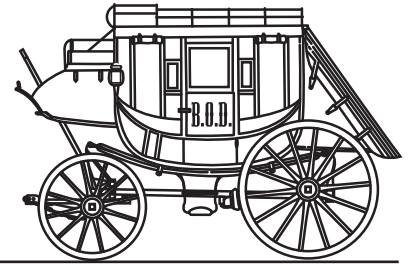


OVERLAND DESPATCH



Volume XV No. IV

Winter 2023

Remember the Smoky Hill Trail



2023 ELTON BEOUGHER MEMORIAL SHTA GRANT AWARD PRESENTED

Presented to Garrett Seuser, for his historical research and documentation of the finds at crossings and sites along the Smoky Hill Trail.

locations. For me, the true treasures of Trego County are the people that live there. Thank you again, each one of you.

I would like to thank our conference presenters. They all did an excellent job and were well received. Presenters were: Garrett Seuser, Wes Brown, Wade Davis, Leo Oliva, Bryron Strom, Mike Baughn, Dave & Anita Schneider, Marla Matkin, and Don Rowlinson.

This is my last article as 2024 will bring new leadership, new ideas, and new directions. Bob Andersen will be our new president. I will return to the vice-president position. I will continue on the conference committee for one more year and will do the planning for 2024 Conference in Leavenworth, Kansas... October 18, 19 & 20.

See you there! *Jim*



Jim Mayhew, President
Smoky Hill Trail Association

ALONG THE TRAIL... WITH JIM

Wow, the final *Overland Despatch* edition for 2023. This year has gone by rather rapidly.

All the good things you want to happen to an organization have happened to us this year. We have grown, we are financially stable, and we are telling the story of the trail in different ways, and people are noticing.

I would like to thank each individual on the board and committee members for all your hard work this year. A big "Thank You" to all the members for your support.

The 2023 Conference has come and gone. I hope you didn't miss it as it went well. A special thank you is included in this newsletter for all the Trego County Historical Society Museum, Trego County, the City of WaKeeney, and the people that contributed to the success of our conference. Our theme "Discovering the Treasures of Trego County" took us to lots of different time frames, different subjects, and



2023 DONNA MALSOM MEMORIAL AMBASSADOR AWARD

Presented to Marla Matkin, for fostering a passion for history in youth with stories of the Smoky Hill Trail, including publications of her book, "A Dragon's Tale".

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the Trail.

Eileen Bellairs
Ogallah, KS

Larry Hixson
WaKeeney, KS

Donald McGuirk
Kansas City, MO

Shirley Popp
Hoxie, KS

Dean Unrein
Gorham, KS

Dennis Will
Chapman, KS

Andrew Peterson
Topeka, KS

Jim Wohlenhaus
Flagler, CO

John Benkelman
WaKeeney, KS


Don Fick
Sheridan, WY

Michelle Sankale
Centennial, CO

THE TOPEKA BRIDGE FINISHED.

*The Great Crossing of the Kansas
River Completed!*

**On Saturday, 1st. day May, '58,
THE TOPEKA BRIDGE**

THE first and ONLY Bridge across the
Kaw river, was finished, and is now being
crossed hourly by trains and teams of all
descriptions.  Rates of toll reasonable.

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 historical 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 submitted to smokyhilltrailassn@gmail.com or mailed to the address below.

Submissions become the property of SHTA and may be edited or abridged at the editor's discretion. All rights reserved.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Association is open to all. Members receive the **OVERLAND DESPATCH** newsletter quarterly. Memberships are on the upcoming calendar year until December 31. Annual dues are:

- \$25.00 for Individual
- \$30.00 for Family / Living at same address
- \$40.00 for Institution / Nonprofit Organizations
- \$50.00 for Business
- \$100.00 for Patron (Support the Organization)
- \$500.00 Lifetime Membership*

* May be paid in quarterly installments during one or two years.

Membership fees may be paid through PayPal using email address: smokyhilltrailassn@gmail.com or mailed to the address below. Other donations are always welcome and appreciated.

Smoky Hill Trail Association
PO Box 978 / Hays, KS 67601

SHTA OFFICERS

- President: Jim Mayhew, Abilene, KS
- Vice President: Bob Andersen, Genoa, CO
- Secretary: Mike Baughn, Brewster, KS
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- Marla Matkin, Hill City, KS
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Newsletter Editor: Tanner Mayhew, St. Joseph, MO

The Kansas Tribune (Topeka, KT), May 8th, 1858

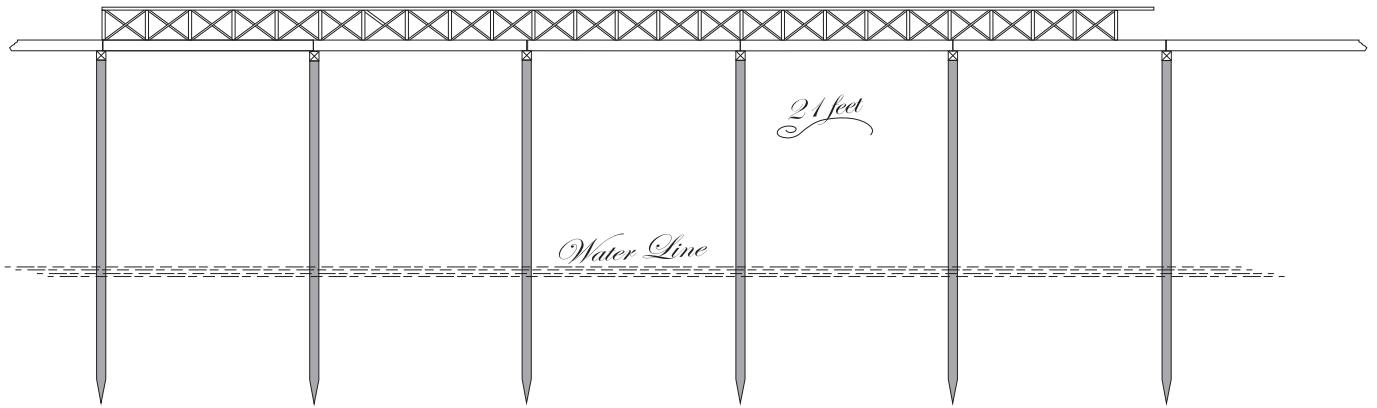
The Value and Importance of a Bridge.

The completion of the bridge across the Kaw river at this place, has opened one of the greatest thoroughfares of the West. The tide of travel across the river at this point is increasing daily and hourly, and at the present rates will soon become a volume of moving humanity, unprecedented in all previous migratory movements.

