Pike’s Peak Express Companies

PART II—SOLOMON AND REPUBLICAN ROUTE—Concluded

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THE early months of operation of the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express Company were much complicated by the fluctuations of migration to the new gold fields. This was due in part to the widespread exodus of many who were either ignorant of the hardships of mining in a remote and mountainous country or who were unwilling to undergo privation. Many without adequate supplies thoughtlessly joined the mad rush and still more who had no knowledge of prospecting and mining. As in all great migrations, there were many “floaters” who speedily moved on when they discovered that chunks of gold were not scattered promiscuously about the landscape. A stronger cause for discouragement, however, which for a time threatened the future of the region as a mineral empire, lay in the fact that the early discoveries of flake gold were inadequate to sustain the number that had migrated.

Since winter had largely halted mining and prospecting, the scarcity of gold was not fully realized until the warm weather of May, 1859. But even before this disappointed pilgrims were heading eastward over the Platte route, telling the westbound emigrants that “Pike’s Peak was a humbug,” “gold would never be found in paying quantities,” “provisions and merchandise were scarce and high,” “the country [was] without law of any kind,” etc.¹⁰²

A stampede of returning emigrants took place, which at times approached panic proportions. Hundreds of wagons were soon on the back track; the roads were strewn with culinary utensils, camp fixtures, and other “impedimenta”; and oxen, teams and wagons were sold for a song. Some even made use of the Platte and Missouri rivers as a convenient way to return.¹⁰³ An observer on Big Sandy

¹⁰² J. E. Bromley, route agent from Kearny to Laramie on the Platte river stage line of J. M. Hackaday and company, wrote to his employers as follows (April 28, in St. Joseph, Mo., Weekly West, May 8, 1859): “We are in a very tight place here [Cotton Wood Springs, Louisa Station]. On the road from the crossing down, we have five stations that are emmended full of wagons from morning till night. . . . . . Pike’s Peak has turned out to be a humbug, and the road is lined with starving men; and God knows we have got to give them something to eat as long as we have it. . . . If you could do something to keep the poor deluded devils from starving, you would be doing a kindness to humanity. . . .”

¹⁰³ White Cloud Kansas Chief, May 20, 1859, which remarked that “skiffs loaded with Pike’s Peakers, who have had their eye teeth cut, may be seen going down the river [Missouri] at almost any hour of the day.”

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creek, west of the Big Blue river, wrote a graphic account of this event for the New York Tribune:

We had already heard a faint murmur of a retrograde movement from the Peak, and no sooner did we arrive on top of the divide than we beheld the advance guard of the retreating columns. Such a stampede of human beings was never before seen. Mule teams, horse, cow and ox teams, hand-carts, men with carpet sacks, riders and runners, with every imaginable conveyance, loaded with every species of articles, from steam saw mills to blankets, all coming back in a hurry, as if flying from danger; some swearing lustily at Pike's Peak, at themselves, and the rest of mankind. Some were laughing at their folly, and at us. Some wore faces as long as the Peak they sought. The prairies, as well as the road, seemed alive with the masses. We no doubt met a thousand men per day, with saw mills, quartz mills, and whole trains of store goods. Outfits amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars are returning. And still, in the face of all this, thousands were pushing on as if nothing had happened.104

This stampede was in great measure limited to the Platte route and appears to have started in April and May, 1859, even before the season had opened in the mountains. The situation was well described by a Denver correspondent of the Leavenworth Herald:

The first emigration that arrived here was of that excitable class who, deceived by the false and exaggerated tales of the Missouri River papers, rushed, totally unprepared—without tools, provisions or any proper outfit—to this place, expecting to pick up gold as they would potatoes. Winter was still upon us, and digging had not commenced. . . . Disappointed in finding what they expected they turned back, and determined that no others should come. They have, by the most unblushing lies and extraordinary stretch of fiction, contrived to turn back almost all of the emigration by the South Platte. By the Arkansas and Republican we are filling up fast enough. . . .105

In their bitter disappointment some of the more unfortunate gave voice to a stinging rebuke of the whole “Pike's Peak humbug,” and directed a storm of abuse against the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Company. The Kansas City (Mo.) Journal of Commerce

104. Dispatch dated May 14, in the New York Daily Tribune, May 31, 1859. This movement appears to have been an outstanding example of mob hysteria, which might afford interesting data on the working of the “mass mind.” It seems to have been motivated by a wild, unreasoning desire to escape the evils that threatened—a feeling which was greatly intensified by flight. Like the mob that accompanies a lynching, the individuals seem to have abandoned all pretense of considering the subject in an objective, reasonable manner.

105. Denver City correspondence, dated May 9, of the Leavenworth Weekly Herald, May 28, 1859. A letter of D. D. Cock, dated Auraria, May 11, 1859, in the same issue of this paper, remarked: “I was quite amused at a little incident the other day. . . . A large four-horse wagon drove down to Cherry creek, where teams cross from Denver City to Auraria. On its arrival at the Creek one of the party jumped from the wagon and waded in the Creek, rolled up his sleeves, and pulled a handfull of sand. After washing the sand and examining it, and not finding the color just as he expected, he turned immediately around and started for the States. Since their departure we have heard from them on more than one occasion. They report the two cities—Denver and Auraria—at war; that houseburning, horse stealing, murder and plunder is the order of the day; that there is no gold in the country, and that it is a humbug. The consequence is that their bees have turned an immense number back on the Platte route.”
had made repeated exposures of "this grand humbug," and now rang the changes with growing fervor. The *Weekly Journal of Commerce* branded as false everything the express company claimed to have accomplished. They asserted that there has never been an attempt to open a route from Leavenworth by the Smoky Hill—that Jones & Russell never sent a coach that way—that their exploring party has just returned from the *Republican*—that no daily line has been established at all—that Jones & Russell have not advertised an express line as in operation, in any paper either in Leavenworth or in America. That their gold news is "gas," that their receipts of gold dust are "gassier," and that their "painted wagon," is "gassiest." In short, that the whole thing is buckram, from beginning to end. . . 107

The White Cloud *Kansas Chief* had long held a similar belief and in its issue of April 21, 1859, remarked: "The rival 'outfitting points' are becoming so jealous of each other, that they are compelled to expose their own humbuggery." A few weeks later (May 5) it asserted that they had "heard any amount of unfavorable news. Hundreds, and some say thousands, are getting back home as fast as they can, perfectly satisfied with their sight of the 'elephant.'" Soon thereafter came the "explosion," but they believed that "our skirts are perfectly clear of this swindling affair." 108 The St. Joseph (Mo.) *Weekly West* could "hardly resist" calling the whole Pike's Peak proposition a humbug, although it attempted to present the news of all kinds in an objective manner. In its issue of May 18, 1859, it gave an adverse statement by George B. Throop, G. W. Price, and Job Sears, but pointed out that none of these men had actually been at the mines. In its issue of June 12, however, on the basis of very unfavorable reports from Leavenworth, this paper conceded that the whole affair was a hoax, and blamed the editors of the border papers. It asserted "that [to] the credulity of the emigrant, the unmitigated villainy of the shareholders of townsites in the region

106. The issue of April 13, reviewed the whole "humbug," and concluded that there was "no such route, and no such facilities for taking emigrants to the mines." There was such a company, but they "have no stock on their route, and as yet have made no arrangements at all to transport passengers or anything else," having merely "sent out a company to explore the route over which they propose to run this great express!!"

107. Issue of May 21, 1859. The obvious unfairness of these assertions is apparent. The Kansas City paper wrongly assigns the Smoky Hill route to the express company, a mistake more or less common, but typical of this publication, which could see no good in Leavenworth. The whole subject should be viewed with due regard to the intense rivalry between towns which characterized the period.

108. The *Kansas Chief* of May 28, 1859, which gives an extended review of the whole "swindle," with their repeated condemnation. They blamed the Pike's Peak publicity campaign, and apparently did not condemn the express company, as did the Kansas City *Journal of Commerce*. The issue of June 2 described a trial on the plains of a "penny" who was alleged to have circulated a false report of gold at the mines. As late as June 30 this paper was decrying the reports of gold and believed that when things "exploded" at Denver those interested at that point sent men into the mountains to bring back reports of great discoveries.
of Cherry Creek, and of letter writers in the mines, is to be attributed all the disaster which has ensued. . . .” 109 The St. Joseph Gazette for a time subscribed to the view that the Pike's Peak express company of Jones & Russell was “an arrant humbug,” 110 but later spoke in much more hopeful terms of the prospects for gold—
“we are satisfied that the gold of the South Platte extends over a vast range of country, and that there are many places where it can be obtained in paying quantities.” 111 In general, however, the border papers did not blame the Pike's Peak Express Company.

The initial trips of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak express were made with this background of uncertainty regarding the future of the mines. The company being the chief means of carrying mail to the diggings, the arrival of the express coaches was awaited with the greatest interest by the public. On May 12, 1859, two coaches arrived in Denver for the second time, after a journey of 19 days from Leavenworth. 112 Among the passengers was Daniel Blue, who had been given free passage from Station 25, where he had been left by the first stage coach after a grueling experience on the Smoky Hill route. 113 The most noted passenger on this trip was Henry Villard, a correspondent of the Cincinnati (Ohio) Daily Commercial, who wrote a graphic account of the journey to his paper. 114 Villard found the Cherry creek diggings in a state of depression, many miners were without funds and consequently the cry of the auctioneer was a very familiar sound. Many had struck for the mountains, and others, disgusted, had returned to the “States.” The prevailing “depression of mind,” however, was giving way to a more hopeful attitude, he wrote, adding that the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Company had shipped during the last week about a thousand dollars worth of scale gold. 115 B. D. Williams of the express company returned to Leavenworth on the second return trip from Den-

109. In a more or less modified form the suspicion of fraud persisted, probably encouraged by the fact that many failed at the mines, or at least failed to discover paying deposits.
110. Leavenworth Weekly Herald, April 30, 1859, which charged that the Gazette was alarmed for fear the emigrants would leave St. Joseph.
113. See his signed statement, dated Denver City, May 12, 1859, in Henry Villard, “To the Pike's Peak Country in 1859 and Cannibalism on the Smoky Hill Route,” in the Colorado Magazine, Denver, v. VIII, No. 6 (November, 1931), pp. 232, 233. Blue was the sole survivor of a party of four, who were forced to resort to human flesh as a means of subsistence. A friendly Indian took him to an express station, and he rested at Station 25 until able to complete the journey to Denver.
114. Ibid., pp. 225-226; also a reprint by the same author, entitled The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Regions (Princeton, 1932).
ver and brought further details of the more favorable news from the mountains, where many were prospecting.\textsuperscript{116}

The third trip of the express coaches was completed the following morning (May 28), after a journey of nine days and a few hours from Denver, which would have been reduced a full day had it not been for high water. This forced them to swim the Wildcat, near Manhattan, and delayed them a day at Rock creek,\textsuperscript{117} where they met the westbound coach with its illustrious passenger, Horace Greeley, and his journalist companion, Albert D. Richardson. The passengers on the third coach reported a great hegira from the settlements to the mountains, and the prevalence of a feeling of confidence that gold would be found in considerable quantities.\textsuperscript{118}

The journey of Horace Greeley and Albert D. Richardson by Pike's Peak express to the gold mines of Colorado has been chronicled by a number of writers.\textsuperscript{119} Richardson left Leavenworth on the stage of May 25, 1859, and wrote an interesting account of the Concord coach which, like the "wonderful one-hoss shay," was made so that it "don't break down, but only wears out."

