

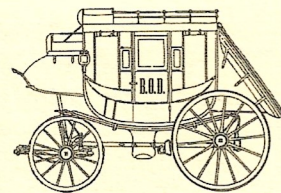
# OVERLAND DESPATCH

SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY

VOL. V No. 1

REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL

Spring 2012



## FORT FLETCHER AND THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL PART I

by Bob Wilhelm

*[Bob Wilhelm is site administrator at Fort Hays State Historic Site. He presented the history of Fort Fletcher at the SmHTA conference in Oakley last year. Special thanks to him for sharing this story for OD, which will appear in two parts.]*



**F**ORT Fletcher was a fort in name only. It had none of the "classic" features of a fort, such as a stockade wall with blockhouses on the corners. It was merely a collection of tents, some wooden huts, and dugouts along Big Creek in what is now southeast Ellis County, Kansas. It was manned by a collection of soldiers, some of whom wanted to be there, others who didn't, but they all served to the best of their ability, protecting the supply wagons and stage-coaches along the Smoky Hill Trail. Fort Fletcher served for just 207 days, from October 1865 to May 1866. But this brief period was filled with hardship, danger, and death.

David Butterfield first made comment about needing protection from Indians on April 5, 1865, shortly after his company, Butterfield's Overland Despatch (BOD), was created. He was quoted as saying that "with proper military protection" his company would "have daily coaches and express trains running through to and back from Denver."

But it wasn't until June 1865 that the protection he sought began to take shape. It began when 2nd Lt. Julian Fitch, U.S. Signal Corps, was given Special Order 143, Headquarters, Dept. of the Missouri, which stated he was to accompany the "Butterfield Surveying Expedition on the route to Denver City,

(continued on page 5)

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN ABILENE

**T**HE 6th annual Smoky Hill Trail Association Conference will be held at Abilene, Kansas, October 19-21, 2012. The theme is "Abilene: Cowboys, Cattle Country and the Smoky Hill Trail." Program details will appear in the summer issue and registration materials will be sent to all members..

The SmHTA Board will meet Friday afternoon, and a pre-conference program is being planned for Friday evening. On Saturday and Sunday there will be lectures, tours, silent auction, and other activities, with the annual membership meeting, presentation of awards, and special program on Saturday evening. Please get these dates on your calendar now and plan to be in Abilene in October.

## "ASK FOR TICKETS VIA SMOKY HILL ROUTE" UNITED STATES EXPRESS COMPANY

by Lee Whiteley

*[Lee Whiteley is a member of the SmHTA Board, an authority on the trail in eastern Colorado, and a frequent contributor to Overland Despatch.]*

**D**AVID Butterfield founded the Butterfield's Overland Despatch (BOD) in 1865, establishing the Smoky Hill Trail as a viable route to Denver and the Colorado gold fields. Ben Holladay purchased the BOD in March of 1866, then resold to Wells Fargo in November. This transaction was one of the buyouts, mergers, consolidations, and other business dealings which resulted in a major reorganization of the stage and freight business throughout the Western United States.

It was the United States Express Company that emerged as the provider of stage and freight service along the Smoky Hill Trail between Denver and the western terminus of the advancing Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division.

Denver's *Daily Rocky Mountain News* ran an ad February 4, 1867, noting in part: "United States Express Co. Overland Daily Mail, Express and Stage Line, via Smoky Hill. . . .The company will immediately stock the route for a fast freight line in connection with the well known 'Great Western Dispatch,' of which the United States Express Company are proprietors, and is now in successful operation to the terminus of the Railroad." No mention was made as to the terminus of the railroad until April 19, 1867. On that date, the newspaper announced that a daily line of coaches between Denver and Salina, Kansas, was in operation. The ad is reproduced in this article on page 4.

The ad was changed on September 21, 1867, to reflect the new western terminus of the railroad,

(continued on page 4)

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I am pleased to report that as our Association approaches the time for our sixth annual conference we continue to prosper.

- Our conference this year will be held October 20-21 in Abilene with the theme of "Abilene: Cowboys, Cattle Country and the Smoky Hill Trail." An evening pre-conference activity is in the works for October 19.
- As of May 11, we have 174 members.
- The Mapping and Marking Committee has conducted 19-20 site studies, working with 25-30 landowners along the trail. Kansas Anthropological Association President Nancy Arendt and members of the KAA have assisted greatly in the studies.
- Treasurer Sam Chestnut and Past President Michael Olsen are in the process of completing our application for designation as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
- An attractive membership brochure has been printed and is being distributed.
- The Smoky Hill Trail Special Collection at Forsyth Library at Fort Hays State University continues to grow.
- Kansas Senators Jerry Moran and Pat Roberts have introduced Senate Bill 1083 in the 112th Session of Congress to authorize a study of the Smoky Hill Trail and assess its qualifications to be designated a National Historic Trail..
- Every board member has been active in promoting and strengthening our Association.

Although we are making great progress, we still have areas of need:

- Additional cosponsors for SB 1083 are needed, especially the Colorado Senators. Members are encouraged to contact Senators seeking their assistance.
- Information on the eastern part of the Smoky Hill Trail, from Junction City east, is needed as regards station sites and trail rut locations.
- Help is needed with membership recruitment from current membership.
- Suggestions from membership as to what you would like to see our Association doing that it is not doing currently.
- Volunteers for various committee appointments are needed.
- More articles and items for the newsletter are needed.

Your board of directors met May 11 at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site Administration Building. Our thanks to Joanne VanCoevern, Manager of the Santa Fe Trail Association and SmHTA board member, for making the arrangements. Many events were scheduled at the Fort on the 12th and 13th for a weekend themed "Wagons Ho! Transportation through Time," and several board members stayed to enjoy the programming.

As I walk the old Smoky Hill Trail ruts and study the history of the trail, the voices and scenes of those exciting but now forever gone days flood my mind. Historian Johan Huizinga's words could be mine, "A feeling of immediate contact with the past is a sensation as deep as the purest enjoyment of art; it is an almost ecstatic sensation of no longer being myself, of overflowing into the world around me, of touching the essence of things, of through history experiencing the truth."