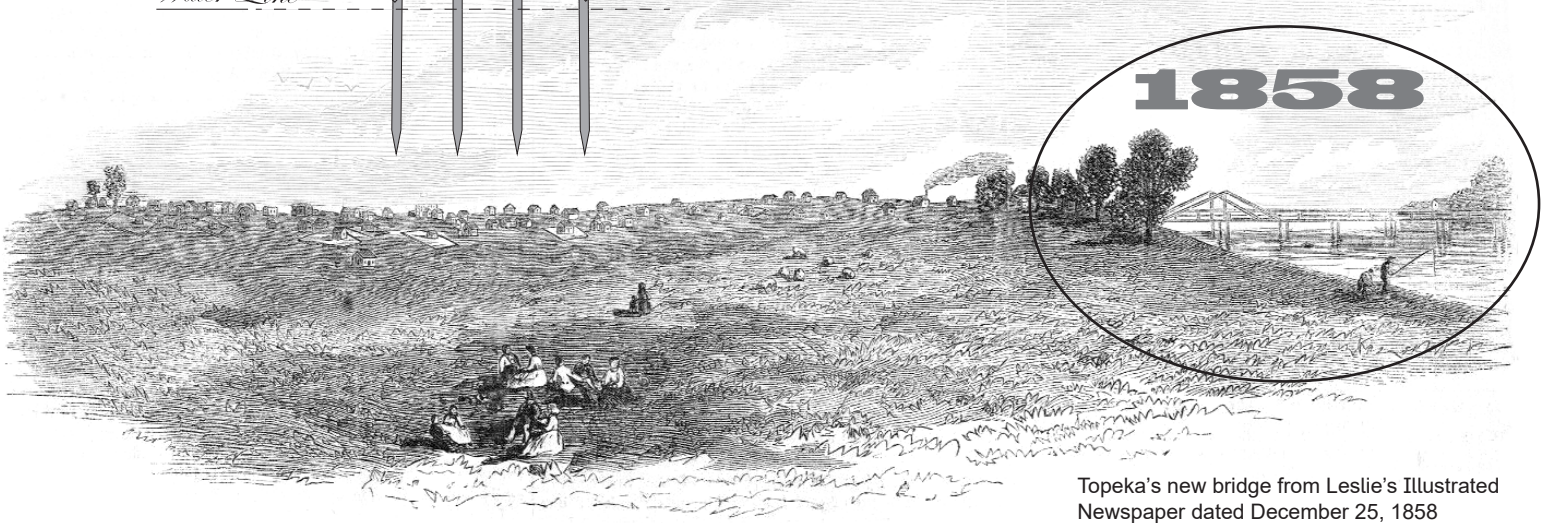
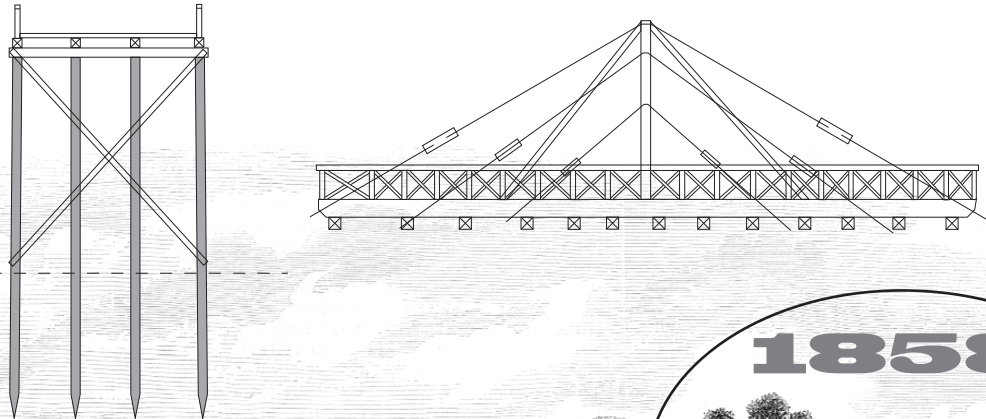
Beside the local travel for miles up and down the river, which is itself very considerable, this is the point of crossing for all trains from Southern and Southeast Kansas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and much of the travel to Utah and Oregon. Several trains have already crossed, going to and coming from Santa Fe, and also going to California, many of them have herds of cattle, which it is very troublesome and expensive as well as dangerous to ferry over such a stream as the Kaw, with its swift current and shifting bed.

The perfect safety of this crossing is a very great inducement for emigrants to even travel out of their way if necessary, to avoid crossing by the old method of ferrying. Serious accidents have frequently occurred in ferrying, in despite the most careful management, and valuable teams have been entirely lost, and goods damaged by unlooked for obstruction in the river, and the natural restiveness of animals while crossing on the light boats which are necessarily used in ferrying.

The saving of time, too, is an important item to the emigrant on a long journey, frequently amounting with large trains, to several days. The bridge is 900 feet long, and 16 feet wide, and 20 emigrant wagons and teams, or 250 head of cattle can pass upon it at the same time, with safety and convenience, so that not a moment of time is necessarily lost; all passing over with the same despatch, safety and comfort, as on the level ground.



This illustration of the Topeka Bridge was redrawn, tracing over the original pencil drawn plans by Jones, Kidney & Co. of 1857



Topeka's new bridge from Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper dated December 25, 1858

With such a convenience as this for crossing, emigrants to all parts of the south and west will not be long in finding their way hither, judging, and correctly too, that a few miles of extra travel, if necessary to reach a perfectly safe and speedy crossing, is cheaper than the risk their teams and goods on a frail boat, liable at any moment, to the hidden dangers of this capricious stream.

The Kansas Herald of Freedom, July 24, 1858

High Water.

For the last ten days we have been visited by a flood, which has forced the river out of their channels, and in some instances has caused great damage in some localities. The Kansas river has been full, and along the low bottoms has overflowed, causing great injury. The Topeka bridge, without doubt, has been carried away, as large quantities of bridge materials floated past this place on Sunday last.

Fifty Men

Wanted immediately, to work on the Topeka Bridge, to whom good wages will be given.

JONES, KIDNEY & CO.

