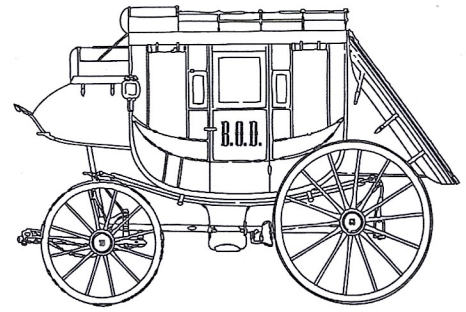


OVERLAND DESPATCH



Volume VIII No. 2

Remember the Smoky Hill Trail

Winter 2015

NEWS FROM THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION ARCHIVES

The SmHTA Archives will soon be moving to a new location in Forsyth Library. I have just moved in to my new office in Room 112 as of November 24, 2015. We will be relocating some shelving into this room and then the big move will begin. The Western Collection and the Military History Archive, the Smoky Hill Trail Association Archive, and several other smaller special collections will be moved to the new location. The old Special Collections room will be used for University Archives, as we are running out of space to house the items coming in for the archives. The new Special Collections room is located on the main floor on the northeast side next to the restrooms and the water fountain. The Center for Ethnic Studies is located right next door.

Both my email and phone number remain the same: pnichola@fhsu.edu / 785-628-5901

Patty Nicholas, SmHTA Archivist



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The 2015 Conference of the Smoky Hill Trail Association is history. It was a grand time. Attendance was good and we were treated to excellent presentations by the well-qualified speakers, so gracefully arranged by long-time member and well-known historian, Leo Oliva. The tour of Fort Leavenworth, after some red-tape obstacles were overcome, was very informative and entertaining. The banquets provided delicious fare and good visiting was enjoyed by all. Another highlight of the conference was the dedication of the monument commemorating the 1865 establishment of Butterfield's Overland Despatch. This is placed at a site overlooking the Missouri River in Atchison, Kansas, within 100 yards of where David Butterfield had his Atchison headquarters. If you have an opportunity to visit Atchison, make sure you take a moment to visit the riverfront park to see our monument in its beautiful setting. The dedication ceremony was well attended by members of the Association and representatives of the Atchison community. A poignant touch was a short biography of David Butterfield, presented by a great-great grandson of his, member Jere DeBacker. Jere was appropriately dressed in period clothing, including a black top hat, string tie, white shirt and black suit. (See photo at left showing Jere, in top hat and holding an original photograph of David Butterfield. His sister Kathe stands to his right and they are flanked by the SmHTA Board). He looked ready to ceremoniously step into an 1865 BOD Concord stagecoach for a trip to Denver on the Smoky Hill Trail. Thanks to Jere for this peek into the past.

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OVERLAND DESPATCH is the official publication of the Smoky Hill Trail Association, Inc., a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), corporation chartered in the State of Kansas. Primary missions of the Association are to preserve, protect, promote, and interpret the Smoky Hill Trail for the benefit of present and future generations, and to promote awareness of the historical legacy associated with the remnants and locations that represent the historic trail and Butterfield's Overland Despatch (BOD) and its successors as well as the railroad that replaced the overland trail. Letters and articles for publication in the newsletter are welcome and can be sent via email to the newsletter editor at <[mailto:rjwilh@gmail.com]> or via USPS at **Smoky Hill Trail Association, PO Box 978, Hays KS 67601**. 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 (may be paid in quarterly installments during one or two years). Membership fees should be sent to **Smoky Hill Trail Association**, at the address above. Other donations are always welcome.

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

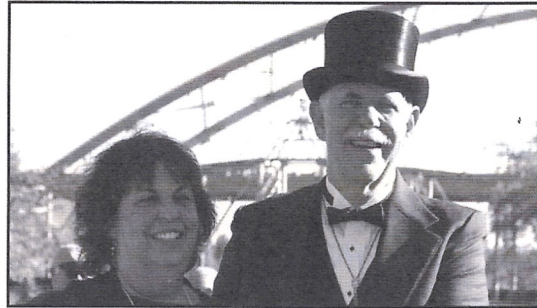
The deadline for articles to be included in the next edition of the Overland Despatch is **February 29, 2016**. Please have your articles, announcements, notes, etc. sent to the newsletter editor either by US mail or E-mail by that date (addresses in box above). Thank you.



