When Horace Greeley Visited Kansas in 1859

MARTHA B. CALDWELL

On April 28, 1859, Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, announced "To the Friends of The Tribune":

I propose taking a trip Westward this season through Kansas and the alleged Gold Region at the Eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, thence through Utah and the Great Basin, to California, returning across the continent or by the Isthmus, as circumstances shall dictate. I purpose to leave this City on the 9th or 10th of May, and to reach it on my return between the 16th and the 25th of September. I shall try to look in on the first distinctly Republican Convention of the Free men of Kansas, which meets at Osawatomie on the 18th of May, and to start westward from Leavenworth or Lawrence soon afterward. I shall also look at Oregon, if Time should serve.

I shall write as frequently as practicable for The Tribune, and shall try to add something to the popular knowledge of the now wild and lonely region over which the Iron Horse is soon to trace the pathway of Empire.¹

Greeley also wrote the following to T. D. Thacher, editor of the Lawrence Republican:

Will you please state in such manner as you think fit, that I propose to attend your Territorial Republican Convention at Osawatomie on the 18th prox. I have written and talked about Kansas some, until I want to see it. So I am going to start westward about the 10th or 11th prox., and hope to see some old friends whom I may more easily find at Osawatomie than by traveling over your broad prairies.²

For a number of years Horace Greeley had been advocating as a government necessity the building of a transcontinental railroad to connect the two widely separated settlements in the United States. He now resolved to make a journey across the continent and note the physical characteristics of the region with reference to the facilities it afforded for the construction of a road.³ This, no doubt, more than anything else prompted his trip.

It gave rise, however, to the accusation by those who opposed the organization of the Republican party, that Horace Greeley had been invited by straight-out Republicans, with a view of creating en-

¹. New York Daily Tribune, May 2, 1859. During his journey Horace Greeley wrote thirty-four letters to the Tribune. These were later republished in book form under the title An Overland Journey, From New York to San Francisco, in the Summer of 1859 (New York, C. M. Saxton, Burtier & Co., 1860). The letters quoted here are from the book version; consequently they may occasionally vary from the newspaper printing.
². Lawrence Republican, Lawrence, May 5, 1859.
thusiasm at the Osawatomie convention. The rumor spread that Horace Greeley, Frank P. Blair of Missouri and Gov. S. P. Chase of Ohio were expected to be present at the convention to give the Republicans some wholesome advice. The opponents thought that such meddling in local politics by outsiders was not to be tolerated. The Democrats especially made political capital of the story. The Leavenworth Herald wrote, “We find the so-called Republicans of Kansas sending all the way to New York for the great Agamemnon of Black Republicanism—Horace Greeley—to aid in the organization of their party in this Territory. He comes with a platform in his breeches pocket. . . .”

So much was made of these reports that Greeley authorized the editor of the Lawrence Republican to say in the columns of his paper that the story was without a shadow of foundation; that no one, either in or out of Kansas, solicited his presence at the convention; that the moment he determined to visit Kansas he wrote the articles which appeared in the Tribune and Lawrence Republican.

On Monday, May 9, Greeley boarded the train at New York for his Western journey. He traveled the accustomed route: by train to Buffalo, thence to Chicago and Quincy, Ill. At Quincy he took the boat down the Mississippi as far as Hannibal, Mo., where he again took the train over the Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad to St. Joseph. Here he took passage on the steamer Platte Valley for Atchison, arriving there Sunday morning, May 15.

It is doubtful if at that time the arrival in Kansas of any other man would have created such a sensation. Greeley’s paper, the New York Tribune, was widely read in Kansas. He had been a constant and devoted friend of Free Kansas, and his pen and voice had been effective in securing her freedom. It was fitting that this great champion of freedom should be given a hearty welcome. “Gentle and simple, Hunkers and Radicals, Conservatives and Progressives,” wrote a correspondent to the Tribune, “all united in showing the deep respect entertained for him in Kansas.”

Atchison was the first Kansas town to greet the renowned visitor. Her prominent citizens, among them S. C. Pomeroy, gave him a

5. Leavenworth Herald, quoted in Freedom’s Champion, Atchison, June 4, 1859.
8. Ibid., June 2, 1859.
cordial reception. He was entertained at the old Massasoit house, a substantial frame hotel, said at the time to be one of the finest public houses in Kansas outside of Leavenworth and Lawrence. In the afternoon he enjoyed a ride around the city, and that night he wrote his first "Overland Journey" letter to the Tribune.

The letter consisted principally of his impressions of his journey to Kansas. Of Atchison he wrote:

Atchison gives me my first foothold on Kansas. It was long a Border-Ruffian nest, but has shared the fortunes of many such in being mainly bought out by Free-State men, who now rule, and for the most part own it. For the last year, its growth has been quite rapid; of its four or five hundred dwellings, I think, two-thirds have been built within that period. The Missouri at this point runs further to the west than elsewhere in Kansas; its citizens tell me that the great roads westward to Utah, &c., from St. Joseph on the north and from Leavenworth on the south, pass within a few miles of Atchison when thrice as far from their respective starting-points. Hence the Salt Lake mail, though made up at St. Joseph, is brought hither by steamboat and starts overland from this place; hence many trains are made up here for Laramie, Green River, Fort Hall, Utah, and I hear even for Santa Fé. I have seen several twelve-ox teams, drawing heavily-loaded wagons, start for Salt Lake, etc., to-day; there are others camped just outside the corporate limits, which have just come in; while a large number of wagons form a corral (yard, inclosure or encampment) some two miles westward. A little further away, the tents and wagons of parties of gold-seekers, with faces set for Pike's Peak, dot the prairie; one of them in charge of a grey-head who is surely old enough to know better. Teamsters from Salt Lake and teamsters about to start, lounge on every corner; I went out three or four miles on the high prairie this afternoon, and the furthest thing I could see was the white canvas of a moving train. I have long been looking for the West, and here it is at last.—But I must break off somewhere to prepare for an early start for Leavenworth and Lawrence to-morrow, in order to reach Osawatomie next day in season to attend the Republican Convention which is to assemble at that place on Wednesday, the eighteenth.9

With regard to the weather Greeley's visit to Kansas was untimely. It was an unusually rainy period. Rain had fallen off and on from Thursday, May 12, until Saturday night, May 14. Sunday was cloudy and chilly but without rain until evening, when thunder showers came up from all sides and it continued pouring throughout the night. "Kansas brags on its thunder and lightning," wrote Greeley of the storm, "and the boast is well founded. I never before observed a display of celestial pyrotechny so protracted, incessant and vivid as that of last Sunday night."10 The country already soaked with water was again drenched by the downpour.

10. An Overland Journey, p. 20; Daily Tribune, June 1, 1859.
Streams ordinarily insignificant were rendered dangerous or impassable for the time.

Under such conditions and with a sky still threatening, Greeley, S. C. Pomeroy, John A. Martin, possibly, and one other left Atchison at six o'clock Monday morning, May 16, in a two-horse wagon with the expectation of reaching Osawatomie the next evening. They knew that the streams were swollen but they trusted in the ability of their pilot, who had forded many Kansas streams, to get them there by some route or other. They traveled in a southerly direction across the prairies, fording numerous streams which were usually mere rills, but now swollen into torrents. Twelve or fifteen miles from Atchison they struck the California trail and followed it south and east into Leavenworth.