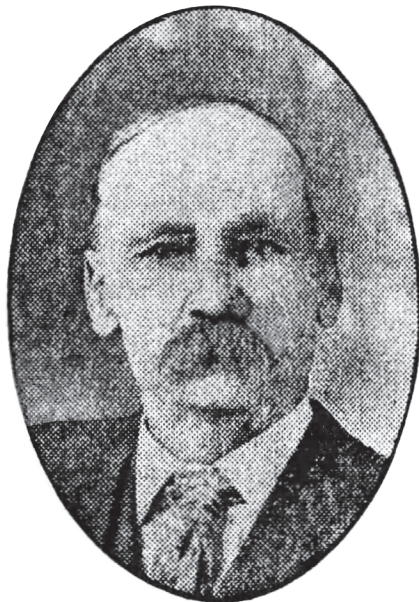
The Kansas Tribune, January, 20th, 1859

The Topeka Bridge.

Efforts are now being made to have the crossing of the Kansas river completed in two months from the present time. Mr. Gordon, the President of the Company, informed us that this could be done by building the bridge from the Island to the opposite side of the river, and running a ferry on this side of the Island until the whole length could be completed, which can be done in about four months, with the present efficient corps of workers. The timbers have been contracted for and men are busily engaged preparing them for use. But a few months and we can again cross the river at Topeka on a Bridge.

EDITOR - As I was looking for something interesting that depicted the way of life on the Smoky Hill Trail, back in the day, I came across the obituary of John Warner. It gives good insight as to the way of life then. A name mentioned in John's obituary had a perkily past.

I'll share both with you...



John Warner

John Warner was born August 10th, 1838 in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. He passed February 14th, 1907 at age 68 in Atchison County, Kansas.

John Warner traveled to Atchison, Kansas Territory from White Pigeon, Michigan in 1859 -- at the time the Pike's Peak rush was on. Warner enlisted in the First Kansas at the outbreak of the war. He was wounded at the battle of Springfield in 1861. After his recovery he re-enlisted in 1862. He was attached to General Blunt's body guard for eight months, and participated in the affair with Quantrell raiders at Baxter Springs, Missouri, where all but four of his party were killed. For his bravery he received the Accolade of Chivalry honor.

After his discharge from service, he was a stage coach driver on the western plains. John worked on the Butterfield and Holliday

stage lines. He went through with the first party to establish stations for the Butterfield stage (BOD). They were strung along twelve miles apart from Atchison to Denver, and a wagon and twelve mules were left at each station.

John never experienced any trouble with Indians, but used to tell of a trip he made with **Sandy Corbin**. When at Plum Creek, about halfway between Atchison and Denver, they passed through a settlement of adobe houses and saw the bodies of twelve men, all scalped. There had been trouble there, but not a soul was left to tell about it.

John Warner passed at his home in Shannon and is buried at the Lancaster Cemetery.

Massacre of Blunt's Column

Maj. Gen. James G. Blunt, was moving his command headquarters south from Fort Scott, Kansas to Fort Smith, Arkansas when they were attached by Quantrill's men which outnumbered them.

Quantrill's men, wearing Federal uniforms took the Federals by surprise, killing most of the detachment, including many who attempted to surrender. Among the dead was a military band, Maj. Henry Z. Curtis (son of Maj. Gen. Samuel R. Curtis), and Johnny Fry (first official westbound rider of the Pony Express), a total of 103 men. Also killed was James R. O'Neill, an artist/correspondent for Leslie's Weekly. A few men escaped to Fort Baxter and soldiers went out to search for survivors; there were few, but Blunt was among them.

Sandy Corbin

Sandy Corbin was a noted freighter, horse enthusiast and somewhat of a bully in Atchison. The following are storys from newspapers that tell of his interesting and colorful life.

1863 Lynching in Atchison

One day a boy in western part of Atchison county was hanged by the notorious Sterling gang because he would not tell where his mother's money was. This stirred the souls of the populace and vengeance was vowed.

A mass meeting was held in Atchison and Joe Hilton made a speech urging the people to act. A vigilance committee was organized. The leaders were Hilton Barnes, **Sandy Corbin** and George Fanchild. Sterling and three of his mean were captured. "Pony" McDonald escaped. Sterling was identified and admitted his guilt. The other two desperadoes declared that they were innocent. Johnny Kingston ran across McDonald at Geary City and told him that if he would return to Atchison and identify the Sterling gang, he would not be prosecuted. The proposition was accepted, and McDonald identified the three outlaws. The committee then arrested McDonald.

A trail was held before a jury of twelve men. Both sides were represented by counsel. The jury found the desperadoes guilty and they were sentenced to death.

Sterling was the first man hanged. He was placed in a wagon, which stood under an elm tree. The rope was then adjusted and the outlaw was asked if he had anything to say. He replied: "Not a word. Pull the rope. You can't make me blubber. I'm the best damn man in Kansas." **Sandy Corbin**, one of the lynching party, was somewhat of a fighter himself and did not like Sterling's talk. "Men," Sandy said to the lynchers, "if you will postpone proceedings ten minutes I will take the conceit out of this scoundrel." The committee thought it would not be proper to let Sandy whip Sterling before hanging him. **Sandy Corbin**

gave the word, and a group of men took hold of the wagon and pulled it from under the bold bushwhacker where he strangled to death. The other outlaws were hanged in the same manner.

The lot, in Atchison, upon which the Globe building stood was once won by Peter Urie in a poker game. He owned it just about twelve hours, when he traded it to **Sandy Corbin** for a saddle and bridle. For benefit of those who will express surprise that the proper Mr. Urie ever indulged in a quiet game, it is stated that it occurred when poker was as legitimate as pitching horse shoes. (Peter Urie ran for Sheriff of Atchison county in 1879, but did not win the nomination.)

John McBratney's stallion "Bellfounder" that cost \$500 took first premium and was the admiration of everyone. Dr. Challiss' gray horse "Prairie Boy" driven by **Sandy Corbin** of Atchison won the trotting prize, while in a scrub race between seven horses. C. E. Joy of Sabetha won the score. Joy's cream colored trotting horse also carried off the blue ribbon as the best single buggy horse.

Gabe Wade came to Atchison in 1859. For three years he worked as a clerk at McCubbin's store. After clerking, he became as a plains freighter for six years. It was during this time that he worked a wild buffalo in an ox team, which made him famous. After being broken, the buffalo bull was an excellent work animal. He brought the buffalo bull to Atchison and used it for a time in breaking prairie. The following winter, the animal became very fat from running in corn fields and was killed for Christmas meat.

Gabe Wade was also famous because of a fight he had with **Sandy Corbin**, the local bully. The fight lasted sixteen minutes, and was a draw. Although, at the end of the fight Corbin was bleeding like a stuck pig.