(President's Column continued from page 1)

Another descendent of David Butterfield, Jere's sister, Kathe Graham from Wabasha, Minnesota, also

attended the conference. It was delightful to have both of them in attendance (see photo at left, courtesy of Lem Marsh).



The front of the monument (left) and the back (right)

There are numerous people to thank for the success of the 2015 conference. If I try to list them all, I would surely miss some. So, I will mention a few groups of people who contributed much time to the effort -- the Board of Directors of the SHTA, the staff of the Atchison Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Mayor and members of the Atchison City Council, officials of the city park commission, the staff of the Atchison County Historical Association, the staff of the Atchison City Library, SHTA members who assisted with arrangements for the conference, and many others who offered support and

(Continued on page 3)

(President's Column continued from page 2)
encouragement. An undertaking of this magnitude requires a lot of "sweat equity," and I appreciate you all.

With this year's conference packed up and stowed away, it's time to plan for the future. Just as Butterfield's stagecoaches headed west, we will also head west for the 2016 conference, will be held in Hays, Kansas. The association was founded ten year ago in Hays, so we return to our roots. "People of the Smoky Hill Trail" has been selected as the theme of that conference. A bit of brainstorming on my part led to such people as soldiers, women, Native Americans, explorers, buffalo hunters, gold seekers, immigrants, and "famous" people. This is in no sense an exhaustive list.

The next meeting of the Association Board will be held in Hays on February 13, 2016, at the Hays Public Library, 1205 Main Street, Hays, KS. All Association members are welcome to attend as observers.



PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP CHANGE!

In the last issue of the *Overland Despatch*, it was noted that the Board was contemplating some changes to the By-Laws. The amendments, as published, were approved by a formal vote of the members in attendance at the Annual Conference. Most had to do with the Board-related items such as the make-up of committees, appointive officers and annual conference planning but one is of importance to the entire membership. It deals with the membership year.

It was decided that rather than have the membership year coincide with month in which the original membership request was made, it will be based on the calendar year. As of 2015, all memberships will expire on December 31. It was further decided that members who have already paid their dues in the last half of 2015, will be

current through 2016. So, while you may have paid your dues after July of 2015, you will be current through 2016. This may be confusing to many (and understandably so, it is a complex issue) so the best way to know if your dues are current is to look at your address label. If it says 2016, you are paid up through the year. If it says 2015, your dues for 2016 will now be due. See the insert enclosed with this newsletter. We appreciate your patience and understanding during this transition period.



AIR TOWNS AND THEIR INHABITANTS

By W.E. Webb

(From *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 51, Issue 306, November 1875) Part 1.

The world has its air towns as well as its air castles. Yet while the latter vanish like punctured bubbles, noiselessly and harmlessly, the first disappear in a puff of the locomotive's smoke, with a crash and consequences rather disagreeable to interested ears.

Ever since the giant, Steam, strode Westward in his seven-league land-grant boots, each momentary resting-place has become a new-born city. Child of nursling railroad, the infant town has often rended [*sic*] the heavens with hits birth-shout, while Fate prepared to throttle it at tooth-cutting. The incisors, however, have usually developed before decrease sufficiently for every one to be bitten who fondled the infant. And the sponsors have usually cut their wisdom-teeth about the same period.

That portion of our continent between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains has of late years borne upon its face not only the wrinkles of numerous projected as well as finished railways, but, like pimples upon a sot's countenance, an irruption of towns has broken violently out--the impurities of new States and Territories drunken with glittering projects. Not only have these menaced and then

(Continued on page 4)

(*Air Towns continued from page 3*)

taken temporary seat along and upon the backbone of the continent, but its broad face has been pitted by what may well have been termed angry ulcers, slow of cure.

