

That Broad and Beckoning Highway: The Santa Fe Trail  
and the Rush for Gold in California and Colorado

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## Preface

The motto of the Santa Fe Trail Association is “The Santa Fe Trail Lives On.” This study of the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the California gold rush of 1849 and the “Rush to the Rockies” in 1859 echoes and reinforces that motto. It portrays the trail as a living entity for those who trod it during these two epic eras in American history. For them it was a broad and beckoning highway, literally their road to riches. They followed the trail for weeks and dreamed their dreams of untold wealth.

The organization of this study is somewhat idiosyncratic for three reasons. First, the audience that will read and use it is highly varied. Second, as will become apparent, there are fundamental differences between the rush in 1849 and that of 1859 and they must be treated separately. And finally, since this piece will appear only as an Ebooks, it is broken into “user friendly” segments that can be accessed from a variety of electronic devices.

The audience that might read or consult this analysis stretches across a spectrum from elementary, middle and high school students pursuing questions or class research to scholars referencing it for their own interests. Those folks in between will include the occasional trail traveler, trail “buffs” and aficionados, members of the Santa Fe Trail Association, anyone delving into the history of the two gold rushes, and all those interested in protecting, preserving, or interpreting the Santa Fe Trail. As a consequence, the study is not written or laid out as a traditional published work. It relies heavily on material quoted from emigrant diaries, letters, journals and memoirs. It draws extensively on contemporary newspaper coverage. Further, it can be “accessed” wherever a reader’s interest might lead without scrolling through many pages of narrative.

In certain basic ways this study is really two “books” because there is little connection between emigrant use of the trail in 1849 and emigrant and freighting activity in 1859. As a result it broken into two parts with a separate annotated bibliography for each. Part One, on the 1849 gold rush, is more lyrical given that emigrants then were encountering a trail that still ran largely through a “wilderness” which both frightened and enchanted them. Part Two, for the 1859 rush, is more analytical since the trail was more settled and “tamer” heading east from Missouri and because in 1859, as contrasted with 1849, the trail was a major freighting route to the Colorado mines. These two sections of the study are each introduced by a singular account. For 1849 the diary of emigrant H. M. T. Powell is incorporated. For 1859 the musings of William N. Byers, editor of the *Rocky Mountains News* are considered. These narratives are deliberately designed to engage a reader and prompt interest in the entire study.

The layout of every component of this study has been planned for its publication as an Ebook rather than in traditional print format. There is a story here and it is written as such, but its elements are broken out into easily accessed and understood segments. With the aid of the Table of Contents a reader can reference any portion of the study and not wonder “what happened before this and how did we get here?” That necessity resulted in some duplication of source material from one section to another but in the end it serves readers, both casual and otherwise.

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## OVERVIEW

The California gold rush of 1849 is one of the iconic events in American history. After more than 150 years “California” and “gold” remain synonymous in the American mind. For many the details of the momentous discovery at Sutter’s Mill may be hazy, but even today almost everyone can hum a few bars of Stephen Foster’s “Oh! Susanna,” perhaps recalling its famous lyric of 1849, “I’m going to California with my washpan on my knee.” And every football season, multitudes of fans cheer on the “San Francisco ’49ers.” (The lyric in “Oh! Susanna” celebrating the California gold rush was not written by Stephen Foster, but was a later adaptation. Foster’s original composition was first published in 1848.)

The “Rush to the Rockies,” the race for Colorado gold in 1859, does not similarly register to any like degree with the American public. It does define the history of the Intermountain and Rocky Mountain West, but while Coloradans acknowledge the gold rush as central to the development of the state, they most likely associate the names of the historic mining towns like Cripple Creek, Breckenridge, and Aspen with casino gambling, ski resorts, and upscale shopping. Nonetheless, the residual wealth of the Colorado mines is still in evidence and influential in the state, such as in the philanthropic endeavors of the El Pomar Foundation in Colorado Springs, endowed by the mining fortune of Spencer and Julie Penrose.

This present study, “That Broad and Beckoning Highway: The Santa Fe Trail and the Rush for Gold in California and Colorado,” will investigate the role of that historic trail in the events of 1849 and 1859. While much has been written on the Santa Fe Trail as a trade route and economic link between the western fringe of American settlement and the Republic of Mexico and then the American Southwest, and as a road to conquest in the Mexican-American War of

1846-1848, it has not been interpreted as a highway to the gold fields. Yet, in 1849 thousands of California-bound emigrants used the trail as a link to the Pacific Coast via the Gila Trail and other routes through the Southwest deserts. In 1859, more thousands of men and women hopeful of finding their fortunes in Colorado opted to travel the well-known and well-trodden Santa Fe Trail. In both instances, these emigrants blazed no new route to the west. Instead, they reinforced the importance of the Santa Fe Trail as *the* first and most historic road leading Americans on their quest for new frontiers beyond the Missouri River.

There are two sections to this study. Part One will address the role of the trail in the 1849 California gold rush, and Part Two will similarly consider developments for the 1859 Colorado rush. An evaluation of the significance of the trail in each emigration and suggestions for new or further interpretations and research follows at the conclusion of these chapters. A highly detailed annotated bibliography is provided for each part. In the bibliography for Part Two – the 1859 gold rush – the extensive list of guidebooks for the “Rush to the Rockies” is set apart from other works on the topic. These annotated bibliographies in particular identify those primary sources which pertain very specifically to the use of the Santa Fe Trail in the “rushes” of 1849 and 1859, a distinction which has not generally been made previously in trail studies.

This study does not include a general overview of the history of the Santa Fe Trail, though each emigration is considered in the context of its time and place. The literature of the Santa Fe Trail is vast – in fact, the written “history” of the trail dates from 1844 and the publication of Josiah Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies*. There are excellent general treatments, from Robert Duffus’ somewhat romanticized *The Santa Fe Trail* to Jack D. Rittenhouse’s scholarly introduction in *The Santa Fe Trail: A Historical Bibliography*. Since 1986, *Wagon Tracks: The Santa Fe Trail Association Quarterly* magazine has published hundreds of articles

and news items concerning the history and heritage of the old trail, the Santa Fe National Historic Trail, and current trail-related developments. There are also numerous resources, including the full text of 25 years of *Wagon Tracks*, online at a host of Internet sites. This study particularly emphasizes the burgeoning technological resources for both the historic and contemporary Santa Fe Trail.

The approach taken toward the 1849 California gold rush and the 1859 Colorado gold rush in the following pages will be similar in that the same basic questions will be asked of each. These include:

- What general events and developments herald this gold rush?
- What primary sources do we have for understanding the use of the Santa Fe Trail – journals, diaries, letters, memoirs, guidebooks and maps?
  1. What do these sources tell us – for example, who is going, why are they going, how are they provisioning for the journey, how are they organizing themselves, what is their understanding of the trail, what experiences – unique or mundane – do they have on the trail? How did these gold rush emigrants differ from other trail travelers?
  2. Why did these emigrants choose the Santa Fe Trail over some other route?
  3. What was the emigrants' judgment of the Santa Fe Trail as a route west?
- What conclusions can be drawn concerning this enhanced view of the role of the trail in the 1849 – and 1859 – gold rush?

Investigating these questions will, of course, reveal inherent variations in the role of the trail in 1849 as contrasted with 1859. For example, in 1849 emigrants blazed new trails which

supplemented or branched from the “old” trail as it wound from Missouri to New Mexico, either by its Mountain or Cimarron routes. These “new” roads included the Cherokee Trail, which originated in northeastern Oklahoma, joined the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek near present-day McPherson, Kansas, and then followed the old trail to the Arkansas River Crossing/Bent’s Old Fort vicinity in Colorado. It then went west up the Arkansas to Fountain Creek (present-day Pueblo Colorado) and then north to join the Oregon - California Trail in Wyoming. Also in 1849, a stream of emigrants reached New Mexico via the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road through present-day Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle, joining the Santa Fe Trail in the vicinity of San Miguel, New Mexico, in the Pecos River Valley. Neither the Cherokee Trail nor the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road played a role in the 1859 rush to gold in Colorado.

The migrations of 1849 and 1859 both also saw the use of the Platte River Road as a route west. Although the two initial parties which reached the Colorado gold fields in 1859, the “William Green Russell” and “Lawrence” associations, used the Santa Fe Trail, subsequently the Platte River Road was chosen overwhelmingly as the emigrant and freight route to the new city of Denver and the surrounding mining districts.

Those 1859 emigrants who did choose the Santa Fe Trail took a variety of approaches. Some joined it at a traditional eastern terminus such as Independence, Missouri. Others opted to outfit and organize at Leavenworth, Kansas. Some followed the Smoky Hill Trail to various points in central Kansas and then dropped south to the Santa Fe route. Almost all these emigrants, once they reached the vicinity of Bent’s Old Fort, followed the previously-blazed Cherokee Trail west to present-day Pueblo, Colorado, then north to Denver. Additionally, in 1859 the Santa Fe Trail took on a new role as a freight route to the newly-opened mines in central and southern Colorado, accessible up the Arkansas Valley via Pueblo, Cañon City, and Ute Pass, west of

present-day Colorado Springs. Also, Denver and its contiguous mining regions, as well as the central and southern mines, came to be supplied for a time from New Mexico, via the Santa Fe Trail northward through Raton Pass.

Given these differences and developments, a major conclusion of this study will be that in the 1849 gold rush, the Santa Fe Trail played a role as a primary route for emigrants to California through New Mexico and Arizona. In 1859, on the other hand, while it served as a route for many emigrants, the trail also functioned as a freighting connection between the mines and new communities in Colorado and the commercial centers of Missouri and Kansas as well as the agricultural regions of New Mexico. Any interpretations of this era in trail history should take this distinction into account.

*Note: Citations in this study are incorporated in the text of the study, at the end of relevant paragraphs, listing an author's last name and a page number, with a brief title indicated if there is more than one book or article for an author. A complete annotated bibliography for each part will be found at the end of that section. Just as the story of each gold rush – 1849 or 1859 – is distinct, so are their resources – the diaries, journals, letters, and reminiscences of emigrants, as well as newspaper coverage and varied historical works.*

## PART ONE: HO! FOR CALIFORNIA – THE GOLD RUSH OF 1849

### FOREWORD

Gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill near present-day Sacramento, California, on January 24, 1848. The news quickly spread to San Francisco and then, via word of mouth, personal letters, newspaper accounts and official United States governmental reports to the rest of the country and beyond. The great emigration to the California gold fields began as a trickle in the autumn of 1848 and then became a deluge – the California Gold Rush – in the spring of 1849. California's population of approximately 14,000 in 1848 swelled to nearly 265,000 in 1852.

Gold seekers from the eastern United States had a number of options for traveling to California. They could sail via Cape Horn. They might book a sea passage to Panama, cross the isthmus on mules, and then take a ship north to the Pacific Coast. Some made their way to Mexican ports on the Gulf of Mexico, trekked across Mexico itself, and then caught a ship for Los Angeles or San Francisco. Or, they might leave Boston, New York or perhaps Baltimore on the eastern United States seaboard, arrive in New Orleans, and take various trails across Texas and the American Southwest.

Emigrants might also choose one of four transcontinental routes leading west especially from the states of Missouri or Arkansas. The most northerly of these was the Platte River Road which, as part of the Oregon-California Trail, had carried wagon trains west beginning in the early 1840s. The Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road and the Cherokee Trail also beckoned emigrants. The Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road ran from western Arkansas, then across Oklahoma, the Texas Panhandle, and the eastern plains of New Mexico, terminating in Santa Fe. The Cherokee Trail angled northwest from northeastern Oklahoma to join the old Santa Fe Trail in present-day

McPherson County, Kansas and continued along the Santa Fe Trail to Bent's Old Fort near contemporary La Junta, Colorado. It then followed the Arkansas River to the confluence of Fountain Creek [Pueblo, Colorado], turned north along the front range of the Rocky Mountains and joined the Oregon-California Trail in Wyoming.

The Santa Fe Trail from Missouri to New Mexico had been in use since 1821. Emigrants choosing this route anticipated arriving in Santa Fe and then heading from there for California though, as will become evident in this study, many of them bypassed Santa Fe and camped at Galisteo, New Mexico, before challenging the deserts of the southwest. In either case, they had to make a choice at that point of what path to take to California. Their primary options included the Gila Trail, the Southern Trail, the Zuni Trail, and the Old Spanish Trail. The Gila and Southern routes followed the Rio Grande south, with the Gila Trail leaving the river near present-day Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, and the Southern Trail branching off in the area of today's Garfield, New Mexico. The Gila Trail eventually struck the Gila River in southwestern New Mexico and followed it to its junction with the Colorado River. The Southern Trail led to the far southwest corner of New Mexico, dipped briefly into old Mexico, then struck the Santa Cruz River and followed it north to its confluence with the Gila River in south-central Arizona.

The Zuni Trail headed west from Santa Fe to Zuni Pueblo in far western New Mexico, trended southwest in Arizona to the Salt River, and then joined with the Gila Trail farther west. The Old Spanish Trail, which was attempted by few emigrant parties, traversed north-central New Mexico, cut through southwest Colorado, crossed southern Utah and Nevada, and then proceeded to Los Angeles. These trails are definitively identified and considered in historian

Patricia Etter's comprehensive study *To California on the Southern Route, 1849, A History and Annotated Bibliography*.

The number of emigrants who used the various transcontinental roads to California can only be estimated. Merrill Mattes in his conclusive history *The Great Platte River Road* puts approximately 180,000 gold seekers on that route between 1849 and 1855. Elliot West, in his introduction to Patricia Etter's *To California on the Southern Route* calculates that some "20,000 persons rushed to California in 1849 by another way – a cluster of trails through the southwestern deserts. . . ." Available evidence suggests that the preponderance of these 20,000 used the Santa Fe Trail or the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, but precise figures are impossible to compute. The experiences of these emigrants are amply chronicled in the letters, diaries, journals, and memoirs they penned. These accounts are at the heart of this study. (Mattes 23, Etter 8)

H. M. T. Powell was one of the emigrants who followed the Santa Fe Trail on his journey to the California gold mines in 1849. This chapter will begin with a consideration of his journal for that trip, one of the two or three most thoughtful, descriptive and entertaining journals of the era. Having thus "set the scene" with Powell, the chapter will then consider various questions, such as:

- How was the news of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill carried across America and when did it reach Missouri River towns like St. Louis, Independence and Westport?
- Once an emigrant decided to leave kith and kin for the rush to California, how did he, or the "company" he might join, decide what route to take? There were starkly different

options – from “rounding Cape Horn,” to the Platte River Road or the Santa Fe Trail. One primary factor, for example, was an emigrant’s proximity to a point of departure.

- What experiences did emigrants have which were unique to them and the times? Up to 1849 the Santa Fe Trail had been primarily a commercial link between the Missouri frontier and New Mexico, with some traders then venturing to “old” Mexico itself. After 1846, it also became a freighting and travel route for the United States Army, which was establishing and provisioning forts in the conquered territories of the new American Southwest. Again, the question is, what was different about emigrant traffic on the trail and how did the emigrants themselves perceive the trail?

Throughout this consideration of the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the California gold rush, it will be seen that this era was an anomaly in the history and heritage of the trail. For a brief period it was an emigrant, as well as a commercial and freighting trail. In that time tens of thousands of Americans took the Santa Fe Trail and its variant routes west. They have a story to tell.

*H. M. T. Powell and The Santa Fe Trail to California*

Very little is known about H. M. T. Powell. As Douglas S. Watson puts it in his introduction to Powell’s journal, published as *The Santa Fe Trail to California, 1849-1852* by the Book Club of California in 1931, “All efforts to trace out the history of the author of the journal have been fruitless.” Nonetheless, as Watson also remarks, “But who or what Powell himself was makes little difference. It is the record he has given us that counts. Of his journal much may be said. In its completeness of detail and wealth of description of the life and daily doings of his fellow emigrants and the country through which he journeyed, it is unsurpassed.”

(Powell, no pagination)

Powell left his family in Greenville, Illinois, on April 4, 1849, but not without qualms. He wrote, "Parting bitter – bitter." The trip began inauspiciously: "We traveled on in a cold rain storm. . . ." On April 12<sup>th</sup>, he and his party, the Illinois Company, crossed the Missouri River by ferry to St. Charles, Missouri. There they "held a council in the Tent in the evening and appointed to each man his peculiar duties," – including who would "drive [the] big waggon," and the "2 Horse Waggon." Some men were allotted "all duties pertaining to the Camp," while others were chosen as "train master," "forage master," and "camp master." But almost immediately, as was so often the case with these groups, dissatisfaction surfaced. Powell groused, as they wended west in Missouri and he was sleeping on the cold, wet ground, "All this time Dr. Park has made himself perfectly comfortable by taking possession, as if it were a matter of course, of my waggon where he and Edmund sleep warm and comfortable. I must see to this and have it amended." (Powell 1-2)

As they neared the Missouri-Kansas frontier, Powell and his party began to discuss and worry about what route to take to California. This was a choice which every emigrant had to make. On April 24, Powell recorded, "A very serious question has been started here: whether we go on to St. Joseph and thence by the South Pass to California, as we intended at the starting, or to entirely change our plans and go by Santa Fe. We have been talking about it all the time." They feared that the sheer number of livestock, wagons and men headed via the Platte River Road and South Pass would deplete forage for their teams and "that consequently we may be reduced to dreadful privations by their loss." They resolved to collect more information on the two routes before making a decision. (Powell 4-5)

Various factors and conversations eventually convinced the men of the Illinois Company to prefer the Santa Fe Trail. Near Glasgow, Missouri, they sought out a man named Congreve

Jackson, “who was Lieutenant Colonel in Doniphan’s regiment,” who assured them that the road to Santa Fe was the one for them – in fact, he hinted that he might even accompany them, meeting them in Independence. One question that bothered them regarding the Santa Fe Trail was whether they could take their oxen and wagons on from Santa Fe via “Cooke’s Road” to California, a route blazed by Lieut. Philip St. George Cooke and his “Mormon Battalion” in 1846 during the Mexican-American War. On May 18<sup>th</sup>, near Lone Elm in eastern Kansas their fears were further eased by a Captain Grove, “a Virginian and formerly Captain of Volunteers and a Gentlemanly young man,” who “has been out as far as the Gila River. . . . He says there is nothing to hinder us going by Cooke’s route to California with our Ox Teams. This is cheering.” All along the route they also met up with New Mexico traders and freighters who told them of the trail and the conditions they might encounter, as on May 21<sup>st</sup>: “A number of Santa Fe waggons, belonging to a trader of the name of Webb, were camped near the running water by the Indian’s house. From some of the teamsters I learned the distance from Bull Creek to Black Jack. . . .” (Powell 5, 15)

*Note: As will be discussed several times below, Powell had with him a copy of House Executive Document No. 41, Notes of a Military Reconnoissance, from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, including part of the Arkansas, Del Norte, and Gila Rivers, by William H. Emory; J W Abert; Philip St. George Cooke; and A. R. Johnston; United States Army; Corps of Topographical Engineers, published in a run of 10,000 copies by Wendell and Van Benthuysen, Printers, at Washington, D.C. in 1848. This volume incorporated reports of Emory and Abert on their trip over the Santa Fe Trail with the Army of the West in 1846, Cooke’s description of his march from Santa Fe to California, and A. R. Johnston’s journal [Johnston was in Cooke’s command]. Consequently in this one volume, Powell could cover*

*much of the territory he would be crossing from Missouri to Arizona. He refers to it frequently in his journal. It is available full-text online. See the annotated bibliography for Part One.*

Perhaps the greatest hardship and heartache that Powell faced on the trail was the death of friends and comrades from cholera. On May 15<sup>th</sup> he notes, “We were all glad to get away from Independence as the Cholera rages there fearfully.” The next two days are grievous for him: “16<sup>th</sup> Started early. Passed a number of Camps and Big Blue about noon, near which were three graves of Californians who died of Cholera. . . . We hear that the Cholera is raging to a fearful extent among the Emigrants beyond the Kansas [River – i.e. on the Platte River Road]; how it is on our route I do not know.” And then for him, disaster strikes on the 17<sup>th</sup> when his friend Isaac Carter succumbs: “In the middle of the night Carter was taken dangerously sick with the Cholera. Dr. Burchard [another member of the party] and I attended him all night. In the morning we moved out of camp. . . . When he became dangerously ill we had to stop. . . . I lay down, but woke about 4 o’clock. . . . I arose and walked around a short time and then saw Fuller go towards my waggon where Carter was. He got down from there and said Carter was dead. We went to look and found it to be so. . . . About sunset we confined him to his last home.” Cholera persisted in Powell’s company and others they encountered for the next two weeks. On May 18<sup>th</sup> he observed, “The road today seemed like a lengthened Cemetery. The mounds of graves of the Emigrants thrown up at intervals on either side of the road and the bones and remains of cattle and mules strewn in all directions was but a dismal sight.” And ten days later, on May 28<sup>th</sup> he lamented, “My bed clothes have all become grave clothes,” because he had given up so many blankets for shrouds. (Powell 12-15, 27)

*Note: Cholera killed indiscriminately and rapidly, often within a few hours of the appearance of the major symptoms, violent vomiting and diarrhea. Death came from extreme dehydration. There was no known cure at this time.*

Powell was a keen observer. He especially provides a picture of the immense numbers of emigrants headed for California, both on the Oregon Trail and, of course, on the Santa Fe Trail. On May 16<sup>th</sup>, about twenty miles west of Independence, he recorded, “We passed a good many Trains of all kinds today.” Even while he waited as his friend Isaac Carter was dying, he noticed, “Train after Train passed us and we see Trains in a variety of directions, wending their way on by different routes on the vast Prairie. . . .” In camp west of Lone Elm he again commented, “This is a great camping place for both Oregon and Santa Fe teams, as the forks of the road [present-day Gardner Junction, Kansas] are only about a Mile and a half back and the Oregon Teams can easily turn on to their trail again.” Near Switzler Creek [just east of present-day Burlingame, Kansas], Powell’s party even encountered a “traffic jam” of sorts: “Soon after we moved on from Switzler’s Creek it began to rain and looked as if it threatened a wild night. About 4 miles brought us to another creek where the road was stopped by one of the Santa Fe waggons [of the trader James Josiah Webb] being stalled. They put on 17 Yoke of Cattle but could not move it. We went back up the hill again and passing a little to the left, by going down a very precipitous road we effected a crossing.” (Powell 12-13, 17-18, 22-23)

Despite these occasional difficulties, the ease of travel on the Santa Fe Trail impressed Powell. At times he must have been pleased that he and his party chose it. June 12<sup>th</sup> finds him on the “Wet Route” of the trail, just east of present-day Dodge City. He is content to report, “Started at 7, and continued over the same smooth, level road, nearby the river for 10 miles. . . . We travel . . . not more than 3 or 4 feet above the level of the water. . . . In the afternoon we

started about 2 o'clock, continued on the same level road but sometimes further from the river. . . . The rolling for days past has been excellent: one Yoke of cattle could haul any of our loads." A further feature of his journal is that he faithfully records campgrounds, river and creek crossings, and landmarks – such as Fort Mann in Kansas and Point of Rocks and Wagon Mound in New Mexico – “Started just before sunrise – two miles brought us to ‘Fort Mann,’ a small fortification made of Cottonwood logs and turf, all falling to pieces. . .” - and the New Mexico towns of Las Vegas, Galisteo and Santa Fe. In fact, between Lone Elm and Santa Fe he identifies all 44 campgrounds for his party as well as naming numerous other sites. (Powell 42-43)

Powell, like many a Santa Fe Trail traveler before and after, was enthralled with the “exotic” flora and fauna of the prairies, in his case right down to recording, on May 16<sup>th</sup>, “Just after passing the Big Blue we saw a large clump of Cactus growing on the left side of the road, the first we have seen.” In one single journal entry on June 11<sup>th</sup>, near Pawnee Rock, he effused, “We have, as yet, today seen but very few buffalo, but Walter had a fine chase on a Pony after two Antelopes. . . . We passed through another Prairie dog village. Saw very few flowers all day. The party killed a large number of rattlesnakes this morning. . . . We noticed this afternoon a salty efflorescence on the top of the ground. . . . Some of the boys caught a Prairie dog alive this afternoon and I examined him more carefully. . . . There is nothing like a dog about the animal.” And finally for that day, he ended his entry, “Opposite our Camp on the other side of the river a number of Buffalo were grazing very quietly . . . and our arrival did not seem to disturb them, so some of the young men waded the river to have a shot at them, but on their approaching the opposite side the Buffalo ran off.” (Powell 12-13, 42)

As might be expected, Powell also carefully recorded his party's encounters with Native peoples. From east to west he meets and identifies individuals or bands of Shawnee, Sac, Kaw, Kiowa, Arapaho, Comanche, and Apache, plus others as he subsequently travels through Arizona and into California. His party's interaction with Arapaho deserves to be quoted at length: "We continued along the bottom, say eight miles from [west of] Fort Mann, to halt at 10 o'clock when we took a meal. The Camp was crowded with Arapahoes . . . and trading for horses, mules, Buffalo robes, etc., etc., was the order of the day. Walter was keen for the sport and got moccasins, leggings, lasso, etc., for tobacco, knife, bells, etc., etc. Mrs. Harrison offered an Indian a shawl for the robe he wore. He accepted it and taking off his robe stood with easy negligence before us for a considerable time admiring his new purchase, with nothing on but his moccasins and strip of blue cloth six inches wide passed between his legs and held up to his waist by a thong. This was taking things cool with a vengeance, I thought. I looked at Mrs. Harrison but she seemed to be quite easy about it as did all the rest; so I suppose it was all good Indian manners." He is not so sanguine once the train reaches Apache territory in northeastern New Mexico. While camped on the Canadian River a contingent of Comancheros joins them: "About sundown a party of Mexicans came over the slope of one of the table lands to the North of West; they proved to be a party from Taos with a train of jacks and mules, carrying bread, maize, blankets, bridle bits, etc., etc. to trade with the Indians. . . . They camped close by us, for safety. . . . They tell us that 3 pastores or herdsmen were killed only yesterday by the Apaches not more than 30 miles from us. They tell us also to be on our guard as the Apaches will be around us all the time." (Powell 45, 65)

Powell, his company, and other trains traveling near them, took the Cimarron Route of the Santa Fe Trail rather than the Mountain Route. After waiting several days for high water to

drop, they crossed from the north bank of the Arkansas River to the south bank and headed southwest on Sunday, June 17, 1849. Once again, as with the rest of his travels, he furnishes a detailed account of the challenges of this rigorous trek, historically known as the *Jornada*, an arduous and sometimes ultimately fatal stretch of the trail. His journal entries include:

“June 18<sup>th</sup> – After putting up as much wood and water as we could . . . we started at 3 o’clock P.M. . . .”

“June 19<sup>th</sup> – Started again at sundown, 7 ½ o’clock, and continued on until 11 ½, say 7 miles more. It was ‘dark as Erebus’ and the only thing that enabled us to see our way was the constant lightning. A violent storm stopped us at last. . . .”

“June 20<sup>th</sup> – Started at 4 o’clock. The cattle this morning show the want of food and water. They look gaunt and travel wearily.”

He passes Lower and Middle springs and reaches the Cimarron River on June 26<sup>th</sup>, finding it surprisingly “swollen by recent rains. . . . The water was so deep it got into some of the waggons.” Finally, on July 1<sup>st</sup> he can record, “Kept on the low savannah for about two Miles and then rose over the wall on to the plateau, or table land. Here we found ourselves gazing at a panorama of mounds, and various shaped hills and elevations; the most conspicuous being Round Mound immediately in front.” He had reached the eastern plains of New Mexico and the *Jornada* now truly was behind him. (Powell 48-62)

Powell’s final days on the trail ended in some confusion. There was a dispute between him and the other members of his party over money and provisions, so he leaves the Illinois Company and joins the wagons of another group, the Missouri Company. The two trains had been traveling in the vicinity of each other since eastern Kansas. Then, while camped near

Barclay's Fort [present-day Watrous, New Mexico], the emigrants were visited by a mule trader who informs them that they cannot possibly get to California via "Cooke's route" with their wagons and oxen. But Powell is skeptical – the man, after all, is a mule trader. They also learn that "there was a large party at Las Vegas who were changing waggons and cattle for mules at a great sacrifice." Powell's observation is, "I believe there is a conspiracy in the country to cheat the Emigrants." (Powell 53, 67)

Powell and his party did not go into Santa Fe, but turned south to Galisteo, leaving the Santa Fe Trail a few miles east of the city. This was a choice many emigrant trains made. However, Powell was then delegated to go into Santa Fe to buy provisions and see what information he could get on routes to California. He is disappointed when he eventually does reach Santa Fe, finding it to be "a miserable hole; gambling and drinking in all directions." On the other hand, he mentions, "The most memorable thing I did here was to go into a barber shop and have my moustache, which had grown very long and flourished finely, cut off and part of my whiskers." (Powell 74)

The question of what route to take from the Rio Grande to California continued to plague Powell and his fellow emigrants. From the beginning of his trek his faith that "Cooke's route" could be traveled with oxen and wagons never faltered. As noted above, he had a copy of Cooke's report with him, and consulted it religiously. A "Kentuckian by the name of Whittey," a rancher from near Rayado whom they meet near Point of Rocks, New Mexico, tells them they "cannot go by Cooke's route, that Cooke never took waggons, etc.," but as Powell notes, "This man wants [us] to go to Rayado and change . . . cattle and waggons for mules." An army officer they meet east of Santa Fe "says he heard Kit Carson say it was impossible for Ox Teams to go by Cooke's route to California. Still, some of us are incredulous on the point." He makes

further inquiries in Santa Fe: “I went to the Quartermaster’s Department in the Plaza to gain information. . . . They referred me to private citizens.” Powell asks after Kit Carson, but learns he is in Taos. However, he runs across an old acquaintance, “Mr. Joseph, one of our party who left us on the Arkansas with a mule team, and who has been here some time. He informed me he had a conversation with Carson, who assured him the route was practicable for Ox Teams. . . . This, after all the stories we have heard, was cheering and I felt comforted, although my belief had never wavered.” (Powell 65, 71, 74)

Powell and his companions remained in camp at Galisteo from July 15 to July 24, 1849. They then headed southwest, following “Cooke’s route.” They forded the Rio Grande on August 20 and ventured southwest into the deserts of New Mexico and Arizona, following the “Southern Route” through the “boot heel” of present-day New Mexico, then on to Tubac, Tucson, and the Gila River, in Arizona, and then California. Powell’s journal covers this part of his trip in the same vivid detail as his account of the Santa Fe Trail. He remained in California until the spring of 1852 and then returned to Greenville, Illinois.

*“We Are on the Brink of the Age of Gold” – Horace Greeley*

Most journals and diaries kept by California gold rush emigrants begin with their taking leave of their families and friends, or with their decision to “head for the gold regions.” Usually, they do not relay how they first heard the news of the strike at Sutter’s Mill. At best they might say, “gold fever was in the air and I resolved to take my chances.” George Sniffen’s account is typical – in his “Notes by the Campfire: Being A Narrative of an Overland Journey from the United States to California in the year 1849,” he writes, “Sometime in the month of December 1848, I first conceived the idea of going to California and having made up my mind to it shortly

after, I cast my eyes diligently about me in order to ascertain the most advantageous methods of making the trip.” By July 13<sup>th</sup> he and his companions in the Havilah Mining Association are on the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, headed west. (Sniffen, ms not paginated)

The most likely news source about California gold for prospective emigrants would have been a newspaper article, although after 1849 letters from those who had made it to the gold fields reached relatives and friends back home, sometimes with encouraging information or sometimes not. America was liberally supplied with hundreds of national, regional and local newspapers in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and a glance at the files of almost any of them reveals an eagerness to print the latest bulletins “from the mines.” It was common at this time for newspaper editors to “borrow” from one another, reprinting articles, reports and even “letters to the editor.” Sometimes an editor would have a formal arrangement with his fellow publishers, called an “exchange.” But more often the lead-in to an item might read, “The *Daily Bugle* having arrived by stagecoach last night, we are informed. . . .”

In Missouri and Kansas, at the eastern end of the Santa Fe Trail, *The Weekly Tribune*, published in Liberty, Missouri, was one of the first newspapers to alert its readers about the riches to be won in California. On October 6, 1848 it reprinted an article from the New Orleans *Picayune*, detailing the arrival in New Orleans of Naval Lieut. Edward F. Beale, who was headed for Washington, D. C. from the Pacific Coast with official communications on gold discoveries in “Upper California.” The St. Joseph, Missouri, *Gazette* followed suit on October 27<sup>th</sup>, attributing an article in the Washington, D. C. *Union* claiming that “An immense bed of gold, 100 miles in extent, has been discovered in California.” Then, on November 24<sup>th</sup> the editor of the *Gazette* was able to verify personally the electrifying news, reporting the arrival in town of men newly come overland from California “bringing with them large quantities of the Feather

river gold, a portion of which was assayed by a chemist of our town, and pronounced pure gold.”  
(Barry *Beginning* 779, 787)

Arkansas newspapers reflected their Missouri counterparts. The *Fort Smith Herald* noted that as early as September 5, 1848 a company in that community was organizing for the trip to California. And as Grant Foreman mentions in this history of the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, *Marcy and the Gold Seekers*, “A great idea had awakened the people of Fort Smith and Van Buren: the discovery of gold in California was beginning to attract national attention; vast numbers of people were planning to go there, many of them by Independence and the Santa Fe Trail; why could not thousands be induced to come through Arkansas and proceed up what was known as the Canadian River route, to the great financial benefit of the Arkansas towns?” Speculation along this line was expressed in *The Arkansas Democrat* [Little Rock] throughout the spring of 1849. Beyond such promotional campaigns, the ease of steamboat transport down the Ohio and Mississippi to the Arkansas River, and then up the Arkansas to Fort Smith or nearby Van Buren also induced thousands to take the “Canadian River route.” This road, as will be discussed in detail later in this study, joined the Santa Fe Trail along the Pecos River in New Mexico, although from time to time some emigrant groups struck north from some point on the Canadian River to join with the Santa Fe Trail along the Arkansas River. (Foreman *Marcy* 9)

The Arkansas-Oklahoma border also was the “jumping off” point for those parties that blazed the Cherokee Trail, which angled northwest to join the old Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek, near present-day McPherson, Kansas, and followed it west to its Mountain Route in Colorado. From there these emigrants headed farther west to the confluence of Fountain Creek with the Arkansas, then north to join the Oregon-California Trail in Wyoming. These companies, which included members of the Cherokee Nation, had been stimulated by the

Arkansas newspapers as well as a report in the *Cherokee Advocate*, the newspaper of the Cherokee Nation, for January 8, 1849, which read, “We have received through the New Orleans papers . . . such accounts from California, as leave little doubt, that the stories of the mineral wealth of the country, however exaggerated, are founded in fact. . . .” The first group to try this new route was led by Captain Lewis Evans. Consisting of forty wagons and nearly 400 head of livestock, it left Grand Saline [Oklahoma] the last week of April 1849 and reached the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Other companies followed the “Evans Trail” later that season and again in 1850. (Fletcher 16ff; Foreman *Marcy* 68ff.)

According to Rudolph Kurz, a Swiss artist who came to America to study and paint Native peoples and who resided in the vicinity of St. Joseph, Missouri from 1848 to 1850, “At the end of January 1849 the first gold seeker showed himself in St. Joseph. . . . The first arrivals from the East were two rich merchants from New York. They had traveled in a sleigh direct from their home to this place (more than 3,000 miles), in order to be the first to reach California.” While claiming to be the “first” in any historical endeavor or event is always questionable, it was clear to Kurz and the merchants and general population of Missouri River towns that a flood tide of emigrants was about to begin. Kurz continued, “As they [the New York merchants in their sleigh] traveled westward, the gold fever mounted. . . . The prices of provisions, cattle, and goods became exorbitant.” (Kurz 46)

There is general agreement among historians as to the sequence of events leading up to the rush of emigrants to California – nearly 100,000 alone in 1849. As Ralph Bieber eloquently put it in his classic *Southern Trails to California in 1849*, “A gold mania now gripped the nation. Thousands of men in all parts of the country and in all stations of life made preparations to hasten to the new El Dorado. Farmers left their plows, merchants closed their shops, journalists

forsook their profession, mechanics quit their trades, physicians and lawyers took down their shingles, men deserted their wives, and clergymen abandoned their holy calling to seek after worldly treasures.” (Bieber 27-28)

The story, of course, begins at Sutter’s Mill on the South Fork of the American River, near present-day Coloma, California. On January 24, 1848, while digging a ditch to channel water to a new sawmill, James W. Marshall, John Sutter’s partner in the enterprise, “remarked calmly that he believed he had found a gold mine.” Though there was general disbelief among his labor crew, one of them, Henry Bigler, did record in his diary, “This day some kind of mettle was found in the tail race that looks like goald.” Within a few days, Marshall shared his find with Sutter, and the news was out. (Jackson 8)

Some of the defining moments in the spread of the news include:

- March 15, 1848. The *Californian* newspaper, San Francisco, reports, “Gold Mine Found – In the newly made raceway of the Saw Mill recently erected by Captain Sutter, on the American Fork, gold has been found in considerable quantities.”
- June 1 and June 28, 1848. Thomas Larkin, who had been United States Consul to Mexican California and was now U.S. Naval agent in Monterey, sends letters with news of the gold at Sutter’s Mill to U.S. Secretary of State James Buchanan and Navy Secretary John Mason, in Washington, D. C. These letters reached Washington the following September, carried in a perilous journey across Mexico by Lieut. Edward F. Beale. (Jackson 40-41)
- August 4, 1848. The *New York Herald* publishes a letter from “Paisano,” in reality U.S. Consul Thomas Larkin in his role as the California correspondent of the *Herald*. Dated

March 1<sup>st</sup>, it had been carried 2,800 miles by Kit Carson, traveling from Los Angeles to Washington, D. C. with official federal dispatches. In this letter Larkin reported, “mines are discovered in many places.” Although he primarily stressed the development of quicksilver finds, various eastern newspapers picked up on his letter and fulsomely elaborated on it. (Jackson 39-40)

- October 6, 1848. The steamship *California* leaves New York for San Francisco, via the Straits of Magellan, carrying the first emigrants to take that long sea voyage to riches. They docked in San Francisco nearly five months later, on February 28, 1849. (Jackson 52)
- November 22, 1848. A letter from Col. R. B. Mason, governor of California, confirming the discovery of gold, arrives in Washington, D. C. It was one of two duplicate letters sent by two different routes. Lieut. Lucien Loeser, U.S. Army, carried the other – as well as what has been described as a “tea caddy” of California gold. He eventually reached Washington and the gold, 230 ounces worth \$3,900 according to the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia, went on display at the War Department. (Johnson 38)
- December 5, 1848. Using California Governor Mason’s report, President James K. Polk mentions the discovery of gold in his annual message to Congress. He briefly said, “The accounts of the abundance of gold in that territory are of such an extraordinary character as would scarcely command belief were they not corroborated by the authentic reports of officers in the public service who have visited the mineral district and derived the facts which they detail from personal observation.” (The full text of Polk’s remarks is available online at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29489>. Accessed September 18, 2012.)