Greeley was greatly interested in the trains of emigrants on the California road, describing them as follows:

As we neared the California trail, the white coverings of the many emigrant and transport wagons dotted the landscape, giving the trail the appearance of a river running through great meadows, with many ships sailing on its bosom. Most of the independent wagoners were still encamped by the wayside, unable or unwilling to brave the deep mud; their cattle feeding on the broad prairie; the emigrants cooking or sitting beside the wagons; women sometimes washing, and all trying to dry their clothing, drenched and soaked by the pouring rain of the past night. One great wagon-train was still in corral with its cattle feeding and men lounging about; the others might better have been, as it was clearly impossible to make their lean, wild-looking oxen (mainly of the long-horned stripe, which indicates Texas as their native land, and which had probably first felt the yoke within the past week) draw them up the slightest ascent through that deep, slippery mire. A great deal of yelling, beating, swearing, was being expended to little purpose, as I presume each train corralled for the ensuing night within a mile of the point it left in the morning. These contractors’ wagons are very large and strong, each carrying a couple of good extra axles lashed under its body, to be used in case an old one gives way under a heavy jerk; the drivers are as rough and wild-looking as their teams, though not quite so awkward at their business; but to keep six yoke of such oxen in line in the road, and all pulling on the load, is beyond human skill. It is a sore trial to patience, that first start of these trains on their long journey—to Utah, Fort Hall, Green River, and some of these to New Mexico, though this is not the Santa Fé trail. The loads are generally fifty hundred weight; the wagons must weigh at least fifteen hundred each; and, though this would seem moderate for twelve oxen, it must be remembered that they are at this season poor and at first unbroken, and that the road is in spots a very bad one. A train consists of ten to thirty wagons; each train has its reliable and experienced master or director; and when a team is stalled, another is unhitched from its own wagon and sent to the aid of the one in trouble. The rate of progress is necessarily snail-like; these trains will do very well if they make twenty miles the first week; considering the weather.
But then the feeding of the teams (like the lodging of the men) costs nothing, as they live on the broad prairie, and though they will often be fearfully hungry or dry in traversing grassless tracts on their route, they are said generally to gain in flesh (for which there is ample room) during a journey of three or four months. Of course, they improve in docility and effectiveness, being at first so wild that, in order to be yoked, they have to be driven into the corral (formed, as I may have explained, by wagons closely ranged in hollow square, the tongue of each being run under its next neighbor, for defense against Indians or other prowlers.) Very few wagons or cattle ever come back; the freighting is all one way; and both wagons and cattle are usually sold at or near their point of destination for whatever they will fetch—to be taken to California or disposed of as they best may.\textsuperscript{11}

At eleven a.m. the Greeley party reached Leavenworth. Greeley had been expected by boat, and a demonstration was planned, but he had quietly slipped in by carriage and was at the hotel before any one was aware of it. The Typographical Union together with other prominent citizens gave him a cordial welcome.\textsuperscript{12} His arrival gave new courage to the Leavenworth county delegates who had about given up the idea of reaching Osawatomie, thinking that on account of the high water the convention would be postponed. Greeley’s stay in Leavenworth was necessarily brief at this time, for the party was compelled to push on in order to be in Osawatomie in time for the convention. Their plan was to go by Lawrence, spend the night there and proceed to Osawatomie the next day. However, Stranger creek stopped any travel in that direction, for even the Leavenworth stages were unable to make their way out of town. They finally decided to go by boat to Wyandotte, and at three p.m. shipped their horses and wagons on board the steamer, \textit{D. A. January}, and descended the Missouri river about fifty miles, “past the bleaching bones of several dead cities (not including Quindaro, which insists that it is alive) to Wyandot” where they spent the night.\textsuperscript{13}

Although Greeley’s arrival was unexpected a Republican meeting was hurriedly arranged for the evening and some “off hand” talks were made.\textsuperscript{14} The next morning, May 17, at six o’clock the party set out for Osawatomie, about fifty miles distant, hoping to get there before night. A heavy rain had fallen the day before and the Kansas river bottom was covered with water, so that the road across it was all but impassable. Fortunately a wooden toll bridge had just

\textsuperscript{11} An Overland Journey, pp. 23-25; \textit{Daily Tribune}, June 1, 1859.


\textsuperscript{13} An Overland Journey, pp. 25, 26; \textit{Daily Tribune}, June 1, 1859.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
been built over the river and although it was not quite completed, it was usable.

After crossing the river they soon emerged upon the high prairie. The clouds of the morning had broken away and the day appeared perfect. "The young grass of the prairie," as Greeley described the view, "refreshed by the heavy rains, appeared in its freshest, tenderest green; the delicate early flowers were abundant, yet not so numerous as to pall by satiety the pleasure of looking at them, and the panorama presented was magnificent." 15 Passing the prairie village of Shawnee, 16 a town of twenty or thirty houses with a large hotel, their road went more directly south and brought them in sight of the Santa Fé trail with its "white-topped emigrant wagons, and three great contract trains." 17 Crossing the trail at right angles, they left "the smart village of Olathe" a mile or so to the west, and struck off over the prairie almost due south. Greeley was much impressed with the beauty of this region and declared, "If the Garden of Eden exceeded this land in beauty or fertility, I pity Adam for having to leave it." 18

At Spring Hill, which was characterized as "a hamlet of five or six dwellings, including a store, but no tavern," the party stopped to give their horses food and rest. Unable to secure horse feed in the town, they finally succeeded in purchasing a "homeopathic dose" for a quarter from a passing wagoner, and after lunching on crackers and herring they again set out. Their direct route led due south through Paola, but being assured by persons they met that Bull creek was impassable on this road, they turned to the west through Marysville 19 and crossed the creek at Rock Ford three miles beyond. Greeley confessed that this "wide, impetuous stream, so impenetrable to the eye, and so far above its average level, wore a vicious look" to him when they plunged into it. 20

Twelve miles more brought them to Stanton where the lateness of the hour and the impassable condition of the Marais des Cygnes forced them to stop for the night. Stanton was a little town of twenty or thirty houses, including two stores and a tavern. At the tavern they found five or six persons bound for Osawatomie, "one of whom had swam three streams since the morning." Later

16. Shawnee (formerly Gun Springs) is situated in the northern part of Johnson county. The first settlement was made in 1857.—A. T. Andreas, History of Kansas (1883), p. 636.
17. An Overland Journey, p. 28; Daily Tribune, June 1, 1859.
18. An Overland Journey, pp. 28, 29; Daily Tribune, June 1, 1859.
19. Marysville, an early town in Miami county, is now extinct.
20. An Overland Journey, pp. 29, 30; Daily Tribune, June 1, 1859.
in the evening fifteen or twenty more arrived, among them the Lawrence and Douglas county delegation. After supper a meeting was held at the school house where Horace Greeley, S. C. Pomeroy, T. Dwight Thacher and others spoke to a well filled house. They then adjourned “to fill all the beds and floors of the tavern as full as they could hold.” All were “snugly bestowed” except Thacher of Lawrence who accepted the hospitality of William P. Dutton, a Republican farmer, at a half mile distance and were well entertained at his house. During the night heavy rains again fell and still further swelled the streams, so that a number who had come part way were unable to reach Osawatomie the next day.