It is covered with duck or canvas, the driver sitting in front, at a slight elevation above the passengers. Bearing no weight upon the roof, it is less top-heavy than the old-fashioned stage-coach for mud holes and mountain-sides, where to preserve the center of gravity becomes, with Falstaff's instinct, 'a great matter.' Like human travelers on life's highway, it goes best under a heavy load. Empty, it jolts and pitches like a ship in a rageing sea; filled with passengers and balanced by a proper distribution of baggage in the 'boot' behind, and under the driver's feet before, its motion is easy and elastic. Excelling every other in durability and strength, this hack is used all over our continent and throughout South America.

\textsuperscript{116} Leavenworth Weekly Herald, May 28, 1859 (the coaches left Denver May 18). Williams prophesied much more favorable news in ten days. He reported meeting about 600 persons bound for the mines, and none returning by the express road, although about 4,000 had left by way of the Platte.

\textsuperscript{117} Leavenworth Daily Times, May 30, 1859. The third coach carried J. Heywood, T. A. J. Withrow, W. W. Thompson, Capt. Fickland (Ben, F. Ficklin), and J. H. McEwen, four of whom bore gold dust. The trip was said to have been pleasant, although at a lay-over station the stage drivers refused to accede to Captain Fickland's request for night driving until after much persuasion.

\textsuperscript{118} Leavenworth Weekly Herald, June 4, 1859. Both Greeley in his Overland Journey (p. 71) and Richardson in his Beyond the Mississippi (Hartford, 1875, p. 100), describe the wait at Rock creek, where a number of express coaches and wagons were congregated, until the high waters subsided. The Leavenworth Daily Times believed the mines "comparatively unprofitable," and in its issue of June 4 printed a letter of C. Davison, a special newspaper correspondent, who had returned on the last stage with news that Denver City and Aurora were about half empty. "Of the gold... I need say little, further than it is now the general belief that failure has been the lot of most if not all, so far, that have sought it. That some have made fair wages on some leads, for a little time, is true; but their success was of short duration; and it is certainly true that it has been a losing business as a general thing."

\textsuperscript{119} The trip is described in Greeley's Overland Journey, pp. 71-114, with a further chapter on the "Kansas Gold-Diggings" (pp. 115-127); Albert D. Richardson, Beyond the Mississippi, pp. 159-192; and Martha B. Caldwell, "When Horace Greeley Visited Kansas in 1859," Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. XI, pp. 115-150.
Two coaches, each drawn by four mules, leave Leavenworth daily and make the entire trip together, for protection in case of danger from Indians. A crowd gathered in front of the Planter's House to see our equipages start. Amid confused ejaculations of 'Good-bye, old boy.' 'Write as soon as you get there.' 'Better have your hair cut, so that the Apaches can't scalp you.' 'Tell John to send me an ounce of the dust.' 'Be sure and give Smith that letter from his wife.' 'Do write the facts about the gold,' the whips cracked and the two stages rolled merrily away.

After he had concluded a brief tour of the principal settlements Greeley boarded an express coach bound for the mines. Wherever he went he aroused the interest of the people, even though he encountered, every now and then, one who had been "born and raised in Missouri," who had never heard of Greeley and the New York Tribune. The trip was completed without incident of importance, although shortly before arriving at Station 17 the coach was overturned and Greeley suffered injuries which proved more painful than serious.

Descending an abrupt hill, our mules, terrified by meeting three savages, broke a line, ran down a precipitous bank, upsetting the coach which was hurled upon the ground with a tremendous crash, and galloped away with the fore-wheels. I sprang out in time to escape being overturned. From a mass of cushions, carpet-sacks and blankets soon emerged my companion, his head rising above the side of the vehicle like that of an advertising boy from his frame of pasteboard. Blood was flowing profusely from cuts in his cheek, arm and leg; but his face was serene and benignant as a May morning. He was soon rescued from his cage, and taken to Station Seventeen, a few yards beyond, where the good woman dressed his galling wounds.

At Station 23, nearly 600 miles from Leavenworth, B. D. Williams of the express company overtook the coach containing Greeley and Richardson and proceeded with them to Denver. The sight of the mountains towering in the west gave the travelers new hope, and the

120. Although it was first announced that a coach would leave daily, in actual practice the business of the company was far less than would have been required for so frequent service. A departure of one or several coaches at the same time was more nearly a weekly event. The presence of several vehicles traveling together across the plains also made for added safety. At about the time that more favorable news began to come from the mines, the Leavenworth Daily Times announced (June 9, 1859) that thereafter Jones & Russell would run a weekly express to the diggings, starting every Tuesday. A few weeks later the company announced that an express would leave daily "when coaches are full of passengers," but none would leave, except on Tuesdays, unless there were six passengers. "One, Two or Three Coaches Will Start Every Day if there are passengers enough to justify."—Daily Times, June 21, et seq.

121. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 159.

122. Ibid., p. 170.

123. Ibid., p. 175. As usual they slept that night in the coach, although the next morning Greeley "awoke so stiff and sore that he could not move a muscle without suffering." However, they continued their journey as usual, up the "sandy valley of the Republican, destitute of tree and shrub and barren as Sahara."—Ibid., p. 175. Greeley's lameness remained with him for several days, even after the completion of the trip at Denver, but he attached no blame to the express company for this accident.

124. Leavenworth Weekly Herald, June 25, 1859—a detailed article on the gold region.
reappearance of trees in abundance was even more cheering. Early in the morning of June 6 the coach arrived at Denver City, after a journey of eleven days from Leavenworth. Even though a trip by stage was much superior to other methods of transportation, Greeley could not fail to note the humbling influence of the experience, and remarked:

A true picture of gold-seekers setting out from home, trim and jolly, for Pike’s Peak, and of those same gold-seekers, sober as judges, and slow-moving as their own weary oxen, dropping into Denver, would convey a salutary lesson to many a sanguine soul. Nay, I have in my mind’s eye an individual who rolled out of Leavenworth, barely thirteen days ago, in a satisfactory rig, and a spirit of adequate self-complacency, but who—though his hardships have been nothing to theirs—dropped into Denver this morning in a sobered and thoughtful frame of mind, in dust-begrimned and tattered habiliments, with a patch on his cheek, a bandage on his leg, and a limp in his gait, altogether constituting a spectacle most rueful to behold.

The next day (June 7) Greeley, Richardson and Henry Villard set forth on an expedition into the mountains to investigate the new mines. B. D. Williams, superintendent of the express company, placed one of the coaches at their disposal and personally accompanied them on the trip. It was clearly to the interest of the express company as well as the press to place the truth before the people of the country and end if possible the oft-repeated charge of humbug. After visiting the principal mines Greeley, Villard and Richardson issued a combined statement which described the operations on the leading claims, the amounts of gold being produced and future prospects. The manifesto portrayed the region as very promising, but closed with a warning of the grave difficulties involved.

125. Greeley, Overland Journey, pp. 111, 112. “And it was a pleasure to see, last evening, the many parties of way-worn gold-seekers encamped beside our way, after their long journey through a woodless region, surrounding great, ruddy, leaping fires of the dead pitch-wood, and solacing themselves for their long privation by the simplest allowance of blaze and warmth.”

126. Ibid., p. 114. Concerning Denver, Richardson termed it “a most forlorn and desolate-looking metropolis.” He further asserted that there were only “five women in the whole gold region.” The men who gathered about our coach on its arrival were attired in slouched hats, tattered woolen shirts, buckskin pantaloons and mocassins; and had knives and revolvers suspended from their belts.” Greeley and Richardson lodged at the Denver House, where occupants demanded a speech. “On one side the tipplers at the bar silently sipped their grogs; on the other the gamblers respectfully suspended the shuffling of cards and the counting of money from their huge piles of coin, while Mr. Greeley standing between them, made a strong anti-drinking and anti-gambling address, which was received with perfect good humor.” — Beyond the Mississippi, pp. 177, 178.

and the possibility that emigrants might come away empty handed and be forced to endure privation, particularly late in the season.

"Greeley’s Report" was given the widest publicity throughout the country, and was very effective in stilling the cry of hoax and placing the future of the region on a firm basis, although for a time there were allegations that even this was humbug. Richardson asserted that he had "absolute confidence in the permanency, extent and richness of these diggings," but he warned that a great many would fail in the undertaking. On the second day of the trip Greeley addressed a mass meeting of the miners of Ralston valley, which embraced the rich Gregory diggings. He spoke hopefully of the mines, advocated the formation of a state government and placed himself on record in favor of temperance.

Mr. Williams, the Superintendent of the Express Company, succeeded him in some eloquent and logical remarks, in the course of which he took occasion to refer to the willingness of the Company he represented to facilitate the intercourse of the miners with the States at the lowest possible rates. He explained the arrangements made by the Company for the shipment of dust, transportation of mails, etc., all of which were received with evident gratification by the audience.

There is a very cordial feeling here towards your city [Leavenworth], and the warmest gratitude is felt towards the Express Company.

The emigration can now start on a certain basis. Everything looks well for Kansas and the Great West.

Three cheers for Pike’s Peak and Leavenworth.

The dispatches from the mines during the month of June, 1859, were a barometer of the great change that was taking place. The coaches that had taken Greeley and Richardson to the mountains returned too soon to bring the good news of their joint report but did carry the welcome message that emigration from the mines had entirely ceased and that business had greatly revived. James M. Fox of the express company wrote from Denver on May 30, asking

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128. It is published entire in the Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 376-382. The border papers as a rule copied the manifesto, even though in some cases it ran counter to their own beliefs. Some questioned its authenticity, in particular doubting the signature of Greeley, whose name carried great weight over the country. Such charges seem to have been the last refuge of those "sold" on the humbug charge, like the Kansas City Journal of Commerce. The report did not appear in the Leavenworth Daily Times until the issue of June 21, when it was made a part of "Our Gold Budget."

129. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 201. Villard estimated the output of gold as "at least $3,500 per day" (letter cited above).

130. Special correspondence of the Leavenworth Daily Times of June 21, dated Denver City, June 10, 1859. Richardson gives a very graphic picture of this gathering of some fifteen hundred people (Beyond the Mississippi, p. 188), which he termed "the first mass meeting ever held in the Rocky Mountains." A detailed account of this same event was published in the Leavenworth Weekly Herald, June 25, 1859: "He [Greeley] was followed by Mr. Williams, who spoke of the high character, objects and designs of Jones & Russell’s Express Company—of its ability to fulfill all engagements, and appealed to the people to know whether they would sustain a company that had remained faithful through evil and good reports, whilst all others had abandoned the field. He was answered by a universal shout, 'We will! We will!'
 convincing to most people. The Leavenworth Daily Times asserted that all conclusions be suspended until he could get the report of Martin Field and Henry Villard, whom he had sent into the mountains, and said, “I think it is the richest country in the world.” The next day he wrote in a much more positive manner, confirming in full the richness and extent of the discoveries, stating, “You can set down the unparalleled richness of this country as a fixed fact.”

The express coaches that arrived on June 13 were too early to carry the “Greeley Report” but did bring over a thousand letters from the mines, addressed to every part of the country. The Leavenworth Daily Times remarked:

A number of private letters to our citizens have been shown to us, and we have yet to see one that gives us a discouraging account of the mines or those who are there.

The excitement in our city relative to the matter is as general as intense. Knots and groups of men at every corner are seen discussing the propriety of “taking a start.” “Pike’s Peak” is again a household word, and the gold fever is turning into a regular epidemic.

Thus wags the world. Up and down. Down and up. A few weeks since everybody declared—“I always knew and always said Pike’s Peak was a humbug.” Now the song goes—“Just as I predicted and always maintained, Pike’s Peak is all gold.”

The express that arrived on the night of June 19 brought to Leavenworth conclusive tidings of great riches in the Western mountains. It carried $2,500 in gold, of which a thousand dollars was consigned to the Leavenworth firm of Smoot & Russell, and the rest to Eastern customers. The express also brought the “Greeley Report” on the mines and mining operations in the West, which substantiated the claims of rich discoveries and made the news convincing to most people.

The Leavenworth Daily Times asserted

131. Leavenworth Daily Times, June 10, 1859. A copy of the Rocky Mountain News seemed to substantiate reports of the discovery. Two coaches arrived on the previous day, after a trip of eleven days, with four passengers and $229 in dust. Barring the above letter of an “insider,” however, the news was still of a discouraging nature—provisions were not to be had, money was a thing “unknown,” and emigrants were arriving and departing in about equal numbers, all of which prompted more “humbug” comments in the border papers.

132. Letter dated May 31, 1859, in Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 384-386. Four days later he wrote to Jones & Russell that he was forwarding by express a sum of gold amounting to over $400, and added as his “firm belief that in two weeks I will be able to ship you as purchasers on consignments from five to ten thousand dollars [of gold],” and described the mines as “surprisingly rich.”—Leavenworth Weekly Herald, June 18.

133. Issue of June 14, 1859—an article entitled “Pike’s Peak Redivis.”

134. In another column the Times pointed out that an express was about to leave for Denver, which would take “a number of passengers and an immense amount of mail matter. The reaction has already commenced. The tide is again turning towards the mines, and in a few weeks we may expect an emigration even larger than . . . early this year.” Despite all this, the Kansas City Journal of Commerce was still continuing its tirades against Leavenworth, which it now asserted by “helpless and deserted,” the victim of a “false system” which made it a parasite upon its neighbors. The Leavenworth Times replied (June 16): “The dirty little paper, in the dirty little town aforesaid, is ever ailing the frog in the fable. The frog insisted on swelling to ox-ish dimensions, and burst.”

135. Ibid., June 21. The White Cloud Kansas Chief of June 80 still believed the golden bubble would finally burst, and rejected the numerous dispatches of the arrival of gold at Leavenworth as largely “bunk.” It believed the Greeley report written at the request of B. D. Williams in order to boost the business of the express company.
that its position “from first to last, [was] sustained and vindicated.” Those desiring to emigrate “should start at once, and those who can should take Jones & Russell’s Express.” 136 Beginning June 21 the Times ran a new advertisement of improved service by the express company:

JONES, RUSSELL & Co.’s

EXPRESS TO THE GOLD MINES

WILL LEAVE EVERY DAY

When coaches are full of passengers. No coach will leave except on Tuesdays, unless there are six passengers.

One, two or three coaches will start every day, if there are passengers enough to justify. Fare $1.25, including 20 lbs. baggage. Extra baggage will be charged express rates.

JOHN S. JONES, Supt.

FREIGHT FOR THE MINES

I have on hand a large number of oxen and wagons, and will contract with parties to deliver in Denver City any quantity of freight. Will start a train next week, and at least two or three a week during the summer, or as often as freight offers. Apply at my office, under the Planter’s Hotel.

June 20th, 1859.

JOHN S. JONES.

The coaches that arrived at Leavenworth on June 19 would have made the trip in seven days from Denver had they not been delayed a day by an accident which took place near Station 12. The vehicles were moving at a fast pace while thousands of buffalo were swarming on the plains and in the road. A herd passed directly in front of the mules, which took fright and ran. The driver dropped the reins and jumped for the animals. He caught the harness, but was dragged along like a feather. B. D. Williams, who was in the coach, tried to catch the reins, but when the mules dashed for a precipice he hastily jumped out. He was caught by the wheels, which passed over his legs and one arm, inflicting painful but not

136. Issue of June 21. This paper had published “thousands” of an extra edition of June 29, which sold in an “unparalleled” manner.

137. June 3, 1859, the first supply train sent out by Jones & Russell arrived in Denver, loaded principally with groceries. Twenty-five wagons, each drawn by six splendid mules that appeared as sleek as when they left Leavenworth, made up the train. “It is a real God-send in view of the general scarcity of almost all articles of trade in this place.”—Special correspondence of the Leavenworth Times, dated Denver City, June 3, copied in the New York Daily Tribune, June 30. A letter dated Denver, June 14, asserted that these goods were sold mainly at wholesale (chiefly to retailers of Denver, Auraria, and elsewhere). Owing to these large shipments, prices at Denver went down considerably—sugar was then only 25¢, coffee 35¢, and flour 15¢ per pound—much cheaper than the exorbitant prices previously in effect.—Daily Times, July 4.
serious injuries. In a few moments mules, coach and all rolled over the declivity. Marvelous to state, neither animals nor coach were injured, although two of the mules escaped for a day.\footnote{138}

The trips of late June were affected by plans for a change-over to the Platte route to the mines. On May 11, 1859, Jones, Russell & Co. purchased the mail contract of John M. Hockaday & Co., who since 1858 had held a government contract to transport the mail from St. Joseph, Mo., to Salt Lake City. In the transfer were included all the stations, livestock and equipment of the Hockaday firm. Since the contract provided for mail service by way of Forts Kearny and Laramie, it was necessary that the route of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express be moved to the Platte if its coaches were to transport the overland mail. The press remained very quiet concerning the change. Since the Pike's Peak firm had been accorded much praise (and some blame) for its pioneering in establishing a new and shorter route, it is possible that the company frowned on all publicity in the matter. Late in June the service by way of the old route was interrupted, and mail and passengers from Denver were brought to the junction point on the South Platte, where connections were made with the overland mail to Utah and California.\footnote{139} Shortly thereafter the outbound coaches followed the new route, the first express for Denver by way of the Platte leaving Leavenworth July 2, 1859.

**Initial Route by the Solomon and Republican Valleys**

The route of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express from the Missouri river to the Rockies was an indefinite "right of way," the exact location of which is difficult or even impossible to establish with certainty. Since it was laid out before the region west of eastern Kansas had been surveyed the precise station locations are often questionable, particularly those in extreme western Kansas and Nebraska and present-day eastern Colorado which in 1859 constituted a part of Kansas and Nebraska. The following table of stations and intervening locations is based upon the available sources, particularly the detailed field notes of E. D. Boyd as they appeared

\footnote{138. Ibid., June 21, 1859. At Station 26 they met fifteen of Jones & Russell's express wagons, loaded with corn and provisions for Denver, and at Station 16 Downing's train of 27 wagons, also loaded with provisions for the same place.}

\footnote{139. Ibid., June 24, 1859. The transfer of contract and related matters is treated in some detail in 36 Cong., 1 Sess., Senate Reports, v. 2 (Serial 1040), No. 259, which concerns the relief of John M. Hockaday and William Liggitt. The change of route to the Platte will be discussed in more detail in the next and final installment of this article.}
in *Freedom's Champion* of Atchison, June 25, 1859; Horace Greeley's *Overland Journey*; Albert D. Richardson's *Beyond the Mississippi*; and Henry Villard's account as published in the Cincinnati *Daily Commercial*. The mileage figures are largely based upon "Boyd's Notes" and although believed to be fairly reliable should be regarded more as estimates than exact computations.

**Station 1.**—Basement of the Planter's House, Leavenworth.

**Station 2.**—Easton, Leavenworth county, which Greeley described as "a village of thirty to fifty houses."

**Station 3.**—Osawbie, Jefferson county, at the crossing of Grasshopper creek. Greeley described the town in 1859 as in "a state of dilapidation and decay, like a good many Kansas cities which figure largely on the map."

**Station 4.**—Silver Lake, Shawnee county, on the Pottawatomie Indian reservation. Richardson points out (p. 160) that this station was kept by a half-breed Indian with whom he passed the night after a day's journey of 68 miles from Leavenworth.

**Station 5.**—St. Mary's Catholic Mission.

Richardson:

Passed St. Mary's Catholic Mission—a pleasant, home-like group of log-houses, and a little frame church, bearing aloft the cross—among shade and fruit trees, in a picturesque valley. The mission has been

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140. "The Great Central Route to the Gold Mines of Western Kansas—Notes of Travel," which are referred to in this article as "Boyd's Notes." This original narrative is here republished in part, with further comments by Greeley, Richardson, and Villard. The reader is also referred to the documents included under the heading, "Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Route," which accompany "Boyd's Notes" in the publication *Overland Routes to the Goldfields, 1859*, particularly the annotated diary of Richardson; also the article by Dr. Margaret Long in *The Colorado Magazine* entitled "The Route of the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express," v. XII, pp. 186-194, and the more recent book by the same author, entitled *The Smoky Hill Trail* (Denver, 1943). See, also, the chart accompanying this installment.