In thinking about those who traveled West on the trail, crossing the wide, grassy plains and first glimpsing the Rocky Mountains rising into the sky; seeing vast herds of buffalo grazing and spreading abroad so far and dense; sensing the perils of crossing Indian lands—even with the hardships of travel, it must have fulfilled the traveler's sense of adventure. For the various Indian cultures, seeing the wagons and stagecoaches crossing their traditional hunting grounds must have filled them

**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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with a sense of curiosity, yet of foreboding—a gnawing feeling that their way of life was being changed forever. A vast array of history awaits me at every step as I traverse the old trail.

One of the challenges for us is to find some avenue of introducing our youth to the appreciation of this history in our nation's heartland. After our board meeting at Bent's Old Fort, as I looked around the group of some 100 persons representing several organizations attending Greg Holt's program "The Night the Stars Fell," there were only three who were younger than 60 in attendance.

If we are to continue our efforts of preserving the history and legacy of the Smoky Hill Trail, we must somehow find a way to draw more young people into sharing our enthusiasm for the task. It will fall to them to carry forward our Association after we have gone.

The Smoky Hill Trail, Butterfield's Overland Despatch, the Kansas Pacific Railroad, Highway 40 and Interstate 70, cultural relations, settlement and agricultural endeavors—all in the valley of the Smoky Hill River—each with their own history, legends and lore, each ripe for study and publication. The past is merely prologue, and by studying the successes in their history, perhaps we can avoid costly mistakes in the future of the Smoky Hill River country. A future that younger generations will be leading and who should now should be learning of its past. This says nothing about the fact that looking at the past of the Smoky Hill River country is just plain FUN!

I look forward to seeing each of you in Abilene, so mark the dates now as we will be gathering to **REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL.**

—Mike Baughn

### GET READY...IT'S COMING

by Kay Homewood, Auction Coordinator

**Y**ES, it is time to gather items for the Annual Silent Auction at the fall conference in Abilene. Get prepared for fun competition as auction items are gathered along the BOD and Smoky Hill Trail. It is amazing to see the different kinds of articles gathered for the auction and where they come from. One of the exciting things is they come from fine folks like you living along the trail.

The funds are designated for mapping the trails. We can't all physically help with this important part of our organization, but it is a way to share in the excitement by supporting the mapping committee's efforts. Perhaps a business or organization in your area is just waiting to be asked to support the trails and to represent their area. It offers an opportunity to talk about the trails and the progress being made. Please e-mail Kay at <khomewood@ruraltel.net> and describe your item or items by October 1.

Items received to date include a hand-crocheted lap robe made and donated by Patti Olsen, three books *The American Frontier—Pioneers, Settlers & Cowboys, 1800-1899* and *Fifty From the Trail, the Best Cowboy Cooking from a Timeless Land*, both

donated by Deines Cultural Center, and *Doles Unlimited Partners* donated by Fossil Station Museum.

### BOARD NOMINATIONS NEEDED

**T**HE SmHTA nominating committee, Bonita Oliva, chair, Kay Homewood, and David Richardson, is seeking nominations for officers and directors to submit to the membership at Abilene in October. President Mike Baughn has announced that he will not serve another term in that office. If anyone is interested in serving as president or knows someone who is willing, please let the committee know.

The president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer are elected annually and directors are elected for two-year terms (two of the directors are up for election this year: Ann Liston from Kansas and Lee Whiteley from Colorado). All incumbents are eligible to serve again. All nominees must agree in writing to serve if elected. Please submit nominations to Bonita Oliva, PO Box 2, Woodston KS 67675 or at <bonitaoliva@hotmail.com>.

### AWARDS NOMINATIONS NEEDED BY AUGUST 1

**T**HE SmHTA awards committee (Leo Oliva, chair, Mike Baughn, and Bob Wilhelm) is seeking nominations to consider for awards to be presented at the annual conference in Abilene in October. Please send nominations to Leo E. Oliva, PO Box 1, Woodston KS 67675 or at <oliva@ruraltel.net>, with a brief note explaining why the nominee deserves recognition. If deserving nominees are not found, the awards are not given. The following awards are available:

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

This award, a recognition plaque, recognizes individuals, businesses, organizations, or groups who have made a significant contribution to the purposes of the SmHTA ("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 Overland Despatch (BOD) and its successors as well as the railroad that replaced the overland trail"). The recipient may or may not be a member of SmHTA.

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

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

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

This award, a recognition plaque, is presented to organizations, landowners, leaseholders, or tenants of trail ruts, remnants, structures, or sites, who have preserved and protected significant portions of the trail or sites associated with the trail, and provided public access. The recipient need not be a member of SmHTA.

Remember deadline for the 2012 nominations is August 1.

## UNITED STATES EXPRESS COMPANY

(continued from page 1)

Wilson Creek. All other information in the ad remained the same, even the outdated reference to the railroad reaching Ellsworth by June 1. Wilson Creek was also known as Hick's Creek, located between present Wilson and Dorrance, both west of Ellsworth.

This ad ran until October 16, when the western terminus was advanced to Hays City. The ad noted that Hays City was 575 miles west of St. Louis and that coaches leave Denver daily at 7 a.m.

The next change occurred on February 6, 1868, when the newspaper announcement was changed to read "Now open for business to Coyote, 620 Miles West of St. Louis." The rest of the ad was basically

### UNITED STATES EXPRESS CO.

Express Forwarders and carriers of the  
**Overland Mail**

between Denver and the States, via

**SMOKY HILL,**  
in connection with the  
**UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD**

Eastern Division, to all points East.

The company is running a

**DAILY LINE**

of coaches, leaving Denver at seven a. m. connecting at

**SALINA, KANSAS,**

the present terminus of the Union Pacific Railway  
and a TRI-WEEKLY

**TREASURE & FREIGHT EXPRESS**

carried on mail time, in charge of messengers.

The stage equipments are nearly all new

**SIX HORSE CONCORD COACHES.**

**THE EATING STATIONS**

furnished by the company, are unequalled, and  
every thing will be done to promote the comfort  
and convenience of the traveling public.

Passengers will find this the most desirable route, making

**Quick Time and Sure Connections**

to all Eastern and Southern cities. The Railroad  
will be opened on the first of June to Fort Ellsworth,  
reducing the time to three days and a half  
from Denver to St. Louis, four days to Chicago,  
and six days to New York. The

**SMOKY HILL ROUTE**

is over one of the best natural roads in the world, no  
obstructions or impassable streams or bottom lands.  
Passengers called for and left in any part of the city.

**W. S. WALKER, Agent,**

Corner of Larimer and G Streets.