The next morning, May 18, the delegations took an early start and were soon at the Marais des Cygnes river, a mile from Stanton. The river at this place, ordinarily fordable, was now so swollen by the heavy rains as to be fifteen or twenty feet in depth, its sweeping current being filled with driftwood. The rope to the ferry at this place was buried in the water and the tree to which it was attached was standing in the middle of the stream. After a long wait a new rope was secured and the party was ferried across, finally reaching Osawatomie about nine o'clock. Greeley described Osawatomie as a village of at most one hundred and fifty houses, situated in the forks of the Marais des Cygnes and Pottawatomie, a somewhat smaller creek, which comes in from the southwest. He wrote:

The location is a pleasant and favorable but not a commanding one; the surrounding country is more considerably cultivated than any I had passed south of the Kaw. The two creeks supply abundant and good timber; an excellent steam sawmill has taken the place of that which the border-ruffians burned; a flouring mill, tannery, brewery and a large hotel, are being erected or completed. I presume there is a larger town somewhere in what is known as Southern Kansas, though I do not know which it is.

Quite a number of the delegates were already on the ground. Still the streams were so high in every direction that it seemed impossible that many could get through. Before long the delegations from Linn and Bourbon counties came in on foot, having left their horses on the other side of Pottawatomie creek. They crossed the stream in a skiff. The Leavenworth, Doniphan and Wyandotte county delegates arrived looking somewhat bedraggled. “Some of them had traveled all night—some had swam swollen streams” in

22. An Overland Journey, p. 30; Daily Tribune, June 1, 1859.
23. Lawrence Republican, May 26, 1859.
their determination to reach the convention. Col. O. E. Learnard came up from the Neosho with a party from Burlington and Emporia. When they reached Pottawatomie creek they found that fording was out of the question and in the absence of a ferry, they crossed on an improvised raft and proceeded in a "delapidated condition" to the town. Before noon over fifty delegates had arrived and the convention was assured.

The caucusing and preliminary maneuvers of the political leaders preceding the convention were held in an upstairs front room in the Jilson house; the convention itself met in the Osage Valley house in an unfinished second story fitted up for the occasion. Many of the men composing the convention had been active participants in the Kansas struggle. Among those of prominence were S. C. Pomeroy, Thomas Ewing, Jr., W. A. Phillips, T. Dwight Thacher, John A. Martin, Mark Delahay, Web and Cart Wilder, James McDowell, C. K. Holliday, D. W. Houston, Charles Branscomb, O. E. Learnard and A. D. Richardson. James H. Lane for some reason was absent.

There were other Free-State leaders absent because they opposed forming the Republican party at this time, holding that they should continue as the Free-State organization until Kansas was admitted to the union. Prominent in this group was George W. Brown, editor of the Herald of Freedom, Lawrence, who failed to give Greeley a cordial welcome in the columns of his paper, and printed much adverse criticism of him.

There was also a lack of harmony within the convention itself. A great diversity of opinion prevailed, primarily upon the question of the negro in Kansas, and many doubted the possibility of reconciling the different views. There were, of course, radical Abolitionists who went so far as to advocate giving the ballot to the colored man. There were also conservatives, numerically the strongest, many of whom were called "black law men" because they favored the exclusion of the negro from the state. It was said to have been due to the necessity of harmonizing these opposing views that Greeley was not invited to address the convention. According to Col. O. E. Learnard a feeling prevailed that Greeley with his pronounced views and his lack of understanding of the situation, might serve to aggravate rather than to placate the differences.

25. Lawrence Republican, May 26, 1859.
27. The Commonwealth, Topeka, November 30, 1859.
Therefore the majority thought it best not to invite him to participate in the business of the convention. Learnard, who was president of the convention, forty-six years later told how they "Sat Down on" Greeley. "He came out to Kansas," he asserted, "with a number of theories and intended to dictate to us. But right there was where Mr. Greeley miscalculated. We treated him with the courtesy due the great editor that he was, but we merely pushed him aside and held the convention in our own way." How much influence Greeley exerted among the committees is not known. The charge was that he wrote the platform. This brought forth a vigorous denial from John A. Martin, editor of the Atchison Champion, who was a member of the platform committee. Martin described in detail the work of the committee and the origin of the different resolutions. He declared that Greeley had never seen the platform until a copy was handed to him in Lawrence.

The temporary organization was completed with little friction, and the convention adjourned to listen to an address by Greeley. The meeting was in the open with an improvised platform for the speaker just outside the hotel door. Notwithstanding the impassable roads, nearly one thousand people had gathered in honor of the occasion. Greeley was amazed at the crowd and wondered where it came from. He was introduced by O. C. Brown and talked for an hour and a half to attentive listeners. His subject naturally was political parties. He reviewed the old parties, the steady growth of the slave power and then dwelt on the origin, history, principles, and objects of the Republican party. At the close the audience is reported to have enthusiastically cheered him. "It was a labor of love so to speak," wrote Greeley of the occasion, "but rather a tax to write the speech out, even imperfectly, as I was obliged to do during the next two days in the intervals of riding and speaking, in order that all those people of Kansas who care to do so may consider my notions of 'Free-State Democracy' and 'Squatter Sovereignty.'"

The Lawrence Republican printed the speech in full, May 26, and posted up the proof-sheets with corrections in Greeley's own hand.

20. The Osawatonic Journal, May 27, 1858.
21. The Kansas City (Mo.) Journal, September 14, 1860.
22. Freedom's Champion, Atchison, June 4, 1859.
23. The Topeka Tribune, May 26, 1859.
24. The speech was reported in full in the New York Daily Tribune, May 31, 1859.
in the composing room as typographical trophies. They remained there until the office was burned in 1863 in the Quantrill raid.35

The next morning, May 19, Greeley left by stage for Lawrence. The stage crossed the Marais des Cygnes, which was still out of its banks, at Bundy’s ferry and traveled north and west to leave the mail at Ottawa Jones’ 36 and then struck due north to Prairie City. Finding numerous infant towns along the route, Greeley wrote that “it takes three log houses to make a city in Kansas, but they begin calling it a city so soon as they have staked out the lots.” 37

Greeley arrived in Prairie City 38 in the evening and remained there for the night. At a Republican meeting that evening he spoke to a gathering of about four hundred people. He was amazed at the number and wondered “where on earth so many could have been scared up, within a reasonable ride of this point.” Although Prairie City, Baldwin and Palmyra were neighboring towns, he was sure they couldn’t have mustered half the number. All of which made him conclude that the country was really better settled than it appeared.39

On Friday morning, May 20, Greeley continued his journey to Lawrence. As he traveled the fifteen miles from Prairie City, he especially noted the rich limestone soil, the walnut, oak and hickory timber along the streams and the magnificent view of the Wakarusa valley. South of Lawrence Greeley crossed the Wakarusa river at Blanton’s bridge, “a good toll bridge,” and here the Lawrence welcoming party met him.

Perhaps no city in Kansas gave the New York editor a warmer reception than did Lawrence. Its citizens remembered how he had befriended them during the border-war troubles; how he had portrayed the crimes and outrages against their town in the columns of his paper, stories which the Democratic newspapers had denounced as “Greeley’s Kansas lies.”

