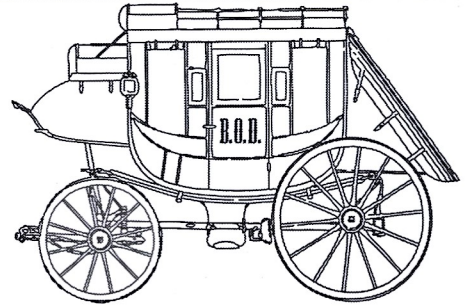


# OVERLAND DESPATCH



Volume XI No. I

*Remember the Smoky Hill Trail*

Fall 2018

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

As this is my first newsletter during the term of my office, I want to briefly introduce myself. My wife, Jaynell, and I live in Russell, Kansas. I am a practicing attorney. (Yes, it is true, attorneys say they are practicing until they get it right.) My wife is retired. We have 3 grown children who have left home, and thankfully 1 dog who has stayed home. We were introduced to the association by Kay Homewood.

As you may recall I was elected vice-president at our last annual meeting. During the course of the year our President, Jim Mayew, resigned as President which pushed me into this position. While it was unexpected and a little overwhelming, I am excited and proud to be the President of the Association.

I believe, as I trust each of you do, that the strength of an association lies in its members and will only be as strong and as meaningful as its members make it. We are blessed with excellent officers and board members, but I believe I speak for each of them in saying that each of you, the members of the association, has made, and will continue to make the Smoky Hills Trails Association what it is.

With that I welcome, encourage and look forward to seeing each and every one of you at our annual conference in Manhattan, Kansas. The conference is scheduled to begin in the afternoon of Friday, October 19, and run through the morning of Sunday, October 21. The primary location for the conference will be at the Kansas State University Student Union Building on the Kansas State campus.

Plans are underway for a tour Friday afternoon with programs all day Saturday and on Sunday morning. The annual banquet and annual

meeting is scheduled for Saturday evening in the Flint Hills Room at the Kansas State Student Union.

If you are not familiar with the campus, the student union is on the south edge of the campus close to the alumni center and old memorial stadium. There is a public parking garage next to the same.

At the time this letter is being written we do not yet have the registration and brochures published, but will be uploading them to our website as soon as they are available. We will also mail them out to all members.

Please visit frequently our website at [www.smokyhilltrail.com](http://www.smokyhilltrail.com) for any updates and posting of materials. Arrangements have been made with some local hotels for a special room rate for the conference; however, the deadline for making those reservations is Wednesday, September 19, 2018. The hotels are listed on our website.

The theme of the annual conference is "Smoky Hill Trail Rendezvous at the Island of Many Hills." (The word *Manhattan* is from the Muncee Indian tribe meaning "Island of many hills.") Please join us in Manhattan, Kansas for our conference as well as the opportunity to explore the sights and attractions of KSU campus and the city of Manhattan.

Ken Cole, President

Smoky Hill Trail Association

REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL!



## REPORT ON THE BOD POST REPLACEMENT/REPAIR PROJECT

By

Elton E. Beougher

Approximately two years ago the SmHTA Board initiated a project to improve the condition of the markers that locate the Smoky Hill Trail west from Ellsworth County to the Kansas/Colorado state line. The original posts were placed by Howard Raynesford of Ellis, Kansas, in the mid-1960s. During the ensuing 50-some years some posts



**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](mailto: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.

**President:**

Ken Cole, Russell, Kansas

**Secretary:**

Mike Baughn, Brewster, Kansas

**Treasurer:**

Danny Lattin, Lawrence, Kansas

**Newsletter Editor:**

Robert Wilhelm, Hays, Kansas

**Directors:**

Dorothy "Dee" Saddler, Sharon, Kansas

Michael Hook, Abilene, Kansas

Deb Goodrich, Oakley, Kansas

have been broken off by encounters with road maintenance equipment or farm machinery, some have disappeared to other locations (as yard art or by persons who decided that Raynesford put some posts at incorrect locations), and some have fallen over, partly or completely. The project to restore Raynesford's markers is now underway. This is an update on the progress of this task.

A decision of the Board was made to restore the posts to the original locations that Raynesford chose. Leaning posts still standing or those which have fallen over completely will be restored to upright position at the original site. The replacement of missing posts will be at locations that we can be confident are as close as possible to Raynesford's determination. We will use all items of information that we can access – Raynesford's original maps (these mark locations of his posts), aerial and satellite photos, the original GLO surveyor's notes, a survey of the entire route done in the early 2000s by Mark Eberle, member of the Association, and on-site observations of extant trail ruts. As an item of information, Howard Raynesford convinced the Kansas Legislature to pass a bill that approved his project. This included the positioning of the posts at the locations he determined to be the proper ones. Other persons have indicated that they know where the trail was located and have taken it upon themselves to "correct" Howard's mistakes. To reiterate, we are restoring Howard Raynesford's marking of the trail, as approved by the Kansas Legislature.



I might describe the process we follow. First, we survey the trail and Raynesford's markers in a county. We establish the locations and conditions of markers, on-site. Then we contact county road officials to inform them of the project, to enlist their cooperation. They have been very helpful. Next, I call the Kansas One-Call service to notify the various utilities which have underground lines that we need to avoid. They place flags marking the positions of their lines. Then we begin the field work. We can straighten a leaning post in about 30 minutes. Replacement of a missing post requires approximately one hour. If you, the reader, have examined one of the extant posts, you will have seen the base that Howard placed around each post. He put a concrete "plaque" on the base that gives details of the significance of the Smoky Hill Trail, its history, etc. Members Mike and Sandy Sprague have furnished us with Howard's original form for this plaque, which we use to replicate his original design. As a final touch a metal plaque will be attached to each post on the reverse side from the BOD



carved in the post. This plaque will identify the donor(s) and the persons honored by the gift of the post. I will then notify the donor(s) of the location of their post.

