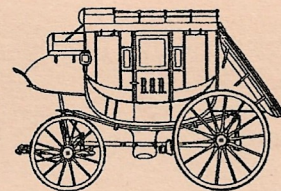


# OVERLAND DESPATCH

SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY

VOL. IV No. 2

REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL Summer 2011



**THE PIONEER MONUMENT  
WEST END OF THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL**

by Lee Whiteley

**T**HE Pioneer Monument, at the corner of Broadway Street and Colfax Avenue in downtown Denver, was designed and built by sculptor Frederick MacMonnies. The \$70,000 memorial was dedicated on June 24, 1911. The fountain is topped by a bronze equestrian figure of Kit Carson. Bronze sculpture groups depicting the prospector, the hunger, and the pioneer mother and child ring the base of the monument.

A plaque was added to the Pioneer Monument in 1936:

*"Here was the end of the famous SMOKY HILL TRAIL emigrant and stage road extending from the Missouri River to Denver.*

*Traveled by pioneers 1858.*

*Surveyed by W. G. Russell 1860.*

*Route of Butterfield's Overland Despatch and Wells Fargo Express.*

*The trail took its human toll.*

*Death by thirst and Indian raids.*

*Placed by the State Historical Society of Colorado from the Mrs. J. N. Hall Foundation and by the City and County of Denver. 1936."*

*(continued on page 3)*

## JULY SITE STUDIES CANCELED

by Lem Marsh

**N**ANCY Arendt and I have decided to cancel the site studies scheduled for July 23 and 24 because of the heat. A lot of people died along the Smoky Hill Trail in the middle 1800s, but we don't want it to happen now. We will resume the site studies in the fall after the temperatures get down to a more reasonable level. More information will be sent out when we are ready to resume the Smoky Hill Trail site studies. For more information, please contact Lem Marsh at 785-824-3957 or <smht1865drifter@st-tel.net>.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 14-16

**P**LAN now to attend the 5th annual Smoky Hill Trail Association Conference at Oakley, Kansas, October 14-16, 2011. The theme for the conference is "The Contested Plains," with several speakers, tours to historic sites, and other informative and entertaining programs.

The SmHTA Board will meet on Friday, October 14 (all members are welcome to attend). A special program is being planned for Friday evening.

Dr. Henrietta Mann will be the keynote speaker Saturday morning, with the topic "Walking the Cheyenne Road of Life." The Cheyennes were greatly affected by the Smoky Hill Trail, and they were major participants in "The Contested Plains." Dr. Mann is a full-blood Cheyenne, a highly-respected educator, and president of Cheyenne and Arapaho College in Weatherford, Oklahoma. 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." Following these talks, the three speakers will sit as a panel to answer questions and discuss the conference theme.

Jim Gray will lead tours east from Oakley (Saturday afternoon) and west (on Sunday) to several historic trail sites. Kay Homewood will organize another silent auction, and your donations and bidding will contribute to this annual fundraising activity.

Following the Saturday evening banquet will be a general membership meeting, presentation of awards, and portrayal of Will Comstock by Mark Berry.

Registration will soon be available on the website: <www.smokyhilltrail.org>. We hope to see you there.

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

**S**ENATE Bill S1083 to order the study of the Smoky Hill Trail for potential addition to the National Trails System was introduced in the 112th Congress by Kansas Senator Jerry Moran! It has been referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Hats off to our National Historic Trails Committee members for working for the introduction of the bill! I believe our next step would be to have a companion bill introduced in the House and urging cosponsors to attach their name to both bills.

Your board of directors met July 16 and specific recommendations as to how members can support the bill (hopefully bills) will be forthcoming. Prior to the board meeting, a strategic planning session was held to determine where our organization will be going the next few years, how we're going to get there, and how to know whether we've gotten there or not.

The Mapping and Marking Committee continues its work in locating Butterfield's Overland Despatch station sites, with their last foray being in Gove County, KS. The High Plains Archaeology Group, headquartered out of Colby, KS, has been assisting with the site surveys and their participation has been invaluable. These site studies, directed by Lem Marsh, will continue in the autumn.