When it became known that Greeley was to visit the city, the people of Lawrence made extensive preparations to greet him. The wet morning did not dampen the ardor of the prominent citizens who formed a cavalcade and with a brass band playing marched out to meet their distinguished guest. Jonathan Oldham as marshal

35. *Daily Kansas State Record*, Topeka, October 7, 1870, quoted from the *Lawrence Journal*.
38. Prairie City was a town in the southern part of Douglas county. It is now extinct.
used for a baton a copy of the New York Tribune, and many of the
horsemen wore Tribunes in their hats as badges. He was con-
ducted into the city by way of Mount Oread, passing the old fort
which served as a refuge from the Proslavery hordes in 1856. After
marching through several of the streets the procession halted in
front of the Eldridge house where a large crowd had assembled.
Here a short ceremony took place in which S. O. Thacher as spokes-
man for the occasion welcomed Greeley to the city and to which
Greeley responded briefly. At three p.m. he spoke to a large
crowd from the steps of the Eldridge house.40 That night he wrote
his second “Overland Journey” letter to the Tribune in which he
described his journey from Atchison to Osawatomie.41

Of Lawrence Greeley wrote:

I should say Lawrence has now five hundred dwellings and perhaps five
thousand inhabitants; and these figures are more likely to be over than under
the mark. She has a magnificent hotel (the Eldridge House)—the best, I
hear, between the Missouri and the Sacramento—far better, I fear, than its
patronage will justify—though it has nearly all that Lawrence can give. She
is to have a great University, for which a part of the funds are already pro-
vided; but I trust it will be located some distance away, so as to give scope
for a Model Farm, and for a perfect development of the education of the
brain and the hands together. . . . I trust the establishment of the
Lawrence University will not be unduly hurried, but that it will be, whenever
it does open its doors to students, an institution worthy of its name.42

While Greeley was in Lawrence the steamboat Gas Linn came
down the Kansas river from Fort Riley. She had reached the fort
in a little over a week from Kansas City, and after discharging her
cargo, she loaded with corn on her way down. Her arrival was
hailed with exultation. In the absence of passable roads Greeley
considered it a matter of great consequence that the river could be
navigated even if only during high water.43

On Saturday morning, May 21, at ten o’clock, Greeley left Law-
rence by stage for Leavenworth. Crossing the Kansas by ferry at
Lawrence, the stage passed through the wide and well-timbered
bottom on the north and then came out on a “beautiful and gently
undulating” prairie checkered by belts of timber along the creeks.
Several times, at creek crossings, the passengers were turned out to
lighten the coach. At Turkey creek the coach was driven cautiously
through the steep-banked ford while its occupants severally let
themselves down a perpendicular bank by clinging to a tree, and crossed a deep whirling place above the ford on a log, which to Greeley was the “vilest log” he ever attempted to walk, “twisty, sharp-backed, and in every way detestable.” One of the passengers refused to risk his life and hired an Indian loafing near to bring his pony and let him ride across. At Big Stranger they changed coaches with the passengers from Leavenworth who had been waiting their arrival, the baggage and passengers were taken across the stream in a skiff, and each coach returned the way it had come. At six o’clock the stage arrived in Leavenworth.

Greeley took time while at Leavenworth to write his third letter to the Tribune. He considered Leavenworth much the largest city in Kansas, judging that it contained one thousand houses and ten thousand inhabitants not including the fort. The fort was a city of itself, with extensive barracks, capacious store-houses, several companies of soldiers, many fine houses for officers, sutlers, etc., and a farm of twelve hundred acres. “It is a nice place, that Fort,” he added, “with many excellent people about it; but I can’t help asking what it costs, and who pays, and whether that little bill might not be somewhat docked without prejudice to the public interest. I believe it could.”

But the great feature of Leavenworth according to Greeley was Russell, Majors & Waddell’s transportation establishment between the fort and the city.

Such acres of wagons! such pyramids of extra axletrees! such herds of oxen! such regiments of drivers and other employees! No one who does not see can realize how vast a business this is, or how immense are its outlays as well as its income. I presume this great firm has at this hour two millions of dollars invested in stock, mainly oxen, mules and wagons. (They last year employed six thousand teamsters, and worked forty-five thousand oxen.) Of course, they are capital fellows—so are those at the fort—but I protest against the doctrine that either army officers or army contractors, or both together, may have power to fasten slavery on a newly organized territory (as has just been done in New-Mexico) under the guise of letting the people of such territories govern themselves.

While at Fort Leavenworth, Greeley witnessed the departure of a great mule train filled with one hundred and sixty soldiers’ wives and babies, on their way to join their husbands in Utah, from whom they had been separated nearly two years.

44. Big Stranger creek flows almost due south through Leavenworth county and empties into the Kansas river.
45. An Overland Journey, pp. 46, 47; Daily Tribune, June 2, 1859.
47. Ibid.
Greeley left Leavenworth by stage on Tuesday, May 24, a day in advance of the Pike’s Peak Express in order to have time to visit Topeka and Manhattan and sum up his impressions of Kansas for the Tribune. For three days there had been no rain; the streams had fallen and the roads which had been so muddy were now blowing dust. The prairie wind from the west was blowing a gale. Crossing the rich valleys of Salt creek and Stranger creek they came out on the rolling prairie with its sea of waving grass and timber visible along the water courses. They stopped for dinner at Osawkee, once the county seat of Jefferson county, but now as Greeley observed, probably four years old and in a state of dilapidation and decay; its business having left it, its great hotel had been mysteriously burned, and, he presumed, the insurance had been duly paid. The tavern where they dined was kept by a Pennsylvania Dutchman who recognized Greeley from having met him at the Whig national convention at Harrisburg twenty years before. From Osawkee they crossed Rock creek and Muddy creek, passed through the little village of Indianola, and reached the ferry at Topeka a little after sunset. They were delayed in crossing the river by a contractor’s train which had been all day crossing, and they did not get into Topeka until nearly dark. Greeley wrote with regret of the cruel treatment of the animals in these trains.

I noticed with sorrow that the oxen which draw these great supply-wagons are often treated cruelly, not merely in respect to the beating and whaling which every human brute delights in bestowing on every live thing over which he domineers, but with regard to food and drink. Here were cattle that had stood in the yoke all that hot, dry day with nothing to eat or drink; and, when they came down to the river mad with thirst, they were all but knocked down for trying to drink. I was assured that oxen are sometimes kept in the yoke, without food or drink, for two days, while making one of these river crossings. There can be no excuse for this. Those which have long to wait ought to be taken off and driven a mile or more if necessary to grass and feed there; at all events, they should be watered at least twice a day. How can a competent train-master—to say nothing of humanity—overlook the policy of this?