The crew that has been working on this project includes a number of members of the Association. Included are Leo Oliva, Danny Lattin, Jerry Grant, Lem Marsh, Ken Griffin, and I. Others are in line to be called upon as we progress. The work is progressing as weather, and the availability of workers, permits. I am happy to report that the restoration has been completed in Russell County. Next will be the counties of Ellis, Trego, Gove, Logan, Wallace and Ellsworth.

We sure could use some help with the project as we move on. If anyone is interested in participating in the replacement/restoring of posts they may contact me at [eebeougher@fhsu.edu](mailto:eebeougher@fhsu.edu). It would help in scheduling if those interested would provide me with days in September and October that they are available to work and the county or counties in which they would like to participate. Our experience so far suggests that 4 or 5 days are needed to complete the actual work in a county. That is, after I survey a county and determine the locations of missing posts and leaning posts. If someone wishes also to help in this process, I would welcome them. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Be assured that the labor is not extremely hard. I can handle it at the age of 78 years!!

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the donation of stone posts for this project by Robert and Lila Schmitt of rural Russell County. Thank you to all the supporters of the goals of the Smoky Hill Trail Association and, particularly, the named individuals. A final bit of information that might interest the reader is the fact that the stone cutters who carved the posts for Raynesford are still in business and they still have the original design and means to carve the new ones. They, and I, were delighted to repeat the service!



Leo Oliva (L)  
and Elton after  
setting a post

## TO PIKE'S PEAK AND DENVER

By Thomas W. Knox

*(Editor's note: Although some of the language in this article is not "politically correct" by today's standards and downright bigoted in some cases, in the interest of historical accuracy, it is being reprinted here as it appeared in its original form as published in "Knickerbocker" magazine, v. 58, no. 2, August 1861.)*

Reader, were you ever at Pike's Peak? If you have visited the auriferous and Indian-iferous [sic] region, where whiskey and white men, sure evidences of civilization, have but recently been introduced, you may read these pages to learn how the author's experience compares with your own. If you have. unwisely staid at home when 'out west' is a land covered knee-deep with huge 'nuggets,' you may now, without leaving your sofa or easy-chair, journey with me seven hundred miles over the 'sea of grass and sand' between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains, to the Central Dorado of our continent. Packing up a few rough garments, among which wollen [sic] shirts form the most important item, we bid adieu to Lucy and the children, and betake ourselves to one of the several out-fitting points on the Missouri river [sic]. Omaha, St. Joseph, Atchison, Leavenworth and Kansas City, will each be represented by interested property-holders, as better than all the others combined. As St. Joseph is at present the terminus of the farthest and most direct western railroad, (the Hannibal and St. Joseph,) and can furnish every thing needed on a Pike Peak's trip, it has a slight advantage over its rivals. The question now is, not the common-place one, 'How do you do?' but 'How do you go?' As we would cross the plains in the shortest possible time, we book ourselves at the office of the 'Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company,' where we find the affable and genial Jo Roberson, ready to give any desired information. The coaches of this line make trip-weekly trips to and from Denver, and accomplish the distance in a little less than six days. They travel day and night, stopping for about an hour at each of the thirty-two 'stations,' where the teams are changed, and the passengers furnished with 'wittles.' [sic] Novices generally dread the fatigue of this journey, and are solicitous about the sleeping question; but after a day out, nature asserts herself, and one finds his sleep as sound, sweet and refreshing, when sitting bolt upright in a rapidly-moving vehicle, as when wrapped in the drapery of his couch, and reclining on the softest of downy pillows. Commend me to





the 'Central Overland' whenever I cross the plains.

Another mode of travel is with a stout but light carriage, or ambulance, drawn by mules—these animals being far better than horses for service on the plains. If this mode is selected, you will camp out at night, and be obliged to keep careful watch over your animals, to prevent gentlemen with confused ideas of *meum* and *tuum* [sic] appropriating them to their own use and behoof. Many an emigrant, neglecting this precaution, has waked in the morning and found his wagon minus motive-power,, and himself feeling as much akin to an ass as any of the four-footed beasts of which he had been deprived. The pleasures of sleeping on the ground, with a blanket for a covering, will here be yours. After a day's travel you will find the bosom of Mother Earth a welcome resting-place, and will fall asleep before you can count a hundred stars. In the morning, shake well your blanket before folding it, for the plains and Pike's Peak, like poverty, acquaint one with strange bed-fellows. On several occasions descendants of the celebrity that beguiled Mother Eve have shared my couch, and been with me in my slumbers. Wolves will come quite near—near enough to steal the boots of a sound sleeper—but they will offer no indignity to his person. As these animals have confused notions of the Eighth Commandment, it is well to secure all eatables before retiring for the night. If you do not, farewell to that ten-pound ham you threw under the wagon, and supposed would be 'all right' in the morning. 'Blessings brighten as they take their flight,' and you now prize cold bacon better than ten hours ago.

In crossing the plains in this manner, you will be initiated into the mysteries of the *cuisine*—making bread, frying bacon and griddle-cakes, decocting tea and coffee, and washing the dishes. Sometimes you will find yourself destitute of water, an article generally considered indispensable in performing the last-mentioned operation. Never mind—plates can be washed (excuse the term) with a handful of dirt, and two or three wisps of grass, so clean that they can be used for mirrors; knives and forks by thrusting them into the ground a few times, and wiping them on the grass. What house-wife would have dreamed of such a cleansing process?

