Pike’s Peak Express Companies

PART I—SOLOMON AND REPUBLICAN ROUTE

GEORGE A. ROOT and RUSSELL K. HICKMAN

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John Beck, a member of the original Cherokee party of 1849-1850,
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by William Green Russell.3 In this venture were included Cherokee
Indians from the West, a smaller group of experienced prospectors
from Georgia, several parties from Missouri, and a group from Law-
rence, who had set out by themselves to investigate the rumor of
gold in the Pike’s Peak region.4 After a considerable amount of un-
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don their search and left for home, with the exception of a small
group under Russell who in July found gold in paying quantities on
Cherry creek, a branch of the South Platte.5 Early in September the
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1. Leroy R. Hafen, “Cherokee Goldseekers in Colorado, 1849-50,” The Colorado Maga-
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member of the Delaware tribe of Indians, acted as a guide of Col. E. V. Sumner’s expedition
against the Arapahoe Indians, and discovered gold on the eastern slope of the Rockies. The
sample of this precious metal, which he brought back to Lawrence, is credited with being a
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6. Leroy R. Hafen, Colorado, The Story of a Western Commonwealth (Denver, 1933),
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diggings and brought back a bag of the ore to Kansas City. He reported that seven of his party "had made over $1,000 in ten days," and that at the places visited by Russell's party "the dirt would yield from seventeen to twenty cents to each pan; and he thinks that if properly worked, one man can make from $20 to $25 per day. The mines will average with those of California, in which Mr. Cantrell is experienced, having spent several years in them." 7 This account had a wide circulation in Kansas and Missouri. Other parties returned to Lawrence and Leavenworth with stories that spread like wild-fire, and soon a Pike's Peak gold fever gripped the border country. 8 A Leavenworth paper reported:

The gold fever has risen in our city to the highest degree of temperature, and in less than thirty days from this date, there will not be less than two hundred persons leave this city for the diggings. Old fogies may attempt to throw cold water on the progressive spirit of Young America, but it will do no good, the boys will go and there's an end on't. . . . We have as much confidence in this "gold news" as we have that we are living. . . . 9

In the fall of 1858 numerous reports of the discovery of gold seemed to fully substantiate the view that a new El Dorado had really been found. 10 The St. Louis (Mo.) Republican conceded the truth of the reports, and believed that "thousands of adventurers from the western states" would soon leave for the West, and by the following spring "the rush will be immense from all parts of the Union." 11 The fall migration was well under way before the original party of prospectors had all arrived at their homes for the winter (after leaving a few on the ground to guard their discoveries). The Leavenworth Times remarked: "Not a day passes but what a company may be seen starting from our city for Pike's Peak," and

7. Kansas City (Mo.) Journal of Commerce, clipped in the Herald of Freedom, Lawrence, September 4, 1858. The Herald added that Cantrell brought with him three ounces of gold, which he himself dug.

8. E. Y. King returned to Leavenworth with samples of gold he obtained at the diggings worth 521 per ounce (Leavenworth Ledger, clipped in Herald of Freedom, September 18, 1858). Robert B. Willis, express messenger between Kansas City and Topeka, gave a most encouraging report of the Lawrence party, alleging that the miners could make from eight to ten dollars a day, with pans and rough washers (Kansas City Journal of Commerce, September 11, clipped in the Herald of Freedom, September 18, 1858). The Journal printed a review of the discovery in a detailed article some weeks later.

9. Kansas Daily Ledger of Leavenworth, clipped in the Herald of Freedom, September 25, 1858. "Gentlemen of character and standing, whom we know, have been there and have exhibited to our citizens specimens of the gold. . . . All agree (except a few old fogies in our own midst), that we have a new El Dorado within our grasp. . . . Lieut. [G. K.] Warren of the U. S. Topographical Engineers in his report speaks in the most flattering terms." 10 Some of the reports were greatly exaggerated as to the amount of gold actually found, but these accounts usually bore the outward stamp of truth. Prior to the discovery of the Gregory lode in May, 1859, the "float gold" was usually meager in amount.

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The first company arrived at the gold fields late in October, 1858, and found the remaining members of the Russell and Lawrence parties hard at work erecting cabins.\textsuperscript{13} Despite the lateness of the season, train after train continued to wend its way westward,\textsuperscript{14} even though Captain Russell advised against foolish venturing at that time of year by persons inadequately prepared, and pointed out to those planning to go in the spring that many probably would not realize three dollars a day, instead of the ten or fifteen dollars they hoped to obtain.\textsuperscript{15}

The settlers on Cherry creek founded Auraria, and somewhat later Denver (named for Gov. James W. Denver of Kansas) grew up nearby under the leadership of William Larimer, a very able town promoter.\textsuperscript{16} During the winter of 1858-1859 the settlers built cabins and made ready for a busy and successful season during the following summer. All expected a great migration in the spring of 1859. With the opening of the new year the papers on the border ran special gold mine editions\textsuperscript{17} while practically every issue contained numerous articles describing the gold fields, quoting letters of travelers and prospectors, and the advertisements of merchants. Pike's Peak seemed destined to rival California as a goal of migration and settlement. The spirit of the new hegira was aptly phrased by an anonymous writer in the \textit{Kansas Tribune}, Topeka, January 20, 1859:

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\textsuperscript{14} Palmetto Kansas, in the \textit{Herald of Freedom}, November 6, 1858. "With only a knife and tin pan, men are easily earning from $10 to $15 per day. We predict such a rush to these diggings this winter and next spring as California, Australia or any other country never witnessed." A letter of Wm. B. Sneedley, dated Richmond, Mo., October 10, 1858, by a member of the Missouri company, maintained that only a little fine gold had been found, and that the whole thing would turn out to be a humbug.— Junction (City) Sentinel, in the \textit{Herald of Freedom}, November 10, 1858.

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\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Herald of Freedom}, January 1, 1859; \textit{Kansas Tribune}, Topeka, January 6, 1859. The Leavenworth \textit{Weekly Kansas Herald} described the cost of an "Outfit for the Mines" (issue of January 8), and listed three yoke of oxen, a wagon, and supplies and equipment for mining that would cost $114.25. The Leavenworth merchants were prepared to outfit over 30,000 persons with cattle, horses and mules—"Any number," since "we have the famous Platte county, Mo., market opposite." For a detailed statement of a proper outfit for the mines, see the article from the St. Joseph (Mo.) Gazette, re-published in the \textit{New York Daily Tribune}, March 21, 1859, entitled "To and From the Gold Mines," in "Bypaths of Kansas History; The Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. XII, pp. 319, 320."
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A CALL TO THE MINES

By Floy

Hurra for Pike’s Peak! Hurra for Pike’s Peak!
A rich El Dorado has lately been found,
Far, far to the Westward, and near Cherry Creek;
Where gold in abundance is scattered around.
Ah! hurra for Pike’s Peak!

Hurra for Pike’s Peak! Hurra for Pike’s Peak!
There’s gold in the Mount’n, there’s gold in the vale,
There’s plenty for all who are willing to seek—
Believe me; believe me—’tis no idle tale.
Come, hurra for Pike’s Peak! 18

With the prospect of a huge migration to the West, the “jumping off” places on the border began to vie with one another for a share of the business. Kansas City, Leavenworth, Atchison, Westport and St. Joseph each argued its superiority as the best place to outfit emigrants, and each maintained that it was the terminal of the best route across the plains. 19 In this rivalry for the overland trade Kansas City and Leavenworth were pronounced leaders, both being favorably situated with reference to travel up the Missouri river, while Kansas City was especially well located as a gateway to the Southwest via the Santa Fe trail. Fort Leavenworth had long been the chief military depot for supplies bound for the West and the eastern terminus of the Fort Leavenworth military road (also known as the California trail or the Salt Lake road). As a very convenient entrepot of settlers to Kansas, and of emigrants to California and Salt Lake, the town of Leavenworth grew rapidly during the 1850’s and the freighting business increased by leaps and bounds. 20 In 1855

18. Compare the following salute from the initial number of the Rocky Mountain News, Cherry Creek, K. T., April 23, 1859:
“Hurrah for the land where the moor and the mountain
Are sparkling with treasures no language hath told,
Where the wave of the river and the spray of the fountain
Are bright with the glitter of genuine gold.”

19. Samuel C. Pomeroy wrote to Thaddeus Hyatt of New York, January 17, 1859 (MSS. division, Kansas State Historical Society), inquiring as to whether Hyatt still owned the steamer Lightfoot, a small vessel built for the Kansas river trade. Pomeroy believed that the Hannibal and St. Joseph and the North Missouri railroads would soon be finished, giving through connections with St. Louis, which would carry the bulk of the traffic from that gateway to St. Joseph and Atchison. The Hoakaday and Co. stage line to Cherry Creek would make it possible to sell through tickets from the Atlantic coast to the mines. (The Lightfoot, which made regular trips up the Kansas river in 1857, did not return to that locality in 1859, the Silver Lake, Col. Gus Lamb, Coloma, and Star of the West serving in its stead.—Albert R. Greene, “The Kansas River—Its Navigation,” in Kansas Historical Collections, v. IX, pp. 385, 383-385.)

20. George A. Root, “Fort Leavenworth Military Road,” supplement to the Horton Headlight, October 29, 1856. Alexander Caldwell, an early-day freighthouse of Leavenworth, wrote (Kansas Historical Collections, v. III, pp. 451-458): “The amount of supplies required annually for the military alone amounted to from thirty-five to fifty million pounds.” This required 10,000 wagons, 12,000 men, and 129,000 head of stock, representing an investment of over $5,000,000. “These prairie schooners, if placed end to end in one continuous line in the ordinary way of freighting, would have formed a column more than 1,000 miles long.”
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20. George A. Root, “Ft. Leavenworth Military Road,” supplement to the Horton Headlight, October 29, 1836. Alexander Caldwell, an early-day freighter of Leavenworth, wrote (Kansas Historical Collections, v. III, pp. 451-458): “The amount of supplies required annually for the military alone amounted to from thirty-five to fifty million pounds.” This required 10,000 wagons, 12,000 men, and 120,000 head of stock, representing an investment of over $5,000,000. “These prairie schooners, if placed end to end in one continuous line in the ordinary way of freighting, would have formed a column more than 1,000 miles long.”
PIKE’S PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES

William H. Russell and Alexander Majors, who had been in the freighting business, formed a partnership and established headquarters at Leavenworth City from whence they transported supplies to Forts Laramie and Kearny. Their business enormously expanded during the Mormon troubles of 1857-1858, when they held the contract to supply the federal army in Utah. In 1858, if not earlier, William B. Waddell, a Missouri financier, joined the firm, and Russell, Majors, and Waddell became known as the largest freight contractors for the government in the West. 21 On his trip to the new gold fields of western Kansas (Colorado) in 1859 Horace Greeley described in flowery language the tremendous business of this organization, with its “acres of wagons . . . pyramids of extra axletrees . . . herds of oxen . . . [and] regiments of drivers and other employees.” 22

During the winter of 1859-1860 plans were formulated for the establishment of one of the most noted transportation companies ever to serve the Rocky Mountains. William H. Russell and John S. Jones of the freighting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell were the moving spirits in the founding of the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express Company. One of the best accounts of this historic event appeared in the Missouri Republican of St. Louis, 23 dated Leavenworth City, March 23, 1859:

... A number of leading representatives of the business community of this city, concluded in the early part of February last, 24 to associate themselves for the purpose of creating a company for the transportation of passengers and freight to the mining districts with the greatest possible safety and dispatch. In due course of time the organization of a company . . . was effected and completed by the subscription and cash payment of stock to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars, and the election of Mr. Wm. H. Russell, the famous

21. J. V. Frederick, Ben Holladay, The Stagecoach King (Glendale, Cal., 1940), pp. 37-39; H. Miles Moore, Early History of Leavenworth City and County (Leavenworth, 1906), pp. 128, 129; Col. Prantise Ingraham (editor), Seventy Years on the Frontier, Alexander Majors’ Memoirs of a Lifetime on the Border (Chicago and New York, 1893), pp. 140-143. It is possible that Waddell, even previous to 1858, was a silent partner of the firm, and contributed a considerable part of the necessary capital. This view is mentioned in an article by Paul I. Wellman, in the Kansas City (Mo.) Star, November 22, 1942, entitled: “The Silent Partner Who Made History and Lost Fortunes on the Great Plains.” Matters of a financial nature will be treated in more detail in the final installment of this article.