Greeley’s stay in Topeka was exceedingly brief. That night he spoke to a gathering on the political topics of the day, and after greeting friends he learned that the stage for Fort Riley would start at three o’clock in the morning. This gave him little time for sleep. However, on rising the next morning he found that the high

48. Indianola was a Proslavery town in Shawnee county founded in 1854. It is now extinct.
49. An Overland Journey, pp. 56-58; Daily Tribune, June 7, 1859.
wind would not allow the coach to cross the river and it was almost six o'clock before it actually started. The Topeka Tribune editor wrote regretfully of the fact that he had had no time to show Greeley around the town or to introduce him to the ladies.50

After enjoying three days of bright sunshine, clouds began to gather and by nine a.m. rain started to pour, continuing until eleven. The route lay for thirty miles through the Pottawatomie reserve, crossing Soldier,51 the Red Vermillion52 and Rock creeks,53 and passing St. Mary's (Catholic) mission,54 where Greeley observed quite an Indian village and large improvements. At the Red Vermillion they dined, the landlady being a half-breed, and the dinner the worst for which the editor of the Tribune ever paid half a dollar. Continuing on their journey, they passed the stakes and "ruinous cabin or so of one or two still-born cities" and reached the Big Blue. Soon Greeley's beaver hat, a speck of white above the tall prairie grass, could be seen by observers in Manhattan as he rode on top of the four-horse stage coach. A committee of three appointed to tender Greeley the hospitality of the town, met him at the pontoon bridge and escorted him to the Manhattan house where he was a guest. In the evening as usual he spoke to a large audience at the Methodist church while a regular tempest of thunder, lightning and rain prevailed outside.55

In his "Overland" letter written from Manhattan, Greeley described that city as an embryo city of perhaps one hundred houses, of which several were unroofed and three or four utterly destroyed by a tornado on the night of the fifteenth. Several of the families deprived of their homes were lodged in the basement of the new hotel that had just been erected, a three-story building fifty-five feet by thirty-three feet, with limestone walls and black-walnut finishing.56

The high water detained Greeley at Manhattan a day longer than he had expected. Wild Cat creek, five miles west, was impassable on Thursday, holding up an express wagon from Pike's

50. The Topeka Tribune, May 26, 1859.
51. Soldier creek, a tributary of the Kansas river, flows south through Jackson county, emptying into the Kansas at Topeka.
52. The Red Vermillion flows south through Pottawatomie county and empties into the Kansas.
53. Rock creek is a tributary of the Red Vermillion in Pottawatomie county.
54. St. Mary's mission was in the southeast corner of present Pottawatomie county. It was established in 1848.
55. An Overland Journey, pp. 54-56; Daily Tribune, June 7, 1859; Topeka Daily Capital, November 18, 1928.
56. Ibid.
Peak, while Rock creek seventeen miles east stopped five mail coaches and express wagons Thursday and Thursday night. Friday morning the streams had fallen so they could be forded and at one p.m. Greeley took his seat in the Pike’s Peak express and started westward. The only other passenger in the coach was A. D. Richardson, correspondent for the Boston Journal. Richardson, who had arrived in Manhattan on another coach, wrote of Greeley:

... at Manhattan Horace Greeley after a tour through the interior to gratify the damnosous settlers with speeches, joined me for the rest of the journey. His overland trip attracted much attention. A farmer asked me if Horace Greeley had failed in business, and was going to Pike’s Peak to dig gold? Another inquired if he was about to start a newspaper in Manhattan.57

The Leavenworth & Pike’s Peak express had been established in the spring of 1859 by the firm of Jones, Russell & Co. Over fifty Concord coaches were purchased for the line. Each of these coaches was drawn by four fine Kentucky mules which were changed at stations established from twenty to thirty miles apart, according to the availability of wood and water. The route ran westward on the divide between the Republican and the Solomon rivers.

A few miles out of Manhattan Greeley’s coach came to Ogden, a land-office city with thirty or forty houses. A short distance beyond the “sad remains of Pawnee City”58 on the Fort Riley reservation was passed and the party soon arrived at the fort. Greeley described it as having comfortable barracks, a large and well placed hospital, spacious and elegant officers’ quarters, and extensive and admirable stables. “I hear,” he wrote, “that two millions of Uncle Sam’s money have been expended in making these snug arrangements, and that the cats largely consumed here have often cost three dollars per bushel. I have seen nothing else at all comparable to this in the way of preparations for passing life agreeably since I left Missouri.”59 Crossing the Republican river on a rope ferry they drove into Junction City where they spent the night. Here Greeley again talked Republicanism for over an hour to a crowd gathered in an unfinished stone church.60 Junction City was a village at the time, consisting of a store, two hotels, and thirty or forty dwellings. It also had a newspaper, founded and kept alive

58. The first territorial legislature of Kansas met at the new capitol building at Pawnee City in July, 1855.
60. Richardson, op. cit., p. 162.
by an army sutler, and of course, as Greeley expressed it, "Democratic in its inculations." 61

While at Manhattan Greeley summed up his impressions of Kansas. He stated that he liked Kansas better than he had expected to. The soil was richer and deeper, the timber more diffused and the country more rolling than he had supposed. He considered that, not confining his remarks to the then “flooded” time, Kansas was well watered, and the limestone underlying the soil was among the chief blessings. After discussing the crops indigenous to Kansas and speaking of the drawbacks in having little timber for building purposes, he wrote:

An unpleasant truth must be stated: There are too many idle, shiftless people in Kansas. I speak not here of lawyers, gentlemen speculators, and other non-producers, who are in excess here as elsewhere; I allude directly to those who call themselves settlers, and who would be farmers if they were anything. To see a man squatted on a quarter-section in a cabin which would make a fair hog-pen, but is unfit for a human habitation, and there living from hand to mouth by a little of this and a little of that, with hardly an acre of prairie broken (sometimes without a fence up), with no garden, no fruit-trees, "no nothing"—waiting for some one to come along and buy out his "claim" and let him move on to repeat the operation somewhere else—this is enough to give a cheerful man the horrors. Ask the squatter what he means, and he can give you a hundred good excuses for his miserable condition: he has no breaking-team; he has little or no good rail-timber; he has had the "shakes"; his family have been sick; he lost two years and some stock by the border-ruffians, etc., etc. . . .

And it is sad to note that hardly half the settlers make any sort of provision for wintering their cattle, even by cutting a stack of prairie-hay, when every good day’s work will put up a ton of it. If he has a corn-field, the squatter’s cattle are welcome to pick at that all winter; if he has none, they must go into the bottoms and browse through as best they can. Hence his calves are miserable affairs; his cows unfit to make butter from till the best of the season is over; his oxen, should he have a pair, must be recruiting from their winter’s famine just when he most urgently needs their work. And this exposing cattle all winter to these fierce prairie-winds, is alike inhuman and wasteful. I asked a settler the other day how he could do it? "I had no time to make a shelter for them." "But had you no Sundays?—did you not have these at your disposal?" "O, yes? I don’t work Sundays." "Well, you should have worked every one of them, rather than let your cattle shiver in the cold blasts all winter—it would have been a work of humanity and mercy to cut and haul logs, get up a cattle-stall, and cover it with prairie-hay, which I will warrant to be more religious than anything you did on those Sundays."

61. An Overland Journey, pp. 58, 73; Daily Tribune, June 7, 11, 1859.
Greeley thought that the "poor pioneer" should work for the first four or five years every hour that he did not absolutely need for rest. 62

In his third letter to the Tribune, Greeley wrote:

The twin curses of Kansas, now that the border-ruffians have stopped ravaging her, are land-speculation (whereof the manufacture of paper-cities and bogus corner-lots, though more amusingly absurd, is not half so mischievous as the grasping of whole townships by means of fraudulent pre-emptions and other devices familiar to the craft) and one-horse politicians. 63

Of the land speculators Greeley declared:

As to the infernal spirit of land speculation and monopoly, I think no state ever suffered from it more severely than this. The speculators in broadcloth are not one whit more rapacious or pernicious than the speculators in rags, while the latter are forty times the more numerous. Land speculation here is about the only business in which a man can embark with no other capital than an easy conscience. For example: I rode up the bluffs back of Atchison, and out three or four miles on the high rolling prairie, so as to have some fifteen to twenty square miles in view at one glance. On all this inviting area, there were perhaps half a dozen poor or middling habitations, while not one acre in each hundred was fenced or broken. My friend informed me that every rood I saw was "preempted," and held at thirty up to a hundred dollars or more per acre. "Preempted!" I exclaimed; "how preempted? by living or lying?" "Well," he responded, "they live a little and lie a little." I could see abundant evidence of the lying, none at all of the living. 64

Greeley considered that many of the "one-horse politicians" were driven into the free-state movement by the enormity of the border-ruffian outrages, by their own terror or indignation, and by the overwhelming force of public sentiment; but, being essentially demagogues, they gravitate irresistibly toward the sham-democracy, in whose embraces the whole tribe will bring up, sooner or later.

