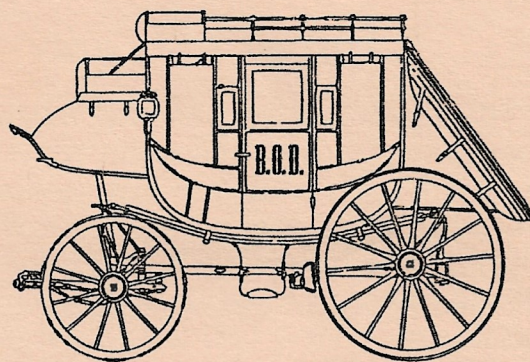


LITERATURE AND LORE  
OF  
THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL

By

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“REMEMBER THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL”



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## THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL – A BRIEF HISTORY

The Smoky Hill Trail stretched from Atchison, Kansas, on the Missouri River, west to Denver, across the plains of Kansas and Colorado. It opened in 1859 as a route to the Rocky Mountain gold fields. It was touted as the shortest route to riches by 200 miles, in contrast to the Santa Fe Trail or the Oregon-California Trail, which followed the Platte River in Nebraska. It proved more dangerous than either of these routes, especially at its western end in Colorado where it was dubbed the “Starvation Trail,” principally for its lack of water and game to hunt.

The route of the Trail could vary. It followed the Kansas River to its junction with the Smoky Hill and then the Smoky Hill to its confluence with the Solomon River. There it split. A northern branch went up the Solomon, eventually crossed to the Republican River and rejoined the southern track of the trail in the vicinity of present-day Limon, Colorado. The first stagecoach line on the trail, the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express Company used this road beginning in 1859. A southern branch, favored especially by gold seekers, tracked along the Smoky Hill River and its tributaries into eastern Colorado, and then struck west for the Rockies. In 1865, David A. Butterfield inaugurated his Butterfield’s Overland Despatch stage line using this route.

The Kansas Pacific Railroad, as it ultimately became known, built west along the southern route in 1863. Its first locomotive steamed into Denver in 1870. In the years after it ceased to be the gateway to the gold fields, the Trail still served as a route for the U.S. Army in its confrontations with Plains Indians and then for settlers opening the wheat fields of western Kansas. Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and on to the present, highways traced the route of the old Trail, including U.S. Highway 40 and then Interstate 70.

Today, the Smoky Hill Trail Association, founded in 2007, is dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and interpretation of the Trail’s heritage. More information about the Association is available at [www.smokyhilltrail.com](http://www.smokyhilltrail.com).

## LITERATURE OF THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL – FACT, FICTION, AND ROMANCE

This pamphlet is intended as an introduction to some of the books, articles, stories, reports, journals, poems, and other literature of the Smoky Hill Trail. It is not a comprehensive bibliography but can serve as a guide to reading about the Trail. It is divided into six sections: Guidebooks to the Trail from the 1850s and 1860s, Military and Government Reports, Journals of Travels on the Trail, the Era of the Railroad along the Trail, Art and Poetry, and Fiction and Stories of the Trail. Also, it should be mentioned here that readers seeking a comprehensive historical consideration of the Smoky Hill Trail might begin with *Trails of the Smoky Hill*, by Wayne C. Lee and Howard C. Raynesford, first published in 1980 and reissued by the Caxton Press, Caldwell, Idaho, in 2008.

Enjoy the following “literature and lore” and “Remember the Smoky Hill Trail!”

*Dr. Mike Olsen, author and compiler*



## Guidebooks

There were many guidebooks published delineating the route west to the Pikes Peak gold regions. The following list includes only those which have particular application to the Smoky Hill Trail in that they have some textual description of the route or they map the route, whether accurately or inaccurately. Many guidebooks only covered the Platte River Road or the way west via the Santa Fe Trail-Arkansas River.

Most of these guidebooks are scarce in their original form. Some have been reprinted and others are described and summarized by compilers of Western Americana. Three sources are especially central to the preservation and reprinting of all the Pikes Peak gold rush guidebooks. LeRoy Hafen included various guidebooks in Volume 9 of the Arthur H. Clark Company's *Southwest Historical Series*; Nolie Mumey, of Denver, with the collaboration of Hafen, reprinted many guidebooks from the 1940s through the 1960s; David White's compilation and annotation, *News of the Plains and Rockies*, also includes Pike's Peak gold rush items.

Bibliographic references for Hafen and White are included below after the guidebook entries. Each guidebook entry indicates if a reprint is included in Hafen, was reprinted by Mumey, or if a synopsis is provided by White.

