

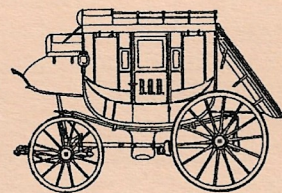
# OVERLAND DESPATCH

SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY

Vol. IV No. 1

REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL

March 2011



## SMOKY HILL TRAIL MONUMENTS IN EASTERN COLORADO

by Lee Whiteley

THREE major monuments were placed along the Smoky Hill Trail in Eastern Colorado in the late 1930s. The original interpretive plaques have been stolen from all three. Fortunately the text of the missing plaques was recorded in Margaret Long's book, *The Smoky Hill Trail* (Denver, 1947).

### Horseman Monument

"Horseman Monument" is located at the intersection of the South Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail and U.S. Highway 40, seven miles west of the town of Cheyenne Wells. The horseman is pointing along the trace of the Smoky Hill Trail as it heads southwest two miles to Eureka stage station and 17 miles to Dubois stage station on Big Sandy Creek. The horseman on the opposite side of the monument is pointing northeast to the Cheyenne Wells stage station on the South Fork of the Smoky Hill River. This stage station is nine miles from the monument and five miles north of the town of Cheyenne Wells. The Smoky Hill Trail split into the north branch and south branch just west of the stage station.



### Horseman plaque:

*"The route of the famous SMOKY HILL TRAIL. Emigrant and stage road extending from Kansas City (Westport) to Denver via Fort Riley, Fort Hays, and Fort Wallace. Traveled by goldseekers, soldiers, and pioneers. Route of Butterfield's Overland Dispatch and Wells Fargo Express. The trail replaced by the Union Pacific Railroad in 1870. Erected by the State Historical Society of Colorado from the Mrs. J. N. Hall Foundation and the Cheyenne County Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration Club. 1939."*

The correct name of the 1865-1866 stage line, which established the South Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail, was Butterfield's Overland Despatch. The 1870 railroad was the Kansas Pacific Railway, acquired by the Union Pacific Railroad in 1880. Wells

(continued on page 3)



Site study at White Rock Station, Trego County, March 26.

## SMOKY HILL TRAIL SITE STUDIES

by Lem Marsh

ONE of the most important jobs of the Smoky Hill Trail Association's Mapping and Marking Committee is to conduct site studies. These studies are done with the help of the Kansas Anthropological Association (KAA). Nancy Arendt with the KAA is our site studies' leader.

The site studies consist of finding important locations along the Smoky Hill Trail, such as wagon ruts, stage stations, as well as battle-sites and campsites. Once a site is discovered, the researchers document the physical location, take GPS readings and pictures, measure the site, and make notes and maps of the area. This information goes into the archives of the Smoky Hill Trail Association at Forsyth Library at Fort Hays State University.

We never go on private land without the landowner's permission. While we do look for artifacts to help us locate sites, we do not collect any artifacts. Also, these studies are surface studies and no digging is done.

The site studies are always a lot of fun and the researchers get a chance to improve their knowledge of the history of the Smoky Hill Trail. You are invited to join us if this sounds like fun to you. Contact Lem Marsh at 785-824-3957 or <smht1865drifter@st-tel.net>.

### Dates of Site Studies:

All of the dates are a Saturday and Sunday. The first effort this spring, March 26-27, was fruitful on Saturday, despite the cold day, but canceled on Sunday because of inclement weather. We would like to

(continued on page 3)



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

**Q**UITE a bit has been written about the Smoky Hill Trail and the business ventures, such as Butterfield's Overland Despatch and Wells Fargo, who utilized the trail for mail, freight, and passenger service. Many references to trail-related incidents have surely been written into other works not specifically about the trail or its commercial applications.