On June 15 board members Jim Gray, Dave Richardson, and I scouted the trail from Carlyle Station to Monument Station and Fort Monument. If the weather cooperates and it is determined that a stagecoach (*i.e.*, bus) can maneuver the trail through the prairie, you can look forward to an exciting segment of our 2011 annual Conference tour. Chief Scout Jim Gray has been working hard to bring you another Smoky Hill Trail experience that you will treasure.

**SO**, put October 15-16 on your calendar and pack your trunk for a trip to Oakley, KS, for the Conference. We are also making arrangements for an evening of entertainment and socializing on the evening of the 14th. Be watching our website for conference program details and registration information.

Although our Association isn't geared toward collecting artifacts for display, we were fortunate to obtain a memento from the stage station located near present Chapman, KS. The original station was recently destroyed by a tornado. The Pond Creek Station, located in Wallace County, KS, at the Fort Wallace Museum, is the only remaining original structure utilized as a station of the Butterfield's Overland Despatch in Kansas.

I am asking for assistance from anyone who might have primary information regarding the German Family Massacre that occurred on the Smoky Hill Trail, September 11, 1874. The traditional site,

otherwise known as the Brock site, is located on Six-Mile Gulch, six miles east of Russell Springs, KS. Another possible site, the Linville site, is located at the Forks of the Smoky Hill, west of Russell Springs. It is my desire to collect sufficient data to positively identify the massacre location, if possible. The information that provided Col. Brock sufficient cause to take massacre survivor Julia German to the Six-Mile site and place a marker there has not been located.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our annual Conference and continue to encourage you to inform others about our Association and invite them to become members.

**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.

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## PIONEER MONUMENT

(continued from page 1)

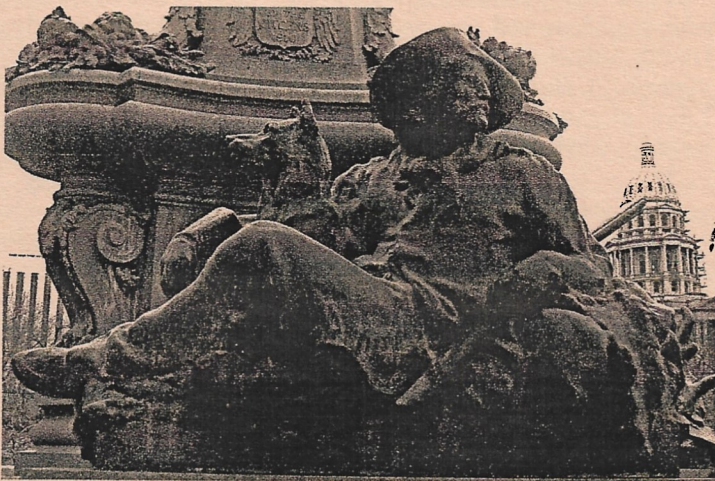
A description of MacMonnies's monument appeared in *Century*, October 1910:

"In the equestrian statue of Kit Carson, the sculpture's aim was to sum up the sentiment of the whole Western movement. 'The Call of the West—Westward Ho.'



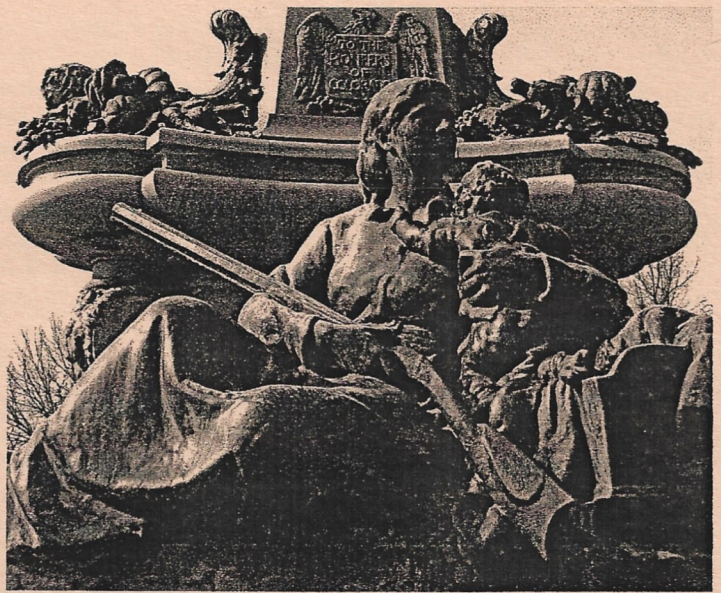
Pioneer Monument, "The Prospector"

"In the prospector he has sought to express something of the philosophy of the miner who alone, in the solitude of the desert, is sustained by constant hope, and a prophetic vision which recognizes great possibilities in the smallest indications.