142. *Overland Journey*, p. 50. Richardson points out in his *Beyond the Mississippi* (p. 160): "Beyond Easton and Hickory Point we passed hundreds of freight and emigrant wagons stalled in the mud. William H. Russell the chief freighter of the plains, owns many of them. Last year he employed twenty-five thousand oxen and two thousand wagons, chiefly in transporting supplies for our army in Utah. He stipulates that any one of his teamsters who whips cattle unmercifully or utters an oath, shall forfeit his wages. Of course the precaution proves ineffective, for there is a logical connection between mud-holes and profanity." This oath is commonly attributed to Alexander Majors of the firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell.


144. This station was at the log store of Sloan & Beaubien, which also served as the residence of Madore R. Beaubien, pioneer settler of this community. The son of Jean Baptiste Beaubien, famous French-Indian trader and business man of Detroit and Chicago, Madore came to Kansas in 1847 and settled on the Pottawatomie reserve, passing most of his later life at Silver Lake. He was a leading member of the Pottawatomie tribe, until it was naturalized, and also had a prominent career as a business man.—Unpublished manuscript of Mrs. Emma C. Reichert, a resident of Silver Lake. For an account of the early Beaubien and son, who were among the founders of Chicago, see A. T. Andreas, *History of Chicago* (3 vols., Chicago, 1864), v. I, pp. 84-86.
in operation twelve years. In the school-room we saw sixty Indian boys at their lessons.146

Station 6.—Manhattan. At this point Greeley joined Richardson, both bound for the gold mines. Because of high water their express coach was delayed a day at Manhattan.

Richardson:
Beyond the three houses which compose the town of Pittsburg, we crossed the Big Blue river and reached Manhattan—a flourishing Yankee settlement of two or three hundred people in a smooth and beautiful valley. . . .

Thus far I had been the solitary passenger. But at Manhattan Horace Greeley after a tour through the interior to gratify the clamorous settlers with speeches, joined me for the rest of the journey. . . . 146

Villard:
The high, well timbered bluffs of the Kaw River began to serve as a background to the scenery as we approached Manhattan. . . . A short distance this side of Fort Riley we came upon the ruins of Pawnee and Riley cities, consisting of two or three storehouses on both banks of the Kaw, which were considered but a few years ago as the beginning of surely great cities. It was here that Gov. Reeder wanted to locate the state capital, for the purpose of subserving the land interest he owned in this vicinity. But in this, as is well known, he signally failed, and the aforementioned edifices will stand as monuments of a speculation that overleaped itself.

Fort Riley is the best military post I have seen upon my extensive travels through the West. Officers' quarters, sutlers' establishments, stables, etc., all have an appearance of solidity and cleanliness which differ greatly, and pleasingly to the eye, from the rudely constructed cabins of which the towns we had passed consisted.147

Station 7.—Junction City. In 1859 the “jumping off” place on the frontier where travelers for the West bade good bye to most of the remaining amenities of civilization.

Richardson:
We stopped for the night at Junction City, (Station Seven,) the frontier post-office and settlement of Kansas.148

145. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 160. Because of the swollen state of Rock creek, Richardson was forced to remain an afternoon and night at Louisville, “a city of three houses.” Its hotel affords the inevitable fat pork, hot biscuits and muddy coffee. The landlady is a half-breed; and her two daughters with oval faces, olive complexions and bright black eyes the only pretty Indian girls I have ever seen.”

146. Ibid., p. 161.

147. “Pike's Peak Country,” p. 285. Richardson agreed with Villard in this conclusion, terming Fort Riley “one of our most beautiful military posts,” and added: “All the buildings are two stories high, of light limestone resembling marble.”—Beyond the Mississippi, p. 161. Greeley also praised its location, but lamented the “two millions of Uncle Sam's money” that had been used in its improvement. “The barracks are comfortable, the hospital large and well placed, the officers' quarters spacious and elegant, and the stables most extensive and admirable.”—Overland Journey, p. 72.

Villard:

... Junction City, which is a combination of about two dozen frame and log houses, which derives its name from being at the Junction of the Kaw [Smoky Hill] and Republican rivers, ... 

During my stay at Junction City I paid a visit to the "Sentinel" office, the most westerly located newspaper establishment of eastern Kansas. Its office is a most original institution. It serves the purposes of a printing house, law office, land agency, and tailor shop, and the followers of these different avocations appear to live, and sometimes to starve together in unbroken harmony.

From Leavenworth to Junction City, which represents Station No. 7, the express route is in the very best working order. I came through in 22 riding hours, which is better time than even the oldest stage lines are able to make, and fared as well on the way as though I was making a pleasure excursion along a highway of eastern travel.

After leaving Junction City we at once entered upon the unmodified wilderness of the seemingly endless prairies that intervene between the waters of the Missouri and the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains.149

Villard also wrote a good description of the express route from this point westward:

From Junction City to the last mentioned place [Denver] the route is divided into four divisions of five stations each, so that Denver City figures as Station No. 27. The distance between the several stations averages 25 miles. Care has been taken to locate the stations on creeks, in order to furnish the necessary supply of wood and water. From 18 to 24 mules, under the charge of a station-keeper, his assistant and four drivers, are kept at each of them, to furnish relays for the coaches from the East as well as the West. From two to three stages are made a day by the latter. Passengers obtain three meals a day and plenty of sleep in tents, which will soon give away to log and frame houses.

The road is an excellent one. ... Water, grass and timber, the indispensable necessities of the navigators ... [of the plains] are plentiful throughout with the exception of the valley of the Republican, the extremely sandy character of which renders it destitute of timber. For the 125 miles that the road follows its course, grass and water is, however, ample. ... 150

149. "Pike's Peak Country," pp. 226, 227. While at this place Villard "fell in with some officers from the Fort" who were "celebrating" Easter, and proceeded to "enjoy" the "very last spree for some time to come." Greeley remarked that "Junction has a store, two hotels, and some thirty or forty dwellings, one of which is distinguished for its age, having been erected so long ago as 1858." The following morning: "A mile or two of progress carried us beyond any road but that traced only this spring for the Pike's Peak expresses; for ten miles onward, no house, no field, no sign of human agency. ..."—Overland Journey, pp. 73, 74.

150. "Pike's Peak Country," pp. 227, 228. In reality the region along the upper Republican approached a desert area, but of course Villard traversed it early in the season when water and grass were probably at their best. His detailed account follows: "The express route keeps along the divide of the Republican and Solomon's Fork of Kansas River, crossing the heads of the tributaries of the latter named fork for some distance, then bearing a little northward, crossing the heads of Prairie Dog, Sappa and Cramer creeks, tributaries of the Republican, and striking that river between the 101 and 102 degrees of western longitude, it follows the south side 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 and the Santa Fe Trail twenty miles below [above] the former's mouth, and running alongside of it to Denver City, its western terminus."—Ibid., p. 227.
Station 8.—Located on the west side of Chapman’s creek near the present Clay-Dickinson county line.

Richardson:
Dined at Chapman’s creek, in a station of poles covered with sail cloth, but where the host superior to daily drenchings, gave us an admirable meal upon a snowy table-cloth.¹⁵¹

Greeley:
Our road bore hence north of west, up the left bank of Chapman’s Creek, on which, twenty-three miles from Junction, we halted at “Station 8,” at 11 a.m., to change mules and dine. . . . There is of course, no house here, but two small tents and a brush arbor furnish accommodations for six to fifteen persons, as the case may be. A score of mules are picketed about on the rich grass; there is a rail-pen for the two cows. . . . She [the station-keeper’s wife] gave us an excellent dinner of bacon and greens, good bread, apple-sauce and pie, . . . The water was too muddy . . . [to] permit me to drink it. . . .¹⁵²

Station 9.—On Pipe creek, probably northeast of present Minneapolis, Ottawa county.

Richardson:
Stopped for the night at Station Nine, consisting of two tents. In the evening wrote newspaper letters in the coach by a lantern. . . . At ten o’clock composed ourselves to sleep in the carriage to the music of howling wolves and heavy thunder.—Days’ travel sixty-eight miles [Greeley estimated it as 58 miles].¹⁵³

Greeley:
We rose early from our wagon-bed this morning, had breakfast at six, and soon bade adieu to Pipe Creek, with its fringe of low elms and cotton-woods, such as thinly streak all the streams we have passed to-day. . . . We have crossed many streams to-day, all making south for Solomon’s Fork, which has throughout been from two to six miles from us on our left. . . . The route has been from fifty to two hundred feet above the bed of the Fork, keeping out of all bottoms and marshes, but continually cut by water-

¹⁵¹ Beyond the Mississippi, p. 163. “Timber disappearing; only straggling fringes remain along the creek. . . . Began journeying now among the buffalo grass. . . . Met thirty Cheyenne Indians on a begging and stealing expedition, who asked for whisky and tobacco.”

¹⁵² Overland Journey, p. 75; also Martha B. Caldwell, “When Horace Greeley Visited Kansas in 1859,” cited above, pp. 132, 133. Some distance below this they “passed the last settler on our road to Pike’s Peak,” who was located in a valley of “gloriously rich prairie,” and already cultivating seventy-five acres of land, with splendid results.

Among the “equipment” furnished the keepers of the several “home” or “eating” stations on the line was one or more milk cows. The Leavenworth Times, May 8, 1859, pointed out that eighty such animals had been started west early that month, and added: “We are told that some of these stations are beautifully located in spots of choice fertility. Truly, in the case of the Express route, cultivation and improvement follows closely upon the footsteps of the pioneer.”

¹⁵³ Beyond the Mississippi, p. 163.
courses... in one of which... we stalled until an extra span of mules was sent from the other wagon to our aid.  

STATION 10.—Near the Solomon river and close to or a little west of present Glasco, Cloud county.

Richardson:
Dined at Station Ten sitting upon billets of wood, carpet-sacks, and nail-kegs, while the meal was served upon a box. It consisted of fresh buffalo meat, which tastes like ordinary beef though of coarser fiber, and sometimes with a strong, unpleasant flavor. When cut from calves or young cows it is tender and toothsome.  
Six weeks ago not a track had been made upon this route. Now it resembles a long-used turnpike. We meet many returning emigrants, who declare the mines a humbug; but pass hundreds of undismayed gold-seekers still pressing on.”