While reading John W. Cook, ed., *Hands Up: Or, Thirty-five Years of Detective Life in the Mountains and on the Plains* (Denver: W. F. Robinson, 1897), reminiscences by General David J. Cook, Chief of the Rocky Mountain Detective Association, I found one such item of trivia. This book, long out of print, is now available as a "print on demand" book, ISBN 9781120625991, from several sources online. It may also be read online at Google Books.

In 1867 General Cook was Marshal of Denver when a ranchman named McIntyre had two fine horses stolen from McNassar's Corral, which was then located where the American House later stood when the book was written in 1897.

Marshal Cook undertook to find the stock and within hours developed as suspects George Britt and William Hilligoss, noted Rocky Mountain region desperadoes and horse thieves. They were seen at Bijou Basin, where they stated that they were heading for Denver but, in fact, were headed toward Kansas.

It was bitterly cold in December of 1867, but Marshal Cook, acting on the information, took a stage for the East. He stopped at Bijou Basin and other points long enough to get information to assure him that he was on the right track. At Cheyenne Wells he received information which made it certain he was, and after crossing the Kansas line he heard of the fleeing thieves more regularly. Then, when sitting with the stage driver, he saw two men just west of Pond Creek, near Fort Wallace, whom he believed to be the men he sought. They had hired on as laborers and were carrying picks and shovels.

As Cook came closer to them, he saw that they were the ones he sought, so he had the driver stop the coach near the men, get down, and pretend that something had broken about the gears. Cook also dismounted and walked carelessly about while the driver commenced swearing over the apparent breakdown. When only ten paces from the men, Cook drew down on them, compelled them to disarm and handcuff themselves.

Both horses were recovered and later returned to their owner. Cook and his prisoners spent the night at Fort Wallace, waiting for the return stage. The next day Marshal Cook started back to Denver with his prisoners, riding with them in the stage coach. They arrived in Denver five days after Cook had set

out in pursuit.

Britt and Hilligoss were tried and sentenced to three years imprisonment, but both escaped after serving a year and disappeared into history.

Discovering such footnotes to the overall history of the Smoky Hill Trail is always interesting, and they should be preserved as we collect trail history for our archives.

I hope that everyone has reserved October 14-16 on their calendars for the Smoky Hill Trail Conference, which will be held at Oakley, Kansas. As part of the conference agenda, we will be touring sites along the trail, including the Fort Wallace area. I'll see you there as we gather to "Remember the Smoky Hill Trail!"

—Mike Baughn

**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. Membership fees should be sent to Smoky Hill Trail Association, PO Box 322, WaKeeney KS 67672. Annual memberships are for the calendar year and expire on December 31. Other donations are always welcome.

**Editor:** Ann E. Liston, 1301 MacArthur Rd, Hays KS 67601, 785-628-8323, <aliston@fhsu.edu>

**President:** Mike Baughn, PO Box 159, Brewster KS 67732, 785-694-2278, <prairie lawman@yahoo.com>

**Vice-President:** Donna Malsom, PO Box 165, Collyer KS 67631, 785-769-4268, <donna@collyer.us>

**Secretary:** Jody Zeman, 714 Easter Ave, WaKeeney KS 67672, 785-259-0725, <jodyzeman@ruraltel.net>

**Treasurer:** Sam Chestnut, PO Box 313, Quinter KS 67752, <schest@ruraltel.net>

**Directors:**

Jim Gray, PO Box 62, Ellsworth KS 67439, 785-472-4703 <kansascowboy@kans.com>

Ann E. Liston (see under editor above)

Lem Marsh, PO Box 263, Grinnell KS 67738, 785-824-3957, <smht1865drifter@st-tel.net>

Joanne VanCoevern, 4773 N Wasserman Way, Salina KS 67401, 785-825-8349, <jvancoevern@juno.com>

Lee Whiteley, 6077 S Elizabeth Way, Centennial CO 80121, 303-888-2426, <leeandjanewhiteley@yahoo>

