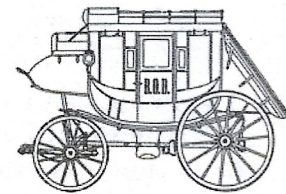


# OVERLAND DESPATCH

SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY

VOL. VI No. 1 REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL Spring & Summer 2013



## DENVER: WEST END OF THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL

by Lee Whiteley

*[Lee Whiteley, Centennial CO, is an authority on the historic trail and the modern roads which follow it, and a frequent contributor to Overland Despatch. This concludes his series about the trail in Colorado to prepare everyone for the 2013 conference there.]*

### A Howling Wilderness

"The California Trail, which we have been following, crosses the South Platte River here, just below the mouth of Cherry Creek. . . . This part of Kansas Territory was literally a 'howling wilderness,' with little indication of its having been occupied or traversed by white men, except the old wagon-road we have been following, with here and there a stump and a few chips by the roadside, as the mark of some California emigrant." Private Robert Morris Peck, First U. S. Cavalry and member of Colonel Edwin Vose Sumner's 1857 military campaign against the Cheyenne, made this observation while camped at present-day Denver in June 1857. His "California Trail" would become known as the Cherokee Trail, the 1849-1850 north-south wagon road connecting Bent's Old Fort on the Santa Fe Trail Mountain Route with Fort Bridger on the Oregon-California Trail.

Peck also stated, "We here [mouth of Cherry Creek] met the party of men who first discovered, or first made public, the discovery of gold in the Pike's Peak region." Some of the soldiers panned some gold there, and they and Fall Leaf, a Delaware Indian guide for the Sumner expedition, displayed this gold in Eastern Kansas when they returned to Fort Leavenworth in the autumn. This generated enough interest for small gold-seeking parties to visit the South Platte region in 1858. Enough gold was found that gold seekers were willing to spend the winter of 1858-59 at the South Platte-Cherry Creek confluence.

Approximately 75 cabins were constructed in the new towns of Denver City, north of Cherry Creek, and Auraria, south of the creek. Denver City was founded by William Larimer and named for James William Denver, 1858 Governor of Kansas Territory. Auraria was named for Auraria, Georgia, in the heart of Cherokee country.

Wilbur Fiske Parker traveled the Smoky Hill Trail from Leavenworth, Kansas, to Denver in the winter of 1858-59. He noted: "[January] 15 Walked 25 miles to day & found quite a settlement Slept in a Cabbin for the first time in 88 days, tis Gen Larimers House. . . . Feb 22 Encamped to night on Cherry all alone. . . . Tis a queer Life, this; tis one of many ups & downs.

(continued on page 3)

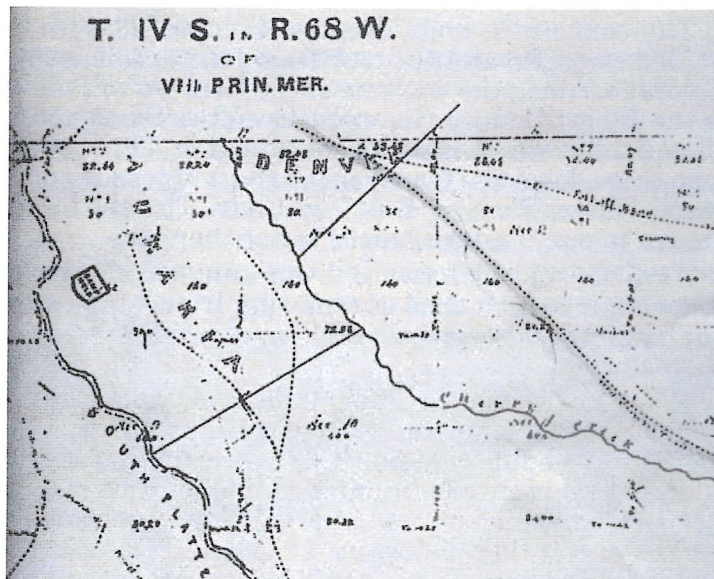
## 7th ANNUAL SMOKY HILL TRAIL CONFERENCE IN PARKER, CO, OCTOBER 11-13

**P**LAN now to attend the 7th annual Smoky Hill Trail Conference at Hampton Inn, Parker, Colorado, October 11-13. Complete details, program schedule, and registration form are included as an insert in this issue. A fine lineup of speakers, tours, good food, and entertainment await those attending. Motel reservations should be made soon and early registration is encouraged because the Saturday tour and banquet have limited space. Special thanks to Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society and Elbert County Historical Society for helping host this fine conference.

### LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS CAN BE A REALITY!

**W**E understand that \$500 at one time may put some hardship on many of our members that would like to become lifetime members. The board has approved an installment plan whereby you can pay quarterly on a one-year or two-year basis. Once you request an installment plan (one- or two-year), the secretary will send out quarterly invoices. Once the installments are paid you will be listed as a Lifetime Member.

**WE CAN SAY THIS IS A ONCE IN A "LIFETIME" DEAL!**



The 1862 General Land Office land plat shows the new towns of Denver and Auraria. The "Cut off Road" entering Denver from the east would be used by Ben Holladay in 1866, the North Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail. The "Old Cherokee Trail" along Cherry Creek was used by the Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express in 1859 and the Butterfield's Overland Despatch in 1865. Camp Weld, small enclosed area at left, served as a military installation during the Civil War.

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### Pikes Peak or Bust:

#### The Smoky Hill Trail along Cherry Creek - The Final Twenty Miles to Denver

Due to the heavy demand on schedules this year, this issue of the newsletter is a combined Spring/Summer edition. Plans have gelled and we can look forward to another great annual conference, our second in Colorado, the first having been held at Limon. Our conference location is the Hampton Inn & Suites, 19010 Cottonwood Drive, Parker, Colorado, with dates of October 11-13.

Your board will be meeting from 12:30-4:00 p.m., MT, at the hotel ballroom on Friday, October 11. All members are welcome to attend the meeting. That evening, at 5:00 p.m., we invite everyone to a pre-conference get-together (dinner on your own) at the Saltgrass Steakhouse located near the hotel. Please bring maps, items of interest, documents, manuscripts, etc., that you might have an interest in sharing with those present. Conference Planning Committee member Lee Whiteley plans to have some of his material on display.

Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. Saturday morning, October 12, with presenters taking center stage at 8:15 a.m. You won't want to miss the presentations by Lee Whiteley, former SmHTA president Mike Olsen, and Peter Ferris, which will be followed by a panel discussion.

A Saturday trail tour has been arranged for our education and enjoyment, beginning at noon. Our annual membership meeting, awards presentation, banquet, and entertainment will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the hotel ballroom.

The conference ends Sunday, October 13 with a guided car caravan trail tour from Parker to Limon, Colorado. Along the way one of the sites we will view is the Elbert County Historical Society's Smoky Hill Trail exhibit which is under construction. Those of us who came down the trail from the east determined to reach "Pikes Peak or Bust" will have "busted" and return to our "eastern homes" after the tour.

As always, I look forward to our annual conference knowing it to be a time of renewing friendships and sharing our appreciation of the Smoky Hill Trail and its history.

Your board met in Burlington, Colorado, Saturday, July 20 and among the items discussed was our desire to schedule conferences at least five years out so as to eliminate or minimize conflicts which might keep our members from attending conferences. A tentative schedule places us at Russell, Kansas, in 2014, Manhattan, Kansas, in 2015 where we will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of Butterfield's Overland Despatch on the Smoky Hill Trail, Hays in 2016, returning to the site of our first annual conference to celebrate SmHTA's 10th anniversary, a Colorado site in 2017, and Atchison, Kansas, in 2018. These locations are tentative and are subject to change, so if anyone has any other recommendations for conference locations please relate your thoughts

to the board. The board is seeking ideas on how to properly celebrate the two anniversaries so please direct any thoughts our way.

Two of your board members, Lem Marsh, Oberlin, KS, and Roger Hanson, Parker, CO, experienced unfortunate conveyance problems associated with our Burlington board meeting. Roger experienced a buggy breakdown at Burlington enroute to the meeting and Lem used his new surrey to go deer hunting without his rifle on his trip home.

