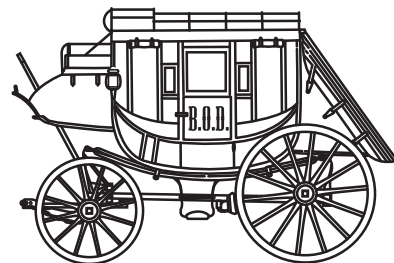


# OVERLAND DESPATCH



Volume XVI No. III

*Remember the Smoky Hill Trail*

Fall 2024



## "Hello" to all Smoky Hill Trail Association members.

We had our Spring Board Meeting in Quinter Kansas, March 27, 2024.

It was decided to move the 2024 conference to Atchison, Kansas instead of Leavenworth due to lack of hotel rooms and expensive room rates when there was availability. The Atchison Historical Society has stepped forward to host our conference.

Steven Knowles was awarded a grant for \$200.00 to help in his thesis, of riding the trail on horseback this summer. If he survives that, a copy of his thesis will be placed in our archives.

Neil Unrein was introduced to the group; he comes to us from the Limestone Post Association. We interviewed him, as a possible replacement for Deb Miller, who had resigned from the board. A notion was made to ask Neil if he would like to join, as the newest member of the board, the motion passed.

Mary Andersen proposed an idea of placing text panels along with an audio tour along the Smoky Hill Trail in Colorado in celebration of Colorado's 150 anniversary of statehood. These panels and tour, would begin at Cheyenne Wells, marking a 5 places along the trail, ending at the outskirts of Denver.

We hope to see many of you at the conference in Atchison. **QUEST WEST** is the theme, and we have a great lineup planned.

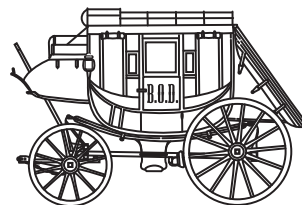
Lastly, I would like to shout out loud, a huge thank you to Tanner Mayhew. Without his work on our behalf, this conference would not be the informative, interesting and simply, grand event he worked to create and organize. As I knew nothing about Atchison, Kansas, he stepped in where Jim left off and carried it to the finish. Thank you again, for all your hard work.



Robert Andersen  
Smoky Hill Trail Association  
President

*Smoky Hill Trail*  
ASSOCIATION

2024 CONFERENCE  
**QUEST  
WEST**



**ATCHISON**

October 11 - 13, 2024 / ATCHISON, KANSAS

**Conference Presentations on Page 6!**

Mail-In Registration Form on **Page 11**  
-OR- Register Online at **[www.smokyhilltrail.com](http://www.smokyhilltrail.com)**

Lodging Info - **Page 11**

## NEW MEMBERS

### *Welcome to the Trail.*

Dave Bruce  
Farmington, MO

Sheryl Finley.  
Topeka, KS

Jennifer Smirl  
Manhattan, KS

### OVERLAND DESPATCH

is the official publication of the Smoky Hill Trail Association, Inc., a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), corporation chartered in the State of Kansas. Primary missions of the Association are to preserve, protect, promote and interpret the Smoky Hill Trail for the benefit of present and future generations, and to promote awareness of the historical legacy associated with the remnants and locations that represent the historical trail and Butterfield's Overland Despatch (BOD) and its successors as well as the railroad that replaced the overland trail. Letters and articles are welcome and can be submitted to [smokyhilltrailassn@gmail.com](mailto:smokyhilltrailassn@gmail.com) or mailed to the address below.

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

### MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

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

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

### SHTA OFFICERS

President: Bob Andersen, Genoa, CO  
Secretary: Mary Andersen, Genoa, CO  
Treasurer: Marilyn Copeland, Quinter, KS

### Directors:

Neil Unrein, Gorham KS  
Nancy Arendt, Colby, KS  
Marla Matkin, Hill City, KS  
Mary Lattin, Hay, KS  
Mike Baughn, Brewster, KS

Newsletter Editor: Tanner Mayhew, St. Joseph, MO

## The Smoky Hill Expedition.

The expedition was a Military and private enterprise endeavor. Major Scott J. Anthony, 1st Colorado Regiment, was engaged by David A. Butterfield to have his expedition escorted to Colorado, via the Smoky Hill Route. Maj. Anthony had been approached for his extensive knowledge of the country which the route passes. For over two years previously Anthony was in service at Fort Larned and Lyon and had much knowledge of the Smoky Hill.

In June of 1865 Butterfield's train of 100 wagons left Atchison for Denver. Issac E. Eaton was in charge of the expedition. There were one hundred and twenty-five men belonging to the train and construction party, all armed with Ballard's breech loading carbines.

At Leavenworth, Lieutenant Julius R. Fitch, of the Engineer Corps. U.S.A., and his men were detailed to accompany the expedition as surveyors. Lieut. Fitch was a member of Greene's party which explored this route in 1860.

*The following is Lieut. Fitch's detailed report that was awarded to D. A. Butterfield.*

PRINTED IN THE JUNCTION CITY UNION - Sept. 9, 1865

## THE SMOKY HILL ROUTE !

**Lieut. J. R. Fitch's Report - Details of the Expedition-  
Description of the Road - Exact Statement as to the Wood  
and Water - Full Description of the Country - Exact  
Distances - The Shortest Route.**

**D. A. Butterfield, Superintendent Overland Dispatch:**

**SIR:** - I have the honor to report that in compliance with special order, No. 143, Headquarters Department of Missouri, dated Fort Leavenworth, June 9, 1865, I started on the morning of the 13th of June to accompany the Butterfield Surveying Expedition on its route to the Denver and the gold mines, via the Smoky Hill River, for the purpose of testing the feasibility of building a central road, directly west from the Missouri River to the mountains. My party consisted of myself, Charles H. Fitch and Daniel Clark as assistants; also Abner Coleman and Joseph Cornell of the U. S. Signal Corps, were detailed to accompany me.