The Pacific railways have been responsible for more and worse towns than any other single cause. Every temporary terminus of track-laying became, for the time being, a city, wicked, wonderful, and short-lived. Dull Care and Prudence fled as fugitives out of these butterfly swarms, and only found refuge in the lonely "dug-outs" of pioneer farmers. Shame flaunted her scarlet rags from the dance-house's open door, and saluted passenger trains with an air full of violin scrapings, feet beatings, and "all han's roun', swing yer partners." Life was merry, after a fashion; and Love, no longer snowy-pinioned, but soiled and *passee*, leaned on a bar instead of a bow, and gave ever-constant evidence of having been out overnight with Bacchus.

It was the writer's destiny to be associated for some years with the organization of towns for what was then the Eastern Division of the Union Pacific Railway--a line running from Kansas City, on the Missouri River, to Denver. The first portion of the road, that east of Fort Harker, the centre of the State of Kansas, was through an agricultural



This illustration entitled "Town of Coyote" accompanied the *Harper's* article

region, and with that our article has nothing to do. From where the "Harker Bluffs" looked out upon the silent plains, away off through the Western Kansas and Eastern Colorado to the Rocky Mountains, the iron road was being placed. Five hundred miles through the red man's pastures was a path leveled, that the genius, Steam, might tread it; and along this path, wherever the Aladdin lamp of the engine became stationary for a brief time, magic cities sprang into existence. With those which have survived, future generations have to do. Be outs the task to rescue from oblivion those towns which were, but are not.

Coyote was a temporary terminus of the railroad in 1868. On every side the dreary rolling plains lay up against the cloudless horizon. Sky and earth came together like two tenantless wastes, relieved only by the golden sun rolling daily over the one, while the mushroom town looked up at it from the other. A crazy street of shanties and a mob of men had been flung down among the buffaloes--the wreck of other mushroom cities, and the habitants of their purlieu. Canvas saloons, sheet-iron hotels, and sod dwellings, surrounded by tin cans and scattered playing-cards, the latter so out of form by repeated turnings from the bottom that even a Coyote gambler could not manipulate them. And it was interesting to see Boreas and Notus take a hand with these discarded trumps. Before the breath of the north wind they would rise into air, the queens dancing like so many witches in effigy, as, close over the smooth surface, they fled south. A few moments and the barren earth would be swept clean, while the pasteboards, accompanied by stray newspapers and old hats, were fluttering, like a flight of white birds, out of sight. Three days, the usual life of a full-grown prairie gale, might pass, and then, as the north wind met the forces of the south, and fled back over this disputed territory of the tempests, the tenantless air became alive again. Far off on the heel of the vanquished and the crest of the victor wind came the white-winged coveys of cards, like the curses of the proverb, on their way home to roost. At night-fall

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(Air Towns continued from page 4)

they had collected beside the track and among the houses, and were again thick as leaves in autumn. Had it been possible for conscience to prick through a Coyote gambler's skin, how it might have gratified him to see the marked Jack that had fleeced the last stranger rise up like a grasshopper and fly south, beyond the possibility of becoming State's evidence! And how annoying to wake up and find the knave again under his window!

Coyote was in the midst of the buffalo country. For a hundred miles on either side carcasses disfigured the land. The meat, cut into strips or lying on sheds, thereby becoming merchantable "jerked," was every where *[sic]*. At night wolf baiters, armed with strychnine and lard, sallied out and daubed the bones. What the amber whale has been to the whaler, the white buffalo has been to the hunter. Traditions existed that there roamed, in the inner circles of the vast herds, one or two of these animals. Yet the hunters who had spent a lifetime on the plains declared the report but an idle tale of greenhorns, who had mistaken for a white buffalo one covered with light clay from wallowing. Within the last year, however, the dispute has been settled by the acquisition of two individuals, one of which is now in the cabinet of a railroad company at Kansas City.