Our last station site studies were in Ellis County, Kansas, but we have suspended further studies until determination can be made as to what the studies need to include so as to support our efforts to have the Smoky Hill Trail designated a National Historic Trail.

We are in the process of seating a new chairman of the National Historic Trails Committee which is vacant due to the death of our able chairman Ron

**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.

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Harris. Ron was an active member who worked on legislation to direct the National Park Service to initiate a study to determine our eligibility and his leadership and expertise are sorely missed by the SmHTA. Currently we have no legislation filed with the sitting Congress to seek such a study.

Membership development and retention are always concerns and all of us are encouraged to invite those interested in the Smoky Hill Trail, its environs and events, as well as its eventual designation as a National Historic Trail to become members; and hobnobbing with our SmHTA group is just gol darn fun!

**REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL!**

—Mike Baughn

## DENVER: WEST END OF THE TRAIL

(continued from page 1)

Tis divided into many parts, Tis a Theater on a grand, grand scale." His diary appeared in the Spring 1986 issue of *Montana, the Magazine of Western History*.

Large gold discoveries in early 1859 prompted the "Pikes Peak Gold Rush" and the rapid growth of "Denver City."

### Arrival of the First Express

"On Saturday evening last—7th inst.—two coaches, the first of the 'Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express,' arrived in our city, having made the trip in nineteen days, bringing news from the States down to the 18th ult.; also nine through passengers. This is the beginning of the stupendous enterprise undertaken by the above named express company—the making of a new road, over a comparatively unknown country, and immediately stocking it with a working force of men, animals and wagons, sufficient to forward with promptness and dispatch a daily mail and passenger coach from each end of the line. The coaches which we have seen are the very best of Concord coaches, finished in the best style, and perfectly new, having never turned a wheel until their departure from Leavenworth." *Rocky Mountain News*, May 14, 1859.

The west end of William Russell and John S. Jones' short-lived express company followed what would become known as the Middle or "Starvation" Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail. This branch descended present-day Smoky Hill Road and followed Cherry Creek for nine miles.

Henry Villard was a passenger on the second set of stagecoaches over the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express. His description of Denver was reproduced in *Colorado Magazine*, November 1931. "DENVER CITY AND AURARIA . . . are situated immediately opposite each other, on both banks and right at the mouth of Cherry Creek and the South Platte, not being very high flung. I felt no disappointment when the cluster of log cabins, intermixed at intervals with frame structures and Indian lodges, rose upon my vision. Were it not for the beauty of the location and surrounding country, these two much talked about towns would indeed, be sorry places. Each of them



The "Early Denver" diorama was constructed in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration. Depicting central Denver in 1860, the refurbished display is now on exhibit in the lobby of History Colorado.

numbers from 100 to 150 structures. . . . Both towns contain a number of one-horse stores, the aggregate stock of which would hardly fill a third-class Western Row grocery; one or two abortive hotels, whose guests are obliged to repose on the bare ground, a number of whiskey dens that strongly indicate a precocity, as far as the spiritual wants of the inhabitants are concerned; and the inevitable appendages of border towns in the shape of legal, medical and land offices. . . . The most attractive feature in this and adjoining town is the beautiful mountain scenery, which one has constantly in view. . . . From Cherry Creek to the foot of the mountains, it is but a few miles of a mountain tour, is spoken of by all as paying for the journey across the plains alone."

### Another Great New Route

"It seems remarkable that Colorado should commemorate in the same week, and almost in the same day, the opening of two great routes of travel, both more central and of greater importance to her interests than any ever before opened, yet such is the fact. Col. Butterfield arrived from Atchison with the



Elephant Corral was a campground and stockyards built in 1859. Now an office complex, it is located on Wazee Street between 14th and 15th Streets.



The Pioneer Monument, at the corner of Broadway Street and Colfax Avenue in downtown Denver, was dedicated in 1911. A plaque noting this to be the end of the Smoky Hill Trail was added in 1936. The intersection is also "milepost 0.0" for all highways radiating from Denver.

first coach on Saturday last, thereby marking the consummation of his great enterprise. Bela M. Hughes expected to reach Empire City, over the Berthoud Pass, with his wagon road from the West. . . These two new roads, the Smoky Hill and Middle Park—will shorten the distance between St. Louis and San Francisco almost three hundred miles, compared with the present overland routes of travel. The importance of such a fact cannot be over-estimated." *Rocky Mountain News*, September 25, 1865.