- December 9, 1848. Horace Greeley puts his imprimatur on California, gold, and the bright future in his *New York Daily Tribune*, trumpeting, “We are on the brink of the Age of Gold.” His prediction is reprinted in newspapers across the country.

Given this onslaught of news from every quarter, the great emigration began to wend west early in the spring of 1849. Many gold seekers, of course, chose the Oregon-California Trail, *The Great Platte River Road* as historian Merrill Mattes immortalized it in his book of the same name. Early on these emigrants outfitted in Independence, Westport and St. Joseph, Missouri, but soon towns farther up the Missouri River served their needs, such as Council Bluffs and Nebraska City. However, historians Elliott West and Patricia Etter, among others, dispute the claim of Merrill Mattes that only “a few thousand California gold-seekers from the southern states did reach the Coast by desert variants or extensions of the Santa Fe Trail . . . but for the most part the Santa Fe Trail stopped at Santa Fe.” West asserts, “At least 20,000 persons rushed to California in 1849 by another way – a cluster of trails through the southwestern deserts, routes that had been used for many generations by native peoples and for decades by fur trappers and traders.” Included here were trails crossing exclusively through Texas, and even Mexico, on west. And as Etter demonstrates in her “history and annotated bibliography,” *To California on the Southern Route 1849*, there are several hundred journals and diaries of those who chose the southern trails in 1849, including the 32 she lists for the Santa Fe Trail, and 20 for the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Trail. She does not deal with the Cherokee Trail since it is outside the scope of her work. She also wisely does not estimate the number of emigrants on any one trail, nor does she carry her study forward to 1850 and beyond although [as the present study shall show] there were gold rush emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail and its variants into the decade after 1849. (Mattes, 5; West in the “Foreword” to Etter 8)

The question that arises at this point, then, is: Why would an emigrant or an emigrant company choose the Santa Fe Trail and its links to the roads across the southwestern deserts?

*Why Choose the Santa Fe Trail as Your Route to California?*

More than 100,000 emigrants made their way to the California gold fields in 1849, most of them from the eastern United States. Many tens of thousands more started out but turned back. They employed nearly every conveyance available at the time - steamboats, carriages, canal boats, wagons of all descriptions, and even the few fledgling railroads. They used horses, oxen, mules - and their own two feet. California, which had a population of around 14,000 in 1848, became a state of the union in 1850 and boasted a population of nearly 265,000 by 1852.

This multitude had a number of routes to choose from. They could brave the seas and the dangers of the Straits of Magellan, rounding Cape Horn. They could take a steamship to Panama, confront the horrors of disease crossing the isthmus, and then head north on another steamer. They could take a stagecoach across the Appalachians to the Ohio River and from there take passage on a river steamboat to St. Louis, then on a smaller steamer head up the Missouri to the "jumping off" towns serving the Oregon-California and Santa Fe trails. Or they could continue by steamer to Napoleon, Arkansas, and then voyage up the Arkansas and follow the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Trail or the Cherokee Trail west. Some might even come up the Mississippi from New Orleans to the Arkansas or Missouri rivers. Others went to ports on the Texas coast and crossed the southwestern deserts from there or to Mexican ports on the Gulf Coast and crossed Mexico.

For each and every emigrant, then, there was a choice to be made: "How shall I get to California?" And for each route ultimately chosen, including the Santa Fe Trail and its variants,

a question central to this study is, "Why choose one route over another?" Or more specifically, "Why choose the Santa Fe Trail?"

The answer to this question is not particularly straightforward. Just as the decision to choose one route over another was personal, so too some emigrants decided on the Santa Fe Trail for one reason, some for another. It is not possible, of course, to get inside the mind of each and every emigrant. Even those who left journals and diaries often did not record the moment of their decision; however, some did, as the following accounts demonstrate.

But first, it must also be mentioned that geography obviously played a role in an emigrant's choice of route, though again every individual's decision was personal. It was unlikely that a man from central Illinois would travel to New York City and take a steamship for either Cape Horn or the Panamanian Isthmus. This man would head directly west. Or, a resident of Arkansas was more tempted by the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road than by the Oregon-California Trail out of Council Bluffs or Nebraska City, or the Santa Fe Trail from Independence or Leavenworth.

As an example of how an emigrant or California-bound company might fixate on one particular route over another, consider Charles Pancoast's experience south of Ocate Creek in northeastern New Mexico on July 28, 1849. Pancoast was with the Peoria Company from Illinois, having departed from Leavenworth, Kansas, for Santa Fe. While camped that evening, Pancoast records, "During our stay at this Camp there came that way a large Train of gold Hunters from Louisiana, with Pack Mules and Horses. They were going to California over the road we had just passed [the Santa Fe Trail south from Raton Pass], intending to follow up the eastern borders of the Rocky Mountains to the Platte River, and thence take the northern Route

to California. But they did not influence us from our determination to go south, nor we them from pursuing their course to the north.” (Pancoast 211)

*Note: The following analysis of the Santa Fe Trail as a route to the California mines will include the long-established “old” Santa Fe Trail, stretching in 1849 from various towns in western Missouri and eastern Kansas to Santa Fe. It will also consider the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, which joined the main Santa Fe Trail in the vicinity of San Miguel, New Mexico, and the Cherokee Trail, which originated in northeastern Oklahoma, merged with the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek – near present-day McPherson, Kansas, and then left the Santa Fe Trail near the ruins of Bent’s Old Fort in Colorado, headed up the Arkansas River to the site of present-day Pueblo, Colorado, and then turned north along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains into Wyoming, where it united with the Oregon-California Trail.*

#### Following the “Old Trail” to Santa Fe

Given the myths and legends that have grown up around the California gold rush, the first influence on emigrants and the routes they chose that comes to mind is the guidebooks that enterprising promoters quickly printed and sold. It was Lansford W. Hastings’ *The Emigrant’s Guide to Oregon and California*, after all, that contributed to misleading the Donner Party and delivered it to its fate. Because they are so prominent in American lore of the California gold rush, they will be discussed first here. But as will be seen, there were other more effective elements which influenced an emigrant’s choice. All of the following will be considered:

- Guidebooks – and Josiah Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies*
- National and regional newspapers – articles, editorials, letters from correspondents, and merchant advertisements and promotions

- The published reports of official United States military expeditions, especially those generated during the 1840s and the Mexican-American War
- The advice and leadership of Mexican-American War veterans, many of whom had fought in the Southwest and Mexico and had returned, especially in the case of Missouri volunteers, only a year or two earlier
- The prospect for emigrants of traveling with federal officials heading west in 1849 to assume various government posts in New Mexico or California – and with the U.S. Army escorts provided to these officials
- The chance to hire seasoned mountain men and fur trappers who knew the Santa Fe Trail and routes farther west
- Fresh news of conditions on the trail as emigrants left their various “jumping off” towns, especially along the Missouri River, news often garnered from Santa Fe traders just arriving over the trail

In the case of the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, additional considerations for emigrants included their knowledge of the route as gleaned from Josiah Gregg’s compendium of trade with Santa Fe, *Commerce of the Prairies*, and the blazing of this new route by U. S. Army Captain Randolph B. Marcy – one of whose specifically assigned duties was to accompany emigrant trains to Santa Fe. For the Cherokee Trail, as will be evident, the experience of members of the Cherokee Nation as fur trappers and traders was an important factor.

### **Guidebooks – and Josiah Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies***

Although the availability of guidebooks was prominently advertised in the Missouri newspapers and at steamboat ports for emigrants such as Cincinnati and Memphis, not one of the many journals of emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail consulted for this study mentioned the use of a

guidebook. [See, Barry 800 for a list of guidebooks available from booksellers in St. Louis in the spring of 1849.] Several reasons for this situation can be surmised. First, the Santa Fe Trail was so well known, so well-trodden, and so well-traveled by 1849 that ample information on it and its conditions was easily obtainable on the streets of Independence, St. Joseph, and Leavenworth, prime towns for provisioning and “jumping off.” Second, and somewhat surprisingly unless this “universal” knowledge of the trail is taken into account, is that few guidebooks published in 1849 and the next few years mentioned the Santa Fe Trail except in passing. And any maps these guidebooks contained showed the trail as a wavering line, mostly along the course of the Arkansas River and, if the Cimarron Route was included, across a blank, white space to Santa Fe. In defense of the general run of guidebooks, however, it must be recognized that perhaps their greatest value for emigrants lay in their detailed suggestions on what provisions to buy for the journey and what “outfit” – horses, mules, cattle, wagons – to take. On the other hand, some guidebooks were financed and published by merchant houses specifically to induce emigrants to buy from their inventory and in their town.

Only three guidebooks need to be investigated here because they are the only three that made more than a nod to the Santa Fe Trail. These three are Charles Foster’s *The Gold Places of California*, S. L. Massey’s *James’ Traveler’s Companion*, and, most importantly, John Disturnell’s *The Emigrant’s Guide to New Mexico, California, and Oregon*. Foster’s is one of the more lengthy 1849 guidebooks, topping out at 106 pages. Emigrants might have found the reading interesting, but the information somewhat useless, since Foster basically cobbled together various extant sources, quoting Thomas Larkin’s letters from California concerning early gold news, portions of President Polk’s 1848 annual address to Congress mentioning gold in California, communiqués from “Headquarters, Military Department, Monterey, California,”

and observations by Senator Thomas Hart Benton. It did include superficial considerations of numerous routes to the gold fields, such as the Gila Trail, roads through parts of Mexico, sailing around Cape Horn, and crossing Panama. And it mentioned the Platte River Road and the Santa Fe Trail. With respect to the latter, Foster relied completely on excerpts from Lieutenant W. H. Emory's *Notes of a Reconnoissance from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California*, published in 1848. At least Foster credited Emory, introducing the guidebook's section on the "Route to California, By Santa Fe And The Rio Gila," by admitting, "In tracing the route from Missouri by Santa Fe and the Rio Gila, the notes of W. H. Emory, Lieut. Top. Eng., under Gen Kearney [sic], with his map, afford the fullest and most accurate information. The following is condensed from his work." (Foster 55)

The title to S. L. Massey's guidebook, not published until 1851 in Cincinnati, was nearly as long as the short section he devoted to the Santa Fe Trail, being in full *James' Traveler's Companion, being A Complete Guide Through the Western States to the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific, Via the Great Lakes, Rivers, Canals, Etc. Giving Full and Accurate Descriptions of all Places on, and in the Vicinity of, the Western Waters; Interspersed with Historical Notes and Statistical Tables; - Together with a Vast Amount of General Information not Found in Other Works of a Similar Character. With Numerous Maps and Illustrations. Also, containing all of the Principal Stage, Steamboat, and Railroad Routes in the West, and the Chief Routes to Oregon and California, with Their Respective Distances*. At 224 pages, it did deliver on its promises, tracing the nuances for every river and land route from eastern cities such as New York and Baltimore, to the "West," in this case Missouri or Arkansas. But from there, little information was provided. Massey printed a "Table of Distances" along the Santa Fe Trail from Independence to Santa Fe, but the only additional meager knowledge he added was, "the whole

distance from Independence to Santa Fe, 875 miles. The mail generally goes through in about one month. The route has been gone over, however, in twenty days. The passenger fare from Independence to Santa Fe, is \$100.” He does not mention the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road.

(Massey 183)

John Disturnell’s guidebook, *The Emigrant’s Guide to New Mexico, California, and Oregon; Giving the Different Overland and Sea Routes*, published in New York in 1850, had several pages of information on the Santa Fe Trail and, unlike almost every other guidebook, also on the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. Unfortunately, from an emigrant’s standpoint, this information was descriptive but not particularly helpful. For the Santa Fe Trail, Disturnell provided a table of distances based on General Stephen Watts Kearny’s route, taken from Lieutenant William Emory’s *Notes of a Reconnaissance*. He also observed, “This route is said to afford a good wagon road the entire distance, although in some places there is a scarcity of wood and water. Immense herds of buffaloes are usually encountered, however, affording an abundant supply of fresh meat. Roving tribes of Indians are often met with, who sometimes rob and murder small parties of travelers, or strangers, who fall into their hands. It is therefore much the safest to proceed across the country in large parties, and then strict caution and vigilance is required to prevent horses and cattle from being stolen by Indians during the night, while the travelers are encamped on the open prairie.” Of the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, Disturnell merely states, “This [trail] is usually called Long’s or Gregg’s route, and is highly spoken of by several officers of the American army.” He then proceeds to print various “testimonials” from those who recommended or had traveled the route. (Disturnell 14, 8)

Disturnell’s guidebook also, however, included one of the more important and subsequently famous maps of the American West, though its use for emigrants must have been

limited. John Disturnell was a New York book and map publisher. His “Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico” of 1848 [there were previous editions], “introduces General Kearny’s route, the Battle of ‘San Pascal,’ and Colonel Doniphan’s route,” as Carl Wheat notes in his majestic survey *Mapping the Transmississippi West*. Wheat further adds, “Disturnell, though he continued to issue his ‘Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico’ from time to time (two editions appeared in 1849), reproduced the western half in 1849 as a ‘Map of California, New Mexico and Adjacent Countries Showing the Gold Regions &c.’ This latter map, on which many new names appeared, and many others were Anglicized, was published separately, and was used to illustrate the second edition of Disturnell’s *Emigrant’s Guide to New Mexico, California and Oregon* (the first and third editions of which seem to have appeared with a J. Calvin Smith map of North America).” As with other guidebook maps, it would not have behooved an emigrant to rely solely on Disturnell’s map since it did little more than give a general indication of “the way west.” (Wheat 3: 51, 77)

In the context of the guidebooks, it is necessary also to mention Josiah Gregg’s “best seller” of the day and classic of the Santa Fe Trail, *Commerce of the Prairies*. It was published in an edition of 2,000 copies by J. and Henry G. Langley in New York in two volumes in 1844, with the lengthy but descriptive title *Commerce of the Prairies: or the Journal of a Santa Fé Trader, during Eight Expeditions Across the Great Western Plains and a Residence of Nearly Nine Years in Northern Mexico. Illustrated with Maps and Engravings*. The first volume covered Gregg’s experiences in the Santa Fe Trade, the second his opening of what became the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. [For Gregg’s impact on the development of the Fort Smith to Santa Fe route, see below.] Many emigrants choosing the Santa Fe Trail, the evidence apparently suggests, consulted Gregg’s volumes, as for instance Benjamin Hayes, who left Independence on

September 10, 1849. On September 24<sup>th</sup> Hayes and his party crossed the Arkansas and took the Cimarron Route. In his diary for the 25<sup>th</sup> he wrote, “Stay here till late in the afternoon. Old friends. Returning emigrants. Sam Hayes must go back to his beautiful wife. Rumors from California. Buffalo grass. Houck [Hayes is traveling in a train led by veteran Santa Fe trader Solomon Houck] was with the first wagon that ever passed this road. Former profitable commerce, for this and all other matters see Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies*. To-night camped five miles from Arkansas.” In her extensively annotated bibliography of emigrant journals and diaries, *To California on the Southern Route, 1849*, Patricia Etter, writing of Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies*, asserts, “A number of diarists listed here thought so highly of Gregg’s prose that they incorporated it into their own diaries.” Everyone traveling the Santa Fe Trail or studying it, then and now, has been indebted to Josiah Gregg. (Moorhead xxxi-xxxii; Hayes 15; Etter 117)

## **Newspapers**

Both national and regional newspapers discussed, and often shamelessly promoted, particular routes to California, with the regional papers in Missouri or Arkansas proclaiming the advantages of *their* particular community as the best place to outfit for the mines and begin one’s trek west. On the national level, for example, Ralph Bieber notes in his *Southern Trails to California in 1849*, “Late in December, 1848, the *New York Weekly Tribune*, which theretofore had been a staunch advocate of the water routes to California, admitted that the overland trail by way of Santa Fé and the Gila River, though long and tedious, was probably as good a route as any, especially for those who started from points west of the Allegheny mountains. . . . At about the same time similar views were expressed in Philadelphia and Washington in published letters of men who had first-hand information of western travel.” On the regional level, as Kate Gregg

mentions in her article “Missourians in the Gold Rush,” “In response to many inquiries, newspapers from one side of Missouri to the other, began to publish information concerning routes to the gold fields.” She cites examples from the *Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], *Glasgow Weekly Times*, *St. Louis Daily Union*, *Weekly Reveille* [St. Louis], *St. Joseph Gazette*, and the *Liberty* [Missouri] *Weekly Tribune*. For its January 11, 1849 issue, the *St. Louis Daily Union* very perceptively interviewed the veteran mountain man Solomon P. Sublette, asking for his opinion on the best routes. As Kate Gregg summarized it, Sublette said, “There was . . . little choice between Independence and St. Joseph as places to rendezvous. If one started late, he could save a little time by starting from the latter. But Independence was an old and favorite place of meeting for parties crossing the plains and presented certain advantage for buying an outfit. He recommended the Santa Fe and Old Spanish trails for those going on mules, but not at all between June and October on account of the scarcity of water.” These newspapers circulated from hand to hand, got mailed to friends “back East” and hence had a life long beyond their publication date. (Bieber 28, 29; Kate Gregg 143-144)

### **Reports of U. S. Military Expeditions**

Unlikely as it seems, the published government reports of military men who headed exploratory expeditions or U. S. Army commands had a wide circulation among emigrants. These reports are mentioned frequently in journals, diaries, and letters. The emigrants had them in their possession and consulted them on the trail. For the Santa Fe Trail, those most frequently cited included the accounts of Lieutenant J. W. Abert, Lieutenant W. H. Emory [noted above], Lieutenant Philip St. George Cooke, and, given his rank on his early expeditions, Lieutenant John Charles Frémont. Abert, Emory and Cooke had served in various capacities with General Stephen Watts Kearny’s Army of the West in his march to New Mexico and California in the

Mexican-American War, commencing in 1846. Frémont, of course, had led four expeditions west between 1842 and 1848. Congress commissioned the printing of each of these explorers' reports in various editions. For instance, a run of 10,000 copies of Emory's *Notes of a Military Reconnoissance from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California* was ordered on February 17, 1848. This printing included the narratives of Abert and Cooke. The federal government, at this time, contracted with private printers, such as Wendell and Van Benthuisen in Washington, D. C. – publishers of the Emory report, and then booksellers in cities along emigrant routes to the Missouri – Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Independence, bought stock from these printers. The *Liberty Tribune* for March 30, 1849, lists various guides and reports that could be purchased from several vendors in that city, including that of Lieutenant Emory. (Emory, title page; Kate Gregg 144; Barry *Beginning* 800)

Bernard Reid and H. M. T. Powell serve as examples of emigrants who consulted government reports and were much motivated by them. Reid was an “examining clerk” in the St. Louis office of the Surveyor General for the District of Illinois and Missouri, beginning in 1847. As he tells it, during the winter of 1848-1849, “Captain (afterwards General) Frémont’s journal of his explorations on the plains, the Rocky Mountains and California fell into my hands, and its perusal gave me a strong desire to see for myself the interesting countries he described.” By March, 1849, Reid had signed on with a company headed for California, though by the Platte River Road. H. M. T. Powell, as noted elsewhere in this study, swore by his copy of Emory-Abert-Cooke – *Notes of a Reconnoissance* – and read it religiously and carefully. On July 9, 1849, while camped near Barclay’s Fort on the Mora River north of Las Vegas, New Mexico, he commented, “About ¼ mile below, the Moro [Mora] passes in a deep narrow rapid stream; Emory’s map of the route is again wrong, therefore.” And at San Miguel, New Mexico, he

observed, “From what I saw of San Miguel, Abert’s sketch would answer – but the adobe houses and church are so near the color of the soil around that at a short distance it is difficult to clearly distinguish the outline.” (Reid 24; Powell 67, 70)

### **Veterans of Doniphan’s Expedition and Other Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail**

On May 13, 1846, the Congress of the United States declared war on the Republic of Mexico. Throughout the last days of June 1846, the U. S. Army of the West, under the command of General Stephen Watts Kearny departed company by company from Fort Leavenworth headed for the conquest of New Mexico as part of the war strategy. One contingent marching under Kearny was the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers, led by Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan. The Army of the West captured Santa Fe, New Mexico, on August 13, 1846. Kearny marched from Santa Fe on September 25<sup>th</sup> with 300 men to invade California. He left Doniphan and his 800 troops behind in New Mexico. After a campaign against the Navajo, Doniphan and his command deployed south to Mexico, where they defeated Mexican forces at the Battle of Brazitos and the Battle of Sacramento and then took the city of Chihuahua. This regiment was mustered out in June 1847 and arrived back in Missouri around July 1<sup>st</sup>.

When news of gold in California reached Missouri, many of these “Doniphan’s Expedition” veterans resolved to seek their fortunes and opted to take the Santa Fe Trail, since it was a route with which they were familiar. More importantly, they convinced other emigrants who were weighing the merits of the Santa Fe Trail against the Platte River Road to go with them. The impact of these veterans is mentioned often in emigrant diaries, letters, and journals. John Hudgins and his party from Livingston County, Missouri, left for California on May 6,

1849, then joined up with other trains, forming a company of “38 wagons and 150 men and boys” at Diamond Spring [Kansas]. Of this larger contingent, Hudgins mentioned, “There was in the train some 10 or 15 men, who had served in Mexico in the first and second Mo. Calvary and some of us had crossed the plains twice before and was pretty well acquainted with the wiles of the Indians.” Benjamin Hayes, who left Independence on September 10, 1849, observed as his train followed the Rio Grande south of Santa Fe, “As we journey along Doniphan’s men ‘fight their battles o’er.’” H. M. T. Powell’s train traveled off and on across Kansas and into New Mexico with another group that included a Charles Dens and his brother – Powell called them “the Dens.” He noted, “The Dens go only to Santa Fe; taking out an apparatus for distilling. They are anxious to push on as fast as they can; have been there before last year, in the army I believe. Seem to be respectable young men.” But sometimes these veterans’ memories did fail them. Powell, again, recorded of “the Dens” – “Less than a Mile beyond our camp we passed Turkey Creek and here is where we ought to have corralled, if only we had known it, but the Dens, although they went this route with Kearny, thought it was 4 Miles farther.” (Hudgins, 5; Hayes 24; Powell 29, 32)

The career of Congreve Jackson can also be touched on here. Jackson was in northeastern Kansas as early as 1830, working as a chainman on a crew surveying Delaware Indian lands. From 1839 on he held various Indian agent and subagent posts. With the outbreak of the Mexican War, he became a Lieutenant Colonel in Company G of Doniphan’s regiment, marching with Doniphan to New Mexico and on into Mexico itself. H. M. T. Powell, while his party was in central Missouri – coming west from Illinois, mentions that, “At Glasgow Mr. Fuller went out of town about 2 miles to see Lieut. Colonel Congreve Jackson who was Lieutenant Colonel in Doniphan’s regiment. He found him and got valuable information from

him.” At this point Powell thought perhaps Congreve would join his train, but eventually Congreve decided to organize his own party. Augustus Heslep, traveling with the Morgan County and California Rangers of Illinois, encountered Jackson on May 15<sup>th</sup> about three miles west of Independence, “encamped with a company of about twenty persons.” Heslep also remarked, “The colonel visited our camp and, upon an interchange of views, found his objects similar to ours.” On May 19<sup>th</sup> at Lone Elm, Powell noted in his journal that “Colonel Jackson is only a day or two ahead; so that, notwithstanding our delay by sickness, we may yet overtake him.” Jackson did make it to California, stayed two years, and returned to Missouri via the Santa Fe Trail in the summer of 1851. (Powell 5, 17; Bieber [Heslep] 360; Barry *Beginning* 176, 363, 594, 1039)

### **Government Officials with United States Army Escorts**

Two federal officials traveled the Santa Fe Trail west in spring of 1849 – James S. Calhoun, who had been appointed Indian Agent at Santa Fe, and James Collier, headed for California to take up his duties as Collector of the Port of San Francisco. Each of their parties had a military escort. Bvt. Lt. Col. Edmund B. Alexander accompanied Calhoun. Alexander’s command included four companies of infantry and two of artillery, the latter with six 12-pound mountain howitzers. Collier journeyed with Capt. Croghan Ker’s Company K, Second U. S. Dragoons. Some emigrants and emigrant companies informally attached themselves to these official parties, while others trailed a few days ahead or behind. Calhoun left Fort Leavenworth on May 16<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Santa Fe on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Collier departed from Fort Leavenworth on May 17<sup>th</sup> and reached Santa Fe on July 11<sup>th</sup>.

The proximity of U. S. troops encouraged the emigrants, bolstering their confidence especially as they encountered large bands of Native peoples. Calhoun himself, in his official correspondence, mentioned that at the Arkansas Crossing on June 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, “we found several thousand Indians of various tribes assembled, awaiting the return of Mr. Fitzpatrick [Indian Agent]. . . . The Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Keoways, Comanches & Utahs were the principal tribes in lodges at the . . . Crossing.” Emigrant Thomas Sutherland, in a letter to the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, reprinted in the New York *Tribune*, July 20, 1849, wrote, “Mr. Collier, the collector of San Francisco, is behind us with an escort of dragoons, and there are emigrants, traders and soldiers enough to eat up every Indian on the road.” Collier was delayed in Santa Fe for nearly a month. He thought he had engaged Kit Carson as a guide, at the munificent sum of \$1,500, but Carson’s family in Taos, whom he was visiting before leaving, dissuaded him. William Brisbane, an emigrant from Pennsylvania who joined Collier’s brigade for the trip to California, conveyed the excitement of actually having Kit Carson as a guide in his “Journal of a Trip, or Notes of One, from Fort Leavenworth to San Francisco via Santa Fe, in 1849,” confiding to his notebook, “We leave here on pack mules – have secured and employed Kit Carson for guide – our route is to be kept secret for so many [emigrants] will join us.” In the end, Collier eventually proceeded to Zuni Pueblo, took an obscure route to the Gila River in Arizona, and reached San Diego on November 1, 1849. (Calhoun 17; Sutherland 205; Barry *Beginning* 859 for Sutherland’s identity; Brisbane 42; Etter, 57, 69. For Collier see Foreman, *Adventures of James Collier*.)

### **Hiring a Guide or Joining a Train**

Determining the number of men who hired themselves out as emigrant guides, whether they were seasoned veterans of the fur trade, the Santa Fe trade, or had dealt with the various

Indian nations of the prairies and plains in the many decades before the 1849 gold rush, is impossible. But surviving memoirs, letters, diaries, journals, newspaper interviews and articles, both of these men and gold rush emigrants, suggest that many did so. St. Louis and the Missouri River towns such as Independence, Westport, and St. Joseph – all “jumping off” spots for emigrant trains – had long been the haunts, supply depots, and in many cases, in their retirement especially, the homes of these men. They were available and ready to include emigrants in their annual freighting trains or lead them west.

As with all aspects of an emigrant’s passage to California, hiring a guide could be fraught with difficulties and unforeseen consequences. Rudolph Kurz, the Swiss artist resident in and around St. Joseph in 1849 and 1850, commented at length in his *Journal* on various aspects of the emigrant’s crossing the Missouri there at the start of their westward trek; concerning the hiring of a guide, he reflected, “‘Oh, Californy, you are the land for me,’ was their song, their rallying cry, their constant thought. It happened however, that a conductor who had been engaged by several bands of emigrants gambled away their combined funds instead of providing the necessary outfit.” (Kurz 48)

Solomon Houck and James Kirker were two well-known Santa Fe Trail personalities whose caravans emigrants joined or whom they hired to guide them. Houck, a native of Boonville, Missouri, traded to Santa Fe as early as 1826 and had made 16 trips there by 1849. He continued trading into the 1850s. In 1849 he arrived in Independence from a prairie crossing in early May. He and his trade caravan were headed back for Santa Fe by early September. On September 19<sup>th</sup>, Benjamin Hayes and his companions joined Houck’s train at “Dickson’s Spring,” east of Turkey Creek in central Kansas. Hayes then traveled with Houck all the way to Santa Fe. Houck went out of his way to aid Hayes, who noted in a letter of September 20<sup>th</sup> to his

wife, “I had a pleasant trip to the Grove [Council Grove], although my pack mule was much galled; so much so, that Mr. Houck very kindly offered to divide my load, taking part of it himself. . . .” In another letter, dated September 24<sup>th</sup>, written at the Arkansas Crossing, he mentioned, “Mr. Houck will not travel now as fast as he has done. His animals have suffered somewhat from the trip.” And in his journal, for October 4<sup>th</sup>, he places the caravan between Rabbit Ears Creek and Point of Rocks, New Mexico, observing, “This day we reached what we called ‘Houck’s Retreat,’ a little creek flowing between high banks or bluffs. The weather looked like a snowstorm. Remained here for this reason all the 5<sup>th</sup>.” Hayes and the men he was with continued to California via Galisteo, by-passing Santa Fe, taking the “Southern Route” through the “boot heel” of New Mexico and into Arizona. Hayes reached Los Angeles on February 26, 1850. Shortly thereafter he was elected as a county attorney, launching a distinguished legal career. (Hayes ix, 14, 16, 23)

James Kirker was a somewhat notorious frontier figure, with a reputation that stretched from St. Louis to Chihuahua, Mexico. Born in Ireland, he appeared in St. Louis in 1817, then 24 years old and having abandoned a wife and son in New York City. In 1822, he joined William Henry Ashley’s fur trading company and then made his first trip to Santa Fe in 1824. He trapped in the Rockies for the next ten years. In 1839, the Mexican governor of Chihuahua contracted with Kirker to lead a quasi-military expedition against the Apache in northern Mexico. His most controversial exploit came in 1846 at the “Battle of Galeana” [Mexico], where he slaughtered 130 peaceful Apache. In the Mexican-American War he served as a scout, guide, and interpreter for Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan, joining Doniphan’s force at El Paso and accompanying it into northern Mexico. With the end of the war he was back in Missouri and the spring of 1849 found him in Independence.

Kirker guided three loosely-confederated parties of California-bound emigrants across the plains, the most well-known being the Morgan County and California Rangers, and the Peoria Company. The letters of Augustus M. Heslep of the Rangers and the journal of Charles Pancoast with the Peoria Company detail the experiences of these parties and their relationship with Kirker. Concerning the hiring of Kirker, Pancoast writes, “The Company had engaged an old Mountaineer named Kirker to pilot them to California, agreeing to give him a Horse and \$50.00 down, and \$100.00 when his work was ended.” Heslep, in a letter to the *Missouri Republican*, May 24, 1849, reveals Kirker’s “qualifications” for the emigrants: “It will be perceived that we have the benefit of the services of the celebrated Indian fighter and guide, Captain Kirker, whose minute knowledge of the territory we shall travel over will be of incalculable advantage not only as a protection against Indian cunning but in speedy traveling.” (Pancoast 185; Bieber [Heslep] 357-358)

The emigrants’ experience with Kirker was both positive and negative. For example, Pancoast portrays an encounter with 1,500 [his estimate] Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors on the Arkansas River “at a point near the present dividing-line of Kansas and Colorado.” He vividly remembers tense moments as the Indian force approached the wagon train, where “[Kirker] had the whole Company equipped and drawn up in a line, the Mule Men forming a Company of Cavalry.” Kirker then, inexplicably, in Pancoast’s account, avoids being seen by the Indians, but when he does appear at the behest of the Peoria Company’s “captain,” Pancoast writes, “As soon as he showed himself, the Chiefs with one voice cried out ‘Kirker!’ – a cry which was resounded through all their Camp with much emphasis.” Then another large band of Indians is spotted approaching the emigrants’ train and Pancoast says, “Our hair stood squarely up on our heads; but the Chiefs assured Kirker (who spoke their vernacular) that they were only Squaws and

Children. . . .” With this, trading between the emigrants and the Cheyenne and Arapaho began. Pancoast gives the impression that on this day, Kirker more than earned his fees. But, on the negative side, Kirker led them up the Arkansas past Bent’s Old Fort to the region southwest of present-day Pueblo, Colorado, where they prospected for gold with little result. The parties then made their way to Santa Fe via Raton Pass and the Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail. In Santa Fe, Kirker abandoned them, reneging on his contract. Pancoast comments laconically, “On the eighth of August, Kirker not having appeared, we decided to move on without him.” The various companies then made their separate ways to California. (Pancoast 185, 191-193. *Note: There are two biographies of Kirker. See bibliography for Ralph Adams Smith and William Cochran McGaw.*)

### **A Calculated Decision: Trail Conditions, Disease or Overcrowding**

For all the careful planning and agonized thought that many emigrants put into the selection of a route to California – Platte River Road, Santa Fe Trail or some other route? – some changed their minds at the last minute, influenced by a chance remark, a letter, or the conditions they found at Independence or St. Joseph or even once they had left the Missouri River and were heading west – such as a crowded ferry crossing, rumors of poor forage along the Platte River, or fear of that greatest of the diseases of the trail, cholera.

Two different observers, both recording the scene across the river from St. Joseph in May 1849, give an indication of the hubbub and uproar an emigrant might encounter. Major Osborne Cross, who led a military expedition from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Vancouver in 1849, noted as he left and headed for the Platte River Road, “Large trains were coming in from all points on the Missouri river on trails intersecting this great highway. . . . All these trails followed ridges,

which placed the wagons frequently in such position that they seemed to be crossing the prairies in every direction . . . . They looked at a distance not unlike vessels on the wide ocean steering for different parts of the globe.” At St. Joseph itself, an emigrant passing on an upriver steamer observed, “The country on both sides of the river was lined as far as the eye could reach. . . . [The emigrants] were and had been for the last two weeks, crossing day and night. There were two ferry boats . . . and two more a few miles above. Two steamboats had been engaged one or two days, and still the accommodation was insufficient. Many had gone to other places to cross. . . . A considerable number had concluded to go by Santa Fe. . . .” (Cross, 42; Barry *Beginning* 849)

The threat or prevalence of cholera could change an emigrant’s plans and route. Charles Pancoast, who left St. Louis in early April, made his way by steamer to St. Joseph, then travelled to Leavenworth and, as indicated above, was a member of the Peoria Company, led by James Kirker. His panic is palpable in his journal: “We had hardly moved off from St. Louis before there was talk on the Boat that there was a case of Cholera on board. . . .” as proved to be only too true. He continues, “[One] morning there were two dead and five or six more attacked; before night there were seventeen sick, and nine dead. . . . We were all now much alarmed. . . . The disease increased, and the next morning we again landed in an obscure place and buried twelve more. . . . Thus far not a single soul that was stricken with the disease had recovered.” On landing at St. Joseph he noted, in what perhaps was not an understatement, “Thus ends the most perilous nine days of my life.” (Pancoast 172-176)

The progress west of two emigrant companies, the Calloway County [Missouri] Pioneers and the Morgan County and California Rangers was influenced by the cholera epidemic. William Hunter kept a journal of his travel with the Calloway County party, which left

Montgomery County, Missouri, on April 23, 1849. Even as they crossed Missouri he recorded, “On nearing ‘Lone Jack’ [Jackson County, Missouri] . . . we were much perplexed by doubts as to the best course to pursue. The cholera was raising violently at Independence, and there we dared not go. . . . We finally concluded to start on the road and to fall in with some company about to cross the Kansas River tolerably high up, and by striking across the country obliquely to fall into the ‘South Pass’ road amongst the foremost trains.” On their way, they encountered a train headed for the Santa Fe Trail and were convinced that road would suit them better: “A vote was accordingly taken as to which route should be taken. . . . The vote of over three-fourths was given in favor of the Santa Fe route, and from this moment, in good earnest, we concluded to speed on our way.” Augustus Heslep was with the Morgan Rangers. Between Independence and present-day Gardner Junction, where the Santa Fe and Oregon-California Trails diverged, Heslep – in a letter to the *Daily Missouri Republican*, published July 4, commented, of the Pioneer Company, a train taking the Platte River Road, “That monster, the cholera, was again in [that] train, there being two new cases during the night. Much consternation prevailed. I had been uncommonly successful in keeping up the health of our company and in saving the cases treated. . . . It is at this point that the Oregon and Santa Fé routes separate, and after a hearty adieu we left the Pioneer Train to pursue, I am fearful, a troublesome voyage.” (Hunter 10-11; Bieber [Heslep] 362)

Other immediate factors, besides cholera, could induce emigrants to take the Santa Fe Trail rather than the Platte River Road. The uncertainty of conditions for livestock along the Platte, as compared to the well-known campgrounds along the Santa Fe Trail, was one such concern. An unidentified correspondent to the New York *Weekly Tribune*, writing from Council Grove on June 7, 1849 – whose letter was published on July 21<sup>st</sup> – bluntly stated, “All persons

familiar with the South Pass route . . . anticipate that those who have gone that way will suffer greatly from the want of grass, which, giving out, as it is bound to do, the mules, and especially the oxen, will die by thousands, and the men cannot carry enough to support themselves, and that they would get no further than the mountains ere Winter, where they are bound to freeze to death.” In contrast, emigrant Thomas Sutherland, also writing from Council Grove – three days earlier on June 4<sup>th</sup>, traveling with James Collier’s party and his military escort, cheerfully observed, “We start this morning for Santa Fe, having remained here two days repacking, and washing, and resting our cattle. Thus far we have had very good luck, plenty of grass, and the season has been so wet that there is abundance of water everywhere. We apprehend no scarcity of water on our journey to Santa Fe. The crowd is not very great on this road.” (See “Unidentified emigrant” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* (August 1950) 325; Sutherland 205)

John Hudgins, traveling from Livingston County, Missouri, sums up these variable factors, writing in his memoirs, “We expected to go the South Pass route, and intended to cross the Missouri River at St. Joseph. The spring was cold and wet which made the grass late and traveling slow. . . . We sent a man ahead to see about crossing the [Missouri] river. He reported that the ferry was two weeks behind, and the people there were dying with the cholera like hogs. We heard there was a small boat at Westport Landing . . .” and that set his party’s course for Santa Fe. (Hudgins 4)

#### Variants of the Santa Fe Trail: The Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road and the Cherokee Trail

Besides the main Santa Fe Trail from Missouri to Santa Fe, two other overland routes which incorporated portions of the Santa Fe Trail led emigrants to the southwestern desert trails through New Mexico and Arizona, to California. One was the Fort Smith to Santa Fe Road,

which, according to historian Patricia Etter, carried thousands of emigrants west in 1849 alone. It joined the Independence-Santa Fe Trail at several points near San Miguel, New Mexico. The other was the Cherokee Trail, blazed by several parties from northeastern Oklahoma to the Santa Fe Trail, intersecting it at Running Turkey Creek, near present-day McPherson, Kansas. This trail then followed the old Santa Fe Trail on its Mountain Route to Bent's Old Fort, and then went farther up the Arkansas River and headed north along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains to meet the Oregon-California Trail at Fort Laramie, in present-day eastern Wyoming. Emigrants on these variant routes chose them for reasons just as compelling as those that influenced the many thousands that went via the Independence-Santa Fe Road. (Etter 25 for "thousands of emigrants")

### **The Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road**

California-bound gold seekers arrived at Fort Smith overland, mostly from Arkansas or contiguous states, or by steamboat from more distant points. Those choosing the river routes came from states as far-flung as Maine and New York, following the Ohio, Mississippi and Arkansas rivers from the east. Some of them, usually well-financed, took the unique step of shipping their heavier supplies via Cape Horn and then traveling light across the prairies. George Sniffen, a member of the Havilah Mining Association, a consortium of young men from New York state which left Fort Smith on April 11, 1849, mentioned in his journal that some men in this company chose to "round Cape Horn" and consequently, "The largest portion of our machinery and supplies were shipped by sea in charge of our members who preferred that route." The New York Knickerbocker Association, organized in New York City, also sent its heavy equipment – including mining machinery – via Cape Horn, though it brought wagons west by

steamboat and then purchased horses and mules at Fort Smith. The “Knickerbockers” left Fort Smith on March 26<sup>th</sup>. (Sniffen, ms not paginated; Foreman *Marcy* 23)

As with those who followed the old Santa Fe Trail, emigrants opted for the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road for individual reasons, weighing the alternatives of what route to take. Few probably were as diligent as George Sniffen who, again in his journal, recalled, “Sometime in the month of December 1848, I first conceived the idea of going to California and having made up my mind to it shortly after, I cast my eyes diligently about me in order to ascertain the most advantageous methods of making the trip.” On the other hand, some might not have given their choice a second thought – Stanislas Lasselle of Logansport, Indiana, was a Mexican-American War veteran and, Patricia Etter, who edited his journal suggests, “Lasselle’s participation in the Mexican War no doubt influenced his decision to travel a southern route and also hardened him for the rigors of the journey.” (Sniffen, ms not paginated; Lasselle 3)

In general, however, several basic factors – as discussed below – induced emigrants to take the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, including:

- Geographical proximity
- Heavy promotion in regional newspapers, much copied in the eastern press, by cities and merchants in Arkansas
- Recommendations from respected military leaders
- Prior knowledge of the route gained from Josiah Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies*
- The opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of the route and conditions from recent or even on-going U. S. Army expeditions such as those of Lieut. Abraham Buford or,

especially, Captain Randolph B. Marcy – who was commissioned not only to blaze a road from Fort Smith to Santa Fe but provide protection to emigrants

Behind these various influences was also the lure and belief that this road was said to be the shortest route to the mines, especially for emigrants from southern states.