24. The authors know of no charter issued to the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express, which apparently operated on the basis of a private agreement. Its successor, the Central Overland California & Pike’s Peak Express Company, was chartered by the Kansas Territorial Legislature (1860). There were a number of smaller organizations that denominated themselves Pike’s Peak express companies—one was incorporated by the legislature of Kansas territory in 1859, and another, which was much advertised, was owned by William Smith of Independence, Mo. Hockaday, Burr & Co., contractors for the Salt Lake mail, announced they would run a regular line of coaches from St. Joseph and Atchison. All of these were of far less importance than the Leavenworth & Pike’s Peak Express.
government freighter as president, and of Mr. John S. Jones, of Pettis county, Missouri, the pioneer government contractor of the west, as superintendent. To the latter gentleman the company, knowing that his ability and experience would be more than equal to the management of . . . so large an enterprise . . . , very wisely delegated discretionary powers. The capital of the company is represented by 40 shares of $5,000 each, the whole of which is now held by ten individuals. It can be increased as the wants of the company demand it. The company adopted the name of "Leavenworth City and Pike's Peak Exportation [Express] Company." . . .

At about this time Russell and Jones appear to have spent some time in New York City and the East in order to interest New York capitalists in the venture, and to obtain the supplies needed by the new company. Beginning in the issue of February 8, 1859, the New York Daily Tribune carried the announcements of the new firm, the following appearing on the front page:

PIKE'S PEAK GOLD MINES

The subscribers propose to transport any given number of pounds from Leavenworth City, or other points on the Missouri that may be agreed upon, to the Gold Mines of Pike's Peak, Cherry Creek and the Platte, during the months of April and May, with dispatch, on favorable terms. [Names and addresses of references follow, concluding with J. B. Simpson of Nos. 5 and 7 Nassau St., who was also their general agent, and could give full particulars.]

Early application will meet with favor.

Signed
Russell, Majors & Waddell
Leavenworth City, K. T.
Jan. 28, 1859.

Among the classified advertisements of the Tribune at this time appeared the following announcement:

FREIGHTING TO PIKE'S PEAK

TRANSPORTATION OF BAGGAGE, PROVISIONS AND MERCHANDISE

The undersigned, having made arrangements for transporting Freight for emigrants to Pike's Peak, will send out during the season 50 trains of 26 wagons each, from Westport, Mo., and from Atchison, K. T.

The first trains will leave the above points in April, and regularly thereafter.

This will afford an opportunity to merchants and emigrants of having their provisions, merchandise and other freight transported for a stated price per 100 pounds, and at prices much less than private terms, can be had. I will also

25. This correspondent added that the first passenger line would be supplied with at least fifty of the celebrated Concord coaches, and eight hundred mules. From the start, the managers promised a transit in less than twelve days, and later in less than eight days.

26. The Pike's Peak guidebook by James Redpath and Richard J. Hinton, entitled Handbook to Kansas Territory and the Rocky Mountains Gold Region (N. Y., J. H. Colton, 1858) remarked (p. 149): "A company is also organized composed chiefly of New York capitalists, with $200,000 capital, of which Wm. H. Russell, of Leavenworth, is President, and J. S. Jones, of Missouri, is Superintendent. They will run a daily line of Concord coaches, and a daily line of express wagons, from Leavenworth City to Cherry Creek."
carry passengers at a stated price, furnishing board and transporting their baggage. . . . 27

In commenting on these advertisements the New York Tribune remarked:

This promises to be an extensive business in a few months. Merchandise, provisions, saw and shingle mills, with all kinds of machinery, will have to be forwarded hundreds of miles by ox team. . . . We take pleasure in calling attention to the advertisement . . . of John J[J]S. Jones, who . . . has had ten years' experience of this nature on the plains; was a large sub-contractor of Russell, Majors & Waddell; is full of energy, and of such reputed integrity that we feel safe in saying he will give satisfaction to those who contract with him . . . ." 28

Despite these "promotional boosts" of a friendly nature, 29 the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Company from the start included elements of uncertainty in its make-up, which made its future problematical. At the time of its foundation it was objected to by Alexander Majors, of the firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell. He stated that "it would be impossible to make such a venture, at such an early period of development of this country, a paying institution, and urgently advised them [W. H. Russell and John S. Jones] to let the enterprise alone. . . . They, however, paid no attention to my protest, and . . . bought 1,000 fine Kentucky mules and a sufficient number of Concord coaches to supply a daily coach each way between the Missouri River and Denver . . . on credit, giving their notes, payable in ninety days. . . ." 30 At this early date Majors refrained from cooperating in a project that appeared so doubtful, leaving his more venturesome colleagues to proceed on their own responsibility. The new company appears to have been launched

27. The advertisement further noted that Messrs. Samuel & Allen were authorized to contract for transportation of men, merchandise, and persons. They would receive freight at St. Louis, while the undersigned (John S. Jones) would do the same at Westport, Mo., and Atchison, K. T. Jones would give full particulars, if addressed at Longwood, Pettis Co., Mo., or at Atchison, K. T. [List of references follows.]

28. Issue of February 8, 1859. The Tribune of February 24 published a new announcement of the company, stating that their stages would connect with the Eastern lines at St. Louis and Leavenworth, and the first coaches would leave the latter city on April 10. They planned to start two daily passenger coaches, in addition to those needed for express. "To obtain preference of seats, those holding tickets will be required to register at the Company's office in Leavenworth. . . ."

"We do not guarantee an arrival in any given number of days, but feel every confidence that the trip from Leavenworth City to our Depot in the mines of Denver City or its vicinity, will be made inside of twelve days, and after the road is well established, hope to make the trip inside of ten days."

29. The wide circulation of the New York Tribune, which was extensively copied by other papers, furnished a great initial impetus to the company. Thus the National Era (Washington, D. C.) of February 10 repeated the notice in the Tribune, and remarked that 'some of the leading capitalists in the country' were in the new organization.

30. Ingram, Seventy Years on the Frontier—Alexander Majors' Memoirs of a Lifetime on the Border, p. 164. Although Majors did not consent to the coach line, he seems at least to have agreed to the extension of freighting business, to be carried on by the firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell.
on borrowed capital, and for a continued existence needed a large income, which under the circumstances was fraught with uncertainty.\(^{31}\)

The Leavenworth papers were quick to publish accounts of the new company. The *Daily Times* of February 18 copied a dispatch from the Washington (D. C.) *Union*, and remarked that the new organization would begin operations in the near future. “The business in store for it would be of immense dimensions, but the energy and enterprise of those having it in charge is a sure guarantee of its triumphant success.” Its wagons and teams would land passengers and freight at the mines a week ahead of all competitors.\(^{32}\) The Leavenworth *Herald* of March 12, 1859, featured a letter of W. H. Russell announcing the new express and coach line—beginning April 10, 1859—as “a daily line of Passenger and Express Coaches, making the trip to Denver City . . . inside of twelve days,” also “any given number of Emigrant and Transportation trains, commencing on the first day of April.” This was followed by a detailed statement of the terms upon which the new organization would transact business, signed by Russell, Majors & Waddell, and a shorter announcement of the new coach line, signed by Jones & Russell.\(^{33}\)

From the start, it appears that the older firm intended to carry on all matters of a freighting nature, as an extension of its overland business. Two weeks later the Leavenworth *Herald* published the first comprehensive description of the new undertaking (March 26, 1859):

**The Great Express Line**

John S. Jones, W. H. Russell & Co. have established an Express and Transportation line from this place to the gold mines. Mr. Jones is now here, and has his office in the Planter’s House, and is actively and energetically engaged in outfitting his companies, hiring his hands, and putting the line into complete and successful operation. He is preeminently qualified for the position he occupies as general superintendent of the whole business. He is a practical man, of great energy and indomitable perseverance. There was a general rush of men at his office on Monday last, from early dawn till night. He hired on that day about 100 hands as drivers of teams.

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31. *Ibid.*, p. 165; *Ben Holladay, The Stagecoach King*, pp. 39, 41. Holladay bought equipment for the freighting firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, and also for the new stagecoach line. From the start, it is probable that the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express Company was heavily in debt to him, making Holladay virtually a silent partner. The interlocking nature of the freighting firm and the stage coach company obliged the former to take over the Pike’s Peak Express, when financial troubles of the stage line threatened W. H. Russell, a member of both firms.

32. *Missouri Republican*, St. Louis, February 26, 1859 (quoted in Hafen, *Colorado Gold Rush*, loc. cit., pp. 272, 273), carried an advertisement of John S. Jones, stating he would run fifty trains from Westport and Atchison, for the transportation of freight, and would also carry passengers. This clearly refers to the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express Company, about to be launched.

33. The latter advertisement noted that a through ticket would entitle the holder to passage to St. Louis by emigrant cars, from thence to Leavenworth as deck passengers on first-class steamboats, and from Leavenworth for provisions only. (Boston—$100, New York—$98, Chicago—$89, St. Louis—$85.) This advertisement was misleading, as it was the clearly expressed intention of the Company to transport its passengers by coach to the mines (the announcement by Russell in the adjacent column so states).
He sent out an exploring party, about two weeks ago, of nine [seven] men, under charge of Col. Preston and Mr. Smith. They go to Fort Riley, and from thence will look out a route proceeding as near as practicable due west from Leavenworth, between the Republican and Smoky Hill Forks. They will proceed a part of the way up Solomon's Fork, which stream forms a junction with the Smoky Hill Fork. These men will all proceed to a point about half way between Fort Riley and Denver City; a part will then turn back to Fort Riley, where they will meet the first trains and conduct them on to the half-way point. A part of the company of explorers keep on to Denver City, establishing the route, and return to the half-way point and conduct on the first trains through to the gold mines. In this way the route is laid down, and the road made so that those who follow will have no difficulty in knowing the road.

On the route 27 stations will be established, at 25 miles apart, with six men at each station—four drivers and two to remain permanently at the station. Five wagons will be started soon, and kept on the route, hauling forage for the stock, and 25 ox wagons will start, as soon as grass will admit, with provisions for the stations. These supplies will be kept up during the whole year. Drivers are hired for 12 months, and are bound to remain. Half of their wages are reserved at each payment, which is forfeited if the driver leaves before his time expires. Each driver is responsible for losses occurring from his willful negligence.