So numerous were the buffaloes around Coyote that on several occasions I knew them to dash directly through the suburbs of the town when chased by horsemen.

This article, which goes on to describe other towns along the route of the UPRRED, will continue in the next issue.



RULES FOR STAGECOACH TRAVELERS

From the Omaha Herald, 1877

1. The best seat inside a stagecoach is the one next to the driver even if you have a tendency to seasickness when riding backwards--you will get less than half the bumps and jars than on

any other seat. When any old "sly Eph," who traveled thousands of miles on coaches, offers through sympathy to exchange his back or middle seat with you, don't do it.

2. Never ride in cold weather with tight boots or shoes, nor close-fitting gloves. Bathe your feet before starting in cold weather, and wear loose overshoes and gloves two or three sizes too large.
3. When the driver asks you to get off and walk, do it without grumbling. He will not request it unless absolutely necessary. If a team runs away, sit still and take your chances; if you jump, nine times out of ten you will be hurt.
4. In very cold weather, abstain entirely from liquor while on the road; a man will freeze twice as quick while under the influence.
5. Don't grown at food stations; stage companies generally provide the best they can get. Don't keep the stage waiting; many a virtuous man has lost his character by so doing.
6. Don't smoke a strong pipe inside especially early in the morning. Spit on the leeward side of the coach. If you have anything to take in a bottle, pass it around; a man who drinks by himself in such a case is lost to all human feeling. Provide stimulants before starting; ranch whisky is not always nectar.
7. Don't swear, nor lop over on your neighbor when sleeping. Don't ask how far it is to the next station until you get there.
8. Never attempt to fire a gun or pistol while on the road, it may frighten the team; and the careless handling and cocking of the weapon makes nervous people nervous. Don't discuss politics or religion, nor point our places on the road where horrible murders have been committed.
9. Don't linger too long at the pewter wash basin at the station. Don't grease you hair before starting out or dust will stick there in sufficient quantities to make a respectable 'tater' patch. Tie a silk handkerchief around your neck to keep out dust and prevent sunburns. A little glycerin is good in case of chapped hands.
10. Don't imagine for a moment you are going on a

(Continued on page 6)

(Stagecoach Rules continued from page 5)

picnic; expect annoyance, discomfort and some hardships. If you are disappointed, thank heaven.



TRAIL TREASURES

**Memoirs of Captain Richard Watkins Musgrove,
First U.S. Volunteer Infantry, on the Smoky Hill
Trail, 1865-1866:**

Part VII

*Musgrove continues
his account at Pond
Creek:*

During all our stay on the plains of western Kansas, we did not find a single burial place of the Indians. This is explained by the fact that the

Indians of this section generally secreted their dead in some cavern or out of the way place, unknown to all except the two or three engaged in the disposal of the remains, and not disclosed by them. On the death of a warrior, all his effects were destroyed — tepee, blankets and war implements cut up, except the few buried with him, and even, in some cases, his ponies were killed. His face was generally painted, and without further ceremony, his body was thrown across the back of a pony or dragged ruthlessly over the ground to the place of burial. Here it was secreted, and all traces of the burial removed as far as possible, so that even the nearest relative did not know its last resting place.

Poisoned arrows are sometimes used by these Indians. One method of poisoning the arrow points was to place a piece of raw liver before a rattlesnake, which was sure to bite anything within reach. The venom injected into the liver poisons the whole, and into this the points of a large number of arrows are thrust, and the blood



from the liver dries on the arrow point but softens and becomes active, when it finds a place in the flesh of man or beast. When the poisoned liver is not needed for immediate use, it is dried, pulverized, and preserved in bags, and when needed is soaked in water, and in this the arrows are placed with the same result as when thrust into the soft liver. But the use of the poisoned arrows was not very common.

