, and appeared bent on driving it quite away from their pasturage. While we were speculating on their movements, a lovely little fawn sprang up from the grass and made away over the hills. The old antelopes were evidently its parents, and their boldness in facing and intimidating the wolf was now explained.

From the western edge of the watershed, we overlooked many a league of brown, monotonous, treeless country, through which meandered, not the waters, but the dry, sandy bed of the Big Sandy. We really seemed to have reached at last the Great American Desert. At the stage station we found two men living in a hole in the ground with nothing but alkaline water to offer

us. I tasted it, and finding the flavor not disagreeable, drank—which brought later woe upon me. Beyond this point even the buffalo grass died and we rolled along in the burning sun and acrid dust, over dreary gray undulations of weeds and cactus. At Grady's station, 18 miles further, there was but one man, a lonely troglodyte, burrowing in the bank like a cliff swallow.

Very soon, however, the grass began to appear again, the country became green, and the signs of desolation vanished. A distance of 49 miles embraced all we had seen of the Desert—in fact, all there was of it, upon this route. In these 40 miles, a scattered settlement, here and there, is not impossible, but is very unlikely. The adjoining country, for 100 miles, both to the east and west, is adapted to grazing, and will support a moderate population. The road, however, will soon be carried through from Cheyenne Wells up the divide, entirely avoiding the Big Sandy. This new route, I am told, shortens the distance to Denver by 20 miles and has good grass and water all the way.

Toward evening I was struck with a peculiar tint in the shadow of a cloud along the horizon. After half an hour's study, I pronounced it to be a mountain—and, of course, Pike's Peak. My fellow travelers dissented at first, from this opinion, but as the clouds dissolved, the outlines of a snowy peak came out sharp and clear. It was something like that of the Jungfrau, but stood alone, surrounded by no sisterhood of Alps. At sunset we saw not only Pike's Peak, but the tops of the Sangre de Cristo range and the Spanish Peaks, like little pimples on the line of the horizon.

What a night followed! The hard "hack" bumped and jolted over the rough roads; we were flung backward and forward, right and left, pummeled, pounded and bruised not only out of sleep, but out of temper, and into pain and exasperation. At 1 o'clock yesterday morning we were at Hedinger's Lake, 97 miles from Denver. I thanked Heaven that no fifth night in the coach awaited me. The hours dragged on with incredible



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slowness, until dawn brought some refreshment, showing us a country of high hills, occasional pine groves, and far, flashing snowy mountains.

Before sunset we drove into Denver—
but of the last days ride, to-morrow! [sic]

B.T.



SPORTS ON THE TRAIL

Association member Mark Eberle has some great news to pass along to our membership:
“Forsyth Library just posted one of my baseball monographs online. It describes the baseball games played by the troopers of the Seventh U.S. Cavalry in Kansas from 1868 to 1870. Most of the games were played when the regiment was deployed along the Smoky Hill Trail and the growing Union Pacific, Eastern Division Railway. I also reprinted all of the box scores available in newspapers of the period. For those with a general interest in the Seventh Cavalry, I listed all of their known games through 1875, which includes games in the South and in the Dakota Territory.

This is an open access pdf file that anyone can download and is a public service of Forsyth Library. The direct link to the monograph is:

https://scholars.fhsu.edu/all_monographs/12/

The full list of the 14 monographs on baseball history is available at:

<https://works.bepress.com/mark-eberle/>

Perhaps not surprisingly, the one I wrote about the Dwight Eisenhower baseball “controversy” is the most popular. They are all free to download. If you have any questions, just contact me at my e-mail meberle@fhsu.edu.”

Mark teaches in the Department of Biological Sciences at Fort Hays State University. He authored the book “Kansas Baseball 1858-1941.” Not only is this a wonderful history of the National Pastime in Kansas but he describes nine parks in Kansas where “the game is still played on some of the oldest diamonds in the country.”

Mark is also the co-author of “Kansas Fishes” and “Fishes of the Central United States.”