- Allen, Obridge. *Allen's Guide Book and Map to the Gold Fields of Kansas & Nebraska and Great Salt Lake City*. Washington: R. A. Waters, 1859. 68 p.: map. (Hafen, Mumey 1953)
- Eastin, Lucian J. *Emigrant's Guide to Pike's Peak*. Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory: L. J. Eastin, 1859. 8 p.: map. (Hafen, Mumey 1959, White)
- Green, Henry T. *Report and Map of the Superintendent and Engineer of the Smoky Hill Expedition*. Leavenworth, KS: Daily Times and Job Printing Establishment, 1861. 19 p.: map. (White)
- Gunn, Otis. *New Map and Hand-Book of Kansas & the Gold Mines: Containing Descriptions and Statistics of the Indian Tribes, Settlement, Soil, Productions, Climate, Roads, Rail Roads, Telegraphs, Mail Routes, Land Districts, Legislatures &c.: with Description of All the Routes to the New Gold Mines, Outfits for Miners, and a Variety of Other Useful Information*. Pittsburg: W. S. Haven, 1959. 71 p.: fold. map. (Hafen, Mumey 1952)
- McGowan, D. and G. H. Hildt. *Map of the United States West of the Mississippi Showing the Route of Pike's Peak, Overland Mail Route to California and Pacific Railroad Surveys...* St. Louis: Leopold Gast & Bro., 1859. (White)
- Oliver, J. W. *Guide to the New Gold Region of Western Kansas and Nebraska: with Table of Distances and Accurate Map*. New York: J. W. Oliver, 1859. 32 p.: fold. map. (Hafen, Mumey 1951)
- Parsons, William B. *The New Gold Mines of Western Kansas: Being a Complete Description of the Newly Discovered Gold Mines; the Different Routes, Camping Places, Tools and Outfit; and Containing Everything Important for the Emigrant and Miner to Know*. Cincinnati: Geo. S. Blanchard, 1859. 63 p.: fold. map. (Hafen, Mumey 1951)
- Pike's Peak; Great Through Line Between the East and West, via Cincinnati and St. Louis by the Ohio & Mississippi Broad-gauge Railroad; with Map of Western Connections, including the*



*Kansas Gold Fields*. Cincinnati: Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Company, 1859. 16 p.: folded map. (Hafen, White)

Pratt, C. N. *Pacific Railroad of Missouri: the Old Established and Most Reliable Route to Kansas, Nebraska, and All Points on the Missouri River: the Most Direct Route to the Newly Discovered Gold Fields of Pike's Peak and Cherry Creek*. [s.n.], 1859. 10 p.: map. (Mumey 1963, White)

Pratt, John J. and Francis A. Hunt. *A Guide to the Gold Mines of Kansas: Containing an Accurate Account and Reliable Map of the Most Direct Railroad Routes from the Atlantic Cities to the Farthest Point West Now Reached by Railroad Communication ... and from thence to the Gold Mines; also, All Other Practicable Routes*. Chicago: C. Scott & Co., 1859. 70 p.: fold. map. (Hafen, Mumey 1950-1959)

Redpath, James. *Hand-book to Kansas Territory and the Rocky Mountains' Gold Region; Accompanied by Reliable Maps and a Preliminary Treatise on the Pre-emption Laws of the United States*. New York: J. H. Colton, 1859. 177 p.: 2 fold maps. (Hafen, Mumey 1954)

Reed, Jacob W. *Map and Guide to the Kansas Gold Region, the Map Embracing Both Routes – the Northern and Southern – from the Missouri River to the Guide Giving a Description of the Country, Game, Water-Courses, Distances from Camp to Camp: also, General Directions for Outfitting, Traveling, etc.* New York: J. H. Colton, 1859. 24 p.: fold. map. (Mumey 1959, White)

Stevens, W. H. *Field Notes: Crossing the Prairies and Plains from Atchison, Kansas, to Denver, through the Mineral Region of Colorado Territory*. Philadelphia: J. B. Chandler, 1865. 21 p. (White)

The Hafen and White compilations are:

Hafen, LeRoy, ed. *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859 by Luke Tierney, William B. Parsons and Summaries of the Other Fifteen*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1941. 346 p. pl., ports., fold. map.

This is Volume 9 in The Southwest Historical Series. Hafen's "Historical Introduction," pp. 19-80, places the guidebooks in the context of the gold rush. This volume was reprinted as *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks 1859*, by the Porcupine Press, Philadelphia, 1974.

White, David A., compiler and annotator. *New of the Plains and Rockies, 1803-1865: Original Narratives of Overland Travel and Adventure Selected from the Wagner-Camp and Becker Bibliography of Western Americana*. Spokane, WA: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1996- .