I have not done with the various styles of travel in the free-and-easy west. There is the slow but sure method, where you pay a stipulated sum for the privilege of walking all the way behind an ox-wagon, boarding at and lodging under the aforesaid vehicle. The passenger has as good a bed as his blanket will make; and a leisurely, and, if not varied by an occasional fight, a somewhat monotonous trip of from forty to fifty-five days.

Then there is the mode independent; where you take your outfit in a hand-cart, or on your back, and trudge along at your own pace. You have an advantage over the express, for that is required to 'make time,' and you are not. You are better off than those who travel by ambulance, for their mules may be stolen while you can lie down at night, soliloquizing as did the ancient darkey; [sic] 'Blessed am dem what haint got noffin, for dey shan't lose it.' You can look with scorn upon the ox-teams, for they must camp and 'noon' where there are grass and water, while you can snap your fingers at such necessities, and stop when and where you like.

Having completed our preparations, we leave St. Joseph, called 'St. Jo,' by the Westerners; and, like the Star of Empire, take our way westward. For a few miles we find the road rough and hilly, after which we strike the open prairie. It is of the kind known in the west as 'rolling,' differing from the almost dead level of Illinois, and a few other States, in having a succession of ridges from a quarter to half-a-mile apart. Bryant's lines are admirable descriptive of the view before us:

'Prairies, gardens of the desert!

Lo! They stretch in airy undulations far away,

As if the ocean in his gentlest swell

Stood still, with all his rounded billows

Fixed and motionless forever.'

Thus is the whole distance of two hundred and eighty miles from St. Joseph to Fort Kearney—a gentle ascent of a quarter to half a mile, and then a corresponding descent, its regularity broken occasionally by a creek or a river. In May and June the road is alive with an almost continuous caravan, moving westward. Here is a train of twenty-six wagons, twenty-five of them laden with merchandise, and the remaining one carrying the provision for the *attaches* of the train. Five yoke of oxen is the motive power for each wagon, and these are urged forward by a 'bull-whacker,' armed with a whip, carrying a lash from six to twelve feet in length, which makes its mare wherever it falls. When the train halts, it 'goes into corral,' that is the wagons are placed so as to inclose an oval space, with an opening at one end. When the cattle are to yoked, they are driven into this *corral*, and a chain is stretched across the entrance to keep them



within. In case of an attack by Indians, the corral makes an excellent barricade; from such a temporary fortress, many a 'red-skin' has received his death-wound. Here are wagons with families, and wagons without families. Here is a sorry-looking team with a load of provisions and mining outfits, and a dozen sorrier-looking followers on foot. The canvas wagon-cover is labeled: 'Pike's Peak or Bust.' Three months hence it may bear in addition the words: 'Busted, by Thunder.' Here is a squad of footmen, and just in advance for men harnessed to a hand-cart, and past them all rolls gracefully along one of the Central Overland coaches. Soon a clatter of hoofs is heard, and 'the Pony,' bearing letters that are to reach San-Francisco in twelve days, sweeps gayly by; passing alike pedestrian, ox-wagon, ambulance and coach. 'Make ten miles an hour, or kill a pony!' is the order given to each rider, and it is faithfully obeyed. Two hundred and eighty miles have been made by this line in twenty-four hours.

Such is a picture of the road from St. Joseph to Denver, on almost any day in the months of the spring migration. It is an almost unbroken line of wagons and pedestrians for the entire distance. In the variety of outfits, the grotesque costumes of the emigrants, the inscriptions upon the wagons, the appearance of the teams, the woe-begun aspect of the weary walkers, and the complacency of those who ride, the rough and unpresentable *tout ensemble* of the few women to be seen—in all these there is sufficient to give the lover of the ludicrous constant enjoyment. But anon there may be a serious side to the picture. How many in that living panorama will enjoy the realization of their golden dreams? How many, now so joyous, will return at the approach of winter, cursing the day they started on that weary journey? How many will lie down to their long rest where fall the mountain shadows? How many a youth who left the paternal roof, our and innocent, will return hardened and corrupted by contact with this semi-barbaric life? What deeds of crime, what suffering and penury, sorrow and remorse, will follow this search to satisfy the 'cursed thirst for gold!'

Marysville, in Kansas, is the last village of any importance passed by the traveller to the

Western Gold Fields. It is situated on the Big Blue river, at the crossing of the old military road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Kearney and California. It was started a few years ago by General Marshal, a noted 'border-ruffian,' but withal an agreeable and affable gentleman. He gallantly called the further metropolis 'Marysville,' in honor of his wife, and modestly named the county after himself. The city has great prospective and some actual importance. A railroad is confidently talked of to connect it with St. Joseph, the mines, and the Pacific Ocean. If you stop an hour or two, you will encounter a gentleman with a deal of dignity, who will kindly volunteer to show you through the town. After exhibiting the site of the court-house, and of the grand Union depot, the location for the cemetery, and several eight-story brick warehouses, he will bring up at a small groggery, [sic] and stand treat. At parting, after an affectionate shake of the hand, he will extort from you a promise to invest in Marysville lots on your return, sagely concluding, that if you now had any spare funds you would not be traveling to Pike's Peak. In your perambulations you will doubtless hear of fights and law-suites innumerable, for this little town has the reputation of being founder of fist, knife and pistol encounters, and of settling them in courts, than any other in Eastern Kansas. Sometimes those who administer the law get strangely mixed up in its violation. On my first visit several men were arrested for the heinous crime of horse-racing. They anticipated and received an acquittal, for the wearer of the ermine had acted as 'judge' at the very race where the crime was committed. His honor had no idea of being *particeps criminis* in an offense against the law 'in such case made and provided.'