We joined the expedition, which we found under charge of Isaac E. Eaton, awaiting us at Leavenworth City. We started on the Fort Riley road, and arrived on the 23d at Fort Riley, 115 miles west of Fort Leavenworth, having been detained somewhat by the immense floods of rain, which had rendered most of the other roads impassable. We went into camp at this point to await the arrival of our escort.

The road from the river to this point is located through what is known as the Kaw River Valley, being from the first fifty miles high rolling prairie, under a fine state of cultivation and intersected at distances ranging from 10 to 20 miles, with fine streams which are easily crossed. Directly west of Topeka, the capitol of the State, we entered upon the Pottawatomie Reserve on the broad

bottom of Kaw, following it west thirty miles, along the line of the Central Pacific road, crossing several fine streams; we leave the Reserve, still keeping up the river, pass through Louisville, on Rock Creek, and Manhattan on the Big Blue Fork, fifteen miles east of Riley. At this latter point I was informed it was the intention of some parties to build a fine bridge. At present there is a good ferry in operation. I have recommended to the U. S. Government, the bridging of all the streams west of the river to this point. Between this point and Fort Riley there are no bridges needed, and indeed, the road is now far superior to any other road leading west from the river.

At Fort Riley we were joined by Major Pritchard, with two companies of the 3d Wisconsin Cavalry, under command of Capt. Pond. On the morning of 6th of July, we started on our journey, taking the Fort Larned road. We crossed the Republican Fork, which by its junction with the Smoky Hill River at this point, forms the Kansas, then bearing a little south of west, across fine bench land, lying between the Smoky Hill and Republican. At three miles we came to Junction City, the thriving county seat of Davis county. We here met with a very cordial reception by the inhabitants, who seemed disposed to do all in their power to aid us in our project. Passing through Junction City, we followed the beautiful valley of the Smoky Hill, which grows broader and broader as we leave the Republican; eleven and a half miles west from Junction City, we crossed Chapman's Creek on a good, rock ford; twelve miles further west, we passed through Abilene, the county seat of Dickinson county, situated on Mud Creek, nine miles west of which we crossed Solomon's Fork, (a fine stream which bears south-east, one mile into the Smoky Hill,) on a ferry owned by Whittly & Hall. The road from this point extends across a high level bottom, formed by the Smoky Hill, the Solomon and the Saline, extending as far as the eye can reach, girted on all sides by heavy timbers. Seven miles west of Whittly's Ferry, we crossed the Saline River at Woodward's Ferry, and once more touched the banks of Smoky Hill at Salina, the county seat of Saline County, situated on the eastern terminus of the Great Bend of Smoky Hill. I would here state that I was positively assured by the county officers of Dickinson and Saline Counties, that they had issued a sufficient quantity of Bonds to secure the speedy erection on substantial structures across the Solomon and Saline forks, and as I had already recommended to the Government to bridge those streams, I think there is no doubt but that they will both be bridged in the course of six months.

The country from Junction City, to a point twelve miles on our road west of Salina is the finest stretch of land by far in the West. Noted for its heavy timber; its luxuriant grass, and extraordinary richness of its soil. The country for the most part is under cultivation, and there is today sufficient quantities of corn and other product to be had either at Junction City or Salina, as well as Abilene, to supply all emigration. This of course will increase as emigration increases, and furnishes the farmers with a permanent market.

Still following the old Government road thirty-four miles west of Salina, we arrived at Fort Ellsworth, situated at the crossing of the old road on the western terminus of the Great Bend. Here we were joined by two companies of the 13th Missouri Cavalry under command of Capts. McMichael and Snell. After resting a day, killing a few Buffalo, which we had commenced to find in considerable numbers, we diverged from the old road, bearing a little north of west upon the north side of the Smoky Hill, near our old trail of 1860, which had at this time become entirely obliterated.

Our road from this point laid over a hard stretch of level bench land, covered with a luxuriant growth of Buffalo grass, intersected every three or four miles with fine streams of water. Our party at this time consisted of Col. Eaton and his party of constructionists, twenty-six in number, eleven four mule wagons, loaded with tools, reapers and everything necessary for putting the road in fine condition; Maj. Pritchard and 250 cavalry as escort, and Engineer Corps. On the 14th of July, with everything looking fair and all in good spirits, we started on our work. I was accompanied by wife and Capt. West by his.

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 or as being greater than all the domestic cattle in America. Truly it has been said that the Smoky Hill is the garden spot of hunting ground of America. Following along on the high, level bench before spoken of, erecting mounds at every station, our route lay over a fine, rich and fertile soil, bountifully supplied with wood, water and grass, and every thing necessary to make a good wagon road or railroad.

Finding fine springs as we traveled along, thirty-four miles west of Fort Ellsworth, we found a fine coal bed on what we named Coal Creek. Parties that accompanied us on our expedition, and who were capable of judging, pronounced it as being a fine vein, and capable of yielding in sufficient quantities to pay for working. Twelve miles farther west we came to Big Creek, a large stream, having a beautiful valley with heavy timber. Here we made a good rock ford and erected a large mound and stake for a home and cattle station. We camped here over Sunday and Monday to rest and hunt. During our stay a party under Lieut. Bell, whilst exploring in the neighborhood, discovered a vein of coal on the south side of Smoky Hill seven feet in thickness. Specimens of it were brought into camp and gave indications of some day proving a source of great benefit and wealth to this part of the country.