Atchison Free Press Mon. Oct 2, 1865

One of the features of the fair will be a tournament, under the superintendence of **Sandy Corbin**.



Tom Ray, was a blacksmith, who conducted an extensive shop, and did an enormous business building and repairing wheels and shoeing horses and mules for the plainsmen.

Ray was driven away from Atchison in '61, on account of his strong Southern sentiments, and left his business in an unsettled condition. After an absence of several weeks, he returned to Winthrop (*Winthrop is directly east of Atchison on the Missouri side of the river*) and sent for a number of prominent Republican leaders, and informed them that he came to settle up his business affairs preparatory to going to Montana and asked for their protection. It was granted, and that day Ray reappeared at the Massasoit house, where he had lived.

Sandy Corbin, a notorious character who prospered phenomenally just after the war began, had become a leading citizen during Ray's absence. Corbin was a small man; Ray a

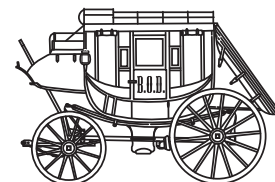
giant. Spying Ray in the barroom of the hotel, Corbin approached and began an insolent and offensive conversation. Corbin used profanity to express his gratification of the death of confederate Major Weightman, which was a close friend to Ray. This was more than Ray could stand, and he notified Corbin that he must clear out or be thrashed. Corbin rushed to his room, buckled on two revolvers, pulled them forward into plain sight and reappeared at the barroom. Ray looked at him for a moment, and paying no attention to the shooting irons, seized Corbin by the collar and slack of the trousers, slammed him face downward on a billiard table. With an open hand he spanked him until he was almost insensible. This done, Ray packed his grip, made a bee-line for the ferry boat, and hiked for Montana. Corbin was confined to his room for three or four days afterwards.

The Atchison Daily Champion Sept 5, 1867

Sandy Corbin has come back to Atchison bringing with him an ingenious clothes-pin, the patent for which has been secured. Dr. Burge, Judge Kingman and others, who are interested in patents and inventions, pronounce this instrument a most excellent point attained in improvement. They tried it, and know!

Western Home Journal Nov 30, 1871

Dead. -- "**Sandy**" **Corbin**, of Atchison, well known among horse dealers, died in the that city on the 24th. While driving on the race course at the Kansas City Exposition he was run into by another vehicle, and received injuries from which he died.





A BIG THANK YOU! TO THE

Trego County Historical Society Museum

For their exceptional hosting & courtesy given to the

SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION 2023 CONFERENCE



DISCOVERING THE TREASURES OF TREGO COUNTY

Board of Directors:

Brianna LaMotte, Eric Wilds, Delbert Bollig,
Peggy White, John Benkelman, Eileen Bellairs,
William Deines, John Mong, and Eeva Rumpel

Planning Committee:

Marjean Deines, Brianna LaMotte, and Cathy Albert

Bus Tour:

Cathy Albert, Dave Hendricks, Amber McLaughlin,
and Larry Pearson

Local Sponsors:

Bosselman Energy, Inc., Dreher's Carquest Auto Parts,
Old 40 Auto Care, Terry & Holly Trego Family,
Tim Trego, and WaKeeney Travel & Tourism

Banquet PA System: Golden Prairie Extension / Dist. #12

Banquet Fall Table Decorations: The Plant Barn

Banquet Drawing Gift: Edna Mae Deines



Editor -- *The SHTA Conference in WaKeeney was enjoyable and informative. The presentations were very enlightening and abounded in a wide spectrum of history and knowledge. The Trego County Historical Society Museum was an excellent venue! The folks and businesses listed above went out of their way to make us feel welcome and made our conference a success.*

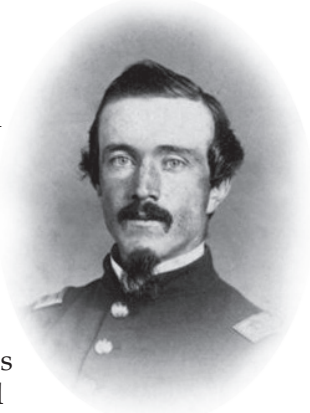
I was so impressed with the museum that I chose to add some Trego county history in this newsletter. The conference theme: DISCOVERING THE TREASURES OF TREGO COUNTY truly turned into a challenge for me! Trego County abounds with history -- Fremont, California and Pikes Peak gold seekers, Mormons on their famous hegira from Nauvoo, the Fort Downer massacre, native Americans, and so much more. In this newsletter I am only going to highlight a small sampling: Trego County naming; KPRW promoting; WaKeeney naming and Threshing Machine Canyon.

TREGO COUNTY NAMING

Before Kansas became a state the Smoky Hill Trail was promoted as the shortest route to the gold fields and gold seekers dauntlessly took this route. About the close of the Civil War the trail became open to regular travel. The trail became known as the Butterfield (BOD) or Denver Trail. As the trail pertains to Trego County, there were several stations located in the county. From east to west were Louisa Springs or Stormy Hollow, White Rock or Bluffton,

Fort Downer, and Castle Rock Creek or Hackberry.

The Smoky Hill Trail was soon superseded by the Union Pacific Railway Company, Eastern Division that built across Trego county in 1867. For several months the terminus of the line was at a station called Coyote, located a short distance west of today's Collyer. Another station called Trego Tank was located west of today's WaKeeney.



Capt. Edgar Poe Trego

In 1867, the legislature gave Trego County its present boundaries and the name was chosen to honor Edgar Poe Trego, Captain of Company H, 8th, Kansas Infantry. Captain Trego was killed during the first day's fight at Chickamauga, Sept., 19, 1863. He was struck by a Confederate sharpshooter while trying to remove a wounded soldier from the battlefield.

NOTE: Graham, Norton, Trego, Rooks & Sheridan counties were all named for Civil War soldiers.

The following is promotional information that was printed in an 1872 Kansas Pacific Railway brochure.

TREGO AND GRAHAM COUNTIES.

About three-fourths of the land is rich smooth prairie, and the balance good bottom. The Smoky Hill and Saline rivers run through Trego, with several branches of the latter running northward through Graham county. There is an abundance of building stone, and from a recent survey, made by the Geological Department of Yale College, a superior vein of coal exists, closely resembling the famous Cannel coal. There has also been discovered near Parks Fort, in Trego county, a fine deposit of very pure chalk, an absolute rarity throughout the United States.