A good wagon road over Berthoud Pass was not opened until 1874. Travel to distant points west was still over Ben Holladay's Overland Stage Line, which traveled north from Denver over sections of the old Cherokee Trail, before turning west through southern Wyoming.

David Butterfield's B.O.D. (Butterfield's Overland Despatch) route through eastern Colorado would become known as the South Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail. The trail descended present-day Hilltop Road and followed Cherry Creek for 20 miles. Butterfield sold to Ben Holladay in 1866. The "Stagecoach King" established what would be known as the North Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail. This branch entered Denver from the east.

#### The Iron Horse

The Kansas Pacific Railway, originally named the Union Pacific Railway Company, Eastern Division, followed closely the Smoky Hill Trail across Kansas, and east of Denver, the North Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail. It completed tracks to Denver in August 1870. The *Junction City Union*, noted on September 3, 1870: "Five years ago, trains that went through



The mural painted by Allen True is on display at the Brown Palace Hotel. Several other of his transportation-related murals are located throughout downtown Denver. True also designed the bucking-horse symbol used on Wyoming's license plates.

this country to Denver and the Pacific, consisted of mules, prairie schooners, rugged pioneer settlers, and split-bottom chairs. Five years, however, in the nineteenth century, bring about a wonderful change. At four o'clock p. m. on Thursday the excursion of the period passed through on its way to Denver. It was a gorgeous affair, a train of elegant palaces, improvements of the hour take the place of old canvas-covered wagons of 'ye olden time.' Now those retired servants of the emigrant stand on the shores of the Pacific with dry spindles and rusty tires—mementoes of the past. Pullman's palaces usurp their place on the great paths of travel."

#### The Automobile

Named "auto trails" began to appear in the early 1910s. The Golden Belt Road and Union Pacific Highway both became well-marked and somewhat maintained roads between Kansas City and Denver. Both followed the general path of the Smoky Hill Trail but paralleled more closely the Kansas Pacific Railway. The 1921 coast-to-coast Victory Highway followed this route. With the Federal numbering of highways in 1926, it was U.S. Highway 40 that followed the above named highways between Kansas City and Denver. West of Limon, the highways followed closely the North Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail, entering Denver from the east along East Colfax Avenue.

Interstate 70 completes the transportation system history along the Smoky Hill Trail.

#### BOARD NOMINATIONS NEEDED

THE SmHTA nominating committee, Bonita Oliva, chair, Kay Homewood, and David Richardson, is seeking nominations for officers and directors to submit to the membership in October. The president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer are elected annually and directors are elected for two-year terms (three directors are up for election this year: Jim Gray, Lem Marsh, and Joanne VanCoevern). All incumbents are eligible to serve again. Any member interested in serving on the board to provide direction to the association is encouraged to be a nominee. All nominees must agree in writing to serve if elected. Please submit nominations and agreement to serve if elected to Bonita Oliva, PO Box 1, Woodston KS 67675 or <bonita.oliva@hotmail.com> by September 1.

## TRAIL TREASURES

—DOCUMENTS—

### *Butterfield's Overland Despatch*

*The following article was printed in the Junction City Union, May 13, 1865.*

By reference to our news columns it will be seen that D. A. Butterfield, Esq., proposes to run his Overland Express on the Smoky Hill Route. Mr. Butterfield has at his command a cash capital of six millions, and control of one of the most gigantic enterprises of the day. His knowledge of the advantages of the Smoky Hill Route has induced him to propose to the business men of Leavenworth to open said Route provided certain aid was given him. Leavenworth, having awoke to her true interests, generously and judiciously tendered him the desired aid, and her citizens individually are giving him all aid and encouragement.

It is proposed to start the first train of one hundred and twenty-five wagons about the 20th of this month. A constructing train is wanted to go in advance, and do what work may be necessary with picks and shovels, that it may not be retarded.