Everything is arranged like clock work. It is a giant undertaking, and requires a perfect system, which Mr. Jones has maturely considered. Tents will be furnished at each station for the summer, and for winter good adobe and log houses will be erected.

Passengers going this route may rest assured that everything will be provided for giving them a speedy and comfortable passage across the plains to the gold mines. The known reliability and responsibility of Messrs. Jones, Russell & Co. is a sure guaranty that they will perform what they undertake.

They have completed arrangements with the most reliable express companies in the United States to convey all express goods and packages from St. Louis or this place to the gold region.

This is one of the best companies in the Union, and can be implicitly relied on. We commend it to the patronage of the public.

Before plans had been completed for locating the route of the proposed line, considerable discussion of the subject took place. Each of the major “jumping off” places on the border had its favorite route across the plains, and now praised its advantages, with a weather eye out for the business which would follow in the wake of a great migration to Pike's Peak. Kansas City naturally looked with favor upon the Santa Fe road, which had long been used through this gateway. 34 For those who expected to take the overland trail

34. See the guidebook of Gunnison and Gilpin, entitled: Guide to the Kansas Gold Mines at Pike's Peak, Describing the Routes, Camping Places, Tools, Outfits, etc., From Notes of Capt. J. W. Gunnison [actual author unknown]. . . . (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1859), reviewed by Hafen, Pike's Peak Guidebooks, loc. cit., v. IX, p. 242. This work recommends the Platte river road only for those who come from Nebraska, Iowa, and the country above. “To all east of the Mississippi, and for a hundred miles west of it, the best route by far is the great Santa Fe road, and thence following the Arkansas to Bent's Fort and the mines.”
across Iowa and Nebraska, the most convenient route usually led through Omaha and on to the Platte river—the "northern route." Intermediate points on the border, such as Atchison, St. Joseph, and Leavenworth might make use of a number of off-shoots leading to these major routes, but came to advocate a new or central road to the mines, which would attain a notable saving in distance traversed.\(^{85}\) Early in January, 1859, the Leavenworth Herald pointed out that that city enjoyed "the only direct route to the gold mines, wherein a road can be established with wood and water, throughout the whole distance. The valley of the Smoky Hill Fork affords these facilities. It heads within thirty miles of Pike's Peak, and flows nearly due East, to its confluence with the Kansas river, & the line produced would touch our city. . . . This gives our route an advantage of 120 miles over all others."\(^{36}\)

The Leavenworth Times remarked:

Choose your point of outfit and departure and then stick to it. Don't let the representations of interested parties influence you. . . . If you prefer or think it best to go by the Northern route, why go that way. . . . Or if by Kansas City and the Southern Route, why, bend your steps thitherward. Only remember that the united testimony of the most of those who are disinterested and who for years have traveled more or less all these routes, is strongly and unmistakably in favor of the road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley, and thence by one or two or three roads, as seems most practicable."\(^{37}\)

When other places decried the advantages of Leavenworth, that town replied that "it has been demonstrated a thousand times that the route to the gold mines from our city is the shortest, best supplied with wood, water and grass, and most agreeable to travel. The road is direct and even, camping grounds are scattered at intervals of from five to twenty miles. The streams are all bridged, and supplies at hand."\(^{38}\)

By early March, 1859, the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express

\(^{85}\) The principal routes followed, in addition to the Santa Fe and Platte, were the Arkansas (a variation of the Santa Fe), the Smoky Hill, the route of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express by way of the Solomon and the forks of the Republican rivers, and the parallel road which ran west from Atchison, somewhat north of the express route, which it joined in present Jewell county.

\(^{36}\) *Weekly Kansas Herald*, January 8, 1859.

\(^{37}\) Issue of February 4, 1859. Each route had its champion, the great majority of whom were far from being "disinterested." No doubt one of the "central" routes—between the Santa Fe and the Platte, was considerably shorter in distance, but other factors, such as water, fuel, etc., were not to be lost sight of. The above writer argued further for Leavenworth, as the "largest, most flourishing, and the best provided city in the Territory"—the best place to obtain an entire outfit, at a moderate price.

\(^{38}\) *Leavenworth Daily Times*, February 11, 1859. O. B. Gunn's *New Map and Handbook of Kansas & the Gold Mines* (Pittsburgh, 1859) asserted (p. 40) that the Smoky Hill route was "entirely feasible," with ample supplies of timber, water and grass, almost the entire distance. "In directness, it is *The* route beyond a cavil, as it will be 160 miles shorter than either of the present routes, and so centrally located, that all prominent points in Kansas are about equally accessible to it. The Pike's Peak guidebook of L. J. Eastin (editor Leavenworth Herald) agreed with this viewpoint, but both of these guidebooks "had an axe to grind."
Company had made arrangements for the survey of a route to the mines, to be directed by Col. William J. Preston. On the 15th of the month a party left Leavenworth with this object in view, which included C. F. Smith, Richard and William Eubank, and E. Downing. A traveler on the plains wrote:

I was fortunate in meeting the party sent out by Messrs. Russell & Co., as I understand, to test the practicability of a wagon road on the table lands between the Smoky Hill and Solomon rivers, on the South, and the Republican, on the North, to the Gold Mines. This party headed by Col. Preston, consists of seven practical, trustworthy men, whose report will be anxiously looked for, as it can be fully relied upon as being correct.39

In its issue of April 30, 1859, the Leavenworth Times announced it wished to present important information dealing with the new route and published the following account of two members of the survey party, Eubank40 and Downing:

Thursday afternoon Messrs. Eubank and Downing, two experienced mountain men and old Californians, returned from the reconnoissance, upon which they with others, had been dispatched by Messrs. Jones & Russell, of the Overland Express. Their statements are clear and explicit and must effectually put an end to all outside cavilling, as to the wisdom and foresight of the company in adopting a route which they pronounce unequalled for the requirements of travel, and of which the maximum distance is not to exceed five hundred miles from Leavenworth to Denver City.

The locating party left this city on the 15th of March, were several days in Denver City, were obliged to halt at least three days to refresh their animals, and at no time travelled after dark, and yet they have performed the round trip in forty-four days, taking into account all detention which they met with, and the time necessarily consumed in the performance of their duties. They left Denver City on the 9th of April, and were thus only nineteen days on the return journey, two and a half days being lost by necessary stoppages on the road to recruit their animals. Here is their description of the

Route

After leaving Junction City, our party struck out on the divide between the Republican and Solomon's Forks, bearing mostly towards the latter stream; thence the route passes over to the tributaries of the Republican Fork, up that stream until the divide between the Arkansas and South Platte is reached, through extensive pineries, thence to the head waters of Cherry Creek and along

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39. F. Patterson to L. J. Eastin, dated Ogden, K. T., March 26, 1859, in the Leavenworth Herald, April 9, 1859. Patterson remarked that "C. F. Smith, esq., the Col's [Preston] principal assistant, is a scientific engineer, and will be of great service to him in the discharge of his important trust."

U. S. Deputy Marshal William J. Preston was commissioned by Governor Shannon a lieutenant colonel in the southern division of the Kansas militia. He played an active part in the troubles of 1856, among his "missions" being that of arresting James H. Holmes and certain disturbers of the peace on the Missouri border, and with Col. P. St. George Cooke of taking into custody a large force under Col. S. W. Eldridge, who entered Kansas from the north in the fall of 1856. It was widely rumored that he was too cowardly to arrest John Brown, but there is no substantial basis for this story.—Kansas Historical Collections, v. III, pp. 216, 306, 314; v. V, pp. 817, 640, 652; James C. Malin, John Brown and the Legend of Fifty Six (Philadelphia, 1949), pp. 691, 661.

40. Probably William Eubank. Richard Eubank went on to the mines, and returned to Leavenworth May 20, 1859.
that stream to Denver City. On this route, there is no poisonous or alkaline water, nor sage brush, two peculiarities and disadvantages of the Santa Fe route, there is no sand except in one body of forty miles in extent, and this is along the Republican, with plenty of water, timber and grass close at hand. They further say that the region over which they have just travelled, is the best grass country in the West, that there is an abundance of water and timber for emigrants, and that in these essential respects, it is far superior to the Platte Route.

The Company have in all, twenty-seven stations, seventeen of which were erected and in full operation when this party returned, and the rest were going up and are undoubtedly ere this completed. They passed the stages which left Leavenworth on the 18th, near the head waters of Solomon's Fork, and are fully convinced, according to the progress which the coaches had made, that they reached Denver City on the 28th inst [they actually arrived May 7, 1859]. . . . The road from Junction City is far better than that from this city to Fort Riley. It is smoother in surface and there are no streams of any magnitude to pass, nor in fact any that may not be readily forded at all times. The Government had located the site for a substantial bridge over the Blue, where there is now an excellent ferry; in short there have been no representations made of the route, which are not more than sustained by the statements of these gentlemen.

A week later the same paper published a much more detailed account of this journey of exploration—the journal of C. F. Smith, which gave a general picture of the overland route to Denver, before the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Company had actually established a "right of way." The following journal is a verbatim copy of this narrative, as it appeared in the Times, May 7, 1859:

**Journal of C. F. Smith**

On the 15th of March, 1859, we left Leavenworth, bound for Denver City—our party numbering seven; Col. William Preston having charge of directing the route. Day fine and a bright sky; we took the Fort Riley route; having started late we made but thirteen miles, and camped at Easton for the night; party in good spirits, and all well.

**March 16th.**—A mild and pleasant day; struck camp early and made forty-two miles—traveling through a rather hilly country, but a good road all the way; at night we camped at Indianola, a town situated on the boundary of the Pottawatomie Reserve.

**March 17th.**—Day broke upon us rather unpropitious; about 9 o'clock, A.M., a fine drizzling rain began to fall, which soon turned into sleet, accompanied with snow, making our day's travel very disagreeable; passed through St. Mary's Mission, and camped on Vermillion Creek, the western boundary of the [Pottawatomie] Indian Reserve; the road through the Reserve lies along the Kaw river bottom; is remarkably level and is a good road; made thirty-three miles to-day.

**March 18th.**—Rose early; a bright day. The road to-day was more elevated and dry, well watered, and wood in abundance. We made Ogden early, and camped. Made 40 miles to-day.
MARCH 19th.—Day pleasant; started rather late; arrived at Fort Riley, and from thence we crossed the Republican river, and wended our way towards Junction City. This city, situated at the junction of the Smoky Hill and the Republican, may be considered the starting point towards the mines. We spent some few hours here, making changes in our packing wagons, &c.; took dinner—our last in the settlements—and bidding our friends “good-by,” we struck a due west course for the Peak. Camped on Chapman’s creek for the night. Day’s travel, about 28 miles.

MARCH 20th.—A bright day; struck camp early. Our journey to-day has been over an undulating country, well watered, but rather scarce of timber, but still sufficient to supply the wants of the emigrants. Made about 30 miles to-day, and camped on the head waters of a creek called by the buffalo hunters, “Hard Crossing.”

MARCH 21st.—A mild and pleasant day; country very level, well watered and timbered. Crossed Pipe creek about noon, and bore a little northwest, aiming to strike the Solomon river about 60 miles above its junction with Smoky Hill. Day’s travel, about 30 miles. Camped for the night on a creek emptying into the Solomon.

MARCH 22d.—A fine day; moved camp early; country well watered and timbered; surface gently rolling; made about 25 miles, and camped near the Solomon river; saw a few buffalo and antelope during the day.