Volume 7 of this compendium includes synopses of 19 Pike's Peak gold rush items.

#### Government Reports – Expeditions and Military Items

At first glance, the Smoky Hill Trail looks like the neglected step-child of the U. S. Army and the various federal agencies which explored, mapped, and assessed the west in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In part this is because exploration of the Smoky Hill Valley and the building of the Kansas Pacific Railroad to Denver was completed nearly a decade before the U. S. Geological



Survey Service was established. However, several famous expeditions did traverse the Smoky Hill region and the Army ordered a few limited, specific evaluations of the Smoky Hill, Republican, and Solomon valleys.

The first American explorer to wander through the area – and in this case “wander” seems to be an appropriate word choice – was Zebulon Montgomery Pike, in 1806. Pike more or less went up the Solomon, turned south and crossed the Smoky Hill near Beaver Creek, then headed off to New Mexico and his destiny. There are many editions of Pike’s journals; the most recent is a new issue of Hart and Hulbert’s *The Southwest Journals of Zebulon Pike, 1806-1807*, published by the University of New Mexico Press in 2006.

Pike was followed, in 1843-1844, by John Charles Frémont, who touched on the Republican, the Solomon and the Smoky Hill rivers. There are various editions of Frémont available; the most scholarly and comprehensive is that of Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence, noted below.

There isn’t space here to cover in depth the reports of about a half dozen military men, including Lt. Francis Bryan from 1856-1857, General G. A. Forsyth, who penned his memoirs in 1895, or Capt. L. C. Easton, who went from Fort Laramie to Fort Leavenworth via the Republican River in 1849. Accounts such as these have appeared over the years especially in state historical publications such as *Kansas History*, *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, *Nebraska History*, and even *South Dakota History*. Readers interested in this type of material should check out the “Making of America” Internet site at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moagrp/>, particularly for full-text articles from *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*.

Fort Wallace and its role on the Smoky Hill Trail and in the heritage of western Kansas deserve special mention. Here the best publication to start with is Mrs. Frank C. Montgomery’s pamphlet *Fort Wallace, Kansas*, which was published in the *Collections of the Kansas Historical Society* for 1926-1928 and reprinted by the Fort Wallace Memorial Association in 1955. It includes a reprint of the 1865 report of Lieut. J. R. Fitch to D. A. Butterfield on “The Smoky Hill Route.” Lieut. Fitch had a way with words and he was nothing if not loyal to the Smoky Hill route. He waxed eloquent, saying

Five miles west of Fort Ellsworth we were fairly in the buffalo range, and, for miles in every direction as far as the eye could see, the *hills* were *black* with these shaggy monsters of the prairie, grazing quietly upon the richest pasture in the world. Should I estimate the number of buffalo to be seen at one view at a million it would be thought an exaggeration, but better authority than myself has estimated them at millions ....

*He continues:*

The advantages of the Smoky Hill route over the Platte or the Arkansas must be apparent to everybody. In the first place it is one hundred and sixteen miles shorter to Denver, making two hundred and thirty-two miles on the round trip; and emigration, like a ray of light, will not go around unless there are insurmountable obstacles in the way.

*He concluded, based on his experience but misleadingly, “There is no sand on this route,” and, “On the new route we saw no signs of Indians....”*

Bryan, Lt. Francis. “Report of Lt. Francis T. Bryan,” *Report of the Secretary of War, 1857*. House Exec. Doc. 2, Appendix H. 35<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. 1857.