Pioneer Monument, "The Hunter"

"In the hunter he has tried to suggest something of the roving life of the pioneer living among primitive conditions, daily menaced by death, either from starvation or from treacherous enemies, and who is only saved from destruction by constant vigilance and superior woodcraft.



Pioneer Monument, "Mother and Child"

"In the group of the mother and child, he has endeavored to reflect the high qualities of courage and resourcefulness of the pioneer woman always ready to meet danger in the defense of her child and her home."

The intersection of Colfax and Broadway is literally the center of Denver, for this was "Milepost 0.0" for all auto roads radiating from the city. Here was the western end of the Golden Belt Road and the Union Pacific Highway, both of which followed sections of the Smoky Hill Trail.

## TRAIL TREASURES

### -DOCUMENTS-

The following article from the *Denver Weekly Rocky Mountain News*, December 6, 1865, was submitted by Lem Marsh. The article was written by Theodore Davis, who later wrote an expanded account of the trip for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, July 1867. A second article, dated November 25, 1865, was printed in the *Rocky Mountain News* and reprinted in the *New York Times*. It will appear in a later issue of *Overland Despatch*.

**General Brewster's Trip Over the "Butterfield Overland Dispatch" [sic] Route—Exciting Incidents During the Journey—Indian Disturbances, Etc.**

HEADQUARTERS IN A "DOBE," (Indians on every side,) SMOKY HILL SPRINGS, Nov. 23, '65.

On the morning of the 17th ult. A special coach left Atchison for a journey across the Plains, via the B. O. D. route.

For passengers, we had Gen. Brewster, Vice Pres. of the B. O. D. Co., Mr. Lawrence Hashbrouck of Kingston, N.Y., Mr. Calhoun of Atchison, and Theo R. Davis, special artist of "Harpers' Weekly."

The object of the trip on Gen. Brewster's part, was to so arrange and regulate the affairs of the B. O. D. Co., as to enable the company to make their trip with greater regularity, and dispatch, and so far as possible to secure every convenience for passengers during a trip necessarily so long and tedious. Gen. Brewster had given orders prior to his leaving Atchison, that no more passengers should be taken, and had even refunded money already paid for passage, that he might have every opportunity to get the line in complete order at once.

New stock, stages, coaches, horses, mules and provisions of every kind were on the way to be used in the perfection of the line, which it seems will be the main artery of travel to your city among the mountains.

The journey to Ruthton Station was almost without incident. The General being continually busy with his tho'ts of "how exceedingly sharp the appetite of the stock was," and kindred subjects known to those who have interest in the "stage lines," *nous verrons*, we were disposed to think that the conscience of parties selling the provisions and produce might be more trouble than the stock, by the different amounts called for.

Buffalo, and other game was wonderfully abundant—various speculations, as to the number of herds and the reason of their presence in such unusual numbers were indulged in by the party. One thought that the feed to the northward was used up so they came where more grass and water was to be obtained.

The guide seemed more thoughtful, and presently told us that it was possible that the Indians had driven the Buffalo toward us. This we thought to be very kind of Mr. John Indian, but entertained no desire on our part to receive his visits if he did send buffalo before him as cards of invitation.

We left Ruthton on the evening of the 10th, and had barely reached the next station, Blufton, when our driver called to us that some one was coming down the road. Our Ballard rifles were immediately called into service and we drew up each in a line of battle on his own hook. The new comers proved to be Mr. Perrin of your city, the coach driver that had taken out the last stage, two carpenters, and a negro blacksmith. The party informed us that they had been attacked by Indians who were in force at the next station but one to the west, known as Downer's.

This information was quite sufficient to induce us to turn back to Ruthton where a considerable train of wagons containing provisions, etc., for the B. O. D. company was parked. The drivers of this company being armed with Ballard rifles, we knew that we could withstand any attack that the Indians should make on us after we should reach Ruthton and make preparations for a reception.