On the morning of the 18th we left camp bearing a little south of west over the same character of country, close to the Smoky, (which, at this time owing to the rains would have floated a large steam-boat). and at a distance of

*Continued next page* ➤



twenty-eight miles we came to a fine, large spring -- one of the larges in the West. Fifteen miles further we bore away from the river, and kept on high, level ground about three miles north of the river which here makes a southerly bend. On the south side of the river, opposite this point, we discovered high bluffs covered with cedar. Twelve and a half miles west we camped at the head springs of a stream emptying south three miles into Smoky Hill. The water and grass at this place we found unusually fine. We called this place Downer Station. Nine miles west we came to a splendid basin of springs, covering an area of one mile square - one of the finest spots on the route. We called it Ruthton. Nine and one-fourth miles further West we crossed Rock Castle Creek. Camped two days to rest. The scenery here is really grand. One mile south is a lofty calcareous limestone bluff, having the appearance of an old English castle with pillars and avenues traversing it in every direction. We named it Castle Rock. Leaving Rock Castle Creek we once more bore a little south of west, on the divide between the Smoky Hill and the creek, keeping along the bench of Smoky, crossing streams at convenient distance for stations, at a distance of about fifty miles we found the largest springs on the route, situated on Oglallah Creek in a pleasant valley, one half mile north of Smoky Hill. Eight miles further on we crossed the North Fork, keeping up the South Fork. The great difficulty on what was known as the old Pike's Peak road lay in the fact that emigration kept up this Fork, then bore across a divide, eighty five miles without water to the Smoky; lengthening their route. We followed the South Fork, finding wood, water and grass all the way. Twenty-eight miles from the Forks we came to a bottom extending to within two and a half miles of Big Cottonwood Grove, covered with grass six feet high, and containing some splendid springs. This we called The Meadows, and left a reaper in the grass. Two and a half miles west of The Meadows we camped at the Big Cottonwood Grove. This is a grove of large Cottonwood trees, and used to be a celebrated camping ground for Indians. Sixteen and a half miles west we reached the Cheyenne well at the head of Smoky Hill. This well was built by our party in 1860 and is one of the finest of wells, yielding sufficient water to supply a heavy emigration. At this point we left the Smoky Hill, bearing south west across the divide between Smoky Hill and the Sand branch of the Arkansas. At eleven miles we erected a mound for a well to be dug and at twenty-one miles came to Eureka Creek. At its junction with Sandy here we found a large living stream of water, also good grass. We bore from this place north of west up the Sandy seventy miles to its most northern bend, finding an abundance of water and grass and some timber, though the latter is scarce.

Fourteen miles west of this point we had our first view of the mountains which we had been prevented from seeing on account of clouds. This morning the snow capped mountains burst upon our view, looming far above the clouds. The long expected view cheered our boys and we pushed on with vigor, now that our work seemed almost done our goal appeared within our reach.

Leaving the Sandy at the bend before mentioned, we bore northwest across the divide crossing Beaver at nine miles, then the Bijou and Kiowa, with other well watered streams, and struck the old Taos Road at Cherry Creek, nine miles from Denver. This we followed into Denver, where we were received with congratulations. Our trip lasted after leaving the old road, twenty-four days, six of which we rested. We lost but one mule and one pony, which died of cholera.

## ADVANTAGES OF THE ROUTE.

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. In this case the obstructions are altogether on the Platte and Arkansas routes. Aside from the difference in the distance is favor of the new route, you will find no sand on it, whilst from Julesburg to Denver, a distance of two hundred miles, the emigrant or freighter has a dead pull of sand, without a stick of timber or a drop of living water, save the Platte itself, which is from three to five miles from the road; and, when it is taken into consideration that a loaded ox train makes but from twelve to fourteen miles a day, and never exceeds sixteen, it will not pay and will double the distance to drive to the Platte, (The only water in the country) for the purpose of camping and all will admit that the Platte waters are so strongly impregnated with alkali as to render it dangerous to water stock in it, the carcasses now lining the road along the Platte bear evidence to its destructive qualities; whilst on the new route not a particle of this bane can be found.

Another advantage of the new route is that on the Platte, from Junction to Denver, a distance of eighty-five miles, hardly a spear of grass can be found to hide the sandy desert like appearance of the route; whilst on the new route an abundance of excellent buffalo grass and grama grass can be found on the way, and near the approach to the mountains, does not seem to affect it, as all kinds of grass can be found from one end of the route to the other.

On the new route we saw no signs of Indians, or in fact, any signs later that last fall. This can be accounted for from the fact that the Platte and Arkansas routes being so heavily garrisoned. Indians with their natural shrewdness will not wedge themselves into a narrow strip of country entirely surrounded by Government troops. In addition to which, I have reason to suppose, in fact I know that it is the intention of the United States Government to protect this route, and I have in compliance with my instructions suggested places for U. S. Military posts on the route.

In addition to the advantages above enumerated, the new route is located through its entire length along and directly parallel to the Central Pacific Railroad, which is now running daily trains as far as Lawrence, forty miles west of the Missouri River. I have been confidently informed that the cars will be running as far as Topeka, the

State capital, this fall which will shorten the stage route over the new line sixty miles, making the distance to the traveled by coach but five hundred and twenty four miles, or one hundred and twenty six miles less than by the Platte, and two hundred and seventy-six shorter than by the Arkansas, as it is even hundred miles from Leavenworth City or Atchison to Denver, by the Platte route, and eight hundred by the Arkansas.