Leaving this frontier town, with its whiskey, its fights and its justice, we pass on to Fort Kearney. The fort is situated on the southern bank of the Platte river, on a fine grassy plain, and consists of scattered adobe and frame buildings, strong enough to afford protection from Indians, but of small avail against regular troops. One or more companies of 'our country's brave defenders' are always stationed here; and if one has letters of introduction to the officers, a few days can be passed pleasantly; otherwise, twenty-four hours will be dreary, and the visitor glad to move on. Now the road leaves the rolling prairie, and follows the level valley or 'bottom' of the Platte, broken from a smooth track by an occasional creek or water-course. The Platte is a wide and apparently majestic stream, but an examination convinces the traveller of the truth of the adage: 'Appearances are deceptive.' Like many a loud-mouthed declaimer, it lacks sadly in depth; it has not sufficient water to afford save navigation to a good-sized cod-fish. Returning 'pilgrims' often attempt to descent it, but in only a few



instances have they succeeded in reaching the Missouri, and then only by dragging their boats for hundreds of miles over shoals and quicksands. Fremont tells of a party of French fur-traders who were twenty-five days in going as many miles. In most cases emigrants are overset in the eddies, and lost their entire outfits. Last year, a poor fellow who had dragged his boat to within a few miles of Fort Kearney, was thus overturned, and lost everything, reaching that post with only a single shirt. So much for the Platte.

Occasionally on our route we find the bluff coming down to the river's edge, and in such places generally encounter sand. Sometimes in a warm day we see before us beautiful lakes, surrounded by pleasant groves, inviting us to rest and repose. On a near approach they vanish, and we learn that this *mirage* of the western plains is just as deceptive as that we read of on the deserts of Africa. At the South Platte Crossing, where the road to California leaves that to Denver, and crosses the Platte river, Indians are usually found. Experience has taught these vagabonds of the plains that it is easier to get and steal their subsistence from the emigrants than to get it by hunting. If, my dear reader, you have derived your ideas of the red-man from 'Hiawatha' and Cooper's novels, I am sorry for you, for your fancy will receive a sad check. Instead of a formidable individual, dressed with care and taste, and looking the personification of those beautiful pictures that adorn bank-notes, you will behold a miserable, unwashed and uncombed creature, wrapped in a blanket that my once have been clean and new, but is now sadly the worse for wear, and covered from head to foot with all varieties of the genus *pediculus*. [sic]. Take care that he does not come too near, or in a day or two and 'itching palm' may not be the only cutaneous affection with which you are afflicted. These rascals will beg for flour, whiskey, sugar and tobacco, with the utmost pertinacity, and will steal whatever they can lay their hands on. The only words of English they are capable of are the names of the articles they desire, the word 'How,' used in salutation; 'heap' for describing quantity, and perhaps a few sentences of profanity.

From Beaver Creek there are two routes leading to Denver. The one by way of the Platte takes you past several old forts or trading-posts,

now in ruins. They were erected years ago when the trade with the Indians and toppers of the west wad of far greater importance than at present. The prices at which goods were sold in the by-gone days of trapper history would satisfy the most profit-loving of this money-making age. The trapper who had labored and suffered to procure peltries, betook himself to the fort whenever the tie of his 'pile' warranted a visit. Here he bartered the furs for coffee, sugar or flour, paying one dollar for a pint of each, for rum four dollars a pint, and tobacco one dollar a plug. The trader had also 'a boot on the other leg,' for he sold the furs in the St. Louis market at a *small* advance on first cost. Beaver which he had bought at three dollars per pound, and paid for in goods at the above 'orful' [sic] rates, brought twelve dollars in hard cash. No wonder that traders were able to make their fortunes in a short time. Some of these wilderness forts were splendidly arranged. Bent's Fort, on the head-waters of the Arkansas river, had its principal apartments furnished with mirrors, chairs, and sofas, in the highest style of the upholsterer's art. There were billiard-tables from the hands of the most approved makers, with a player expressly employed to amuse visitors. Tropical fruits of every variety, and all the adornments of a metropolitan board, were there in abundance. But now, alas! [sic] naught marks the site of the 'Old Fort,' save a mass of blackened ruins.

Sixty miles below Denver is the 'big bend of the Platte,' where that river sweeps around, changing its course from north to east. At this point in Cherokee City, a newly-fledged St. Louis. Be reference to the map that adorns the stock certificates of Cherokee, it will be seen that it has the Pacific Railroad passing through it, is environed by gold mines, and other beauties of nature; and is, in fact, *the* place of all others in the far west. If you invest in this town, do so with the conviction that it will make you a millionaire.

As the road by the Platte is much longer than the 'cut-off,' we will take the latter, although it passes away from the river, and has but little grass and water. If from this cause we should lose any of our animals, (supposing we took.

Neither the speedy nor the independent mode of transit,) you will be likely to consider it the 'unkindest cut-off (of) all.' We will risk it, at any rate. But pause a moment—do you see that little cloud on the horizon, hanging there without change, while all around is fast fading away? It is no cloud, my friend, but the Rocky Mountains in the distance. After our long journey over this treeless prairie, is it not cheering to gaze on those grand old cliffs, towering in majesty above this level waste? Watch them as you advance, and note the changes that come over the picture. Now their forms rise distinctly, and you can no longer doubt their reality. Their corrugated sides, adown



[sic] which the huge avalanche has held its course, now bursts on your view. The hazy, deep-blue mantle which enveloped them is drawn away, and they now are dotted with an ashen veil thin as gossamer. Those first in view are dark with the forests of pine, while farther on the white-clad peaks of the snowy range stand clear and sharp against the western sky. To the north Long's Peak rises like some grim mountain sentinel, thrusting his bold outline full into view. That rounded summit, in the extreme south, rising far above the surrounding mountains, is Pike's Peak, the cynosure for which the we Ary eyes of all in this mighty caravan have so long been watching. We will yet s and on its highest cliff, and feast our eyes on the picture there spread before us. Now, however, we are on our way to Denver, more of the Peak hereafter.