During the ride back to Ruthton, Mr. Perrin gave us an account of his Indian experience and extremely narrow escape. He had taken passage in the coach that left Atchison on the morning of the 15th under the charge of messenger Fred. Merwin. Being the only passenger in the coach and a rather companionable gentleman, Mr. Perrin had become quite intimate with Merwin. At different portions of the route when the ride was slow, these two gentlemen found it more pleasant to walk. When within a mile of Downer's Station they left the coach and walked to the station, which the two pedestrians had just reached, when a number of Indians came charging among the stock, which was just unhitched from the coach, preparatory to changing the team for a fresh one.

The only place of comparative safety was the quarters of the stock herders, known as the "Doby," which at this place, was a sort of excavation in the hill side, with a roof of boards loosely thrown over it for shelter. Preparations for defense were at once made. The party consisting of Messrs. Perrin and Merwin, three carpenters, two stock tenders and the negro blacksmith.

Those of the party that were armed (and they were poorly off for ammunition) took the best positions for commanding the approaches to their fort, while those who were not, busied themselves by strengthening the position.

After the firing began, Mr. Perrin made two trips to the coach after ammunition that had been left in it. The rest of the party covered him with their rifles so far as possible.

The firing had continued but a short time, when a voice addressed the occupants of the "Dobe," asking in excellent English whether the treaty had been signed. A reply was at once made that the treaty had been signed, and a desire expressed to know what person with the Indians spoke such good English.

Near the "Dobe," and behind it, were piled a number of boards that were to be used in the construction of the buildings that were necessary for the station. From behind this pile of boards a man made his appearance, and announced himself as the son of Bill Bent, and volunteered the statement that when the first charge was made, the Indians thought that the stock was the property of the Pawnees and Pottawatomies, which tribes were supposed to be hunting in the vicinity. The "son of Bent" said too, that the tribe with whom he was travelling were Cheyennes, under the lead of Fast Bear, and desirous of peace. After much of this talk, the occupants of the "Dobe" came out and underwent a general hand shaking. The Indians said that the coach could go on at once, and proceeded to drive up the stock that the station men might hitch them up. While thus engaged, some parties on the little bluff

or bank near by opened fire on the whites with their bows and revolvers. At this moment "Fast Bear" and a number of his warriors were about the coach and seemed much surprised at the renewal of hostilities, but ran immediately off to the shelter of the bank, turning and looking at the party of whites, as if they thought they were going to run upon them.

Merwin, who was in the coach at the time, was killed instantly, as was one of the stock tenders. Both were shot in many places with arrows and revolver balls. The other stock tender was taken prisoner.

At the first show the carpenters and others started for the bluff near by, Mr. Perrin endeavoring to prevail on them to stand by the others near the coach, but without success. Seeing that he could be of no service should he remain, he then started after the men who had escaped toward the bluff.

The Indians were now in hot pursuit, firing at the fugitives with rifles, pistols and arrows, but fortunately without injury to any of the party.

Seeing that the idea of running away from mounted Indians was not likely to prove a success, the party took refuge in a Buffalo wallow—four of the party in one and two in another. The Indians were then not quite so anxious for a near view as before, but kept off, riding in a circle about the small band of men who kept fighting for their lives, with a very limited stock of ammunition. The negro blacksmith proved to be of good material. Mr. Perrin thinks that he hit two of the Indians, one of them mortally. But the valiant darkie did not escape unharmed. In endeavoring to get a good shot he would expose himself to the fire of the Indians: one bullet hit him on his particularly strong hold—his head—the wool and a good thickness of skull saved him—the ball glancing off of it as if it had struck stone.

When the night fall came, the Indians withdrew—so did Mr. Perrin and his party. The next station to "Downer's," Blufton, they found burned, so determined to reach "Ruthton" if possible, and were on their way to that place, when they met us.

After we arrived at Ruthton General Brewster at once dispatched a messenger to Col. Tamblyn, commanding the troops at Big Creek, stating the case and asking for an escort that we might proceed and discover the extent of the damage done.

Col. T. came to us that eve, but too late to start, so a comfortable night's rest was indulged in by all parties. Early on the morning of the 21st we left Ruthton, for the continuation of our journey, an escort of cavalry going with us and an escort of infantry going with the train. We found that the station at Blufton had been burned and discovered near the station a number of army wagons—without animals of any kind near them—the reason of this we found to be that Mr. John Indian had stampeded fifty-seven government mules and ran off with them,

right under the eyes of the infantry that was acting as escort.