Further, should emigration ever increase to such an extent as to cause a scarcity of timber, nature has supplied, bountifully, the Smoky Hill with an abundance of bois de vache\*, which is always cheerfully chosen by the tired emigrant in preference to cutting timber for fire.

Accompanying this report you will find a copy of my notes, also a correct map, which I hope will show truly the relative position of the two routes, as I have endeavored to describe them in this my report, fairly and impartially, and having just returned by coach over the Platte route, I think I am fully qualified to decide between the two routes.

*I am, Sir, very respectfully,*

Your obedient servant,

Julian R. Fitch



\* **bois de vache:** French for buffalo chips

## MILITARY HISTORY OF JULIAN R. FITCH

May to August 1861, Fitch served as a Private in the 6th Ohio Volunteers and September 1861 was appointed as Second Lieutenant with the 35th Ohio Infantry. He engaged in action of Mill Springs, KY. In February of 1862 Fitch was detailed for signal duty and served the following: Staff of General Buell, engaging at the battle of Perryville. Staff of General Rosecrans, engaging at the battle of Stone River. Staff of General Crittenden during the march to Chattanooga, Tenn., and engaged at the battles of Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, and Missionary Ridge. He then served as Quartermaster of the Signal Corps of Sherman's army. In September 1863 he was promoted to Second Lieutenant U. S. Signal Corps. In June of 1864 he reported for duty to General Curtis at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. While stationed at Leavenworth; he engaged in the pursuit of the rebel General Price and at the actions at Little Blue, Big Blue, Maria des Cygnes, and Newtonia, Missouri. In August of 1865 he surveyed the Central Route for the Pacific Railroad from Fort Riley, Kansas to the Rocky Mountains. Fitch was brevet Captain U. S. Volunteers for his distinguished services during the war. He served as Second Lieutenant in the 17th U. S. Infantry in February, 1866 and joined the regiment at Hart's Island, New York Harbor. He was transferred to the 35th U. S. Infantry by the reorganization of the army where he became a First Lieutenant on November, 1866. In August of 1869 Fitch was transferred to the 15th infantry serving in Kansas.



## COURT MARTIAL ORDER

**CHARGE I. - "Conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline."**

**CHARGE II. - "Conduct unbecoming an officer and gentlemen."**

October 15, 1870 -- Julian R. Fitch, 15th Regiment of the U. S. Infantry, on duty as Acting Assistant Quartermaster at the post of Fort Cummings, New Mexico. The charges against Fitch was that he was in charge of receiving (among other supplies for the Government) two hundred thousand (200,000) pounds of corn to be delivered by J. Edgar Griggs of Mesilla, New Mexico, under written contract. According to the records Fitch knowingly and willfully failed to require the full delivery of quantity of corn from Griggs. The amount not received was fifteen thousand seven hundred and fifty (15,750) pounds of corn. This amounted in a money value to about four hundred dollars.

It was discovered that an agreement was made between Captain Alfred Hedberg at Fort Cummings and J. Edgar Griggs, in lieu of the 15,750 pounds of corn, Hedberg would delivered 9,000 pounds of bran.

Lieutenant Fitch turned the contractor Griggs vouchers in for the full payment of the 200,000 pounds of corn. In turn, contractor Griggs paid Captain Hedberg \$417.00 for his bran.

Fitch was asked if he knew of any transaction in bran between officers of the Army and the Quartermaster's Department at Fort Cummings. He answered "I do not." The said answer was false, as Fitch was privy to this transaction according to the affidavit.

Due to this general court martial order, the Adjutant General dismissed First Lieutenant Julian R. Fitch from service. He was found guilty on all charges.

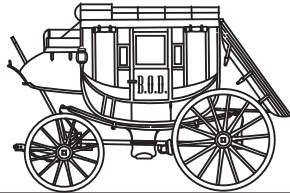


In September of 1865, Lieut. Julian Fitch established a stage station called Eaton. It later became known as Russell Springs. The name was changed in honor of a prominent western Kansas cattlemen by the name of William Russell. Today the Butterfield Trail Museum occupies the former Logan County Courthouse in Russell Springs. **A MUST VISIT!**





## 2024 CONFERENCE **QUEST WEST**



**ATCHISON**

### **Atchison County Historical Society Museum**

Santa Fe Depot, 200 S 10th Street  
Atchison, Kansas

## **Friday, October 11**

**2:00 - Trolley Tour of Atchison**

**3:00 - Trolley Returns**

(Possible 2nd Trolley Tour at 3:00  
if first tour is full)

**3pm -Till Meet & Greet**

At the Atchison County Historical  
Society Museum.

Cash Bar: Spirits by local  
distillery MGP

*You may register at this time.*



**REGISTER TODAY!**

ONLINE AT:

[www.smokyhilltrail.com](http://www.smokyhilltrail.com)

OR

USE THE FORM ON PAGE X

## **Saturday, October 12**

**8:30 am - 9:30 am**

**GARRETT SEUSER**



Garrett Seuser is an avocational archaeologist as well as a middle and high school history teacher in Kansas. He graduated from Emporia State University in 2020 with his B.S.E. and was voted as the Undergraduate Student of the Year in the entire Social Sciences department. He was also named as the 2023 Educator of the Year by the Oregon-California Trails Association. At last years conference (2023), he was awarded the Elton Beougher Memorial Grant. In March of 2024 he was awarded Outstanding Teacher of American History by the Nathan Edson chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. A lifelong Kansan, he has spent his free time researching and discovering hidden sites all across the state and midwest using his metal detector. He has been successfully detecting for 10 years and has found thousands of artifacts, the locations of several hundred lost houses, schools, churches, and other locations humans once occupied. The last few years, he has shifted his main focus to searching for military and emigrant campsites along the westward trails and has located dozens of lost campsites with many more on the way. Garrett has also been featured on the Relics Radio podcast and the Great Outdoors Detecting YouTube channel. Garrett enjoys teaching his students about history using the artifacts he finds. He stresses good ethics, keeps very detailed records of every location, and always gets landowners permission.