- Chalfant, William Y. *Cheyennes and Horse Soldiers: The 1857 Expedition and the Battle of Solomon's Fork*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989. 415 p.: ill.
- Chalfant, William Y. *Hancock's War: Conflict on the Southern Plains*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. [To be published]
- Custer, George A. *My Life on the Plains. Or, Personal Experiences with Indians*. New York: Sheldon and Company, 1874. 256 p. incl. front. plates, ports.
- Davis, Theodore R. "A Summer on the Plains." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 36:213 (February 1868): 292-307.
- Forsyth, General G. A. "A Frontier Fight." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 91:541 (June 1895): 42-62.
- Frémont, John Charles. *The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont*. Edited by Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970 - <1980>. V <1-3> in <4> illus., 2 fold. maps, ports. and portfolio (5 fold. maps)
- Hurt, R. Douglas. "The Construction and Development of Fort Wallace, Kansas, 1865-1882." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 43:1 (Spring 1977): 44-55.
- King, James T. "The Republican River Expedition, June-July, 1869, I, On the March." *Nebraska History* 41: 3 (September 1960): 165-99.
- King, James T. "The Republican River Expedition, June-July 1869, II, The Battle of Summit Springs." *Nebraska History* 41:4 (December 1960): 281-97.
- Mattes, Merrill J., ed. "Capt. L. C. Easton's Report: Fort Laramie to Fort Leavenworth Via Republican River in 1849." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 20:6 (May 1953): 392-417.
- Montgomery, Mrs. Frank C. *Fort Wallace, Kansas*. Wallace, KS: Fort Wallace Memorial Association, 1955. 64 p.: ill. See also, the *Collections of the Kansas Historical Society* 17 (1926-1928): 189-283.
- Oliva, Leo. *Fort Harker: Defending the Journey West*. Topeka, Kansas State Historical Society, 2000. 104 p.: ill., maps.
- Oliva, Leo. *Fort Hays, Frontier Army Post, 1865-1889*. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1980. 66 p.: ill.
- Oliva, Leo. *Fort Hays: Keeping Peace on the Plains*. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1996. 82 p.: ill., maps.
- Oliva, Leo. *Fort Wallace: Sentinel on the Smoky Hill Trail*. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1998. 132 p.: ill., maps.
- Pike, Zebulon Montgomery. *An Account of Expeditions to the Sources of the Mississippi, and through the Western Parts of Louisiana, to the Sources of the Arkansas, Kans, La Platte, Pierre Juan, Rivers; Performed by Order of the Government of the United States During the Years 1805, 1806, and 1807; And a Tour through the Interior Parts of New Pain, when Conducted through These Provinces, by Order of the Captain-General, in the Year 1807*. Philadelphia, C. & A. Conrad & Co., 1810. 277, 65, 53, and 87 p., 4 maps, 2 charts.

There have been various editions of Pike's journals in the two centuries since 1810. The latest covering his Western Expedition is a reissue of that edited by Stephan Harding Hart



and Archer Butler Hulbert in 1932-1933 – *The Southwestern Journals of Zebulon Pike, 1806-1807*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006.

Scheffer, Theodore H. "Following Pike's Expedition from the Smoky Hill to the Solomon." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 14:3 (August 1947): 240-47.

Smith, Dwight L. "The Kansas Frontier, 1869-1870: Lt. Samuel Tillman's First Tour of Duty." *Kansas History* 12:4 (Winter 1989/1990): 202-09.

Staab, Rodney. "The Smoky Hill Route and Fort Fletcher." M. A. thesis, Fort Hays State University, 1985. 196 p.

Voight, Barton R. "The Death of Lyman S. Kidder," *South Dakota History*, 6:1 (Winter 1975), 1-32.

### Journals, Diaries, Reports, Tours and Letters from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

The American West fascinated people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One way to rustle up a few bucks, for both men and women authors, was to take a trip out West and then write about it. The western travel tour book was a literary genre, a popular form of entertainment and information in its day.

As far as the Smoky Hill Trail is concerned, there are several dozen travelers' accounts, but the most famous tourist was undoubtedly Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*. He is, of course, still quoted frequently for his remark, "Go West, young man." Greeley himself went west in the spring of 1859, headed for California. To get there, he took a stagecoach of the newly established Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company from Leavenworth to Denver. His is perhaps the most fulsome and accurate account we have, though he obviously reflects the attitudes of the time, such as viewing the High Plains as the "Great American Desert." The chapters covering his journey across Kansas and into Colorado in his book, *An Overland Journey*, have titles such as "On the Plains," "The Home of the Buffalo," "Last of the Buffalo," "The American Desert," and "Good Bye to the Desert."

Another traveler of note was Albert Richardson, who penned his experiences as *Beyond the Mississippi: From the Great River to the Great Ocean: Life and Adventure on the Prairies, Mountains, and Pacific Coast, 1857-1867*. As often was the case with book titles in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the author here made sure a prospective book buyer knew exactly what he or she was getting. Richardson too took a Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express stage coach – in fact, he was a fellow passenger of Horace Greeley.

The books and articles of W. E. Webb are a third interesting example of this travel genre. Webb's most famous travel narrative is entitled *Buffalo Land: An Authentic Account of the Discoveries, Adventures, and Mishaps of a Scientific and Sporting Party in the Wild West*, published in 1872. He also wrote a delightful article in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* called, "Air Towns and Their Inhabitants." Webb defined an "Air Town" as one of those railroad communities that are here today and gone tomorrow, and he concentrates on places on the Union Pacific – Eastern Division west of Fort Harker, Kansas. He says, "child of a nursing railroad, the infant town has often rended the heavens with its birth shout, while Fate prepared to throttle it at tooth-cutting."