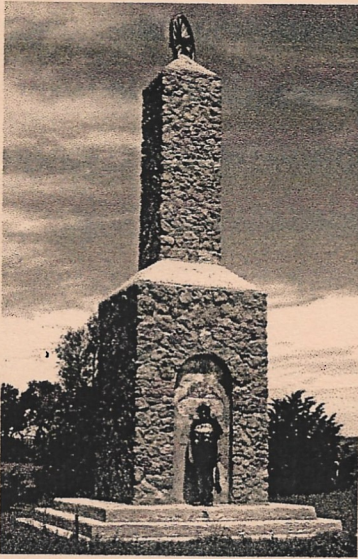


## MONUMENTS IN EASTERN COLORADO

(continued from page 1)

Fargo actually used the North Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail.

### Wagon Wheel Monument



"Wagon Wheel Monument" is located 11 miles north of Kit Carson, at the intersection of the North Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail and Colorado Highway 59. The 34-foot-high monument is made of volcanic flint with steel reinforcement, with a large wagon wheel on top. The Big Springs stage station is located two miles west of the monument and the Texas-Montana Cattle Trail passed seven miles southwest of the monument.

### Wagon Wheel plaque:

*"In memory of the Old  
TEXAS-MONTANA CATTLE TRAIL 1886-1894  
Principal Trail Brands  
XIT N-N  
Erected 1938  
[At the base of the Monument]  
Montana  
Kit Carson  
Texas"*

The cattle trail opened in 1866, not 1886.

### Pyramid Monument

"Pyramid Monument," shown with Jane Whiteley on top to show size, is located 15 miles north-northwest of the U.S. Highway 40 town of Wild Horse. This is at the crossing of the Smoky Hill Trail North Branch and the Texas-Montana Cattle Trail. The monument is four miles north-west of Davids Well stage station. The solid concrete monument was built with the help of boys from Hugo's CCC camp. Cattle brands have been cut into the flat surfaces of the third and top tiers. A faint trace of the Smoky Hill Trail can be seen running left of the monument.



### Pyramid plaque:

*"This monument stands on the SMOKY HILL TRAIL on the Republican-Big Sandy Divide, the route of the BUTTERFIELD STAGE 1866-1870. Fifty yards east the TEXAS-MONTANA CATTLE TRAIL crossed the Smoky Hill Trail. Erected by the State Historical Society of Colorado and Scouts of the Smoky Hill Trail. 1939."*

The "Scouts of the Smoky Hill Trail" were local "old time cowboys." The North Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail was opened in 1866 by Ben Holladay, who purchased David Butterfield's operation in March of that year. Holladay sold to Wells Fargo in November of the same year.

### TRAIL SITE STUDIES

(continued from page 1)

have you come for both Saturday and Sunday, but if you can only come on one of those days, that is fine. Please put these dates on your calendar and plan to attend.

Saturday and Sunday, April 30 and May 1

Saturday and Sunday, May 21 and 22

None in June

Saturday and Sunday, July 23 and 24

More will be scheduled in late summer and fall.

### BOARD NOMINATIONS NEEDED

THE SmHTA nominating committee (Bonita Oliva, chair, Kay Homewood, and David Richardson) is seeking nominations for officers and directors to serve next year. Names will be presented at the annual meeting in Oakley in October. President, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer are elected annually and directors are elected for two-year terms (three directors up for election this year). All incumbents are eligible to serve again. All nominees must agree in writing to serve if elected. Please send nominations to Bonita Oliva, PO Box 1, Woodston KS 67675 or <bonitaoliva@hotmail.com>.

### AWARDS NOMINATIONS

THE SmHTA awards committee (Leo Oliva, chair, Mike Baughn, and Bob Wilhelm) is seeking nominations to consider for several awards. Nominations for awards to be presented at the annual conference in Oakley in October are due by August 1, 2011, and welcome any time before that deadline. Please send nominations to Leo E. Oliva, PO Box 1, Woodston KS 67675, or <oliva@ruraltel.net>, with a brief letter explaining why the nominee deserves recognition. If deserving nominees are not found, the awards are not given.