*Garrett Seuser Presents:*

**Fort Harker**

**Artifacts Unearthed**

Fort Ellsworth, later known as Fort Harker, served as a crucial rest stop for travelers on the Smoky Hill Trail. Operating from 1864 to 1872, this brief military outpost made a lasting impact on American history. Despite its frequent coverage, the site's grounds have been thoroughly explored by many observers. Recently, however, previously untouched ground revealed numerous artifacts shedding new light on the daily lives of the soldiers stationed at Fort Harker. Garrett will be going over these artifacts, endeavoring to reconstruct the historical snapshots preserved by each item.

**9:30 am - 10:30 am**

**KIM SCHUTTE**



Dr. Kim Schutte is the Historic Preservation Planner for the City of St. Joseph, MO. In that role she does extensive research into the history of the city and the surrounding region. Dr. Schutte earned her PhD with honors from the University of Kansas in 2011. She has taught at Missouri Western State University; University of Kansas; and SUNY, the College at Brockport specializing in British, Early Modern European, and World History. She has published two monographs: A Biography of Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox (2002) and Women, Marriage, and Rank in the

British Aristocracy, 1485-2000: An Open Elite? (2014). As Historic Preservation Planner she speaks extensively on a wide range of local/regional history topics to a number of organizations.

**Kim Schutte Presents:**

## **Mormons And The Midwest: The Bloody 1830s**

In 1830, Joseph Smith founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known as the Mormons, in upstate New York. From its inception, the adherents of this new faith found themselves unwelcome in the east and began the search for a place where they could create a community in accordance with their beliefs. In 1831, Smith declared that God had designated the area around Independence, MO as the site of the second coming of Christ and the location of the Mormon settlement. Quickly large numbers of Mormons moved to Jackson County, soon outnumbering the "Old Settlers" who saw their presence as a threat. The period between 1833 and 1838 was characterized by escalating violence between the two groups. The infamous "extermination order" issued by Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs, on Oct. 27, 1838 provided the fuel for the outbreak of the Missouri - Mormon war culminating in the imprisonment of Joseph Smith and other LDS leaders. In the wake of this opposition, approximately 8,000 members of the church left Missouri heading for Illinois where they founded the settlement of Nauvoo.

**10:30 am - Noon**  
**RICK HAMBY**



Rick Hamby was born and raised in the Ozarks of Southern Missouri. Rick developed a love for American History at a young age, due partly to the influence of his grandparents and their stories. In 1999, Rick had the opportunity to purchase a very historic and original 1880 Overland Stagecoach. After much prayer and planning, Rick and his family decided to open an Overland Stage Route from Springfield, MO to Tombstone, AR. Since the coaches of old days carried mail, we decided to start our interstate Pen Pal Mail program where we partner elementary schools in Missouri and deliver letters to kids along our Western Stage routes. In June of 2024, we completed our 14th Overland run from Mount Sunflower, KS to Monument Rocks, KS, along the Smoky Hill Trail. The objective through it all is to share our great American history and God's love and creation.



► *The stagecoach will be on display!*

**Rick Hamby Presents:**

## **Open Forum -- Stagecoach Journey: Dust In The Wind, Along The Smoky Hill Trail**

Program format will consist of a round table discussion with the Stagecoach crew and special guests from Western Kansas. There will be a large screen set up behind the panel with a digital slideshow of the Stage Coach Journey along the Smoky Hill Trail. It will be an open discussion with questions and comments from the audience.

**NOON LUNCH BREAK**

**.....NOT PROVIDED.....**

## **Afternoon Presentations**

**1:15 pm- 2:15 pm**  
**JAMES CORMODE**



Mr. Cormode is an ordained minister of the Christian Churches currently serving in Cummings, Ks; having in the past served in Germany, Belgium, Canada and Italy as well as in the States of Missouri, Michigan and North Carolina. He holds a degree in Communications Studies from the University of Kansas, a Bachelor of Theology degree from Ozark Christian College, and a Master of Management degree from Troy University.

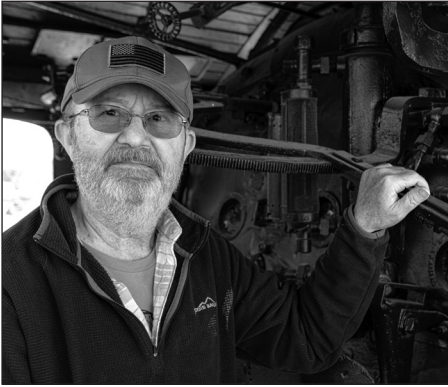
**James Cormode Presents:**

## **Early Roads That Crossed Atchison County**

James Cormode will speak about the early roads that crossed Atchison County, Kansas. He will focus on two road: the military road called the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Kearney Road or sometimes the Oregon Road and a road from Atchison to Pardee. Mr. Cormode first learned of these roads as a child from his maternal grandfather who himself was a grandson of an 1854 settler in Atchison County. His connections to the history of Atchison County also pass through his paternal great-grandmother who in 1867 purchased eighty acres crossed by the Ft. Leavenworth-Ft. Kearney Road. He is married to Charlea Ann Higley, a great-granddaughter of 1857 Atchison County settler who farmed and worked with Pardee Butler, the Kansas Christian Church minister and abolitionist. His four children have all developed their own interest in history.