Many of the books in the following list are available in full text on the Internet at a site called "Making of America," a collaborative effort of Cornell University and the University of Michigan. This project concentrates on reproducing books and periodicals published from 1850 to 1877. For those interested in the Smoky Hill Trail, this site also has digitized all the issues of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, which contained many articles related to the Trail. This site is found at: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moagrp/>.

Horace Greeley deserves the last word here. It is May 28, 1859, and he is writing from Pipe Creek, Station 9 on the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak line. His situation was all too common for the day,

I was detained at Manhattan [Kansas] nearly a day longer than I had expected to be by high water. Wildcat, five miles west, and Rock Creek, seventeen miles east, were both impassable on Thursday, so that an express-wagon from Pike's Peak was stopped behind the former, while five mail-coaches and express-wagons faced each other through part of Thursday and all of Thursday night across the latter. Next morning, however, each stream had run out, so that they could be forded, and at [O]ne P.M. I took my seat in the Pike's Peak express, and again moved westward. (71)

"Along the Line of the Kansas Pacific Railway in Western Kansas in 1870." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 19:2 (May 1951): 201-211.

Barney, Libeus. *Letters of the Pike's Peak Gold Rush (or, Early Day Letters from Auraria) Early Day Letters, by Libeus Barney, Reprinted from the Bennington Banner, Vermont, 1859-1860*. San Jose, CA: Talisman Press, 1959. 97 p.: illus., map (in pocket).

Barry, Louise. "Albert D. Richardson's Letters on the Pike's Peak Gold Region; Written to the Editor of the *Lawrence Republican*, May 22-August 25, 1860." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 12:1 (February 1943): 14-57.

Beadle, J. H. *The Undeveloped West; Or, Five Years in the Territories; Being a Complete History of that Vast Region between the Mississippi and the Pacific*. . . . Philadelphia: National Pub. Co., 1873. 823 p.: front., illus., plates, double map.

Bell, William Abraham. *New Tracks in North America: a Journal of Travel and Adventure Whilst Engaged in the Survey for a Southern Railroad to the Pacific Ocean during 1867-8*. New York: Scribner, Welford, 1869. 2 v., plates: ill., map.

Blue, Daniel. *Thrilling Narrative of the Adventures, Sufferings and Starvation of Pike's Peak Gold Seekers on the Plain of the West in the Winter and Spring of 1859. By One of the Survivors*. Chicago: Evening Journal Steam Print, 1860. Reprinted, Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1968. 23 p.

Byers, Frank S. "From West to East in '65." *The Trail: A Magazine for Colorado* 18:8 (January 1926): 3-6.

Caldwell, Martha B., ed. "Exploring the Solomon River Valley in 1869: From the Journal of Robert McBratney." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 6:1 (February 1937): 60-76.

Copley, Josiah. *Kansas and the Country Beyond, on the Line of the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division, from the Missouri to the Pacific Ocean. Partly from Personal Observation, and Partly from Information Drawn from Authentic Sources. Written in a Series of Letters to the Pittsburg Gazette*. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867. 96 p.: front. (fold. map).



- Davis, Theodore H. "A Stage Ride to Colorado." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 35 (July 1867): 137-50.
- Dixon, William Hepworth. *New America*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867. 495 p.: front., plates, ports.
- Greeley, Horace. *An Overland Journey, from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859*. New York: C. M. Saxton, Barker & Co., 1860. 386 p.
- Hafen, LeRoy, ed. *Colorado Gold Rush: Contemporary Letters and Reports, 1858-1859*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1941. 386 p., illus.
- Hafen, LeRoy, ed. *Overland Routes to the Gold Fields, 1859: from Contemporary Diaries*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1942. 320 p.: plates, ports., fold. map.
- This is Volume 11 in The Southwest Historical Series. It includes Albert D. Richardson's account of his 1860 journey on the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express, a chapter, "The Smoky Hill Trail, Contemporary Letters and Reports," as well as "The Great Central Route to the Gold Mines of Western Kansas – E. D. Boyd's "Notes on the First Parallel Road," and "Pike's Peak and Back: Notes of a Returned Pike's Peaker – John H. Edwards." The volume was reissued as *To the Pike's Peak Gold Fields, 1859*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.
- Knox, Thomas W. "To Pike's Peak and Denver." *Knickerbocker* 58:2 (August 1861), 115-128.
- Lavers, Norman, ed. "'The Golden Orb of Day Has Rose': A Diary of the Smoky Hill Route to Pike's Peak, 1858." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 36:2 (Spring 1986): 50-61.
- This is the diary of William Fiske Parker, who leaves Leavenworth on October 21, 1858, and is in camp on the banks of Cherry Creek, Colorado, by January 13, 1859.
- Lindsey, David, ed. "The Journal of an 1859 Pike's Peak Gold Seeker." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 22:4 (Winter 1956): 305-20.
- Lowe, Percival G. *Five Years a Dragoon ('49 to '54) and Other Adventures on the Great Plains*. Kansas City, MO: The F. Hudson Publishing Co., 1906. 417 p.: front., illus., ports. There are various subsequent editions.
- Majors, Alexander. *Seventy Years on the Frontier: Alexander Majors' Memoirs of a Lifetime on the Border*. Chicago: Rand, McNally & Company, 1893. 325 p.: illus., plates, ports. (incl. front.). There are various subsequent editions.
- McCain, G. S. "A Trip from Atchison, Kansas, to Laurette, Colorado: Diary of G. S. McCain." *Colorado Magazine* 27:2 (April 1950): 95-102.
- Putnam, John H. "A Trip to the End of the Union Pacific in 1865." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 13:3 (August 1944): 196-203.
- Richardson, Albert Dean. *Beyond the Mississippi: From the Great River to the Great Ocean: Life and Adventure on the Prairies, Mountains, and Pacific Coast, 1857-1867*. Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1867. 572 p.: [19] leaves of plates: ill., maps. Reprinted in Hafen, *Overland Routes*. See above.
- Riley, Paul D. "A Winter on the Plains, 1870-1871 – The Memoirs of Lawson Cooke." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 37:1 (Spring 1971): 33-40.