As we ascend this ridge, cast your eyes down the v alley of the Platte, and tell me what you behold. There, sure enough, is Denver, stretched for a mile or more along the river. Its motley group of brick, frame and log-houses is a welcome sight after our wilderness journey of seven hundred miles. That line of timber stretching from our left down to the centre of the town skirts the banks of Cherry creek, at whose *embouchure* the first gold in the Pike's Peak region was discovered. Those white dots along its margin are the tents of emigrants like ourselves, who have reached their journey's end, and are now resting from their fatigues. 'How far is it from Denver to the Mountains?' 'A mile or two,' you may answer; but if some day you attempt it, you will find it at least twelve miles, and those liberal measure. It takes some time to become accustomed to the d deception of this wonderfully clear atmosphere. Yonder is a flag floating from a staff in the centre of the city, and near it you can discern the outline of a huge warehouse. We will quicken our pace, and hold as soon as possible, at the door of some friendly hotel. But pause! [sic] before we enter the city of the living, let us glance at the city of the dead. Even this young metropolis has its cemetery, and here, two miles from the busy streets, it is located. Nine-elevenths of those lying here met violent deaths; the revolver and the bowie-knife have been far more destructive than disease, and here are their victims. No pains have as yet been taken to adorn and beautify this burial-ground; it does

not even boast an inclosure. Let us pass on, our business is not with the dead but with the living.

Almost the first building on our left is a small frame-house, some fourteen by twenty feet, with a modest little kitchen in the rear. Six Pike's Peakers reside there, and as they are at home this fine morning, and we happen to know one of the, we will enter. The house is like many habitations in Pike's Peak; what an Easterner would call a mere shell, being entirely innocent of lath or plaster. Its one room boasts of a pine table which serves alike for dining, writing, and whist-playing purposes. One of teh occupants indulges in the luxury of a chair, but the remainder consider it an unwarranted extravagance, and content themselves with those modest articles of household economy non as 'three-legged stools.' That bed in the corner nightly holds a pair of sleepers, while their four friends take their rest at there places of business. Yonder mahogany desk in the opposite corner, once adorned an editorial sanctum in Cincinnati, and afterward in Kansas. That shelf holds a diminutive library; and among its volumes are Webster's Dictionary, several books of trade, Shakespeare's Works, and Kames' Elements of Criticism. A miscellaneous array of reading matter, indeed!

While we are glancing around the room, the cook, an ebony-complexioned fellow, exulting in the name of Sam, enters to prepare the table for breakfast. Sam is a bright, active fellow, and is the same darkey [sic] who, while acting as barber in Lecompton, refused to shave Governor Medary by the month, because, as he expressed it: 'Kansas Gub'ners [sic] don't stay here month out; day is mighty onsartin, [sic] anyhow.' With care Sam spreads the cloth, arrays the crockery, and places the dishes in order. The four outside members of the family having entered, we will postpone our hotel visit, and accept an invitation to take our morning meal with them. All are seated at the table, and while cooling our coffee we will take a look at the assemblage. The man at the head has been a miner in California, a stage-driver in Australia, and land speculator in Iowa, and is now a merchant in Pike's Peak. That youth at his right, in appearance barely eighteen, has been two voyages up the Mediterranean. The individual on the left came from the old Bay State years ago, and has pretty well rambled over the indefinite region known as 'out west;' he took an active part in the Kansas wars, spent three long months in the famous Lecompton prison, and finally escaped with a few scars to give him occasional remembrance of old times. That bearded fellow, so busy with his coffee and beefsteak, is a traveller of twenty years' experience. With buffalo and polar bears, elephants and Esquimaux, [sic] Parisians and Tahitians, corn-bread and curry, cava and cocktails, he is e equally familiar. Engage him in conversation at some leisure time, and you



will find him interesting. The fifth is a journalist who has taken notes among Cincinnati pork-dealers, Kansas fights, Choctaw fevers, Arkansas bowie-knives, Missouri lead-mines, New-Mexican *hombres*, and Pike's Peak miscellanies. The sixth, and last, is also a journalist, whilom principal of a flourishing academy in the Granite State. Though but a few months in the country, he is as good a Peaker as the next man, and says life here is a pleasant change from its quietly civilized condition at the East. We have briefly described each one of the semi-dozen, and if you look around you, you will find that every collection of the same number of individuals contains nearly as miscellaneous an assortment as the preceding. And now, bidding our friends good morning, we will saunter down-town.

Denver is situated on the south fork of the Platte, some fifteen miles from the base of the Rocky Mountains. It is on the prairie which has here a gently slope toward the river, except at the point of union between the valley and the plain above, where the ascent is quite sharp. The soil is gravelly and of a peculiar character, that makes the streets always excellent. There is too much gravel to allow the soil to adhere to one's feet, and enough finer earth to make the roads 'tread' well. Nature has done every thing in the way of paving this city of the west. Occasionally the wind raises a cloud of dust, but it is nothing in comparison with the same in Eastern Kansas or Western Missouri.