**2:15 pm - 3:15 pm**  
**STEVE CAPLINGER**



Steve's vocational experiences are wide ranging: farming, banking, insurance, real estate but the love of history has been continuous since he was five years old. Listening to stories from his parents and grandfather stirred his appreciation of local history. It has manifested itself into this new chapter in his life of caring for the county historical society museum and collecting stories of our community's development.

***Steve Caplinger Presents:***

**Atchison County  
Prominence in the  
Westward Expansion**

Steve Caplinger, director of the Santa Fe Depot in Atchison, will be presenting at the annual meeting a summary of the importance of the Atchison County area as it relates to the westward expansion of the country during the 18th and 19th centuries. Those factors explored will be geographic, political and sociological.

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**3:15 - 4:15 - Board Meeting**

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**BANQUET**

**6:00 at Cedar Ridge**

**Banquet Hall**

**Located approximately**

**6 miles North**

(Map for directions in program)

**Banquet Presentation by**  
**DEB GOODRICH**



Deb Goodrich is a native of Ararat, Virginia, just a couple of miles from Mount Airy, North Carolina (more widely known as Mayberry). Her life's work has been spent in media — newspaper, magazine, radio, and television and consulted on media at the Army's Command and General Staff College. She has been the host of Around Kansas TV Show for more than ten years. It aired throughout the state on various commercial stations and went all digital during Covid. She has served as the Garvey (Texas) Foundation Historian in Residence at the Fort Wallace Museum, Wallace, KS, since 2017. Prior to that, she worked as a tour guide and created exhibits at the museum. She was the Historian in Residence at the Historic Topeka Cemetery and was responsible for many historical and cultural events there.

Deb chairs the Santa Fe Trail 200, marked from 2021-2025, and is publicity chair for the Santa Fe Trail Association. She is author of several books and writes a weekly column for Grass and Grain. She has been an instructor for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute through the University of Kansas for several years.

She has spoken in front of hundreds of audiences across the country and has appeared in numerous documentaries including The Road to Valhalla (winner of a Wrangler Award) and The American Artist: The life and Times of George Caleb Bingham (winner of an Emmy

Award). She also appeared in AHC's Gunslinger Series on Wild Bill Hickok and in The American Experience on Jesse James. She is a producer on the feature film, Sod and Stubble, starring Bailey Chase, Barry Corbin, Buck Taylor, Darby Hinton, and Mary McDonough. The project is currently in post-production.

She is writing the biography of Vice President Charles Curtis, From the Reservation to Washington: The Rise of Charles Curtis, scheduled to be released in autumn, 2024, by TwoDot Books, an imprint of Rowman-Littlefield.

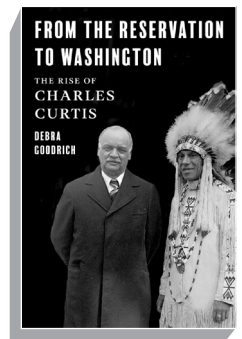
She is Past President, The Shawnee County Historical Society, The Civil War Roundtable of Eastern Kansas, and the Kansas City Civil War Roundtable; Board Member, Western Writers of America; Board Member, The Kansas Cowboy Hall of Fame; Past Board Member, The Kansas Music Hall of Fame.

She has five brilliant, beautiful grandchildren and lives in Oakley.

***Deb Goodrich Presents:***

**Our Charley: The  
Life of Vice President  
Charles Curtis.**

Deb's biography of the native Kansan and member of the Kaw Tribe will be published in October by Rowman-Littlefield. Charley was born in North Topeka in 1860 and spent part of his growing up years on the Kaw Reservation at Council Grove. He served as Shawnee County Attorney, Congressman, Senator, and ultimately, Vice-President of the United States. His life was colorful and his achievements impressive, yet he has become a footnote in American history. It is time for America to re-acquaint themselves with Our Charley.





**Sunday, October 13**

**8:30 am - 9:00 am - Coffee**

**9:00 am - 10:00 am  
SARAH ELDER**



Sarah Elder is currently the manager of the Remington Nature Center in St. Joseph, Missouri. She was employed 29 years at the St. Joseph Museum (39 if you count the 10 years as a volunteer. She is a graduate of Central High School and holds a bachelor's degree in History from Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, Missouri. Sarah is knowledgeable in various aspects of history, including western emigration (Oregon-California Trails), the California Gold Rush, the Pony Express, the Border War and Civil War in Missouri and Kansas, as well as general western history, and is expanding her knowledge into natural history. She has assisted on local documentaries "Days of Civil War", "Spirit of the Pony Express", and "The Legacy They Left: Mount Mora Cemetery" Railroads and the history of Northwest Missouri and Northeast Kansas go together like bread and butter, peanut butter and jelly, Mahomes and Kelce, and other iconic pairings.

***Sarah Elder Presents:***  
**Early Railroads in St. Joseph, Missouri & Atchison, Kansas**

St. Joseph, Missouri, may have been founded by the fur trade but it wouldn't have been as prosperous without the railroad, while the very name of Atchison, Kansas, is synonymous with railroads and is immortalized in song and story.

This program, "Early Railroads in St. Joseph, Missouri & Atchison, Kansas" will explore the complex history of the railroads and the communities they served.