STATION 11.—Located on Limestone creek, Jewell county, probably a little south of the present village of Ionia. At this place the “Parallel Road” west from Atchison joined the express road, at a point 172 miles west of that city, at latitude 39° 42’ north and longitude 98° 12’ west. From this point of intersection, which seems to have been a branch of Limestone creek (termed “Dog creek” by Boyd), the Parallel road made use of the “right of way” of the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak express. The field notes of E. D. Boyd give a table of distances from the crossing of the Republican (near Scandia, Republic county), and provide a more exact picture of much of the route of the express company.

Boyd’s Notes:
From the crossing [of] the Republican the course is due west, crossing five branches of Dog [probably Limestone] creek at inter-

154. Overland Journey, pp. 80, 81. Greeley was impressed by the great herds of buffalo he saw in this vicinity, along the Solomon river. Richardson described the large numbers of antelope, which he regarded as the exact opposite of the buffalo. “The antelope gallops airy over the hills, with an elasticity surpassing the fleetest race-horse.”... Miles away, when his earth-colored body is quite indistinguishable, one sees his white tail fluttering in the breeze like a shred of linen—a perpetual flag of truce to human enemies. Here he ventures near us, but on the older roads, rifles and shot-guns have made him shy and difficult to approach.  
155. Ibid., pp. 165, 166. “Hundreds of deep buffalo trails cross our road; and through the whole afternoon the prairies for miles and miles away, quite black with the huge animals, look like bushes covered with ripe whortleberries, or like wood-land afar off.”... The next day Richardson gave a still more detailed account of these animals (pp. 166-168). He later asserted he had seen forty thousand buffalo from one vantage point and estimated that he had observed a total of a half million on the trip. Greeley thought he had seen a million in one day.—Overland Journey, p. 87.

156. This and succeeding quotations from “Boyd’s Notes” is from the Freedom’s Champion of Atchison, June 25, 1869, cited above. A brief account of the Parallel road was included in the first installment of this article (Footnote 55 gives a brief resume of the route from Atchison to Station 11), while Boyd’s narrative, as found in Overland Routes to the Goldfields, 1859 (loc. cit., pp. 285-297), gives further details upon the eastern section. (See the map accompanying this installment.)
vals of three to six miles until we reach Station No. 11, 31 miles beyond the Republican, from which point the distances set down hereafter are computed. Station No. 11 is 172 miles west from Atchison and ten miles north. Latitude 39 deg. 42 min., Longitude 98 deg. 12 min.

Creek ten ft. wide, runs south; oak and elm............................ 32½
Creek ten ft. wide, runs S. Oak and elm............................. 35½
Creek ten ft. wide, runs S. Scattering burr oak and elm........... 38½
Creek ten ft. w. runs S. E. oak and elm.............................. 39½
Creek six ft. w. runs S. W. scattering............................... 45½
Creek eight ft. w. runs S. timber.................................... 46½
Creek ten ft. w. runs S. timber...................................... 48½
Creek ten ft. w. runs S. timber, outcrop of white limestone...... 49½
Creek eight ft. w. runs south-east; scattering timber and limestone ......................................................... 50
Creek ten ft. w. runs south-east; scattering timber; chalk cliffs.. 53
Creek 10 ft. w. runs S. scattering timber............................. 59

Richardson:
Spent the night at Station Eleven, occupied by two men who gave us bread and buffalo meat like granite.—Day’s travel fifty-six miles.158

STATION 12.—In Smith county, probably a little south of the forks of Beaver creek, about seven miles southwest of present Smith Center.

Boyd’s Notes:
Station No. 12—creek 20 ft. w. runs S. elm, &c; forks into three parts above ............................................................... 63½
Creek 10 ft. w. runs south; scattering elm and cottonwood......... 71
Creek 10 ft. w. runs south-east; abundance of timber, principally elm ................................................................. 74½
Creek 10 ft. w. runs south-east; elm, high, steep bank on east side ............................................................................ 76½
Small creek runs south; no timber........................................ 79
Creek 8 ft. w. runs south; scattering cottonwood and elm........ 81½
Delaware creek, 10 ft. w. runs south-east; cottonwood and elm.. 84

Richardson:
At Station Twelve where we dined, the carcasses of seven buffaloes were half submerged in the creek. Yesterday a herd of three thousand crossed the stream, leaping down the steep banks. A few broke their necks by the fall; others were trampled to death by those pressing on from behind.159

157. This statement is very confusing but it is clear that the table of mileages was computed with the crossing of the Republican as the place of beginning and not Station 11. The longitude reading for this station appears to be too far east.
158. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 166. At about this point both Greeley and Richardson describe the large number of disillusioned “Peakers,” who were returning with humbug stories.
159. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 169.
Station 13.—Located close to Kirwin, Phillips county, near the
junction of Deer creek and the Solomon.

Boyd’s Notes:
Station No. 13—creek 10 ft. w. runs south-east; scattering cottonwood ........................................... 86
Creek 10 ft. w. runs south; scattering cottonwood, &c. .................. 90
Creek 10 ft. w. runs south; cottonwood .................................. 93½
Creek 10 ft. w. runs south; cottonwood and willow ...................... 94½
Creek 10 ft. w. runs south; Cottonwood and elm ....................... 86½ [96½]
Creek 10 ft. w. runs south-east for many miles; cottonwood .......... 98
Creek, pools of standing water; runs N. into last creek; white,
yellow and slate color chalk cliffs; yellow ochre ....................... 100
Lat. 39 deg. 42 min. Long. 99 deg. 25 min. 160 .......................... 103½
A dry creek runs north into creek at 98 miles ......................... 104½
A table mountain with monuments, a conspicuous landmark, half a mile to N.
Creek, pools of standing water; scattering cottonwood and willow, 112½
Creek 8 ft. w. runs south; cottonwood and elm ....................... 113½

Richardson:
After being mired in the same creek [probably a branch of Cedar
creek] for two hours, our own vehicle was drawn out by the oxen
of friendly emigrants. Spent the night at Station Thirteen. Day’s
travel, fifty-six miles. 161

Greeley:
[Dated at Station 13, on “Reisinger’s Creek.”] I write in the
station-tent (having been driven from our wagon by the operation of
greasing its wheels, which was found to interfere with the steadiness
of my hastily-improvised table), with the buffalo visible on the
ridges south and every way but north of us. 162

Station 14.—About 12 miles southeast of present Norton and
about four miles north of the North Fork of the Solomon
river.

Boyd’s Notes:
Station 14—Last 15 miles rough and rolling, road crooked. No
water for 13 miles. The soil is porous and does not retain it. TIM-
ber at intervals, a mile either side.
Limestone ................................................................. 119
Timber and water one mile north ...................................... 122
Divide between Solomon and Repub’n .................................. 125½
Creek runs north-east into Prairie Dog creek; cottonwood and

160. Located southwest of present Phillipsburg.
161. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 170.
162. Overland Journey, p. 89. This entire letter of Greeley’s was devoted to the buffalo
that “darkened the earth around us.” He noted that “a party of our drivers, who went back
seven miles on mules last evening, to help get our rear wagon out of a gully in which it had
mired and stuck fast . . . , report that they found the road absolutely dangerous from
the crowds of buffalo feeding on either side, and running across it . . . ,” Greeley stated
that the division superintendent, Mr. Fuller, had a narrow escape from the buffalo a few days
before, when they knocked down his mule, and very nearly trampled its rider to death.
elm; water 1/4 of a mile above road. No water or wood for the last 17 miles ................................................ 127½

Prairie Dog creek, 10 ft. w., runs north-east; cottonwood, elm and ash; very large prairie dog town west of creek............... 128½

Greeley:

As we left Station 14 this morning, and rose from the creek-bottom to the high prairie, a great herd of buffalo were seen in and around our road. . . . 163

Richardson did not mention this station, but remarked:

To-day we have been among prairie-dog towns, passing one more than a mile long. Some of their settlements are said to be twenty miles in length, containing a larger population than any metropolis on the globe. . . . This evening we supped on his flesh, and found it very palatable, resembling that of the squirrel." 164

Station 15.—On the 100th meridian at approximately the point where it crosses the Prairie Dog, about five miles southwest of present Norton.

Boyd's Notes:

Station 15 on north bank of Prairie Dog creek, runs east then south-east .................................................. 139

Creek 10 ft. w. runs south-east; Prairie Dog creek close to road, separating at this point ........................................ 140

Spring near road ................................................... 144

Lat. 39 deg. 52 min. Long. 100 deg. 07 min. 165 ........................................ 149

Creek 10 ft. w. runs north into Sappa creek; elm and ash............ 159

Creek 10 ft. w. runs east; elm and ash .......................... 161

Richardson:

We spent the night at Station Fifteen, kept by an ex-Cincinnati lawyer, who with his wife, formerly an actress at the Bowery Theater, is now cooking meals and making beds for stage passengers on the great desert three hundred miles beyond civilization. . . . Our road, following the valley of the Republican river, is here two thousand three hundred feet above sea-level. . . . Day's travel fifty-six miles. 166

Greeley:

[DATED STATION 15, PRAIRIE DOG CREEK.] We have made fifty-six miles since we started about nine this morning, and our present encampment is on a creek running to the Republican, so that we have bidden a final adieu to Solomon's Fork, and all other affluent branches of the Smokey Hill branch of the Kansas. We traveled on the "divide" between this and the northern branch of the Kansas for some miles today, and finally came over to the waters of that stream (the Republican), which we are to strike some eighty miles further on. We

163. Ibid., p. 92.
164. Beyond the Mississippi, pp. 170, 171.
165. A tributary of the Republican, near the present Norton-Deer Park county line.
166. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 171.
are now just half way from Leavenworth to Denver, and our coach has been a week making this distance; so that with equal good fortune we may expect to reach the land of gold in another week.167

**Station 16.—Probably northeast of present Oberlin.168**

**Boyd’s Notes:**
- Station 16—Timber 1½ mile to north, on Sappa creek. 170
- Timber one mile to north, on Sappa creek. 174
- Timber and limestone ½ mile to north on branch. 176
- Sappa creek 20 ft. w. runs north-east then east; cottonwood. 179½
- Creek 5 ft. w. runs south into Sappa creek which is close to road. 181½

**Richardson:**

Dined at Station Sixteen, kept by a Vermont boy who has roamed over twenty-seven States of the Union. Near it was encamped a party of Arapahoes, with thirty or forty children playing upon the grass. Those under four or five years were entirely naked. The older boys wore breech-cloths of buffalo skin, and the girls were wrapped in robes or blankets. All were muscular and well developed.169

**Station 17.—Probably on Beaver creek, near present Ludell, Rawlins county.170** A less probable location is on Driftwood creek, north of Ludell, near the present Kansas-Nebraska boundary. (See the map accompanying this installment.)