Leavenworth furnishes twenty-five hands and five teams to the enterprise. It is expected that Manhattan and Junction City will each furnish ten men and a couple of wagons. It is the bounden duty of settlers all along this Valley to secure free ferries to this enterprise. Should a train once go over the Route, it will be thoroughly opened, and you will be repaid tenfold in the increased wealth of the country.

Junction City stands ready to do her share.

*The Union, June 17, 1865, reprinted the following notice from the Leavenworth Bulletin of June 13.*

Butterfield's Overland Express via the Smoky Hill Route, leaves to-day. The party is accompanied by a corps of engineers and an escort of troops sufficient for all emergencies. The party will be joined at Fort Riley by about 150 wagons from Atchison. The owners determined to try that route, it being much shorter than any other to the mountains.

*The same issue of the Union reprinted the following from the Leavenworth Times.*

The expedition to explore this new route to Denver, started on Tuesday morning. It is well manned. Intelligence and hardiness characterize officers and men of plains experience, too, and a thorough knowledge of outdoor life and Indian ways. We anticipate great results from the expedition. If successful, it will shorten the route to Denver materially, and open a new and more fertile country, to settlers and travelers.

*The same June 17 issue of the Union reported the following about David A. Butterfield.*

Last week the citizens of Atchison met, and paid D. A. Butterfield, Esq., a handsome compliment. It was a surprise. Busy with the work of the Great Overland

Dispatch Company, he did not think of compliments or dream of presents. But on Monday night, a week ago, a tablet of pure gold was presented to him by A. W. Spaulding, in behalf of good friends who had gathered together at his home. The occasion was one of jolity and good friendship. Judge Morton, Mr. Butterfield, Cols. Grafton and Martin spoke. The Atchison Champion describes the gift thus:

The tablet presented to Mr. Butterfield on the occasion, is of solid gold, and is three and three quarter inches wide, five inches long and half of an inch thick. It was enclosed in a very handsome rosewood case, lined with purple velvet. On one side was an engraving in the center, of a freighting wagon, drawn by three yoke of oxen, in charge of driver and loaded for the plains. Around it were the words:

BUTTERFIELD'S OVERLAND DISPATCH,

Established by

D. A. BUTTERFIELD, ESQ.,

JULY 5TH, 1865.

Upon the other side was engraven these words:

"Presented to D. A. Butterfield, by his employees, in token of their high estimation of him as a man and an employer."

A. W. Spaulding, General Agent; Wm Martin, Agent, Versey street, New York; J Q A Bean, Ag't, 21 State street, Boston; W A Moore, Agent, 40 South Fifth street, Philadelphia; H S Nickols, Agent, 34 Clark street, Chicago; S E Forsyth, Ag't, 11 South Main street, St. Louis; S A Kinney, Agent, Atchison; I E Eaton, Agent, Leavenworth; F M Hibbard, Agent, Denver, Colorado; C M Mackie, Book Keeper, Atchison; Saml Fuiqua, Shipping Clerk; J L Butterfield, Receiving Clerk, Atchison; James Fernald, Clerk, Atchison; H C Rogers, Transfer, Quincy, Ill.; John Rogers, Rocky Mountain Transfer, Denver.

After the supper, dancing was commenced, and kept up until about 3 o'clock in the morning, when the company dispersed, pleased and gratified with the elegant entertainment of the evening.

### **Memoirs of Captain Richard Watkins Musgrove on the Smoky Hill Trail, 1865-1866: Part II**

*Please see previous issue for brief biography of Musgrove and the beginning of this series of his service on the Smoky Hill Trail. His account picks up the story west of Salina when they encountered buffalo. He wrote:*

As we progressed, indications that we were in the vicinity of the buffalo multiplied, but it was not till the afternoon of the second day out that we had the opportunity of trying the mettle of our horses in a buffalo chase. Then, in company of several other officers, we rode a few miles in advance of the column, and soon saw a herd of six, a mile or so in advance to our left. They were tearing along at a rapid rate, leaving a cloud of dust behind them. It was but the work of a moment to note the direction they were traveling, and then, putting spurs to our

horses, we sought to reach a spot they would pass.