While Col. Tamblyn and his battalion of four companies were making their way west over the plains, Col. C. A. R. Dimond, with his battalion of six companies, came down the Missouri river from Fort Rice, and other points on the Upper Missouri to Fort Leavenworth and were mustered out of service. During all their stay at Fort Rice, Fort Benton, and other places, they had been surrounded by hostiles, who made constant warfare on them. Even fuel for the forts could not be cut except under the protection of a strong and vigilant guard. One day Lieut. Wilson was sent out from Fort Rice with the choppers. Sending his party ahead, he lingered in the fort till his party had reached a point perhaps a quarter of a mile or more from the post, when he started to overtake them. He had gained about half the distance between the post and his squad and was urging his horse forward, when suddenly, from a nearby thicket, came a flight of arrows. Lieut. Wilson fell dead, and the hostiles suddenly disappeared.

A few days previous to this, two Indians were seen on a bluff near the fort making observations, and Col. Dimond sent out a party which surrounded and captured them. These Indians were in the guard house when Lieut. Wilson was killed. Immediately, on being informed of the death of Wilson, Col. Dimond sent word to these two Indians that they would die in one hour. The troops were assembled and marched to a bluff on the bank of the Missouri, near the fort, and here the two Indians were shot and their lifeless bodies thrown into the river. This was done as a retaliatory measure.

We had at Pond Creek as Indian scout, guide and interpreter, a man known as Bill Comstock. He had spent his life in the Indian country and was

(Continued on page 7)

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS NOW EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31 EACH YEAR. IF YOU HAVE NOT YET PAID YOUR DUES FOR 2016, PLEASE USE THE FORM BELOW.

Check the address label on this issue of the *Overland Despatch* to find if your dues are current. The membership year will appear above your name. If it says "2016" (or "Life") you are current. If it says "2015" you have yet to pay your dues for the coming year. If you have any questions, contact President Elton Beougher <ebeoughe@fhsu.edu> or Membership Committee Chair Ann Liston <aliston@fhsu.edu> for clarification.

Smoky Hill Trail Association
PO Box 978
Hays KS 67601

New Member Renewing Member

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Telephone and/or E-mail (optional) _____

Membership Categories

(check one)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Life (individual or family | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Patron | \$100/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Business | \$50/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Institution (non-profit) | \$40/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family | \$30/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual | \$25/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Student | \$10/year |

Check here if you would be willing to serve on the board or a committee: _____

Enroll me for the year _____

Make checks payable to the Smoky Hill Trail Association. All memberships expire on December 31.

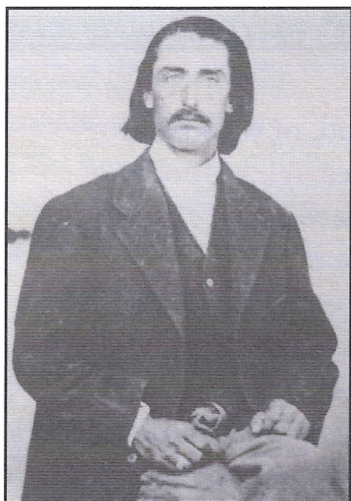
(Musgrove continued from page 6)

thoroughly familiar with all the Plains Indians, was well versed in their habits and manner of life, and could speak the language of all, or at least by the use of the common sign language, could converse with the Indians of any tribe. One of the diversions of the camp was listening to his tales of experiences, his narrow escapes when acting as a scout in their country, of the scenes of horror he had witnessed, or that had come to his knowledge, and of their modes of life in their villages and their methods of warfare. In times of peace, he had lived for months in their villages, and had shared their hospitality, though he was known as their bitter enemy in times of war. The Indian nature is such that, when peace is made, the past is forgotten or forgiven.

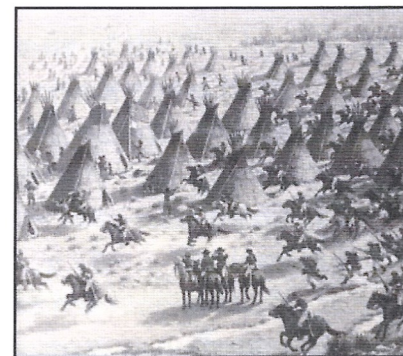
They come with perfect confidence and unconcern into the presence of those they have most wantonly wronged, and receive in like manner their worst enemy.