- Root, Frank A. and William E. Connelley. *The Overland Stage to California: Personal Reminiscences and Authentic History of the Great Overland Stage Line and Pony Express from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean*. Topeka: Published by the authors, 1901. 630 p.; [2] leaves of plates (1 folded): ill., map, ports.
- Taylor, Bayard. *Colorado: A Summer Trip*. New York: G. P. Putnam and Son, 1867. 185 p.
- “Touring Kansas and Colorado in 1871; the Journal of George C. Anderson – Concluded.” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 22:4 (Winter 1956): 358-384.
- “Touring Kansas and Colorado in 1871; the Journal of George C. Anderson – Part I.” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 22:3 (Autumn 1956): 193-219.
- Villard, Henry. *The Past and Present of the Pike’s Peak Gold Regions, with Maps and Illustrations*. St. Louis: Sutherland & McEvoy, 1860. 112 p.: ill, 2 folded maps.
- Villard, Henry. “To the Pike’s Peak Country in 1859 and Cannibalism on the Smoky Hill Route.” *Colorado Magazine* 8:6 (November 1931): 225-36.
- Webb, W. E. “Air Towns and Their Inhabitants.” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 51:306 (November 1875): 828-36.
- Webb, W. E. *Buffalo Land: An Authentic Account of the Discoveries, Adventures, and Mishaps of a Scientific and Sporting Party in the Wild West*. Cincinnati: E. Hannaford & Company, 1872. 503 p., incl. plates, ports.
- Wheeler, Homer W. *Buffalo Days: Forty Years in the Old West: The Personal Narrative of a Cattleman, Indian Fighter and Army Officer*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, c1925. 369 p.: front., plates, ports.

### Railroads and Railroad Building

The story of the Kansas Pacific Railroad is an integral part of the history of the Smoky Hill Trail. The Kansas Pacific began building west from the Missouri River in 1863 and completed its main line to Denver in 1870, thus bringing to a close the first phase of Smoky Hill Trail history. The era of railroad building through Kansas and onto the Colorado High Plains is as complex as all the other aspects of Smoky Hill history and the railroad literature, likewise, is extensive.

Perhaps the best place to start in getting a grasp on the Kansas Pacific is George L. Anderson’s *Kansas West*, published in 1963. Anderson served for decades in the History Department and as chair of that department at the University of Kansas. He became the expert on the history of railroads in Kansas. He sets the tone for his study in the very first two sentences of his book: “More than a decade ago one of the greatest of American historians suggested that what was needed in the field of historical literature was a railroad interpretation of American history. This suggestion was made in all seriousness to call attention to the fact that transportation, or perhaps the lack of transportation, has been the most important factor in the development of the West.” These sentences could serve as a rallying cry and central theme for the Smoky Hill Trail Association – harking back to its Mission Statement, the Association is interested in all aspects of Trail history. Although out of print, this book is still relatively easy to find and purchase.