The ground here was a rolling prairie, and from the time we started till we reined up our horses a few minutes later on a commanding position, we had seen nothing of our game, but we had hardly time to take a long breath and look about us when these same animals came in sight, this time only a few rods distant and coming straight as an arrow to where we were. In looks, the buffalo is a most ferocious animal. In running, he carries his head near the ground, and a sharp, ugly eye from behind a mass of long tangled hair is enough to strike terror to any horse or man not accustomed to his habits. When wounded, the bulls are dangerous, but usually they will run before they will fight. Ordinarily a herd when traveling takes a straight course and is not easily turned to the right or left, but the statement so often heard that a herd of buffalo cannot be turned from its course is without foundation, as we several times demonstrated for the purpose of testing its truth. Ordinarily, the larger the herd the harder the work of turning it and the more persistently the leaders are followed. We do not mean that a herd may be turned square about, but simply that they may be turned from a straight course. On this occasion the buffalo advanced with a seeming determination to annihilate our party, then turned slightly to the left, and passed within a few feet of us. They struck terror to the horses, if not to the riders, and the horses reared and plunged to such an extent it was impossible to fire a shot. As soon as they had passed, we followed in hot pursuit, but it was impossible to overtake them, and they escaped. Though we frequently joined in the hunt later and saw herds extending many miles, yet on no subsequent occasion was the excitement equal to this afternoon. We could not dismiss them from our thoughts, when we closed our eyes that night, and all night long visions of flying herds were constantly seen, and our escapes from death beneath their hoofs were numerous and miraculous.

As we advanced, wolves became very numerous. There were two species, the small coyote, or prairie wolf, and the grey, or buffalo, wolf. The former, the most numerous, were but little larger than a fox, but the latter were much larger.

But few of the coyotes were seen in the day time, but as night approached, they gathered in vast numbers, frequently entirely surrounding our camp, being attracted from miles around by the odor of food. Then commenced a concert that lasted all night. Disappointed at not appeasing their appetites, it seemed that every wolf turned against his neighbor, and the air was filled with howls that baffle description. Multiply an ordinary cat concert a thousand times, and the reader may have some idea of the music that lulled us to sleep many a night. It seemed at times that, emboldened by their vast numbers, they certainly would rush into camp and devour the entire party, but beyond disturbing our slumbers they did us no harm. Later on, these concerts were more welcomed because it was said their presence indicated that no Indians were about.

Wood was a scarce article, and we depended almost entirely for fuel upon buffalo chips - dried buffalo manure. These chips were very plentiful, and immediately, upon halting for the night, a supply was gathered. The burning chips made a comfortable fire, emitting an odor like burning grass. Our camp stove was like a huge tunnel, placed on the ground, the top provided with a small funnel to carry off the smoke, but with no bottom. One difficulty with these chips was they made a great amount of ashes, and frequently the stove had to be lifted and the ashes thrown out, or the stove moved to a new position.

On the arrival of the command at his destination, Col. Tamblin at once established a post, which was named Fort Fletcher, near where now stands Fort Harper [Hays].

We were now in the heart of the Indian country. Indeed, along this creek, until our arrival, had been the homes of the red man, but they had now disappeared, and their disappearance was ominous of trouble, because all Indians, if friendly, are sure to make themselves familiar and generally offensively so. This spot was selected for a station because near by was timber in sufficient quantities to furnish material for the erection of quarters.

The two trains with supplies for Fort Fletcher were unloaded there and returned to Fort Leavenworth. After a rest of a day or two at Fort Fletcher, Capt. Strout, in command of Co. A, and I with my company, started for our destinations at Monument and Pond Creek, respectively. We took along two wagon trains of twenty-five six-mule wagons each and one train of nine wagons, having supplies for our stations.

The first three days out, the weather was fine, the trail in good condition, and we covered a longer distance than usual. A vast number of buffalo were in sight, and we killed two or three to furnish meat for the men of our commands. Indeed, as far as the eye could reach, the prairie was black with these great creatures, and the men were exceedingly impatient to go into camp that they might have an hour for hunting. In killing these buffalo for food, the young animals were always selected because the meat was so much more tender and palatable than that of the older ones; but compared with first class beef even the tenderest was tough. The steak of the older animals was simply masticated, and but seldom swallowed. Quite frequently only the tongue and liver were taken for food.