MARCH 23d.—A pleasant day, but rather cool; course of the route along the north side of the Solomon river, keeping it 4 or 5 miles to our left; country same description as yesterday, well watered and timbered, affording a good natural road. Day’s travel, about 25 miles. Camped for the night on a creek and near the river.

MARCH 24th.—Day mild and pleasant; still keeping the same course; country of the same description as yesterday; saw a few straggling buffalo, and numerous herds of antelope; day’s travel about 25 miles; camped on the Solomon river; the party rather disappointed in our distance traveled during the last few days, and as we experience delay in crossing the numerous creeks with the wagons, unanimously decided to pack through to the Peak on the wagon mules.

MARCH 25th.—A bright day; rose early, and went to making pack saddles for our mules; did not complete our arrangements until about noon; got breakfast, and taking a final farewell of our wagon, started en route again for the Peak; came to the conclusion before night that packing was far preferable to hauling a wagon; country to-day slightly rolling, well watered and timbered; day’s travel, about 25 miles.

MARCH 26th.—A pleasant day; party all well and in good spirits; same course we have been following all along, keeping north side of Solomon river; country well watered and timbered; made about 30 miles, and camped on Solomon river.

MARCH 27th.—Bright and clear day; concluded it would be best to send two of our party back to pilot the “express trains” out to this point. Mr. Cranmer and Alonzo were the ones to return; having packed up and bid “good-by,”

41. Apparently some eight miles north and a little east of present Minneapolis. The mileage figures given in this journal cannot be relied on to serve as a basis for locating places of encampment, since Smith often seems to overstate the actual number of miles.
the balance of us, Cal [Col.] Preston, Messrs. R. and M. [W.] Ebanks, Dowry [Downing?] and myself, started to explore the remainder of the route; day's travel about 30 miles; camped on the river. Towards night the sky became overcast, threatening to snow.

March 28th.—Snow fell last night to the depth of about six inches; day looking unpropitious for traveling, but "pack up" is the word, and in ten minutes we are en route again. Having traveled up the Solomon about 15 miles, we conclude to bear northwest, and strike the Prairie Dog Creek, which after a few hours' ride we made. Prairie Dog Creek empties into the Republican, is well wooded, and contains excellent water; pitched camp for the night; made about 25 miles; retarded somewhat on account of the snow. During the day saw signs of the Indians for the first time.

March 29th.—Cold and disagreeable day; traveled until 3 o'clock p.m.; got supper, and then resumed our journey until late at night; camped in a ravine, without wood or water; day's travel about 30 miles; country rolling, well watered and timbered, affording an excellent road.

March 30th.—Struck camp early—and after traveling four or five miles, camped on a creek and got breakfast; cooked fast, ate fast, and on our route again; course northwest, bearing towards the Republican; crossed Tappa [Sappa] creek and struck the Republican about 12 o'clock. The country up to this point from Fort Riley is well watered and timbered, and gives an excellent road. The land is good for farming purposes, and offers every inducement for the emigrant to settle. Today a body of the Cheyenne Indians met us at the Ari Kari Fork of the Republican, or as some call it, the "White Man's Fork." Twenty-three of their warriors crossed the river and came over to us. They proved to be quite friendly, and gave us a good deal of information concerning the route. Camped on the Republican; day's travel about 35 miles.

March 31st.—A cold and cloudy day; struck camp early and traveled fast along the south side of the Republican. The route along the Republican is not quite as good as that previously traveled. The bottom along the river is quite sandy, but on the ridge, a distance of from a mile to two miles from the river, a good road can be made. Wood is rather scarce, but an occasional clump of cottonwood trees is to be met with along the river. Day's travel about 25 miles. Camped on the Republican, without wood, and went to sleep supperless.

April 1st.—Bright day; made about 10 miles and camped for breakfast; traveling all day along south side of the Republican; towards night struck a grove of willows and camped; day's travel about 25 miles.

April 2nd.—Snow fell last night, completely covering us, as we slept on the ground without tent or covering, save our blankets. An early start and a brisk ride brought us to a clump of willows; here we unpacked and cooked breakfast; that over, in a few minutes we were ready for our day's journey. The river began to grow less in its width, and the volume of water not larger than a small

42. Prairie Dog creek roughly parallels the North Fork of the Solomon, in northwestern Kansas.
43. Smith's use of the term "Sappa creek" is confusing, because today's stream of that name is much further removed from the Republican. It is probable that the various branches of Sappa creek of pioneer days included what is now called Beaver creek, which is considerably closer to the Republican.
44. The Arickaree Fork of the Republican joins the main stream near present Benkelman, Neb.
creek. Towards night headed the river and camped; 45 day's travel about 25 miles; the road about the same all along the river; wood scarce, but plenty of water.

April 3rd.—Cold, windy and disagreeable day; packed up and struck a due west course for Beaver creek, which creek empties into the South Platte; traveled all day without anything to satisfy our hunger (which I may say is rather ravenous on the prairies,) and camped at night in a deep ravine; the road good, but no timber or water; snow on the ground about 3 inches deep; day's travel about 35 miles.

April 4th.—Cold and windy, very disagreeable; made about 10 miles and camped, determined to get something to eat if possible; collected weeds, and while one would feed the fire, another would hold the coffee-pot over the blaze to boil; after an hour's labor, managed to get a cup of coffee and a show for bread. Packed up and traveled all the rest of the day; towards night, struck a clump of willows and camped, went to sleep supperless; mules beginning to look badly; day's travel 25 miles; road good, but no wood or water.

April 5th.—Struck camp late, detained by cooking breakfast; day promises to be fair, but cool; traveled until 3 o'clock, when we struck Bijou creek; camped and got supper; our last two days' travel have been over a barren and sandy country, good for a road in itself, but not timber or water sufficient; camped a few miles beyond Beaver creek, 46 on one of its branches; obtained first view of the Rocky Mountains to-day; day's travel about 30 miles.

April 6th.—Rose early, bright day, packed up and started; party in hopes of striking Kiowa creek soon; about 1 o'clock saw timber in the distance and headed for it; arrived at Kiowa about 3 o'clock, P. M., camped for supper, and after eating a hearty meal, resumed our journey; course during the day northwest; traveled until late at night, and camped near a creek among some willows; during the day the mountains have been visible for a distance of 50 miles on either side of us, Long's Peak lying directly in front of us, and Pike's Peak more to the southward; day's travel about 30 miles.

April 7th.—Rose early, and were astonished to find ourselves in close proximity to an old adobe fort, or something of the sort; immediately despatched three of our party to ascertain if it was inhabited, and to acquire all the information they could as to our whereabouts; they soon returned with the welcome news that we were on the South Platte, 47 and but 20 miles from Denver City; packed up immediately; traveled along the South Platte on a well beaten road, and arrived in Denver City about 10 o'clock, P. M., upon entering the town we were met by Gen. Larimer, who kindly proffered his services in procuring us a resting place; after some little delay we managed to procure a house, or rather cabin, of which we took immediate possession; the rest of the day was passed in hearing Pike's Peak news from the inhabitants, and giving an account of our journey in return.

April 8th.—Remained at Denver City inquiring the news all the day, and trying to ascertain what amount of gold the claims produced. The pleasure of

45. The South Fork of the Republican rises near the present Lincoln-Kit Carson county line, in Colorado.
46. This probably should read Bijou creek, which was crossed in present Elbert county, Colorado.
47. Probably Cherry creek, a tributary of the South Platte river.
our stay was marred by the law being enforced upon a man who was found guilty (and acknowledged his guilt) of murdering his brother-in-law. Spent a pleasant day, listening to all the reports given us by the inhabitants concerning the mines. Denver has about 250 cabins in it; is well situated, at the junction of Cherry Creek and the South Platte. Auraria, on the opposite side of the creek, contains some 100 cabins. The population of both places was estimated at about 500 inhabitants. The population of all the towns, and including the persons in the mines, is estimated at about 2,000.

April 9th.—To-day is set apart for our homeward journey; we take a different route from Denver, until we strike the Republican, the outward route proving impracticable from the head of the Republican to Denver City; 48 rather late in getting off; at last we bid “good bye” and start, taking a course up Cherry Creek, on a hard beaten road, and very level, which we follow for twenty miles, leaving Rupelville [Russellville] to our right about six or eight miles; from thence we strike off nearly due East, through what are called the “Pineries”; made about twenty-five miles, and camped on Rogers’ claim; an excellent route to this point from Denver, good road, and well watered; wood abundant.

April 10th.—A bright day; racked [packed] up, got breakfast and struck a due East course for Kiowa creek; arrived and forded Kiowa about noon, and made Bijou Creek, upon which we camped for the night; a good high and dry road; well watered and timbered at regular intervals; day’s travel about thirty miles.

April 11th.—A cold and windy day; got breakfast, packed up and started; course during the day due East; crossed Beaver creek about 2 o’clock p.m.; got supper, and renewed our journey towards Republican river; a mule gave out in the evening, and, finding it impossible to get it along, we were reluctantly obliged to leave it; camped for the night in a deep ravine, with some little wood and water; the route to-day has been on a high divide; is well watered, and wood is abundant; day’s travel about twenty-five miles.

April 12th.—Cold and rainy day; struck the Cherokee trail about 10 o’clock, a.m., and camped; after breakfast packed up and started again; crossed the Cherokee trail, and bore due East, for the head of the Republican; during the evening snow fell, which made it very disagreeable for both men and mules; towards night struck head of Republican, on which we camped; day’s travel about twenty-five miles; the road from Denver City to this point is a remarkably good one; wood and water is abundant all along the route, and the soil hard and firm.

April 13th.—Rose rather later than usual; got breakfast, and started down the Republican; a cloudy day, and cold; struck an Indian trail, fresh and indicating very recent travel, of perhaps but a few hours; this trail follows the course of the river for the distance of about twenty-five miles; at about the distance of fifteen miles from the head of the Republican the water disappears in the sand which forms the bed of the river, and does not show itself again for some twelve miles; this is the longest stretch on the route without wood or water; the road is located on the ridge, and proves to be good; towards night, struck into the hills and camped, day’s travel about twenty-five miles.

48. This leg of the return journey was by a route somewhat further north.
APRIL 14TH.—A cold but bright day; rose early, got breakfast and started; a few minutes' ride brought us to the point we left on our outward trip, supposing it, at the time, to be the head of the river; 49 it may be necessary here to mention that the road adopted by the Express Company, from this point to Denver City, is the one we traveled on our return; the first route having proved impracticable on account of the scarcity of wood and water; struck our old trail, and followed it during the day, until we crossed the South Fork of the Republican; from thence, in order to explore a Northern route—which, should it prove practicable, would shorten the distance considerable—we bore due East, and traveled until late; another mule gave out to-day, but we managed to get it along until we camped; a violent hail storm struck us whilst on a high divide; we were obliged to stand it all, and finally, striking a deep ravine, camped for the night; road excellent, but a scarcity of wood and water; our mules hold out better than we expected, but look badly.

APRIL 15TH.—A clear day, but windy and cold; struck camp early, and traveled until 10 o'clock, when we stopped to get breakfast; wood there was none, but by substituting the Cache du Vache for it, succeeded in getting a breakfast. Resumed our travel after packing up; route on a high divide, lying between the South Fork of the Solomon and the Republican. 50 It does not answer for a route to be traveled, owing to the total absence of water; occasionally water is found in a buffalo roll; day's travel, 25 miles; camped in a ravine for the night.