- Geographical Proximity

Anyone catching “gold fever” in Arkansas, or Mississippi or Tennessee naturally might first think of Fort Smith or Van Buren, on the Arkansas River, as the spot to leave from for California. As noted above, thousands of emigrants left Fort Smith in 1849. At this time Arkansas had a population of nearly 210,000 and had been a state since 1836. Tennessee, by the census of 1850, counted over one million residents, and Mississippi was home to more than 600,000. As historian Elliott West puts it in his introduction to Patricia Etter’s *To California on the Southern Route, 1849*, “California-bound emigrants naturally followed lines of least resistance, typically moving westward as directly as possible and using the most accessible means of transport.” Consequently, as Elliott continues, “Thousands of southerners headed directly westward – in their case usually funneling through Fort Smith, Arkansas, or through Texas, then on through New Mexico and across the desert to southern California.” In this instance, it is important to stress again that, while the Platte River Road was the route of choice for the majority of gold seekers overall, the Santa Fe Trail and its variants carried many more emigrants than at one time credited – 20,000 in 1849 by Elliott’s estimate [though this figure also includes the Texas trails]. In his *The Great Platte River road*, Merrill Mattes does not mention the Fort Smith-Santa Fe route; it is not even listed in the index of this major work. (Etter 8, 9)

As early as September 1848, men in the Fort Smith area began talking about going to the mines, and soon formed a “committee” to carry their project forward. The following January, this committee published a manifesto, “Ho! for California Gold Mines,” which gave notice that a party would leave for the west early in April and provided detailed instructions on what outfit (wagons, oxen, mules, horses, etc.) and provisions to take. This manifesto was reprinted in newspapers from Little Rock to New York City. Soon other organized parties began arriving at Fort Smith. As Grant Foreman discovered when he researched this topic, “River towns on the Mississippi and Arkansas were entertaining hordes of visitors on their way to Fort Smith and Van Buren. A company from Mississippi arrived in Memphis [on] March 15, 1849, and the *Memphis Daily Enquirer* said there were 175 emigrants feverishly seeking steamboat accommodations to Fort Smith. The Little Rock and California Association was one of the first Arkansas companies to constitute itself formally, at Little Rock on February 1, 1849. Its “captain” was James McVicar, who had served as a quartermaster sergeant in the U. S. Army during the Mexican-American War. This group left Van Buren on April 16 and arrived in Santa Fe in mid-June. Dozens of other regional companies followed suit throughout the ensuing summer. Obviously, geographical proximity was a factor, though not the only one, as mention above of the Havilah Mining Association from New York demonstrates, for taking the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. (Foreman *Marcy* 12, 13-14)

- Advertising Arkansas and the Fort Smith Road

The Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road was heavily promoted by merchants in Arkansas towns – Little Rock, Van Buren, Fort Smith – to capture the lucrative emigrant trade. If nothing else, these promotions informed prospective emigrants that there was a route to California other than the old Santa Fe Trail or the Platte River Road. As already mentioned, the proclamation “Ho!

for California Gold Mines” – certainly a provocative and eye-catching banner headline – was widely reprinted and gave concrete details about Fort Smith and the possibilities of this route.

Another tactic was to cast doubt on the feasibility of taking a more northerly trail. As Francile Oakley notes in her article, “Arkansas’ Golden Army of ’49,” referencing the *Arkansas State Democrat* and its comments on the Platte River Road, “The journalists recounted the delays caused by late snows and heavy rains at the points of rendezvous, they described the desert wastelands that characterized the route, and they expressed grave doubts that there would be sufficient pasturage for the vast number of animals that would be driven over the arid prairies. Attention was focused on examples of Indian attacks, and imminent trouble with the Mormons was prophesied.” A long editorial in the *Arkansas Banner* also warned of these dangers, purportedly showing great concern for the well-being of emigrants: “By reliable accounts from the East we learn that the rush of emigration to California continues as large as ever. . . . In view of these facts we call upon the press of Ohio, Kentucky, and all along the Ohio River, and everywhere else within earshot of those emigrants who at this time are wending their way to the northern route, to sound the alarm, and warn them of the dangers which threaten them and the privations which they may be obliged to endure – the dreadful sufferings they may be subjected to, and the horrid fate which they may meet. . . .” (Oakley 18; McArthur 29)

- Recommendations of Respected Military Leaders

Testimonials from two respected military men who knew the Oklahoma and Texas frontier well also served to steer emigrants to the Fort Smith route. No less a personage than General Matthew Arbuckle, commander at Fort Smith – on being solicited by John F. Wheeler, editor of the *Fort Smith Herald*, wrote on November 20, 1848: “I do not entertain a doubt, but

that upon an impartial examination this [Fort Smith] would be found to be the best point for emigrants going to New Mexico and California, to assemble, and make preparations for their journey. . . . It is well ascertained that the route from this place is the nearest that can be found from our frontier to New Mexico and California. . . . I have availed myself of the most reliable maps in computing the distances on the route . . . which makes the distance from this place to La Joya, on the Del Norte [Rio Grande], 630 miles, being, at least 250 miles less than the route from Independence, Missouri.” Arbuckle was echoed by Major B. L. E. Bonneville, western explorer and career army officer who had been stationed at Fort Gibson, west of Fort Smith in Oklahoma, as early as 1824. Bonneville wrote in a letter published in the *Fort Smith Herald*, November 22, 1848, “This route possesses so many advantages over any other. . . . It is shorter, more level, has water and good encampments every mile of the way. . . . It is settled at least one-third of the way, and beef and corn can be purchased that far. It can be traveled earlier in the spring and late in the fall. . . . The Canadian River affording great quantities of sweet cottonwood, rushes and winter grass, enables parties of size to travel it at all seasons. . . .” (McArthur 14-16; Oakley 20)

- Josiah Gregg and *Commerce of the Prairies*

A further inducement to take the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road was that it had been extensively described by the Santa Fe and Mexican trader Josiah Gregg in his well-known *Commerce of the Prairies*, published in 1844. This book was widely known on the Missouri and Arkansas frontiers. Gregg had, of course, written of the Santa Fe-Independence route and trade in Volume I of his book, but Volume II chronicled his voyage across the prairies from Van Buren, Arkansas, to Santa Fe and back in 1839-1840. He left Van Buren on April 21<sup>st</sup> that year. He chose the uncharted track along the Canadian River because, ultimately, he was headed for Chihuahua with goods and feared that if he did not reach that city quickly the then current

French blockade of Mexican gulf ports would end and the high prices for the merchandise he carried would evaporate. So, as he wrote, “We deemed it expedient to abandon the regular route from Missouri for one wholly untried, from the borders of Arkansas. . . .” He reached Santa Fe on June 25<sup>th</sup>, went south to Chihuahua, traded, and returned to Santa Fe, setting out for the Arkansas frontier, again along the Canadian River, on February 25, 1840. He successfully reached Van Buren on April 22, 1840. (Josiah Gregg 225)

Besides touching on aspects of the Canadian River route – his chapter titles for the journey out include “A Party of Comanches,” “Ponds and Buffalo Wallows,” and “Valley of the Canadian and Freaks of Nature,” – Gregg included a highly detailed map “Of the Indian Territory in Northern Texas and New Mexico,” which traced his route to Santa Fe in 1839 and the route back in 1840. In his concluding remarks on the blazing of this road to Santa Fe, Gregg contrasted the old Santa Fe Trail which he knew so well with his newly opened route, writing, “Concerning this expedition, I have only one or two more remarks to offer. As regards the two different routes to Santa Fé, although Missouri, for various reasons which it is needless to explain here, can doubtless retain the monopoly of the Santa Fé trade, the route from Arkansas possesses many advantages. Besides its being some days’ travel shorter, it is less intersected with large streams; there are fewer sandy stretches, and a greater variety of wood-skirted brooks, affording throughout the journey very agreeable camping places. Also, as the grass springs up nearly a month earlier than in upper Missouri, caravans could start much sooner. . . .” What emigrant would not be persuaded by such a recommendation? (Josiah Gregg 328)

That Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies* was well-known to emigrants and widely consulted is demonstrated in three unsigned “letters to the editor,” sent by gold seekers about to embark or already on the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. One correspondent, writing from Fort

Smith on March 11, 1849 to the *Arkansas State Democrat* [published on March 16<sup>th</sup>], commented on various companies leaving Arkansas, noting, “The Van Buren party goes up on the south side of Webber’s Falls and will cross at that point, taking Gregg’s route out between the Canadian and the North Fork. . . . Many of them are experienced Arkansas and Missouri frontiersmen, and go about their preparations with as much *sang-froid* as if they were not ‘going out of sight of land.’” Another correspondent to the same newspaper, writing from Van Buren on April 18, 1849 observed, “In consequence of the miry condition of the roads through the Choctaw Nation and the delays and obstacles met with by the parties that went that route, many of the emigrants who were encamped on the south side of the [Arkansas] river crossed over and took the road on the north side . . . following Gregg’s route from Van Buren to Santa Fé.” A third emigrant, writing to the *Van Buren Intelligencer* from Albuquerque on June 23, 1849, began his letter by saying, “I embrace this opportunity to write, it being the first since our leaving Little river [in eastern Oklahoma]. We have followed the route pursued by Gregg on his return in 1840, with slight variations.” If any of the volumes of Gregg which the emigrants took with them and consulted survive, their marginal notes might be interesting. (Bieber, 284, 287, 311)

- Military Expeditions: Buford and Marcy

Two official U. S. Army expeditions, that of Captain Abraham Buford from Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, to Santa Fe in 1848, and that of Captain Randolph B. Marcy from Fort Smith to Santa Fe in 1849, forged portions of the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. Marcy in particular gave hope, guidance, comfort, and protection to emigrant parties. Both eventually returned to their respective posts. Each had a great impact on the use of routes across Oklahoma to Santa Fe. In Marcy’s case, the importance of his expedition cannot be under-estimated.

Captain Buford received his orders to explore west from Fort Gibson before the news of gold in California gripped the nation and gold fever struck. Accompanied by Company H of the First Dragoons, he and his men left Fort Gibson on July 17, 1848. They struck the Cimarron River and took its north bank westward, joining the Santa Fe Trail near the Middle Spring of the Cimarron in present-day southwestern Kansas. From there they followed the old trail into Santa Fe, arriving on September 9, 1848. Buford returned to Fort Gibson the next year, leaving Santa Fe on June 6, 1849. He kept to the Santa Fe Trail as far as Running Turkey Creek, near present-day McPherson, Kansas, where he and eight of his men turned south to Fort Gibson on what became known as the “Cherokee Trail,” inaugurated several months previously by an emigrant company led by Lewis Evans, of Evansville, Arkansas. Several Arkansas newspapers and the *New York Weekly Tribune* published dispatches from Buford recommending his route west in their July and August 1849 issues. At least one party followed in his footsteps. It departed from Fort Gibson by mid-April 1849, reached Santa Fe and eventually took the Gila River route to California, arriving on the banks of the Colorado River in September. (Foreman *Marcy* 88)

Concerning Buford’s route, the editor of *Arkansas State Democrat* accused Missouri newspapers of trying to consign Buford’s exploits to oblivion as they sought to promote the Platte River Road and maintain their hold on the Santa Fe trade, complaining, “As an evidence of this, witness with what unanimity the press of Missouri acted in suppressing the testimony of Lieutenant Buford in relation to the superiority of the Arkansas route. . . . Almost every paper in Missouri . . . in copying the intelligence [Buford’s recommending his route as the “best and shortest”], merely mentioned the arrival of Lieutenant Buford, suppressing entirely his flattering, but what is well known to be truthful, notice of the southern route!” (McArthur 25)

Captain Randolph Marcy's expedition of 1849-1850 was designed to be more definitive and have a more permanent impact than that of Captain Buford. Marcy was directly ordered to establish a road from Fort Smith to Santa Fe, protect any emigrant parties which chose to accompany him, and "conciliate as far as possible the different tribes of Indians who inhabit the region of the country through which you shall pass." As it transpired, the loosely organized Fort Smith and California Emigrating Company departed with him; it consisted of 479 emigrants – some with families, "seventy-five wagons, including sutlers or merchants with their stocks of goods, traveling forges and other equipment drawn by 500 oxen and as many mules and horses, besides hundreds of saddle- and pack- horses and mules. The caravan when united extended its length more than three miles along the road," and took two and a half hours to pass any given point. (Foreman *Marcy* 149, 142)

Marcy departed from Fort Smith on April 4, 1849 and arrived in Santa Fe on June 28<sup>th</sup>. He followed the Canadian River into northeastern New Mexico and then made his way to the village of Anton Chico on the Pecos River. Upon leaving Anton Chico he by-passed San Miguel, Pecos Pueblo and Glorieta Pass, the route of the main trail to Santa Fe, and went overland south of the Pecos River to Galisteo [Gallestia in his report], south of Santa Fe, and then north into *La Villa Real de la Santa Fé de San Francisco de Asís* – Santa Fe. Most emigrants who followed him and his newly blazed trail ultimately chose to go to San Miguel and take the Santa Fe Trail from there, either then branching off just west of Glorieta Pass south to Galisteo, or heading on into Santa Fe. (Foreman *Marcy* 246-248)

Marcy had much to say about New Mexico and its people. His reaction was mostly positive, in contrast to many who came later via the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. As will be discussed elsewhere in this study, they often characterized Mexicans as dirty, lazy, conniving

thieves. Of Anton Chico, Marcy graciously commented, “This was the first settlement we had seen since leaving Edwards’ trading-house [in eastern Oklahoma]; and we were much delighted to see houses and cultivated fields once more. . . . Anton Chico is a town of about five hundred inhabitants . . . built . . . of ‘adobes,’ or unburnt blocks of clay. . . . The inhabitants raise corn, wheat, onions, beans, and peas, upon which they subsist. . . . In the evening I visited a fandango for a few minutes, where I saw the Mexicans in their favorite national amusement, the dance; and I was surprised to see with what ease and grace a ‘peon,’ who is degraded to a condition worse than slavery, and is constantly employed in the lowest kind of menial services, would hand his signorita to the floor to engage in a gallopade or waltz. They are really very graceful.”

(Foreman *Marcy* 245)

### **The Cherokee Trail**

On May 27, 1849, California-bound emigrant Oliver Lipe wrote a letter to the *Cherokee Advocate* newspaper subsequently published on July 30<sup>th</sup>. Lipe was married to a member of the Cherokee Nation and traveling with a party of Cherokee gold-seekers and another company, that of Lewis Evans which departed from Fayetteville, Arkansas. These two groups were pioneering a new westward route for emigration which became known as the Cherokee Trail. The initial section of this trail ran from northeastern Oklahoma to meet with the old Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek, in south central Kansas. In his letter Lipe described a dispute among the members of the two parties as to what direction to take from Running Turkey Creek. In broken English, he wrote, “A question arose at that point what rout to pursue, whether we should continue on our northwest course to intersect the oregon road at the southe, fork of the platt or take the Santa Fe road to Fort Bent, the latter route carried so we are now on a great highway and can travel 20 miles per day with ease.” Eventually most emigrants in the combined

Cherokee/Evans companies reached “Fort Bent,” and proceeded up the Arkansas to the site of Pueblo, Colorado. There some members chose to travel south to Santa Fe and take southern trails to California, but most of them went north, joining the Oregon-California Trail at Fort Laramie. For approximately 350 miles, then, from Running Turkey Creek to Bent’s Old Fort, the old Santa Fe Trail once again served as a road to California. (Lipe in Fletcher et al. 50)

At a time when thousands of other emigrants in the same region – western Arkansas and northeastern Oklahoma – opted for the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, why would some others choose this Cherokee Trail, which was undeveloped and longer? Here the role of the Cherokee seems decisive. The Fayetteville Gold Mining Company, with Lewis Evans as its captain, did not select a route when it organized – its members only decided to rendezvous at the “Grand Saline” [near present-day Salina, Oklahoma], where they planned to join the Cherokee company. The Cherokee gold-seekers, on the other hand, had various reasons for seeking their fortunes in California and taking a northerly route. The call for organizing among the Cherokee, published in the *Cherokee Advocate* of February 3, 1849, declared, “Therefore we, a portion of the Cherokee people, designing to avail ourselves of the inducements held out for bettering our condition by emigrating thither, and wishing to organize ourselves into a company to proceed in such a manner as shall insure our safety and comfort, and success, DO RESOLVE . . . .” As for the choice of a northerly route, for decades men of the Cherokee Nation had been fur trappers and traders, with some ranging as far west as Mexican California. For instance, part-Cherokee trader Jesse Chisholm “headed an expedition to California bearing a passport issued at Fort Gibson September 23, 1839, by General Matthew Arbuckle.” Also, in 1843, a company of Cherokee fur traders “captained” by Dan Coody and including the seasoned mountain man John Henry Brown, who was not a Cherokee, went “cross country” to California via Fort Bridger and

Fort Hall. The geography of the west was a known quantity among the Cherokee, certainly more so than among greenhorn emigrants or the authors of so-called gold rush “guidebooks.”

(Fletcher et al. 19 – referencing the *Arkansas Intelligencer* of April 7, 1849; Bieber 327, Fletcher et al. 13; Foreman *Marcy* 4)

Use of the Cherokee Trail by emigrants continued on into the next decade. In 1850 several parties, including both Cherokee and others, chose it. Two factors influenced them. First, Captain Abraham Buford, headed eastbound, had followed that portion of the Cherokee Trail from Running Turkey Creek and thence to Fort Gibson on his return from his round-trip expedition to Santa Fe [1848-1849], arriving at Fort Gibson on June 29, 1849. He had traveled the Santa Fe Trail from Santa Fe to Running Turkey Creek. His favorable account of the Cherokee Trail from the old Santa Fe Trail south appeared in various Arkansas and Missouri newspapers. Also, very interestingly, Alfred Oliver, who had gone to California with the Evans/Cherokee companies in 1849, had returned to Oklahoma by the spring of 1850, bringing with him Captain Lewis Evans’ own journal of the 1849 trip. Oliver returned to California in one of the loosely affiliated parties that went via the Cherokee Trail in 1850, taking the Evans’ journal along. William Quesenbury, another emigrant in this group, actually noted some mileages and campsites from Evans’ journal in his diary. The Evans journal obviously inspired confidence in this company of 1850 emigrants. There is further record of an emigrant company from Kentucky using the Cherokee trail in 1852, and another from Arkansas taking it in 1853. (Fletcher et al. 197, 198; Barry *Beginning* 1100, 1154)

### Conclusion: Why Choose the Santa Fe Trail?

Why would an emigrant or emigrant company choose the Santa Fe Trail? As has been demonstrated above, the answer to this question usually was highly personal. An emigrant's decision might depend on where he lived, the chance reading of a newspaper article, his experience in the Mexican-American War, an encounter with a veteran Santa Fe Trader, the availability of steamboat connections, or the vote of his emigrant company. Whatever the cause, he joined thousands of other emigrants on either the Independence-Santa Fe Trail, the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, or the Cherokee Trail in 1849 and on into the 1850s. But regardless of his route, he might have echoed the observation of William Chamberlin, who left Lewisburg, Pennsylvania on February 26, 1849, traveled by steamboat from Pittsburgh to Fort Smith, then followed the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road: "Before reaching San Miguel [New Mexico], we came out upon the Santa Fe and Independence Road. It is better than any macadamized road I ever saw in the states, being broad, smooth, and solid." Regardless of how they encountered it, or when they traveled it, few emigrants regretted their decision to follow the Santa Fe Trail.

(Chamberlin, 50)

### *The Emigrant Experience of the Trail in 1849*

The Santa Fe Trail presented a series of unique challenges for California gold rush emigrants. They usually responded to these challenges adequately, but at other times woefully. In a few cases, particularly in the eyes of the veteran Santa Fe traders who encountered them along the trail, their actions might even have seemed bizarre. Consider the sight that would have startled anyone meeting the Peoria Company of emigrants at the confluence of the Pawnee and Arkansas rivers in mid-May, 1849 – as Charles Pancoast, one of the party, depicted it in his

journal: “The weather was now becoming very warm. The long continuous dusty Travel over flat glaring Plains began to affect the eyes of our men, and those that had had the foresight to bring Colored Glasses were using them.” Sunglasses on the Santa Fe Trail! (Pancoast 188)

Besides seeing the Santa Fe Trail through tinted glasses, what other developments did emigrants have to deal with – developments which may or may not have had counterparts in the traditional evolution of the trail up to that time? In other words, from 1821 to 1848, the Santa Fe Trail was fundamentally a trail of commerce and conquest. It was primarily a highway for merchant caravans and U. S. Army contingents. But gold rush emigrants – from eastern cities, Ohio Valley farms and southern cotton country – now flooded the old trail. What expectations of trail travel did they have and did those expectations match reality? How did they cope with the rigors and rewards of the trail?

Brief though it was – from 1849 into the mid-1850s – the California gold rush emigrant experience is well documented. Several dozen emigrants kept diaries or journals of varying length. Others wrote memoirs later in life. Newspapers from Maine to Missouri printed letters from the emigrants, sent with passing merchant trains headed east or dispatched from Santa Fe or Albuquerque when they arrived there. From these sources a series of general “categories of experience” for emigrants can be identified. Most of these situations were common to the trail – they had been encountered and dealt with for three decades by the traders, fur trappers, soldiers, and occasional trail travelers, but the emigrants were a new phenomenon on the trail. They brought radically different perspectives and perceptions with them, so in many ways their era on the trail was unique. The circumstances of crossing the plains for the emigrants included:

- Organizing their “companies” or “parties” of men, wagons, livestock and supplies for the journey – or, for some emigrants, finding a group with which to associate.
- Outfitting and provisioning for the trip – some brought what they thought they might need from their home communities or farms, while others purchased transportation and supplies at the “jumping off” towns along the Missouri River, in eastern Kansas, or Fort Smith and Van Buren, Arkansas.
- Experiencing the physical trail itself, including its course and topography, the weather, the flora and fauna, and the day to day duties, hardships and pleasures of the journey to Santa Fe.
- Meeting and interacting with Native peoples, from the Shawnee, Delaware, or Pottawatomie in eastern Kansas to the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa and Apache farther west.
- Observing, doing business with and being entertained by the Hispanic/Mexican people of the newly conquered United States territory of New Mexico; emigrant reactions ran from disgust to reluctant admiration.
- Reaching Santa Fe. Emigrant depictions of the “City of the Holy Faith” give a candid snapshot of life there at that time, though these snapshots are filtered through emigrants’ own expectations, prejudices and anxiety over the next leg of their journey to California.
- Getting set for their trek from Santa Fe to California. Many emigrants found they needed to outfit themselves anew, in particular selling their wagons and oxen and learning to deal with pack mules.

- Remarking on various sites along the trail such as river crossings, branch trails, topographical features, or outposts such as Bent’s Old Fort; some of these sites became particularly noted in emigrant lore, and the emigrants’ perceptions of them adds new dimensions to present-day appreciation, understanding and interpretation over and above how the sites have been viewed in particular during the era of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

Emigrant diaries, journals, letters and memoirs provide ample examples of these elements as the gold rush pioneers experienced them – examples that are sometimes tragic, sometimes poignant, sometimes mundane, and often comic – but always fresh and immediate.

#### Organizing an Emigrant Company – the “Rules of the Road”

The great majority of the thousands of emigrants taking to the Santa Fe Trail beginning in 1849 formed themselves into regulated organized groups which they called “companies” or “associations.” This was in contrast, of course, to the traditional business procedures of merchant wagon trains, which were often led by the owner/merchant himself or a trusted colleague and were manned by employees hired for specific duties such as driving the oxen, herding the livestock, or even maintaining the wagons.

Almost all of the emigrant groups took a quasi-military form, electing “captains” and other officers and assigning various duties to company members. This form of organization mirrored American society at the time, with its numerous private and state militias, and was a natural step for the many emigrants who had been in volunteer units during the Mexican-American War. Many companies also framed and ratified written constitutions, a reflection of

the evolving American frontier and the expectation of citizens in new regions that they could and should form their own government. It was their tradition as Americans to do so.

Various examples of this form of democracy in action can be cited. Sometimes the process went smoothly and sometimes it did not. The latter was the case with the “Calloway Co., Missouri Pioneers.” This loosely affiliated group had traveled several hundred miles through northern Missouri and then into Kansas until, just shy of Council Grove on May 19<sup>th</sup>, as party member William Hunter recorded it in his journal, “At night a committee of six were appointed to draft a constitution and bylaws for government during the journey to California.” He continues, describing the ensuing difficulties:

“May 20<sup>th</sup> [Sunday] This morning the committee met according to appointment and proceeded patiently to the discharge of the duty imposed on them, and after much deliberation and discussion, finished the instrument and submitted it to the assemblage. Its reading produced an expression of opinions and sentiments, as diversified and irreconcilable as the languages that confronted ‘Babel’s Workmen.’ After many of a ‘d---d if that will do’ as the various clauses were negated and an explosion of each man’s particular or general disgust, the ill-fated instrument, misconstrued, vilified and excoriated, was consigned contemptuously to the shades of Pluto’s dominion. All was now anarchy and confusion. Every man wished to talk but none would hear, and the day, instead of being spent in devotion and reverence, echoed with nothing but liberties invaded, rights set at, all officers and no men.

May 21<sup>st</sup> All hands started for [Council Grove]. . . . Here one or two ‘New Constitutions’ soon went the rounds, each sharing the fate of the one that then slumbered. In the evening I concluded to try my hand solus at the business, and knowing that brevity

was essential to the success of any measure that might now be proposed, I soon drew out a document to my notion and with much solicitude ventured to read it before the company. Not much was said contra to it, and on the whole a favorable impression had been made [though] still no action was taken. . . . After nightfall a committee of one [member] from each wagon was selected, whose action was to be binding on their respective messes. My ‘bantings’ having been first submitted, and a vote taken on each clause separately, was unanimously adopted ‘verbatim et liberatim’ and our company was christened the ‘Callaway Co., Missouri Pioneers.’ And now a spirit of unity usurping that of discord and contrariness, each retired to his bed to refresh himself for the morrow.” *Note: The term “messes” as used by Hunter refers to the particular small group with whom an emigrant might be associated in the larger wagon train, such as those with whom he shared a wagon or supplies. (Hunter 18-19)*

Charles Pancoast, with the Peoria Company, which left Council Grove on May 5, 1849, provides additional insight on the workings of these associations. He prefaced his account with an interesting summary of the men in his party who ultimately agreed to bind themselves to their particular constitution. Pancoast wrote,

“Our Train was composed of forty-four Teams, seventeen of which were four-mule Teams, and the balance Ox Teams, most of them with four to six yoke of Oxen each. There were in all two hundred men, natives of different States and Countries. The Characters and Dispositions of the men varied much. There were ignorant and learned; generous and selfish; indolent and industrious; wild and erratic, and staid sober Souls; jubilant good Fellows, and crooked ill-natured Curmudgeons. There were Preachers, Doctors, Lawyers, Druggists, Pilots, Mechanics, Farmers, Laborers, Sailors, and

representatives of many other occupations. Among them was a three hundred-pound Pilot. Some of the men were as old as sixty-five years; others were invalids when they started.

Two Peoria men, Dr. Rogers and James Rankin, had been elected Captain and Lieutenant. The Captain was vested with power to halt and start the Train, to superintend its general movements, to select camping-grounds, to keep order among the men, and to enforce such rules as the Company adopted from time to time with regard to Guards, care of Animals, order and cleanliness of Camp, etc. Some of the members grumbled at rules that they considered useless and oppressive; but all were required strictly to obey. One Order required that no man should be permitted to ride in a Wagon unless unable to walk. Many rebelled against this Order as an arbitrary abuse of power, depriving them of the free use of their own property; but it was sustained, and was found afterwards to have been very wise, enabling us to preserve our Teams much longer than we could otherwise have done. We grew accustomed to it, and the time soon came when no man would think of riding unless compelled to do so.” (Pancoast 184-185, 186)

The *Cherokee Advocate* newspaper of February 3, 1849, published the detailed rules and regulations expected of anyone who joined the “citizens of the Cherokee Nation” organizing for the trek to the California mines via what became the Cherokee Trail. Members of this company knew exactly what would be required of them far in advance of their departure in late April.

Their resolution read, in part:

1. “That it would be neither safe nor expedient to proceed with less than one hundred able-bodied, efficient men, well armed with a rifle gun, a butcher knife, and sufficient

- ammunition to last through the journey – say not less than three pounds of powder and nine pounds of lead;
2. That each man shall furnish provisions sufficient to support him during the journey; not less than one hundred pounds of bacon, two hundred pounds of flour, twenty-five pounds of salt, and two pounds of soap;
  3. That each wagon shall not be drawn by less than one yoke of cattle or mules to each ration; that each wagon be furnished with six gallons of tar and not less than one axe, one handsaw, one drawing knife, and one set of necessary augers and chisels;
  4. That no wagons carry more than twenty hundred-weight and small ones less in proportion, which is to be determined by a committee hereafter appointed;
  5. That the company rendezvous by the first day of April at Richard Drews's, on the south side of [the] Arkansas river, where all necessary officers are to be elected by the company;
  6. That the secretary tender an invitation to those in the neighboring states and in the Nation who wish to go to California, to join the company;
  7. That the following persons at the several places open books for the enrollment of names of those wishing to join the company: A. D. Wilson, Fort Gibson; W. H. Holt, Flint; D. M. Gunter, Tahlequah;
  8. That this meeting adjourn to meet again at this place on the tenth day of March next  
[.]”

Those who signed on to this company duly met on March 10, 1849 and adopted these resolutions, though with various amendments, subsequently printed in the *Cherokee Advocate* on March 19, 1849. (Bieber 327-328, 331)

Very few companies made it to California intact. Very few even made it to Santa Fe without breaking up over one matter or another. Inevitably, problems surfaced and personalities clashed, though usually there was an attempt at first to stay united and deal with the trials and tribulations of the trail. In a letter to the *Daily Missouri Republican*, Augustus Heslep – writing from “Greenhorn Village, Base of the Rocky Mountains, July 8, 1849” [the letter was published on September 12<sup>th</sup>], offered prospective emigrants some philosophical advice on the organization of a company. He opined, “A judicious selection of persons in the formation of emigrant parties in crossing the plains is an item of the highest import. Generally the object sought is numbers, with but little reference to character, capacity, and sound judgment. A neglect of these considerations is the great cause of difficulty, dissention, and ruin upon the plains. . . . Cut loose from society, uncontrolled by public sentiment, if there is a black streak in the mind of an individual, it is sure to show itself. He becomes reckless, thoughtless, and troublesome. He disregards himself and the rights and feelings of others. With nothing to restrain him, he becomes a demon in human shape. . . .” One wonders who exactly from among his party that Heslep had in mind! (Bieber 376-377)

As the realities of the journey unfolded, adjustments might be necessary, as with the Illinois Party, as recorded by one of its members, H. M. T. Powell, when it had been on the road only a few days: “We held a council in the Tent in the evening and appointed to each man his peculiar duties. . . .” As Powell also explains, they make a wrong turn while approaching Independence, Missouri, so “Fuller now rode on to make enquiries. By the time we had got a Mile beyond the Mill, Fuller came back and called a council – the end of which was that we returned to the Mill, then turned to the left toward the Missouri and kept on for about 5 miles till we came very near the river.” A change in a company’s rules could also call for a meeting – and

result in dispute. For instance, many parties voted not to travel on Sundays, preferring to observe the Sabbath by laying-by and perhaps having a sermon, often from a clergyman-member. But circumstances could change, as William Quesenbury, with the John Wolfe Company on the Cherokee Trail heading north from Pueblo, Colorado, on June 15, 1850, recorded: “The Company determined this morning to travel. This is the first time we have broken the Sabbath by travelling. The grass is bad and we are inconveniently situated.” This change evidently riled one company member, the Reverend J. J. May, who promptly quit and joined another nearby party which, presumably, was resting on Sunday. (Powell 2, 9; Fletcher 301)

H. M. T. Powell also chronicles one of the longer-simmering conflicts recorded in trail journals, a conflict between himself and members of his Illinois Company, which led to his break with his comrades at the “Lower Cimarron Spring” and his joining with the Missouri Company, which had been traveling more or less in tandem with the Illinois Company. The split was the culmination of petty disputes that went all the way back to the beginning of the company’s trek through Missouri. The intricacies of these all-too-common conflicts are revealed in Powell’s lengthy journal entry as the final parting comes – he does not even get to pull out the capital he has invested in the Illinois Company, noting, “They peremptorily refused to allow me the debt that Dr. Park owed me; would not even allow me for the bacon I let him have, which he had placed to his credit as part of his capital stock in the Company. . . . I raised the bacon on my farm and put it in the concern. . . . And thus I am deprived of about \$62.00, a serious matter in settling accounts. By transfer of property on the Cimarron I take the wagon I put with the concern at \$90.00; my 2 Yoke of cattle at \$100.00; with such provisions as they in their benignity choose to let me have.” But he was pleased with his decision, noting that the next day,

“The Captain [of the Missouri Company] came himself and took my flour. He and some of the Missouri Company having offered to help me all they could, they take the flour to lighten my load.” Powell immediately threw himself into the life of the Missouri Company, perhaps somewhat to the chagrin of its members, also recording that, “The Captain today, acting on a suggestion of mine . . . organized a council composed of delegates from each mess who meet at his Tent and decide what to do, and he gives the order.” Perhaps controversy kept up Powell’s mettle – he made it through to California, arriving in San Diego early in December, 1849. And it can be emphasized again – such disputes and disgruntlement and switching of trains were more the rule than the exception. (Powell 53-54)

#### Outfitting for the Trek to Santa Fe and California

Besides the need to form some sort of government for their company or association, emigrants had to provision themselves for their journey – in most cases not just for the segment taking them to Santa Fe but also, although their plans often proved to be faulty, beyond by whatever route they might choose through the southwestern deserts. They had to arrange not only for food and sundries but for transportation as well – should they take wagons, should they use oxen or mules, were horses reliable, or would they go by “shanks mare” – walking all the way? The emigrants’ needs and how they chose to fill them differed from those of the seasoned Santa Fe Trail trader and his caravan. Traders usually had a long-standing relationship with a mercantile house in a particular town, such as Lexington, Westport, or Independence. Many traders also had annual business dealings with St. Louis firms and some had contacts with merchants as far-flung as New York, Baltimore, New Orleans and Amsterdam. Not only did these houses know the requirements of their customers, they would extend credit until the Santa Fe trader had been to the southwest or Mexico and returned with silver or trade goods.

Emigrants, of course, had none of these connections, and their situation was compounded by a fundamental ignorance of what to take and how much they might use.

Once an emigrant definitely decided to join the westward throng of gold seekers, he began to think about supplies and provisions. He might read a list of the bacon, beans, flour, oxen and wagons he would need in a local or regional newspaper. Just as they trumpeted the news of gold in California, so America's newspapers printed and reprinted varied advice on what was needed to get to the mines. Depending on how late in 1849 he left, or on into the 1850s, there might be a letter, circulated in the neighborhood or published in the local paper, from a local man who had already reached the mines, detailing his experiences, what had worked for him on his journey or what mistakes he had made. And inevitably, emigrants probably received lots of unsolicited and uninformed advice from neighbors who were staying safely at home.