**W. H. Cottrill, Supt. Denver Division U. S. Ex. Co.**

[Daily Rocky Mountain News, April 19, 1867]

The railroad schedule printed below, originally published in the *Junction City Union*, January 28, 1868, was provided by Sam Chestnut. It complements this article.

### UNION PACIFIC RAILWAY

OPEN TO

**COYOTE.**

Forty-six miles west of Fort Hays.

### WINTER ARRANGEMENTS.

On and after Jan. 5, 1868 trains will leave

Daily, Sundays excepted, as follows:

#### GOING WEST:

	MAIL	MIXED.
Leave Leavenworth . . . . .	7:00 A.M.	
Leave Wyandotte . . . . .	7:20 A.M.	7:55 P.M.
Leave State Line . . . . .	7:50 A.M.	8:20 P.M.
Arrive at Lawrence . . . . .	9:45 A.M.	12:45 A.M.
Arrive at Topeka . . . . .	11:25 A.M.	8:43 A.M.
Arrive at Wamego . . . . .	1:20 P.M.	7:30 A.M.
Arrive at Manhattan . . . . .	2:28 P.M.	9:12 A.M.
Arrive at Junction City . . . . .	3:35 P.M.	11:30 A.M.
Arrive at Salina . . . . .	6:20 P.M.	4:25 P.M.
Arrive at Fort Harker . . . . .	8:40 P.M.	7:55 P.M.
Arrive at Ellsworth . . . . .	9:00 P.M.	8:30 P.M.
Arrive at Fort Hays . . . . .	3:45 A.M.	11:59 P.M.
Leave Fort Hays . . . . .	7:00 A.M.	
Arrive at Coyote . . . . .	11:00 A.M.	

#### GOING EAST:

Leave Coyote . . . . .	1:30 P.M.	
Arrive at Fort Hays . . . . .	5:00 P.M.	
Leave Fort Hays . . . . .	11:00 P.M.	1:00 P.M.
Leave Ellsworth . . . . .	5:30 A.M.	5:45 A.M.
Leave Fort Harker . . . . .	5:50 A.M.	6:17 A.M.
Leave Salina . . . . .	8:00 A.M.	9:40 A.M.
Leave Junction City . . . . .	11:00 A.M.	2:15 P.M.
Arrive at Manhattan . . . . .	12:13 P.M.	5:05 P.M.
Arrive at Wamego . . . . .	1:00 P.M.	5:25 P.M.
Arrive at Topeka . . . . .	3:22 P.M.	10:10 P.M.
Arrive at Lawrence . . . . .	4:52 P.M.	12:45 A.M.
Arrive at State Line . . . . .	7:00 P.M.	4:25 A.M.
Arrive at Wyandotte . . . . .	7:40 P.M.	4:25 A.M.
Arrive at Leavenworth . . . . .	7:45 P.M.	

Connecting at Lawrence with stages for Fort Scott and all points in North and South Kansas. At Wamego with stages for Council Grove, Mission Creek, Rock Creek, Emporia and Marysville. At Fort Hays with Sanderson's tri weekly line of coaches for Fort Union, Santa Fe, Taos, Albuquerque, and all points in New Mexico and Arizona. At Coyote with United States Express Company's Overland Mail and Express Coaches for Denver City and all points in Colorado, Montana, Utah, California and Idaho. At Leavenworth with Packets for points up the Missouri Valley R.R. (Hannibal and St. Joe Line) for all points east. At State Line with trains of the Missouri Pacific Road and Hannibal and St. Joe Railroad for St. Louis and all points South and East.

**A. ANDERSON, General Superintendent**

**J. M. Webster, Gen'l Freight & Ticket Agt.**

unchanged. Coyote was located at or very near present-day Collyer. On February 11, new text in the announcement appeared. It began: "Smoky Hill Route. Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division, is now open for business to Coyote 335 miles west of Kansas City and Leavenworth. In connection with the United States Express Company's superb coaches, forms the shortest and most direct route to Leavenworth, Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago, and all points South and East."

The Coyote reference was replaced on August 28, 1868: "Now open for Business to Sheridan, 405 Miles West of Kansas City." Sheridan, the notorious end-of-track town, was named for General Philip H. Sheridan. A totally revamped notice appeared in the *Daily Rocky Mountain News* on April 14, 1869. It thoroughly outlined the importance of Sheridan's wild location on the North Fork of the Smoky Hill River, 15 miles northeast of present Wallace, Kansas. The ad is reproduced at the right.

The name of the railroad was changed to the Kansas Pacific Railway on March 2, 1869, and construction continued west of Sheridan in October 1869. The importance of the town as a shipping point, however, continued until much of the activity was moved west to Kit Carson, Colorado Territory, in April 1870.

Issues of the *Daily Rocky Mountain News* and many other early Colorado newspapers are available for viewing online at <[www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org](http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org)>.

## FORT FLETCHER AND THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL

(continued from page 1)

via Smoky Hill River." He left Fort Leavenworth on June 13, 1865, accompanied by his brother, Charles Fitch, whom he had employed as First Assistant to the expedition, and proceeded to Fort Riley where

Major Jesse Pritchard, commander of the 2nd Colorado Cavalry, joined him.

Upon leaving Fort Riley, the expedition consisted of Lt. Fitch and his wife, Charles Fitch, Daniel Clark (2nd Assistant), Abner Coleman and Joseph Cornell (both of the U.S. Signal Corps), Isaac Eaton (Butterfield's agent), and 26 "constructionists." Also

# Kansas Pacific Railway

(Smoky Hill Route)

Is Now Open for Business From

**KANSAS CITY, WYANDOTTE & LEAVENWORTH,  
ON THE MISSOURI RIVER, TO**

**PHIL. SHERIDAN,**

**KANSAS, 405 MILES WEST.**

## TRAINS LEAVE PHIL. SHERIDAN DAILY,

Making close connections at State Line and Kansas City with Pacific Railroad of Missouri, and North Missouri, Platte County, and Hannibal and St. Joe Railroads at Leavenworth, for all points in the United States and Canada.

At PHIL. SHERIDAN direct connection is made with the

## UNITED STATES EXPRESS COMPANY'S COACHES

For Denver, Golden, Black Hawk, Central City, Georgetown, and all points in the West and with the

## Southern Overland Mail and Express Co.'s Coaches

For Fort Lyon, Fort Reynolds, Pueblo, Cañon and Colorado Cities, Trinidad, Fort Union, Las Vegas, Elizabethtown, (Moreno Mines,) Santa Fe, Albuquerque and Chihuahua, and all points in New and Old Mexico.