APRIL 16TH.—Struck camp early; course all day due East; about 10 o'clock struck several deep ravines, which we supposed to be the head waters of Prairie Day [Dog] Creek; stopped for an hour to graze our mules, then followed down the ravine in search of water; traveled the remainder of the day, but did not succeed in finding any; camped in ravine for the night; party pronounce this route impracticable; day's travel 25 miles.

APRIL 17TH.—Rose early; bright day; packed up and started, expecting to strike the head of the Solomon by night; course northeast; traveled all day without a halt; struck a creek about 3 o'clock P.M.; creek well timbered, but perfectly dry; not finding water, kept on our course, traveling east; towards night struck a large ravine, bearing east; followed it down about 12 miles, and finding water, camped; made about 30 miles.

APRIL 18TH.—Struck camp early, got breakfast, and followed down ravine; after a ride of a few hours found water in a buffalo roll; gathered chips and got breakfast; resumed travel after breakfast; course due east; traveled all day and at night struck South Fork of the Solomon and camped; day's travel, about 25 miles.

APRIL 19TH.—A pleasant day; made about 10 miles and camped for breakfast; course along north side of river; mule gave out and obliged to leave it; resumed journey after breakfast; camped about 4 o'clock, P.M. for supper; after supper traveled till late and camped for the night on the Solomon; day's travel about 20 miles; mules completely fagged out, cannot go out of a walk.

49. In view of the many "dry" streams and seasonal washes of Colorado, it is very difficult to locate any route in this region that is described in terms of the prevailing water courses.—See Margaret Long, "The Route of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express," The Colorado Magazine, v. XII, No. 5 (September, 1935), pp. 186-194.

50. The location of this divide is questionable. It probably lies between the North Fork of the Smoky Hill, and several tributaries of the Republican, in present Sherman county.
April 20th.—A bright day; made 7 or 8 miles and stopped for breakfast; during the day kept along the river, obliged to do so on account of the grass being better for our mules; provisions getting short, and on an allowance of one meal a day; coffee and sugar gone entirely; day’s travel 20 miles; camped on river for the night.

April 21st.—Owing to a storm accompanied with lightning, turned into sleet and snow before morning, spent a disagreeable night; day cold and snowy; moved camp a quarter of a mile down the river, built a fire in a large pile of drift wood and laid up for the day; mules gone under entirely; employed during the day drying blankets, &c.

April 22nd.—Bright and pleasant day; camped about 10 o’clock for breakfast; resumed travel, and towards night crossed the South Fork of the Solomon at its junction with the North Fork; camped for the night; day’s travel about 20 miles.

April 23rd.—Bright and clear day; immediately struck across the country in order to ascertain if Mr. Williams had passed with the trains; found the trail about 6 miles from the river; at this point Col. Preston and Mr. Ewbank left us to overtake Mr. Williams, in order to pilot him through to the Peak; the rest of us returning to Leavenworth, camped at station No. 10 for the night; our homeward journey has been slow, owing to the condition of our mules; our trip throughout has been one to which we were necessarily exposed to great varieties of weather and encountered many hardships; but, with the exception of Col. Preston, who had the chills, not one of the party experienced a day of sickness.

William J. Preston, who was in charge of the survey, made a brief report in which he endorsed the journal of C. F. Smith as “substantially correct.”

Myself and party left here, in accordance with your instructions, on the 15th of March, selecting a route between the waters of Solomon Fork and the Republican. Striking up the Republican, we followed that stream to its head waters, and took a course 20° N. of W., passing Beaver Lake, the forks of the Kiowa and Cherry Creek: the last names[d] being tributaries of the South Platte. [Comments on Denver and the mines follow.] . . .

I will only add, that the country through which it passed is beautifully diversified with streams and gentle undulations; the soil is highly fertile, and well adapted for agricultural purposes; the face of the country lying along the whole route, and its characteristics, differ very little from the Western prairie country generally. The lands about Denver and Auraria will teem with busy tillers of the soil by thousands and tens of thousands. . . .

51. About a mile from present Cawker City.
52. Near present Glasco, Cloud county.
53. This report to John S. Jones, general superintendent of the express company, is dated Leavenworth, May 11, 1859, and is in the Leavenworth Weekly Times of May 14. Preston sent his journal of the trip to B. D. Williams, but so far as is known, it was not published.
54. At the close of this “meager report,” Preston thanked C. F. Smith, William and Richard Ewbank and E. Downing for their prompt discharge of duty and “valuable assistance” which had been rendered “throughout the entire survey.” The glowing conclusion smacks of the typical boomer account.
A few weeks later E. D. Boyd published a reply to these comments of Preston, in a description of "The Great Central Route to the Gold Mines of Western Kansas—Notes of Travel." The Atchison and Cherry Creek Bridge and Ferry Company (F. G. Adams, president) wished to establish a direct route from Atchison to the mines, and with this in view, laid out the "Parallel Road" to the west, closely following the first standard parallel across Kansas (approximately latitude 39° 40' north). The road extended 172 miles across the state, from Atchison to a point on Limestone Creek, Jewell county, where it joined the Pike's Peak express road at Station No. 11.  

Boyd acted as civil engineer of the company, and did the actual surveying under the personal supervision of Judge F. G. Adams. Henry Kuhn, later of Leavenworth and Marion, was an active promoter of the Atchison road, and accompanied Judge Adams to the junction with the express road on the Limestone. East of the junction point the road was "carefully selected," and ferries were promised across the Blue at the mouth of Elm Creek, and across the Republican at a point some miles north of the standard parallel. In this section of the route the characteristics of the country remained much the same, there being "no interval of ten miles . . . without wood, and water is still more frequent. The soil is rich, and grass luxuriant till we cross the Republican, where it becomes short though still thick and nutritious."  

This route was 65 miles shorter than that of the express company from Leavenworth, "and the road will be much better as it avoids most of the streams falling into the Kansas river this side of Fort Riley."

West of the point of intersection the road followed the route of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak express. Late in May, 1859, E. D. Boyd wrote to F. G. Adams, giving a description of the new "right of way," which appeared in the Freedom's Champion of Atchison. A week later his detailed field notes of the survey were published in the same paper. The first part of the letter of May 31, 1859, giving

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55. Starting from Atchison the road ran west to the Grasshopper at Muscotah, and then to America City. It passed along the parallel to Clear Creek (a branch of the Red Vermillion), thence bore to the northwest, and crossed the Black Vermillion near Barrett's mills, and the Big Blue at the mouth of Elm Creek, near Blue Rapids. It then passed Marble Falls, the Big and Little Blue rivers, and followed a divide between the Little Blue and the branches of the Republican. After crossing that stream near present Norway, Republic county, it ran west to Station 11, on Limestone Creek, Jewell county, near the site of the present village of Ionin.—F. A. Root and W. B. Connelley, Overland Stage, p. 502; introduction to "The Great Central Route to the Gold Mines of Western Kansas—Notes of Travel," by E. D. Boyd. Freedom's Champion, Atchison, June 25, 1859. (These travel notes are published entire in 'Appendix A' of Overland Routes to the Goldfields, 1859, cited above. Henceforth they are referred to as "Boyd's Notes.")

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid. of June 18, 1859.
Boyd's description of the "Great Central Route to the Gold Mines," follows:

Denver City, May 31, 1859

F. G. Adams, Esq.—Dear Sir:—

We arrived here yesterday afternoon.

I wrote you on the 6th inst., by Colonel Preston. I had been but one day on the road after you left, and the information I was able to give you was but limited; as far as it was from my own observation it was correct. But that which I obtained from Col. P. was entirely erroneous. He must have strangely misunderstood me, or I him.58 From that camp (49 miles from our ferry over the Republican) our course was nearly due west for 73 miles, at which distance we crossed the "divide" between Solomon's Fork and Republican Fork, latitude 39° 48'; longitude 99° 47'.59 Thence our course was North of West till we reached station 18 on the Republican, 221 miles from Republican ferry—latitude 40° 8'; longitude 101° 17'.60 From 100 miles to the last named point I found by the map that the road followed Fremont's trail of 1843.61 Thence the road runs in a southwest direction, parallel with the Republican to 366 miles, in latitude 39° 8'; longitude 103° 27', eight miles east of station 24.62 Thence northeast [northwest] to this place [Denver], latitude 39° 49', longitude 105° 7', leaving the Republican at 391 miles, crossing the "divide" between it and the waters of the Platte at 396 miles, and the first creek 63 running into the Platte at 401 miles. The distance to this place from our ferry on the Republican is 469 miles, making the total distance from Atchison not more than 620 miles,64 while the distance from Leavenworth by the Express Route is 685 miles.

The above will furnish you with an idea of the general character of the route. I send you a list of the distances, omitting the courses, as they will be shown on the map which I shall send you as soon as I can prepare it.

Very poor judgment has been displayed, in my opinion, in the location of the stage road.65 As I said in my last, a much better road could have been made nearer the top of the divide, between [the] Solomon and [the] Republican; I mean to where we cross it. Up to that point it is a constant succes-

58. Boyd apparently refers to a more detailed statement of Preston than the brief missive quoted above, probably based on the journal Preston sent to B. D. Williams of the express company.

59. A few miles southeast of the site of present Norton. Boyd's mileage figures closely approach the actual distance.

60. Near Benkelman, Neb. The authors believe the latter figure should read 101° 27'. Boyd's field notes of his survey, to be incorporated in the second installment of this article, quote the longitude a mile distant as 101° 27', which would place Station 18 very close to Benkelman, Neb. However, his longitude reading nine miles farther southwest is exactly the same, pointing to at least two errors in these computations.

61. See map accompanying the Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-44, by Brev. Capt. J. C. Fremont, published in Sec. Doc. 174, 28 Cong., 2 Sess. This map bears out the observation of Boyd. Further east, Fremont's route was closer to the Republican, than to the express route, which closely followed the Solomon river.

62. Probably a few miles east of Hugo, Lincoln county, Colo.

63. Apparently East Bijou creek, southeast of Denver, in Elbert county, Colorado.

64. Such seemingly exact mileages are to be treated "with a grain of salt," because of the usual inexact methods of estimating distances used at that time, but Boyd's computations are far more exact than those of most writers.

65. See Boyd's letter of July 20, 1859, quoted later, in which he refers to the abandonment of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak express route in favor of the road by way of the Platte.
tion of ascents and descents and is very crooked. No time was taken to examine routes, and consequently the best has not been selected. Even the general route where it already is, can be improved somewhat, and shortened perhaps fifty miles between station 11 and this point. The road appears to follow a temporary wagon trail; does not go out of the way to avoid bridges, but does to find less precipitous banks. The bridges are like the one you saw at Station 11. The drivers are making small “cut offs” as they become acquainted with the roads.

Col. Preston could not tell the latitude of any point on the road; did not know the magnetic variation, and said the road did not touch Nebraska. The men employed at Station 18 and 19 supposed that they were in Arapahoe county, Kansas, till I told them differently.

On March 28 and April 1, 1859, an advance train in two sections left Leavenworth to locate stations at suitable points some twenty-five miles apart along the route to the mines. This preliminary work was under the general supervision of Beverly D. Williams, who had entire management of the trains and stations. When this advance expedition reached Junction City, then on the outer fringe of settlement, a border paper wrote the following graphic account:

On Tuesday of this week, the advance train, consisting of twenty wagons, drawn by four and eight mule teams, arrived in town; this being their seventh station from Leavenworth, the twentieth [twenty-seventh] being at Denver City, and each being twenty-five miles apart. Yesterday (Friday) morning 20 more wagons, mostly eight mules to the wagon, arrived, accompanied by numerous families, &c, &c, to be located along the road at various stations. The wagons are heavily laden, some carrying 5,000 lbs., but at this point their freight is being shifted, invoiced and reloaded, preparatory to their final departure, today, for the plains.