Whether to stock up locally before he left or buy provisions and supplies in Missouri or Arkansas was another decision that weighed on an emigrant. If he hailed from the farming frontiers of Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee or Mississippi, he might have been able to outfit himself with his own wagon, oxen, cured meats and cornmeal. But traveling by wagon – and most likely with others from his neighborhood or in a more formally organized party – would slow him down right at the start of his venture and he literally would be eating into his supplies for 300 or 500 miles before he reached the Missouri River or Fort Smith, Arkansas. Perhaps it would be best to take cash and book passage on a steamboat to Independence or St. Joseph? But then, would he have enough cash to cover expenses? Rumors of inflated prices on the frontier circulated widely – and proved to be true. It would also seem that the farther an emigrant lived from the western trails the less likely he would be to burden himself with gear and supplies, but often this was not the case. As mentioned elsewhere in this study, the New York Knickerbocker

Association, which took the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road in 1849, sent part of its goods by sea around Cape Horn and shipped the rest by steamboat down the Ohio and Mississippi, then up the Arkansas. Charles Pancoast, heading by steamer up the Missouri in April, 1849, recalled, “The largest portion of the Passengers were Emigrants bound for California. The Deck and Hurricane roof were covered with their Wagons. . . .” (Foreman *Marcy* 25; Pancoast 174)

Emigrants could also turn to various guidebooks which immediately became available on the east coast, along the Ohio River corridor, and on the Missouri and Arkansas frontiers. Some guidebooks promoted one route over another – the Platte River Road versus the Santa Fe Trail or the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, but when it came to advice on provisioning, they did not distinguish between one route or another as to what kind of outfit and provisions might be needed. Usually, if the guidebook ran to such a feature, there would be a separate section or “chapter” on “what to take.” The list in Joseph Ware’s *The Emigrant’s Guide to California* was typical. Ware recommended, “*For each person:* you want a barrel of flour, or 180 lbs ship biscuit that is kiln dried, 150 to 180 lbs bacon, 25 lbs coffee, 40 lbs sugar, 25 lbs rice, 60 lbs beans or peas, a keg of clear cooked beef suet, as a substitute for butter (butter will become rancid after a few days on the plains), a keg of lard, 30 or 40 lbs of dried peaches, or apples, also some molasses and vinegar. For arms, you want a good rifle, and a pair of long pistols (some companies foolishly talk of taking small cannon along), or a revolver, 5 lbs powder, ‘Lafin’s’ best, with 10 lbs of lead, and a few rounds of shot. If you have room to spare fill up with additional provisions, as they will be scarce after you get through. . . .” (Ware 6)

A letter to a newspaper describing a well-organized and provisioned association came from a member of the Morgan County and California Rangers, which left Independence via the Santa Fe Trail in May, 1849. Written by an unnamed member of the party, it was dated May 4<sup>th</sup>

and published in the *St. Louis Weekly Reveille* on May 14<sup>th</sup>: “The outfit of our company is considered very complete. . . . Our exact number is forty men, with twelve wagons – four of which, have four persons, and eight mules to each, with a load of two thousand five hundred lbs. We are all well armed, and well supplied with full provisions for six to nine months – ample clothing for two years – India rubber clothing – extra equipments such as saddles, harness, shoes for the animals, axles for wagons, and all that sort of thing, to provide against accidents; we carry scythes for cutting forage – blacksmithing apparatus complete – carpenter’s do., etc., and have our wagons fixed with iron rings in the axles, so that with . . . artillery ropes, we can drag them by hand where mules would not work. I have seen no company better fitted out in every respect than our own.” (Bieber 356-357)

Sometimes, concerning outfitting and provisions, specifications for joining a company would be laid out to the public in “flyers,” or pamphlets, or a “call for members” in a local or regional newspaper. The Fayette Gold Mining Company issued such a call in the *Fort Smith Herald* on February 21, 1849. This company took the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. The company’s secretary W. R. Cunningham wrote: “The following are the requisitions imposed on each member of the company. The lightest wagons that can be constructed, that will be strong and durable. Great care should be taken in the selection of good wagons and teams, as on these depend the speed and success of the company. Wagons may be made for two, four, or six horses, mules, or oxen; the largest not to carry over twenty-five hundred pounds, and the smaller in proportion, and can be drawn by horses, mules, or oxen. Oxen are preferable. Each wagon should carry one or two good axes, one shovel or mattock, a drawing knife, a saw, [a] chisel, and to every family or mess, a good tent with all the appurtenances thereunto belonging. Each person should take one hundred and seventy-five pounds of bacon, one hundred and forty pounds

of flour, and it is left optional with each member whether or not he takes sugar and coffee; but all should carry some fifteen or twenty pounds of salt, to salt the wild game they kill. Every man should be provided with a good rifle or shotgun, two pounds of powder, and six pounds of lead, together with a brace of pistols and a good knife, to be carried in the belt. Such stock must be taken as shall not impede the progress of the company, but no more should be taken than can be attended to by each person.” Whether this company, or any other, actually carried out an inspection of each emigrant’s outfit is not evident in the journals and diaries of the day. (Bieber 330-331)

That emigrants heeded these published lists and calculated what they needed is attested to time and again in their accounts. One example can suffice, that of John Hudgins, who, nearing 80 years of age in 1910, reminisced: “On the 6<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1849, I, John Hudgins, Mooresville, Livingston County, Missouri, drove out of my father’s yard with eight yoke of oxen hitched to a large Kentucky Turnpike wagon loaded with about 6,000 pounds of provisions, mostly flour, bacon, sugar, coffee, with 10 gallons of alcohol and 1 gallon of cholera medicine. I owned three quarters of the outfit and Warren M. Hudgins, a cousin, owned one-fourth. My two brothers, James and Humphrey, aged respectively 17 and 15, accompanied us.” (Hudgins 3)

As indicated, those emigrants who waited to buy provisions on the frontier paid prices they found very dear. Rudolph Kurz, a Swiss artist resident in St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1849, observed in his journal, “The prices of provisions, cattle, and goods became exorbitant. The farmer fixed no price for his products but advanced them higher and higher with each new band of adventurers. A bushel of corn, formerly only 15 cents, advanced to \$1; a barrel, containing 5 bushels, was \$5. Ham, formerly from 3 to 7 cents a pound, was now 12 cents; butter, from 8 to 25 cents. Oftentimes bread could not be had at all.” Because of these prices, Kurz added, “many

poor emigrants felt compelled to give up their plans, at least for that year. They were obliged to return home or else remain here and seek employment.” (Kurz 46, 47)

Except for occasional comments, it is unclear how the emigrants fared on the trail with their rations. All of the companies, of course, supplemented their provisions by hunting, especially buffalo and antelope, though some larger parties could not bring down an ample supply of meat. Charles Pancoast, with the Peoria Company guided by James Kirker in 1849, lightheartedly lamented about one of his provisions that ran short, recalling, “I had been a constant Smoker since I was sixteen years of age, and had bought two boxes of Segars before starting the trip; but with the aid of the other members of the Company they were all consumed [by the time the party reached Bent’s Fort]. Although I felt a constant longing for them, I congratulated myself that the time had come when I could break myself of the pernicious habit.” In a letter to his wife, headed “Arkansas River, Friday, Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>, 1849,” Benjamin Hayes provides a glance at how he was faring with his provisions, writing, “I use my coffee altogether without sugar, and like it very well. My bread has held out admirably. I still have left a few of your biscuit, and Mr. Shields has flour along which he will commence baking to-night. I furnished him and a son with bread all the way to this point, and each of them ate twice as much as I did. I have not yet resorted to my meal, saving it till we cross the Arkansas, which will be, probably, on Sunday. We will then be half way.” (Pancoast 197; Hayes 16-17)

Whatever was the case with any given emigrant or emigrant company, there was jubilation when they arrived in New Mexico and got fresh vegetables, eggs, and newly baked bread in Las Vegas, San Miguel, Galisteo or Santa Fe.

## The Trail and Trail Life

Except for the occasional difficult stream crossing or patch of sand, most emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail seemed to be strongly impressed with the ease of travel and good condition of the “Independence Road.” They did not regret their decision to take the Santa Fe Trail, or join it if they were on the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road or the Cherokee Trail. Many of the more observant emigrants who kept journals or diaries or later wrote their memoirs, specifically commented on their experience of the physical trail itself – sometimes indicating that they were surprised at how pleasant travel could be. For example:

- Stanislas Lasselie, who journeyed from Logansport, Indiana, to Fort Smith Arkansas, and then on to Santa Fe, in 1849: “About two o’clock in the afternoon [May 25<sup>th</sup>] we came to a ranche called Bernal [New Mexico] which was rather small having some twenty five persons. A ranche was some thing new to some of the company never seeing any before. Here is the Independence road that lead to Santa Fee. It has been worked by the government and much used.”(Lasselie 16-17)
- George Sniffen, coming all the way from New York City via Philadelphia, Cincinnati and Fort Smith, to Santa Fe, in 1849, noted in his journal while near “Pecos, upon the river of the same name,” – “In camp, recruiting our wearied animals. Several parties of traders as well as Californians passed our encampment to day on their way from Independence to Santa Fe. Their animals were oxen and mules in splendid order, showing a very marked contrast to ours. . . .” (Sniffen, ms not paginated.)
- William Chamberlin, who left Lewisburg, Pennsylvania on February 26<sup>th</sup> and took the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, declared: “Before reaching San Miguel, we came out upon the

Santa Fe and Independence Road. It is better than any macadamized road I ever saw in the states, being broad, smooth and solid.” (Chamberlin 50)

- Thomas W. Sutherland, traveling with James Collier and his escort of dragoons – Collier is on his way to California to assume his duties as Collector of the Port of San Francisco – observed soon after the party left Council Grove on June 4, 1849: “The road is very fine and hard, equal to any that you have ever seen. . . . A Dr. McE. of Mississippi, travels with us. He is a wealthy gentleman; has his servant, &c. He travels with a mule carriage. Our oxen, however, keep up with him. We pass over from eighteen to twenty-five miles a day. . . .” (Sutherland 205)
- An anonymous member of a company from Helena, Arkansas – this company trekked from Little River, Oklahoma, to the head waters of the Washita River and then, as reported in a letter published in *The Southern Shield* at Helena on July 21, 1849, went: “Up the Canadian until we came to Bent’s old semi-dilapidated Fort [which William Bent had deserted just a few weeks before], at which point we left the river and struck across the prairie for the Rio Pacos, which we struck after traveling six days in a southwesterly course. After we reached the Pacos, our course was north-west to San Miguel, and on to this place [Santa Fe]. I can say one thing, I never saw a better road in my life than we found from Little River to this place. I expect it is the best natural road in the world, of its length.” (Foreman *Marcy* 263-264)

Camp life on the trail also seems to have agreed with many emigrants, or at least those who made it through to Santa Fe and wrote about their exploits. Time and again, there are comments on how healthy they are, healthier than they have ever been. Oliver Lipe, on the “Wet Route” near present-day Kinsley, Kansas, wrote to the *Cherokee Advocate* [published July 30,

1849]: “I am now in perfect health. . . . I never had a better appetite than I have now and above all let me inform you that I am a great cook, beat the company Baking Biscuits.” William Hunter, on reaching the Arkansas, enthused, “I do not believe, with any moderate experience, that disease or sickness can exist here. . . . The trip we are now engaged [in] . . . is a sure and certain ‘Panacea’ for all the physical infirmities to which we poor mortals under other circumstances are liable and subject.” And in a letter to the *Arkansas Banner* [Little Rock, published August 31, 1849], a member of the Little Rock and California Mining Company wrote from Santa Fe, “All our company have been healthy; and although we have often-times been obliged to travel for hours in our wet clothes, none of us have experienced any bad effect from it. Colds are unknown in the camp.” These comments, of course, echoed the sentiments of Josiah Gregg who, in the opening pages of his *Commerce of the Prairies*, a book known to some emigrants, noted that his health in 1831 was so poor that he was confined to his bedroom, but that when he took to the prairies on the advice of his physician, “The effects of this journey were in the first place to re-establish my health, and, in the second, to beget a passion for Prairie life which I never expect to survive.” (Fletcher 53; Hunter 25; Foreman *Marcy* 272; Josiah Gregg 4)

Gregg’s “passion for Prairie life” also found expression in emigrant jottings. Many of them exulted in the camaraderie of camp life and took note of the flora and fauna of the plains, much of which was of course unknown to them. William Brisbane in his “Journal of a Trip, or Notes of One,” remarked of his party’s halt at 110 Mile Creek: “June 4<sup>th</sup> – Dr. Marshall and I went down and took a complete bath in the creek – a beautiful spot and convenient. I feel as clean as soap and water can make me.” And on June 10<sup>th</sup>, a Sunday, west of Council Grove, he was content: “In the afternoon Minister preached to us – and one of the most astonishing things occurred after the service. A man and woman (servants of Major Steen) stepped up and had the

marriage ceremony performed. It was a truly novel affair out here.” In the same vein, William Goulding, far out on the plains of northeastern New Mexico on May 20, 1849, told of a pack train which caught up with his company, remarking, “We had a hearty time altho their was not one of the party of 11 packed mule men we had ever seen before. Still, we were as sociable as though we had been natural brothers – well how did you leave the States, have you any letters for me, and you got the late papers – did you not stop at the post office – and all such questions.” (Brisbane 21-22; Goulding 122)

High spirits could result in practical jokes in some companies, as with that of William Hunter. While still in eastern Kansas, four men set out on a hunt, two up one side of a creek and two up the other. One of the latter soon crossed the creek and then rushed towards the other two, “yelling, shouting,” saying that “there were some forty Indians, with guns, just above them and in full pursuit, that they had by this time got W’s scalp and d---d if they would not get theirs in less than five minutes. Waiting for nothing further they dashed through briar patches, over rock, stumps, and logs. . . . In a few minutes they reached camp . . . . Their eyes betrayed the perturbation within and their bloodless and trembling lips showed plainly that they considered it anything but a joke. The others shortly afterwards came in breathless from laughter, and the way the jests and merriment flew about for some time ‘wasn’t slow.’ The sufferers, however, bore it very stoically and in a few days other pleasantries succeeded in affecting its sting.” (Hunter 13-14)

The flora and fauna – or lack of it - on the trail could either delight emigrants, or drive them to despair, except perhaps for the thrill of seeing, chasing and killing buffalo, which seems to have entranced everyone. On the negative side, many might have confirmed William Brisbane’s lament near Point of Rocks, Kansas – “Camped on the Cimarrone again – dry for

water – a perfect wilderness we passed through today – nothing but sand – Oh! For a tree!” And the next day in his diary he said, “I feel as if I could hug a tree if I see one.” A John Myers, traveling with James Collier’s party, ironically while still at Council Grove, wrote back to the *Daily Cincinnati Gazette* [writing on June 7, published on June 28, 1849]: “This is a prairie life, of which we read such delightful descriptions. . . . It is the same from day to day with the exception of an occasional travel of the whole of one day, and even two, without wood, water or grass. To me there is nothing pleasant in this – it is utterly devoid of poetry – terribly ‘flat and unprofitable’ . . . .” Another member of Collier’s company would later write home from Santa Fe, “The whole country between the Arkansas and Santa Fe would be dear as a gift.” (Brisbane, 32; Foreman *Collier*, 22, 16)

These observations were the exception. More emigrants commented favorably on the flowers, fruits and grasses of the prairies and plains, as might be expected since many of them came from farms and were country folk back home, or hailed from eastern cities and were now encountering the “frontier wilds” they had so often read about. Thomas Sutherland’s comment is typical – he is about 130 miles southwest of Fort Leavenworth: “‘The Plains’ are richer than I had supposed. The soil, instead of being arid and sterile, is very rich . . . very good for wheat, hemp and tobacco but too strong for corn. . . . The Plains furnish flowers enough to meet the desires of any botanist. We find along the route almost everything that we cultivate in gardens. Strawberries and mushrooms grow very large, and are excellent. . . . We have quite good living.” In an unsigned letter to the New York *Weekly Tribune*, a correspondent wrote from Council Grove that the trees along the streams appeared as “vast parks, most beautifully interspersed with Prairie Pinks, Roses, Verbena, Morning Glories, Sensitive Plants, Strawberries, and ripe Gooseberries, Plums, and fifty varieties of flowers I know nothing about, but all in most

lavishing profusion.” Even as they went farther west, some emigrants appreciated what they found, as with James Mitchell near present-day Syracuse, Kansas, on the Arkansas in May, 1850, “Some of us that went on a head of the waggons had the pleasure of Shading under a large cotton wood the first tree I had got to Shaide under in 300 miles.” Even at Upper Spring on the Cimarron River – mid-way on the dreaded *Jornada* – William Hunter could find beauty, writing, “On reaching the spot I regretted that I was not a landscape painter.” (Sutherland 205; Unidentified Emigrant in “Bypaths of Kansas History” 325; Mitchell, in Fletcher 260; Hunter 34)

The animals of the prairies and plains, some familiar and some “exotic,” including the much-anticipated and admired buffalo, also captured the attention of the emigrants. Hiram Davis, a member of the Lewis Evans party which had come from northeastern Oklahoma via the Cherokee Trail, wrote to his wife, after crossing the plains, “I have seen animals that I never saw before . . . the Elk, Antelope, Badger, Hare, Prairie Dog and Squirrel, and many others.” Many travelers mentioned the presence of wolves all along the trail. At “Willow Spring” in eastern Kansas [near present-day Baldwin City], William Hunter wrote, “We discovered a wolf den out of which we dug six whelps – five of which seemed perfectly sullen, refusing to move or note anything that passed. But the other one manifested a most vicious disposition, snapping at everything that came in his way. We put them up as targets and shot them.” William Brisbane, on June 25, 1849, along the Cimarron River, groused: “After watching a wolf for an hour last night with my pistol I fell asleep and slept so late we had to start without my breakfast. . . .” On July 4<sup>th</sup>, now near Point of Rocks, New Mexico, he observed, “I was detailed for guard duty – the wolves are so troublesome – we are annoyed every night and on one night they attacked our horses and wounded them severely with their teeth.” (Fletcher 53; Hunter 15; Brisbane 32, 38)

But it was buffalo that captured the imagination of the emigrants, as they did of all travelers on the Santa Fe Trail – almost every diary and journal marked the sighting of the first buffalo, the thrill of a hunt, and the welcome taste of a buffalo roast. One example suffices for all – Oliver Lipe, with the Cherokee Nation party, in a letter to the *Cherokee Advocate* related, “We are on the bank of the Arkansas 389 miles from home in the midst of the Buffalo. . . .” And later observed, “Any amount of Buffalo calfs could be caught – Daniel Gunter caught two when we first got to them kept them tied all night and let them go in the morning. . . . The first day we got among Buffalo, schrimshers and I went and killed a large bull – I believe we have all killed buffalo but potter.” (Fletcher 53)

As a final glance at “trail life,” it can also be noted that nearly every emigrant journal or diary reveals some quirk of character, sidelight on daily camp life, or description of a memorable event that gives a singular snapshot of a moment along the trail. For example, some caravans had musicians among their number – John Hudgins recalled in his memoir, “We had several instruments in the train. Drum, fife, coronet and fiddles and some nights they would give a concert that would . . . divert the wolves.” William Brisbane occupied his leisure time with books: “Read two chapters in my little Testament which my Mother gave me when a boy . . .” and “stretched myself out on the ground . . . read a little in ‘Tom Burke of Ours’ and then eat my supper. . . .” [An historical romance, published in 1844] Many emigrants commented on the weather, as might be expected – especially the violent thunderstorms. Charles Pancoast provides a concise, classic account – his party is west of Bent’s Old Fort on the Arkansas: “On Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup> [June 1849] . . . about three o’clock in the afternoon there came up a heavy Thunder Storm, beating in our faces. We wheeled our Stock around, and placing the Wagons side by side in close proximity, we waited for the Storm to abate. . . . Lightning flashing about us, and the

dreadful Thunder . . . filled our Cattle with nervous terror.” A correspondent to the *Kennebec Journal* [Maine], in a letter published on September 6, 1849, perhaps summed up trail life for all parties, companies, and emigrants, writing, “It would please you to see us on the road. The captain riding ahead on his bell-horse, a hundred mules following in a drove, and on each wing and behind, fifty men, each with his gun slung to the horn of his saddle, and belted with knife and pistol. . . . On the whole, to stand to one side and see us pass, winding along the trail over the silent prairies, would remind you of a caravan of Arabs crossing the desert. . . .” (Hudgins 6; Brisbane 7, 11; Pancoast 198; Foreman *Marcy* 63)

### Encountering Native Peoples

In his autobiography, Kit Carson recalled leading a military contingent out of Taos, New Mexico, in October of 1849 to rescue Mrs. James M. White and her daughter, who had been taken captive by Apaches. Mrs. White had been with her husband, a Santa Fe Trader, and a few other men making their way to Santa Fe on the Cimarron Route, having left Mr. White’s slowly moving wagon train a few days previously. They were set upon near Point of Rocks, New Mexico, and all the men in the party were killed. Kit Carson and the troops with him caught up with the Apache but, during their attack on the Apache camp, Mrs. White was killed. Nothing was ever heard of the White’s daughter.

In her baggage Mrs. White had a copy of a pulp fiction novel, *Kit Carson, the Prince of the Gold Hunters*, authored by Charles E. Averill and published in Boston in 1849. It was the first of a number of such tales that would feature Kit Carson as the quintessential fur trapper, guide, Indian fighter, and gold hunter. As Kit recalled it in his autobiography, “We found a book in the camp, the first of the kind I had ever seen, in which I was represented as a great hero,

slaying Indians by the hundred. I have often thought that Mrs. White must have read it, and knowing that I lived nearby, must have prayed for my appearance in order that she might be saved.” (Quaife 135)

This novel, of course, reflected prevalent American cultural conceptions of not only Kit Carson and frontiersmen but also frontier conditions and Native peoples west of the Missouri. In the context of the rush to California in 1849, there is no way of knowing what each individual emigrant might have envisioned or anticipated concerning the Native peoples he would encounter. It is even difficult to generalize, though all emigrants did bring with them expectations and apprehensions grounded in newspaper accounts, military reports, novels, and rumors and suppositions of Americans based on two centuries of westward movement. As Elliot West puts it in *The Contested Plains – Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado*, speaking of emigrants in 1859 but applicable to the 1849 gold rush, “Emigrants were walking bundles of values and belief; cultural particulars were embedded in their thoughts and manners, institutions and biases, language and fears, in how they dressed and ate and prayed and in what they named their mules.” (West 164)

The impression given in the journals, diaries, and letters of 1849 gold rush emigrants is that they were apprehensive of what might befall them in Indian Country, but more in the abstract than based on prior personal experience or even actual accounts of violent encounters with Native people related to them second-or-third-hand. Many of them had never seen an Indian. When they do comment on their meetings with Shawnee or Cheyenne or Apache – and their journals, diaries and letters are replete with accounts of these meetings – the emigrants often are bemused or even entertained by what they see and experience. There are “Indian

alarms” from time to time, to be sure, but there is no record in the diaries of major confrontations that result in bloodshed in 1849 or on into the 1850s as regards to the gold rush emigration.

The emigrants of 1849 encountered three distinct Native cultures on their treks from Missouri and Arkansas to New Mexico: the peoples and resettled tribes of eastern Kansas such as the Kaw, Delaware, Pottawatomie, Osage, Shawnee and others; the as yet independent Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and occasionally Pawnee of the central plains along the Santa Fe Trail; and the Apache and Comanche, especially on the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road in the southern plains.

The Native peoples in eastern Kansas elicited admiration from some emigrants and condemnation from others. Several accounts view them with pity and an understanding of their plight, many having been removed several times from one “homeland” after another. An emigrant writing from Council Grove in June, 1849 – his letter was published in the *New York Weekly Tribune* on July 21<sup>st</sup> – took pains, as did so many emigrants, to describe Indian demeanor and dress, saying of the Kaw, “They have the peculiarity of having their hair shaved in such a manner as to leave a triangular tuft, the apex of the triangle on the top of the brow, spreading regularly back, the base resting on the neck. . . . Their ears are gashed, and filled with rings; brass rings around their arms.” He also expressed some sympathy for the Kaw, noting, “From the spirit of the emigrants, it is not to be wondered at that the Indians are hostile and treacherous. It is perfectly outrageous to see how the poor Indians’ fences, chickens, pigs, sheep, corn, potatoes, onions, &c. are stripped from them, without even saying, ‘by your leave, if you please’.” William Hunter commented on the generosity of some Shawnee: “There was a vast detail of timber here injured or destroyed by fire. . . . The Chief, who paid us a visit with some of his councilors, requested us not to cut any of the green timber, but told us that we were

welcome to use as much of that which was dead as we needed. He was a good natured, corpulent old fellow dressed in a French blouse and cap.” Charles Pancoast, while deploring the state of affairs among “the half-civilized Wyandotte and Delaware” he met, also showed some empathy with them and, interestingly, contrasted them with the Plains peoples he later observed, saying, “These Indians [Wyandotte and Delaware] were generally squalid creatures, lamentably debauched and sunken in the scale of Humanity; and I am sorry to say that this condition was much the result of their association with White People, who furnished them with Whiskey and otherwise contaminated the morals of both their Women and their men. Such debauchery, I will here take occasion to say, was never found among the numerous Tribes of Wild Indians with whom we afterwards came in contact; on the contrary, we found the Squaws universally chaste; and ready to resent the indecent approach of a White Man.” (Unidentified Emigrant in “Bypaths of Kansas History” 324; Hunter 12; Pancoast 178)

In both 1849 and 1850, emigrants anticipated, commented about, and reflected later on the “annual gathering” of Plains peoples meeting with Thomas Fitzpatrick, the veteran mountain man who was Indian Agent for the upper Platte and Arkansas rivers from 1846 to 1854. In those years this gathering occurred in the vicinity of the “Arkansas Crossings” – the various fords of the Arkansas leading to the Cimarron Route of the Santa Fe Trail – today immediately west of Dodge City, Kansas. Captain Abraham Buford, on his way from Santa Fe to Fort Gibson [Oklahoma] in 1849, put the numbers of the assembled Cheyenne, Kiowa and Arapaho at between 3,000 and 4,000. James S. Calhoun, himself traveling to Santa Fe to assume his duties as Indian Agent there, writing from the “Arkansas Crossing” on June 24<sup>th</sup>, mentioned emigrant fears of the large number of “Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Keoways, Comanches & Utahs” on their route: “At and near the Arkansas Crossing, we found several thousand Indians of various tribes

assembled, awaiting the return of Mr. Fitzpatrick from Washington. Their expectations in relation to presents to be received by them, on the return of Mr. Fitzpatrick, were so extravagant as to cause emigrants, and others to have fearful apprehensions on account of those, who were expected to be on the plains after the 15 of July, the day named by the Indians for the return of Mr. Fitzpatrick.” (Buford - Van Buren *Intelligencer*, July 14, 1849, quoted in Barry *Beginning* 873; Calhoun 18)

In 1850, Captain Jonathan Wolfe, himself a member of the Cherokee Nation who was leading the Cherokee California Emigrating Company west that summer, actually met Thomas Fitzpatrick. Wolfe wrote in a letter to the *Cherokee Advocate* [published July 23, 1850, written May 29<sup>th</sup> – “on the bank of the Arkansas River, thirty miles above Fort Mann”]: “Today, about noon, we came to a point which had been set aside by Maj. Fitzpatrick, for several of the Northern tribes to meet in council. . . . Those present are Aporoahas, Apaches, Chienne, Soux, and Comanches. I should judge there was two thousand present – all appear perfectly friendly, and the Agent informs us that we need not fear any thing from Indians – this side of the mountains. But warns us against one tribe, which roams on the mountains, the name of which I have forgotten.” (Fletcher 272)

Once on the Cimarron Route, emigrants almost invariably encountered only bands of Comanche. This was particularly true for those coming from Fort Smith as they moved into northeastern New Mexico, nearing the Pecos River Valley and joining the Santa Fe Trail at San Miguel. These contacts were peaceful, though emigrants usually mention that they were “on guard.” The “flamboyance” of Comanche dress and costume – in the eyes of the emigrants – was often noted. Augustus Heslep, writing from Santa Fe on May 23, 1849 to a newspaper in Louisiana, recalling the Comanche he met, said, “They evidently desired our friendship, and we

mingled with them and turned our horses loose in close proximity to them without the least apprehension. . . . All appeared to be very social and courteous, making every effort to converse by sign. . . . The men were . . . all painted, some of a single color, some with many colors, with queues six or seven feet long braided with great nicety and wreathed with beads or silver ornaments of the size of a saucer. . . . Many of the exquisites carried umbrellas to protect them from the sun. . . .” Of his meeting with the Comanche, William Goulding, “on the regular Santa Fe road and only 5 days march from the first settlements,” wrote, “Next morning, Monday May 21 [1849], we were visited by several hundred of these people, old and young, and some whole families, and we were indeed surprised at seeing such a vast number of wild creatures. . . . Several of their aristocracy came out to see us, their young princes mounted on horses . . . without saddle or bridle, poppouses lashed on a kind of frame carried by their . . . women, all curious in seeing us, as much so as we were to see them.” The story of the Plains peoples would change dramatically in the coming decade, but for the California gold rush emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail, their experience of these peoples seems to have been uniformly colorful with just enough anxiety to make it exciting and memorable. (Bieber [Heslep] 305; Goulding 124-125)

There are two comments in emigrant diaries which could be lifted directly from stereotypical Hollywood western movies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Benjamin Hayes, traveling with Santa Fe trader Solomon Houck’s caravan, wrote to his wife from the “Arkansas River” two days west of Pawnee Rock, on September 20, 1849: “We are obliged to keep a strict guard, of course, and last night the wolves howled very close to us, just before the break of day. Mr. Houck told the guard to keep a good look-out, as they might not be wolves; the Indians, as you know, very successfully imitating the sounds of birds and animals to deceive a camp.” Jacob Stuart, member of a company of emigrants from Tennessee, made the generalized comment in his journal, “The

horsemanship of the wild Indians is wonderful. They will charge at full speed, and as they approach you will throw their bodies on the opposite side of the horse. – you can see nothing to shoot at, but one arm and part of a leg. They have their horses trained so that they will run around their enemy and then shoot under the neck of the horse.” (Hayes, 16; Stuart 282-283)

### Encountering the Mexican Peoples of New Mexico

When California-bound emigrants arrived in New Mexico, they entered territory still under the occupation of the U. S. Army. No government had as yet been authorized by the U. S. Congress and consequently there was no established legal system. The region operated under a provisional government and laws sanctioned by the military. This situation lasted for four years. General Stephen Watts Kearny had taken possession of New Mexico by proclamation in Las Vegas on August 15, 1846, and Congress did not create New Mexico Territory until September 1850. For all intents and purposes then, the emigrants might still have been entering a foreign country. They certainly did not view the Mexican population of New Mexico as “Americans,” and in their diaries, journals and letters did not even speculate on the possibility of the future of Mexicans as American citizens. For the emigrants, these Mexicans were alien, as was their life and culture. At best the reaction of the emigrants was curious and at times receptive; at worst it was hostile and violent.

The Mexican population, at least along the Santa Fe Trail from Las Vegas into Santa Fe, had been dealing with Americans since William Becknell’s arrival in 1821, but not in such numbers as now appeared. Their reaction to the emigrants was often cordial, or at least indifferent, but also sometimes duplicitous. In 1850 the indigenous population of New Mexico – which also until 1863 included Arizona – was just over 60,000. Estimates vary, but the number

of emigrants arriving in and passing through New Mexico from 1849 and on into the 1850s might have ranged as high as 20,000. This was an intermingling of differing peoples and cultures on an epic scale, though the great majority of emigrants moved on quickly.

Given the “minority status” of the emigrants – especially since individual companies of 40, or 50, or 100 were coming into New Mexico days or weeks apart and hence could have been at the mercy of the Mexican population – there are a remarkable number of altercations recorded in diaries, journals and letters, altercations initiated by emigrants. George Sniffen, with the Havilah Mining Association which came via the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, provided a detailed account of one such episode in his journal, “Notes by the Campfire.” On April 20, 1849, his party was about 15 miles southeast of San Miguel, New Mexico, where they would join the Santa Fe Trail. That morning they discovered a mule was missing and tracked it – and the two thieves, who were local men – for twelve miles. When they caught up with the thieves, gunfire was exchanged. Sniffen’s companions managed to capture one man, dragging him back to their campsite. There they debated his fate and, “at last we agreed to give the criminal a flogging. We therefore stripped off his clothes with the exception of his pantaloons, and five of the members were deputed to ‘put him through,’ which they did by tying him to a cart wheel and laying on 30 strokes with a cart whip and a good will.” They then let him go, feeling virtuous because they could have, as Sniffen observes, executed him – and they then proceeded on their way to San Miguel! Robert Elliott, also traveling the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, was more circumspect, perhaps because there were only seven members in his party. At San Miguel several of their mules were stolen. He says, “The alcalde [mayor] of the town was very profuse in his expression of sympathy and helpfulness and pretended to start men out in all directions to hunt for the animals.” But it soon dawns on Elliot and a companion, who have remained behind the

rest of the party, that they would never see their mules again, since, after a couple of hours, “the alcalde changed his tone and became arbitrary and discourteous. . . .” Elliott further comments, “Inasmuch as we two boys could not capture a town we concluded that discretion was the better part of valor and we joined our party.” (Sniffen, ms not paginated; Elliott 330)

In contrast to these experiences, some emigrants noted the kindness and hospitality they received. William Hunter was cordially greeted in both Las Vegas and Galisteo. In Las Vegas he was invited into a home “by an aged Senora. . . . I availed myself of her politeness. . . .” In his journal he describes the house and its inhabitants with appreciation, explaining, “I was escorted to a seat on [a] rug on the opposite side of the room, and after an exchange of civilities began to look about me. . . . The floor, of nature’s own formation, was nicely swept and sprinkled with water to lay the dust and cool the atmosphere. The walls were plastered and whitewashed and ornamented with crosses and miniatures of the apostles and of half the saints of the Romish Calendar.” His visit ends pleasantly – “I rose from my mat to return thanks for a handful of roasted piñon which their possessor politely offered me. . . . On being refreshed I took my leave. . . .” At Galisteo he recalls, “We were treated with much courtesy by the inhabitants, who every night of our stay favored us with a fandango. . . .” Given these two reactions, it is tempting to speculate that perhaps Hunter was of an exceptionally pleasant disposition – but he was not impressed with Santa Fe, observing, “I had visited, I thought, about the worst places on this habitable globe, amongst the rest New Orleans, Natches, &c., but never did I in so short a time see so much licentiousness and villainy as graced the Capital of New Mexico.” (Hunter 41, 51, 55-56)

As might be expected, the emigrants commented strongly and at length on the religion, customs and dress of the Mexicans, often condescendingly. It should be remembered that

America was in the grip of nativism and anti-Catholic feeling at this time, marked by the rise of the Know Nothing Party in the coming decade of the 1850s. The emigrants came from a cross-section of the American population – and no demographic group was immune to the prejudices of the day. For instance, regarding the Catholic churches and services in New Mexico, William Chamberlin, on Sunday, June 3, 1849, in San Miguel, wrote, “ ‘Attended church’ today – Catholic of course. The building is a large adobe finished in the most rude style of architecture. . . Thousands of swallows were flying and ‘twittering’ about the room during the service. The images and paintings were of the most ridiculous design and finish. It is a gloomy edifice throughout, and well suited to the ignorant minds that pretend to worship God after the manner of that sect.” The *New York Herald*, on September 25, 1849, printed an unsigned letter from a member of James Collier’s party [Collier was headed to San Francisco to take up his post as Collector at that port] in which the writer complained, “I have been in this city of abomination for weeks. . . . You may see a wax virgin carried through the streets, attended with a fiddler and a rabble, and set down in fields to secure refreshing showers and abundant crops. You may see lifeless bodies of infants, without coffin or clothing, with a red cap on head and a gaudy fan in hand, attended to the grave, followed by the fiddle and a crowd of merrymakers. . . .” Such sights must have confirmed for this man his suspicions and fears. (Chamberlin 51; Foreman *Collier* 22)

Mexican women came in for mention in many emigrant diaries and journals. While the general observation of emigrant men concerned the brazen dress and questionable morals of Mexican women, there were some who admired the women they encountered. Jacob Stuart, arriving in Santa Fe on November 6, 1849, seems immediately to have met the legendary Gertrudes Barceló, known also as Doña Tules. He wrote, somewhat confusingly, “The town is

owned by a very rich Spanish lady who is very agreeable, very polite, and has two beautiful nieces living with her; gave me introduction. I had one of the small English Bibles that was given to me by a kind friend. – Miss M . . . the lovely little creature gave me a thousand thanks. . . . I saw a dark eyed senorita that has Miss Rowena R. . . 's face. Some of them are exceedingly beautiful. There is a penetration and expression of countenance that is almost irresistible. If I was not hunting for gold, I would hardly be safe!” Attending a fandango at Bernal, William Hunter compared the decorous behavior of the senoritas there with the less than kind conversation of the “ladies” he knew back home, writing, “About midnight we broke up. . . . On contrasting the evenings entertainment with some that I have witnessed amongst those said to be ‘well bred,’ I could not help according my admiration to our ‘fandango.’ The females on entering the room, instead of entering into a tete-a-tete on the demerits of a sister, commenced a general and lively chat amongst themselves, and throughout the whole evening seemed to enjoy a pleasure in rectifying instead of criticizing on the blunders and mistakes which happened.” (Stuart 281-282; Hunter 46)

Some emigrants had the experience of meeting Mexicans carrying on centuries of tradition in their interaction with the plains and Plains peoples – they encountered buffalo hunters and Comancheros. Ever since the colonization of New Mexico by Juan de Oñate and then the subsequent eastward settlement by New Mexicans along the Pecos River Valley, hunters and traders from the Spanish villages had roamed the plains. In emigrant diaries and journals there are rare and intriguing eyewitness accounts of this activity. William Goulding, on the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road near Tucumcari Mountain on May 20, 1849, recounted: “A party came in sight . . . consisting of a black covered waggon drawn by 4 oxen loaded with maize, farina, and biscuit and 12 mules packed with the like etceteras for traffic with the Indians. These were

conducted by 6 Mexicans of small size and one female. . . . I bought a lariat . . . for 75 cents & 4 cakes of hard brown bread for 20 cents & 2 pans full of wheat flour for a few charges of powder, and our men were supplied with many luxuries from the caravan.” William Hunter’s encounter with buffalo hunters on June 12, 1849, somewhere on the Cimarron Route, was less rewarding: “We met a party of some 100 Mexicans from Taos or thereabouts who were out Buffalo hunting in order to dry the meat to take back with them. . . . They were a set of dirty, ill-looking fellows, mostly armed with bows and arrows. . . . They were full of politeness and vermin, both equally disgusting.” (Goulding 122-123; Hunter 32-33)

One wonders what the Comancheros thought of Goulding, or the buffalo men of Hunter. But one-sided though they are, these glimpses from emigrant writings set the scene for the beginning of the multicultural saga of New Mexico, which continues now, over 160 years later. They are colored by their times and the personalities of that day, but as with all the other aspects of gold rush emigration on the Santa Fe Trail, they provide an additional dimension to the history and heritage of the trail.