Passengers going to and from any part of Southern Colorado, New or Old Mexico will save

**100 Miles Staging & 20 Hours Time**

Over all other routes.

Tickets for sale at United States Express Company's Office, corner of F and Holladay streets, Denver, to Leavenworth, Wyandotte and Kansas City, for \$53.75.

Also Through Tickets to all principal cities of the United States and Canada.

**Coaches leave Denver Every Day at 1 p.m. for Phil. Sheridan,**

fare as low and Time as quick as by any other routes.

## ASK FOR TICKETS VIA SMOKY HILL ROUTE

Special notice to Shippers of Freights. In Connection with WEBSTER MUSICK & CO'S OVERLAND TRANSIT LINE, the Company is prepared to make Contracts and give Through Bills of Lading for freight, from all principal cities East to Denver, Golden, Black Hawk, Central City, Georgetown, and all points in Colorado and New Mexico.

For information concerning rates &c., address

**D. TOM. SMITH, General Western Agent, Denver.**

Office on Holladay street, near United States Mint.

**A. ANDERSON, General Superintendent, Lawrence, Kansas.**

[*Daily Rocky Mountain News*, April 14, 1869]

along were Major Jesse Pritchard, Captain George West and his wife, Dr. Charles Hedinger (as the expedition's surgeon), and Lt. James Burrell (all of the 2nd Colorado Cavalry), and Capt. James Pond who commanded two companies of the 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry Volunteers.

Upon their arrival at Fort Ellsworth in mid-July, they were joined by two companies of the 13th Missouri Cavalry commanded by Captains DeWitt McMichael and J. C. W. Schnell.

The expedition left Fort Ellsworth on July 14. Two days later, Lt. Fitch recorded, "we came to Big Creek, a large stream having a beautiful valley with heavy timber. Here we made a rock ford and erected a large mound and stake for a home and cattle station." This was to become a station referred to as "Forks Big Creek." In addition to being a home station where stage passengers would be able to secure food, it was also to have a herd of oxen where bull teams could exchange their tired teams for fresh animals. The mound and stake referred to have never been located and in all probability lasted only until the next big rain, so whether or not this actually represented where Fort Fletcher was to be located is not known for certain but the mileage figures in the report from Fort Ellsworth to Forks Big Creek correspond well with the later location of Fort Fletcher.

The expedition reached Denver on August 7 without encountering any Indians, and the reports on the Smoky Hill Trail being a preferred route were quite glowing in their description. Plenty of water, grass, and what was described as "an abundance of bois de vache" or buffalo chips for fuel. It was also stated that the trail consisted of solid soil the whole way which countered the more popular Platte River Road that, for several miles, went through the sand hills making going very difficult for heavily laden wagons of supplies even if pulled by the mighty oxen.

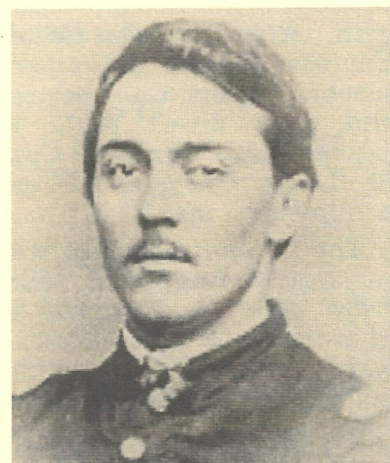
Butterfield was ecstatic at the report and began to acquire livestock, wagons and tack, hire station keepers, and construct station houses at select spots along the trail in anticipation of stage and freight traffic. Butterfield himself made an uneventful trip to Denver in September 1865.

But a train of 50 wagons pulled by 200 mules that left Atchison on August 19, 1865, did not fare as well. On September 30, they were surprised and attacked by a group of Indians who easily succeeded in driving off almost their entire stock of mules.

Two days later, a BOD stage came upon the beleaguered band of teamsters and, despite warnings from the teamsters, they proceeded on to Monument Station where, on October 2, they too were attacked and driven from the station, the Indians burning the coach and station house and capturing about 60 mules. The stage passengers met up with the teamsters and were met by yet another stage heading west. A passenger on this second coach reported that many burned stations and much destroyed equipment was seen all along the trail. Two members of the stranded party walked back to Fort Ellsworth for help.

These incidents made it apparent that military protection was needed, as there was none west of Fort Ellsworth. General John Pope, commander of the Department of the Missouri, remarked that "one or two small posts" along the Smoky Hill route might be needed. Major General John B. Sanborn, commanding the District of the Upper Arkansas with headquarters at Fort Riley, recommended that, "a battalion of cavalry and four companies of infantry be stationed along that route."

So it was on October 10, 1865, that Captain Jesse Elliott Jacobs, Assistant Adjutant General, District of Kansas, ordered Captain Dewitt McMichael who was in command of Companies A and F, 13th Missouri Cavalry, then stationed at Fort Ellsworth, to proceed west and establish a post "at Big Creek 60 miles above Ellsworth." Upon arrival he was to construct quarters for his men and horses. He was to carry with him supplies and equipment to construct the buildings as well as taking advantage of the local environment to create sod huts. "In selecting the site for your station," he was told, "you are not confined to the main road, but the best position near it, having in view water, timber, and building material, grazing ground, and a good defensive position in case it should be necessary to leave the station with small garrison for its defense." He was also permitted to bring a sutler of his choice who was also to "make application for the appointment of Post Master" in order to deal with the mail coming and going from the post.

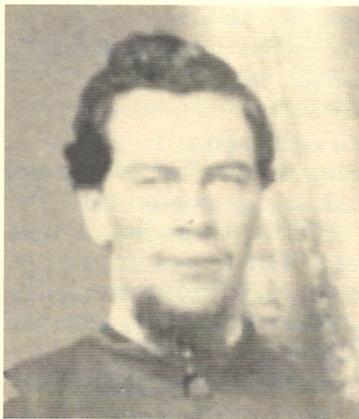


**Dewitt McMichael**

Several companies of the 17th Illinois Volunteer Cavalry were also at Fort Ellsworth at the time and a small contingent of 15 officers and men accompanied McMichael's men to the new fort they established on October 11. The 13th Missouri was quickly dispersed to other stations along the trail and, for a short time, the 17th Illinois was the sole occupant of the fort.