In one respect Denver differs from Washington; the latter is a city of magnificent distances, the former one of magnificent expectations. Denver was originally laid out to contain twelve hundred and eighty acres, an area sufficient for its growth in a long time. Its western boundary was the famous Cherry Creek. But very soon some enterprising gentlemen laid out the town of Aurora on the opposite side of that stream, containing just as much of the earth's surface as its older rival. A few weeks afterward the town of Highland, located on the north bank of the Platte, and separated from Denver only by that river, saw the day. That also contained the same amount of land as Denver. Recently the three have been united under one management, and are known as the city of Denver. The grand consolidated city has, therefore, an area of six square miles, beside numerous additions that

have been made by enthusiastic speculators. The landed property has not been held in peace and quietness. On two or three occasions portions of the town have been 'jumped' or forcibly seized, by men who were desirous of owning without the formality and inconvenience of buying. This jumping led to collisions between the authorities and the jumpers, and in the settlement of their disputes, the rifle and the revolver acted as judge and jury. The holders of land have as yet no title, as the country still belongs to the Indians; but it is hoped the aboriginal claim will soon be extinguished, and in that case the squatter principle of 'first to occupy' will be good. Larimer, Blake, Ferry, and F, are the principal business streets. The first, named after one of the early settlers, boasts of several brick and a goodly number of frame buildings, occupied by merchants, mechanics, groggery-keepers [sic] and land-speculators. Parallel with it is Blake-street, its name perpetuating that of an enterprising youth from the Bay State. Here are the same classes of buildings as on Larimer-street, but they are far more numerous. The latter is comparatively quiet, while Blake-street is ordinarily a scene of bustle and confusion. At mid-day one sees there freight and emigrant-wagons, ambulances, horsemen, footmen, loose cattle, Indians, 'greasers,' dogs, hogs, gamblers and auctioneers, all mingled together in most admired disorder. Above the din of the crowd are heard the mellifluous tones of the last-named gentry crying their wares. Until the enforcement of a late city ordinance prohibiting the practice of their vocation in the streets, gamblers were accustomed to gather on the sidewalks and 'take in' the verdant ones. 'Who bets on the ace of clubs; the ace of clubs, gentlemen, is the winning card. The ace, the ace; whoever turns the ace wins the twenty dollars.' Such is the style in which they court the fickle goddess. They have also a harmless little game wherein a strap is rolled in such a way as to present three loops, and the bystander is at liberty to bet his money and put a small stick in the loop that he thinks will catch when the strap is unrolled. The beauty of the operation is, that not one of the loops will catch, and the better is sure to be the loser. With such and similar amusements do the sporting gentry of Denver while away their time.

Before the United States. Mail reached this city, all the letters to Pike's Peak were brought by the Overland Express Company, and in June or July last a double line of men, reaching oftentimes nearly to the corner of the next block, could be seen on the arrival of each tri-weekly coach. As many as twelve thousands [sic] letters have been received at this office in a single week. The manager of the postal department was once post-master of Sacramento, and has served in the same capacity in two or three cities of the East. He is famous for his memory of names and faces, a



quality quite essential for a good post official. The coaches for St. Joseph start from this office, and it is amusing to hear the parting words to those bound States-ward.

'Good-by old fel. Have you got whiskey enough?'

'I say, Jack, you'd better crop your har before you get to Cottonwood. The Injens thar jest love a scalp like yourn.'

'Tell Dave's wife that he's married to a squaw, and she needn't come out.'

The superintendent hands up the way-bill; the passengers reach from the coach and give a final hand-shake, take a parting drink to good luck, the whip cracks, and off go the mules on their way to the rising sun. On the arrival of each coach from the States, a crowd gathers to witness the debarkation of passengers and the unloading of express matter. In fact, one of the standard amusements of Denver is a visit to the express-offices on the arrival and departure of the coaches.

In speaking of this branch of business, the office of Hinckley and Company on the same street should not be forgotten. They have lines to States, to all the mining districts in the mountains, to Colorado and Canon Cities on the Arkansas River, and to Taos and other parts of New-Mexico. Wherever there are people enough to make it desirable, Hinckley and Company are sure to establish an express. In the months of June, July, August and September of the year 1860, this company transported sixty-three thousand one hundred and fifty-two letters between Denver and the mining region alone. From this office a coach starts weekly for St. Joseph *via* Fort Kearney and Omaha, Nebraska, under the auspices of the Western Stage Company, a gigantic concern that has its lines throughout nearly all the great West. It is the intention to make the service on the Denver and St. Joseph route a tai-weekly one. A short distance from the express office is the mint and banking-house of Clark, Gruber and Company. The only money coined in Pike's Peak is from this establishment. Several gentlemen of the press, among whom the author was physically conspicuous, witnessed the first coinage of Rocky Mountain gold in the basement of that three-story brick. Well does he remember with what politeness Clark produced a bottle, labelled 'Old Bourbon,' and with what eagerness the press (present company excepted) expressed its

contents. He has in mind the gravity with which a youthful journalist propounded the following:

'Why are we now unlike our friends at the East?'

No one in his auditory could tell, and after a due pause the young man gasped faintly:

'Because, while they take mint in their whiskey, we take our whiskey in the mint.'

He survived, and is now doing well.

This firm has already coined upward of a half-million dollars, and sent to the East large amounts in gold-dust. Their coin is a great benefit to the country, obviating as it does the necessity of weighing gold-dust in commercial transactions. Those who do not appreciate the convenience of coined money should live a year in a country where unwrought gold is the circulating medium.