As to the soil, Mr. J. C. Henry(*), of Parks Fort, writes: "Take a spade, after three days drizzling rain, and dig anywhere on our new ground, you will find the earth as dry as dust one foot from the surface; you can retain the moisture in the loose earth among the roots of your grain, by plowing say six inches deep you have splendid prospects."

The lands for sale by the Railway Company comprise 34,938 acres.

NOTE: (*) J. C. Henry became the Postmaster at Park's Fort in 1874, three years after this brochure was printed.



Editor -- Below is an article from "The Kansas Pacific Homestead" issued January of 1875. In my research, the only reference to Keim that I could find was a depot located west of today's WaKeeney. This brings up the question: Did Keim not develop -or- was it just a Kansas Pacific marketing ploy to sell land? I should also add that Beverley R. Keim, the General Passenger Agent for the Kansas Pacific Railway, is the one doing this promoting.

The New Town of Keim, in Trego Co., Kansas

A company of gentlemen, consisting of Hon. S. W. Moulton, George D. Chafee, Charles J. Dexter, John R. Harding, Hamilton W. Hall, Henry E. Walt, John E. Ward, and Daniel N. Harwood, Shelbyville, Illinois, and twenty others, with J. K. Boyer, Esq., of Kansas, Edgar county, Illinois, the 2d day of December, 1874, bought from the Kansas Pacific Railway Company, 10,000 acres of land in Trego county, and a section through which the railroad runs, has been surveyed and laid out by them as a town, designing to make it the county seat of this new county.

As a compliment to the General Passenger Agent, Mr. Beverley R. Keim, they have named their town "Keim."

The nine gentlemen above named, with the several citizens of Kansas, have been incorporated under the laws of Kansas, as "The Keim (Trego County) Town and Land Company."

..... **Editor** -- This article goes on to describe how the gentlemen have capital and that the town's layout plan has 2,500 lots - dedicating a block for a court house, school and church. They plan on building a stone hotel and store, school house to start the town. In a nutshell -- the rest of the article is an advertisement about the quality of the land and water, how one would flourish living in Trego county, and to buy stock...which it also states - they would agree to sell the hotel and store property and divide the proceeds pro rata with holders of stock.

The "Seed" that grew into WaKeeney

This ad was published in newspapers in towns along the Kansas Pacific Railway in June & July 1874.

UNITED STATES CENTENNIAL COMMISSION
INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION
1876.

} Kansas Pacific Railway
 } General Passenger Office
 } Kansas City, June 1st, 1874

To my friends in Kansas and Colorado.

I will be very much indebted if you will send me during the season, choice specimens of your productions, in the way of fruit, vegetables, wheat, rye, oats, corn, and grain generally, in the stalk and threshed: grasses, forage plants, etc. Also specimens of your mineral, building stone, coal, ores and anything which will aid me to attract settlers to your country.

I am arranging for my personal use, a cabinet of Minerals, to be designated as "Keim's Colorado Specimens," which will comprise choice specimens of Colorado gold, silver, copper, lead and minerals generally, and all stones which will bear a polish for cut for ornamental purposes. The collection will be displayed in my office here, and used at various Fairs and Expositions throughout the country, and finally will be displayed, in splendid style, at the great **Centennial Exhibition, at Philadelphia.** I believe you have some knowledge of my past efforts to advance your country and hope you will assist me in every way in your power to go on with the good work. Send all specimens to me by express - I will pay charges; to enable me to acknowledge receipt, which I will do in every case.

Very truly yours,
 Beverly R. Keim, Gen'l Pass'r Agt.

Continued next page

Kansas Lands in Trego Co.

—ON THE—

Kansas Pacific R. R.

A SPECIALTY.

OFFICE OF

WARREN, KEENEY & CO.,

Dealers in Real Estate,

106 Dearborn St., Chicago,

AND Wa-Keeney, Trego Co., Kan.

The Name Origin of WA-KEENEY

Among the many thousands who visited the **Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia**, in 1876, was James F. Keeney, a land speculator from Chicago. Keeney was astonished by the wonderful display made by Kansas and the favorable comments he heard about the resources of Kansas. James then and there decided it would be the basis of his future plans. Believing there would soon be a tide of immigration to Kansas he knew it would be wise to get in ahead of this immigration and secure as much land as possible - before prices increased.

After returning to Chicago, James elaborated to his business partner, Albert Warren, about what he saw and heard at the Exhibition about Kansas. Together they planned a visit to explore the prospects of Kansas. They traveled across the state, along with James' brothers John Keeney and Charles Keeney, as well as agents George Barrel, Thomas Peck, W. S. Harrison, C. Street, and F. O. Ellsworth, inspecting the land. They selected Trego County as the best adapted to carry out their plans to build a good town with a prosperous community in the West.

Trego County seemed most favorable for such a grand enterprise on account of its location, good railroad facilities, rich and fertile soil, abundant supply of water in the nature of springs, creeks, and two small rivers running through the county, beautiful rolling prairies, abundance of fine building stone, lime and the fact that it was already known as the "Golden Belt," famous for wheat production.

Keeney secured for his firm, Warren, Keeney & Co., about one hundred thousand acres of these lands, then went back to Chicago to put into

operation the plans for building and developing this new country, which was almost unknown to the civilized world.

They decided to name the town WA-KEENEY, a portmanteau of their surnames, and billed it as "The Queen City of the High Plains" in their advertising and to hold celebrations to attract settlers.

The town was surveyed and laid out in January 1878. Wa-Keeney was laid out on one entire section (640 acres) located about the center of the large tract of land they purchased, which made it nearly in the center of Trego County. Everybody seemed bent upon making this a large town based on the location which was half way between the two large cities, Kansas City and Denver. The hopes were also, being surrounded by the richest and best wheat land in Kansas in the great "Golden Belt," Wa-Keeney would be the future granary of Kansas.

The first house built on the town site was put up by Peck & Ellsworth, late in 1877, and was used as a real estate office. At that time these gentlemen lived in a "dug out" at Trego Station.

The town's streets all cross each other at right angles. Each street was eighty feet wide with the exception of some streets by which the court house square is bounded, each of which is one hundred feet in width. Wa-Keeney was laid out after the most approved fashion, as Warren, Keeney & Co. had large experience in building towns, having laid out and built several of the suburbs of Chicago.

Before the survey of the town site was completed, people began flocking to Wa-Keeney by the score. The majority of them were coming from Chicago and vicinity. Ideally so, given the amount of the advertising and the excursions that Warren, Keeney & Co. had promoted in the Chicago area.