The fort was referred to as "Forks Big Creek" or simply "Big Creek" until at least November 1, when the Atchison newspaper stated that "a government post has been established at Big Creek, on the Smoky Hill, called Fort Fletcher." On November 7, a group of travelers on one of Butterfield's coaches stated that, when they arrived at the fort, they "found a company of Illinois Cavalry stationed, who were building a log Fort, hereafter to be known as Fort Fletcher." Who officially named the fort is unclear, but it was named for Governor Thomas Fletcher of Missouri. Thus it would seem members of the 13th Missouri Cavalry might have had a hand in it.

The next group of soldiers stationed at Fort



**William Tamblyn**

captain Richard Musgrove and it is through his diary and the subsequent publishing of it in later years, that we learn much about Fort Fletcher, even though his ultimate destination was Pond's Creek, which became Fort Wallace.

Richard W. Musgrove was born in Bristol, New Hampshire on November 21, 1840. He stated in his autobiography that, "It was not an event of great moment to the world at large but to me it was an event of importance." He enlisted as a private in the 12th New Hampshire Volunteers in 1862 at the age of 22 and participated in many battles of the Civil War, including Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, and others. He rose steadily through the ranks until in 1864 he was appointed 1st Lt. of Company I of the 1st USVI.

As described by Musgrove, "The men of this regiment were enlisted...from prisoners of war...who had taken the oath of allegiance to the United States. The men were of various classes. Many were Unionists from North Carolina, who had been forced into the Confederate service, and were now glad to transfer their allegiance and fight under the old flag. Others from the south were men of no principle and were as much at home under one flag as the other. This class was augmented by foreigners, who found themselves by force of circumstances in the rebel

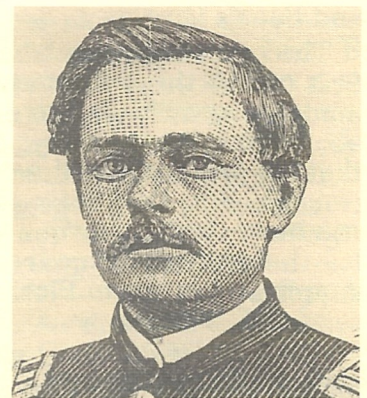
Fletcher was the 1st U.S. Volunteer Infantry (US VI), commanded by Lt. Col. William Tamblyn. These were "Galvanized Yankees," Confederate soldiers who had been captured and imprisoned by the Union, then offered service in the Union Army. They arrived on November 16, 1865, 250 strong.

One of the officers who arrived there was Cap-

tain Richard Musgrove and it is through his diary and the subsequent publishing of it in later years, that we learn much about Fort Fletcher, even though his ultimate destination was Pond's Creek, which became Fort Wallace.

Later, six companies went to Fort Rice while Musgrove's company I, along with companies A, F, and G, all under the command of Lt. Col. Tamblyn, were sent to Camp Reno, near Milwaukee. From there, Co. I was sent to Camp Randall, near Madison, Wisconsin, and then to Forts Snelling and Ridgely in Minnesota. At this last post Musgrove's commander gave him a recommendation for a commission in the regular army, but Musgrove never submitted his application. By September 1865 he found himself and his company at Fort Leavenworth, preparing to head west.

Each company was assigned two six-mule wagons to carry tents, commissary and quartermaster stores, and other supplies. Four other trains of 25 six-mule wagons and another train of nine six-mule wagons were loaded with more camp and garrison equipage, including wood to build a hospital. There were 675 mules and about 250 soldiers involved in this operation. Two mule trains were to be unloaded at Fort Fletcher while the others accompanied Captain Hooper B. Strout and Musgrove to their post at Pond's Creek, and then on to Fort Lyon, Colorado Territory (on the Arkansas River), to get more supplies that were to be taken to Monument Station



**Richard Musgrove**



**Six-Mule Wagon**

and Pond's Creek.

The train left on or about October 31, 1865. The first two or three days were rainy and the clay soil made going difficult, but once it dried out they made about 20 miles per day. Musgrove also mentioned that the prairie fires illuminated the sky at night. On November 16 they reached Fort Fletcher and found "timber in sufficient quantities to furnish material for the erection of quarters." The two trains with supplies for Fort Fletcher were unloaded and returned to Leavenworth.

Although there were plenty of trees in the area, forage was not plentiful and Special Order No. 31 was issued, stating that "on account of the total want of all forage at Fort Fletcher Kansas, L. B. Hickok, Wagonmaster will turn over three loads of corn and one of oats, the same being a part of the supply for Monument Station." This was the first known official document bearing the notation "Fort Fletcher." Interestingly, the Hickok referred to was Lorenzo Butler Hickok, brother of the not yet famous Wild Bill.

Musgrove and his men rested for two days, until November 18, then he and Capt. Strout's Company A left for Pond Creek and Monument, respectively. They took two trains of 25 six-mule wagons each and one train of nine wagons.



The following day, November 19, a stage carrying, among others, Theodore Davis, a special artist for *Harper's Weekly*, reached Fort Fletcher. He described the new post: "During the afternoon we reached Fort Fletcher, a newly established government post, garrisoned by a force of 300 men under the command of Colonel Tamblyn. The fort is so in name alone, as the work is yet to be built. A cottonwood grove, sort of an oasis in this treeless country, had been selected as a campground which was not only picturesque but comfortable."

As Musgrove and his men traveled westward, he commented that the first three days were fine and they shot some buffalo for food, often using just the tongue and liver. Unbeknownst to them at the time, however, other, more terrifying incidents were taking place around them. On the afternoon and evening of November 19, Monument Station, Downer's Station, and Grannell Station, were attacked.

At about 1:00 pm, Downer's was the first to be attacked by a party of about 80 Cheyenne Dog Soldiers. One stage passenger and two stock-tenders at the station were killed. Six men, two with the stage and four station-keepers, escaped to the east where they reached Bluffton Station, which had also been burned but the station-keepers there had all

escaped unharmed. They continued east and the next stage that came along, that containing Davis, picked them up at about 3:00 am, and they were taken east to Ruthton Station.

Meanwhile, at about 3:00 pm, just a couple of hours after Downer's had been attacked, Grannell Spring Station was attacked by a reported 50 or 60 Indians. Whether they were the same band that attacked Downer's is unclear. The attack continued until nightfall when the Indians withdrew and the station-keepers, six men and two women, escaped toward Downer's Station. They saw it on fire and bypassed it.