Mr. Williams, the gentlemanly and energetic partner of Jones, Russell & Co., to whom is confided the entire management of the trains and stations, is in town, giving his attention to the above arrangements, etc. A person inexperienced in these matters, cannot imagine the necessary labors attending the enterprise of the magnitude of this concern. Four hundred and fifty mules; one hundred and twenty men and women; and forty wagons constitutes this advance train and many more on the road, followed by thousands of emigrants! ‘So they come and so depart.’

Account of the arrival of the first express in Denver, Rocky Mountain News, Cherry Creek, K. T., May 14, 1859, copied in “Biographies of Kansas History,” Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. VI, pp. 394, 395. In the Reminiscences of General William Larimer and of His Son William H. H. Larimer (Herman S. Davis [editor], Lancaster, Pa.; 1918, p. 172), it is stated that Nelson Sargent, route agent on the western division, had charge of one of the sections of this expedition. John M. Fox, general agent of the company in charge of express business, and Martin Fields, who directed the postoffice branch, also went either at this time or with the initial coaches.

Wm. H. H. Larimer, who later was employed as an assistant to Fields in the company postoffice at Denver, with his father were intimates of Wm. H. Russell, and were very influential in getting the express company to locate in Denver, rather than Auraria. The elder Larimer had been a leading industrialist of Pittsburgh, Pa., because of business reverses emigrated to Nebraska, and later to Leavenworth, Kansas. He now became one of the founders and leading spirits in the new town of Denver.

Junction City Sentinel, in the Leavenworth Herald, April 16, 1859. The Platte City Atlas (Argus) remarked [Leavenworth Herald, April 9]: “The outskirts of Leavenworth City are covered with camps of the numerous companies destined for Pike’s Peak.”
The stations beyond the seventh at Junction City were constructed in a temporary manner, evidently with the intention of making more permanent improvements later, and when referred to more recent maps and centers of settlement, were not much more than indefinite locations on the plains, designated by numbers only. As one account said: “Each station is supplied with tents (soon to be replaced by houses) sufficient to accommodate all the employees and passengers, and occupied by a man and his family—a new feature, and a decided improvement over most stage stations on the plains.”

After supervising this work, Beverly D. Williams boarded the first stage over the new route, which arrived in Denver, May 7, 1859. John M. Fox accompanied him on this trip, and after arriving at their destination, both men wrote detailed accounts of the trip, which appeared in the Leavenworth papers. Williams remarked:

The road which we have just laid out between the 39th and 40th parallel of latitude from Leavenworth City to Denver City, is 689 miles in length by the roadometer [odometer], which will be reduced to 500 when properly straightened out, passing over the most beautiful and fertile country in the Territory. After leaving Junction City our course was along the tributaries of the Solomon, about ten miles from its north bank, crossing beautiful streams of never failing water every six to ten miles. Leaving the waters of the Solomon, we struck over to those of the Republican, and struck Prairie Dog, Sappa, and Cranmer's Creek, near their head. Then traveling a long divide of twenty-six miles we reached the main Republican, just above the mouth of Rock Creek, and made station No. 18, in a beautiful grove of cottonwoods. Up to this point, wood and water is in abundance; also grass in the proper seasons. After leaving No. 18, we kept up on the southern side of the Republican to near its head, when we crossed the main prong to the middle prong, which we followed to its head. Along this portion of our route, wood is scarce and hard to get; grass and water plenty. We then kept our course, and struck what we think is the most southern branch of the Republican, on which we established

Jones, Russell & Co. dispatched their second train on Tuesday, for Pike's Peak. We understand that several companies, of one hundred each, have started within the last week. It is said that in one week’s time over one thousand persons had disembarked at Leavenworth, of whom the greater portion were destined for the mines.

In same issue: “A contract has been effectuated with the Pike's Peak Express Company from this place, to carry the mail daily to Denver City. The General Superintendent has gone to Denver City.”

68. Rocky Mountain News, Denver, May 14, 1859, cited above. This report was obtained from B. D. Williams, of the express company.
70. The route cut through the present counties of Norton, Decatur, and Rawlins. “Cranmer’s Creek” probably is present Beaver creek.
71. Near Benkelman, Neb., but the mileage figures do not agree with the description in the text. Rock Creek empties into the Arikaree Fork about nine miles west of Benkelman. Williams may have erred in placing this stream before instead of after Station 18.
72. Probably the branches of the South Fork of the Republican, near its head. The description is confusing, when referred to a map of Lincoln and Kit Carson counties, Colorado.
station No. 24,\textsuperscript{73} where another road comes in from the southeast. We traveled up this road about fifteen miles, when it bore off to the south. We continued our course due west, and struck Bear creek, with wood and water, and made station No. 26.\textsuperscript{74} Continued west, and in ten miles reached the pine forest. Continuing our course through high prairie, we passed large forests of pine, crossing the Bryou [Bijou] and two Kioways, and reached Cherry Creek twenty-two miles above its mouth, and then travelled down one of the most beautiful valleys I ever saw, and very fertile, until we reached Denver City, when the people all flocked together to look at the stages, etc.\textsuperscript{75}

In his letter of about the same time, John M. Fox commented at length upon developments in the new diggings and added further sidelights upon the newly surveyed route of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak express:

Our tedious march is at last ended, and we are now snugly located in Denver City, the much talked of Golden City of the mountains. Our progress from Junction [City] to this place, was necessarily slow, inasmuch as we had to open a new road through a country about which none knew but little, to contend with the severity of the weather, the fatigue and complete exhaustion of many of the mules, and the many obstacles incident to an enterprise of this magnitude.

I can truly say, Sir, that I believe our road is the best in all respects, that can possibly be made, from Leavenworth City to the mines. Wood and water in abundance over the entire route, excepting about 150 miles upon the Republican, where there is some scarcity of timber—in fact, a great scarcity for emi-

\textsuperscript{73} Dr. Margaret Long, who has made a special study of the express route through Colorado, points out the confusion of names referring to the South Fork of the Republican, and places this station on the Big Sandy."—The Route of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express," \textit{loc. cit.}, p. 191. This location was probably close to present Hugo, Colo.

A letter of N. Sargent to J. S. Jones, dated Denver City, May 9, 1859 (\textit{Weekly Kansas Herald}, May 29, 1859), remarked: "The express coaches and wagons arrived here all safe, distance about 600 miles by the roadometer [odometer]; but this can be shortened very much. The stations all have wood and water, except three or four, where they have to go three or four miles for wood.

"Our course from Junction City was generally northwest until we left the head waters of Solomon's Fork, then our course was W. and N. W. until we came to the Republican, thence S. W. and S. W. by W. until we left station 23, thence due west 10 degrees S. most of the time until we left station 26, thence west to Cherry Creek, twenty miles south of Denver City; "The whole road, with but few exceptions, is first rate; sand on the Republican is the worst."

\textsuperscript{74} Probably East Bijou creek, in eastern Elbert county, Colorado.

\textsuperscript{75} The article in the \textit{Rocky Mountain News}, May 14, 1859 (cited above), by the same author, is interesting to compare at this point.

"The road, after passing Fort Riley, follows an entirely new route, all the way, keeping along the divide between the Republican and the Solomon's forks of Kansas river, crossing the heads of the tributaries of the later named fork for some distance, then bearing a little northward, crossing the heads of Prairie Dog, Sappo and Cramm (Piper) creeks, tributaries of the Republican, and striking that river near the mouth of Rock creek, between longitude 101 and 102 degrees; it then follows the south side of the Republican to a point near its source, thence striking due west it crosses the heads of Beaver, Bijou and Kiowa creeks, tributaries of the Platte, passing through a beautiful pine country for sixty miles, and striking Cherry creek twenty miles above its mouth.

The whole length of the road is 687 miles by odometer measurement, but it will probably be shortened 75 miles by cut-offs in various places—one very considerable one at this end, terminating the road directly at the mouth of Cherry creek. The road throughout its whole length is good when broken and traveled, but the coaches that have just arrived made the first track over it. Water is found at convenient intervals throughout the whole distance; also abundance of wood, except for about 150 miles along the Republican, where it is somewhat scarce. The road throughout its whole length is between latitude 39 degrees 30 minutes and 46 degrees north."
grants—but our station can be readily supplied from the pineries, lying some thirty miles distant from Cherry creek.

Nearly all the station-keepers, men and employees upon the road, express themselves satisfied with this location. Some one or two swear they will not stay—Murphy (at 19) among them.

We have had two desertions only. Our nearest station to this place is forty-three miles. An intermediate station must, of necessity, be made, until Mr. Williams returns and shortens the road, which he expects to do—saving a distance of fifty miles or over.

Much of the country over which we passed is eminently adapted for agricultural pursuits, and a great deal of it almost or wholly worthless.

 Permit me to say, that I think Colonel Preston missed the chute, both in going back and coming out—being too far north on his outward trip, and a great deal too far south when he returned.77

This criticism of the survey which had been conducted by Col. Preston and party was replied to by a letter signed "S," which was apparently written by C. F. Smith, of the exploring party. In his reply Smith pointed out that the route followed by Fox was not that of Preston and the survey party, and that the work of these "pathfinders" was more to explore than to actually survey the road.

The persons sent back by Col. Preston, to pilot the trains on the route had directions given them to correct all errors that had been made through necessity. Persons understanding the severities and hardships to be encountered by a party of explorers, undertaking the exploration at the time of the year we did, will readily perceive that the company who started us did not expect us to survey the route, but to explore it. In other words, to ascertain if wood, water and grass was in sufficient quantities to warrant a train to proceed on the route we went. From the letter of Mr. Fox, according to his own statement, we would, if we had taken his route, pronounced it impracticable, for the simple reason—as he himself says—"wood and water are deficient on the route for a distance of 150 miles; in fact, a great scarcity of both for emigrants." This is not the route Col. Preston took, as you will see by referring to my report to Mr. Jones.78 Mr. Fox has certainly made a mistake in the route in regard to Col. P. being too far either North or South. Any person looking over my report will perceive that the only "stretch" we had was but the short distance of 25 or 30 miles without wood, and without water, a distance of be-

76. Most accounts agree that there was a marked scarcity of timber along the Republican and its tributaries, in extreme western Kansas and eastern Colorado. The shortage of water was not as serious, but was an additional drawback in this region. Both of these factors reflected upon the desirability of this route, since the older trail by way of the Platte, although longer, was far superior in these respects. The whole problem will be treated in more detail later.

77. John M. Fox to John S. Jones, dated Denver City, May 8, 1859, in Leavenworth Daily Times, May 21, 1859. Fox commented further on the suffering endured by the emigrants who chose the Smoky Hill route, which was notably worse than the new express road.