**10:00 am - 11:00 am  
JACKIE LEWIN**



Jacqueline Lewin, a native of St. Joseph, Missouri, holds an MA in History from Northwest Missouri State University. After teaching for several years, she, by chance, took a part-time job at the St. Joseph Museum where she found her life career in the museum profession. She served as Curator of History, Site Manager of the Pony Express Museum, and upon retirement was Executive Director of the St. Joseph Museums (Wyeth-Tootle Mansion, American Indian Galleries, Doll Museum, Black Archives Museum and Glore Psychiatric Museum).

She also served as the first woman president of the Oregon-California Trails Association. Since retirement,

Lewin has continued to volunteer for special projects at the St. Joseph Museums and the Pony Express Museum. She is responsible for the design and content of the Hall of Riders exhibit gallery and other smaller displays at the Pony Express Museum. Lewin authored *Winds of Destiny*, a Biographical Look at Pony Express Riders and *The St. Joe Road*.

***Jackie Lewin Presents:***  
**Pony Express: Russell, Majors and Waddell**

William Russell, Alexander Majors and William Waddell operated the Pony Express along the Central Route from April 1860 to late October 1861. The Pony Express was designed to prove the year-round viability of that route in order to gain the lucrative government mail contract then held by Butterfield on the Southern Route. Lewin will focus on the operation of the Pony Express, why it came to be, how it worked, and the companies' challenges, successes and failures. Some of the other business ventures of Russell, Majors and Waddell will also be discussed, including their earlier use of the Smokey Hill route. Some of the story will be told through the eyes of the riders, the real heroes of the Pony Express.

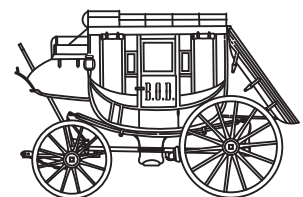
**11:00 am - 11:30 am  
Closing Details  
*Happy Trails***

**REGISTER TODAY!**

ONLINE AT:  
[www.smokyhilltrail.com](http://www.smokyhilltrail.com)

OR

USE THE FORM ON PAGE X



Printed in *The Smoky Hill and Republican Union* -  
August 20, 1864

### **Proposal for Corn.**

Office of the A. A. Q. M.,  
Fort Riley, Kansas Aug. 17, 1864

Sealed proposal will be received at this  
office until 12 o'clock, M., Saturday, the 27th day  
of August, 1864, for the delivery at

#### **Salina, Kansas of**

#### **Two Thousand Bushels of Corn,**

one thousand bushels to be corn in the ear, and the  
balance, one thousand bushels to be shelled and sacked  
in new strong gunny sacks.

Also, at the same time and place, Proposals  
will be received for the deliver at

#### **Smoky Hill Crossing,**

#### **of 2,000 BUSHELS OF CORN,**

one thousand bushels to be corn in the ear, and the  
balance, one thousand bushels, to be shelled and sacked  
in new strong gunny sacks. Contractors will be required  
to deliver the corn at such times and in such quantities as  
the officer of the Quartermaster's Department in charge  
at Salina and Smoky Hill Crossing may direct, the whole  
amount to be delivered before the 15th day of October,  
1864. Separate bids must be made for the amount to be  
delivered at Salina, and for the amount to be delivered  
at Smoky Hill Crossing. But no bid will be entertained  
for less than the whole amount to be delivered at either  
place. Bids must be made in triplicate on separate sheets  
of paper, and accompanied by the written guarantee of at  
least two responsible parties to the effect that the bidder is  
able to fulfill this contract in accordance with the terms of  
his proposition, and that should his proposal be accepted  
he will at once enter into contract with sufficient sureties  
for the faithful fulfillment of the same.

Contracts will be subject to the approval of  
the Chief Quartermaster, Department of Kansas. The  
undersigned reserves the right to reject any and all bids.  
Proposals must be endorsed "Proposals for Corn at Salina  
(or Smoky Hill Crossing), as the case may be.

**J. R. McCLURE,**  
1st Lieut. 11th K. V. C. A. A. Q. M.

Printed in *The Junction Statesman* - May 12, 1860

### **Territorial Item.**

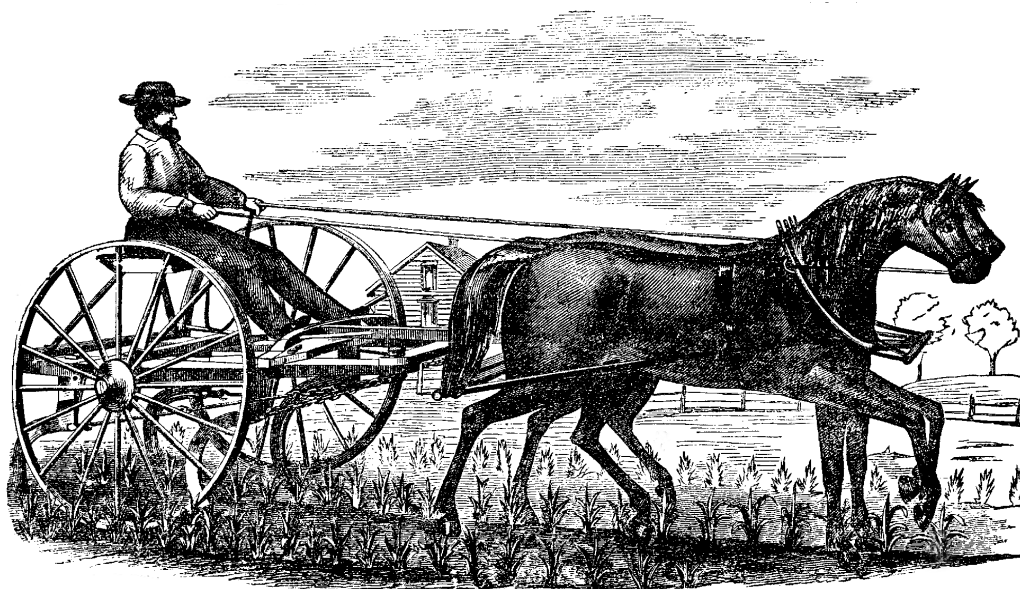
There is a rumor current, that a party of explorers  
sent out by the City of Leavenworth, to determine the  
practicability of the Smoky Hill Route, have been  
murdered by the Indians.