We camped that night at Downer's—saw the empty shed—the burnt coach and plenty of Indian tracks and no bodies or sign of any place where any grave had been dug.

The next day we started to continue our journey. When a short distance from the station, we discovered the body of Van Keehten, one of the carpenters. His body could certainly be called remains. The wolves had eaten him with the exception of his hands, feet and face which made him the most horrible spectacle that I ever witnessed.

We buried him as well as we could, but this was little better than covering over a few bones.

This night we reached Grant Station where we camped. This Station was evacuated.

The next day we reached Chalk Bluffs, where we found a number of stuck tenders, drivers, and others who had fled from the stations.

We found that Merwin had been shot full of arrows and that some of the fugitives from Blufton had seen the Indians from a distance, roasting the stock tender taken at Downer, over a slow fire. He cried so piteously that they cut his tongue out.

On the eve of the 24th, we reached Monument Station, where Capt. Stroud has a camp. Leaving this camp on the following morning, we started with an escort of five cavalymen for "Smoky Hill Spring." Dr. Whipple, who came to Monument to dress the wounds of a soldier that had been scalped alive, accompanied us—with three men in his ambulance.

We had just reached this station when we were attacked by a large band of Indians, who did not fight, but run as soon as we opened on them from the coach windows. Gen. Brewster fired twice at a white man. The ambulance was captured, but the Doctor and his men escaped. We are corralled, and the Indians are trying to burn us out.

27th.—We are out of the Indian country, and safe. Ho! For Denver—where we hope to find our friends.

### **NEW SmHTA MEMBERSHIPS**

New members since last issue.

#### **INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Lincoln County Historical Society, PO Box 124, Hugo CO 80821

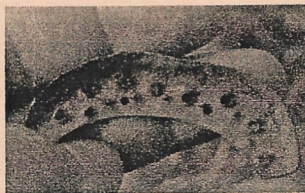
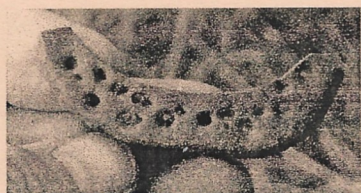
Jerry Thomas Gallery, 423 S Mesquite Rd, Scott City KS 67871

#### **FAMILY MEMBERSHIP**

Larry & Jeanne Keith, 8509 E Krail St, Scottsdale AZ 85250

#### **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP**

Tina Walker, 423 S Mesquite Rd, Scott City KS 67871



### CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS ARTIFACT?

by Lem Marsh

**W**HEN we are doing site studies along the Smoky Hill Trail we sometimes find items that we cannot identify. The item above was found (but not collected) at the Ruthton Stage Station site. Both sides are shown. The item is about two inches long. Can you identify the item? If you know what it is, please email me at <smht1865drifter@st-tel.net>.

### ARTIST PRINT DONATED FOR AUCTION

A print by Kansas artist Jerry Thomas has been donated to SmHTA by Jerry Thomas Gallery of Scott City, KS, a new member of the SmHTA, to be offered at auction at the annual conference in Oakley in October. The print (see b&w image below) of the painting, "Distant Thunder," portrays mounted cavalry troops escorting an Overland Despatch stagecoach near Monument Rocks in western Kansas. It will be framed at the expense of SmHTA, with opening bid set to cover all costs.



Smoky Hill Trail Association  
PO Box 322  
WaKeeney, KS 67672

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### SUMMER HOURS AT FORSYTH LIBRARY:

**P**ATTY Nicholas, librarian in charge of Special Collections at Forsyth Library, Fort Hays State University, where the SmHTA archives are housed, announced that hours during the summer, until classes resume in August, are from 7 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday. The collection is closed on Fridays and weekends.

### TRAIL CALENDAR

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

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

Visit the web site <www.octa-trails.org>

**Sept. 21, 2011:** Michael Martin Murphey performance to kickoff SFTA Symposium, United Wireless Arena, Dodge City KS, 7 p.m., celebrating 150th anniversary of Kansas statehood and the overland trails, sponsored by Last Chance Store.

Ticket information at <www.lastchancestore.org>

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

Visit the web site <www.santafetrail.org>

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

Visit the web site:<www.smokyhilltrail.com>