At about the same time Grannell was being attacked that afternoon, three men in a wagon were attacked and killed 4½ miles west of Downer's. In yet another attack on that very busy afternoon, Musgrove and his troops experienced their own battle while camped between Bluffton and Downer's.

They made camp about noon in some bottom land that afforded good grazing for the mules. But a wagonmaster by the name of Livingston, who was in charge of the smaller outfit of nine wagons, camped about ¼-mile away from the others. Livingston was a cantankerous sort who had complained about others stealing from his wagons and so wanted to be away from them. Strout, some of the teamsters, and some of the other troops had gone hunting for buffalo while Musgrove did some reading in his tent. At about 3:00, a soldier came running in saying he had seen Indians. Musgrove took his "field glass" to a bluff and took a look. Mounted Indians were attacking Livingston's camp. "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."

Musgrove left Lt. Hedge in command of the camp and took a detail of men in pursuit, but they never gained sight of the Indians and returned to camp. All other mules were brought into camp for security, and they brought Livingston's nine wagons to their camp where his supplies were distributed among the remaining wagons. Later that night, smoke was seen to the west near what they presumed to be the next station along the BOD.

The next morning the wagon train moved out. "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." In addition, the wagons traveled in two parallel lines so, if attacked, they could "instantly throw the trains into a corral."

After traveling a few miles, Musgrove saw through his telescope a party of people sitting in a circle. Assuming they were Indians, he approached stealthily with a detail of a dozen men. But they were, in

fact, the men and women from Grannell Station who had been escaping to the east. Musgrove's party gave them food and they traveled with them, even though the soldiers were headed west.

When they reached Downer's, they paused only long enough to bury the dead. A few miles farther they came upon the three men in the wagon, employees of the BOD, who had been killed and, again, buried the dead and moved on toward Monument Station, arriving on November 22. Here they were met Capt. Schnell who was in command of a company of 13th Missouri Cavalry. In the camp was also a private of the 13th Missouri who, with another soldier, had been on their way from Monument to Fort Fletcher. They had been attacked by Indians and his companion was killed but he was wounded and feigned death. Nevertheless, he was scalped, but he made no sound or outward sign that he was anything but dead. After the Indians left, he walked back toward Monument but became "bewildered" and went back and laid down next to his dead companion, where the troops found him. He was given medical aide and was getting better, but Musgrove reported that, "he took cold by his own carelessness and soon after died."

After dark, pickets were put out around the station as the soldiers and civilians settled down. Soon, however, they got a scare when there was some commotion and a guard called out "Who comes there? Halt!" He got a "heavy bray" as his response and in walked a mule! It had given out earlier in the day and was left behind but after a few hours rest had recovered and followed the trail to Monument.



**William Brewster**

Creek the next morning, six or eight men in all. They were well-armed and felt they could get past any trouble.

The next morning, November 24, Musgrove had 112 of his men mount mules and another dozen got into a six-mule wagon and they all set out to scout the trail before moving the entire train. They traveled to Smoky Hill Springs Station, the next station on the line. Here they found Brewster and his passengers, plus the stock-tender at the ranch, all of whom had an interesting tale to tell. The stock-tender reported

that Indians had stolen the stock from the station a few days previous but had not molested him. But when the BOD coach approached the station it was surrounded by a large party of Indians who were, "more intent on securing stock than scalps." "The stagecoach party did what many another party has done under similar circumstances," said Musgrove, "they lost their heads." One of the passengers accidentally fired his rifle through the coach roof and "came near doing more execution among those on the outside than all the Indians combined." As the Indians rode closer to the coach, shouting and waving blankets, it spooked the mules which began running toward the Indians rather than away from them. The driver lost control of them, so the passengers and driver jumped out, allowing the Indians to capture the mules.

One of the men in the group was Dr. Whipple (probably Dr. N. L. Whipple of Bates County, Missouri), a "contract surgeon," meaning a civilian hired by the military. Dr. Whipple had been stationed at Pond Creek but had come to Monument to administer to the soldier who had been scalped. The doctor was riding a horse at the time of the attack and "he very sensibly came to the conclusion that his life would be safer if he and his horse should part company," which he did, the Indians capturing his horse.

"Now the doctor was a very peculiar specimen of humanity," said Musgrove. "He was short, bow legged, round shouldered, cross eyed, an albino, and he had St. Vitus' dance in his eyes." (This is a usually temporary reaction to Rheumatic Fever in which the head or limbs, or in this case, the eyes, twitch uncontrollably.) "In spite of his physical defects he was a good physician and surgeon."

When he jumped off his horse, he came face to face with a young Indian about 19 years of age. Both men were armed with revolvers and began shooting at each other. The Indian was shocked to see such an odd-looking white man and was shooting wildly. The doctor was not only terrified of the Indian but also could not shoot straight anyway due to being cross-eyed. Thus neither man was hurt. The men in the stage all made it to the dugout and began to defend themselves, but the Indians, having obtained the animals, which is what they really wanted anyway, did not attack. However, the one who captured the doctor's horse rode once or twice to within hearing distance of the men and shouted, "Much good horse, much good horse!"

The soldiers fed the men some hardtack and coffee and all had agreed to return to Monument when Captain McMichael and escort from Pond Creek rode up. So Brewster and his party went west while Musgrove returned to Monument to pick up the wagon train, telling his men and the wagonmasters to be ready in the morning.

They arose before dawn on the 25th, made coffee and buffalo steaks over a buffalo-chip fire, and pulled out as the sun rose. Musgrove had 50 wagons but, from unloading some on the way, each held only a half load and they made good time, resting once at

noon for an hour to feed the men and mules, and reaching Pond Creek late that night.

Things were progressing slowly at Fort Fletcher during this time. Many of the troops had taken to the field, and the construction of living quarters took a while to accomplish. Private Levi Absher, Company F, 1st USVI, had been assigned as cook when he arrived at the fort on November 16. He recounted that he lived in his tent until November 23, when he "moved into my shack." He described the weather as generally fine but commented on the ever-present Kansas wind and the fact that, with as much action that was taking place around them, they "lay on our guns all night." He also noted in his diary that on the 27th "Indians made a raid on our camp, but no damage done."