#### End of the Trail to Santa Fe – Beginning of the Trek to California

As emigrants neared Santa Fe, or Galisteo if they chose that route, they had several crucial decisions to make – some personal and some collective, if they were a member of an emigrant company or association. They would be asking themselves: Do I have the will and resources to continue on to California, or should I turn back? Should our company continue together, reorganize, or disband – and if we do break up, how will we apportion the company’s assets? What route should be taken – one of the southern roads or perhaps the Old Spanish Trail? What outfitting do I need to do and what provisions do I need to buy? Not surprisingly,

uncertainty clouded the minds of many emigrants. They had to make their choices based on conflicting information and rumors while Santa Fe was teeming with several thousand men pursuing the exact same course. As some mentioned in their diaries and journals, gold fever was not for the faint of heart.

Just as it is impossible to cite a more-or-less precise number of emigrants using the Santa Fe Trail, the Cherokee Trail, and the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, so too the number of emigrants who turned back cannot be estimated. But turn back many did. Santa Fe traders mention meeting returning emigrants even by mid-summer 1849. Charles Pancoast, a member of the Peoria Company being guided by James Kirker, mentions that while Kirker's party was encamped and refurbishing their wagons and animals at Pueblo, Colorado, "two Messes, comprising eight Persons, became discouraged and resolved to return home. We endeavored to dissuade them from their rash resolution, but to no purpose: they were determined to go." If they reached Santa Fe, some emigrants found they did not have enough cash or could not sell their equipment for enough money to re-outfit for the journey to California. As William Hunter explained in his journal, "There were in the place a great number of California Emigrants who had arrived there with wagons and teams intending to dispose of them and purchase mules to pack them through. But owing to the low prices of wagons and oxen . . . they were unable to do so. After selling out and staying awhile at enormous expenses, they could neither get one way nor the other. . . . Their situation in a strange land without money or friends rendered them desperate and reckless. . . ." Some turned these circumstances to their advantage, as Jacob Stuart noted in his diary entry for November 7, 1849: "I have just had a conversation with Mr. Gould from Bount [Blount] county, Tenn., who started to California; stopped here [Santa Fe]; he is now engaged in a blacksmith shop. A wagon tongue cost ten dollars, ax handle one dollar; hay, wild

grass, sixty dollars a ton; a fortune could be made here in one season – making and hauling hay.” (Pancoast 202; Hunter 56; Stuart 282)

It appears that a majority of formally organized and constituted companies and associations now disbanded. Having reached Santa Fe, the tensions simmering from the long days on the trail now erupted. Or, the company broke up because it might have purchased its outfit and provisions “on shares,” based on the amount of money an individual invested in the venture – and now that some members had decided to “turn back” their stock had to be liquidated. Or there was no agreement on purchasing mules or supplies for the next stage of their trip, so each man decided to go his own way. Even the tight-knit and well-financed “Knickerbockers,” who had left Fort Smith on March 26, and arrived in Santa Fe on May 28, 1849, dispersed. As William Goulding, a member of the group, put it briefly, “The New York Knickerbocker Association was now entirely dissolved and there was now several captains and several companies forming, some to go the northern rout [north to the California-Oregon Trail] and some to go the Spanish Trail. . . . [I] decided with my own party to take the southern rout. . . .” At Galisteo, the Clay Company [formed in Clay County, Missouri] suffered a similar demise, as Benjamin Hayes explained in his diary: “During the day some gentlemen of the Clay company came over to make arrangement for joining us, from whom we learned that most of them had determined to pack from Santa Fé, while a few thought of buying Mexican oxen here, to be driven as far as possible. . . . Four messes finally joined our trains. . . .” (Goulding 143; Hayes 21)

The men and groups who decided to sell their faithful oxen and wagons, some of which they had brought from their own farms, now faced a difficult market which was glutted with these items. Mules and packs, in great demand to supply the emigrants, fetched correspondingly

high prices. Numerous emigrants recorded their frustration. Thomas Falconer, with the Western Rovers out of Fort Smith, wrote to the *Holly Springs Gazette* [Arkansas], while reorganizing at Santa Fe, “Our camp, Mr. Editor, for a week, presented the appearance of a market house in a considerable city. Mexican men, women, boys and even children, were endeavoring to buy for nothing, such articles as we wished to sell. – Wagons worth \$150 to \$200, could not be sold for more than \$40 or \$50, and everything else except soap, candles and trunks, had to be sold at a greater sacrifice. What we had to buy was proportionally dear.” William Goulding, similarly beset, listed everything he sold, all of which he had brought across the prairies, including: wagons, harness, one mule (“partly broken down”), one trunk, one basket, garden seeds, two picks, three bottles of medicine, glass beads, 20 lb. of shot, 2 pairs shoes, one bed, and one gun case. He purchased a blanket, camp kettle, water gourd, three pack saddles, “five larriets,” a frying pan, a holster, one gallon of brandy, 100 lbs. biscuit, 50 lb. flour, shoes for horses and mules, tea, coffee, sugar, rice, and “&tc. &tc. &tc.” (Falconer in Foreman *Marcy* 266; Goulding 142)

The route to California which an emigrant or party chose to take from Santa Fe and Galisteo influenced all of these decisions – who to travel with, what to take, and what to sell. Patricia Etter, in her masterly compilation *To California on the Southern Route, 1849 – A History and Annotated Bibliography*, brought needed attention to these trails and documented them and mapped them. Here it can be added that one group leaving Santa Fe chose the Old Spanish Trail which headed northwest to Colorado and Utah and then to Los Angeles. But ultimately it turned back at the Chama River in northern New Mexico and its members opted for various other roads. Stanislas Lasselie, of Logansport, Indiana, noted the rigors of this attempt in his journal, on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 1849. The decisive moment for the members of this party came

as they ferried their outfit across the Rio Chama in northern New Mexico – and their frustration can serve to sum up all the challenges California-bound emigrants experienced on the Santa Fe Trail – and on their further adventures: “Commenced building a canoe. . . . Crossed four or five loads. . . . Lost two loads of pack in crossing river. One mess lost five hundred dollars in silver in one of his packs. The upsetting of the canoe frightened the rest. . . . Not being able to cross after using great exertions all concluded to return back. . . .” (Lasselle 17)

### Where Are We Now? Places along the Santa Fe Trail of Significance to Gold Rush Emigrants

Wherever they joined the Santa Fe Trail, emigrants frequently remarked on certain “milepost” sites, places that had long been important in the Santa Fe trade. These included traditional camping spots such as Lone Elm, Council Grove, Pawnee Rock, or Rabbit Ears, as well as various river and stream crossings such as Cottonwood Creek, the Little Arkansas, or the Rock Crossing of the Canadian. The emigrants also stopped at all the usual water sources – Diamond Spring, Lost Spring, the Middle and Lower Cimarron springs, and the Mora and Sapello rivers, among others. H. M. T. Powell, on the trail from April through July, 1849, faithfully recorded several hundred places in his diary, including 51 from Lone Elm, on May 18<sup>th</sup>, to Santa Fe, which he reached on July 16<sup>th</sup>.

Some locations on the trail stood out for the emigrants more than others – places which may or may not have had prominence previously in the development and use of the trail. At these sites, more than with the “usual” camping and crossing spots, the emigrants observed certain features or made specific comments which set them apart as of significant importance in the California gold rush story of the trail. These locations are listed immediately below and then treated at length with emphasis on their importance for the emigrants:

Forks of the Oregon-California and Santa Fe Trails [Gardner Junction] – Kansas

Running Turkey Creek – Kansas

Fort Mann – Kansas

The Crossing of the Arkansas – Kansas

Bent's Old Fort – Colorado

Confluence of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River (Pueblo) – Colorado

Las Vegas – New Mexico

San Miguel and the Pecos River Valley – New Mexico

The Forks of the Santa Fe-Galisteo "Road" – New Mexico

Santa Fe – New Mexico

**Forks of the Oregon-California and Santa Fe Trails** [Gardner Junction - Johnson County, Kansas]

For about 50 or 60 miles west of present-day Kansas City or Independence, Missouri, emigrants on the Santa Fe and Oregon-California trails traveled together. Then, about two miles west of present-day Gardner, Kansas, the trails split – members of companies choosing one or the other of the two routes might meet their compatriots again in California, but they reached the Pacific Coast by radically different roads. Merrill J. Mattes, in his classic history *The Great Platte River Road*, notes that “up to this point the trains [intending to take the Oregon-California Trail] had been veering in the wrong direction, toward Santa Fe, but they did this to stay on the

divide between the Kansas and Osage river drainages, avoiding any serious stream crossings. Now it was time to move north. . . .” At the 1924 dedication of a Kansas State Historical Marker noting this fork in the trails, placed at the edge of Gardner, then Kansas State Senator Rolla W. Coleman asserted that this spot was the “grand-daddy of all highway junctions.” In 2008, through the efforts of the Santa Fe Trail Association, the National Park Service marked the site with an interpretive exhibit. (Mattes 138; 1924 dedication at <http://www.gardnerhistorymuseum.org/page3.html>. Accessed January 12, 2013)

Emigrants were cognizant of the importance of this fork in the trails. Not a few must have asked themselves – not for the first time, “Is our decision to follow the Santa Fe Trail, or the Oregon-California Trail, the right one? Should we change our minds now? This is our last chance.” Several emigrants marked the eventful division in their journals and letters.

**Augustus M. Heslep.** Heslep, writing of the spread of cholera along this portion of the trails in 1849, recounted how members of a company taking the Oregon-California Trail, the Pioneer Train, had been hard hit by cholera while his train, bound for Santa Fe, had been luckier. He wrote, “It is at this point that the Oregon and Santa Fé routes separate, and after a hearty adieu we left the Pioneer Train to pursue, I am fearful, a troublesome voyage.” (Bieber [Heslep] 362)

**H. M. T. Powell.** Powell, just beyond the junction on May 20, 1849, sets the scene: “This is a great camping place for both Oregon and Santa Fé Teams, as the forks of the road are only about a Mile and a half back and the Oregon Teams can easily turn on to their trail again. Slept well, although the Tent was so wet.” (Powell 17-18)

**Running Turkey Creek** [McPherson County, Kansas]

The spot where Running Turkey Creek intersects the Santa Fe Trail was an occasional camp for Santa Fe traders over the years, but not a particularly important stop. Then, in 1849, it became noted as the spot where the newly-blazed Cherokee Trail joined the old Independence – Santa Fe Road. The first party through was the combined company of Lewis Evans and members of the Cherokee Nation, the Cherokee California Emigrating Company. This group reached Running Turkey Creek on May 12, 1849, and erected a stone marker to signify the event. Other parties coming up the Cherokee Trail from northeastern Oklahoma followed them both in 1849 and 1850, and recorded their arrival at the creek. Emigrants following the Santa Fe Trail from the east also began mentioning Running Turkey Creek in their journals and diaries, especially on seeing the stone placed by the Evans/Cherokee Company. This site today is unmarked, but was significant in the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1849 gold rush, and in the history and heritage of the Cherokee Trail.

**Hiram Davis.** Davis, a member of the Evans/Cherokee party, in a letter published in the *Daily Missouri Republican* for July 4, 1849, recorded, “Here we obtained a large stone and planted it in the fork of the road; and one of our cunning workmen cut these letters upon it, ‘To Fayetteville Ark., 300 miles – Capt. Evans’s California Company, May 12, 1849,’ to apprise the prairie traveler of a new road. . . .” (Bieber 336)

**H. M. T. Powell.** Powell, a member of a company which left Greenville, Illinois on April 3, 1849, passed the stone erected by the Evans/Cherokee party on June 3. His train camped just short of Running Turkey Creek. He wrote: “We started about 7 o’clock. About a furlong from our Camp on the left side of the road, a large stone was set up with an inscription on it pointing out the Trail to Fayetteville, Arkansas – 300 Miles, with some more about a Militia Captain or Colonel. On it were placed some letters

[correspondence] with directions for return Teams to take them on to Independence or some settlement to be forwarded by mail. While there, as they [the letters] were open, Mr. Joseph wrote a few lines in one to say that our three companies – Missouri, Palmetto and Illinois were well and getting on finely.” (Powell 31-32)

**J. L. Brown.** Brown traverses the Cherokee and Santa Fe Trails in 1850. His party reached Running Turkey Creek on May 17<sup>th</sup>, having left the Grand Saline [Oklahoma] on April 20<sup>th</sup>. His diary entry is brief: “Today at 12 o’clock Traveled 10 miles and came to the Santa fee Trail to Independence.” (Brown 184)

#### **Fort Mann** [Ford County, Kansas]

Fort Mann had a checkered and short life. It was a small post, probably less than 3,600 feet square with the backs of four buildings connected by log walls as its perimeter. Initially built by a Santa Fe trader as a recruitment spot for caravans, it was occupied and abandoned by small U. S. Army contingents several times in 1847 and 1848. Many 1849 emigrant journals, diaries and letters mention it, in its abandoned and dilapidated condition. It was for the emigrants, perhaps, a symbol of the government and civil order they had left behind and also a cautionary reminder that the nearest army posts were Fort Leavenworth to the east and Las Vegas, New Mexico to the west. Or maybe just the sight of a man-made structure, even if it was in ruins, arrested their attention. Also, many emigrant trains helped themselves to the wood and iron of wagons that the army had abandoned at the fort. The site of Fort Mann is today at the western edge Dodge City, Kansas.

**William Hunter.** June 6, 1849: “Reached Mann’s Fort, a Cat-e-cornered structure . . . built of turf cut about the size of bricks. The roofs of the rooms were composed of logs

placed slantingly and covered over with turf. . . . In and about the fort were from 70 to 100 wagons, some perfect and others mutilated for fire wood, with great quantities of log chains and other useful irons scattered in every direction.” (Hunter 28-29)

**Unsigned letter.** In the *Arkansas Intelligencer*, July 28, 1849, an emigrant in a party awaiting the return of men sent in search of runaway oxen while the company was camped at Fort Mann wrote: “We thought it was prudent to wait for them, therefore as our wagons, and a few of our tricks want repairing, we hoisted the forge and have been very busy for the last three days.” (Foreman *Marcy* 75)

**Benjamin Hayes.** September 22, 1849: “Travelled up the Arkansas. . . . Next day encamped for breakfast within five miles of Fort Mann. The person for whom it was named will be well recollected by those acquainted at Weston, Mo. . . . In the afternoon passed the Fort, getting some wood there. Camped five miles beyond it. (Hayes 15)

**J. L. Brown.** May 30, 1850: “Traveled 25 miles. passed the Ruins of Ft. Mann and camped 2 miles above on the Bank of the [Arkansas] River. Camp 24<sup>th</sup>” (Brown 186)

### **The Crossings of the Arkansas and Beginning of the *Jornada*** [Ford, Gray counties, Kansas]

With the exception of the dozen or so emigrant companies that took the Cherokee Trail from Bent’s Old Fort to Pueblo, Colorado, and then northward, almost all parties on the Santa Fe Trail opted for the Cimarron Route, crossing the Arkansas at various spots west of present-day Dodge City, Kansas. [Very few used the traditional Mountain Route, via Raton Pass.] It was at the Arkansas Crossings that those traveling in 1849 and 1850 encountered Native plains peoples in the thousands gathering to meet with Indian Agent Thomas Fitzpatrick, as described elsewhere in this study. The Arkansas was the widest river the wagon trains would cross on their entire

journey, so the emigrants had little experience in how to approach the fording, especially if the Arkansas was running high with snowmelt from the Rockies. Once across the river, as all emigrants knew, the traveling could be daunting because there were no water sources for 60 miles or more, until they reached the Cimarron River – and it was not dependable. They were jubilant that Santa Fe was now only a couple of weeks away, but they also were apprehensive and took what precautions seemed advisable, though they did not know the conditions they might meet. Their journals, diaries and letters reflect their hopes and fears. Three of the following entries are particularly interesting because they are all from June, 1849, with the various crossings described here occurring just weeks from one another.

**William Hunter.** June 10<sup>th</sup>: “Left Mann’s Fort and arrived at the crossing of the Arkansas River. This we first forded about ½ mile across to ascertain the best route for the wagons. We found the water from 2 to 3 ½ feet deep, and after doubling teams and quadrupling drivers, we drove in and before nightfall succeeded without accident in reaching the opposite bank. . . . We now had a journey of 60 miles before us without wood, water or grass, and remained encamped till 2 p.m. on the 11<sup>th</sup>, when we started in order to take advantage of the cool of the evening and night to travel in.” (Hunter 31)

**H. M. T. Powell.** June 17<sup>th</sup>: “Still waiting by the river, which does not fall. . . . About 10 o’clock the Captain suddenly gave orders to go down to the ford and cross over . . . . As usual there was a great deal of fault finding and grumbling in the Train. The cattle were got up, however, and we went down. There our horsemen went into the river, and crossed at various places, one of which was chosen for our track. The Captain’s waggon went first with 7 yoke of cattle, and got over very well. Our baggage waggon went next and also got over well. And so waggon followed waggon until all were safe on the other

side. And then they were all glad that the Captain had been so pertinacious in at once setting about the business. The river where we crossed it is about 500 yards wide. . . . After dinner we began to get wood and water, and make preparations for the ‘Jornada.’” (Powell 48)

**William Brisbane.** June 20<sup>th</sup>: “We soon reached the crossing (11 o’clock) and were all crossed over by 2 – went up the river and camped some 8 miles from the crossing. Had a fine shower, as we staked. Eighty wagons left here last night for Santa Fe and 40 more (emigrants) who are encamped above us – start tomorrow night. We have no water after we leave the Arkansas for sixty miles – so that we are going over by night as it will be cooler and we can make it sooner. . . .” (Brisbane 29-30)

**James T. Mitchell.** [Mitchell’s company, the Cane Hill Emigrating Company, came via the Cherokee Trail and continued on it above Bent’s Old Fort. So, although it did not cross the Arkansas, Mitchell presents a fascinating look at the region of the crossings – he is just beyond present-day Cimarron, Kansas – in 1850.] May 20<sup>th</sup>: “Started late expecting to meet the agent [Thomas Fitzpatrick, Indian Agent for the Arkansas and upper Platte] and a large train with him we met the train in about 10 miles and camped with them the train consisted of many hundreds traders the Bent company Mexicans & indians of 6 tribes it looked like a real camp meeting of a place for miles up & down the river. . . . These men are the last of creation [creation] trappers with indian wives and Some of them has been among [the Indians] 20 & 30 years.” (Mitchell, in Fletcher 258)

**Bent’s Old Fort** [Otero County, Colorado]

Built in 1833 and abandoned in 1849, Bent's Fort was the only permanent post on the Santa Fe Trail between the Kansas frontier and Hispanic villages east of Santa Fe. As such it was a beacon and an important "point of passage" for emigrants in 1849 and after. Interestingly, some emigrants visited the fort before William Bent deserted it in July, 1849; others that season saw and described it in its abandoned state. The fort is especially mentioned by emigrants taking the Cherokee Trail. They were headed farther up the Arkansas River and then north along the Front Range of the Rockies. The gold rush emigration of 1849 and into the 1850s obviously had little impact on the history and heritage of Bent's Fort, but the presence of the fort and its ruins is mentioned in almost every journal, diary or letter of those emigrants who passed by.

**Oliver Lipe.** [Lipe, a member of the Evans/Cherokee party headed for California via the Cherokee Trail, writes to the *Cherokee Advocate* newspaper from Running Turkey Creek, where the Cherokee Trail joined the Santa Fe Trail.] May 27, 1849: "A question arose at that point what rout to pursue, whether we should continue on our north west course to intersect the oregon road at the southe, fork of the platt or take the Santa Fe Road to Fort Bent. . . ." (Fletcher 50)

**Charles Pancoast.** June 14, 1849: "On Thursday morning we reached Bent's Fort and camped there; but none of us were permitted to enter except Capt. Rogers and Lieut. Rankin. The Fort was surrounded by a wall about twenty-five feet high, with a heavy double Gate for Wagons, but no other entrance. The Soldiers obtained admittance by means of a ladder to the top of the wall, and thence by a narrow platform to a Building inside, which was fitted with rifle holes, so that an Enemy could be reached without much exposure to the Soldiers. Both ladder and platform were taken up when the Soldiers were inside." (Pancoast 196-197)

**James Mitchell.** May 31, 1850: “We Started Soon and got [to] Bents old fort in a few miles it had been built of unburnt Brick and has been a Strong concern a vast [amount] of remnent iron lays here of old tore up wagons here we could Stand on this old wall and See the grand rocky maintains white with Snow and black at the bace. . . .”

(Mitchell, in Fletcher 263)

**John L. Brown.** June 10, 1850: “This morning saw mountains at a great distance covered with snow supposed to be a spur of the Rocky Mountains. At noon reached Bents Fort. Traveled on until night. Made 25 miles. Camped on the River.” (Brown 188)

### **Confluence of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River [Pueblo County, Colorado]**

Several California-bound groups in 1849 and 1850 left the Santa Fe Trail just west of Bent’s Old Fort, where the Mountain Route headed for Raton Pass, and instead continued up the Arkansas River to its confluence with Fountain Creek, which flowed from the north along the Front Range of the Rockies. At this point, both in 1849 and 1850, there was dissention in the emigrant parties as to how to proceed. Some sold their wagons and bought pack mules, intending to cross the Rockies directly to Salt Lake City. Others opted for keeping their wagons and attempting to trail north to Fort Laramie. One other, led by James Kirker, panned for gold along the Arkansas and in various southern Colorado streams, then went south over Raton Pass to Santa Fe. The present-day Pueblo area thus became an important transit point, particularly with regard to the Cherokee Trail. Further, this “extension” of the Santa Fe Trail up the Arkansas from Bent’s Old Fort became a major emigration and supply route during the Colorado gold rush of 1859. During the 1860’s it also became a highway to the new southern Colorado

mines, via Cañon City, Colorado, and the upper Arkansas Valley. The observations of the 1849 emigrants provide some of the earliest documentation for the settlement and development of this region.

**Augustus Heslep.** [Heslep was with the Morgan County and California Rangers, one of the groups piloted by James Kirker. He is writing from Santa Fe on August 9, 1849 to the *Daily Missouri Republican*; his letter was published in that newspaper on September 12, 1849] “We have traveled about fourteen hundred miles, having passed up to Pueblo, [and] thence to the Greenhorn mountains; from which point a detachment of fifty men was sent to the Sangre de Cristo creek . . . upon a thorough exploration of the same for gold mines said to be on that stream. Some was found, but not sufficient to justify a detention. . . . From that encampment we passed south . . . striking the Ratón mountains on the Bent’s Fort road to Santa Fé. . . .” (Bieber [Heslep] 378-379)

**Charles Pancoast.** [Pancoast is with the Illinois Company, one of the groups that had engaged James Kirker as a guide. The event he recalls occurred from late June on into July, 1849]: “After much labor we had our Teams in line again . . . and proceeded up the Valley to a place called Pueblo, which then consisted of three deserted Log Cabins. . . . As the long Travel over the dry hot Plains had shrunk our wheels, most of them had come loose; and we resolved to remain at this place until we could overhaul and repair the Wagons. . . . During the time the Wagons were being repaired, some of us were at work felling Pine Trees, making Canoes, and splitting planks preparatory to making a Raft to ferry us over the Arkansas. This Raft was constructed by placing three Canoes abreast about two feet apart, and nailing planks across. . . . We prospected some of the Gulches in this region for Gold, and gathered about three dollars, but soon gave up the pursuit. . . .

Our repairs being now completed, on the tenth day of July we commenced to cross the River. We spent most of the day in ferrying our Wagons and Goods across, and were comfortably camped by evening.” [This party then spends several days at Greenhorn, Colorado, and continues south over Raton Pass to Rayado, New Mexico, and thence to Santa Fe.] (Pancoast 200-204)

**William Quesenbury.** [Quesenbury began his journey in Oklahoma, following the Cherokee Trail in 1850.] June 7<sup>th</sup>: “Good start. . . . Nooned and traveled as usual. Camped and cooked an hour by the sun as usual. Then travelled on to Fontaine qui bouit [Fountain Creek] which had been high but had fallen sufficient for fording.” June 8<sup>th</sup>: “Off soon again. We camped last night within a mile of Pueblo, where we arrived an hour by sun. Crossed the river just below. Very deep fording – almost swimming. At 11 o’clock got to St. Charles Creek. [Today, downtown Pueblo] A single old adobe building two lodges, and a wagon body form the residences of the inhabitants of this settlement.” (Quesenbury, in Fletcher 278, 279)

### **Las Vegas** [San Miguel County, New Mexico]

Located on the Gallinas River and established in 1835, *Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de Las Vegas* [Our Lady of Sorrows of the Meadows] was the first extensive community encountered by traders and travelers on the Santa Fe Trail since leaving Council Grove. There they could purchase the first fresh produce – eggs, vegetables, goat’s milk, and cheese – they had seen in weeks, and they could vary their diet of buffalo and antelope with mutton and beef. Emigrants welcomed these provisions, though some of them also experienced for the first, but not last time, sharp trading for their oxen and wagons in anticipation of their taking pack mules

farther on to California. They would find these same practices down the road in San Miguel and Santa Fe. It was also at Las Vegas that emigrants got their initial exposure to Hispanic peoples and customs. From 1847 to 1851, the U. S. Army maintained a post at Las Vegas and emigrants commented on the welcome site of troopers and “the stars and stripes.” From Las Vegas it was only a few days’ journey to Santa Fe. The regular routine of Santa Fe Trail travel would end and they would face the grueling trek across the southwestern deserts to California.

**Benjamin Hayes.** October 9, 1849: “Camped at the Moro [Mora River, north of Las Vegas]. Mexican women washing in creek, pleasant to see any women!” October 10<sup>th</sup>: “Started before daylight, breakfasted at eight, hence to Bagos [Las Vegas], and dined. Staid two hours. Sight of the Star Spangled Banner. Troops here, near the Moro a small detachment of dragoons passed us going out on the plains scouting. At Bagos fandango, intemperance, visit to look at Church.” (Hayes 19)

**John Hudgins.** “On the second of July 1849, we got in the vicinity of Los Vegas. There were some 4 or 5 trains from Missouri all expecting to trade oxen and wagons for mules. Here I found an Uncle that I had not seen for years with his wife and two small children, and all he had was one small Mo. Mule and saddle and his family and clothes, he having contracted with a man to haul him and family to the mines and here he had baulked and said he would go no further. There was no law and so he was in a strange land with no money and no friends, wife and children, one a babe at the breast. [The uncle appeals to Hudgins for help.] If he was willing I would take him as far as I could. I swapped his little mule and the saddle for one yoke of oxen and a good wagon. We celebrated the fourth at the Tucalate mountain [Tecolote, New Mexico].” (Hudgins 7-8)

**William Hunter.** July 2, 1849: “Passed through Vegas (or San Vegas), the first Mexican town on the road from Independence to Santa Fe. . . . The houses are all one story high, with flat roofs covered with earth, built of adobes or unburnt brick, and from the outside present a very mean and dirty appearance. I walked up to several, but from the filthy appearance of their occupants, who out of every door obtruded their heads, I was fearful of entering, as ocular demonstration corroborated the statements I had often heard of their abounding with vermin. . . . Almost all the females that I had seen . . . had their countenances besmeared with paint (after the Indian mode) to prevent sunburning, which tends to disfigure them very much. I had not yet seen one female who would have been entitled to the compliment of ‘good looking.’ . . . Two Americans resided here and had more land under cultivation than probably 20 Mexican would have done. The town is situated on a creek affording an abundant supply of excellent water.” (Hunter 40-43)

**H. M. T. Powell.** [At the confluence of the Mora and Sapello rivers – July 9, 1849]: “Whilst staying here, Mr. Bartley [Alexander Barclay?], a very sinister looking man, in company with an Emigrant, came back from Las Vegas to trade for mules. They came to our Camp and both told us it was impossible to go on to California with Ox Teams. The Emigrant said there was a large party at Las Vegas who were changing waggons and cattle for mules at a great sacrifice, giving a waggon or yoke of cattle for a mule, etc., etc., as they were satisfied of the impracticability of Cooke’s route with Oxen. . . . This has again put our party into a ferment, but a few of us stand firm and we shall go on as we are to Santa Fé. I believe there is a conspiracy in the country to cheat the Emigrants.” (Powell 67)

**San Miguel and the Pecos River Valley** [San Miguel County, New Mexico]

The founding of San Miguel del Bado (the ford – *bado* or *vado* – at the Pecos River) pre-dates the opening of the Santa Fe Trail by a decade. It was a contingent of Mexican soldiers on patrol from San Miguel which encountered William Becknell and his five companions on November 13, 1821, south of present-day Las Vegas, and had them escorted to San Miguel and then Santa Fe, thus “opening” the Santa Fe Trail. In 1835, San Miguel became a “port of entry” on the Santa Fe Trail for the Republic of Mexico. Traders had to stop in San Miguel for licenses, inspections, and to pay fees. During the California gold rush, San Miguel was especially significant for emigrants coming via the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Trail, for it was their first settlement since eastern Oklahoma, their first contact with Mexican people and culture, and where their route joined the Santa Fe Trail, or the “Independence Road” as they often called it. For these reasons, San Miguel is an important site for assessing the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1849 gold rush.

**William Goulding.** [Goulding took the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, leaving Fort Smith on March 26, 1849 and arriving in San Miguel on May 26<sup>th</sup>] “Having been informed that San Miguel was but 4 or 5 miles from us, we were all anxious to see this first Mexican town. . . . At 9 o’clock the long talked of city of San Miguel came in sight, so after gazing some time to see something in the shape of a town with houses, but seeing nothing but what looked like a very extensive brick yard, we concluded to find the Pecos River, which again presented itself to our front, directly crossing our road. After crossing we passed two small rancherias by a small hill, then turning to the left, and then to the right, rounding a small mountain or hill, we soon came to a halt in the grand plaza of ‘San Miguel.’ This was a square of about 3 hundred yards wide each way with a number of poor, low, and miserable looking mud huts with flat roofs – 3 of them occupied by small

stores – two of which were kept by French men, who gave us considerable information. . . . At these stores we purchased bread & cheese and the native wine at 30 cents a quart. After staying here some three hours and seeing enough of the place . . . we started; or rather, but 6 of our waggons took up one line of march, leaving the other 6 waggons to enjoy the Mexican wine and fandangoes of the evening.” (Goulding 133-134)

**William Chamberlin.** [Chamberlin came by the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. He left Fort Smith on March 28<sup>th</sup> and arrived at San Miguel on June 2, 1849] “San Miguel . . . is composed of about seventy-five adobe hovels. . . . There are several stores of groceries in the place, their principal business being the sale of inferior liquor, at a ‘bit’ a glass. We encamped near the town; there is no grass within miles of the place, but we were lucky in getting some corn at \$1.50 per bushel; it is very inferior to the corn in the states. . . . Walked into town this evening to ‘see the sights.’ Our attention was soon attracted to a ‘Fandango,’ open to all, and especially American emigrants. This was a curiosity to me of the kind I had never seen before – a medley of Mexicans and Americans, dancing on the ground floor with the ‘Marguerettas’ of the country, the face of each of these ornamented with a cigarette. . . . But the ‘noise and confusion,’ heat, smoke, dust, fumes of liquor, and the strange ‘lingua,’ made it sorry enjoyment for me, and I left the scene at an early hour.” (Chamberlin 51)

**Lorenzo Aldrich.** [Aldrich comes west by the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, leaving Fort Smith on May 26, 1849 and arriving in San Miguel on July 28<sup>th</sup>] “Some of us have paid a visit to San Miguel, a thriving village situated on the right bank of the Puerco river. . . . There are quite a number of Stores in this place who retail goods furnished from St. Louis or Santa Fe, at a most exorbitant rate. . . . They have a church supplied with a bell which

is rung every evening. . . . They have a tavern which the landlord showed me, that would be somewhat of a curiosity in a civilized country. The bar room is about twelve feet square . . . . Beyond this is a room about 12 feet by 30, set apart for fandangos &c. This room can boast a coat of whitewash, a piece of extravagance seldom countenanced in this quarter. Connected with the Tavern is a large yard for the accommodation of the mules &c. of the guests.” (Aldrich 31-32)

**William Hunter.** [Hunter came via the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri, arriving in San Miguel on July 5, 1849] “Passed San Miguel, a large Mexican village, where I remarked that more attention seemed to be paid to fencing, titling of the ground, &c., and the crops of wheat and corn looked much more forward than any we had seen. . . .” (Hunter 47-48)

### **The Forks of the Santa Fe-Galisteo “Road”** [Santa Fe County, New Mexico]

Although most 1849 emigrants thought of Santa Fe as their objective on the first leg of the trek to California, it is ironic that a majority of them never saw it. Probably more than 50 percent of the emigrants, or an even great number, chose to turn south on the road to Galisteo, New Mexico, instead of heading into Santa Fe, from the evidence of diaries, journals and letters. Just as computing the total number of gold rush emigrants who took the Santa Fe Trail is impossible, so too we will never know how many ultimately visited Santa Fe. The prime reasons for skipping Santa Fe were – it was not worth the time, the strain on animals or the expense. Plus, it was “out of the way.” Since most emigrants were headed south into the New Mexico and Arizona deserts, it was reasonable to turn south once they were through Glorieta Pass and eventually strike the Rio Grande. To do this, almost all the emigrant parties that did not go into Santa Fe headed down the “Galisteo Road” – that is, about 10 miles east of Santa Fe they went

southwest to the village of Galisteo rather than heading northwest to Santa Fe. [This route approximates present-day Highways 285 and 41 from Exit 290 on Interstate 25.] On the other hand, most companies did send a few men into Santa Fe to buy supplies or barter their oxen and mules for pack animals. And some emigrants just wanted to see the city they had heard so much about, the exotic, Mexican city which recently had been conquered and annexed by the United States. But, again, for the majority of emigrants, it was the “Galisteo Road” that they followed and the community of Galisteo where they prepared for their further journey.

**William Hunter.** July 11, 1849: “Arrived at the forks of the road leading to Santa Fe and Galisteo, distant six miles. Here was a grocery establishment in a tent, the first we had seen since leaving a villainous looking hovel of the kind on the Shawnee Trace in Johnson County. There is a tolerably good spring in the bed of the branch near the descent of the old road. We turned to the left and after passing over about 5 miles of heavy sand commenced a gentle and pleasant descent to Galisteo, distant 11 ½ miles. . . . We were treated with much courtesy by the inhabitants, who every night of our stay favored us with a fandango. . . .” (Hunter 51)

**Charles Pancoast.** Mid-July 1849: “We left Santa Fe about fifteen miles to the west of us, and travelled through the Desert Plains of Oyo [Ojo] de Vaca until we arrived within a mile of the old Spanish Town of Galisteo, where we found Pine woods and a large Plain of grass. . . . On account of the starved condition of our Stock, we permitted them to run at large all night, and in consequence came near to getting into trouble with the Law, as our Cattle got into . . . irrigated lands and destroyed some of the Corn; but we compromised with the owners by paying them a reasonable price for the damage, and promising to guard our Cattle in the future. . . . The next morning a large party of us

went up to Galisteo to have a good time, and were received very cordially by the inhabitants.” (Pancoast 213-214)

**George Sniffen.** [Sniffen and his company camped at the ruins of Pecos Pueblo from July 24<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>, “endeavoring to get the animals into decent travelling order again. . . .”] : “We intend to remove on the 30<sup>th</sup> to Galisteo, a small town about 25 miles distant from Santa Fe, where there is a much better chance of getting our mules into good condition, and where we calculate to make the necessary arrangement for the balance of our journey.” July 30<sup>th</sup>: “At 7 A.M. we left this place [Pecos] after having exhausted all the feed within 3 miles or so, of us. . . .” September 1<sup>st</sup>: “We have remained at Galisteo up to this time, engaged in recruiting our stock. . . . We have decided to pack from this point to San Diego. . . .” (Sniffen, ms not paginated)

**John Watts.** [Watts is writing to “folks back home” from Albuquerque on July 18, 1849]: “I reached this place 2 Days since contrary to Expectaian though it is 70 miles on my way from the trail. . . . I did not write from Santafee. The Reason I stoped my wagons in 15 miles [before] Santafee and went in to see to my business ther & stayed 2 days & I learnt that there was good Warter & grass on the galestere 25 miles from Santafee on my Way & I returned To the Wagon To move them there & then Intended To Return to Santafee and write home but finding Bad fare for my stock I Was forced To push through to this place [Albuquerque] & it is to far To return and to fare write from here, I ascertained What I could there and think The most of my Expectancy is lost in the hands of Swindlers in Whom confidence was improperly placed.” (Watts, ms not paginated)

**Santa Fe!** [Santa Fe County, New Mexico]

Imagine the mind of a gold rush emigrant on reaching Santa Fe – or Santa Fee as many seemed to have pronounced it, given the spelling in their journals and diaries. It was both a destination and a departure point. For six or eight weeks or more they had been looking forward to this fabled town, so recently occupied by American forces, yet they knew that the most rigorous part of their journey was still ahead of them. For the emigrants who went into Santa Fe – and a majority probably turned south to Galisteo and never saw the city – the response they had was almost universal: Santa Fe was the foulest den of iniquity they had ever encountered. They did not care for the architecture, the people, the Catholic religion and churches, the drinking, the gambling, the hotels, and certainly not for the merchants and traders, who seemed to be out to take them for every last dollar they had. Many did comment, as did those who had stopped in Las Vegas, on the presence of American troops and the surge of pride they felt at seeing the American flag flying. These emigrants, then, provide an interesting picture of “The City Different” in 1849 and on into the 1850s. It is not an overstatement to say that the diary or journal of every emigrant who visited Santa Fe had something to say about it. The following four reactions are typical:

**Lorenzo Aldrich.** July 31, 1849: “After journeying fifteen miles we encamped for the night at Santa Fe. The military display, when we first came in sight, wore something of an American aspect, there being about six hundred soldiers. We drove into the city along the borders of a small stream and stopped for the night. On the following morning we traversed the city in the hope of getting some corn for our animals, but found none save in one place. . . . The houses are all built of mud, having no glass windows, but a number of round perpendicular glass pillars in lieu of them. The inhabitants comprise the lowest

and vilest characters, whose time is mainly occupied in gambling, drunken fandangoes and debaucheries.” (Aldrich 34)

**William Chamberlin.** June 7, 1849: “The first object that attracted our attention, as we neared Santa Fé, was the American “stars and stripes” floating in the breeze. . . . The somber appearance of the town, built entirely of unburnt adobes, the scope of the country, stretching away for leagues to the S. W., and enveloped in haze, inspired us with rather gloomy sensations; however, we could not but feel gratified that we had reached the important point in our journey. . . . Having read of the vast wealth and trade of Santa Fe, and the fortunes that had been made here, our curiosity ran high, but we were disappointed. . . . Santa Fe is a very immoral place. The population is composed of Mexicans, Indians and foreigners from all parts of the world. The public square and gambling houses are crowded with idle loungers, male and female; the character of but a few of the latter will bear a virtuous test. Several Fandangoes are in full operation all the while. . . . Some of the California-bound boys enjoy these sports, and lavish their money freely upon amusement.” (Chamberlin 53-55)

**William Brisbane.** August 16, 1849: “Santa Fe! If any one should ever read this journal and expect to form a correct idea of Santa Fe from my description . . . they would be sadly disappointed if they should ever be so unfortunate as to lay eyes on it. A brick factory on a large scale would come nearer resembling it than anything I know of (and a deserted one too). This is the most God forsaken country in the world – barren – nothing in it but minerals – Killdeers would die – and snakes can’t live in it. It swarms with [a] miserable race of people given up to every known vice – Oh how I wish I was out of it – but must grin and bear it a few days longer. . . .” (Brisbane 43)

**William Goulding.** May 29, 1849: “Early this morning, after looking about this city of Santa Fe (a big and noble name but) a poor and miserable place, and ever so much more so must it have been before the American troops came here, which very much added to its appearance by the half dozen pieces of ordnance now in the center of the plaza, and them, with the noble standard of the “Stars and Stripes” then waving over them, was the first thing I observed when turning out in the morning.” (Goulding 139)

*The Significance of the Santa Fe Trail in the Gold Rush Emigration of 1849: Review and Observations*

Las Vegas, New Mexico, has two business districts – “New Town” on the east side of the Gallinas River, and the “Old Town” Plaza on the west side of the river. Connecting the two is National Avenue, which crosses the Gallinas where the old Santa Fe Trail once forded it. The U. S. Army of the West followed what would become National Avenue when it marched to the Las Vegas Plaza, where General Stephen Watts Kearny declared the American conquest of the Southwest. North of town along the river is Old National Road, which twists and turns and is only partially paved. And leading out of the Las Vegas Plaza, on its southwest corner is South Pacific Avenue, which is the route the Santa Fe Trail took from there to Tecolote, San Miguel, Pecos, and Santa Fe.