78. See the journal of C. F. Smith, quoted above. The problem of accurately locating these routes, particularly in extreme western Kansas and eastern Colorado, makes any categorical answer to this difficult. It does seem clear, however, that there were important variations in route, between the survey party and the later group that located stations. Smith's accounts seem trustworthy, but his return journey appears to have been more "lucky" as to wood and water, than were the trips of later travelers along the upper Republican.
t[ween] 15 or 18. True, wood was scarce, but still sufficient for the route. The work, in the start, demanded, for its successful accomplishment, constant and self-denying agents, and such I will venture to say were engaged for the undertaking; and I believe the route chosen by Col. P. (and I have it from those who piloted the trains) is the one adopted, and which Mr. Fox ascribes to himself.

[Signed]

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The high praise of this route leads one to believe that the element of advertising was a large factor in these accounts of the new express road and that the lack of a dependable supply of wood, the scarcity of water at some points, and the remoteness of the route from any well-established lane of travel, like that of the Platte, were negative factors not to be ignored. 81

The departure of the first express coach was postponed beyond the time originally proposed—April 10, 1859, because of unfavorable weather and, what was still more important—the nonarrival from the manufacturers of Concord, N. H., of the coaches intended for this service. These vehicles were built by Abbot, Downing & Company, and were said to have been the first of this make received in Kansas. 82 The delay in beginning the coach service furnished an excuse for rival cities to denounce the whole venture of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express. The Kansas City (Mo.) Journal of Commerce termed the project "a humbug—one of those well con-

79. On the trip west, Smith pointed out in his journal that wood was very scarce, and water not plentiful, from the head of the Republican to Denver. This road "proving impracticable," a different route was taken when the party returned, which proved much better. "The road from Denver City to this point [head of the Republican] is a remarkably good one; wood and water is abundant all along the route, and the soil hard and firm." The next day was the only one on this route in which the scarcity of wood and water was a serious objection. Smith later pointed out "that the road adopted by the Express Company, from this point to Denver City, is the one we traveled on our return.


81. The route was clearly better than the Smoky Hill, upon which there was much suffering, and was decidedly shorter than the Platte, but lacked the "improvements" of this older road. One writer remarked: "The new route thus laid out via Republican Fork of Kansas river, seems to be a good one, according to the report of the stage company, though about the same length as the old Ft. Kearny and Arkansas routes, hilly and sandy on this end, and destitute of timber for fuel, for an equal distance with the others, or some 100 to 160 miles. I think it quite probable this express line will do a good thing in opening up this region of the far west, but from present appearances, however, the company owning it will not enrich themselves, at least not in the legitimate way of carrying mail matter and passengers."—Charendoe Davison, previously a reporter of the Chicago Press and Tribune, and member of the Chicago company, dated Denver, May 9, from the Missouri Democrat of May 25, in Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 347-349.

82. Frank A. Root and William Elsey Connellcy, The Overland Stage to California [hereafter termed Overland Stage] (Topinka, 1901), p. 155. Over fifty coaches were reported to have been ordered, but after reading the article by Edwin G. Burgum, entitled "The Concord Coach" (Colorado Magazine, v. XVI, pp. 175-180), one doubts that the number could have been that high. Frank A. Root says in the Overland Stage (pp. 158, 154): "I saw all the coaches at Leavenworth a few days after their arrival in Kansas direct from the manufacture in the Old Granite State." They were brought up the Missouri river by steamboat and were unloaded on the levee, between Shawnee and Choctaw streets. These stages were the first Concord coaches shipped to Kansas. Each coach was drawn by four mules, which were regarded better than horses for the hard service on the plains, and of which about 800 were purchased for the line. The stations on route to which these animals were distributed had a working force of 108 men—an aggregate "army" of men and animals that entailed an operating expense of about $1,000 a day.
ceived schemes, got up by a few speculators to make a little money out of the sale of city lots, etc., and which, in the end, is calculated to do the West a serious injury. . . .” This paper conceded that there was such an express company, but there was “no such route, and no such facilities for taking emigrants to the mines” as claimed by that organization. The St. Joseph (Mo.) Gazette agreed in this general view, probably from like motives, and asserted that the venture was in a class of “shameless and barefaced deceptions . . . attempted to palm off on emigrants to the gold mines. . . .” To run coaches over a route until recently “absolutely unexplored,” which “had no stations upon its course,” was a “very remote” probability. In reply the Leavenworth Herald pointed out that the project was really under way, and would include the use of “sixty Concord ambulances, seventy-five wagons, eight hundred mules, three hundred oxen and four hundred men.”

Early Monday morning, April 18, 1859, a large crowd assembled to witness the departure of the first coach, and to wish the fortunate travelers bon voyage. The Daily Times of the following morning heralded the historic event with a suitable article in its columns, entitled “The Overland Express”:

About 8 o’clock Monday morning, we observed two of the new coaches of Messrs. Jones & Russell’s Express, each with four splendid mules attached, drawn up in front of their headquarters under the Planter’s House. The street was soon occupied by a throng of people discussing the merits of the vehicles and animals, as well as the great enterprise which the day inaugurated. The crowd continued to increase, and soon blocked the entire space in front of the Planter’s, and was particularly dense in the immediate vicinity of the coaches themselves.

The employees were meanwhile busily engaged in stowing the baggage and mails securely, for their long jaunt across the plains of Kansas. The fortunate individuals who were to take passage in the stages were receiving the congratulations of, and making their adieus to their friends. Punctually at the appointed hour, the conductors shouted their “all aboard,” the drivers flourished their whips, making the air resound with a succession of reports, and the vehicles moved off at a spanking pace.

83. Daily Journal of Commerce, April 13, 1859. From the start this paper termed the whole venture pure humbug, apparently in order to retain as much of the overland business as possible for Kansas City, by way of the Santa Fe trail, and favors the “Kansas City Gold Hunters Express Transportation Company,” operated by the firm of Irwin, Porter & Co., which proposed to use this route. The “humbug” theme will be discussed in more detail later.

84. St. Joseph Gazette, clipped in the Leavenworth Daily Times, April 22, 1859. “That a daily line of comfortable passenger vehicles can be put through is a thorough impossibility. . . . There may ultimately be a road established upon the line indicated . . . but . . . this is an enterprise yet to be consummated . . . there are serious doubts of the practicability of this new route.” As indicative of the extreme rivalry between towns for the overland business, both the St. Joseph and Kansas City papers made misstatements of fact.

85. Weekly Kansas Herald, April 23, 1859. “On Sunday last six of the coaches arrived. Two of them started out on Tuesday, two on Thursday, and two will leave Saturday (today).” The remaining coaches were looked for every day—upon their arrival, one would leave each day. They had already sold at least 2,000 tickets, it was announced.
Two coaches will now leave daily, and the line being fairly under way, we may be permitted to toss up our hat and shout a viva!

Among the articles shipped by the Express Company yesterday, we noticed several flasks of Quicksilver.

In an editorial of praise the Leavenworth Times hailed this event as a great one in the annals of the city—a local enterprise, unsupported by government appropriations or patronage, whose launching augured well for the future of their community.

We believe we can see in the establishment of this great thoroughfare westward, a glimpse of future enterprises still more glorious and important. It will do much to enforce our claims as the most proper point d'appui for a railroad to the Pacific, and the more we do ourselves, to foster and protect the initiatory step, the nearer we are to the object to be obtained. Why shall not Leavenworth eventually become what of right belongs to her position, the great focus of all travel, to Utah, California, and New Mexico, as well as to the mineral regions on our western confines?

The initial journey of the coaches proved uneventful, and was completed in good time. Colonel Preston of the survey party, in accordance with original instructions, delegated two members of that group, Messrs. Cranmer and Alonzo, to return and act as pilots of the first train of coaches, and at the same time to correct errors made by the survey party, thereby establishing a permanent route to the mountains. B. D. Williams, who had had general charge of the survey, accompanied the coaches on the first trip, and apparently was joined later by John M. Fox, who had also been engaged in the initial work of preparation. As the coaches traveled along the Solomon, in the vicinity of present Glasco, Cloud county, Colonel Preston and one of the two Eubanks appear to have joined the party and acted as co-pilots to the mountains. When they reached the headwaters of the Solomon the party met several of the survey group on the return trip from Denver, who reported that all was well.

John M. Fox of the express company commented:

86. Leavenworth Daily Times, April 19, 1859. The previous day this paper announced that the first through train of the express company would leave that afternoon for Denver, which carried, by authority of the Post Office Department, the through mail. Martin Fields was in charge of the forwarding of correspondence. Later that same day a train of thirteen wagons left Fort Leavenworth for Fort Riley, loaded with commissary and quartermaster's stores for the force of cavalry that had been detailed to patrol the new route to the mines, in the interest of safety from Indian attack.

87. Leavenworth Daily Times, April 19, 1859—an editorial review of the whole enterprise.


89. Smith's journal; Rocky Mountain News, May 14, 1859, quoted above; B. D. Williams to John S. Jones, dated Denver, May 9, 1859, in Leavenworth Herald, May 28, 1859. Because of the absence of any detailed narrative of this trip, it is difficult to construct a satisfactory account from the scattered comments of the participants. There were nine through passengers, from Leavenworth to Denver, and in addition, several company officials apparently boarded the coaches, along the route.


91. Account of Eubank and Downing, Leavenworth Times, April 30, quoted above; St. Louis dispatch, dated April 29, of the New York Daily Tribune, May 3, 1859.
It is proper to remark that, during our trip, the utmost harmony and good feeling existed throughout the entire train. We met several bands of Indians, in all cases perfectly friendly. We treated them uniformly with kindness.

We reached Denver City yesterday, (Saturday,) May 7th. Gen. Larimer received us, and has treated us with extreme courtesy and hospitality. The city is situated at the mouth of Cherry creek, and contains a population so floating that I can scarcely estimate the number of inhabitants. I think I am safe in setting the number at three hundred. About one hundred and fifty houses have been erected—built chiefly of pine and cottonwood logs, with thatched roofs. We have secured one of them temporarily for our office. The people were much gratified at our arrival.

Auraria, opposite to this, is about the same in size, population, &c. The town opposite Denver is rather desirable, I think. The citizens had begun to grow very despondent in consequence of so much emigration returning almost as soon as arriving. Our entry, however, has re-animated them.92

The arrival of the stages in Denver on May 7 brought a revival of hope to the people of the new diggings, many of whom had become despondent of the failure to discover rich deposits of gold. The miners received the coaches with demonstrations of joy, and unanimously voted Leavenworth “the greatest city in the East.” The Rocky Mountain News published an extra in honor of the event, which paid a handsome tribute to the new express line and its managers.93 Soon after this came the news of the rich finds in Gregory Gulch, which placed the future of the region on a solid basis. A directory of Denver and Auraria, issued some months later, remarked:

The arrival, in the second week of May, of the officers of the Pike’s Peak and Leavenworth City Express Company, and of the first through coaches with passengers, produced an universal sensation of joy and hopefulness. The establishment of an office of so powerful, energetic, and responsible a company—the certainty of enjoying henceforth a sure and speedy means of communication with the States—the practical demonstration of implicit faith in the permanency of the gold resources of the country, implied in the investment of an enormous capital in an apparently hazardous enterprise, jointly proved a source of deep gratification to the people of both Denver and Auraria, and at least transitorily brightened up their countenance with the light of renewed confidence.94

92. John M. Fox to John S. Jones, dated Denver City, May 8, 1859, in Leavenworth Daily Times, May 21, 1859. “There is gold here; the dust which I send with this letter is sufficient evidence. As to the quantity, no man can form any idea.” Also Wm. Larimer, Jr., to John Larimer, dated Denver City, K. T., May 9 to 12, 1859, and quoted in Larimer Reminiscences (op. cit.), pp. 174, 175:

“Russel’s train changes the whole face of matters here. They are locating in Denver City. Denver is all O. K. Since writing the above the Denver City Company met and donated nine original interests to the Leavenworth & Pike’s Peak Express Company. Wm. H. Russell now holds one original share in Denver City, so you see we are now all right, if not before. Wm. H. Russell & Co. also owns two shares in the Express Company and now two shares in Denver. This is fine; their named influence will make this now the certain point.”