On the fourth day - Sunday - we went into camp early, about noon, a favorable place for feeding the mules being offered on the bottom land on the Smoky Hill river. Without authority from Capt. Strout, who was the ranking captain and therefore in command, the small train of nine wagons under a wagon master named Livingstone, had gone into camp nearly a quarter of a mile from the others. This man, since leaving Leavenworth, had been making complaints that the men of the other trains were stealing from his train and so he wanted to be by himself. The buffalo had largely passed out of sight, but Capt.

Strout and many of the men and teamsters promptly went hunting after getting settled in camp. About the middle of the afternoon, while reading in my tent, a soldier came in from off the prairie in breathless haste and reported that he had seen Indians. Taking my field glass I ascended a bluff close at hand, and at once discovered a band of Indians mounted on fleet ponies, stampeding the mules of Livingstone's train. Swinging their blankets in the air and yelling like demons, they swept down upon the herd guarded by only a few teamsters. The Indians paid no attention to the herders, so intent were they in securing the animals, and the herders, mute with astonishment, offered not the least resistance. Every mule in the herd, fifty-seven in number, in a wild fright, was instantly flying over the prairie, followed by the Indians.

Leaving Lieut. Hedge in command of the camp, I hastily mounted a small number of men on mules and started in pursuit. But the Indians had had a start of several minutes, and, realizing the hopelessness of overtaking them, not even once seeing them after I started, after a few miles ride, I returned to camp and directed efforts to prevent further surprises and losses. The mules belonging to the other trains were brought up, and the trains corralled with the tents, or bivouac, for the men inside the corral. Then taking enough harnessed mules I went with teamsters to Livingstone's camp and drew his nine wagons to our camp. Here the contents of his wagons were distributed among the wagons of the other trains and the empty wagons abandoned.

The next June, in going east, I saw these same wagons still standing where we had left them. The afternoon and night passed without further alarm, but towards night a smoke was seen a few miles to the west, which we understood to mean that the Indians were at work at a ranch just west of us, and so the events of the morrow proved.

The next morning we moved early. As a precautionary measure the canvas on the tops of the wagons was rolled back a few feet from the front and, on each wagon, one or two men were posted in readiness to fire on any advancing foe, and the teamsters had orders, in case of an attack, to instantly throw the trains into a corral. In order that this might be done the more readily, the trains moved in two parallel columns.

We had proceeded but a few miles when I discovered with my glass a party seated on the ground in a circle, in true Indian style, a half mile in advance of us. Supposing this party to be Indians I took a dozen men and advanced under cover of a ravine to within rifle shot, intending to fire on them without warning, but, I discovered that the party consisted of six white men and two women. One of the men approached me with his head uncovered and I approached him in the same way. They were ranchers in the employ of the Overland Dispatch Company at stations west of us. They reported that the Indians had driven off all the stock of the company at their stations, and that they had left the

ranches, fearing a return of the savages and the loss of their lives. They had been traveling east for two days with but little food, keeping all the time in the ravines from fear of being discovered. They reported that the night before they had passed to the north of the next ranch west of us and saw a fire there and heard screams, and they feared the ranchmen were being tortured by the Indians. We gave these people food and they gladly accepted our proposition to remain with us.

The ranches, spoken of above, were habitations of the rudest description possible, sometimes simply holes in the ground, covered with brush and earth, where one or two men lived all alone, from twelve to fifteen miles distant from neighbors, their occupation being to care for the stock necessary to operate the proposed stage line and change the horses or mules of the stage coaches that were expected but did not come, at least that year. That men could be found for such a duty as this seems incredible, and yet the company found plenty to perform this service, a single man being found at some of these ranches, and at others a man and his wife.