The following awards are available this year:

**AWARD OF MERIT** (maximum of 4 awards each year)

This award, a recognition plaque, recognizes individuals, businesses, organizations, or groups who have made a significant contribution to the purposes



of the SmHTA. The recipient may or may not be a member of SmHTA.

**HOWARD C. RAYNESFORD LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** (1 per year)

This award, a recognition plaque, is presented to a SmHTA member for extraordinary lifetime achievement in research about and promotion of the trail.

**HERITAGE PRESERVATION AWARD** (maximum of 2 awards each year)

This award, a recognition plaque, is presented to organizations, landowners, leaseholders, or tenants of trail ruts, remnants, structures, or sites, who have preserved and protected significant portions of the trail or sites associated with the trail, and provided public access.

Remember the deadline for nominations: August 1, 2011.

**OAKLEY CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 14-16**

**T**HE 5th Smoky Hill Trail Association annual conference is being planned at Oakley, Kansas, October 14-16, 2011. Please get these dates on your calendar and plan to be there. The theme for the conference is "The Contested Plains."

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Henrietta Mann, full-blood Cheyenne, president of Cheyenne and Arapaho College in Weatherford, Oklahoma, who will speak about "Walking the Cheyenne Road of Life." Other speakers include Bob Wilhelm, administrator at Fort Hays State Historic Site, who will look at "Fort Fletcher and the Smoky Hill Trail," and Leo E. Oliva will present "Fort Wallace and the Smoky Hill Trail."

Other programs are in the works, and there will be a banquet, general membership meeting, presentation of awards, and an appearance by Will Comstock, presented by Mark Berry. Jim Gray will lead tours east and west of Oakley to several historic trail sites. Kay Homewood will organize another silent auction, so start thinking now of items to donate for this fundraising activity. Additional details will appear in the next issue.

**Smoky Hill Trail Association**  
**PO Box 322**  
**WaKeeney, KS 67672**

**ARTIST PRINT DONATED FOR DRAWING**

A print by Kansas artist Jerry Thomas has been donated to the SmHTA to be offered in a drawing at the annual conference in Oakley in October. The print of the painting, "Distant Thunder," portrays mounted cavalry troops escorting an Overland Despatch stagecoach near Monument Rocks in western Kansas. The scene is based on events in 1867, depicting an escort commanded by Lieutenant Frederick Benteen, 7th U.S. Cavalry. Tentative plans are to use this print to help raise funds for SmHTA. Details will appear in the next issue.

**NEW SmHTA MEMBERSHIPS**

New members since last issue.

**INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Fort Wallace Memorial Association, Highway 40, Wallace KS 67761

**FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS**

Cecil & Jayne Pearce, 1470 Rd 26, Wallace KS 67761

**TRAIL CALENDAR**

Everyone is invited to send notices for this section; provide location, date, time, and activity. Thank you.

**July 16, 2011:** SmHTA Board meeting, tentatively scheduled at the Nature Conservancy south of Monument; details to be announced later

**Aug. 8-13, 2011:** Oregon-California Trails Association Convention, Rock Springs WY

Visit the web site <[www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org)>

**Sept. 22-25, 2011:** Santa Fe Trail Association Symposium, Dodge City KS

Visit the web site <[www.santafetrail.org](http://www.santafetrail.org)>

**Oct. 14-16, 2011:** Fifth Annual Smoky Hill Trail Association Conference, Oakley KS

Visit the web site:<[www.smokyhilltrail.com](http://www.smokyhilltrail.com)>

**EDITOR'S REQUEST**

**A**LL SmHTA members are reminded that articles for *Overland Despatch* are welcome any time. Please contact Editor Ann Liston at <[aliston@fhsu.edu](mailto:aliston@fhsu.edu)>. The deadline for the next issue is **June 1, 2011.**

**REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL**

**REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL**

**REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL**

**REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL**

postage