Anderson's interest in Kansas railroads was first piqued when he taught at Colorado College in the 1930s, where he became acquainted with the life and legacy of General William Jackson Palmer, founder of Colorado Springs and Colorado College. Palmer got his start in the West surveying for the Kansas Pacific after the Civil War. A second interesting book to highlight here – a book infinitely rarer than Anderson's work, is General Palmer's *Report of Surveys across the Continent, in 1867-'68, on the Thirty-fifth and Thirty-second Parallels, for a Route Extending the Kansas Pacific Railway to the Pacific Ocean at San Francisco and San Diego*. Palmer covers the technical aspects of building the Kansas Pacific in detail. (I got to hold a copy of this book, not surprisingly, in the Rare Book Room at Colorado College – and, as it turned out, it was General Palmer's personal copy, given by him to the College in 1907. It was one of those nifty moments that come along once in a while for a researcher.)

Another interesting and rare railroad item is one entitled *The History of the Construction of the Union Pacific Railroad*, issued by the Department of Public Relations of the Union Pacific. This is a modest 14 page pamphlet and doesn't really say much, but it had turned up in a bibliographic search through the World Catalog, which incorporates the catalogs of thousands of libraries around the world. As it turns out, the Forsyth Library at Fort Hays State University is one of the few libraries anywhere that has this document, as is the case with many other rare items on the Smoky Hill Trail. This library is truly a major resource for members of the Smoky Hill Trail Association. The library's catalog can be accessed on line at <https://www.fhsu.edu/library>. The link for the World Catalog is <http://www.worldcat.org>.

So, if you have an interest in railroad history and the Smoky Hill Trail, start searching - you are never going to run out of material.

(Note: Items in this bibliography pertain mainly to the Kansas Pacific and Union Pacific in Kansas and Colorado before 1870, when the Kansas Pacific was completed through to Denver, Colorado.)

“Along the Line of the Kansas Pacific Railway in Western Kansas in 1870.” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 19:2 (May 1951): 201-11.

Anderson, George LaVerne. *Kansas West*. San Marino, CA: Golden West Books, 1963. 268 p. illus., maps, ports.

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#### Photography, Art and Poetry

The Smoky Hill Trail, as with all western trails, is not only a place – a physical artifact, or a time, but it is also a "state of mind," or what can be called a "cultural artifact." When someone says, "Well, I'm interested in the Smoky Hill Trail," those words conjure various images in his or her mind, to say nothing of the images others might have. Those images change over time, too – people living along the Trail 75 years ago had different ideas about it than those of 25 years ago and certainly than of us today.

One way this "culture of the Trail" is communicated is through photography, art, and poetry. Each of these elements has, of course, physical and historical connections; each of them summons up or is tied to a place, event, person, or general development along the Trail or in the story of the Trail. But they bring a different representation of the Trail to the table than, say, a book, an article, a memoir, or newspaper account. They are more likely to convey the message of the Trail emotionally than other media. In short, they appeal to us on another level.

Aficionados of the Smoky Hill Trail are fortunate to have the stunning contemporary photographs of Alexander Gardner, taken in the late 1860s across Kansas as the railroad built west. There are half-dozen scholarly studies of Gardner's career and assessments of his photographs, with reference to Kansas, especially of course in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly* and *Kansas History*. A good place to start if one is interested in this aspect of the Trail is with Robert Taft's compilation of Gardner photos in the possession of the Kansas State Historical Society, "A Photographic History of Early Kansas," published in 1934. The Gardner photos can also be accessed on the Internet on the site of the Kansas State Historical Society.



Another treasure of Trail art is the sequence of artist Thomas Currey's 15 watercolors of "stage stops in western Kansas along the Smoky Hill Trail of the 1860s." They were published as a collection in 1976 as the third volume in the Western Plains Heritage Series of the H. F. Davis Memorial Library at Colby Community College. They are accompanied by a narrative written by Betty Radcliffe Jackson emphasizing the stage coach era of Trail history. This book is obtainable from used book dealers, but is expensive.

And then we come to poetry, a favorite literary form for connoting a culture and a time. There seems to be only one volume of poetry specifically related to the Smoky Hill Trail, though numerous "Smoky Hill" poems may have been published over the last century in the newspapers of the Kansas towns scattered along the Trail. The one volume is Margaret W. Moody's *Smoky Hill Trail*. There are several dozen poems in the book touching on a number of Kansas topics; only the lead poem, titled "The Smoky Hill Trail," directly evokes Trail times. It has stanzas on Native Peoples, the Spaniards, the 1859 gold rush, emigrants, settlers, and the subsequent transportation era of railroads, automobiles and even airplanes! An especially evocative line is, "And the cars now speeding across the plain/Where the Union Pacific train bell peals,/Shall never the pioneers' trek distain." But the essence of this poem as a "cultural artifact" is perhaps best expressed in its opening stanza:

In the dust of the trail by the buffalo made  
Is the pioneer's trail of the unafraid,  
Where man and nature, each bitter hour,  
Fought, one for endurance and one for power.  
The stinging winds of the northern blast;  
The heat of the scorching desert sun;  
Sweeping fires that round them passed;  
Raging floods down a creek's dry bed;  
All these came bringing disease and death  
To pioneers who, with failing breath,  
Begged the others to go ahead,  
That their sunset goal might be won.