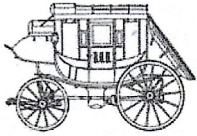
### Indian Cruelties

As we approached the next ranch, Downer's, on our march, in company with two or three others I rode ahead of the train a little, and a ghastly sight met our eyes. Here we found three dead men. The body of one lay in front of the ranch, stripped of all clothing, and from his chest protruded more than twenty arrows. One was driven into his ear and ghastly wounds had been inflicted on various parts of his body. Not far away lay another dead man, also nude, his body pierced with many arrows, his tongue cut out, and he was otherwise shamelessly mutilated. In the rear of the ranch a still more sickening sight met our view. Here the fiends had made a fire of boards, that had just been delivered there for the construction of quarters, and such other combustible material as the ranch afforded, and across the yet smouldering embers lay the body of a man half consumed from the knees to the shoulders. The arms were drawn to the chest, the hands clenched, and every feature of the face indicated that the man had died in agony. Without doubt he had been burned alive. Not content with this, before leaving their victim, they had inflicted other indignities on the lifeless remains. When we removed the remains for burial the elbows unjointed. Our friends whom we had rescued had rightly divined that fiendish work was being enacted here when they passed this point the night before.

We halted here long enough to give the remains of these men decent burial and then resumed the march, but we had proceeded but two or three miles when we found further work of these fiends on the day before. The Indians had evidently overtaken a party of three carpenters, in the employ of the Overland company, on the road with a wagon drawn by two mules. It was evident the men had deserted the wagon, probably hoping the Indians cared more for the plunder than for them, but none escaped. The mules had been taken and the wagon burned. About

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forty rods from the wagon one man was struck down, and there we found his remains, and a little further off the remains of the second man were found. Both of these had evidently fallen easy victims to the savages, but not so the third. He had succeeded in reaching a "buffalo wallow" and there evidently had made a gallant fight for his life. A buffalo wallow is a large circular hole in the ground made by the buffalo. The buffalo, in order to rid himself of tormenting insects, lies on the ground, and kicks himself around in a circle using one horn for a pivot. Having once started a wallow, the same spot is used by many animals in turn until they sometimes excavate a space a foot deep and fifteen feet in diameter, and this depression with the earth thrown up on the rim of the circle made a breastwork that afforded considerable protection for a man with modern arms.

It was in one of these wallows that the third man had taken refuge, and the large number of empty shells of the Smith & Wesson rifle, lying about, showed that he had sold his life as dearly as possible. But in time his ammunition was exhausted and then he, too, fell a victim. These three, like the three found earlier in the day, had been mutilated but evidently not till death had claimed them. Again we paused long enough to bury the dead and then resumed the march. A sharp lookout was kept during the day for Indians. None showed themselves, however, but smoke was seen in various directions, indicating their presence within a short distance, and possibly signalling among themselves.

This day vast numbers of buffalo were seen. Indeed, our march all day was through immense herds extending as far as the eye could reach, all moving south, as usual, at this season of the year. At times they were on the run and there was great danger of stampeding the train. At such times the men could see in their movements the directing hand

of the Indians. No buffalo were killed this day as the discharge of a gun was to be the signal of danger. On the whole the day was one of great anxiety and danger. When we started in the morning, nearly two full days' march lay between us and Monument but, in view of existing conditions, it was thought best to cover the distance that day. A halt was made at noon, the mules fed from the grain in the wagons and we again pushed on. We reached Monument just at night and here we found a company of the 13th Missouri Cavalry under command of Capt. Schnell, which had preceded us a week or two, to do garrison duty in connection with Co. A of our battalion. Another company of this cavalry, under command of Capt. McMichael, had gone to Pond Creek to do garrison duty in connection with my company.

*(continued next issue)*

### NEW SmHTA MEMBERSHIPS

New members since last issue.

#### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Don Fisk, 1526 Wyoming Ave, Cody WY 82414

David L. William, 17095 E Ithaca Cir, Aurora CO 80013

#### TRAIL CALENDAR

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

**Oct. 11-13, 2013:** 7th Annual SmHTA Conference, Parker CO.

#### EDITOR'S REQUEST

All SmHTA members are reminded that articles for *Overland Dispatch* are welcome any time. Please contact Editor Ann Liston at <aliston@fhsu.edu>. The deadline for the next issue is November 1, 2013.

**Keep track of the Smoky Hill Trail Association on our website: <http://smokychilltrail.com>**