The controlling idea of the one-horse politicians is that the Republicans must not let their adversaries have a chance to raise the cry of "nigger" against them—that hence they must be as harsh, and cruel, and tyrannical, toward the unfortunate blacks as possible, in order to prove themselves "the white man's party," or else all the mean, low, ignorant, drunken, brutish whites will go against them from horror of "negro equality." To which I reply that this sort of cattle are against the Republicans any how, and never can be permanently otherwise. They may be driven by circumstances to vote once or twice with us, but the virus of sham-democracy is in their blood, and must come out. That democracy, from long practice and an experience that it pays, can dive deeper, stay under longer, and come up master, in this business of negro-hating, than any other party that ever was or ever can be invented. There is nothing that more strikingly exposes the

63. An Overland Journey, pp. 56; Daily Tribune, June 9, 1859.
64. An Overland Journey, pp. 68, 69; Daily Tribune, June 9, 1859.
radical baseness of slaveholding than the fact that its votaries so hate those they have long injured, that, beaten in their desperate struggle to force negroes into Kansas as slaves, they now turn a short corner and insist that, if they cannot come in as slaves, they shall be shut out, and even driven out, altogether.

I apprehend that it will be necessary for the Republicans of Kansas, in view of the inveterate western prejudices of a large portion of her population, to concede, for the present, that the right of suffrage shall be exercised only by white males, or men of European lineage, excluding, on account of their imperfect moral and intellectual developments, Indians, negroes, and their descendants. Further than this, I would not go, no matter how great the inducement. Leave the Democrats alone in their glory, when they come to propose and support—as they are certain to do—propositions that negroes shall be expelled and excluded from Kansas—shall be precluded from testifying against a white man—shall be debarred from attending schools frequented by white children, etc. etc.

Summing up, Greeley concluded: "Adieu to friendly greetings and speaking! Adieu for a time to pen and paper! Adieu to bedrooms and wash-bowls! Adieu (let me hope) to cold rains and flooded rivers! Hurrah for Pike's Peak!"

In a briefer way Greeley recorded his impressions of Kansas in a letter to Charles A. Dana to whom he wrote on May 20, 1859: "Rain—mud most profound—flooded rivers and streams—glorious soil—worthless politicians."

The stage started from Junction City at six a.m. on May 28. A few miles carried them beyond any road but that traced in the spring for the Pike's Peak express, and for ten miles all signs of habitation had disappeared with the exception of one wretched cabin and an acre or two of broken ground. At Chapman's creek they passed the last settler on the road, a farmer who had been there two or three years and had seventy-five acres fenced and broken, "grew three thousand bushels of corn last year," had a fine stock of horses and cattle about him, "with at least eight tow-headed children under ten years old." Greeley thought his house would be dear at fifty dollars but that he neither needed nor wished to be pitied.

At Station 8 on Chapman creek, a distance of twenty-three miles from Junction City, they halted to change mules and to dine. In the absence of a house, two tents and a brush arbor furnished accommodations for from six to fifteen persons. There were a score of mules picketed about on the grass, and a rail pen for two cows.

65. An Overland Journey, pp. 36-38; Daily Tribune, June 2, 1859.
67. Frank Holt and W. E. Counsel, The Overland Stage to California, p. 68.
68. An Overland Journey, pp. 78-79; Daily Tribune, June 11, 1859.
The station keeper, his wife and two small girls lived here. They had an excellent dinner of bacon, greens, good bread, apple-sauce and pie upon a snowy tablecloth. Little time was lost for refreshments and the express was soon on the road again. While the trail was less cut up than in the east, the hills were steep since there were no bridges and causeways over the water-courses. That afternoon the travelers saw their first antelope, several of them being within rifle shot of the stage. They crossed many old buffalo trails but saw no buffalo that day. Greeley noticed that the limestone had changed to sandstone and that the soil was thinner and the grass less luxuriant, and the furious rains running off without any obstruction had washed "wide and devious water-courses."

At Station 9 on Pipe creek the express stopped for the night. Here their hostess had two small tents, as at the previous station, which she informed her guests were of little protection in a drenching rain, and that she and her two children might as well be on the prairie. A log house, however, was in the process of construction. After eating a "capital supper" the two newspaper men sat in the coach writing letters by lantern light to their respective newspapers. The vehicle was shaking with the strong wind and it is possible that the Tribune printers found Greeley's letter less legible than usual. This was his sixth "Overland Journey" letter to the Tribune. He wrote:

I believe I have now descended the ladder of artificial life nearly to its lowest round. If the Cheyennes—thirty of whom stopped the last express down on the route we must traverse, and tried to beg or steal from it—shall see fit to capture and strip us, we shall probably have further experience in the same line; but for the present the progress I have made during the last fortnight toward the primitive simplicity of human existence may be roughly noted thus:

May 12th.—Chicago.—Chocolate and morning newspapers last seen on the breakfast table.

23rd.—Leavenworth.—Room-bells and baths make their final appearance.
24th.—Topeka.—Beef-steak and wash-bowls (other than tin) last visible. Barber ditto.
25th.—Manhattan.—Potatoes and eggs last recognized among the blessings that "brighten as they take their flight," chairs ditto.
26th.—Junction City.—Last visitation of a boot-black, with dissolving views of a board bedroom. Beds bid us good-by.
28th.—Pipe Creek.—Benches for seats at meals have disappeared, giving place to bags and boxes. We (two passengers of a scribbling turn) write our letters in the express-wagon that has borne us by day, and must supply us

69. Pipe Creek station was in the southeastern part of present Ottawa county.
lodgings for the night. Thunder and lightning from both south and west
gave strong promise of a shower before morning. Dubious looks at several
holes in the canvas covering of the wagon. Our trust, under Providence, is
in buoyant hearts and an India-rubber blanket. Good night.70

The violent rain and wind storm came that night as anticipated
but neither tents nor wagons were upset. The travelers rose early,
breakfasted at six, and said goodbye to Pipe creek with its fringe of
low elms and cottonwoods. Greeley considered the soil good in
this section of the state but not equal to that of the eastern part.
Their route kept on the ridges away from the bottoms and marshes,
but occasionally in crossing streams with steep banks and miry
beds they would become stalled and an extra span of mules from
the other express wagon (the express wagons were always sent in
pairs) would help pull them out. At Station 1071 they dined, the
meal being served on a box, and the guests sitting on pieces of wood,
carpet-sacks, or nail kegs.72

On May 29 Greeley saw his first herd of buffalo. He was thrilled
at the sight, describing it as follows:

On rising our first ridge this morning, a herd of buffalo was seen grazing
on the prairie some three miles, toward the Solomon; soon, more were visible;
then others. At length, a herd of perhaps a hundred appeared on the north—
the only one we saw on that side of our road during the day. Having been
observed, they were heading down the valley of a small creek toward the
Solomon. Just then, the tents and wagons of a body of encamped Pike’s
Peakers appeared right across a little creek; two men were running across the
prairie on foot to get a shot at the buffalo; another was mounting a horse
with like intent. The herd passed on a long, awkward gallop north of the
tents and struck southwest across our road some forty rods ahead of us. A
Sharps’ rifle was leveled and fired at them by one of our party, but seemed
rather to hasten than arrest their progress. But one old bull shambled along
behind in a knock-kneed fashion (having probably been lamed by some
former party); and he was fired at twice by our marksmen as he attempted
to cross the road—once when only fifteen rods distant. They thought they
wounded him fatally, but he vanished from our sight behind a low hill, and
their hasty search for him proved unsuccessful.