The crowds in this street, like all gatherings in a new country, are of a motley character. We will pass the 'great unwashed' without notice, and fix our attention on that mulatto-visaged man arrayed in a rough suit, and with feet covered with moccasins. He is portentously known as Captain Beckwourth. A few years ago he. Published a book giving an account of the scenes and incidents in his life, and especially of nine years during which he was head chief of the Crow Indians. Engage him in conversation, and you will find him ready to launch upon his favorite topic and recount marvellous [*sic*] stories of his past career. He tells us he was the happy husband of eight ducky wives when he was 'big Injin' in the Crow nation. He has lately taken to his bosom a ninth bride, and the charming couple are enjoying the saccharine period, yclept [*sic*] 'the honeymoon,' in a small cabin about three miles above Denver. That tall, fine-looking man, with a form like Adonis, is an ex-fillibuster. [*sic*]. He served in Nicaragua under the 'grey-eyed man of destiny,' was a prisoner of state in Mexico, and worked for a year on the roads of that land of *aguardiente* and *frijoles*. He has been in numerous fights on the frontier, bears the scars of a dozen wounds inflicted by sword and. bullet, and is yet good for a dozen more. That smooth-faced and smiling personage by his side has likewise been a fillibuster. [*sic*]. He visited Central America at the time of Walker's first expedition, and in the haste of his departure left behind a splendid law library. He is now editing a Pike's Peak newspaper, is also in the practice of the law. That slender-framed and modest-appearing man who shrinks from the gaze of the crowd, is one of whom you have often heard, but whose name it will be difficult for you to guess. You might take him for a Pennsylvania farmer at first glance, but there is something in his featured indicative of character. He is none other than Kit Carson, the famous mountaineer, around whose name so much of romance is clinging. He resides in Taos, New-Mexico, three hundred miles south of Denver; and is here



merely on a visit. That personage behind the small bar facing the street, and engaged alternately in selling whiskey and dealing monte, was once professor in an Eastern college, and afterward minister of the Gospel in Western New-York. Bear gun us the stand of a former Kansas deacon, now a dealer in whiskey and other like commodities. But notice that slight frame and womanly face, from which a huge cigar protrudes. John Phoenix, when in charge of the *San-Diego Herald*, advertised for a small boy to work about the office, and added as postscript; 'No young woman in disguise need apply.' This would seem superfluous appendage to a public notice, but it would be necessary in Pike's Peak, for 'female women' in male attire are occasionally seen; and the specimen now under contemplation is 'one of 'em.' Lastly comes a 'greaser' or New-Mexican native, clad in the *sombrero* and *serape* of his region, with a pair of enormous spurs attached to his heels and jingling at every step. He would not be seriously injured if held under a pump for the space of half-an-hour.

Denver Hall, a notorious gaming and drinking-saloon, deserves a passing notice. It is a building some twenty-five by sixty feet, and its single apartment is nightly thronged by an eager multitude. Around the hall are ranged tables, behind which are seated professors of 'the art of making money by easy process.' Grouped around these tables are those who trust their fortunes on the turn of a card or the revolving of a wheel, and it is interesting to watch the countenances of the betters as the games go on. A band of music occupies an elevated position, and the bar on the left-hand corner has a most liberal practice. The air is vitiated with tobacco-smoke and the odor of bad whiskey. Oaths and ribald songs and jests are heard, and a fight is looked upon as an occurrence scarcely deserving of notice. In addition to the above disagreeables, the frequenters of the place have a way when drunk of letting off revolvers sometimes selecting a mark, and at others making only a general and miscellaneous shot. To a nervous and quietly-disposed individual these non-particularize bullets are not at all agreeable, and he is glad to get out of their range as speedily as possible.

The drama is not unknown in Denver. A theatre is in nightly operation in a hall on

Larimer-street, where tragedies and comedies are enacted, to the delight of the two or three hundred the compose the audience. In constant attendance, and occasionally on the stage, can be seen the famous 'wheel-barrow man,' a plucky printer, who came to this country in the early times, trundling a fine specimen of an 'Irishman's coach' all the way from Kansas City. With him usually appears a sedate foreigner, known as Count Murat, who asserts with great vehemence that he is nephew to the King of Italy. How are the mighty fallen! The audience that assembles there is composed almost entirely of the sterner sex. It is rude and boisterous, and gives vent to its feelings in a most demonstrative manner, but the visitor will seldom hear expressions absolutely coarse and indecorous. One dollar is the price of admission to this temple of Thespis.

The architecture of Denver is exceedingly varied. The most modest habitation that met my gaze during numerous perambulations through the consolidated city, was a wagon-body removed from the wheels, and furnished with a stove and other house-keeping comforts. In this snug domicile lived a Missouri native with his wife and three children. One degree above this is the tent of canvas which has served for shelter on the plains, and is now used as a local habitation. Next is a small frame or log basement, some four or six feet in height, with an upper part or roof, of canvas—a style of architecture quite popular with the keepers of one-horse grogeries. [sic] Better than this is the log-cabin, with a floor of mother earth: a roof of poles, covered with dirt; a rude chimney, composed of sticks, stones and mud, but with no mode of lighting the domestic retreat, save through the open door. The early settlers considered such accommodations quite palatial. Then come frame-buildings of all grades and descriptions, and last on the upward scale are the fine three-story brick warehouses that adorn the principal business streets. Stone has not yet come into use as a building material. Nowhere, in a city of five thousand inhabitants, can be shown such a diversity of architectural taste as in Denver. A two-story frame building in the middle of Cherry Creek (which, by the way, is a mythical stream being destitute of water) attracts the attention of the curious. It faces in no particular direction, and its corners are of the geometrical order of angles known as acute and obtuse. It is the place whence emanates the *Rocky Mountain News*, as a huge sign on the roof proclaims. The senior editor will tell you that his office was thus oddly shaped to ward off the force of the severe winds, but the Recorder's books show that the lot on which the building is located is of just such shape as the domicile indicates. In the spring of 1859, before the country had become convinced of the *reality* of Pike's Peak, a press and printing materials were



started from Omaha for these western gold-fields. Arriving in the month of March, the owners went immediately at work, and in a few days thereafter appeared the initial number of the *Rocky Mountain News*. It is now by far the best daily and most attractive weekly newspaper west of St. Louis. Its editors are human curiosities, and worthy of niches at Barnum's. The senior was 'raised' in Ohio. He has been a pioneer settler in Iowa, Nebraska, Oregon and Pike's Peak; has acted as Government surveyor in all those territories, excepting the last; has been four times over the plains; was once shot and badly wounded in an attempt to quell a riot; and on numerous occasions has listened to the pleasing whistle of a bullet in close proximity to his head. 'Moving accidents by flood and field' he can relate without number. The junior, an ardent admirer of a huge meerschaum, [sic] is by birth a New-Yorker. He has published papers in Buffalo, Chicago, Melbourne, New-Zealand, Peru and California. Australia and adjacent lands, many isles of the Pacific, South-America, and all parts of the United States, have received the impress of his restless foot, and where next he may turn up, it is difficult to imagine. A novelist might make a fine two-volume romance from the history of these two men. If he had, in addition, the career of each of the workmen in the composing and press-rooms—no less than four of whom have been editors of daily papers in various parts of the Union—the 'Scottish Chiefs' would be mere nothing.