These street names can be read as evidence that in the late nineteenth century and on into the twentieth century, the people of Las Vegas, certainly, and in a broader context perhaps, peoples all along the Santa Fe Trail saw the trail as a national highway linking the older American states in the east with the new territories in the west – South Pacific Avenue pointed the way to California.

It was in 1811 that Congress first authorized the construction of the “National Road” from Cumberland, Maryland, over the Appalachian Mountains to Wheeling, West Virginia. In 1820 this “old” National Road was extended, again by act of Congress, to St. Louis. And St. Louis was seen as the “gateway to the west” and to a certain extent the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail. Various land routes connected St. Louis to Independence, Westport and Kansas City. By the 1820s, steamboats carried merchandise up the Missouri, merchandise which would be taken by traders in their wagon caravans to Santa Fe and old Mexico – along the Santa Fe Trail. The Santa Fe Trail has been and still can be regarded as a natural extension of that Old National Road, linking east and west.

As this study has demonstrated, thousands of California gold rush emigrants chose the Santa Fe Trail as their route to the Pacific. For them, the Santa Fe Trail was *the* road to El Dorado – it was well-known, well-beaten, and well-traveled. It was the highway to the new American possessions gained in war with Mexico, including California. The emigrant experience of the trail was short-lived, from 1849 into the early 1850s, but it served the emigrants well. And they experienced the Santa Fe Trail in new and varying ways that differed from its traditional use by traders and U. S. Army contingents. They provide a fresh perspective on the people, places, and experiences of the trail, and even on the road itself – that broad and easy highway to their dreams.

There are four areas of emphasis through which this story of emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail in the California gold rush can enhance our contemporary understanding of the trail and change our perceptions of its history and heritage. These areas include:

1. The Santa Fe Trail as an *emigrant* trail, not just a commercial or military highway.

2. The importance of certain places on the trail, some familiar to all travelers of the day, but others not, which gained significance for emigrants in particular and today should be acknowledged as such.
3. The unique interaction of the emigrants with the peoples of the plains and the Southwest, both Native groups and the Mexican population – the newly annexed “Americans” of New Mexico. Their experiences provide fresh insights into the general cultural opinions of Anglo-Americans in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with regard to American Indians and Mexicans. Also, the emigrants’ comments and observations in their diaries, letters and journals contribute to a better comprehension of the events that will unfold on the plains in the 1850s and 1860s and the evolution of the multicultural society that will emerge in New Mexico over the next decades.
4. The view, by the late 1840s, of the Santa Fe Trail as a major highway with many branches or “feeder” trails. There was a general knowledge, regardless of from where an emigrant party started or how it proceeded that, even if they were not on the main route of the Santa Fe Trail – it lay somewhere to the north or south of them and was accessible with a few days’ or weeks’ travel. It would lead them west.

#### The Santa Fe Trail as an Emigrant Trail

The Santa Fe Trail historically has been regarded first and foremost as a commercial link between the American frontier and the Spanish/Mexican southwest, and rightly so. After 1846 and the American conquest and annexation of the Southwest it also became the route by which the United States Army maintained its presence in this new territory, both for troop movements and the freighting of provisions for dozens of army posts. The trail has not been seen as an emigrant trail, certainly not on the scale of the Oregon-California Trail, following the Platte

River west. This perception can and should be somewhat revised, given the evidence of the use of the Santa Fe Trail by California gold seekers from 1849 on into the 1850s. Admittedly, tens of thousands more “’49ers” used the Platte River Road, but the emigration on the Santa Fe Trail and its variants such as the Cherokee Trail and the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road was not insignificant. Also, in this instance it was the Santa Fe Trail which fed into the major routes across the New Mexico and Arizona deserts, such as the Gila Trail. And again, admittedly, the Santa Fe Trail was never an important route for Americans seeking to move westward and settle, primarily as farmers in a new land, as with the Oregon-California Trail.

As indicated several times in this study, assessing the number of California-bound emigrants who followed the Santa Fe, Cherokee, and Fort Smith trails is impossible, though estimates have been made. Certainly from 1849 to the mid-1850s, total emigration to California from all points of the globe reached well over 100,000 and perhaps even approached 200,000. Merrill Mattes in his thorough study of emigration on *The Great Platte River Road* places the number just for that route between 1849 and 1855 at 180,000. Patricia Etter, noted historian of the American West, has conducted the most substantive research into the use of southern trails to California, especially in her *To California on the Southern Route 1849: A History and Annotated Bibliography*, which has been referenced liberally in this study. She is cautious, placing the number of emigrants on these routes, including the Santa Fe Trail and the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, in the “thousands” in 1849. Elliott West, author of *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush To Colorado*, writing the “Foreword” to Etter’s *To California* asserts that “at least 20,000 persons rushed to California in 1849 by another way. . . .” – that is, other than by the Platte River Road. Etter provides one further estimation in her edition of “The 1849 Diary of Stanislaus Lasselie,” where she writes, “The majority of emigrants coming out of Santa

Fe had wagons and followed the Southern Trail, which left the Rio Grande near present Hatch, New Mexico. Travelers coming from Texas and Mexico also funneled into this trail. It headed in a southwesterly direction toward Guadalupe Pass just north of the international boundary and east of the Arizona-New Mexico border, continued to Santa Cruz, Sonora, then turned north by way of Tucson and the villages of the Pima Indians. At this point it joined the Gila Trail. Well over 15,000 emigrants moved over these trails toward the Yuma crossing in 1849.” After 1849 emigrant traffic on all these routes, whether from Missouri via the Santa Fe Trail or from Fort Smith or Grand Saline [Oklahoma] and then across the southwest, diminished rapidly. (Mattes 23; Etter 8; 25; Lasselle 4)

Historians of the Santa Fe Trail have almost uniformly ignored or overlooked the role of the trail in the California gold rush. The one exception is Louise Barry in *The Beginning of the West*, her exhaustive and supremely valuable catalogue of the people, events, and developments connected with Kansas as “the gateway to the American West” from 1540 to 1854. Her entries for the years 1848 to 1854 include numerous notices of gold rush related items. Her indexing of the major regional newspapers is especially valuable, saving a researcher countless hours, even in this age of online access to historical newspapers.

A few examples of general histories of the Santa Fe Trail will suffice to demonstrate the lack of attention granted California-bound emigrants on the trail. Henry Inman in his *The Old Santa Fé Trail* [1899] has just three sentences on the gold rush, though he does acknowledge that “thousands of men and their families crossed the plains and the Rocky Mountains, seeking their fortunes in the new El Dorado.” Robert Duffus, whose *The Santa Fe Trail* [1934] is one of the more lyrical and readable general trail histories, devotes three paragraphs to the 1849 emigration. He mainly speculates on the impact of the emigration on the city of Santa Fe itself, rather than

discussing the use of the trail. Interestingly, he reviews use of the trails southwest from Santa Fe, even mentioning that “no less than 8000 are said to have gone this way [from Santa Fe],” though without verification. Stanley Vestal [*The Old Santa Fe Trail* – 1939] and Hobart Stocking [*The Road to Santa Fe* – 1971] merely nod toward the gold rush emigration, dismissing it in a few sentences. Even William Brown in his ground-breaking *The Santa Fe Trail: National Park Service 1963 Sites Survey* includes only one paragraph lumping together the 1849 and 1859 gold rushes. He claims that, “between April and September 1849 about 2,500 emigrants from at least ten states went to California via the Santa Fe Trail,” but he cites no source for this estimate. It would seem that the general history of the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the California gold rush has yet to be appreciated and written. (Inman 145; Duffus 225; William Brown 58)

#### Sites on the Trail in 1849 of Special Interest or Importance to Emigrants

While many emigrants faithfully recorded the names and locations of hundreds of natural features, creek crossings, campgrounds and other places along the trail – sometimes using well-known names, at other times inventing their own – of the ten sites listed and describe previously in this study there are four sites that were mentioned frequently, figured importantly in emigrant travel calculations and progress, and have not to date been recognized nor interpreted in this light. These four are: Running Turkey Creek; Bent’s Old Fort; San Miguel, New Mexico, and vicinity; and the “Galisteo Fork,” the branching of a trail from the main route into Santa Fe, west of Glorieta Pass, down to Galisteo, New Mexico. These locales are considered extensively elsewhere in this study. Here they will be reviewed briefly along with an assessment of the current interpretations of the sites.

*Note: One of these sites – San Miguel del Bado – is catalogued in the “Rediscovery Survey – Final Report – September 2009,” compiled under the auspices of the National Trails Intermountain Region and the Santa Fe Trail Association. That survey also included the “Running Turkey Creek Campground,” but not the junction of the Cherokee Trail and the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek. It also did not mention the “Galisteo Fork,” which has not been identified previously as a notable site on the Santa Fe Trail. Bent’s Old Fort, obviously, is in a category by itself in this context – it is mentioned in the “Rediscovery Survey” and, more importantly, is a National Historic Site.*

### **Running Turkey Creek** [McPherson County, Kansas]

Running Turkey Creek, long before the 1849 emigration, was used as a campground by traders on the Santa Fe Trail. In 1849 the Lewis Evans party, which blazed the Cherokee Trail from northeastern Oklahoma, followed this creek upstream to its intersection with the Santa Fe Trail and marked the spot with an engraved stone, which subsequently disappeared but was remarked on by emigrants coming along the Santa Fe Trail at this time. This site is not mentioned in the *Santa Fe National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management and Use Plan* [May 1990], either in text material or on maps. Gregory Franzwa locates it in his *The Santa Fe Trail Revisited* [1989], though it is not marked in his *Maps of the Santa Fe Trail* [1989]. Marc Simmons and Hal Jackson in their guidebook *Following the Santa Fe Trail* [2001] give directions to the Running Turkey Creek Campground and add, “a bronze plaque” marks the location. This site, then, is important in the heritage of both the Santa Fe and Cherokee trails. (Franzwa 89; Simmons and Jackson 109)

### **Bent’s Old Fort** [Otero County, Colorado]

Bent's Old Fort is, of course, a National Historic Site administered by the National Park Service. William Bent abandoned this major trading outpost on the plains in the summer of 1849 – some emigrants visited it before it was deserted, others after. Though a majority of gold seekers took the Cimarron Route of the Santa Fe Trail, heading south just west of present-day Dodge City, for those who proceeded to the Rockies and then went either north on the Cherokee Trail or south over Raton Pass to Santa Fe, Bent's Old Fort was a longed-for destination and milepost to be achieved. David Lavender in his study, *Bent's Fort*, barely acknowledges this aspect of the fort's history. Nor is it covered in the pamphlet *Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site* [1998] or other official government publications.

### **San Miguel, New Mexico and Vicinity** [San Miguel County, New Mexico]

The thousands of emigrants choosing the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Trail intersected the “Independence Road,” as many of them called the Santa Fe Trail, where the trail crosses the Pecos River. Sometimes they first visited Anton Chico or Bernal, but *San Miguel del Bado* – the ford of the Pecos was where these emigrants decisively encountered the trail and the Mexican culture of New Mexico. There are numerous descriptions of San Miguel in emigrant diaries, letter and journals, along with accounts of the amusing or sharp encounters some emigrants had with the inhabitants. These entries are an overlooked source of information on the interaction of Hispanic and American cultures in the early years following the American conquest of the Southwest. San Miguel is mentioned in the text and on maps in the *Santa Fe National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management and Use Plan* [May 1990], though not in the context of its role in the California gold rush emigration. Should the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road ever be given more recognition as a route to California [recognition overdue and neglected by the state of Oklahoma], the junction of that road and the Santa Fe Trail at San Miguel will have an even

heightened importance. It can be noted here, in this regard, that the Fort Smith National Historic Site, Arkansas, administered by the National Park Service, does a more than adequate job of promoting and interpreting the role of Fort Smith in the 1849 gold rush. (National Park Service, Santa Fe National Historic Trail *Management and Use Plan* 105)

### **Galisteo Fork** [Santa Fe County, New Mexico]

Although once again even generally precise information is lacking, it would appear that the majority of emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail never visited Santa Fe. They had several reasons, including the rumored [and real] lack of forage for their animals in the area and the high prices they would pay for supplies. Consequently, they turned south to Galisteo, about 25 miles from Santa Fe. There they usually found adequate forage and a friendly welcome. It also put them further along on their trek to the Rio Grande and the southwestern trails to California. Galisteo additionally served as a temporary encampment where emigrants decided on what supplies they might need for the journey ahead, whether to trade their oxen and wagons for mules and packs, and so forth. Emigrant parties or companies often sent one or two men as representatives into Santa Fe to sell and buy what they needed. This site, the fork to Galisteo, reckoning from descriptions of the emigrants, is at the exit for U. S. Highway 285 on Interstate 25, about ten miles east of Santa Fe. It merits acknowledgment and interpretation.

### Native People and Mexican “Americans”

As covered in several instances in this study, emigrants commented at length on the Native peoples they encountered from eastern Kansas to northeastern New Mexico. They also passed judgment, for good or ill, on the Hispanics they met in Las Vegas, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Galisteo – or, for example, with the Comanchero trading caravans they met on the northeastern

plains of New Mexico. Their view of these people is different from that found in the journals of Santa Fe Trail traders. These traders dealt with the Arapaho or Kiowa or Cheyenne or Comanche on nearly every trip they made on the trail and were accustomed to their cultures and ways. Also, many Anglo-American trail merchants married into New Mexican families, either out of attraction or expediency, or both. The emigrants brought with them the views and prejudices of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century America and their accounts are of interest if for no other reason. In the heritage of the Santa Fe Trail, however – as it is interpreted today – their observations inform any study of the violence and warfare on the plains with Plains peoples that erupts in the 1850s and, more specifically, in the 1860s and 1870s. Their reaction to the Mexican population of New Mexico colors the early years of the relationship between Anglos and Hispanics in the territory and on into statehood in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and hence broadens any appreciation of the emergence of New Mexico’s multicultural society. These observations deserve to be better known and utilized.

#### The Santa Fe Trail and Its Branches, Feeder Trails, and Variants in 1849

One final impression of the Santa Fe Trail – at least for the author of this study – concerns the extent to which the trail, while it was in some ways the “mother road” to the Southwest, also fed and was fed by numerous other trails. When viewing the entire scope of the 1849 gold rush emigration, it seems that while many emigrants followed heavily-traveled and well-known routes, others occasionally blazed their own way or used less-frequented tracks. There was no need for signposts – the mountain men and fur trappers and Santa Fe Traders who led or informed the emigrants had a thorough knowledge and vast experience of the geography of the plains, and they used it. Often a chance meeting or change in plans will pop up in an emigrant diary – “We met a party trailing north from Texas,” or “We decided to leave the Fort

Smith trail and strike north to the Santa Fe road.” There are dozens of examples. No one used maps [or their maps were highly impractical, as with those in gold rush guidebooks]. They just either knew where they were going or figured they would get there at some point. This crisscrossing of the plains and prairies needs to be factored into the present understanding not only of the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1849 gold rush but into accounts of the trail in general.

### Changing Interpretations

As observed at the beginning of this study, the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the California gold rush of 1849 has been neglected. Its range and impact need to be further assessed and applied in the context of current trail interpretations and marking, especially since the Cherokee Trail and the southern trails across New Mexico and Arizona may be added to the list of “National Historic Trails.” At present there is no mention of the gold rush in the literature of the Santa Fe Trail Association or on its website. There have been few references to it in articles in the association’s magazine, *Wagon Tracks*, throughout its 25-year run. Furthermore, the better-known trail histories have paid scant attention to this subject. Also, in the brochure of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail, published by the National Park Service, the only mention is in a timeline, “1849-1852 – California Gold Rush increases Trail traffic.” Indeed it did, by the tens of thousands. More work needs to be done.

## *Ho! For California: 1849 Gold Rush Bibliography*

The following bibliography is divided into four sections: newspapers, primary sources, 1849 guidebooks and secondary sources. The primary sources are extensively annotated to highlight their importance to the story of the Santa Fe Trail in the California gold rush. Some secondary sources are similarly annotated; those not annotated are not central to the interpretation of the history and heritage of the trail in the late 1840s and 1850s with respect to the gold rush but provide pertinent information.

### Newspapers Cited or Referenced

<i>Arkansas Banner</i>	Little Rock, AR
<i>Arkansas Democrat</i>	Little Rock, AR
<i>Arkansas Intelligencer</i>	Van Buren, AR
<i>Arkansas State Democrat</i>	Helena, AR
<i>Californian</i>	San Francisco, CA
<i>Cherokee Advocate</i>	Tahlequah, OK
<i>Daily Cincinnati Gazette</i>	Cincinnati, OH
<i>Daily Missouri Republican</i>	St. Louis, MO
<i>Fort Smith Herald</i>	Fort Smith, Arkansas
<i>Glasgow Weekly Times</i>	Glasgow, MO
<i>Holly Springs Gazette</i>	Holly Springs, MS
<i>Kennebec Journal</i>	Kennebec, ME
<i>Liberty Weekly Tribune</i>	Liberty, MO
<i>Missouri Republican</i>	St. Louis, MO
<i>New York Daily Tribune</i>	New York City, NY
<i>New York Weekly Tribune</i>	New York City, NY
<i>St. Joseph Gazette</i>	St. Joseph, MO
<i>St. Louis Daily Union</i>	St. Louis, MO
<i>The Southern Shield</i>	Helena, AR
<i>The Weekly Tribune</i>	Liberty, MO
<i>Van Buren Intelligencer</i>	Van Buren, AR
<i>Weekly Reveille</i>	St. Louis, MO

## Primary Sources

These listings include diaries, journals, memoirs and letters with significant entries or observations on the Santa Fe Trail in the late 1840s or the early 1850s, whether from Missouri to Santa Fe or for that portion of the trail traveled by emigrants on the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road or the Cherokee Trail. Each entry especially highlights aspects of the reference that provides unique comments or observations on the role of the trail in the 1849 gold rush. In most cases, these sources were edited for publication though some material, whether published or in manuscript, can be accessed in the original online, as indicated.

The entries are alphabetical by the name of the original author of the diary, journal or letters, though in two instances that author remains unidentified – see the entry for “Unidentified Emigrant” below. The full citation for the item is then provided.

Aldrich, Lorenzo D. *A Journal of the Overland Route to California & The Gold Mines*. Los Angeles: Dawson’s Book Shop, 1950.

Lorenzo Aldrich traveled the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road in 1849. He left Albany, New York, on April 18<sup>th</sup>. He arrived by steamboat at Fort Smith, leaving there on May 26<sup>th</sup>. He arrived in Santa Fe on July 31<sup>st</sup>. His account is notable for its description of Anton Chico and San Miguel, New Mexico, and the situation in Santa Fe as emigrants sold their wagons and oxen and bought mules. He eventually took the Gila Route to California.

Averill, Charles E. *Kit Carson, the Prince of the Gold Hunters, or, The Adventures of the Sacramento. A Tale of the New Eldorado, Founded on Actual Facts*. Boston: G. H. Williams, 1849.

Brisbane, William. “Journal of a Trip, or Notes of One, from Fort Leavenworth to San Francisco via Santa Fe in 1849.” Manuscript in the Princeton University Library. Accessed online February 17, 2012 at <http://pucl.princeton.edu/objects/sq8bv364>.

William Brisbane crossed the plains in 1849. He left Fort Leavenworth on May 17<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Santa Fe on July 12<sup>th</sup>. He traveled, though not officially, with James Collier's party and eventually formally joined that party on its journey from New Mexico to California. He provides a lively narrative of events and places along the trail – snakes, washing clothes at Cottonwood Creek, hunting buffalo, the Arkansas Crossing, a snowstorm near Point of Rocks, New Mexico, on July 4<sup>th</sup>, and observations on wolves. On the Cimarron Route he writes somewhat in dismay, "Oh! For a tree." (32) He proceeded west from Albuquerque to Zuni, New Mexico, then went southwest to intersect the Gila Trail to California.

Brown, John Lowery, in Muriel H Wright. "The Journal of John Lowery Brown, Of The Cherokee Nation En Route To California In 1850." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 12 (June 1934): 177-213. Accessed online January 16, 2012 at <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Chronicles/v012/v012p177.html>.

J. L. Brown travels the Cherokee Trail in 1850 from eastern Oklahoma to its intersection with the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek and then west. His is one of the few accounts of the Cherokee Trail. He leaves from the vicinity of present-day Stillwater, Oklahoma, and strikes the Santa Fe Trail on May 17<sup>th</sup>. The members of his party reached the ruins of Bent's Old Fort on June 10<sup>th</sup> but do not stop. Instead, they proceed along the Arkansas River to Fountain Creek/Pueblo, Colorado. From there, as with other Cherokee Trail travelers, they head north to the Oregon-California Trail in Wyoming. Brown does note various landmarks on the Santa Fe Trail including Cow Creek, Walnut Creek, Pawnee Rock and the ruins of Fort Mann.

Calhoun, James, in Annie Abel, ed. *The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun while Indian Agent at Santa Fe and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in New Mexico*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915. Accessed online August 28, 2012 at <http://archive.org/details/officialcorrespo00unit>.

James Calhoun traveled the trail in the summer of 1849 to assume his duties as the Indian agent at Santa Fe. His party left Fort Leavenworth on May 16<sup>th</sup>, escorted by four companies of U. S. infantry commanded by Col. Edmund B. Alexander. Little of his official correspondence deals with his experiences on the trail, except for comments on rumors of Indian depredations and encountering, at the Arkansas Crossing on June 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup>, “several thousand Indians of various tribes assembled, awaiting the return of Mr. Fitzpatrick.” (19) Calhoun arrived in Santa Fe on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Chamberlin, William H. “From Lewisburg (PA.) To California in 1849: Notes from the Diary of William H. Chamberlin.” *New Mexico Historical Review* 20 (January 1945): 14-58, (April 1945), 144-180. Edited by Lansing Bloom. Accessed online August 28, 2012 at <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?seq=12;u=1;view=2up;size=100;id=uc1.31822035077197;page=root;orient=0#page/162/mode/2up>.

William Chamberlin traveled the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. He left Fort Smith on May 28, 1849, arrived at San Miguel, New Mexico on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and in Santa Fe itself on June 7<sup>th</sup>. He and his party eventually followed the Gila Trail to California. He comments on purchasing supplies near San Miguel, including a sheep and lamb for food. He makes a notable entry in his diary upon encountering the Santa Fe Trail, “Before reaching San Miguel, we came out upon the Santa Fe and Independence Road. It is better than any macadamized road I ever saw in the states, being broad, smooth and solid.” (50)

Counts, George. “Notes of Travel from New York to the Gold Region in California in the Year Eighteen Hundred and Forty Nine.” MSS, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley. Accessed online August 28, 2012 at <http://www.mariposaresearch.net/COUNTS.html>.

George Counts traveled the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road in 1849 as a member of the Clarksville Mining Company. He left from the vicinity of Fort Smith on April 11<sup>th</sup> and reached Pecos, New Mexico on June 16<sup>th</sup>. He did not go into Santa Fe but turned south to Galisteo, New Mexico. His party used a southern trail via Guadalupe Pass, New

Mexico, and then eventually the western extension of the Gila Trail. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Cross, Major Osborne. *The March of the Mounted Riflemen*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1940. Reprinted, Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1989. Edited by Raymond Settle. Accessed online October 8, 2012 at <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015029405308#page/41/mode/1up>.

Crawford, James Sawyer. See Fletcher, Patricia A., Jack Earl Fletcher and Lee Whiteley. *Cherokee Trail Diaries*. Sequim, WA: Fletcher Family Foundation, 1999.

James Crawford was a member of the Washington County Emigrating Company which traveled from Fayetteville, Arkansas, to California on the Cherokee Trail beginning in April 1849. This company intersected the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek and proceeded to Bent's Old Fort. From there the party headed west to Pueblo, Colorado, and then north to the Oregon-California Trail in Wyoming. Crawford's account is one of the few for this route. His observations are included in Fletcher's compilation in segments from pp. 33-168. Fletcher et al. published a number of manuscript diaries and letters in this volume, interspersing excerpts from them chronologically as those writing them traveled the trail. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Elliott, Robert. "A March Letter: Off to the Gold Fields with Robert Elliott." *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 30 (March 1959), 327-340. With an introduction by Lillian Krueger.

Robert Elliott sets out for the gold fields from New York City, via Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, then down the Ohio and Mississippi to the Arkansas and up the Arkansas by steamboat to Van Buren and Fort Smith. He leaves Fort Smith for New Mexico by the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road on April 18, 1849. His letter gives no date for his arrival at San Miguel, New Mexico, though he does comment extensively and perceptively on the

Mexican population there. He bypasses Santa Fe, heads down the Rio Grande, leaves it at Lemitar, New Mexico, and takes the Gila Route to California. He has a copy of Lieut. W. H. Emory's *Notes of a Reconnoissance* along, noting, "fording the river [Rio Grande] at a place called Lamiter [Lemitar], and then down the west bank a short distance. Here we made use of the report or narrative by Lieutenant Emory of the Topographical Engineers, who had two years previously accompanied the expedition of General Kearney over much the same route." (332)

Emory, Lieut. Col. W. H., et al. *Notes of a Military Reconnoissance, from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, including part of the Arkansas, Del Norte, and Gila Rivers.* By William H. Emory; J. W. Abert; Philip St. George Cooke; and A. R. Johnston; United States Army, Corps of Topographical Engineers. Washington: Wendell and Van Benthuysen, Printers, 1848.

Goulding, William R. *California Odyssey, An Overland Journey on the Southern Trails, 1849.* Norman: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2009. Edited by Patricia A. Etter.

William Goulding left New York City on February 18, 1849. He travels by steamboat from Pittsburgh, via Cincinnati, Cairo, Memphis, Napoleon [at the mouth of the Arkansas], to Fort Smith, leaving there on March 26<sup>th</sup> for Santa Fe via the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. He arrives at San Miguel, New Mexico, on May 26<sup>th</sup>, Santa Fe on May 28<sup>th</sup>, and leaves Santa Fe on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. He takes the southern route via Guadalupe Pass, New Mexico, to California. Goulding is an excellent observer of all he encounters – meeting a large body of Comanche near Anton Chico, New Mexico; describing a company of U. S. Dragoons patrolling out of Las Vegas, New Mexico; on selling and buying provisions and gear in Santa Fe; and on Comancheros headed for "traffic with the Indians." (122)

Gregg, Josiah. *Commerce of the Prairies.* New York: H. G. Langley, 1844. Reprinted many times. Accessed online on August 28, 2012 at <http://www.kancoll.org/books/gregg/>

Although Josiah Gregg's seminal history and personal account of the Santa Fe Trail and trade was published in 1844, before the 1849 California gold rush, it is essential for appreciating the role of the Santa Fe Trail in that gold rush. Once Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies* appeared, it became *the* source for information on trade with and travel to the southwest and Mexico. Not a few emigrants mention reading Gregg and/or carrying a copy west with them. It is important to remember that this book covers not only Gregg's experiences as a trader on the Santa Fe Trail, but that the chapters in "Volume II" recount his blazing, in 1839 from Van Buren, Arkansas, the precursor of the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, and his subsequent adventures in Mexico. Emigrants using the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road in 1849 and later sometimes referred to it as "Gregg's Road."

Gregg, Josiah. *Diary and Letters of Josiah Gregg, Southwestern Enterprises, 1840-1847*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941. Edited by Maurice Garland Fulton.

In the spring of 1839, Josiah Gregg blazed a new route to Santa Fe, from Fort Smith, Arkansas, via the Canadian River. He recounted that journey and his return trip by a somewhat different route in his famous book *Commerce of the Prairies*. He also mentions the return trip in his diary, where he remarks, "Having adjusted my business in Santa Fé, our wagons left today [Tuesday, February 25, 1840] for the U.S. with intention of returning down the Rio Colorado, or Canadian Fork of Arkansas, - in the vicinity of the route we came. Although we will no doubt frequently be at some distance from our former trail, we will endeavor to straighten the route." Gregg's "road" became a major route to Santa Fe, the Rio Grande Valley and ultimately California for emigrants bound for the gold fields in 1849. The diary provides additional, early information on the route. Emigrants in 1849 often mentioned their knowledge of Gregg's trail-blazing.

Hayes, Benjamin Ignatius. *Pioneer Notes from the Diaries of Judge Benjamin Hayes, 1849-*

1875. Los Angeles: Privately Printed, 1929. Reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1976.  
Edited by Marjorie Tisdale Wolcott.

Benjamin Hayes left Independence, Missouri, late in the season [September 10, 1849], taking the Santa Fe Trail to New Mexico. October 15<sup>th</sup> found him east of Santa Fe, turning off to Galisteo: “Passed the forks of the road, one of which leads to Santa Fe, took the one to Galisteo.” (19) He then followed the southern route via Guadalupe Pass, New Mexico, to California. Hayes traveled in a caravan led by Solomon Houck, a well-known trader on the Santa Fe Trail. His diary gives interesting hints of why emigrants might choose the Santa Fe Trail. First, he has a copy of Josiah Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies* with him. Second, he notes that some emigrants are veterans of the Mexican-American War who had traveled the trail at that time: “As we journey along Doniphan’s men ‘fight their battles o’re.’” (25)

Heap, Gwinn Harris. *Central Route to the Pacific, from the Valley of the Mississippi to California: Journal of the Expedition of E. F. Beale, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in California, and Gwinn Harris Heap, from Missouri to California*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Co., 1854. Reprinted in LeRoy Hafen, ed., *Central Route to the Pacific by Gwinn Harris Heap, with related materials on railroad explorations and Indian affairs by Edward F. Beale, Thomas H. Benton, Kit Carson, and Col. E. A. Hitchcock, and in other documents, 1853-1854*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1957. Accessed online August 28, 2012 at <http://www.unz.org/Pub/HeapGwinn-1957>.

In 1852, Edward F. Beale was appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California. The following April he traveled overland from Washington, D. C. to assume his duties. He retained his cousin, Gwinn Harris Heap as journalist for his expedition. The party traveled the Santa Fe Trail from Westport, Missouri, to Bent’s Old Fort, then across southern Colorado and, by a circuitous route, to California. Heap’s journal provides a rare appraisal of the Santa Fe Trail in the period between the 1849 and 1859 gold rushes. Very interestingly, he several times notes that there are California-bound

emigrants on the trail. On May 22, 1853, he writes, “We had already overtaken and passed several large wagon and cattle trains from Texas and Arkansas, mostly bound to California. With them were many women and children. . . . Although Mr. Beale and myself overtook camp at a late hour, we travelled a few miles farther, and encamped for the night on Walnut Creek. . . . This is the point at which emigrants to Oregon and California, from Texas and Arkansas, generally strike this road.” (92, 93) And on May 30<sup>th</sup>, “We passed this morning two wagon and cattle trains for California *via* Great Salt Lake. Washington Trainor, of California, with a large number of cattle, and about fifty fine horses and mules, camped near us.” (99) *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Hudgins, John. “California in 1849.” *The Westport Historical Quarterly* 6 (June 1970): 3-16.

John Hudgins leaves his home in Mooresville, Livingston County, Missouri, on May 6, 1849 and is in the vicinity of Las Vegas, New Mexico on July 4<sup>th</sup>. He doesn’t go into Santa Fe. Instead he writes, “We followed the Santa Fe Road through Tecolota, St. Nagil [San Miguel del Bado] to near the old Pecos church, where we took the left hand road and camped at the foot of the Manzona [Manzano] mountains. (8) Hudgins is an excellent source for indicating why some emigrants preferred the Santa Fe Trail to the Platte River Road, for delineating the types and amounts of provisions taken on the journey, and for noting that Mexican War veterans naturally preferred the Santa Fe Trail. Of himself, he adds, “some of us had crossed the plains twice before and was pretty well acquainted with the wiles of the Indians.” (5)

Hunter, William. *Missouri 49'er: The Journal of William W. Hunter on the Southern Gold Trail*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992. Edited by David P. Robrock.

William Hunter's journal is one of the lengthier accounts of 1849 gold rush emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail. Hunter leaves his home in Montgomery County, Missouri on April 23, 1849 and travels west to Boonslick and Lexington but bypasses Independence because of the prevalence of cholera there. He reaches Council Grove on May 24<sup>th</sup>, takes the Cimarron Route, stops at Barclay's Fort, New Mexico, on June 30<sup>th</sup>, and is in San Miguel on July 5<sup>th</sup>. He and his party do not go into Santa Fe but opt for Galisteo instead. He eventually takes the Gila Route to California. Hunter does make a side trip to Santa Fe, where he comments eloquently on signs of disillusionment among emigrants who could not afford to go on but were too broke to go home. There is lively debate in Hunter's party on whether to follow the "South Pass Route" (Guadalupe Pass, New Mexico) or the Gila Trail – men in the party have copies of both "Kearny's and Cooke's" reports. Of the "turn-off" from the Santa Fe Trail to Galisteo, Hunter writes, "Here was a grocery establishment in a tent, the first we had seen since leaving a villainous looking hovel of the kind on the Shawnee Trace in Johnson County." (51)

Kern, Richard H., in Blanche Grant. *When Old Trails Were New, The Story of Taos*. New York: The Press of the Pioneers, Inc., 1934.

Blanche Grant, in *When Old Trails Were New*, reprints the diary of Richard H. Kern, the artist with Frémont's ill-fated 1848 western expedition. On this expedition Frémont left Westport, Missouri, and followed the Kansas and Smoky Hill rivers to the vicinity of Hays, Kansas, then turned south to Walnut Creek and reached the Arkansas River near the Arkansas Crossing. From there the expedition followed the Arkansas to Bent's Old Fort, Pueblo, Colorado, and then into south central Colorado via Robidoux Pass. Consequently, Kern provides a view of the Santa Fe Trail from the Arkansas

Crossing into Colorado just a year before the flood of California-bound emigrants would take it. *Note: This item is not cited in the body of this study.*

Kurz, Rudolph Freiderich. *Journal of Rudolph Freiderich Kurz: An Account of His Experience Among Fur Traders and American Indians on the Mississippi and the Upper Missouri Rivers During the Years 1846 to 1852*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1937. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 115. J.N.B. Hewitt, ed., Myrtis Jarrell, trans. Accessed online August 28, 2012 at <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/87751>.

Rudolph Freiderich Kurz was a Swiss artist who traveled the northern Great Plains painting Indian life and other scenes from 1846 to 1852. The spring of 1849 found him in St. Joseph, Missouri, where he witnessed the arrival, provisioning, and departure of California-bound emigrants. His observations of the frenetic activity and business dealings are informative for this aspect of the “gold fever.”

Lasselle, Stanislas. “The 1849 Diary of Stanislas Lasselle.” *Overland Journal* 9 (Summer 1991): 2-33. Edited by Patricia Etter.

Stanislas Lasselle takes various steamboats from his home in Indiana to Fort Smith, and then follows the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road west. He leaves Fort Smith in mid-April 1849, reaches San Miguel, New Mexico, on May 26<sup>th</sup> and Santa Fe on May 28<sup>th</sup>. He and his party are among the few California emigrants who attempt the Old Spanish Trail to California. After various hardships they abandon it and go by the Gila Route. Lasselle writes of Bernal, New Mexico, where his company encounters the Santa Fe Trail: “About two o’clock in the afternoon [May 25<sup>th</sup>] we came to a ranche called Bernal which was rather small having some twenty five persons. A ranche was some thing new to some of the company never seeing any before. Here is the Independence road that leads to Santa Fee. It has been worked by the government and much used.” (16-17)

Lipe, Oliver Wack. See Fletcher, Patricia A., Jack Earl Fletcher and Lee Whiteley. *Cherokee Trail Diaries*. Sequim, WA: Fletcher Family Foundation, 1999.

Oliver Lipe was a member of the Washington County Emigrating Company which traveled from Fayetteville, Arkansas, to California on the Cherokee Trail beginning in April 1849. This company reached the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek and proceeded to Bent's Old Fort. From there they headed west to Pueblo, Colorado, and then north to the Oregon-California Trail in Wyoming. One of Lipe's letters to the *Cherokee Advocate*, published on July 30, 1849, is of particular interest regarding the Santa Fe Trail. When his party was at the junction of the Cherokee and Santa Fe trails at Running Turkey Creek, he wrote, "A question arose at that point what rout to pursue, whether we should continue our north west course to intersect the oregon road at the southe, fork of the platt or take the Santa Fe road to Fort Bent, the latter route carried so we are now on a great highway and can travel 20 miles per day with ease."

(50)

Mitchell, James. See Fletcher, Patricia A., Jack Earl Fletcher and Lee Whiteley. *Cherokee Trail Diaries*. Sequim, WA: Fletcher Family Foundation, 1999.