Thence nearly all day, the buffalo in greater or less numbers were visible
among the bottoms of the Solomon on our right—usually two to three miles
distant. At length, about 5 p.m., we reached the crest of a “divide,” whence
we looked down on the valley of a creek running to the Solomon some three
miles distant, and saw the whole region from half a mile to three miles
south of our road, and for an extent of at least four miles east and west,
fairly alive with buffalo. There certainly were not less than ten thousand

70. An Overland Journey, pp. 75-79; Daily Tribune, June 11, 1859; Richardson, op. cit.,

71. Station 10 was in the southwest part of present Cloud county.

72. A. D. Richardson, op. cit., p. 165.
of them; I believe there were many more. Some were feeding, others lying down, others pawing up the earth, rolling on it, etc. The novel spectacle was too tempting for our sportsmen. The wagons were stopped, and two men walked quietly toward the center of the front of the herd. Favored by a water-course, they crept up to within fifty rods of the buffalo, and fired eight or ten shots into the herd, with no visible effect. The animals nearest the hunters retreated as they advanced, but the great body of the herd was no more disturbed or conscious of danger than if a couple of mosquitos had alighted among them. After an hour of this fruitless effort, the hunters gave it up, alleging that their rifle was so foul and badly sighted as to be worthless. They rejoined us, and we came away, leaving nine-tenths of the vast herd exactly where we found them. And there they doubtless are sleeping at this moment, about three miles from us.\(^{73}\)

Greeley considered that they were in the heart of the buffalo region. Occupants of the stage they met coming from the west in the evening reported they had seen millions within the last two days. A company of Pike's Peakers had killed thirteen, and at the next station west eight were killed by simply stampeding a herd and driving them over a high creek-bank, where they broke their necks. “Buffalo-meat is hanging or lying all around us,” wrote Greeley, “and a calf two or three months old is tied to a stake just beside our wagons.” They passed parties of Pike's Peak emigrants who had lost three oxen in a stampede of buffalos, and the mules at the express stations had to be watched carefully to prevent a similar catastrophe.

Although their road had only been established about two months they passed two graves that day, one the grave of an infant and the other that of a Missourian who had started to Pike's Peak. They also met many returning from the gold region who gave most discouraging reports as to the richness of the mines.\(^{74}\)

At Reisinger's creek, Station 13,\(^{75}\) the express spent the night of May 30. In the morning while the wheels of the wagon were being greased, Greeley began his eighth letter, writing in the station-tent, with buffalo visible on the ridges south and in every direction but north of him. He insisted on writing once more about the animals and promised to drop the subject as he expected to be out of their range by night:

All day yesterday they darkened the earth around us, often seeming to be drawn up like an army in battle array on the ridges and adown their slopes a mile or so south of us—often on the north as well. They are rather shy of little screens of straggling timber on the creek-bottoms—doubtless

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73. An Overland Journey, pp. 81-83; Daily Tribune, June 14, 1859.
75. Station 13 was in the southeastern part of present Phillips county.
from their sore experience of Indians lurking therein to discharge arrows at
them as they went down to drink. If they feed in the grass of the narrow
valleys and ravines, they are careful to have a part of the herd on the ridges
which overlook them, and with them the surrounding country for miles.
And, when an alarm is given, they all rush furiously off in the direction
which the leaders presume that of safety.

This is what gives us such excellent opportunities for regarding them to
the best advantage. They are moving northward, and are still mainly
south of our track. Whenever alarmed, they set off on their awkward but
effective canter to the great herds still south, or to haunts with which they
are comparatively familiar, and wherein they have hitherto found safety.
This necessarily sends those north of us across our roads often but a few
rods in front of us, even when they had started a mile away. Then a herd
will commence running across a hundred rods ahead of us, and, the whole
blindly following their leader, we will be close upon them before the last
will have cleared the track.

What strikes the stranger with most amazement is their immense numbers.
I know a million is a great many, but I am confident we saw that number
yesterday. Certainly, all we saw could not have stood on ten square miles
of ground. Often, the country for miles on either hand seemed quite black
with them. The soil is rich, and well matted with their favorite grass. Yet
it is all (except a very little on the creek-bottoms, near to timber) eaten
down like an overtaxed sheep-pasture in a dry August. Consider that we
have traversed more than one hundred miles in width since we first struck
them, and that for most of this distance the buffalo have been constantly
in sight, and that they continue for some twenty-five miles further on—this
being the breadth of their present range, which has a length of perhaps a
thousand miles—and you have some approach to an idea of their countless
myriads. It is hard to realize that this is the center of a region of
wilderness and solitude, so far as the labors of civilized man are concerned—
that the first wagon passed through it some two months ago. But the utter
absence of houses or buildings of any kind, and our unbridged, unworked road,
winding on its way for hundreds of miles without a track other than of
buffalo intersecting or leading away from it on either hand, bring us back
to the reality.

A great many shots have been fired—certainly not by me; even were I
in the habit of making war on nature's children, I would as soon think of
shooting my neighbor's oxen as these great, clumsy, harmless, creatures. If
they were scarce, I might comprehend the idea of hunting them for sport;
here, they are so abundant that you might as well hunt your neighbor's
goose.

A party of our drivers, who went back seven miles on mules last evening,
to help get our rear wagon out of a gully in which it had mired and stuck
fast, from which expedition they returned at midnight, report that they found
the road absolutely dangerous from the crowds of buffalo feeding on either
side, and running across it—that, the night being quite dark, they were
often in great danger of being run over and run down by the headlong brutes.
They were obliged to stand still for minutes, and fire their revolvers right
and left, to save their lives and their mules.
Two nights ago, an immense herd came down upon a party of Pike's Peakers camped just across the creek from this station, and, (it being dark) were with difficulty prevented from trampling down tents, cattle, and people. Some fifty shots were fired into them before they could be turned. And now our station-master has just taken his gun to scare them off so as to save our mules from stampede.

But the teams have returned with the missing coach, and I must break off and pack to go on.\textsuperscript{76}

Fifty-five miles farther on when they stopped for the night of May 31 at Station 15 on Prairie Dog creek,\textsuperscript{77} Greeley finished “Overland Journey” letter eight. This station was kept by an ex-Cincinnati lawyer and his wife who was formerly an actress at the Bowery theater. She was now cooking and working for stage passengers “on the great desert” several hundred miles beyond civilization.\textsuperscript{78} Greeley thought this station was just half way between Leavenworth and Denver, and he reported the coach had been a week making the journey. For the last twenty-five miles of the day’s travel he had not seen a buffalo, but as the buffalo grass had not been eaten down and there were indications that this was a favorite feeding ground for them, he concluded they had not yet reached this region in their search for forage.