**Boyd’s Notes:**
- Station 17—on N. bank of Sappa creek. 187½
- Creek 6 ft. w. runs south-east into Sappa creek which is close to road; ash. 191½
- Dry branch; high and very steep banks. 193
- Leave Sappa creek. Road parallel with it for the last 15 miles. 195
- Dry creek runs south-east; scattering timber. Water ½ mile below. 197½
- Republican about 4 miles north171. 201
- Timber on Republican 1 mile to north. 217
- Cottonwood and water south of road. 220½

167. *Overland Journey*, p. 91. That night they met the eastbound coaches, a week out from Denver. Those coaches had been delayed a day by the begging and stealing propensities of the Arapahoe Indians who were at war with the Pawnees and were encamped along the express company route.

168. Boyd’s assertion that there was “timber 1½ miles to north, on Sappa creek,” would place this station northeast of Oberlin, although his mileage figures do not check as closely as to be desired.

169. *Beyond the Mississippi*, p. 172. Pages 172–175 contain comments upon the Indians of western Kansas. Greeley did not mention Station 16.

170. Boyd’s table of mileages, along with his astronomical observation near present Norcatur, and Greeley’s estimate of mileage east from the forks of the Republican near Benkelman, Neb., are the basis for this location. Boyd’s repeated reference to Sappa creek over a distance of some thirty-five miles cannot be entirely correct. His later allusions to this stream probably should read Beaver creek, which is much closer to the Republican. The Sappa creek of pioneer days may have included Beaver creek of today, of which the latter is tributary.

171. In this locality the Republican is far more distant from the north fork of the Sappa than ten miles. Even Beaver creek is a good deal farther from this river than Boyd’s estimate for Sappa creek would place it.
South bank of Republican Fork runs east; 200 yards w. and very shoal, sandy bottom; banks 3 to 6 ft. high. No timber at this point; no water or timber on road for the last 26 miles. Lat. 40 deg. 08 min. Long. 101 deg. 27 min. [one mile below Station 18].

Richardson:

Descending an abrupt hill, our mules, terrified by meeting three savages, broke a line, ran down a precipitous bank, upsetting the coach. . . . He [Greeley] was soon rescued from his cage, and taken to Station Seventeen, a few yards beyond, where the good woman dressed his galling wounds.172

Greeley:

We left this morning Station 17, on a little creek entitled Gouler,173 at least thirty miles back from Station 181, and did not see a tree and but one bunch of low shrubs in a dry water-course throughout our dreary morning ride, till we came in sight of the Republican, which has a little—a very little—scrubby cotton-wood nested in and along its bluffs just here. . . . Of grass there is little, and that little of miserable quality. . . . Soil there is none but an inch or so of intermittent grass-root tangle. . . .

The dearth of water is fearful. Although the whole region is deeply seamed and gullied by water-courses—now dry, but in rainy weather mill streams—no springs burst from their steep sides. We have not passed a drop of living water in all our morning's ride.

. . . Even the animals have deserted us.174

Station 18.—Probably just below the forks of the Republican river, near present Benkelman, Neb.175

Boyd's letter of May 31, 1859 (Freedom's Champion, Atchison, June 18, quoted in first installment):

172. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 173. Richardson's description of the accident to Greeley has already been quoted in his account of the trip to the mines. (See p. 216.)

173. This comment of Greeley throws some doubt upon the proper location of Station 17. The authors are unable to identify "Gouler Creek," but if Boyd's description could be disregarded they would be tempted to locate this station upon Driftwood creek, which more nearly fits the description of Greeley.

174. Overland Journey, pp. 88, 90. Christian L. Long of Selinsgrove, Pa., made the trip to the Pike's Peak region in 1859 and kept a diary of his trip. He left Leavenworth over the military road and passed through Easton, Winchester, Oskawie, Indianaola, Silver Lake, Cross Creek, Eldon, Louisville, Pittsburgh, Manhattan, Ogden and Junction City. He spoke of taking the "cut off" at Station 17.—MS. diary, Manuscripts division, Kansas State Historical Society. Boyd later refers to a cut-off between Stations 17 and 21.

175. In the article entitled "Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Route," which contains the travel diary of Albert D. Richardson, with added notes and interpretations, the editor of Overland Routes to the Gold Fields, 1859 (Le Roy R. Hafen) has given data contributed by E. S. Sutton, of Benkelman, Neb. Mr. Sutton states that the field notes of the survey of the forty-ninth parallel (the Kansas-Nebraska boundary), made in August, 1859, definitely locate the point where the express road left Nebraska, on the South Fork of the Republican. They quote the precise point where the road entered that state, about ten miles west of present Cornell, Neb. On the basis of these notes, the Nebraska surveys of 1869 and 1872 and a further study of the terrain, Messrs. Sutton and Arthur Carmody locate Station 18 about four miles west of Stratton, Neb. After a study of the description of Boyd, Greeley and Williams, the authors of this article favor the Benkelman location, with the express road entering Nebraska considerably farther west. It must be conceded, however, that it is difficult to make the details of mileage and astronomical reading agree in this locality. It is even possible that the point of entrance was near Cornell, Neb., the express road making a curve toward the Republican, with Station 18 still located near the forks of that river. On their map of the express route the authors have charted an alternate road farther east as another possibility.
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° 45'; longitude 99° 47' [southeast of present Norton]. Thence our course was North of West till we reached station 18 on the Republican, 221 miles from Republican ferry—latitude 40° 3' 8'; longitude 101° 17'. . . .

Thence the road runs in a south-west direction, parallel with the Republican to 366 miles, in latitude 39° 8', longitude 103° 27', eight miles east of station 24 [a few miles east of present Hugo, Colo.]

Boyd's Notes:

Station 18 on south bank of Republican; scattering cottonwood, 222
Branch runs north; timber and water................................. 224
Soda over surface of ground.......................................... 228
Latitude 40 deg. 05½ min. Long. 101 deg. 27 min. 176
Scattering cottonwood on bank of Republican north of road; soda.
Republican 150 yards wide ........................................... 237½
Good water in slough .................................................. 244

Letter of Beverly D. Williams to John S. Jones, dated Denver, May 9, 1859, in Leavenworth Herald, May 28, 1859:

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 cotton-woods. . . . 178 After leaving No. 18 we kept up on the southern side of the Republican to near its head. . . .

Greeley (dated Station 18, June 2):

For more than a hundred miles back, the soil has been steadily degenerating, until here, where we strike the Republican, which has been far to the north of us since we left it at Fort Riley, three hundred miles back, we seem to have reached the acme of barrenness and desolation.

I would match this station and its surroundings against any other scene on our continent for desolation. From the high prairie over which we approach it, you overlook a grand sweep of treeless desert, through . . . which flows the Republican. . . .

176. The reader will note that Boyd's longitude reading for a mile below this point is 101° 27', which is very close to present Benkelman, Neb. However, his longitude reading for a point nine miles farther southwest is exactly the same, indicating at least two errors by him in this locality. It seems probable that Boyd first struck the Republican in the vicinity of Benkelman, after traveling in a northwesterly direction from "Sappa" (probably Beaver) creek.

177. It is very clear that there must be an error either here or at Station 18, although the turn of the Republican to the south apparently lessens its importance.

178. Rock creek empties into Arikaree Fork about nine miles west of Benkelman, Neb. This location of Station 18 so far west does not agree with the chief accounts. It is possible that Williams made the error of placing Rock creek before, instead of after Station 18. In another account Williams stated that he struck the Republican "near the mouth of Rock creek," which was true, in a general way. It is certain that the main route of the express company crossed northwestern Kansas very close to the southern bank of the Republican.

179. Overland Journey, pp. 98, 100.
The same author, dated Station 21:

Since I wrote the foregoing [quoted above], we have traveled ninety miles up the south branch of the Republican (which forks just above Station 18) and have thus pursued a course somewhat south of west. In all these ninety miles, we have passed just two live streams making in from the south—both together running scarcely water enough to turn a grind-stone. In all these ninety miles, we have not seen wood enough to make a decent pigpen.\(^{180}\)

**Station 19.—On the South Fork of the Republican in Cheyenne county, probably a few miles northeast of present St. Francis.\(^ {181}\)**

**Boyd's Notes:**

Station 19 on south bank of Republican; no timber; Lat. 40 deg. 00 min. Long. 101 deg. 43 min.\(^{182}\) ........................................ 248

Water slightly alkaline in slough .................................................. 249

Lat. 30 deg. 46½ min. Long. 101 deg. 52 min. .......................... 265

Dry branch runs north-west .................................................. 269

Dry branch runs north-west ............................................. 270

**Richardson (entry of June 2):**

... we continued on by the sandy valley of the Republican, destitute of tree and shrub and barren as Sahara. Spent the night at Station Nineteen. Day's travel sixty-four miles.\(^ {183}\)

**Greeley:**

A large Cheyenne village is encamped around Station 19, where we stopped last night; and we have been meeting squads of these and other tribes several times a day. The Kioways are camped some eight miles from this spot. They all profess to be friendly, though the Cheyennes have twice stopped and delayed the express-wagons on pretense of claiming payment for the injury done them in cutting wood, eating grass, scaring away game, etc. They would all like to beg, and many of them are deemed not disinclined to steal.\(^ {184}\)

**Station 20.—On the South Fork of the Republican in Cheyenne county, probably near the present Colorado line and**

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\(^ {181}\) Sutton and Carmody place this station about twelve miles northeast of St. Francis, where they have found the remains of an earth enclosure that resembles the station ruins.—*Overland Routes to the Gold Fields*, 1859, p. 255. If the Benkelman location is adopted for Station 18, however, the next stopping point probably would be much closer to St. Francis, perhaps a few miles northeast.

\(^ {182}\) This reading is located on the Arickaree Fork of the Republican, which might lead one to believe that for a brief time this station was located in this locality and was later moved to the South Fork, when Williams straightened the route. The chief accounts agree that the express road went down the South Fork of the Republican, which makes it unreasonable to assume that a diversion up the Arickaree could have been a permanent arrangement. Copies of the original plots of the federal township surveys are on file in the office of the Auditor of State, Statehouse, Topeka. These plots show the "Jones & Russell Express road," (or simply "express road," ) closely following the south bank of the South Fork from Nebraska to the Colorado line.

\(^ {183}\) *Beyond the Mississippi*, p. 175. Richardson also mentions Indian villages in this locality.

\(^ {184}\) *Overland Journey*, pp. 104, 105.
some eight miles northeast of what is now Hale, Colo. Neither Greeley nor Richardson mentions this station although the former describes this semi-desert region in his account of Station 21.