Journalism at Pike's Peak, like the course of true love, does not run smooth. Repeated shots have been fired at the *News* office by indignant 'roughs'; the editors have been assaulted at various times, and on a few occasions their lives have been in great jeopardy. In July last, as the senior editor was quietly seated in his sanctum, several ruffians entered, and two of them presenting cocked revolvers at his head, requested him to take a pleasant walk with them to a gambling-saloon a few squares distant. As their invitation was pressing, he accepted it, and proceeded to the place designated. He was saved from being there shot down only by a stratagem of the saloon-keeper. Every few weeks a threat of cleaning out the *News* office is made by its enemies, and the whole corps, from the 'devil' upward, is prepared to resist such a purifying

process. The sanctum abounds in guns and revolvers, always at hand; and in squally times each man in the composing-room has a 'six-shooter' by the side of his copy. The foreman sports a huge 'navy' at his belt, and the roller-boy is ready to support the honor of the establishment with the weapon of his branch of trade. Pleasant business, publishing newspapers at Pike's Peak!

Law is not by any means unknown in Denver. The gentlemen of the green bag are quite numerous—more numerous, in fact, than learned, though there are a few men of ability among them. The territory being as yet unorganized, there is no regular and acknowledged system of laws. The various Solons of this embryonic Athens uphold different modes of dealing out justice, as their fancies or their educations impel them. Some are in favor of the United States laws, and others are clamorous for those of the Territory of Kansas; some desire the enforcement of the ordinances of the 'people of Denver,' and others see great poetic beauty in the code of the Provisional Government, a few of the legal practitioners desire a general and miscellaneous combination of the four. The 'Provisional Government of Jefferson' had its origin during the babyhood of the Territory. At that time the fossilized political loafers who had wandered from various parts of the States to Pike's Peak, set about putting in order the confused elements found there. Conventions were held, elections instituted, legislatures convened, and laws passed. Thus sprung into existence the famous Provisional Government, in which nearly all officers were self-elected and also self-paid. A few men of respectability among them give a little vitality to the institution, but the majority bear too strong a resemblance to the Bowery boy or the steam-boat deck hand to figure to advantage in high position. A court under this government is a decided curiosity. In one that I entered not long since, the judge occupied the highest seat in the tribunal, dealing out justice to the litigious. A pair of dilapidated pants covered his nether extremities, and outside their terminations was a pair of huge stogy boots. Covering his shoulders was a shirt that for a long time had not seen a washer-woman; and around his waist a belt, holding full in view an enormous bowie-knife and a navy revolver. Out of his rosy face and unkept beard protruded a common clay pipe, from which the smoke of vile tobacco rose like incense, and down his chin two rivulets of amber-colored saliva held their meandering way. The prosecuting attorney sat on the stove, (it was warm weather,) and the opposing counsel was ensconced on a huge billet of wood. In corresponding freedom from the conventionalities of fashionable life were the jury, litigants and spectators. At least one-half of those present were solacing their cares with the smoke of





Remember the Smoky Hill Trail

PO Box 978  
Hays KS 67601

PRSR STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

HAYS KS 67601  
PERMIT NO. 106

'Sublime tobacco, which from east to west,

Cheers the tar's labor and the Turkman's [sic] rest.'

Murderers are generally tried by a 'People's Court,' or in other words, by the celebrated Judge Lynch. Every thing is conducted with the utmost fairness to the accused, and he is allowed all that he would receive in a regular court at the East, with the exception of the benefit of technicalities. After the sentence has been given, it is brought before the people present in the following manner:

'Shall the decision of the Judge, with regard to the prisoner now before you be carried out? All in favor will answer 'Ay.'

'Ay'

Those opposed will answer 'No.'

'No.'

It is seldom that the response of the people is not in the affirmative.

The first account of gold in this region that ever crossed the Missouri River appeared in a Boston journal in the spring of 1858. In the autumn of that year, many residents of the towns along the Missouri River started for the

auriferous land. 'Cities' in abundance were laid out, the most of which still remain in *statu quo*. But little else was done farther than to ascertain that gold really existed in the Pike's Peak region. In 1859 a large emigrant, principally from the Western States, passed over the plains, the most of which 'stampeded' soon after its arrival. In 1860, the number of those who arrived in the mini region was not far from seventy-five thousand, and it was composed of a much better class than those who made the hegrira of the previous year. Rich placers were opened and worked, quartz-mills set in successful operation, explorations made, proving the existence of gold in all the country between Fort Laramie and El Paso, the soil cultivated and found to be exceedingly fertile, and every thing promised the rapid development of the land beyond the plains. Now the canons and gorges of the Rocky Mountains are alive with men toiling to move from its resting-place the glittering metal which charms alike the savage and the civilized eye. The steam-whistle and the mill-stamp awake the echoes where but lately the howl of the wolf and the scream of the panther were the only sounds. An enormous influx of the hard-handed sones of toil is pouring in the present year, and very soon Pike's Peak will bear no mean comparison with California and the other gold countries of the world.