Lt. Col. Tamblyn returned to the post on November 28, and wrote to higher headquarters explaining what had occurred along the trail. In addition to what has already been described, he reported that he had sent one of his infantry companies under Captain William Bleadenhiser west with orders to leave detachments at stage stations along the trail. Bleadenhiser and 20 men stayed at Downer's Station and were attacked on Nov. 24, the engagement lasting two hours but with no soldier and few Indian casualties. On the 25th Lt. Hutchins and 12 men of his company were similarly attacked, this battle lasting about 90 minutes.

Tamblyn himself, along with 12 of his men, was also engaged in a brief exchange on the 28th, but he stated that, "they concluded to let me alone, they did not like the range of my guns." He ended his report by stating, "I have to send an escort through with every stage, and I am much in need of more cavalry. I wish you could send me three more companies of cavalry." This would be a recurring request throughout the period of Fort Fletcher's early months. He closed with a bit of bravado and perhaps inexperience reminiscent of other, less fortunate, Indian Wars officers such as Major Joel Elliott and Capt. William Fetterman, when he stated that "I have enough to whip all the Indians on the Smoky Hill but I have not enough to do escort duty."

The next day he again reported on the movements of the Indians, noting they were "not in sufficiently large numbers to prevent the Stages of the BOD Co. from moving along the route to and from Denver; an escort accompanies each one and I trust they soon will be regular in their movements. I think if I had one more company of Cavalry at this post it will be all that will be required to secure this line."

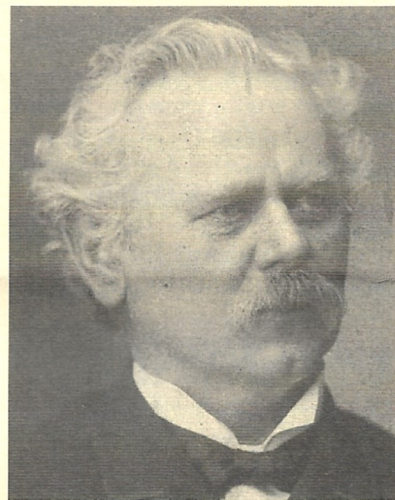
On December 2, Tamblyn reported on the abandonment of Eaton Springs and Smoky Hill Stations due to having too few men to garrison them. Grannell Springs, Downer's, Bluffton, and Ruthton were "burned by the Indians are likewise abandoned." "One more company of cavalry would be sufficient to reopen the BOD line and secure its safety from interruption in future," he said.

The next day, as Levi Absher recorded, the area was hit by a snowstorm followed by another on

December 6, which no doubt limited the activity of both the soldiers and the Indians.

On December 12, a detail of soldiers under command of an unnamed sergeant, was sent west as an escort "to a train of the BOD company," with their ultimate destination being Monument Station. He was ordered to "use great care and not under any circumstances to straggle and will be on your guard at night detailing sufficient men for that purpose, to guard against surprise." Nevertheless, on their first night, while camped at the remains of Ruthton Station 18 miles west of Fort Fletcher, Indians snuck into camp and stole eight horses and four mules. "It is evident that there must have been a great degree of laxity on the part of the Sergeant in posting his guards," an angry Tamblyn said, "or otherwise the guard must have been asleep, as it appears no one saw them stealing the horses or even missed them until morning, when they found the halters cut and horses and mules gone." Tamblyn again made a request for more cavalry and also noted that, "If I could get some good Indian scouts, they would be a great service to me."

On Christmas Eve, 1865, Hospital Steward Hugo Kohl arrived at Fort Fletcher. When he reported to Col. Tamblyn, he asked where his quarters were and Tamblyn replied, pointing, "There is the hospital and there is the doctor's quarters." "I looked about," Kohl recalled, "and found that both these places were plain dug outs on the banks of Big Creek." This, again, indicates that no significant improvements had been made to the post in the two months it had been operational.



**Hugo Kohl**

Nevertheless, Kohl had a favorable impression of the fort, writing nearly 40 years later: "Fort Fletcher was an ideal place, a platan as far as the eye could reach, the banks of the creek were well timbered. Big Creek was abundant with fish of all kinds and game of every variety—buffalo, deer, elk, antelope, grouse, and quail—and often you would see a herd of wild horses run like a cyclone over the boundless prairies."

"The stage coach was the great event once a week," he wrote, "and ten soldiers were needed to guard that old vehicle of early transit on the plains."

On Christmas Day, the colonel reported there had been no activity for the previous 10 days, which he attributed to the cold. But he had word that the Indians had made camp "in a body of timber" 20 miles west of Fletcher. He mounted a raid consisting of 75 infantrymen transported in wagons and 35 cavalry troopers that left the fort the next day in an

"endeavor to surprise their camp." The wagons made it as far as Big Creek Station, where they became bogged down in the snow and were abandoned. The soldiers reportedly went another 18 miles on foot without finding any trace of the Indians, whereupon they returned to Fort Fletcher. The infantrymen, he reported, were "entirely exhausted."

The new year of 1866 did not bring much that was new to the small garrison on Big Creek or to the other stations and posts along the Smoky Hill Trail. On January 12, a detail of 13th Missouri cavalrymen under command of Lt. Bell, arrived at Fort Fletcher from Monument Station. They, along with Musgrove's detachment at Pond's Creek, were nearly out of rations and the commanders feared "they shall have to abandon those stations, unless they are speedily supplied with subsistence." Three days previous to this, Tamblyn himself had sent a detachment of troops to Fort Riley to obtain more supplies for Fletcher, although he stated that he had "a large amount of corn and beef cattle on hand and shall be able to subsist my command including that of Monument and Pond Creek for some time."

Also on January 12, a BOD coach arrived from the east with the report that a "large Government Train" was at Fort Ellsworth headed for Fletcher. But on January 20, it was attacked by "a large body of Indians" (reportedly consisting of between 75 and 100) halfway between Fossil and Walker creeks, 10 miles east of Fletcher. The first volley from the Indians killed two men outright and wounded three more, leaving only one man of the six unscathed. According to Tamblyn, the surviving men took up defensive positions and managed to hold out until nightfall when two of them managed to reach Fort Fletcher under cover of darkness. But, according to another account written by J. C. Alderson, a BOD messenger, the man who was not hurt and two of the wounded men "ran and fired back at the Indians." Charles Riley, the most seriously wounded, could not keep up and "implored them to help him, but they could not." The other two were "shot three times, each with a ball through the arm, and arrows in the back and sides." One of them "still had an arrow in him when he reached" the fort.