James Mitchell's diary offers one of the rare glimpses of travel on the Cherokee Trail in 1850. Mitchell was a member of the Cane Hill California Emigrating Company, which substantially followed the Cherokee Trail as blazed in 1849, from eastern Oklahoma to its intersection with the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek, then west to Bent's Old Fort and on to Pueblo, Colorado. From there the emigrants struck north to join the Oregon-California Trail in Wyoming. As with other diaries and letters in Fletcher et al., Mitchell's diary is presented in segments, interspersed with the diaries, journals and letters of other emigrants chronologically. On May 19, 1850, Mitchell made

a noteworthy entry on encountering large numbers of Native peoples on the Arkansas, gathering to meet with Indian Agent Thomas Fitzpatrick: “We camped 10 miles above the [Cimarron] crossing and a vast [number] of Indians in Sight each Side but was not much affraid after pasing So many yestereday friendly Soon after camping 4 men came to us as mesingers from Fitch [Fitzpatrick] the agent who is about to hold a treaty peace near here with 6 tribes Thies men instructed us to pass on friendly among the Indians to not give insults nor to appear afraid and we would not be interup by them (257)

Pancoast, Charles Edward. *A Quaker Forty-Niner, The Adventures of Charles Edward Pancoast on the American Frontier*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930. Edited by Anna Paschall Hannum.

Charles Pancoast’s *Quaker Forty-Niner* is one of the two or three most fulsome accounts of gold rush emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail. He left Fort Leavenworth on April 29, 1849 as a member of the “Peoria Company” led by James Kirker. His party reached Bent’s Fort on June 19<sup>th</sup> and then uncharacteristically at that time, headed west to Pueblo, Colorado. He then dropped south over Raton Pass, forded the Ocate Crossing of the Santa Fe Trail south of Rayado, New Mexico, passed through San Miguel and then proceeded to Galisteo, commenting, “We left Santa Fe about fifteen miles to the west of us, and travelled through the Desert Plains of Oyo [Ojo] de Vaca until we arrived within a mile of the old Spanish Town of Galisteo. . . .” (213) He meets Kit Carson, visits and describes Santa Fe, discusses the “rules of the road,” including, “no man should be permitted to ride in a Wagon unless unable to walk,” (186) and is evidently the only trail traveler at any time to recount the use of sunglasses: “The long continuous dusty Travel over flat glaring Plains began to affect the eyes of our men, and those that had the foresight to bring Colored Glasses were using them.” (188) Pancoast’s party takes the

southern route over Guadalupe Pass, New Mexico, and the western reaches of the Gila Trail to California.

Powell, H. T. M. *The Santa Fe Trail to California, 1849-1852*. San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1931. Edited by Douglas S. Watson. Available online through the subscription service: [americanwest.amdigital.co.uk](http://americanwest.amdigital.co.uk). Accessed August 28, 2012 at Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO.

H. M. T. Powell's *Santa Fe Trail to California* is perhaps the most informative and readable narrative of all emigrant accounts of travel on the Santa Fe Trail in 1849 and 1850. Powell is a member of the Illinois Company, which leaves Independence on May 15<sup>th</sup>, goes via the Cimarron Route, and – skipping Santa Fe – arrives at Galisteo, New Mexico, on July 15<sup>th</sup>. They continue to California on the southern route over Guadalupe Pass, New Mexico. Powell comments on essentially everything of interest and note regarding emigrant travel on the Santa Fe Trail: framing a constitution for the company's organization; debating the merits of the Platte River Road versus the Santa Fe Trail; weighing the recommendations of Mexican War veterans on the choice of a route; chronicling the ravages of cholera; worrying whether they can take wagons on "Cooke's route to California;" recalling a meeting with James Josiah Webb, a renowned Santa Fe trader; passing the junction with the just-blazed Cherokee Trail; hunting buffalo; using Lieut. W. H. Emory's *Notes of a Reconnoissance*, which Powell deems "inaccurate;" delineating the tensions that arose among members of emigrant companies; and being "cheated" in trading at Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Quesenbury, William M. See Fletcher, Patricia A., Jack Earl Fletcher and Lee Whiteley. *Cherokee Trail Diaries*. Sequim, WA: Fletcher Family Foundation, 1999.

William Quesenbury was a member of the Cane Hill California Emigrating Company which took the Cherokee Trail west in 1850. His diary is one of the few

accounts of travel on that trail that year. It is extensively excerpted by Fletcher et al. from pages 202-286, covering that segment of the Cherokee Trail from eastern Oklahoma to its junction with the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek and then west to the ruins of Bent's Old Fort and Pueblo, Colorado. The Cherokee Trail ran north from Pueblo to join the Oregon-California Trail in Wyoming. Quesenbury provides relatively detailed accounts of sights and events along the trail. On June 5, 1850, Quesenbury and several others from his party go on ahead to Greenhorn, Colorado – approximately 25 miles southwest of Pueblo – to hire a guide to take them across the Rockies directly to Salt Lake City. Of this plan, he wrote, “We the undersigned agree and are resolved to pack and travel to California from Pueblo; and we contemplate securing a guide on reasonable terms, and of making our route direct through the mountains to the Mormon city. . . .” (277) As it transpired, they didn't get a guide, met up with their train at Pueblo, and headed north on the Cherokee Trail.

Reid, Bernard. *Overland to California with the Pioneer Line, The Gold Rush Diary of Bernard J. Reid*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983. Edited by May McDougall Gordon.

Although Benjamin Reid takes the Platte River Road to the gold fields, his diary is important as background regarding conditions in Missouri and eastern Kansas in 1849. He leaves Independence on May 15<sup>th</sup> and follows the Santa Fe/Oregon trail to present-day Gardner Junction, Kansas, then heads off on the Oregon-California Trail. He extensively comments on the prevalence and horrors of cholera among emigrants taking both trails.

Sniffen, George S. “Notes by the Campfire; Being a Narrative of an Overland Journey from the United States to California in the Year 1849.” John B. Goodman Collection, Manuscript 26, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego. Accessed online February 17, 2012 at

[http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/DigitalArchives/f865\\_s72-1849vlt/f865\\_s72-1849vlt.pdf](http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/DigitalArchives/f865_s72-1849vlt/f865_s72-1849vlt.pdf).

George Sniffen was a member of the Havilah Mining Association, one of the principal parties that traveled the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road in 1849. Commenting on the organization of that company, and reflecting perhaps many such organizations, he noted, “After enough voting and trouble sufficient to have elected a president of the US we at last purchased all our supplies. . . .” (No pagination) The party left Fort Smith on July 13<sup>th</sup> and reached the Santa Fe Trail near San Miguel on July 21<sup>st</sup>. Sniffen wrote, “About 11 A.M. we struck the ‘Independence Trail,’ leading from Independence to Santa Fe, and found it to be an excellent road of some 30 or 40 ft. in width.” There is an interesting account of some of the men of the company flogging a “Mexican” who had stolen a mule from them, near San Miguel, an indication of cultural attitudes and frontier vigilance. The party avoids Santa Fe, choosing to go to Galisteo instead, but Sniffen is charged with trading for them in Santa Fe and provides various observations on conditions there. The Havilah Association reaches California via the southern route over Guadalupe Pass, New Mexico, and then the western stretch of the Gila Trail.

Stuart, Jacob, “The Diary of a ’49-er’ – Jacob Stuart.” *Tennessee Historical Magazine* Second Series, 1 (1931), 279-285. Edited by Kate White

Jacob Stuart traveled the Santa Fe Trail with a company of emigrants from Tennessee, leaving St. Joseph, Missouri on July 20, 1849. This edition of his diary contains no entries for travel on the trail but is one of the better sources for a description of conditions in Santa Fe as encountered and observed by gold rush emigrants.

Sutherland, Thomas W. in “Bypaths of Kansas History: News From Council Grove In 1849: Correspondence of the St. Louis *Republican* republished in the supplement to the New York *Daily Tribune*, July 6, 1849 and Correspondence of the Philadelphia *Inquirer* republished in the New York Tribune, July 20, 1849.” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 7

(May 1938): 204-206. Accessed online August 28, 2012 at <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly/13286>.

The *Kansas Historical Quarterly* here has reprinted two letters from gold rush emigrants. The second, whose authorship Louise Barry attributes to Thomas W. Sutherland, former assistant district attorney for Wisconsin Territory [Barry, *Beginning of the West*, 859], mentions the various concerns of emigrants, such as Indian depredations and lack of water, as well as commenting on plants along the trail: “. . .the Plains furnish flowers enough to meet the desires of any botanist.” (206)

Unidentified Emigrant, in: “Bypaths of Kansas History: News From Council Grove In 1849: Correspondence of the St. Louis *Republican* republished in the supplement to the New York *Daily Tribune*, July 6, 1849 and Correspondence of the Philadelphia *Inquirer* republished in the New York Tribune, July 20, 1849.” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 7 (May 1938): 204-206. Accessed online August 28, 2012 at <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly/13286>.

The *Kansas Historical Quarterly* here has reprinted two letters from gold rush emigrants. The first, whose author has not been ascertained, is written from Council Grove. It especially details the prevalence of cholera and the scores of victims who die from it.

Unidentified Emigrant, in: “Bypaths of Kansas History: Council Grove and the Kaw Indians in 1849 from the *New York Weekly Tribune*, July 21, 1849.” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 18 (August 1950): 324-325. Accessed online August 28, 2012 at <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly/13286>.

The author of this letter, reprinted from the *New York Weekly Tribune*, is unknown. He is in a party traveling with a military escort commanded by Capt. Croghan Ker, who was escorting James Collier and his party; Collier was going to California to assume his duties as Collector of the Port of San Francisco. The letter is notable for indicating why some emigrants avoided the Platte River Road: “All persons familiar with the South Pass route . . . anticipate that those who have gone that way will suffer greatly

from the want of grass, which, giving out, as it is bound to do, the mules, and especially oxen, will die by thousands, and the men cannot carry enough to support themselves, and that they would get no further than the mountains ere Winter, where they are bound to freeze to death.” (325)

Watts, John, “The Watts Hays Letters,” Accessed online October 30, 2012 at <http://www.wattshaysletters.com/letters/1-lettrs-49-jan61/letters1-3.html>.

Whipple, Lieut. A. W., in Grant Foreman, ed. *A Pathfinder in the Southwest, The Itinerary of Lieutenant A. W. Whipple during His Explorations for a Railway Route from Fort Smith to Los Angeles in the years 1853 & 1854*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941.

Lieutenant A. W. Whipple surveyed for a railway route from Fort Smith to Los Angeles in 1853 and 1854. One segment of his survey covered the territory in the vicinity of Anton Chico and Galisteo, New Mexico. Some emigrants bound for the California gold fields in 1849 crossed through this region, whether they came via the entire length of the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri or if they came from Fort Smith, Arkansas and encountered the Santa Fe Trail at San Miguel, New Mexico. Foreman reprints Whipple’s journal. The descriptions of Anton Chico, Galisteo, and Whipple’s approach to this territory aid particularly in understanding the “branch fork” route that many emigrants took to Galisteo from the Santa Fe Trail east of Santa Fe, avoiding the New Mexican capital completely. *Note: This work is not cited in the text of this study.*

#### California Gold Rush Guidebooks

The majority of emigrant guidebooks to the California mines in 1849 and the 1850s presented the Platte River Road as the only or best route to take. If they referred at all to the Santa Fe Trail or the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, they gave it cursory attention. For the Santa Fe Trail, this bias was perhaps due in part due to its familiarity – its route, the necessities for provisioning, camping grounds, travel times, possibilities of encounters with Native peoples, and

so forth, were well-known and of common knowledge in Independence and St. Joseph, Missouri, and at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. There seemed to be little need for or, also perhaps importantly, no market for a Santa Fe Trail guidebook.

Conversely, the Fort Smith Road was an unknown quantity, was being scouted by Capt. Randolph B. Marcy in 1849, and had been described by Josiah Gregg in his *Commerce of the Prairies*, published in 1844 and familiar to many who departed from Fort Smith.

Following are three 1849 guidebooks that give “equal time” to the Santa Fe Trail and the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road, and one other that is informative on provisioning, regardless of what trail is taken.

Disturnell, John. *The Emigrant's Guide to New Mexico, California, and Oregon, Giving the Different Overland and Sea Routes*. New York: John Disturnell, 1850. Accessed online August 28, 2012 at <http://archive.org/details/emigrantsguideto00dist>.

For the Santa Fe Trail, Disturnell provides a table of distances based on General Stephen Watts Kearny's route, taken from Lieut. W. H. Emory's reports. He also writes, “This route is said to afford a good wagon road the entire distance, although in some places there is a scarcity of wood and water. Immense herds of buffaloes are usually encountered, however, affording an abundant supply of fresh meat. Roving tribes of Indians are often met with, who sometimes rob and murder small parties of travelers, or strangers, who fall into their hands. It is therefore much the safest to proceed across the country in large parties, and then strict caution and vigilance is required to prevent horses and cattle from being stolen by Indians during the night, while the travelers are encamped on the open prairie.” (14) Of the Fort Smith Road, Disturnell notes, “This [trail] is usually called Long's or Gregg's route, and is highly spoken of by several officers of the

American army.” (8) He also prints several “testimonials” from those who had traveled this way.

Foster, Charles and Samuel St. John. *The Gold Placers of California, Soil, Climate, Resources, &c., of California and Oregon. Routes, Distances There, Outfit, Expenses, Etc.* Akron: H. Canfield, 1849.

Foster’s *The Gold Places of California . . . &c.*, is one of the more comprehensive guidebooks published in 1849, topping out at 106 pages. It is almost exclusively cobbled together from extant sources, quoting Thomas Larkin, President James K. Polk, communiqués from “Headquarters, Military Department, Monterey, California,” Senator Thomas Hart Benton’s speeches and writings, and others. It includes considerations of numerous routes to the gold fields, such as the Gila Trail, roads through Mexico, sailing around Cape Horn, crossing Panama, the Platte River Road, as well as the Santa Fe Trail. With respect to the latter, Foster relies completely on excerpts from Lieut. W. H. Emory’s *Notes of a Military Reconnoissance*.

Massey, S. L. *James’s Traveler’s Companion, being A Complete Guide through the Western States to the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific, via the Great Lakes, Rivers, Canals, Etc.* Cincinnati: J.A. & U.P. James, 1851. Accessed online January 16, 2012 at [http://ebooks.library.ualberta.ca/local/cihm\\_17864](http://ebooks.library.ualberta.ca/local/cihm_17864).

S. L. Massey’s *James’ Traveler’s Companion*, published in 1851, indicated that passenger stagecoach service had begun, linking Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe. David Waldo, a well-known Santa Fe Trail trader, had received a contract from the Post Office Department and inaugurated regular service in July 1850. Massey notes, “The mail generally goes through in about one month. The route has been gone over, however, in twenty days. The passenger fare from Independence to Santa Fe, is \$100.” (183) He also commented, with regard to the Santa Fe Trail, “The Missouri River trade has become a very important one, and the annual business between St. Louis and the towns on the

river, and with Santa Fe, through Independence, is increasing with amazing rapidity.”

(176)

Ware, Joseph E. *The Emigrant's Guide to California: Containing Every Point of Information for the Emigrant, including Routes, Distances, Water, Grass, Timber, Crossing of Rivers Passes Altitudes: with a Large Map of Routes, and Profile of Every Country, &c., with Full Directions for Testing and Assaying Gold and Other Ores.* St. Louis: J. Halsall, 1849.

Ware is cited in this study for his list of provisions emigrants should pack – it is one of the most comprehensive in any guidebook.

### Secondary Works

The following items contain significant amounts of information on emigrant travel along the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri to New Mexico or on that portion of the Santa Fe Trail in New Mexico encountered by emigrants traveling the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road. Many other books and articles touch on the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1849 California gold rush, but while they might comment on certain aspects, such as provisioning, or military expeditions at the time, or the impact of the emigrants on the economy of Missouri or New Mexico, they usually do so in one or two paragraphs. If this information is used in this study, it is cited in endnotes but the references are not annotated here.

*Note: Some of these “secondary” works reprint primary sources in part or in toto. The line between “secondary” and primary is thus blurred but understandable in this context.*

Barry, Louise. *The Beginning of the West, Annals of the Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854.* Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972.

Louise Barry's *The Beginning of the West* should be the initial resource for anyone interested in the people, places and events connected with travel on the Santa Fe

Trail during the “gold fever” years of 1849, 1850, and beyond. She covers the movements of military expeditions, Santa Fe trading outfits and emigrant trains with details on the condition of the trail, camping spots and landmarks, individual travelers, and characteristic or notable events, as well as activity in the Missouri and Kansas towns and military posts serving to protect or provision those headed west. The scope of her scholarship and breadth of the resources she consulted is astonishing.

*Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site.* Tucson: Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1998.

Bieber, Ralph P., ed. *Southern Trails to California in 1849.* Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1937.

The importance of Ralph Bieber’s *Southern Trails to California in 1849* cannot be overstated. Besides valuable background information on the impact of “gold fever” in Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas, he devotes chapters to the various southern routes including “Through Arkansas and along the Canadian,” “The Cherokee Trail,” and “The Santa Fé Trail,” reprinting emigrant diaries, journals and letters. For “The Santa Fé Trail,” he provides the “Letters and Journal of Augustus M. Heslep.” Heslep was a member of the Morgan County and California Rangers of Illinois, a group guided by James Kirker.

Brown, William E. *The Santa Fe Trail: National Park Service 1963 Historic Sites Survey.* St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1988.

Duffus, R. L. *The Santa Fe Trail.* New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1934.

Etter, Patricia A. *To California on the Southern Route, 1849 – A History and Annotated Bibliography.* Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1998.

As historian Elliott West remarks in his foreword to this book, “At least 20,000 persons rushed to California in 1849 by . . . a cluster of trails through the southwestern

deserts, routes that had been used for many generations by native peoples and for decades by fur trappers and traders.” Yet, as he points out, study of these routes has been neglected, attention being given almost exclusively to the northern Oregon and California trails. Etter, in this compendium, begins to shift that focus by compiling an annotated bibliography of accounts of travel on southern trails to California. She concentrates on the routes west from Texas and New Mexico, as well as routes across Mexico, but also includes two “feeder trails,” as she calls them, listing 32 accounts of travel on the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road and 20 accounts of travel along the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri. Her entries include both manuscripts housed at libraries around the United States as well as published accounts. Significantly, since 1998, when her book was published, a growing number of both the manuscript and published works she cites are digitized and available online.

Fletcher, Patricia, Jack Earl Fletcher and Lee Whiteley. *Cherokee Trail Diaries*. Sequim, WA: Fletcher Family Foundation, c. 2001.

The Cherokee Trail stretched from the region of Grand Saline, Oklahoma, to the California gold fields. Blazed in 1849, it was also used by emigrant companies in 1850. It intersected the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek, near present-day McPherson, Kansas. It followed the Santa Fe Trail to Bent’s Old Fort/La Junta, Colorado, then continued west to Pueblo, Colorado, where it turned north, eventually joining the Oregon-California Trail in Wyoming. This book-length study is central to an understanding of the Cherokee Trail – its background development, personalities, companies of gold seekers, and various routes. The involvement of individual Cherokee people and the Cherokee Nation is thoroughly considered. The book particularly traces

the experiences of several expeditions and specifically highlights their routes and camp grounds.

Foreman, Grant. *The Adventures of James Collier, First Collector of the Port of San Francisco*. Chicago: Black Cat Press, 1937. Accessed online August 28, 2012 at <http://content.lib.utah.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wwdl-neh/id/3816/rec/cdm/help>.

James Collier traveled west on the Santa Fe Trail in 1849 *en route* to take up his duties as the first Collector of the Port of San Francisco. He and his party traveled with a military escort from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Various California-bound emigrants and organized emigrant companies more-or-less unofficially joined Collier and his escort. Foreman reconstructs Collier's trip, quoting extensively from the letters of H. K. Hulburt, a member of Collier's group, as published in the *Ohio State Journal* during the fall of 1849. The party used the Cimarron Route. Collier engaged Kit Carson as his guide from New Mexico to California, but Carson ultimately withdrew from his contract. Of the trip along the Santa Fe Trail, one party member remarked, "The whole country between the Arkansas and Santa Fe would be dear as a gift." (22)

Foreman, Grant. *Marcy & the Gold Seekers, the Journal of Captain R. B. Marcy, with an Account of the Gold Rush over the Southern Route*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939.

Published in 1939, Grant Foreman's treatment of Randolph B. Marcy's 1849 military survey expedition from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Santa Fe and back remains the premier treatment of travel on this route. Besides including Marcy's *Journal*, Foreman meticulously considers the dozens of emigrant companies which headed west from Fort Smith. Most of these companies encountered the Santa Fe Trail in the vicinity of San Miguel, New Mexico, and followed it the short distance to Santa Fe, though some of

them by-passed Santa Fe and went to Galisteo, New Mexico, instead, and then chose a route to California. Their accounts present a picture of the western terminus of the Santa Fe Trail in 1849 and the early 1850s, with comments on the condition of the trail, the Indian and Mexican inhabitants of New Mexico, and their impressions – usually derogatory – of Santa Fe.

Franzwa, Gregory M. *Maps of the Santa Fe Trail*. St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1989.

Franzwa, Gregory M. *The Santa Fe Trail Revisited*. St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1989.

Gregg, Kate L. “Missourians In The Gold Rush.” *Missouri Historical Review* 39 (January 1945): 137-154.

This article by Kate Gregg, one of the early scholars of Santa Fe Trail history, is valuable for understanding the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1849 California gold rush for several reasons: it reviews basic background information on the response of Missourians and Missouri businessmen to the news of gold in California; it has many references to primary materials of note, especially in Missouri newspapers; it considers why many Missourians, when they chose a route west, naturally thought first of the Santa Fe Trail. It is one of the few secondary works which lists books available to emigrants concerning travel to California, such as Emory’s *Overland Journey* [Lieut. W. H. Emory, *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance*], and indicates where emigrants could buy them and how much they cost.

Hafen, LeRoy R. *The Overland Mail, 1849-1869, Promoter of Settlement, Precursor of Railroads*. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1926.

For the 1849 gold rush to California, Hafen’s chapter, “Pioneer Monthly Mails to the Intermountain Region, 1849-1858,” is instructive. It includes a section covering the Santa Fe Trail, “Independence to Santa Fé,” which notes, “The route ‘from

Independence, Missouri via Bent's Fort to Santa Fé' was created a post route by the act of March 3, 1847, and service was to be established as soon as it could be done from the postal revenues arising therefrom. In 1849, a Mr. Haywood carried the mail between Independence and Santa Fé. Emigrants and travelers usually joined with the mail carrier forming a party for protection. A regular monthly coach service was inaugurated July 1, 1850." (70) For a much more exhaustive and inclusive treatment of the topic of mail service to Santa Fe from 1849 on, see Morris F. Taylor, *First Mail West, Stagecoach Lines on the Santa Fe Trail*, annotated in this bibliography. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Hardeman, Nicholas P., ed. "Camp Sites on the Santa Fe Trail in 1848 as Reported by John A. Bingham," *Arizona and the West* 6 (Winter 1964): 313-319.

John Bingham, of St. Louis, traveled to California in 1848 via the Santa Fe Trail and El Paso. This article is brief but it does reprint excerpts from a letter written by Bingham to his friend Glen O. Hardeman, of Arrow Rock, Missouri, dated July 12, 1849. He lists campsites and distances from Independence to Santa Fe and appends a few comments about what to expect on the journey. Interestingly, the author/editor of the article indicates that Glen Hardeman wrote a memoir in 1902 and that it contains further information on his trip in 1849. The whereabouts of this memoir is unclear: at the time of the publication of the article the memoir was in author/editor's possession, but an Internet search indicates that there is now a Hardeman archive at the Missouri Historical Society. The memoir evidently indicates that Glen Hardeman, in 1849, reached El Paso but gave up on his plans for California and instead "traveled with pack mules through Chihuahua, doubled back to the Rio Grande, and followed it to the Gulf of Mexico. From this point

Hardeman journeyed by steamboat across the Gulf and up the Mississippi River to his home at Arrow Rock.” (316.) *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Jackson, Donald Dale. *Gold Dust*. Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 2004.

Johnson, William Weber and the Editors of Time Life Books. *The Forty-Niners*. New York: Time Life Books, 1974.

Lavender, David. *Bent's Fort*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954, 1972.

Mattes, Merrill J. *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline Via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987. First published by the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969.

McArthur, Priscilla. *Arkansas in the Gold Rush*. Little Rock: August House, 1986.

Along with Grant Foreman's *Marcy and the Gold Seekers*, McArthur's in-depth consideration of the emigration to California from Arkansas provides essential information on this topic. Although there is no particular focus on the Santa Fe Trail *per se*, McArthur's chapters on "Seeing the Elephant: Along the Arkansas Route to Santa Fe," "Santa Fe and the Elephants Beyond," "The Cherokee Trail: Arkansas Along the Northern Route," and "The 1850 Exodus" cite interesting primary materials relating to the Santa Fe Trail.

McGaw, William Cochran. *Savage Scene, The Life and Times of James Kirker, Frontier King*. New York: Hastings House, 1972.

James Kirker contracted to guide several affiliated companies of gold seekers – including the Morgan County and California Rangers, and the Peoria Pioneers – to California in 1849. The parties left Independence on May 15<sup>th</sup>, took the Santa Fe Trail's Mountain Route, via Pueblo, Colorado and then Raton Pass, and reached the vicinity of Santa Fe on August 7<sup>th</sup>. There, Kirker quit as guide. McGaw, in this general overview, relies on two contemporary accounts of members of the Peoria Pioneers, Charles

Pancoast's *A Quaker Forty-Niner* and letters written by Dr. Augustus M. Heslep, published in the *Daily Missouri Republican* during the spring and summer of 1849 and reprinted by Ralph Bieber in his *Southern Trails to California in 1849*.

Oakley, Francile B. "Arkansas' Golden Army of '49." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 6 (Spring 1947): 1-85.

This lengthy article [published from Oakley's master's thesis] provides almost no direct information on the experiences of Arkansas emigrants along the Santa Fe Trail, whether they followed the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road or the Cherokee Trail. It is useful in that it provides a framework for the Arkansas migration and can fill in gaps for those seeking material on the companies or persons who departed for the gold fields from Arkansas.

Quaife, Milo Milton, ed. *Kit Carson's Autobiography*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

Rittenhouse, Jack D. *The Santa Fe Trail: A Historical Bibliography*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971.

*Santa Fe National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management and Use Plan*. N.p.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1990.

*Santa Fe National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management and Use Plan, Map Supplement*. N.p.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1990.

Simmons, Marc and Hal Jackson. *Following the Santa Fe Trail: A Guide for Modern Travelers*. Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 2001.

Smith, Ralph Adam. *Borderlander, the Life of James Kirker, 1793-1852*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.

This account of the life of James Kirker is more recently published than that of William McGaw [see entry above]. Smith's treatment is both more scholarly and more detailed than McGaw's. Kirker initially contracted to lead several companies of 1849 gold seekers to California from Missouri - the Morgan County and California Rangers,

and the Peoria Pioneers. Smith thoroughly considers Kirker's trek with these companies along the Santa Fe Trail, via the Mountain Route to Pueblo, Colorado, and over Raton Pass. Kirker quit as the companies' guide upon reaching Santa Fe. Smith, as with McGaw, relies on two contemporary accounts of men in Kirker's party, Charles Pancoast's *A Quaker Forty-Niner* and Joseph Heslep's letters to the *Daily Missouri Republican*, published periodically from May 1849 forward and reprinted by Ralph Bieber in his *Southern Trails to California in 1849*.

Stocking, Hobart E. *The Road to Santa Fe*. New York: Hastings House, 1971.

Vestal, Stanley. *The Old Santa Fe Trail*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939.

Weber, David J. *Richard H. Kern: Expeditionary Artist in the Far Southwest, 1848-1853*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press for the Amon Carter Museum, 1985.

In this account of the career of the artist Richard H. Kern, Weber covers Kern's service with Frémont's ill-fated western expedition of 1848. On that expedition Frémont traveled from Westport, Missouri, via the Kansas and Smoky Hill rivers, then south from Hays, Kansas to the Arkansas River, intersecting the Santa Fe Trail near the Arkansas Crossing. From there the expedition followed the Arkansas to Pueblo, Colorado and thence into the Rocky Mountains. Weber provides a context for Kern's diary of this trip and for the expedition and Frémont's career in general. California-bound gold seekers would follow in Frémont's footsteps along the Santa Fe Trail the next year. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

West, Elliott. *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998.

Wheat, Carl I. *Mapping the Transmississippi West, 1540-1861*. San Francisco: Institute of Historical Cartography, 1957-1963. Volume 3: *From the Mexican War to the Boundary Surveys, 1846-1854*. [1959]

This six-volume comprehensive study of hundreds of maps of the American West is one of the central references for understanding any given development or event falling within its time frame. Volume Three includes maps relevant to the role of the Santa Fe Trail during the California gold rush period. Most pertinent is Chapter XXIV, “Gold and the Torrent, 1849,” although prior and succeeding chapters also can be consulted with reward: Chapter XXIII “The Maps of 1848,” Chapter XXV “Maps of Personal Experience, 1849,” Chapter XXVI “Maps of Personal Experience, 1850-1851-1852,” and Chapter XXVII “Commercial Map Making, 1850-1851-1852.” In his chapter on the gold rush, Wheat provides an overview and chronology of maps published in 1849, and then assesses nearly 60 maps from that year. For example, he says of the maps of J. Disturnell, “Disturnell, though he continued to use his ‘Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico’ from time to time (two editions appeared in 1849), reproduced the western half in 1849 as a ‘Map of California, New Mexico and Adjacent Counties Showing the Gold Regions &c.’ This latter map, on which many new names appeared, and many others were Anglicized, was published separately, and was used to illustrate the second edition of Disturnell’s *Emigrant’s Guide to New Mexico, California and Oregon. . . .*” (77) Of Pelham Richardson’s map in his *Emigrant’s Guide to California*, published in London, Wheat wryly notes, “Imaginary geography had another chance in the ‘Map of California and the Country east from the Pacific’ which illustrated an *Emigrant’s Guide to California. . . .*” (78)

## PART TWO: HO! FOR COLORADO!

### THE SANTA FE TRAIL AND THE GOLD RUSH OF 1859

#### FOREWORD

Rumors of gold in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado surfaced in 1849 and on into the 1850s, circulated by California-bound gold seekers who had briefly panned in streams around contemporary Denver on their way to the California mines. Then, in 1858, two organized groups, known as the William Green Russell and Lawrence parties, followed the Santa Fe Trail west, jumped off from it in southwestern Colorado and went north, where they soon found nuggets and gold dust on Cherry Creek. Later that year, members of these companies carried news of their finds to towns and settlements in eastern Kansas and Missouri, and by early spring of 1859 the rush – “Pike’s Peak or Bust” – was on. In the next few years more than 100,000 emigrants would stream across the plains of Kansas and Nebraska, pinning their hopes on striking it rich in Colorado.

Three routes led to the Colorado gold fields. Emigrants could congregate in towns such as Omaha, Nebraska, or Council Bluffs, Iowa, and then take the Great Platte River Road, which tracked the Platte River to its junction with the South Platte. From there they journeyed along the South Platte into Colorado and the fledgling community of Denver, which became the gateway to the Colorado diggings. The Smoky Hill Trail was a second option. It had various branches, but essentially ran along the Kansas River west to its intersection with the Smoky Hill River. That stream led to the high plains of Colorado but, having its origins on the plains, ended nearly 100 miles east of Denver, leaving a waterless stretch for emigrants to cross. The third route was the old Santa Fe Trail, which emigrants could follow, using the Mountain Route along

the Arkansas River, to the site of Bent's Old Fort, near present-day La Junta, Colorado. They then went up the Arkansas to the area of contemporary Pueblo, Colorado, turned north, most often along Fountain Creek, and made their way to Cherry Creek and Denver.

Of these three routes, the Platte River Road was the most popular and favored.

Emigrants could easily reach its eastern terminuses via river steamboats up the Missouri River. It had been well traveled by hundreds of thousands of Oregon and California-bound pioneers and gold seekers since the early 1840s. Also, William N. Byers, influential editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*, which began publication in Denver on April 23, 1859, promoted the Platte River Road over any other route. Byers, significantly, had been an influential businessman and landowner in Omaha, Nebraska, before relocating to Denver. The Smoky Hill Trail was the least preferred choice, primarily because of its waterless western reaches. Some emigrants took it as far west as Fort Hays, Kansas, and then dropped south to the Santa Fe Trail. Ironically, the Kansas Pacific Railroad, which was completed from Kansas City to Denver in 1870, basically followed the Smoky Hill Trail.

The Santa Fe Trail would seem to have been a natural choice for getting to the Colorado mines. As many a trader, occasional traveler, and emigrant on the trail remarked, it was well-beaten and marked, offered abundant grass and water for man and beast, could be traveled earlier in the spring than more northerly routes, and its perils and pleasures had been known since the 1820s. However, it was perceived as the longest of the routes because it required going up the Arkansas River to Pueblo, Colorado – which was over 100 miles south of Denver and the mines. Additionally, while he sometimes commented favorably about the Santa Fe Trail, William N. Byers in his *Rocky Mountain News*, frequently commented on the length of the Santa Fe Trail compared to the Platte River Road and also highlighted the dangers of Indian depredations on

that route, at least as he perceived them. Nonetheless, many emigrants did choose the Santa Fe Trail – the available evidence does not support even an estimate of the numbers – and the trail did serve as a freighting and stagecoach highway to Colorado, especially in the early 1860s when mines opened south and west of Denver, into central and southwestern Colorado. These regions were serviced via the trail to commercial centers such as Pueblo and Cañon City. This study will particularly note the importance of the freight traffic into Colorado along the old trail, but it turns here to further consideration of William N. Byers and his promotion of the Platte River Road over the use of the Santa Fe Trail.

*The Gold Rush, the Santa Fe Trail, and the Rocky Mountain News*

The editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*, William N. Byers, issued something of an apology to his readers, and one of his most consistent advertisers, in the issue of September 29, 1859, explaining, “J. B. Doyle & Co. – We failed to notice the arrival of a train freighted for this house last week. After discharging it left immediately for [New] Mexico.” J. B. Doyle was Joseph Bainbridge Doyle, one of the leading Santa Fe Trail freighters of the day, as well as Alexander Barclay’s partner in the trading enterprise “Barclay’s Fort” at Watrous, New Mexico, owner of several mercantile houses in New Mexico and Colorado, and an extensive landowner and agriculturalist in the Huerfano River valley of southern Colorado. As Janet Lecompte attests in her study of this era, *Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn*, “In 1864 Doyle was the richest man in Colorado Territory and one of the most politically important.” (Lecompte 258)

Advertisements touting the array of goods available at Doyle’s mercantile house in Denver appeared frequently in the *Weekly Rocky Mountain News*. That of December 1, 1859 read in part, “J. B. Doyle & Co., Have just received from their house in La Junta, New Mexico

[Watrous] a supply of SUPERFINE FLOUR, ALBUQUERQUE ONIONS . . . Mexican and American Blankets, Dry Goods, Fine Shirts, Leather, Tinware, and many other articles too numerous to mention.” By the next summer, Doyle was consolidating his business in Denver. As Editor Byers reported on July 4, 1860, “J. B. Doyle & Co. are putting up a fire proof store house on the corner of Ferry and 5<sup>th</sup> streets. 41 by 70 feet to be three stories high and finished in superb style. The sales rooms on the first, second and third floors will be the full size of the building.”

Other Santa Fe Trail traders also saw opportunities in hauling freight over the trail from Independence or Westport, Missouri, and Leavenworth, Kansas, to supply the new mines and miners in Colorado. For example, Auguste Pike Vasquez, a renowned mountain man and a member of a prominent Missouri trading family, brought one of his trains up the Arkansas River in October 1859 with goods to sell at his store in Denver. His advertisement in the *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* for December 1, 1859, read: “Just Arrived for A. P. VASQUEZ & CO their Winter Supply of goods, consisting, in part, of Nails . . . , Window Glass and Glass Dishes, a large assortment of Queensware (no longer any necessity of eating out of tin,) . . . Groceries, Candles, Champaign & Catawba Wines, (in lieu of strychnine whiskey;) Dried and Preserved Fruits, Pickles, Sugar & Fresh Flour.” Andreas Dold, who directed his mercantile empire from headquarters on the plaza in Las Vegas, New Mexico, opened a store in Denver and informed his customers via the *News* on October 2, 1860, “We have just received and opened Thirty Wagon Loads of Goods, including every article of Provisions, Groceries, Hardware . . . and everything that can be desired in this market. . . .”

This freighting activity represents one aspect of the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the rush for Colorado gold. From 1859 until 1870 the trail served as one of the supply routes for Denver

and its regional mines and then, on into the 1860s, for the mines of south central Colorado via Pueblo and Cañon City. During this era the trail also, of course, was a route to the mines for gold rush emigrants, as numerous guidebooks, journals, diaries, letters, memoirs and newspaper articles attest. This study will consider various facets of both of these developments as well as providing a general overview of the state of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1850s and on into the 1860s, thus setting the scene for the Colorado gold rush. But first, there is no better way to get a flavor of the gold rush itself and the role of the Santa Fe Trail than by continuing to peruse the columns of the *Rocky Mountain News*.

William N. Byers published the first issue of the *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* on April 23, 1859, having arrived in Denver just a week before. He came from Omaha, where he had been prominent in civic and business affairs. Born in 1831, he had worked as a land surveyor and, significantly, took the Oregon Trail to the Pacific Coast in 1852 and spent time in the California gold fields. Once established in Denver, he would promote the Platte River Road as the premier route to Colorado from the east, questioning the role of the Santa Fe Trail and disparaging at every opportunity the use of the Smoky Hill Trail. His coverage of the Santa Fe Trail included comparing it with other routes, commenting on its positive and negative aspects, stressing the Mountain Route as a connection for procuring supplies and provisions from New Mexico, and acknowledging the trail as the gateway up the Arkansas River Valley to the mines of south central and southwestern Colorado. Each of these developments is an important aspect in understanding the use and contributions of the Santa Fe Trail in the “Rush to the Rockies.”

Comparing the Santa Fe Trail with the Platte River Road and the Smoky Hill Trail

Byers featured a “Map of the Gold Regions with the Routes Thereto” in the very first issue of the *News*, on April 23, 1859. It showed the Platte River Road in detail. The Santa Fe Trail was not named as such, but the route on the map said simply, “To Santa Fe.” It located Fort Atkinson and “BENTS FT” and indicated routes from the Santa Fe Trail via the “Sandy Fork” [Big Sandy Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas River leading into El Paso County south of Denver] and the Cherokee Trail north from Pueblo, though it was not named as such on the map. Two weeks later, on May 7<sup>th</sup>, Byers reprinted the map with a “Table of Distances,” although the latter denoted only the Platte River Road. These issues also had a plethora of advertisements for supply and outfitting businesses in Council Bluffs and Omaha, connected with the Platte River Road, but none for establishments in Kansas City, Westport, Independence or Leavenworth, connected with the Santa Fe Trail. Commentators would later remark that the merchants in these southerly towns were tardy in recognizing the importance of the development of the Colorado mines and Denver because they were too tied to their traditional markets in Santa Fe and old Mexico.