Boyd’s Notes:
Station 20 on bank of Republican; no timber. 271
White sandy limestone 274
Branch runs north; good water; a few cottonwood. 279
A little timber to right 281
Lat. 39 deg. 40½ min. Long. 102 deg. 12 min. 285
A few small trees to right 288
Creek 6 ft. w. plenty of very good water 289
Republican 1 mile to north 290
Republican ½ mile to north 293
Republican ½ mile to north 295
Small quantity of timber one mile north on other side of Republican 296
At bank of Republican, 50 yds. wide 298

STATION 21.—On the South Fork of the Republican, near present Tuttle, Kit Carson county, Colo. (Probably below the Tuttle ranch.)

Boyd’s Notes:
Station 21 on bank of Republican. No timber; sandy limestone. Lat. 39 deg. 33½ min. Long. 102 deg. 26 min. 300
Note.—(Something has been said about making a cut-off from station 17 to 21. It is thought that water and perhaps timber can be found at a great distance apart. The branches which we cross, though dry at the Republican have water in them above.)
Creek 6 ft. w. runs north; good water; Republican ¾ mile north. It is nothing, above here, but a wide, dry, sandy bed. Water springs from the bed at this point and continues below 306
Cross dry sandy bed of Republican, 50 yds. w. runs north-east. 309
North bank of Republican, dry; hole dug in bed six feet deep, but no water. Yellow conglomerate bluff to north; has the appearance of Castle William, Governor’s Island, N. Y. 316
Cross Republican. Dry, deep, sandy bed, 100 yards wide; runs east 319
Lat. 39 deg. 23 min. Long. 102 deg. 49 min. Dug 3 feet deep in bed of Republican; no water 324

Greeley:
The bottom of the river is perhaps half a mile in average width.

... Water is obtained from the apology for a river, or by digging

185. Located in southeastern Yuma county, northwest of the present town of Hale, Colo. The latitude mentioned above seems to be slightly too far north.
186. The chief basis for locating Station 21 at the above point. Dr. Long points out that there is water in the Republican at this place, below the junction with Spring creek, but none above for about twenty miles, until in the vicinity of Station 22 (loc. cit., p. 189).
187. About six miles southwest of Carey, Kit Carson county, Colo.
in the sand by its side; in default of wood, corrals (cattle-pens) are formed at the stations by laying up a heavy wall of clayey earth flanked by sods, and thus excavating a deep ditch on the inner side, except at the portal, which is closed at night by running a wagon into it. The tents are sodded at their bases; houses of sods are to be constructed so soon as may be. Such are the shifts of human ingenuity in a country which has probably not a cord of growing wood to each township of land. 188

Six miles farther up, the stream disappears in the deep, thirsty sands of its wide bed, and is not seen again for twenty-five miles. 189

Richardson:

At Station Twenty-one where we spent the night, we first encountered fresh fish upon our table. Here the enormous cat-fish of Missouri and Kansas has dwindled to the little horned-pout of New England, lost its strong taste and regained its legitimate flavor. Day's travel fifty-nine miles.

June 4.—We still follow the Republican which at one point, sinks abruptly into the earth, running under ground for twenty miles and then gushing up again. We saw one thirsty emigrant digging in the dry bed for water. At the depth of four or five feet he found it. 190

Station 22.—About 5½ miles northwest of Seibert, Colo., at the junction of the express road and a branch of the Smoky Hill trail to Denver (by way of the Platte river). 191

Boyd's Notes:

Station 22 on south bank of Republican; large spring in bed of river which sinks immediately below. 329½

Since first striking Republic'n our course has been parallel with it and our road nearly level. For the last 23 miles there is no wood or water, but the grass is good. In that distance there are some five miles (not more in all) of deep sandy road—Smoky Hill route comes in from S. E.—South Fork Republican comes in from south-west.

Conglomerate Bluff to right. N. Fork Republican ¾ mile north.

South Fork Republican 1½ mile south. 233½ [333¾]

Leave road to left and take “cut-off.” 192 342

Cross North Fork of Republican; dry, sandy bed 30 yards wide, with occasionally a spring; runs north-east; good grass. For the

188. Overland Journey, p. 103.
189. Ibid., p. 107.
190. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 175. Villard also mentions “the sudden sinking of the Republican between 21 and 22 into a dry bed of sand, under which it continues its course subterraneous to its sources.”—“Pike's Peak Country,” p. 229.
191. The authors have charted this route, which passed through Station 22 in a north-westerly direction, on the basis of the following accounts. It seems probable that this trail to Denver by a round-about detour to the Platte was the road in chief use in early 1859.
192. Evidently Boyd attempted to save time by deviating from or “shortening” the express road. Such minor changes appear to have been of frequent occurrence. Dr. Margaret Long points out in her article on the express road that Boyd's “North Fork” was really the South Fork of the Republican, and his “South Fork” is now called the Big Sandy (loc. cit., p. 160).
last 13 miles high rolling prairie, little grass and no water; good hard road. Lat. 39 deg. 15 min. Long. 103 deg. 06 min. 183
Strike main road; runs parallel with Fork from 343 miles. 186

Richardson:

After riding twenty-five miles without seeing a drop of water, at Station Twenty-two we crossed the Smoky Hill route which from a point far south of ours, abruptly turns northward across the Republican to the Platte. Emigrants who have come by the Smoky Hill tell us they have suffered intensely, one traveling seventy-five miles without water. Some burned their wagons, killed their famishing cattle and continued on foot.

We are still on the desert with its soil white with alkali, its stunted shrubs, withered grass, and brackish waters often poisonous to both cattle and men. Day's travel forty-eight miles. 184

Greeley:

[After describing the subterranean course of the Republican, above Station 211—At the head of this “sink,” the stream disappears in like manner to that of its emergence. Here is Station 22, and here are a so-called spring, and one or two considerable pools, not visibly connected with the sinking river, but doubtless sustained by it. And here the thirsty men and teams which have been twenty-five miles without water on the Express Company’s road, are met by those which have come up the longer and more southerly route by the Smoky Hill, and which have traveled sixty miles since they last found water or shade. . . . The Pike’s Peakers from the Smoky Hill whom I met here, had driven their ox-teams through the sixty miles at one stretch, the time required being two days and the intervening night. From this point westward, the original Smoky Hill route is abandoned for that we had been traveling, which follows the Republican some twenty-five miles further. . . .

The bluffs are usually low, and the dry creeks which separate them are often wide reaches of heavy sand. . . . There is little grass on the rolling prairie above the bluffs. . . . Some of the dry-creek valleys have a little that is green but thin, while the river bottom—often half a mile wide—is sometimes tolerably grassed, and sometimes sandy and sterile. Of wood, there is none for stretches of forty or fifty miles: the corrals are made of earth, and consist of a trench and a mud or turf wall; one or two station-houses are to be built of turf if ever built at all; and at one station the fuel is brought sixty miles from the pineries further west. 185

Extract from special correspondence of the St. Louis Missouri Republican, June 7, 1859:

Denver City, May 20, 1859.

. . . At the latter point [Station 22] a branch of the Smoky Hill route crosses the Express route, and I found a whole city of canvas, inhabited by weary emigrants who wanted to give them-

183. South of Saugus, Colo., near the Lincoln-Kit Carson county line.
184. Beyond the Mississippi, pp. 176, 178.
selves and stock a few day's rest, at and about the junction of the
two roads. I conversed freely with such as had come via the Smoky
Hill route, and they were all unanimous in their denunciations of
the same. The Indians had burned off all the early grass, and were
themselves congregated in large numbers along the road and very
overbearing and troublesome.

The travelers had an absolute desert of one hundred and fifty
miles to cross. . . . [Details of the suffering on this route fol-
low.]

. . . I found every one of the western stations of the Express
company beset by gangs of half-starved men—mostly of the hand-
cart and walking gentry—that had consumed their last, days ago,
and were now driven to appeal to the feelings of compassion of the
employees of the Express company. And heartily and humanely
was this appeal responded to in most cases. Otherwise, the road
would be covered with the bleaching bones of such as had breathed
their last in the merciless wilderness, for want of the means of
physical subsistence. 196

Station 23.—On the South Fork of the Republican, about 16
miles east and a little north of present Hugo, Colo. 197
Neither Greeley nor Richardson mentions this station.

Boyd's Notes:

Station 23 on N. bank of N. [S.] Fork of Republican; springs in
bed; limestone and conglomerate crop out of bluff on south side of
Fork for the last 15 miles.

Pike's Peak in view; bears south about 70 deg. W. distance
about 120 miles ....................................................... 350 1/4
Spring in North [S.] Fork of Republican; a mere ravine at this
place ............................................................... 352 2/3
Water in same ..................................................... 353 1/4
Lat. 39 deg. 00 min.  Long. 103 deg. 20 min. 198 ........ 358
Head of N. [S.] Fork of Republican ............................ 359 2/3
Top of divide; fine view of Pike's Peak; bears south; 70 deg.
west; specimens of selenite ....................................... 360
Dry ravine runs south; spring .................................. 367
Dry ravine runs south; pools of water ......................... 368 1/2

Villard:

. . . and last, but not least, a full aspect of the veritable
snow-browed Pike's Peak, which becomes already visible at station
13 [23]—a distance of 100 miles. It first looks like a cloud, but, as
one comes nearer, assumes clearer and greater dimensions, and when
arriving on the last ridge before running down into the Cherry

197. Dr. Long places this station on the Ketcham and Pugsley (K. P.) ranch (loc. cit.,
pp. 190, 191). This conforms with Boyd's astronomical reading, but not so well with his
mileage figures. It seems possible that this station could have been some nine miles farther
north, on the north branch of the South Fork, which might explain Boyd's reference to the
"North Fork" of the Republican.
198. The latitude quoted in this reading is clearly too far south. In her article on the
express route Dr. Long identifies many of the streams mentioned by Boyd.
Creek valley, its eastern front is completely revealed to the eye, together with a long chain of peaks, partly covered with snow and partly with pine, and extending in a northward direction as far as Long's Peak. I have seen the Alps of Switzerland and Tyrol, the Pyrenees and Appenines, yet their attractions appear to dwindle into nothing when compared with the at once grotesque and sublime beauty of the mountain scenery upon which my eyes feasted before descending into the valley above referred to.\(^{199}\)

**Station 24.**—About seven miles northwest of Hugo, Colo., on the Big Sandy (not the South Fork of the Republican, as claimed by Boyd and B. D. Williams).