*(Part II of this article will appear in the next issue.)*

## TRAIL TREASURES

### -DOCUMENTS-

SmHTA President Mike Baughn found the following items and submitted them to share with OD readers. Thanks Mike.

### SAILING UP THE SMOKY HILL

*(From the Junction City Union, October 7, 1865)*

Navigable—On Tuesday two men passed up the Smoky Hill in a sail boat. Their starting point was Lawrence, and their destination is the forks of the Solomon. The object of their mission is furs. They made the trip from Lawrence to this place in ten days. When the wind was favorable they hoisted a wagon cover, and when not they plied the oar. It

requires an extraordinary amount of pluck to travel up that stream in a skiff.

### BIG FISH

*(From the Junction City Weekly Union, August 17, 1867)*

A fish was caught in the Smoky Hill last Saturday, and served up in one of our markets, which weighed 120 pounds.

*(From the Junction City Union, October 6, 1866)*

A catfish weighing 125 pounds, was drawn from the Republican, at Bachelder, a few days ago. We saw one at Watson & Record's butcher shop, which was caught in the Smoky Hill, the length of which was about five feet, and about fifteen or eighteen inches across the head.

### STARVATION TRAIL

*(From the Rocky Mountain News, Cherry Creek, K.T., May 14, 1859)*

Mr. Williams, conductor of the express, informs us that he picked up on the plains a man in the last stage of exhaustion who had subsisted upon the remains of his two brothers who had died of starvation. Three brothers set out from Illinois for the Gold Region. From Kansas City they took the Smoky Hill route, found the distance much greater than represented, ate up their provisions and when near to death, one of them sinking more rapidly than the others, requested them to live upon his flesh and try to get through. He died and they commenced their horrible feast—ate the body and again braved starvation—another died and the survivor lived upon his remains, but the same fate had almost reached him when he was found by an Indian, carried to his lodge and fed. The next day the express came along and took him in and brought him part way through, but was obliged to leave him because of his feebleness and delirium. He will be brought up by the next coach and probably arrived today.

Mr. Williams after hearing the man's story from himself and the Indian, searched for, and found the bones of the second one who died and interred them.

This we fear is one of a hundred tales of horror yet to be told of the Smoky Hill route—which will bring sorrow to many a hearthstone.

### TRAIL MARKER DEDICATED

*(From "Kansas Historical Notes," Kansas Historical Quarterly, V [August 1936]: 335-336)*

A bronze tablet was recently unveiled on the Pioneer monument at Colfax and Broadway, Denver, Colo., bearing the inscription: "Here was the end of the famous Smoky Hill Trail, Immigrant and Stage Road extending from the Missouri river to Denver. Entered the city by Fifteenth street. Traversed by Pioneers in 1858. Surveyed by W. G. Russell in 1860. Route of Butterfield's Overland Despatch and Wells-Fargo Express. The trail took its human toll—deaths by thirst and by 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."

## WALT WHITMAN ON THE SMOKY HILL

(From Robert R. Hubach, "Walt Whitman in Kansas," Kansas Historical Quarterly, X [May 1941]: 153)

Before leaving Kansas, Whitman visited Atchison and Wallace. Linton Usher believes poor health forced the poet to stop at the latter town. It was here at Wallace, an army post near the Colorado border, on Sept. 19 [1879], that Whitman, inspired by the Kansas celebration and yet probably not physically able to write anything new, recollected and sent back to Lawrence a few appropriate lines from his early poem "Resurgemus" first printed in the New York *Daily Tribune* of June 21, 1850. Whitman later recast this youthful piece of work, lengthening the lines and calling it "Europe—the 72d and 73d Years of these States." It is curious that the poet should have quoted the earlier, short-line version of the poem:

Not a grave of the murdered for Freedom  
But germs seeds of a wider Freedom,  
Which the winds carry afar and sow,  
And the snows and the rains nourish.

Whitman arrived in Denver by the Kansas Pacific railroad on Sept. 20 and stayed in Colorado for four days.

## HORSE RACES TRAIN

(From the Kansas Daily Commonwealth, Topeka, April 2, 1873)

A lively race took place on the 28th inst. between a soldier on horseback from Fort Harker and the express train on the Kansas Pacific (now the Union Pacific) railroad. The horse gained about 25 yards in a half mile. It was better time than was ever made in Kansas. Half a mile made in fifty seconds by a plug.

## SAILING ON THE RAILROAD

(From the Clay County Dispatch, Clay Center, KS, Nov. 29, 1877)

A wind-power hand car, says the Junction City *Union*, sixteen feet in length, is now sailing on the Kansas Pacific. The sail is fifteen feet high, twelve feet wide at the bottom, ten at the top. It is controlled precisely as the sail of a sail boat, and by its means

the car is always easily propelled except when the wind is "dead ahead." With a good wind a speed of twenty-five miles an hour can be easily attained.

## PATRICIA BOWEN

Patricia Bowen, Basehor KS, a charter member of SmHTA, died in February 2012. Condolences are extended to her husband, Montie Bowen, who served on the membership committee.

## NEW SmHTA MEMBERSHIPS

New members since last issue.

### INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society, 1628 S Oakland St, Aurora CO 80012

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Charles G. Steward, PO Box 287, Oakley KS 67748

Ramond Stokes, 1647 Rd 99, Sidney NE 69162

## TRAIL CALENDAR

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

**July 21, 2012:** SmHTA Board Meeting, Eisenhower Library, Abilene KS, 1:00 pm.

**Aug. 1, 2012:** Deadline for nominations for SmHTA Awards in 2012.

**Aug. 6-11, 2012:** Oregon-California Trails Association National Convention, Lawrence KS

**Sept. 20-22, 2012:** Santa Fe Trail Rendezvous, Larned KS

**Oct. 1, 2012:** Deadline for silent auction items.

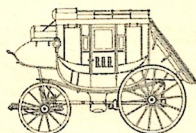
**Oct. 19-22, 2012:** Sixth Annual Smoky Hill Trail Association Conference, Abilene KS

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

## EDITOR'S REQUEST

ALL SmHTA members are reminded that articles for *Overland Despatch* are welcome any time. Please contact Editor Ann Liston at <[aliston@fhsu.edu](mailto:aliston@fhsu.edu)>. The deadline for the next issue is **August 15, 2012**. Thank you.

Smoky Hill Trail Association  
PO Box 322  
WaKeeney, KS 67672



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