In conclusion, it should be noted that so much of this kind of material – photos and snapshots, scenes painted by local artists, and the personal thoughts of those moved by the history and heritage of the Trail – are ephemeral and often lost or destroyed. It is up to the present generation to discover and preserve them. And - the Smoky Hill Trail Association maintains an archive at Fort Hays State University, Hays Kansas, that does just that.

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"On the Kansas Pacific Railway." *Kansas History* 6:3 (Autumn 1983): 164-72.



A portfolio of 12 photographs, probably taken early in 1874 by Robert Benecke, a St. Louis photographer. The views range from west from Manhattan to "The Buffalo Hunters' Home at Sheridan, Kas."

Snell, Joseph W. and Robert W. Richmond. "When the Union and Kansas Pacific Built Through Kansas." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 32:3 (Autumn 1966): 334-52.

Includes a portfolio of 19 Alexander Gardner photographs.

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A catalog of the "some 150 prints" photographed by Alexander Gardner along the line of the Union Pacific – Eastern Division, c. 1868, including side excursions from Fort Harker.

### Fiction of the Smoky Hill Trail

Fiction, whether through a novel, a short story, a play, TV show, or a movie, is one method of conveying history, particularly cultural history. The list in this instance for the Smoky Hill Trail is disappointingly short, totaling only six novels with a Trail setting, and one short story. There are more if the scope of Trail history is broadly defined, say from Zebulon Pike in 1806 to the completion of the railroad to Denver in 1870. However, this wider framework encompasses the whole sweep of Kansas history from the Native Peoples to the agricultural settlement of the Smoky Hill Valley, to the present day, and would include thousands of items. Consequently, the following discussion is limited to those few items directly dealing with the Smoky Hill.

Mark Falcon's *Smoky Hill Trail* is aptly named. It was part of a series called "Black Horse Westerns." There are two other such collections that feature the Smoky Hill – Smoky *Hell Trail* in "The Trailsman" series, and *The Smoky Hill*, a "Rivers West" book. A fourth western, and maybe the best of the lot, is Jack Curtis' *The Jury on Smoky Hill*. In this one, only one man is left standing at the end.

The most interesting novel of the Smoky Hill has to be Tim Bowling's *The Bone Sharps*. This is a fictionalized account of the life and career of Charles Hazelius Sternberg – the Sternberg of the Sternberg Museum. "Bone sharp" as it turns out, is an idiomatic term for a paleontologist. This story shifts from Sternberg's youth and the opening of his career in Kansas in the 1870s to his field work in Alberta, Canada, c. 1916, to the battlefields of the First World War. Here is Bowling's description of Sternberg's first official foray into the field in 1876, at the behest of the famous American paleontologist Edward Drinker Cope:

They had left civilization behind and made their own wagon trails, stopping to explore any exposures of chalk they found, from the mouth of Hackberry Creek in the east to the



south fork of the Smoky Hill, a distance of a hundred miles. All along the dried, old watercourses, antelope, and wild horses with beautiful flowing manes and tails, roamed in great herds. Prairie-dog villages broke the ground in all directions. The sun beat down. They searched as much for drinking water as for fossils, though the water was alkali and barely drinkable. The silence was immense and cleared the mind of fear, directed everything to the task at hand. (p. 92)

Another “good read,” is a short story entitled “Hunting the Bison” by Dagmar Mariager. This author published a series of interconnected short stories in *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* in the 1880s. These stories featured the frontier lives of two women, an un-named narrator and her friend “Mrs. Baker.” Various railroad construction camps provide the scenes for their adventures. They sometimes hire their own horses on contract for “grade scraping,” and sometimes they cook or run boarding houses.

“Hunting the Bison” is the only one of Mariager’s stories set along the Smoky Hill Trail. Its action is centered on the town of Phil Sheridan, or Sheridan, on the Kansas-Colorado border. Sheridan was one of the most notorious railroad towns on the Kansas Pacific Line. All of Mariager’s tales can be accessed and read in full text online at the site “Making of America,” at [www.moa.umidl.umich.edu](http://www.moa.umidl.umich.edu).

This is all the Smoky Hill Trail fiction that has surfaced to date but there certainly must be more novels and stories set on the Smoky Hill Trail than mentioned here.

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Mariager, Dagmar. “Hunting the Buffalo.” *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* 14: 80 (August 1889): 190-96.

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