Bill Comstock had a wonderful ability at trailing a party of Indians or a single warrior. He could easily read all the "signs" left by them for the information of other Indians, could interpret the meaning of one, two or three columns of smoke used in telegraphing between different parties, and, after a party had passed, could tell with remarkable accuracy, by examining the trail, how many were in the party. Such a man was invaluable at any post, and he drew a liberal salary from the government for his services.

On the Sand Creek battlefield in the extreme southwestern part of Kansas, we got many relics of Col. Chivington in his slaughter of the Indians. Col. Chivington was the governor of the territory of Colorado. The Indians committed



some depredations and some murders, when the colonel promptly organized a body of settlers as soldiers, followed the Indians to their encampment at Sand Creek, came upon them unawares, and slaughtered many of them, some reports say, including men, women and children. The ground was covered with evidences of the fight. Col. Chivington was promptly removed for making war on the Indians without authority.



Life at Pond

Creek, after our second arrival there, was somewhat different from our stay there during the winter. It was now spring, and there was no necessity to reoccupy our winter quarters under ground for protection against the cold. Capt. Ball, on reaching this point in March, had reestablished the post some distance from the place Capt. McMichael and I, with our companies, had occupied before the post was evacuated. His position was, like ours, along the Smoky Hill creek, but on the open prairie, and the men and officers were all accommodated in tents. When I arrived with my company, our tents were pitched next to those standing, simply enlarging the camp.

The Overland Dispatch company now sent an occasional coach over the line. Men and mules were again placed at some of the stations that were abandoned the fall before, but this effort seemed to be done with much caution, and it was only at long intervals that stages arrived and not at all regularly, but in time they came about once a week, bearing the mails and a few passengers, that took their chance of being attacked by Indians.

No Indians were seen in the vicinity of Pond Creek after our arrival there the second time. Where

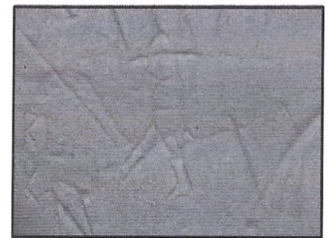
(Continued on page 8)

(Musgrove continued from page 7)

they were, no one knew, but the fact that no danger was seen made most people presume that none existed. Gradually the men extended their range on the prairie, hunting the buffalo or antelope, or the Jack rabbits, even in small parties. Beyond the inevitable camp guard, there were no military duties to perform, and if the men were present at roll call night and morning and ready to respond when details for guard were made in the morning, there were no restrictions on their movements. The consequence was that hardly a day passed that hunting parties did not sally forth to hunt, or amuse themselves shooting the prairie dog or killing the rattlesnakes, which were very numerous.

Buffalo hunting was, of course, the chief amusement, and I took part in these hunts frequently. Some of my experiences in these trips I have spoken of elsewhere. There was another diversion which I had, and that was hunting for petrifications and studying the works of the Indians when they were in undisputed possession of this country. The specimens of petrifications

found, of wood and bones, lying upon the surface of the ground, were many, and now grace my collection of curios, but, while the works and marks of the



Indians were numerous, they were of such nature that they could not be brought away. I was especially interested in studying the rude carvings of the red men on the chalk bluffs. Here were depicted, in the Indian's crude skill, scenes of the Chase and conflicts with the whites. They probably meant volumes to the artists who carved them, or to the Indians who saw them, but to the white man, not versed in Indian lore, much imagination and guessing were needed to divine their import. I attempted to cut away some of these specimens, as I considered them quite valuable if they could be preserved, but the chalk or slate on which they were engraved was too brittle, and every attempt only resulted in failure.

Musgrove's accounts will be concluded in the next issue.