93. Quoted at length in the Leavenworth Daily Times, May 28, 1859.

94. Denver City and Aurora, The Commercial Enterprise of the Pike’s Peak Gold Regions in 1859, p. 10. This facsimile reproduction of the first directory of Denver contains a good account of the early settlements along Cherry creek.
On May 10, 1859, the stages began the return trip from Denver to Leavenworth. Some days before they arrived at their destination, elaborate preparations were begun at Leavenworth for a proper celebration of so historic an occasion. The event would “settle the actuality of the gold deposits, demonstrate the plausibility and superiority of the great route from our city, and, let us hope, compensate those who have conceived and carried out the project of establishing such a medium of intercourse and communication.” 95 In order to stage a grand reception a meeting was held in mid-May and committees were appointed to make detailed arrangements. A few days later the “order of the day” was publicly announced, which included the precise order in which the various organizations would take part in the parade. 96 The actual arrival of the coaches was delayed by an “unparalleled rise in the streams.” When they reached Salt Creek they were met by an assemblage of ladies and gentlemen who distributed “roses of bouquets” to the drivers and coaches. The journey from Denver to Leavenworth was completed May 20, 1859, when the coaches reached their destination, after a trip of approximately ten days from the mountains. The incident was hailed by the Leavenworth Times as a great event, which announced:

**NINE CHEERS FOR LEAVENWORTH**

*The City in a Tumult!!*

**Arrival of Express Coaches From the Mines.**

**THROUGH IN NINE DAYS!!**

**LOTS OF “THE DUST!!”**

**QUICKEST TIME ON RECORD.**

**THE MINERS REJOICING.**

**LEAVENWORTH THE POINT.**

“It is with a satisfaction words can illy express that we are enabled this morning to announce the complete success of Jones & Russell’s Express Coaches, the superiority of the route from Leavenworth, and the settled richness of the new El Dorado.” 97 In an editorial salute to the great occasion, this same paper remarked:

Bring out the flags, and let the cannon roar!

We celebrate today one of the most glorious achievements of the age.

95. Leavenworth Daily Times, May 16, 1859. The committee of arrangements included an executive committee, a committee on invitation, and a committee on dinner and toasts. The Times printed a detailed account of the meeting at the Renick House, at which these tentative plans were drawn up. Cyrus F. Currier was chairman of the committee of arrangements.

96. Ibid., May 18, which announced the make-up and order of the parade in honor of the occasion. Col. A. J. Isacks was to act as president of the celebration, and Gen. G. W. McLane, chief marshal.

97. Ibid., May 21, 1859.
Peace hath its victories as well as war.
A giant Empire springs, Minerva-like, from the bosom of a wilderness, and the genius of man tames the rugged and oceanic plains to the uses of civilization.

Leavenworth extends the hand of fellowship to the Rocky Mountains, and establishes a perpetual bond of union till you may hear the responsive heart-beat.

Honor to the noble men who have conceived and executed the grand project of uniting regions half a thousand miles apart.

A mammoth enterprise—one of our own—has been crowned with success. The golden fields of the West loom up in majestic proportions. Our pioneer friends and brothers are now our neighbors as well, and our city has demonstrated to the world the superiority of her position, and the indomitable enterprise of her people.

The great celebration of May 21, 1859, lasted for about twelve hours, during which there "was naught but marching and feasting and enthusiastic acclaims." The parade began to assemble about 2 P. M., at the corner of Main and Shawnee streets, where a mammoth flag was suspended between the Planter's Hotel and the office of Smoot & Russell.

The balcony of the Renick House and Waverly [House] and the rooms of the Planter's were thronged with ladies, while the streets were filled with horses, wagons, and crowds of enthusiastic people. The other streets of the city echoed with the music of bells and the "gathering of the clans," in their bright uniforms, as they marched and countermarched, lent a life and animation to the scene that words can but faintly picture.

Between two and three o'clock...the great procession moved off in the following order:

1st—Chief Marshal, with Aid de Camps, handsomely mounted and accoutred.
2d—Brass Band (Union) in an open wagon, discoursing elegant music.
3d—Committee of Arrangements, on all kinds of horses, from a mule and an Indian pony up to Arabian coursers.
4th—Some of the Express Coaches, handsomely fitted up and drawn by two pairs of mules, containing some of the Express proprietors and a number of citizens.
5th—The Shield's Guards, Capt. Wm. H. Stanley, with their handsome uniform[s] and burnished muskets, keeping time to martial music. They presented a fine appearance and were much admired.
6th—Pioneer Hook and Ladder Company—Mr. Middleton, Foreman—in the following uniform: Red shirt and black pants, with a handsome patent leather belt, bearing the device of a hook and ladder raised in white letters, together with the splendid firemen's New York uniform hat. Their apparatus was gaily decked, and they bore beautiful flags, the folds of which swelled gracefully with the breeze.
7th—Eagle Fire Company No. 1—Amos Graff, Foreman—turned out about thirty-five strong, with the following uniform: Red shirt, blue cape with velvet

98. Ibid.
DENVER 1859

From Richardson's Beyond the Mississippi as reprinted in The Overland Stage to California.
cuffs, blue cap with eagle for device and black pants. Their hose cart was handsomely decorated with flags and streamers, tastefully arranged, and numerous floral devices. They carried the splendid flag presented to them by the National Theatre, and attracted general praise.

8th—Neptune Fire Company—James Duffy, Foreman—had for a uniform red shirts with blue lapels, black glazed caps (No. 2 painted in front) and black pants. Their hose cart was also most happily ornamented with emblematical devices, floral designs, flags, and streamers, and their presence added greatly to the appearance of the procession.

Without partiality or arbitrary distinctions, we must compliment the Firemen, as a body, on their gallant bearing and pleasing uniforms. They are a body of men who reflect credit upon the city.

The Pioneer Hook and Ladder Company gave the Times three rousers in passing our office, which we beg to return with compound interest, together with our warmest thanks.

9th—The Leavenworth Brass Band, in a covered carriage. Their music was truly inspiring, and they were followed by an immense crowd of citizens on foot, horseback, and in carriages.

With bands playing, flags flying, bells ringing, men shouting, and “Old Kickapoo” roaring, the procession moved up Shawnee to Broadway, greeted by the waving of handkerchiefs and every other evidence of enthusiasm.

Arriving at Government Lane, there stood the two well tried coaches, with their trusty drivers, who had so successfully solved the great problem of “the main route to the mines.” They were both gaily bedecked and looked like triumphal chariots as they were. On the sides of the first coach was the following inscribed by the miners:

“THE GOLD MINES OF KANSAS SEND GREETINGS TO LEAVENWORTH, THE COMMERCIAL METROPOLIS.”

On the other coach appeared the following:

“LEAVENWORTH CATCHES THE GOLDEN ECHO FROM HER MINERAL MOUNTAINS AND SENDS IT ON THE WINGS OF LIGHTNING TO A LISTENING WORLD.”

At sight of the coaches cheer followed cheer till the welkin rang, and they were instantly surrounded by an eager and expectant throng.

After the excitement had somewhat abated, the coaches took the post of honor in the van, the bands struck up, the companies fell in rank, the roaring “Kickapoo” was heard, and the procession, about a mile in length, moved toward the city, passing down Fifth to Shawnee, up Shawnee to Sixth, down Sixth to Delaware, along Delaware to Main, down Main to Cherokee, up Cherokee to Third, up Third to Shawnee, and down Shawnee to the starting point.

After several pleasing and skillful manoeuvres by the horsemen, footmen, firemen, carriages, &c., which excited much applause and some merriment, a general “resting spell” ensued and speaking commenced.

Col. Isaacs [Isacks] opened the ball. He paid worthy tribute to the celebration and to the Express Company, predicted a great future for Leavenworth and great results from the mines.

While yet speaking “the boys” were bringing down old Kickapoo; the cannon got the start of them at the steep descent above the Renick, and dashed furiously toward the crowd. A regular fright and stampede ensued. For
a moment, in the midst of rearing horses, rush of wagons, and fright of men, it seemed as though frightful consequences must ensue. The cannon, however, was checked by a milk wagon, the contents of which watered the earth, and the crowd re-collected with merry laughter.

One or two persons were hurt, but not seriously, and the main damage was to "shins," "corns," and "window panes." Quiet restored, Col. Isaacs [Isacks] closed his speech, and was followed by Capt. Perry, Gen. Eastin and McLane, and then the order was given to disband.

Thus ended the celebration of one of the most notable events in our history, a remembrance of which we will ever cherish with pride and gratification.99

In describing the speeches delivered on the occasion, the Leavenworth Weekly Herald pointed out that the eloquent address of Col. A. J. Isaacs [Isacks] received much applause. Mr. Jones of the express company was not accustomed to making speeches, but thanked the audience in a happy manner for the demonstration accorded him and his company. Captain Perry made a "characteristically eloquent, humorous and sensible" address, in which he pointed out that "the route established by the company, introducing, as it did, civilization, cultivation, and refinement upon what has been styled the 'American Desert,'—linking the Atlantic States with the mineral and agricultural wealth of the mountains . . . it could not but become the channel through which the iron arteries of inland commerce would run and over which the iron horse would yet snort on his road to the Pacific."100

The following night a supper was given at the Planter's Hotel in honor of the arrival of the express coaches. It was said to have been "full of fun and frolic, toasts, speeches and the like. The supper was bountiful and excellent and the company did not disperse till the wee sma' hours. Altogether it was a happy and satisfactory affair. . . ."101 The next day Dr. Renick, the proprietor of the Renick House, gave a grand ball at his hotel in tribute to the Pike's Peak Express Company.

99. Ibid., May 23. "Old Kickapoo" was one of the most famous pieces of artillery that entered into the troubles of "Bleeding Kansas." Captured by Gen. A. W. Doniphan during the Mexican War, this cannon was taken by the Proslavery party from the arsenal at Liberty, to Weston, Mo., and later to Kickapoo, Leavenworth county, from whence it derived its name. The ballads associated with the elections on the Lecompton constitution so aroused the Free-State men of Leavenworth that they recruited a force, and removed the gun from its resting place at Kickapoo (January, 1858). It was taken to Lawrence, and deposited beside the Free-State cannon at the Eldridge House; thereafter it came into possession of the Leavenworth Turnverein. While being used to blow out the wreckage in a Leavenworth coal shaft, the cannon exploded, and was sold to a junk dealer. It was finally purchased by the Kansas State Historical Society (1884) and is still on exhibition in the state museum at Topeka. (Accounts derived chiefly from a manuscript of H. C. Fields, MSS. division, Kansas State Historical Society; copied in Kansas Historical Collections, v. VII, pp. 350, 381.)

100. Leavenworth Weekly Herald, May 28, 1859.

The completion of the first trip marked the successful inauguration of the new company. A new route had been opened to the Rockies and the residents of the new diggings had been given a frequent and dependable means of communication, the permanent value of which was yet to be proven.

*(Part II to be Published in the November Issue)*