Other animals with whom Greeley had formed a “passing acquaintance” were the prairie wolf which he described as a “sneaking, cowardly little wretch,” whose only feat entitling him to rank as beast of prey consisted in digging out a prairie-dog and making a meal of it when he was pressed by hunger. However, the gray wolf he described as a scoundrel of “much more imposing caliber.” This “prairie-lawyer” lurks around the outskirts of a herd of buffalo, waiting for an unlucky calf strayed beyond the exterior line of defense formed by the bulls, or if he is extra hungry he will attempt to cut a cow off from the herd, drive her away until she is beyond hope of rescue, when her doom is sealed. His greatest hope, however, is to find a buffalo, wounded by some hunter, that cannot keep up with the herd. A few snaps at his hamstrings, taking care to avoid his horns, “insures that the victim will have ceased to be a buffalo, and become mere wolf-meat before another morning.”\textsuperscript{79} The prairie dog he considered a funny little fellow, frisky and a source of merriment to others. But he thought the

\textsuperscript{76} An Overland Journey, pp. 88-91; Daily Tribune, June 18, 1859.

\textsuperscript{77} Prairie Dog creek is a branch of the Republican river, flowing northeast through Decatur, Norton and Phillips counties. Station 16 was in the west central part of present Norton county.

\textsuperscript{78} Richardson, op. cit., p. 171.

\textsuperscript{79} An Overland Journey, pp. 91-93; Daily Tribune, June 18, 1859.
only animal on the plain that could justly boast of either grace or beauty was the antelope. He was also fond of antelope flesh which he described as tender and delicate and the choicest meat he had found in Kansas. Antelope were the chief sustenance of the Indians out of the buffalo range.80

At Station 16,81 kept by a Vermont boy, the express stopped on June 1 to change teams and dine. Here the travelers encountered the wild plains Indians. A band of Arapahoes was encamped near the station. Most of the men were away on a marauding expedition against the Pawnees while the remainder, with the women and children, were left in the lodges. Some thirty or forty children were playing on the grass. These children Greeley described as thorough savages with an “allowance of clothing averaging six inches square of buffalo skin to each, but so unequally distributed that the majority had a most scanty allowance.”82 After seeing several bands of Indians, he thought the Arapahoes were the most numerous and the most repulsive.

Just before reaching Station 17 where they were to spend the night an accident caused Greeley slight injuries. As he related it, he and his fellow passenger were having a jocular discussion on the gullies into which the coach so frequently plunged, to their personal discomfort.

[Richardson] premised that it was a consolation that the sides of these gullies could not be worse than perpendicular; to which I rejoined with the assertion that they could be and were—for instance, where a gully, in addition to its perpendicular descent had an inclination of forty-five degrees or so to one side of the track. Just then, a violent lurch of the wagon to one side, then to the other, in descending one of these jolts, enforced my position. Two minutes later, as we were about to descend the steep bank of the creek-intervale, the mules acting perversely (being frightened, I fear, by Indians) my friend stepped out to take them by the head, leaving me alone in the wagon. Immediately we began to descend the steep pitch, the driver pulling up with all his might, when the left rein of the leaders broke, and the team was in a moment sheared out of the road and ran diagonally down the pitch. In a second, the wagon went over, hitting the ground a most unpleasant blow. I of course went over with it, and when I rose to my feet as soon as possible, considerably bewildered and disheveled, the mules had been disengaged by the upset and were making good time across the prairie, while the driver, considerably hurt, was getting out from under the carriage to limp after them. I had a slight cut on my left cheek and a deep gouge from the sharp corner of a seat in my left leg below the knee, with a pretty smart con-

80. An Overland Journey, pp. 94, 102; Daily Tribune, June 18 and 20, 1859.
81. Station 16 was in the north central part of present Decatur county.
82. An Overland Journey, p. 104; Daily Tribune, June 29, 1859. See, also, Richardson, op. cit., p. 172.
cussion generally, but not a bone started nor a tendon strained, and I walked away to the station as firmly as ever, leaving the superintendent and my fellow-passenger to pick up the pieces and guard the baggage from the Indians who instantly swarmed about the wreck.83

The woman at the station dressed Greeley’s wounds and aside from being sore and lame for a few days he was uninjured. This was the first accident that had happened to the express line and was the result of a casualty for which neither driver nor company was to blame.84

Station 17 was just over the line in present Nebraska and from here the route ran slightly northwest to the Republican river. It returned to Kansas farther on and cut diagonally across present Cheyenne county and entered present Colorado.

At Station 1885 Greeley began his ninth letter on June 2 entitling it “The American Desert.” He described the winds that swept the prairie region as terrible. Throughout their morning ride they had not seen a tree and but one bunch of shrubs until they came in sight of the Republican river. He thought he had reached the “acme of barrenness and desolation.” There was little grass; the soil was thin, and the sand along the water courses seemed to be “as pure as Sahara can boast.” The dearth of water was fearful. Although the whole region was deeply seamed and gullied by water-courses, then dry, but in rainy weather mille-streams, there were no springs bursting forth from their steep sides. He continued:

We have not passed a drop of living water in all our morning’s ride, and but a few pailsfuls of muddy moisture at the bottoms of a very few of the fast-drying sloughs or sunken holes in the beds of dried-up creeks. Yet there has been mud rain here this season, some of it not long ago. But this is a region of sterility and thirst.

Even the animals have deserted us. No buffalo have been seen this year within many miles of us, . . . not a gray-wolf has honored us with his company to-day—he prefers to live where there is something to eat—the prairie-dog also wisely shuns this land of starvation; no animal but the gopher . . . abounds here; and he burrows deep in the sand and picks up a living, I cannot guess how.86

At Station 19,87 the last station on the route in present Kansas, the express stopped for the night of June 2. A large Cheyenne

84. Richardson, op. cit., p. 173.
85. Station 18 was on the south fork of the Republican river near present Benkelman, Nebr. Here the route turned sharply to the southwest and again entered Kansas.
87. Station 19 was situated near the south fork of the Republican river possibly a short distance east of the present Colorado line and in the southwestern part of present Cheyenne county.
village was near by. The party had also met bands of Kiowas, Arapahoes and Sioux. The Cheyennes appeared better clothed than the Arapahoes and seemed to have more self-respect, but Greeley considered them all low in the scale of intellectual and moral beings.

The next day, June 3, the party entered present Colorado and on June 6, they rode into Denver. Barely thirteen days before Greeley had left Leavenworth in high spirits and he "dropped into Denver" that morning, as he said, "in a sobered and thoughtful frame of mind, in dust-begrimed and tattered habiliments, with a patch on his cheek, a bandage on his leg, and a limp in his gait, altogether constituting a spectacle most rueful to behold." 88 He spent fifteen days in the Denver region and then set out for the Pacific coast, and from there returned to New York by way of the Isthmus.

In October, 1870, Greeley, on another visit to Kansas, lectured at Lawrence and Topeka. Two years later he was candidate for President of the United States on the Liberal Republican ticket. He died on November 29, 1872, less than a month after the death of his wife and only a few weeks after U. S. Grant defeated him in the November elections.

88. An Overland Journey, pp. 104-114; Daily Tribune, June 20 and July 9, 1869.