About one hundred carpenters were kept busy night and day, and yet houses could not go up fast enough to accommodate the people. Buildings would



be occupied long before they were finished. Although they sprung up as if by magic, "more houses" was still the cry.

The immense crops of that year added to the rush, and during the fall of 1878 and spring of 1879, Wa-Keeney was literally jammed with people.

The town site became one of the most beautiful on the Kansas Pacific Railway, and could be seen from ten to twenty miles away! The regularity and beauty of the design of its streets have done much to show off the place. It was the general remark of everyone who visited the place: "What a beautiful town site! What fine, broad streets! Wa-Keeney looks more like a New England city than a Western town."

Trego county was organized in June of 1879, with Wa-Keeney as the county seat.

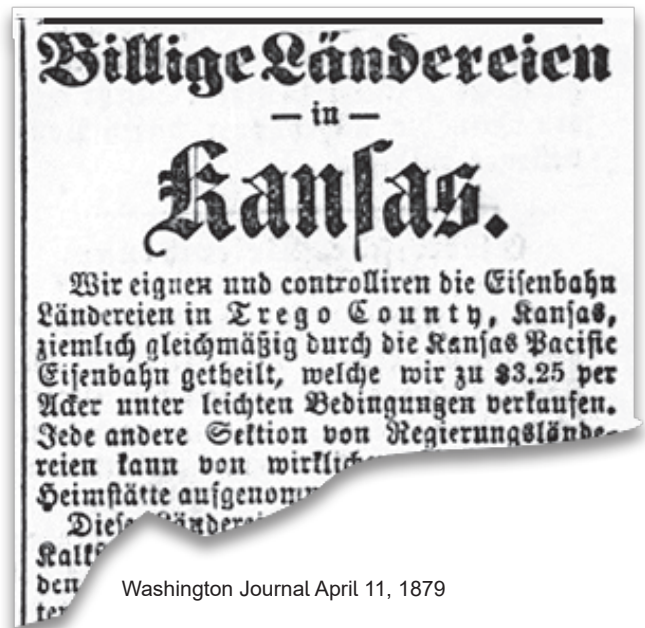
In 1879, Warren & Keeney entered into an arrangement with the railway company to build a depot by which the company was to pay them a dollar figure if they were finished in one year. The depot was the finest in the state, being built of limestone, after the most approved plans of one of Chicago's best architects. It is 100 feet long, 32 feet wide, and very ornamental. Few Eastern cities could boast of such a fine depot.



Kansas Pacific Railway depot built in WaKeeney

Crop failures of 1879 brought about a poor reaction and settlers who had come with the expectation of raising a field crops left in large numbers. Those who remained raised stock and were successful. Crops continued to do poorly in the next few years, and hog raising was also found not to be profitable, at which time, attention was given principally to cattle and sheep, especially the latter.

Germans began settling in the area. Possibly spawned by the advertising Warren, Keeney & Co. had placed in several German language newspapers.



Washington Journal April 11, 1879

Warren, Keeney & Co. heavily advertise in several different German language newspapers.

Chicago area ad from December 1877

REAL ESTATE.

Homes in Kansas

We control 300,00 acres of rich farming lands in Trego County, Kansas, and are offering great inducements to whole colonies and to any actual settlers in the way of good lands on and near the Kansas Pacific Railway; low prices; easy terms; cheap transportation, cheap railroad fares, etc.

At WA-KEENEY, which is situated on the Kansas Pacific Railway, about the centre of Trego County, there has just been laid out, and will be built under our direction, one of the finest towns in Kansas, it being half-way between Kansas City and Denver, and future County Seat. We shall leave here on Wednesday, the 6th of January, 1878, at 10:15 a.m. on the Chicago, Rock Island & P. R. R., with a large excursion party for Trego County. First-class fare, round trip tickets, good for 30 days, to Trego (Kan.) and return, \$30. Persons desiring to go, or wishing for pamphlets, giving full information in regard to Trego County, Kansas, will please call or send in their names to

WARREN, KEENEY & CO.,
106 Dearborn St.

The ads that Warren, Keeney & Co., ran in February of 1878 stated they have 200,000 acres of quality farming and grazing lands available. 100,000 acres less than the ad printed two months previously. Was this a marketing ploy to make it seem as the land was being scooped up and to act now? Originally, they secured only 100,000 acres.

Their February ad also states another excursion party to Kansas was planned.

Threshing Machine Canyon in Trego County

In 1865, the stagecoach line of the Butterfield Overland Despatch established a stopover station in a canyon located along the Smoky Hill River. They called it Bluffton because of the high bluffs of the canyon near by. The canyon was a popular place for travelers to stop and camp. Many made a habit of carving their names into the 75-foot high bluff. Some of those names can still be seen today. There have been names found that date back to 1849. Possible names of members of Fremont's 1849 surveying party or California "49" gold seekers. Etched names found with dates of 1865 may have been from the Army's Third Cavalry surveying party of Lieutenant Fitch.

The canyon lay in the favorite hunting grounds of Indians that didn't appreciate others treading there