We learn from a reliable source, that emigrants who  
have started to the Gold Mines, via the Platte Route, are  
turning back, owing to the scarcity of grass. Messrs. Major,  
Russell & Waddell's trains for the Peak are now sent via  
the Arkansas Route, and will continue to travel by that  
road, until the report of the Smoky Hill Route, by Green  
Russell, is made. Should such report be favorable, their  
intention is to send all their trains by the Smoky Hill.

Printed in *Chicago Tribune* - August 14, 1866

### **INDIAN AFFAIRS ON THE SMOKY HILL ROUTE**

Washington, August 12. - Colonel Leavenworth, Indian  
Agent in the country of the Kiowas and Comanches, has  
just arrived here, and states that the Cheyennes from the  
north and those from the south, together with the Arapahoes  
and the Oglala and Brule bands of the Sioux, are gathering  
in the Smoky Hill country to hold their great meeting lodge.  
The Cheyennes say the whites shall not make roads through  
the Smoky Hill country as it is their hunting ground. It is  
thought that much depends upon the result of the councils  
held at the medicine lodge, as to the attitude of these tribes  
toward the Government. If hostile influences should prevail  
trouble may be anticipated from the Indians. The Kiowas  
and Comanches are quiet and peaceable, and are in a  
prosperous condition.



#### **Corn Production**

*In Kansas during 1866 there was  
217,000 acres harvested of corn  
which produced 6.1 million  
bushels. Five years later the  
acreage for corn production grew  
to two million acres.*

*Today, Kansas produces over  
700 million bushels annually.*

#### **The Key Farm Power**

*Horses in Kansas totaled more  
than a million head for a 30-year  
period from 1892 to 1922.*



## Atchinson, KS Lodging

### Quality Inn & Suites

500 US Hwy 73 S, Atchison  
(913)-367-4000

[www.choicehotels.com/kansas/atchison/quality-inn-hotels/ks304](http://www.choicehotels.com/kansas/atchison/quality-inn-hotels/ks304)

- Special Rates available at this motel when you call for reservation. Tell them you are with the Smoky Hill Trail Association.



### Holiday Inn Express & Suites

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(913) 674-0033

[www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/atchison/mkcat/hoteldetail](http://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/atchison/mkcat/hoteldetail)

### Super 8 by Wyndham

509 S 9th St, Atchison  
(913) 367-7666

[www.wyndhamhotels.com/super-8/atchison-kansas/super-8-atchison/overview](http://www.wyndhamhotels.com/super-8/atchison-kansas/super-8-atchison/overview)

### Hotel Eastin

401 S 10th St, Atchison  
(913) 367-7000

[www.hoteleastinatchisonks.com](http://www.hoteleastinatchisonks.com)



### James Miles Coombs - Biography

**Editor:** The second part of the Coombs biography by Brian Smith will appear in our next issue. If before the next issue you happen to discover any information about James M. Coombs, please share at: [smokyhilltrailasn@gmail.com](mailto:smokyhilltrailasn@gmail.com)

# Smoky Hill Trail ASSOCIATION 2024 CONFERENCE QUEST WEST ATCHISON

October 11 - 13, 2024 / ATCHISON, KANSAS

## REGISTRATION

Mail-in Registration Deadline: October 9, 2024



First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( Cell / Home / Work ) Circle One: \_\_\_\_\_

## Conference and Membership Fees

### Conference & Banquet Meal:

\$100 per person X \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Friday, Oct. 11 to Sunday, Oct. 13

### 2025 Membership:

Individual: \$25.00 per person X \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Family: \$30.00 a family at same address \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Institution / Nonprofit Organizations: \$40.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Business: \$50.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Patron (Support the Organization): \$100.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Lifetime Membership\*: \$500.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

**TOTAL FEES:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed form  
(or a copy) and payment  
before deadline to:

Smoky Hill Trail Association  
PO Box 978  
Hays, KS 67601

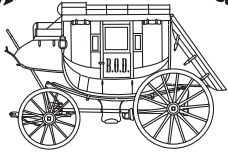
Questions: [smokyhilltrailasn@gmail.com](mailto:smokyhilltrailasn@gmail.com)



**REGISTER ONLINE ANYTIME:**  
[www.smokyhilltrail.com](http://www.smokyhilltrail.com)

You may pay with Credit Card or PayPal!

Smoky Hill Trail



ASSOCIATION

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Please look above and check the  
YEAR DATE on your mailing  
address. If it does not say 2024, your  
membership needs to be renewed.  
*If it says LIFE - you're good!*

## NOTICES

You can Register for the Conference &  
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[www.smokyhilltrail.com](http://www.smokyhilltrail.com)

Questions, Ideas, Comments, Newsletter Articles

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