*Boyd's Notes:*

Station 24 on north bank of south Fork of Republican [Big Sandy]; runs south-east for some distance; dry sandy bed 80 yds. wide with pools of water at this point; no timber. \(^{373\frac{1}{2}}\) Cross same fork, runs south then south-east; dry sandy bed 100 yards wide; water by digging two feet; willow bushes. \(^{377}\) Cross same fork; runs north-east then east; dry sandy bed 100 yards wide; large branch comes in from north-west with large pools of water; shrub willow. \(^{380}\) Small cottonwood and water at Fork to left. \(^{383}\) Lat. 39 deg. 18 min. Long. 103 deg. 49 min.\(^{200}\) Leave south Fork of Republican which runs from south-west towards south-east. \(^{391}\) Top of Divide Ferruginous sand stone. \(^{396}\)

*Greeley:*

A ride over a rolling “divide” of some twenty miles, brought us to the “Big Sandy,” running south-west to become tributary (when it has anything to contribute) to the Arkansas. Like the Republican, it is sometimes a running stream, sometimes a succession of shallow pools, sometimes a waste of deep, scouring sand. A few paltry cotton-woods, a few bunches of low willow, may have graced its banks or those of some dry creek running into it, in the course of the twenty miles or so that we followed up its northern bank. . . . I recollect only that the grass at intervals along its narrow bottoms seemed a little better than on the upper course of the Republican. One peculiarity of the Big Sandy I had not before observed—that of a thin, alkaline incrustation—mainly of soda, I believe—covering many acres of the smoother sands in its dry bed.\(^{201}\)

**Station 25.**—Located on the west bank of East Bijou creek about five miles southwest of Godfrey, Elbert county, Colo.

\(^{199}\) *Pike's Peak Country,* p. 229. Richardson's entry for June 5 seems to be a description of the same distant view of Pike's Peak as obtained from Station 29: "At daylight Pike's Peak more than a hundred miles away, appeared dim and hazy on the horizon and we began to feel the inspiring breath of the mountains. Most emigrants were uncamping out of respect for the Sabbath, and the sore feet of their cattle, which they carefully bandaged."—*Beyond the Mississippi,* p. 176.

\(^{200}\) Located near Riverbend, Colo., where the Big Sandy makes an abrupt turn to the southwest.

\(^{201}\) *Overland Journey,* pp. 109, 110.
Boyd's Notes:

Creek, dry sandy bed 60 yds. wide; runs north into South Fork of Platte, water by digging two feet; a few willows and cottonwood
—Station 25 on west bank ........................................ 401

Top of hill, sand stone; fine view of Long's Peak as well as Pike's Peak; former bears N. 80 W., latter S. 60 W. .................. 403

Dry branch runs N. pools of good water .......................... 404

Beaver creek, sandy bottom 12 yds. wide runs north; very good water; a few scattering, small cottonwood and willows .......... 407

Small grove of Norway (long leaved or yellow) pine to left with spring ................................................................. 409

Scattering groves of Norway pine; Lat. 39 deg. 24 min. Long.
104 deg. 10 min. 202

Creek 5 ft. w. runs N. good water, pine .......................... 411½

Top of hill; magnificent view of the whole range of mountains from Long's Peak to Pike's Peak; deep broad valley immediately to west ................................................................. 414

Descend 300 feet .......................................................... 418½

Bijou creek, 30 yds. w. bluff banks 6 to 10 ft. high, bottom sandy, very shoal, runs east of north; scattering willow and cotton- wood; pine one mile east and west.

Top of hill; Ferruginous sand stone, yellow ochre, bright red trap etc., on eastern slope; pine and cedar. No more pine for sev- eral miles ................................................................. 422

Creek, dry sandy bed 100 yds. w.; water by digging one foot; runs north; bushes; a few cottonwoods one mile north ............. 423½

Dry ravine runs N. pools of water ..................................... 425

Creek, sandy bed 15 yards wide; good water runs north ......... 426

Top of ridge bears north and south ................................. 427½

Richardson:

At our dining station, Twenty-five, I met several old Kansas acquaintances, so dust-covered and sunburnt that for several minutes I did not know them .... Toward evening, Pike's Peak loomed up grandly in the southwest, wrapt in its ghostly mantle of snow and streaked by deep-cut gorges shining in the rays of a blazing sunset—

'The seal of God

Upon the close of day.'

In the northwest Long's Peak was sharply defined against a mass of ominous black clouds which rising slowly left behind them a scattered trail, dark and wild as the locks of the storm-god.203

Greeley:

At length we crossed its deep, trying sand and left it behind us [Big Sandy], passing over a high "divide" much cut up by gullies through which the water of the wet seasons tears its way to the Arkansas on the south or the Platte on the north, until we struck,

202. Near the west fork of Bijou creek in northern Elbert county, Colo.
203. Beyond the Mississippi, pp. 176, 177.
at five last evening, the first living tributary to the Platte—a little
creek called Beaver [probably East Bijou], which I have not seen on
any map. It is about ten miles east of the Bijou, with which it
probably unites before reaching the Platte.

After leaving the valley of Big Sandy, the grass of the uplands
becomes better, and is no longer confined to the water-courses.

At Beaver Creek we saw, for the first time in many weary days—
for more than two hundred miles at the least—a clump of low but
sturdy cotton-woods, thirty or forty in number. . . . And, six
or seven miles further, just as night was falling, we came in sight of
pines, giving double assurance that the mountains were at hand.

Station 26.—Probably on Kiowa creek about ten miles north
of present Kiowa, Colo. 205

Boyd’s Notes:

Station 26 on Kioway creek, 10 ft. wide; sandy bed, very shoal,
good water, runs north; willow bushes; Lat. 39 deg. 29 min. Long.
104 deg. 29 min. 206 .................................................. 429

Creek 10 ft. wide; very shoal; sandy bottom, runs north-east;
good water; willow bushes ........................................ 430½

Take cut off, leaving road to left. .................................. 433

Dry branch bears N. W. Pools of water; willow bushes ........... 433½

Dry branch, sandy bed, runs N. two or three trees and some
bushes; pools of water .............................................. 434½

Creek 20 yds. wide, sandy bottom; very shoal, runs north; a few
bushes ................................................................. 436½

Dry branch runs N.; pools of water; a few bushes .................. 439

Dry branch runs N. E.; bushes ..................................... 439½

Creek, dry sandy bed, 10 yds. w. runs N. E.; pools of fine water;
scattering cottonwood and pine ................................... 441

Scattering pine ....................................................... 443½

Groves of pine ....................................................... 444

Creek, bluff banks 3 to 8 ft. high; sand bed 12 yds. w. runs N.
W.; good water; scattering pine above; leave pine. Lat. 39 deg. 36
min. Long. 104½ deg. 48 min. 207 .................................... 446½

Top of hill, Pike’s Peak bears S. 10 deg. W.; splendid view of the
mountains; a wide valley in the foreground; the lower (black)
mountains in the middle, and the high mountains covered with snow
in the background .................................................... 449

Pine ½ mile to north. 208

Strike old road at Cherry Creek, on road from Santa Fe; creek
10 yds. w.; runs N. W.; sandy banks and bottom; scattering cotton-
wood; thence parallel with Cherry Creek into Denver City. ....... 454

204. Overland Journey, pp. 110, 111.
205. See the comments of Dr. Long, loc. cit., p. 193.
206. About ten miles north of Kiowa, Colo.
207. Southeast of Denver near the present Arapahoe-Douglas (Colo.) county line.
208. Villard calls attention to the “beautiful pine groves from 24 up to 27.”—“Pike’s
Peak Country,” p. 229.
Richardson:
Supping at Station Twenty-six we made a comfortable bed in the coach, and rolling on at the rate of seven miles an hour, slept quietly through the night. 209

Station 27.—Denver.

Boyd’s Notes:
Latitude 39 deg. 49 min.; Longitude 105 deg. 07 min. 210

Richardson (entry of June 6, 1859):
Woke at five, still in motion, and obtained a glorious view of the mountains, their hoary peaks covered with snow and their base, thirty miles across the valley into which we were descending, seeming not more than two miles away.

At last we struck the old trail from Santa Fe to Salt Lake, rode a mile along the dry bed of Cherry Creek, and at eight this eleventh morning reached Denver City. . . . During our journey from Leavenworth we have doubtless passed ten thousand emigrants. 211

Greeley:
From the Bijou to Cherry Creek—some forty miles—I can say little of the country, save that it is high rolling prairie, deeply cut by several streams, which run north-easterly to join the Platte, or one of its tributaries just named. We passed it in the night, hurrying on to reach Denver, and at sunrise this morning stopped to change mules on the bank of Cherry Creek. . . .

As to gold, Denver is crazy. She has been low in the valley of humiliation, and is suddenly exalted to the summit of glory. . . . 212

Denver Express Office.
The following Denver dispatch (dated June 4) of the St. Louis Missouri Republican 213 gives an account of the Denver office of the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express Company:

For the first two weeks after the opening of the express office in this place, it occupied a log cabin of a rather primeval description. A few days ago, however, the headquarters were removed, to a more civilized abode, consisting of frame, and affording a plentiful supply of light, of which the former windowless haunt had been entirely destitute.

209. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 177.
210. The longitude reading for Denver is incorrect, being too far west.
211. Beyond the Mississippi, p. 177.
212. Overland Journey, pp. 112, 114. Both Greeley and Richardson lodged at the Denver House, which the latter described as “a long low one-story edifice, one hundred and thirty feet by thirty-six, with log walls and windows and roof of white sheeting. In its spacious saloon, the whole width of the building, the earth was well sprinkled to keep down dust. The room was always crowded with swarthy men armed and in rough costumes. The bar sold enormous quantities of cigars and liquors. At half a dozen tables the gamblers were always busy, day and evening. One in wooden shirt and jockey cap drove a thriving business at three-card monte, which netted him about one hundred dollars per day. . . .”—Richardson quotes the gambler’s “spoil,” Beyond the Mississippi, p. 187.
The express company carries, as you are undoubtedly already aware, the United States mail, and their mail department is a branch of their business, of great importance, extent and profit. It is under the superintendency of Mr. Martin Field, formerly of the St. Louis, and lately of the Leavenworth City post office. Although but recently arrived, he has already succeeded in systematizing the discharge of his onerous duties, and his office now presents that perfect mechanism that alone is apt to secure satisfaction to the public in mail matters.

The post office is, of course, a place of general rendezvous, crowds of emigrants and immigrants, diggers, traders, mountaineers, etc., can always be seen in and about it, retelling their hopes and disappointments. . . 214

214. In particular see the Reminiscences of General William Larimer, previously cited, p. 172 et seq. The mail business of the Pike's Peak Express companies will be treated in more detail in the final installment of this article.

(Part III—The Platte Route—To Be Published in an Early Issue)