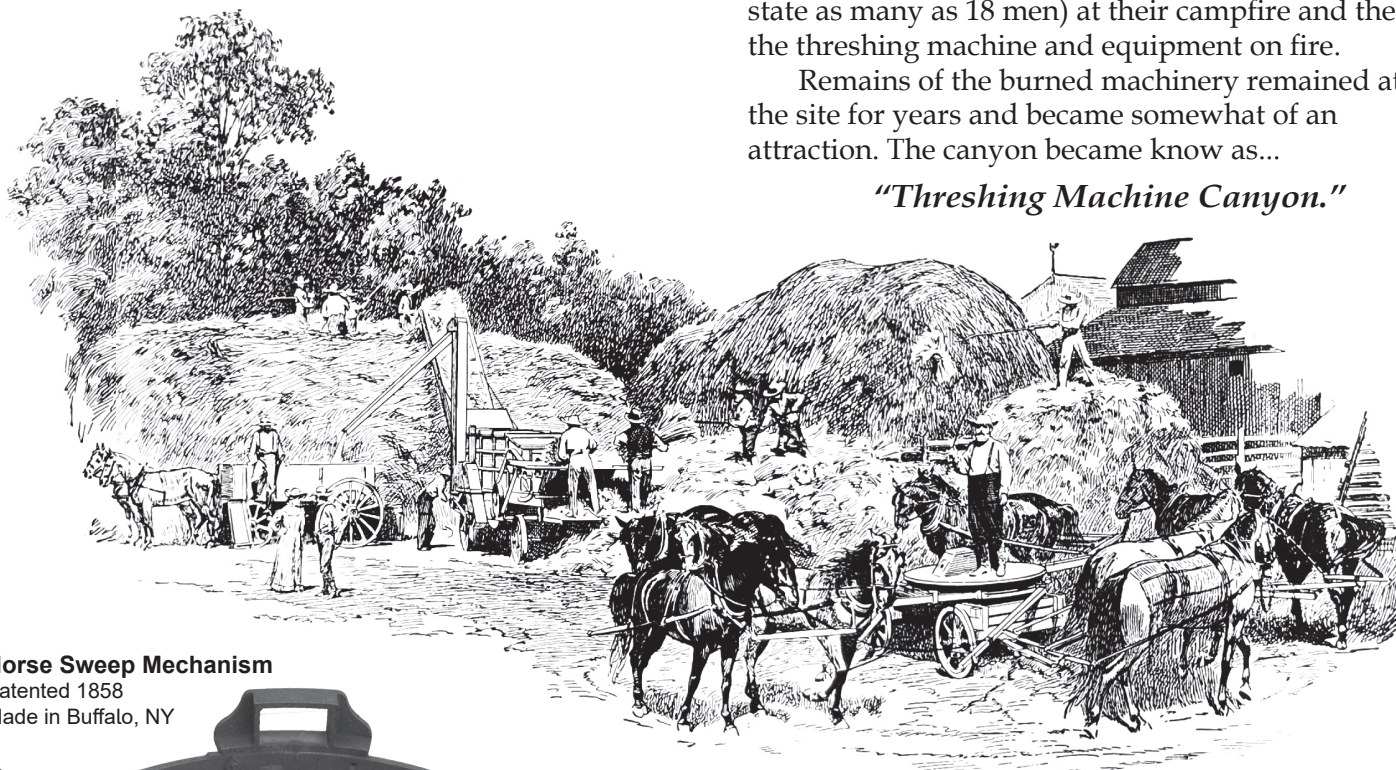
and reacted. Their attacks and raids drove away the stagecoach after about a year. Several BOD stations in this area were raided and burnt at this time. Because of the unrest and BOD's plans to straighten the trail to make it shorter, Bluffton Station was abandoned in favor of the White Rock Station further west.

After the Bluffton Station was closed, settlers heading west still used the canyon as a campsite.

In 1867, freighters who were transporting a horse-powered threshing machine to be delivered to Brigham Young at Salt Lake City, Utah, camped for the night beneath a bluff overlooking the canyon floor. A grave error on their part. If they had camped on the grassy flat it would have been safer. The site under the bluff was bordered by a deep rocky gully. This afforded the Indians easy access to ambush the men. The warriors killed all the men (some reports state as many as 18 men) at their campfire and the set the threshing machine and equipment on fire.

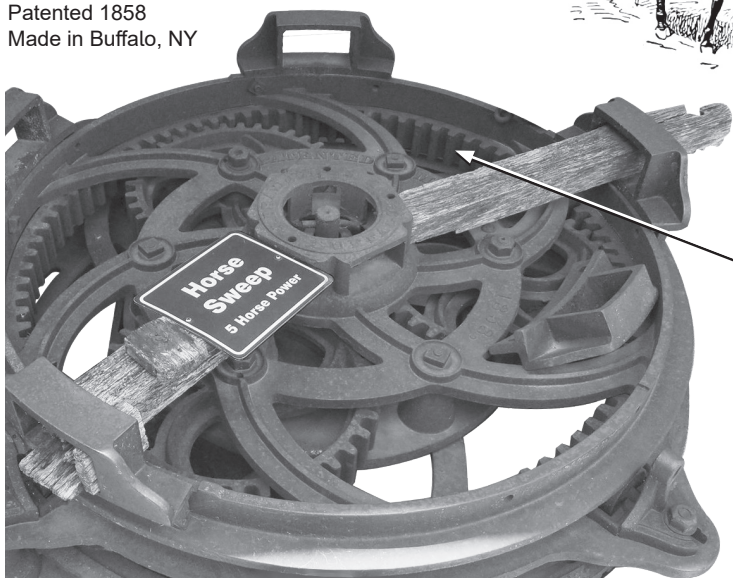
Remains of the burned machinery remained at the site for years and became somewhat of an attraction. The canyon became know as...

"Threshing Machine Canyon."

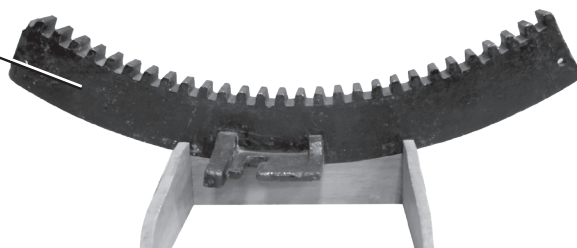


Horse Sweep Mechanism

Patented 1858
Made in Buffalo, NY



HORSE SWEEP: A Five Horse Sweep was used to operate a threshing machine by connecting 5 teams of horses that turned the gears that transferred power to the threshing machine as the horses went around and around. The illustration above shows a rigging of how it was set up.



The above photo show an artifact from the burnt remains of the 1867 attack that gave Threshing Machine Canyon its name. This artifact is on display at the **Trego County Historical Society Museum**. The piece is part of a Horse Sweep similar to that shown in the photo at the left.

Tidbits from along the Trail

1852

In the fall of 1852 the dragoons arrive at the present site of Fort Riley and name it Camp Centre. (March 4, 1853 - Camp Centre was renamed to Fort Riley, after General Benjamin Riley, a distinguished officer that died about the time of the post was established.)

1854

June 16 - The steamer "Excel" left Parkville, Mo., on a trip up the Kansas and Smoky Hill Rivers. It had made a half a dozen trips prior to this.

December - Work began on the Pawnee town site. A great deal of time and money was spent in making a levee. The object was to establish the head of navigation of the Kansas River.

1855

May 21 - The steamer Harford arrived at Lawrence on the Kansas River. It belonged to the Manhattan Emigrating Company, and was loaded with passengers and freight for "their new settlement at the junction of the Smoky Hill and Republican forks of the Kansas river, three miles above Fort Riley." The Emma Harman and the Financier No. 2 were on their way up the river to Fort Riley at the same time.

July - Cholera outbreak at Fort Riley. Mortality each day equaled one-eighth of the population amounting to about 175 total. Cholera spread to Pawnee where eight died.

July 23 - The Leavenworth, Pawnee & Western Railroad Co. was incorporated.

September - The town of Pawnee was destroyed by the military.

November 1 - The steamer Hartford is destroyed by fire near St. Mary's.

1856

June - L. B. Perry ran a ferry between Island City and Fort Riley. This was part of the mail route.

June - The first wheat raised in Davis County was on a patch of two acres. The wheat was taken to Topeka to be ground.

The town of Millard, located on the present site of Junction City, was abandoned. Millard was laid out by a party of Cincinnati speculators, who sold thousands of dollars worth of lots -- on land which they had no title. The organization was known as the Cincinnati and Kansas Manufacturing Company. They built one house on the location.

1857

February 10 - The military road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley was declared to be a Territorial road.

February 17 - The Atchison and Fort Riley Railroad Company was organized.

September 10 - Organization of the Kansas Falls Town Company. This town was on the Smoky Hill River five miles west of Junction City, near Seven Springs.

1859

February 1 - The Junction City *Sentinel* newspaper vigorously urges the Smoky Hill Trail as the proper route to Pike's Peak gold mines.

June - Reports of the return of the steamer Gus Linn to Kansas City. It says that the boat went thirty miles up the Smoky Hill River and found it to be narrow but deep. The least water found being seven feet. They had no doubt they could have ascended with ease 100 to 150 miles.

1860

July 2 - Samuel Barlett establishes the first ferry across the Smoky Hill River.

1861

April - First contract to carry mail west of Junction City let to Samuel Orr. It was a weekly mail to Salina.

June 20 - Samuel Orr and P. E. Weston started from Junction City with the first mail for Fort Larned. The mail consisted of one letter.

December 12 - First "daily" mail between Leavenworth and Junction City. Carried by coach and buggy alternately.

1862

March 10 - Robert Wilson, sutler at Fort Riley, issues shinplasters. (*Shinplaster is a piece of privately issued paper currency*)

March 15 - Soldiers from Fort Riley destroyed the newspaper office of *The Kansas Frontier* newspaper because of beliefs they were not loyal to the Union.

December 15 - *The Union* urges Manhattan to be the location for the State University.

1863

January 13 - *The Union* asserts that there is more good land west of Fort Riley than east of it, and predicts in a few years settlements 150 miles west of Fort Riley.

June 22 - The Leavenworth, Pawnee & Western Railroad is now known as the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division. Work is "to be pushed," and the shrill

whistle of the locomotive is expected in a short time.

August 21 - Lawrence sacked by Quantrell.

1864

April 14 - Assassination of Abraham Lincoln. An extra was brought to Junction City by coach, arriving Monday morning about three o'clock. The postmaster aroused the town. An impromptu meeting was held at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Every house in town draped in mourning. The Rev. Dr. Reynolds preached a sermon at Fort Riley on the death of Lincoln.

May 3 - D. A. Butterfield organizes the Butterfield Overland Despatch Company, with a capital of \$6,000,000. He proposes to open up the Smoky Hill route to Denver.

September 28 - The coaches of Butterfield's Overland Despatch Company begin making tri-weekly trips from Leavenworth to Denver. First coach makes the trip in twelve days.

October 5 - The Indians attack a Butterfield's Overland Despatch coach, near Cow Creek, and burn it.

October 20 - A Butterfield's Overland Despatch coach left Atchison at 11 a.m. and arrived at Junction City at 9 a.m. the next day.

1866

Organization of the Fort Riley, Smoky Hill Valley & Denver City Railroad Company.

April 28 - Holliday Overland Mail runs coaches both ends of the Smoky Hill route -Topeka and Denver - begin making daily trips.

July 2 - Congress changes the route of the Union Pacific Railway, E. D., from the Republican to the Smoky Hill.

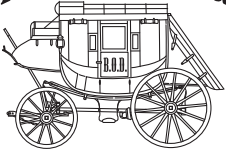
1867

January 24 - The Siamese Twins exhibit in Junction City. Chang and Eng Bunker



March 14 - The Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division, track reached the crossing of Mud Creek, at Abilene.

Smoky Hill Trail



ASSOCIATION

PO Box 978
Hays, KS 67601

Happy Holidays!



The Kansas Pacific and the Monte Men.

Kansas City, Mo., April 9, 1873

To the Editor of the Commonwealth -

I noticed in your journal of the 8th instant, an article headed "Monte Men," and referring to such fellows as traveling over this line. I have had in the hands of the printers for some days placards warning passengers to "beware of confidence men and three-card monte players." I will have them posted thickly in all our passenger cars and at all our stations. I will also have ten thousand copies of your article printed on slips and distributed in every train running over our road. Our conductors have long since been instructed to throw these fellows out of the cars, but they are very careful, however, not to play their nefarious practices when the conductors are present. We are taking every measure possible to keep these villains out of the cars.

Very respectfully,

Beverly R. Keim.
General Ticket and Pass. Agt.



Questions, Ideas, Comments, Newsletter Articles

Email To: smokyhilltrailasn@gmail.com

Or Mail To: Smoky Hill Trail Association
PO Box 978 / Hays, KS 67601



Branche la de montagne à fumée

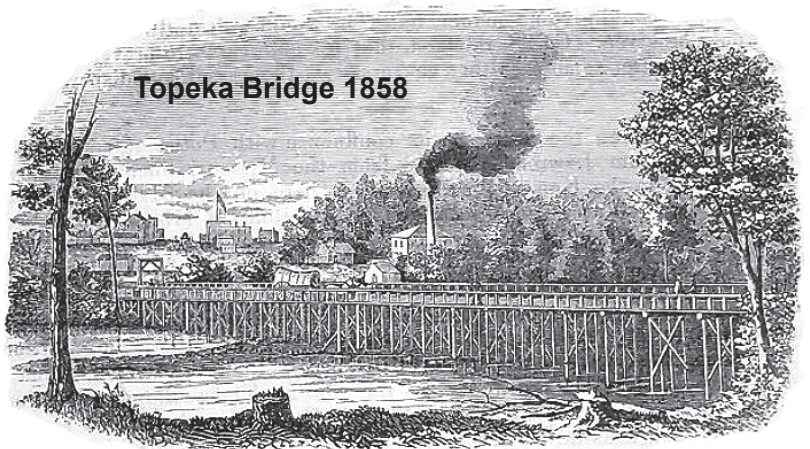
is the name printed on an 1827 map created by Belgian cartographer Philippe Vandermaelen's to indicate the Smoky Hill River.

Translation: *Line from Smoke Mountain*



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Topeka Bridge 1858