On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, Byers devoted a full column to the subject of the “Road from the States to the Mines.” In it he stressed the major point he would echo over again and again – that the Platte River Road was the shortest route for emigrants coming through from the Midwest or taking steamboats up to departure points such as Nebraska City, Omaha and Council Bluffs. He used strong language: “We have heard very many complaints from parties who have arrived from Northern Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, &c., at being deluded as to the southern routes, by the Arkansas river. . . . If not in the road, they have been sadly deceived in the distance, having traveled from two to four hundred miles farther than necessary.” Over a year later he was still emphasizing the shorter distance along the Platte, though he was willing to concede some

superior attributes to the Santa Fe Trail. Writing on October 26, 1860 [in the *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, which began publication on August 27, 1860 – publication of the *Weekly News* also continued] in a column headed, “Roads to the River” [Missouri River], he asserted, “The Arkansas is without doubt the finest natural road leading to this region, as it has few hills, and none of them of any magnitude, and is comparatively free from sand. It is however much longer than either of the other routes [he included the Smoky Hill Trail] from the river to Pike’s Peak, and this fact is quite an important one to all persons, whether coming or going, and to whom travel on the plains is not productive of rapturous enthusiasm in its favor. There is, too, upwards of a hundred miles [on the Santa Fe Trail], where there is not a human habitation. . . . To sum up, then, the Platte is the best known, and most sandy, the Arkansas is the longest, but the firmest. . . . ‘Choose for yourselves which ye will follow.’”

#### News from the Santa Fe Trail – Sometimes Positive, Sometimes Not

Readers of the *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* regularly got reports of Indian activity along the Santa Fe Trail which, while timely, contributed to negative impressions of that route. [These dispatches in 1859 and 1860 are also of interest as early indicators of Coloradans’ “state of mind” in the years just prior to the Sand Creek Massacre.] A headline in the September 10, 1859 *News* was typical: “Startling News from the Border. 5,000 Kaw, Osage, and Comanche Indians threatening the Frontier – A Battle Fought – One hundred Indians and five whites reported killed – Chelsea, K. T., surrounded by the Indians, &c., &c.” The text of the article reports, regarding the tribes, “They have lately removed from the Little Arkansas, where they have been collecting for some time back, for the purpose, it seems, of driving back the settlers from the frontier.” The next month, on October 27<sup>th</sup>, there was even more disquieting news: “Santa Fee Mail Robbed – the outward bound mail, which left Independence for Santa Fee on

the 19<sup>th</sup> ultimo. was robbed by the Indians, and all the party were killed save one. The inward mail is now due over three days, and fears are entertained that it has shared the same fate. Judge Watts and family, and Senor Otero, delegate elect to Congress from New Mexico are passengers by the mail . . . and much anxiety is entertained in regard to their safety.” In the event, this mail stage did reach Independence. The *News* also closely followed treaty negotiations with the Plains peoples, the establishment of Fort Wise in 1860 [renamed Fort Lyon in 1862 – near present-day Las Animas, Colorado], and did report encouraging developments, as on November 28, 1860, “We learn there are no Indians at Bent’s Fort and no trouble in that region from any tribes. It is expected that they will not be troublesome during the winter.”

On the positive side, Editor Byers occasionally mentioned the arrival of emigrants and trains over the Santa Fe Trail, though there is the impression that this was a secondary consideration for him; consequently today researchers should not rely solely on the *News* as a source for fulsome information on the use of the Santa Fe Trail. An item for February 15, 1860 thus was unusual: “From Kansas City a large party of men, with five mule teams laden with assorted articles of goods for this market set out on the 27<sup>th</sup> ult. They come by the Arkansas river route. From St. Joseph, a similar expedition started about the same time, led by John H. Gregory. Mr. Gregory is bringing a quartz mill. Some of the wagons in his train are loaded with butter and lard.” And after many months with no mention of freight over the Santa Fe Trail, there is a notice on October 24, 1860, “Arrival by the Arkansas Route – Mr. Lobb’s train of twenty-seven wagons, from Kansas city, via Arkansas route, and laden with flour, bacon, sugar, coffee, &c., arrived in town this morning, and is now discharging at the brick building of Miller, Russell & Co. in west Denver.” (All items referenced above from the *Weekly Rocky Mountain News*)

## Links with New Mexico

One aspect of the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the Colorado gold rush that should not be overlooked is the use of the Mountain Route from Trinidad, Colorado, south into New Mexico and on to Santa Fe. This part of the trail was connected to roads north from Raton Pass to Pueblo and then up the Cherokee Trail to Denver. It was used mostly to transport provisions such as flour, onions, potatoes and other agricultural products of New Mexico for sale in Denver and at the mines. Nearly every issue of the *News* carried a “Market Report” which included the price of “Mexican flour,” and the various merchants with New Mexico connections, such as J. B. Doyle, A. P. Vasquez and Andreas Dold, would advertise when they had received fresh provisions in from the south. On the other hand, this route also served travelers. The *News* reported lightheartedly, on October 24, 1860, “Going Into Winter Quarters . . . . New Mexico is a ‘land of milk and honey’ that is longed for by those who have delved in crevice and canon during the summer. . . . A great many have left and are daily leaving . . . designing to spend the winter in its warm climate, feasting on tortillas, frijoles, chile Colorado, and the inevitable mutton; - satisfying bibulous desires by copious draughts of El Paso wine, ‘Taos lightning,’ and other stimulants, . . . tripping the light fantastic toe at the eternal ‘fandango,’ and basking through the days, and sometimes by night, in the sunny smiles of dark-eyed señoritas. These will have a happy winter.” On January 11, 1860, the *News* carried a “Table of Distances from Denver . . . to Santa Fe,” mentioning features such as “Picket-wire [Creek] – Raton Mts. – Cimerone – Riaddo (Maxwell’s Ranch) [Rayado] – Okita [Ocate] Creek – and “Ft. Union, A U. S. Station, No place for camping.” (All items referenced above from the *Weekly Rocky Mountain News*)

## Opening the Southern Mines

From 1860 on, prospectors fanned out across southern Colorado and into New Mexico and Arizona seeking further riches. Much of the traffic to these mines, especially in south-central Colorado, came up the Arkansas River into South Park, an open grassland region of over 1,000 square miles along the South Platte River some 60 miles southwest of Denver. Pueblo and, especially, Cañon City, benefitted from this emigration and the trade which followed. The Santa Fe Trail was an obvious and natural route to these mining districts and hence remained important in the Colorado gold rush until the Civil War all but brought a halt to this activity.

An article in the August 27, 1859 issue of the *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* profiled the new southern mines. It described the opening of mining in South Park and indicated how to get there from Auraria via Fountain Creek to Colorado City [today, part of Colorado Springs], and then through Ute Pass. By March 28, 1860 Editor Byers was writing, “Considerable attention is now being directed to Canon City, at the South-west foot of Pike’s Peak, on the Arkansas River. It is . . . on the nearest and most advantageous route for all the New Mexico and Arkansas river travel to the South park and the various mines on and near the tributaries of the Arkansas.” Later that spring, the *News* reported, dealing with that season’s emigration, “The arrivals by the Arkansas valley are . . . said to be in very great numbers, but few of them come by here [Platte River Road to Denver], most going direct to the South Park, Blue river and Arkansas mines, by way of the Canon City and Colorado City roads.” Byers seemed to be conceding that, for access to the southern mines, the Santa Fe Trail was the preferable route. In the *Daily Rocky Mountain News* of November 28, 1860, he quoted two items from the *Canon City Times*: “The position of Canon City is doing and will do much towards the furtherance of its prosperity. Situated at the terminus of the Arkansas – a route that can be traveled six weeks earlier than any other – is, without doubt, the finest natural road leading to the mountains, has few hills, comparatively free

from sand, and water plenty the whole way.” And as further evidence of this claim:

“[Alexander] Majors train of twenty-six wagons, and Curtis & Stevens train of nineteen, arrived this week, heavily loaded with groceries and provisions. There are several other trains within a week’s travel of this place. . . . We had the pleasure of a visit from A. Majors this week. He sojourned with us a day or two, and expressed himself highly satisfied with the present progress and future prosperity of our city. To quote his own words, ‘we have the situation.’ The opinion of this gentleman is founded on no myth, but arrived at by experience and sound reasoning. . . . His dictum we hail almost with prophetic assurance.”

Traffic on the Santa Fe Trail to Cañon City continued into 1861. The *Times* noted on March 23<sup>rd</sup> [reprinted in the *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* for March 28<sup>th</sup>], “Last week two teams arrived from the states up the Arkansas. They were from Missouri and destined for the mines. This is early in the season.” On May 13<sup>th</sup>, again from the *Times*, the *News* relayed, “Brise & Keene’s train of emigrants, with seven wagons and thirty-five men, arrived Tuesday, from Putnam County, Mo., only twenty days from Leavenworth city. They report having passed a large number of emigrants on the Arkansas route, bound for the southern mines.”

As a final example of the role of the Santa Fe Trail as exemplified in the *Rocky Mountain News*, there is one further item from the spring 1861 freighting and emigration, lifted from the *Canon City Times*, “Orville Thompson’s train of six wagons, from Council Grove, arrived on Tuesday. It is freighted with provisions for the mines. Mr. Thompson reports a large emigration within four or five days’ travel of this place. He speaks in highest terms of the Arkansas route, and says that its excellence only need be known to invite the bulk of Pike’s Peak travel.” [*Daily News*, May 24, 1861]

*Changes along the Trail in the 1850s – Prelude to the “Rush to Colorado”*

Significant developments along the Santa Fe Trail in the decade of the 1850s and on into the 1860s profoundly affected the use of the trail by gold rush emigrants to the Colorado mines when the “Rush to the Rockies” began in 1858. These developments included a dramatic expansion of freighting when compared to business on the trail before 1850, advancing settlement in Kansas which “shortened” the prairie experience and challenges of the trail, and ominous changes in relations with the Plains peoples, resulting in military campaigns and clashes.

Between 1846 and 1859, the value of goods carried from Missouri to New Mexico increased ten-fold, from approximately \$1 million a year to \$10 million. By 1862, it had risen to \$40 million per annum. Nearly 1,900 wagons carried freight “down the trail” in 1858, a number that grew to 3,000 by 1862 and 5,000 or more wagons in 1866. Military freight accounted for much of this increase. The Ninth Military Department, headquartered in Santa Fe and encompassing New Mexico and Arizona, had seven essentially permanent posts in 1849 quartering about 1,000 troops; by 1859 these numbers had increased to 16 posts and 2,000 troops. That great entrepreneur of western transport, Alexander Majors, provides an example of the change in commercial traffic during the 1850s. As he noted in his memoir *Seventy Years on the Frontier*, “During the year 1854 I also went upon the plains as a freighter, changing my business from freighting for merchants in New Mexico to carrying United States Government freights. At this time I added to my transportation, making 100 wagons and teams for that year, divided into four trains.” Majors and his partner, William Russell, that season had a contract to carry army supplies from Fort Leavenworth which required a surety bond of \$75,000. (Wyman 415-428; Barry *Beginning* 1206; Majors 140)

Hispanic merchants, mostly from New Mexico, continued their prominent role in the Santa Fe Trail during the 1850s. They had captured a substantial portion of the freighting business on the trail by the mid-1830s. As Susan Calafate Boyle mentions in her study *Los Capitalistas – Hispano Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade*, “Out of the 956 wagons hauling freight from Council Grove to Santa Fe in 1859, more than half (526) belonged to Hispanos.” Discussing the business career of Felipe Chávez, she notes, “Massive purchases were the norm. An 1859 invoice listed eighty thousand yards of indiana, manta, and lienzo [fabric types], 1,092 pairs of boots, 540 pairs of shoes, and 585 pairs of pants. Another one from March 1860 included thirty-six pages of items . . . all valued at \$36,237.77.” (Boyle 58, 75)

The ease of travel on the trail in the 1850s continued to excite positive comment and admiration as it had in previous decades. A couple of entries from the diary of John Udell, who emigrated to California along the trail in 1858, are typical: “May 29 [along the Cimarron River in the Oklahoma Panhandle] – We traveled eighteen miles, and camped on the same creek. It sinks in places, and rises and runs in other places. But water can be found by digging in all places. . . . Road good, and abundance of grass all the way; but no wood yet.” And on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, just east of McNee’s Crossing in northeastern New Mexico: “This day the road was like a Macadamized road all the way; grass plenty; soil sandy; some rocks. . . . Travel today, 15 miles, and 527 miles from Missouri River.” James Mead, who published a memoir in the *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society* [1885-1896], recalled that when he settled in central Kansas in 1859: “At Burlingame the writer first saw the great Santa Fe trail, connecting people of diverse race and language, separated by hundreds of miles of savage wilderness. This huge trail, 60 to 100 feet wide, was worn smooth and solid by constant travel of ponderous wagons carrying 8,000 to 10,000 pounds each. Sometimes three wagons trailed together; from 10 to 30

constituting a wagon train; drawn by 8, 16, or 20 oxen or mules each; coming in from New Mexico loaded with wool, hides, robes, or silver, returning with almost everything used by man, woman, or child.” (Udell, 11, 12; Mead “Trails” 91)

Given these observations and statistics, obviously emigrants to the Colorado mines were not alone on the Santa Fe Trail. The journey was far less daunting than it had been for those headed for California in 1849, just a mere ten years before.

Another significant change in the trail, besides the increase in traffic, was the rapid westward movement of settlement in Kansas in the 1850s. Until the early 1850s Council Grove had been the last outpost of “civilization” and supply for trail travelers, but by 1859 new settlements and trading posts had sprung up for more than 100 miles west of “the Grove.” And looking back east, between there and the Missouri River, settlers had established towns and farms which provisioned emigrants and made the trek to Colorado seem shorter.

In 1860, on the eve of statehood, Kansas Territory – which extended to the Rocky Mountains – had a population of 107,206 according to the federal census. The great majority of these people lived in the eastern third of what is now the state of Kansas. Forty-one counties had been organized in that eastern third, including seven through which the Santa Fe Trail passed: Johnson, Douglas, Osage, Wabaunsee, Breckenridge [Lyon], Morris and Marion. Roughly this meant that county organization by 1860 in Kansas extended as far west as the old Cottonwood Crossing of the Santa Fe Trail in western Marion County. The public land surveys were plotted perhaps another 50 miles west along the trail. Federal land offices in Kansas had opened in Lecompton in 1854, Kickapoo [Leavenworth] in 1857, Junction City in 1859, and in 1861 in Topeka, among other sites. (Socolofsky 27; Map Showing the Progress of the Public Surveys in

the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska To accompany Annual Report of the Surveyor General 1860)

Two fledgling communities, both east of Council Grove, can serve as examples of the “towns” that emigrants and traders on the Santa Fe Trail encountered in the late 1850s. James Mead, who attempted farming near Burlingame on the banks of Switzler Creek in 1859, recalled in later years how he had sat on the porch of a friend in Burlingame “beside the great Santa Fe Trail watching the wagon trains drag their slow lengths along with a rattling fire of popping whips mingled with strange oaths in mixed Mexican and frontier jargon.” Thomas Burns in his reminiscence “The Town of Wilmington and the Santa Fe Trail,” remembered, “The village or station of Wilmington in 1859 consisted of one two-story house of some half a dozen rooms (used as a hotel), a blacksmith shop, a wagon maker’s shop and several dwelling houses, all built of concrete.” [Wilmington was and is in the southeastern corner of Wabaunsee County.] In the 1860 U. S. Census, Council Grove boasted a population of 385. (Mead “Saline” 9; Burns 598)

Farther west during the 1850s a string of singular settlements sprang up along the Santa Fe Trail, some just simple log or sod huts, others more substantial with rudimentary stockades for protection. Emigrants, travelers and traders on the trail might be able to purchase some goods or perhaps fresh meat at these places. They also welcomed them as signs of “civilization,” camping grounds or even refuges from Indian depredations or inclement weather. Santa Fe Trail historian David Clapsaddle has chronicled the rise of some of these outposts, describing them as a “frail, thin line.” Beginning on Six Mile Creek in present Morris County and westward, the trading establishments were called ranches.” Kansas historian Louise Barry in her article, “The Ranch at Walnut Creek Crossing” [located just east of present-day Great Bend, Kansas], observed, “Some gold-seekers westbound in May 1859 mentioned the ranch, but not its

occupants, in their diaries. A. E. Raymond, who crossed Walnut Creek on May 5<sup>th</sup> noted: ‘Here is a Mail Station, Store, Tavern, Corn & Hay, etc.’ William W. Salisbury reached Walnut Creek Crossing on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Of the ranch he wrote: ‘it is a small trading post one house plenty timber and water The Kioway Indians are here there [are] a great many at our camp at noon.’” (Clapsaddle “Frail Thin Line” 22; For a complete list of Dr. Clapsaddle’s articles see the annotated bibliography below; Barry “Ranch” 129)

In the next two decades, these frontier enterprises would be overwhelmed by the westward tide of settlement and the coming of the railroads, but during the Colorado gold rush they answered, as indicated, various needs. In 1866 the Union Pacific Eastern Division – the Kansas Pacific after 1869 – reached Junction City. It was completed through to Denver in 1870. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway built to the Kansas-Colorado border by 1873; Pueblo, Colorado, by 1876; Las Vegas, New Mexico, by 1879. A branch line reached Santa Fe in 1880.

The changing relationship between the Plains Indian peoples, traders and travelers along the Santa Fe Trail, and the involvement of the U. S. Army, was another development which would impact emigrants and freighters trekking to Colorado from 1858 on. Compared to the violent clashes of the 1860s, however, the decade of the 1850s for the most part was quiet from Missouri to New Mexico. As Elliott West points out in his penetrating study of this era, *Contested Plains – Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado*, from 1854 to 1859 there was “no military installation along the Santa Fe road [i.e. – along the Arkansas corridor] .” Fort Leavenworth, in far northeastern Kansas, dated from 1827. Fort Riley, north of the trail on the confluence of the Smoky Hill and Republican rivers, was established in 1853. The U. S. Army did place Fort Atkinson on the trail in 1850, on the Arkansas River near where various “crossings” led to the Cimarron Route, but it was abandoned in 1853. (West 273)

This situation began to change rapidly in 1859. That summer Companies F, H, and K, of the First Cavalry, left Fort Riley on June 10<sup>th</sup>, headed for the Arkansas River. As Captain Lambert Wolf of Company K noted in the diary he kept, “Our summer’s work is to guard emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail.” He and his men had various minor altercations with the Kiowa and returned to Fort Riley for the winter on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Companies F, H, K, and G returned to patrol the trail in 1860, ranging as far west as the ruins of Bent’s Old Fort, north to the Smoky Hill River, then back to the Arkansas. (Wolf - see Root 199)

Emigrants relying solely on Colorado gold rush guidebooks might have expected much more trouble with the Plains peoples than they – or Captain Wolf – ultimately encountered. Obridge Allen in his *Allen’s Guide Book and Map to the Gold Fields of Kansas & Nebraska* [1859] warned, “The country between Pawnee Fork and Bent’s new Fort, is infested by roving bands of Comanche, Cheyenne, Kioway and Pawnee Indians, whose hostile and thievish propensities greatly annoy emigrants.” Samuel Drake’s *Hints and Information for the Use of Emigrants to Pike’s Peak* [1859] advised, “The Arkansas or Santa Fé route, is *notoriously unsafe* for travelers. Its entire length is subject to hostile incursions from the most formidable and warlike tribes on the continent, and during the fall and winter passed, the Indians have been in undisputed possession of the route. *The mails have been plundered and the passengers massacred in cold blood. . . .*” Drake was promoting the route west from Leavenworth to Denver via the Platte River Road and so took every opportunity to disparage travel by the Santa Fe Trail. (Allen 7; Drake 447)

Between 1859 and 1865, as Elliott West again emphasizes, the U. S. Army blanketed the plains with new posts – “fifteen forts appeared where only four had been earlier.” Some of these had only a brief existence, including several along the Santa Fe Trail, but three permanent

garrisons came to dominate the route to Colorado – Fort Larned, established in 1859; Fort Wise, founded in 1860; and Fort Dodge, commissioned in 1865. [Fort Wise, located near present-day Las Animas Colorado, on the Arkansas River, was renamed Fort Lyon in 1862.] Troops from these forts saw action in some of the major battles with Plains peoples in the 1860s, such as the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864 and the Battle of Washita in 1868. But as Captain Lambert Wolf, mentioned above, lamented in his diary, patrolling the trail could be routine and boring – he is with a detachment on the Purgatory River, a tributary of the Arkansas in southeastern Colorado: “July 18 [1860]: after fruitless wandering over bluffs, through ravines and over prairies, we have rejoined the command where we left it, discovering nothing but a very old Indian camp and some bear tracks.” (West 275; Wolf - see Root 208)

*1858: Opening the Colorado Gold Fields – the “Rush to the Rockies” and the Santa Fe Trail*

By December 1858, one contemporary estimate placed nearly 1,000 miners along the South Platte River and its tributaries on the Front Range in Colorado, awaiting spring and the opportunity to pan for gold. While many of these men had arrived during the year via the Platte River Road, many had also come along the Santa Fe Trail through Kansas and then north on the Cherokee Trail from Pueblo to the diggings on Cherry Creek. Interestingly, given that the Platte River Road quickly became the highway of preference for gold seekers, the two most important expeditions which put the Colorado gold fields “on the map” in 1858 arrived over the Santa Fe Trail – that of William Green Russell, including a band of Cherokee from Oklahoma which had met up with Russell and his company at the “big bend” of the Arkansas, and the “Lawrence Party” which included Julia Archibald Holmes, “the first woman to climb Pike’s Peak.” Other emigrants followed them along the Santa Fe Trail later in the year, perhaps most notably William Larimer, who soon was to found the city of Denver. (Henderson 3)

Several questions can frame a consideration of the Russell and Lawrence expeditions, and subsequent parties in 1858, concerning their use of the Santa Fe Trail. First, why did they choose the trail over the Platte River Road, which of course had been a major highway to the west since the early 1840s and had witnessed a significant portion of the 1849 California gold rush traffic? Second, what interaction did these parties have with the old Santa Fe Trail – what did they expect, what did they see, how did they judge the trail as a route to Colorado, and did they have any unique experiences different than those who used the trail in the decades both before and after them? And finally, did their passage have a lasting impact on the trail? They were the vanguard of the more than 100,000 “’59ers” who vowed, “Pike’s Peak or Bust” and headed for Colorado in the next few years. One further statistic conveys the immensity of this migration: Central City, Colorado, had a population of 663 in 2010, yet in 1860, when it was known as “the richest square mile on earth,” it was home to 60,000.

The background details of the Russell and Lawrence parties are well known and documented and will be only briefly summarized here. More importantly, their experience of the Santa Fe Trail – and that of Larimer and others in the fall of 1858 – will be highlighted and evaluated. William Parsons, who traveled with the Lawrence Party in 1858 and then authored one of the early guidebooks to the gold fields in 1859, set the scene in a letter to the *Lawrence Republican*, published on October 28, 1858: “The company left Lawrence on the twenty-fifth of May last. We went out in small parties, and on the evening of Thursday, the twenty-seventh of May, encamped on Hundred and Ten, the point where we first reach the Santa Fe road. On the twenty-eighth of May we ‘laid over’ . . . for the purpose of collecting all our forces and getting our outfit in travelling shape. On the twenty-ninth of May we passed Burlingame . . . .”

The William Green Russell Expedition.

William Green Russell was entrepreneurial, bold, and driven by dreams of gold. He hailed from Auraria, Georgia, where he owned land and slaves. Long acquainted with mining in north central Georgia, he, in his words, “was attacked with the California fever,” and headed for those distant gold fields in 1849. He remained in California for three years. There he encountered John Beck, a Cherokee acquaintance from Georgia who had found traces of gold on Cherry Creek, Colorado in 1849, on his way to California. The two men kept in contact and decided, in 1857, to meet at the Great Bend of the Arkansas River in 1858, each leading a party to pan for gold in the Rockies. As James H. Pierce, a member of Russell’s party, recalled in his memoirs, “The meeting at the Big Bend was accomplished on April 25, 1858. Beck [leader of the Cherokee] had 78 men and Russell 26, making in all 104 men, composed of Georgians, Cherokees, Arkansans, Missourians, and some who joined us in Kansas.” These men reached Cherry Creek in mid-May and prospected along the South Platte and various regional creeks. They did not strike a bonanza but had some limited success, getting “gold in every pan.” Russell returned to eastern Kansas late in 1858. As he noted in an article written for the *Leavenworth Times* [October 19, 1859], “I reached Leavenworth City on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, where I was eagerly beset by people for news from the reputed gold country. The sight of the gold I had in my possession, seemed to produce great excitement, although I admonished all to be cautious, and stated everywhere that I had as yet failed to obtain evidence of the existence of gold in large quantities.” Russell returned to Colorado in 1859, spent time in Georgia during the Civil War, came back to Colorado in the 1870s, and died in Georgia in 1877. (Spring *Rush* 88, 89; Henderson 2)

Why did the Russell Party take the Santa Fe Trail? The reasons are at once straightforward but chronologically complex. Geography, Russell’s prior experience in Kansas,

and the involvement of the Cherokee all played a role. The Russell contingent, consisting of William, his brother Levi J. Russell and several others, left their homes in Georgia on February 17, 1858. They proceeded to the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, where they anticipated linking up with the Cherokee organized by John Beck, as noted above. According to an interview some years later with Levi J. Russell, the Cherokee were not ready to leave, so the Russell party went north to Rock Creek, Kansas, where William had “taken up” land during a sojourn there in 1857. From Rock Creek, William and a few others traveled to Leavenworth where they traded their mules for oxen and procured their outfit – which eventually, as Levi Russell described it, “made an imposing caravan, which consisted of 33 yoke of cattle, 14 wagons, 2 horse-teams, [and] a dozen or two of ponies.” The entire group, augmented by others who joined them in Kansas, rendezvoused at Manhattan. From there they struck southwest for the “old Santa Fe trail on the Arkansas, reaching it near Great Bend.” (Henderson 6)

None of the accounts of the men in the Russell expedition mention their experience of the Santa Fe Trail - they quite naturally commented more on their successes or failures in the gold fields. From the Great Bend the joint party – Russell’s men and the Cherokee with John Beck – followed the Arkansas to Bent’s New Fort, where they stopped briefly. They then continued to follow the Arkansas to Black Squirrel Creek, which empties into the Arkansas approximately 12 miles east of Pueblo, Colorado. That creek then led them north to the South Platte – Arkansas divide and thence to Cherry Creek. Ultimately it is evident that the participation of the Cherokee, who knew the trail from the Cherokee Nation to Colorado, some of them having traveled it in 1850, was central to the choice of the Santa Fe Trail by the Russell Party in 1858, though Russell’s own knowledge of Leavenworth and eastern Kansas also were factors.

#### The Lawrence Party

The leading members of the loosely affiliated group known as the Lawrence Party left that Kansas community in the last weeks of May 1858 – the number of individuals and exactly when they departed varies depending on which one of their letters, diaries or memoirs is consulted. Others joined them at Council Grove and even, as with Julia Archibald Holmes and her husband, at Cottonwood Creek on June 5<sup>th</sup>. A reliable count from that point on indicates there were 46 men, two women and one child, traveling with nine ox teams, two horse teams, one mule team and fifty head of cattle. The Holmes' outfit included what Julia referred to as a "covered wagon." Among other baggage, the wagon carried a "large cooking stove" which was hauled out from time to time to "cook up provisions for two or three days." These emigrants reached the Pawnee Fork by June 14<sup>th</sup>, Bent's New Fort on June 28<sup>th</sup>, and Pueblo on July 5<sup>th</sup>. They then headed north, tarried for some days hunting and prospecting at the base of Pike's Peak, then proceeded to Cherry Creek. (Hafen "Voorhees Diary," 43; Spring *Bloomer Girl* 15; Henderson 8; Hafen, *Gold Rush Guidebooks* 327-329)

Three accounts of the Lawrence Party's journey on the Santa Fe Trail provide a glimpse of conditions on the route in 1858, the year before the great rush of 1859. These three are: a letter of William Parsons to the *Lawrence Republican* published on October 28, 1858 and reprinted in LeRoy Hafen, *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859*; the diary of Augustus Voorhees, reprinted – from the manuscript copy at the Colorado History Center – as "The Voorhees Dairy of the Lawrence Party's Trip to Pike's Peak, 1858" in *The Colorado Magazine* of March, 1935, edited by LeRoy Hafen; and the letters of Julia Archibald Holmes, first published in 1859 then gathered in Agnes Wright Spring's *A Bloomer Girl on Pike's Peak 1858*, published in 1949.

**William Parsons.** In the context of the 1859 Colorado gold rush, William Parsons is best known as the author of one of the most comprehensive and reliable guidebooks to the mines, *The New Gold Mines of Western Kansas*, printed in Cincinnati in 1859. He left the Lawrence Party in Colorado in the fall of 1858 and was back in Lawrence, Kansas, by late October 1859. His long letter to the *Lawrence Republican* notes four developments of interest concerning the Santa Fe Trail and its role in the “Rush to the Rockies:”

- *Crossing Cow Creek.* Parsons and the Lawrence Party encountered one of the banes of prairie travel – crossing swollen creeks. This group had a particularly unpleasant few days. As Parsons related it, “June eighth. Camped on Cow Creek. Here we remained four days on account of bad weather. It rained during the four days continually. The creeks were filled to their very banks, while the small streams from the hills, pouring into the valleys, soon converted the wide grassy bottoms into one expanse of muddy water. We were compelled to move our camp three times to save being drowned out. It seemed as if the storm would never abate. . . .” And, “June 12. Crossed Cow Creek, which being swollen by rain, detained us all the forenoon.” It was this experience perhaps which led Parsons to caution in his guidebook – the italics are his, “*Always cross a creek before camping.*” (Hafen, *Gold Rush Guidebooks* 324-325; Parsons *New Gold Mines* 28)
- *The Lost Hunter.* As often happened to emigrant trains on the prairies, a member of the Lawrence Party, J. T. Younker, got so excited chasing a buffalo that he went farther than he realized and could not find his way back to camp. To compound the situation, he strayed on the first day of the four-day, ferocious rainstorm the group encountered at Cow Creek. His compatriots searched – as Parsons recounted: “Parties were organized to go in pursuit of him, but no traces of him could be found.” In a rare serendipitous

incident, Younker was saved by a band of Arapaho. As Parsons told it, “We were about giving him up as lost, when, on the eleventh of June, in the afternoon, nine Arapahoe Indians came around the camp, with the evident desire of communicating with us. We invited them in . . . and then they produced a scrap of paper, which, on examination, proved to be a line from Younker, informing us of his whereabouts, as far as he knew, and requesting us to come on. We immediately went to him, and found him thirty-five miles from camp. Tired and hungry, he had met the Indians, and they, true to their native instinct, uncorrupted by a vicious civilization, had taken care of him and found his party.” In his guidebook, Parsons maintains a relatively humane attitude towards the Native peoples emigrants might encounter, though he does warn that travelers should keep a sharp eye on their possessions. He says, “The best advice that I can give in regard to intercourse is, to treat [the Indians] well invariably. Be kind, and yet cautious, and you will have no trouble with them.” (Hafen, *Gold Rush Guidebooks* 324-325; Parsons *New Gold Mines* 32-33)

- *The Cheyenne, Kiowa and Comanche.* West of Allison’s Ranch on Walnut Creek the Lawrence Party began to encounter significant numbers of Plains peoples – the “Cheyennes, Kiowas and Camaches,” as Parsons listed them. Here again, in his account, Parsons noted that the Lawrence Party took a compassionate and level-headed approach. He described the people he met: “The Indians themselves are large, well formed, and athletic” – and their village, in some detail: “On the next day (June fourteenth) we passed the main village of the tribes on the Arkansas. The village consisted of about three hundred lodges; and as each lodge is usually occupied by about ten persons, I suppose that there must have been three thousand in all.” The party parleyed with the principal

chiefs and gained safe passage. Again showing his even-handed temperament, Parsons wrote, “This is the only way to treat them with anything like safety; and moreover it is the only HUMAN way. An Indian knows when he is abused and insulted, as well as a white man – and is as ready to resent it, and properly, too.” (Hafen, *Gold Rush Guidebooks* 326-327)

- *Distances and Camp Grounds.* In his *New Gold Mines of Western Kansas*, Parsons included one of the most detailed table of distances for the “Santa Fe Route” to Colorado of any published at the time. It provides a precise list of those places along the trail in the late 1850s and on into the 1860s which were important not only in the history and heritage of the trail itself, but of particular consequence for the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the Colorado gold rush. From Council Grove west, Parsons mentions: Diamond Spring, Lost Spring, Cottonwood Creek, Turkey Creek, the Little Arkansas, Little Cow Creek, Plum Buttes, the Arkansas, Walnut Creek, Ash Creek, Pawnee Fort, Coon Creek, Whitewater, the Crossing of the Arkansas [Cimarron Route], Bent’s Old Fort, Bent’s New Fort, the Huerfano, and the Fontaine qui Bouille [Fountain Creek]. He then takes his readers north on the Cherokee Trail to the gold fields. Readers of his guidebook surely gained confidence in their westward journey as they could “tick off” these places one by one.

**Augustus Voorhees.** As a member of the Lawrence Party with William Parsons, Augustus Voorhees in his memoirs comments on some of the same situations and incidents as Parsons, but he has, of course, a different perspective. He also relates developments not mentioned by Parsons. His descriptions of various natural elements along the trail – stream crossings, buffalo and trees [or the lack thereof], as well as his observations of traffic on the trail and of the various

trading posts available to travelers in 1859, adds to an understanding of the role of the trail in the gold rush.

- *Experiencing the Trail.* The four-day rainstorm that the Lawrence Party encountered at Cow Creek impressed Voorhees just as it had William Parsons. On June 9<sup>th</sup> he wrote, “it rained last night looked rainy drove one mile to big cow [creek]. Camped on the east bank on the bottom. it rained all the after noon and all night. . . .” The next day he observed, “moved Camp up on the hill out of the water, the Creek raised 12 feet last night.” Finally on the 12<sup>th</sup> he could note, “left Camp and fixed a new Crossing one mile above and got over at noon.” But there were compensations. At Little Cow Creek on June 8<sup>th</sup> he “saw thousands of buffalo” and added in his journal, “I went off the road and killed a [buffalo] Cow but she was too poor to eat.” He was also impressed by the lack of timber and gives a clear picture of the prairies as they were compared to today, when the same spots he described are heavily wooded. At Lost Spring, “no timber in sight;” on the Cottonwood, “found no timber today but little on the Cottonwood but fine prairie;” at Turkey Creek, “found no wood;” near Great Bend, “no timber but small brush,” and along the Arkansas east of Bent’s New Fort, “[June] 22 – “Drove 20 Camped on the bank of the river still no timber,” and “[June] 23 – Drove 18 miles. Camped on the river still no timber.” (Hafen “Voorhees Diary” 42-47)
- *Traffic on the Trail.* More than many other emigrants in their letters, journals and diaries, Voorhees comments on the heavy and varied traffic along the trail. Often not a day goes by but the Lawrence Party meets up with someone, showing that the trail was by 1858 far from being remote or isolated but instead was a major highway to the Southwest and the Rockies. On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, he “met a party of soldiers returning from mixico escorting a party

of officers and their families home.” On June 14<sup>th</sup>, “the mail met us this morning,” this being the monthly mail service between Santa Fe and Independence. A few days later, on the 18<sup>th</sup> just east of Fort Sumner [i.e., Fort Atkinson, 1850-1854, Ford County, Kansas], he encountered “a party of Californians of 5 men on their way home. They came on mules by the way of Santa Fe.” He took advantage of the meeting, adding, “I sent one letter to father and one to Mr Leonard.” The next day, having passed Fort Sumner, he saw merchant trains coming from Santa Fe crossing the Arkansas, noting in detail, “passed the ford on the Santa Fe road, saw some teams crossing, they cross with half of a load at a time. . . .” Once past the Cimarron “cutoff,” he and the Lawrence Party met a large number of Cheyenne – “the Indians came in to camp so thick we found they would eat us out of house and home if we laid still.” Then they saw no one until they reach Bent’s New Fort on June 28<sup>th</sup>. (Hafen “Voorhees Diary” 42, 45, 46-47)

- *Trading Posts/Ranches.* Voorhees also indicated the changing nature of the Santa Fe Trail in 1858 by noting some of the trading posts available to emigrants as they headed west. Interestingly, he does not mention a new settlement at Cottonwood Creek, though his fellow traveler William Parsons does. Perhaps Voorhees overlooked it because it evidently at this point was just one house that served as a trading post and a U. S. mail station. He does give a nod to “Allison’s trading post” on Walnut Creek, where he says the Lawrence Party “camped . . . and stopped for Sunday.” He also provides in his journal one of the more fulsome descriptions of Bent’s New Fort, which his party reached on June 28<sup>th</sup>, remarking, “the fort is built on a bluff near the river is built of sand stone 100 feet wide and 200 long, with 13 rooms inside with a large yard inside, the walls are 16 feet high, the rooms are covered with timber and gravel, with a breastwork around the top, with

port holes for Cannon of which they have two pieces.” Two days later he was happy to report, at the ruins of Bent’s Old Fort, “Could distinguish snow on spanish peak, and got sight of the rocky mountains.” (Hafen “Voorhees Diary” 42 – fn4, 45, 47)

**Julia Archibald Holmes.** Julia Archibald Holmes, along with her husband and her brother, also traveled with the Lawrence Party, joining it at Cottonwood Creek. From her letters recording the journey and her experiences – including being the first woman to climb Pike’s Peak – she seems to have regarded the trip as something of a lark, saying that she and her husband were “animated more by a desire to cross the plains and behold the great mountain chain of North America, than by an expectation of realizing the floating gold stories. . . .”

The Holmes family was active in the Kansas anti-slavery movement and Julia – influenced by her mother, who was a personal friend of Susan B. Anthony – called herself an “emancipated woman” and boldly wore “reform dress,” i.e. “bloomers,” on her trek west.

Julia Holmes especially provides several unique perspectives on the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1858 opening of the Colorado gold fields by presenting not only a rare woman’s view, but also through her perceptive descriptions of the scenery and flora of the trail. She additionally pens one of the most detailed accounts of wagons crossing the Arkansas, to head down the Cimarron Route, available in the literature of the Santa Fe Trail. (Spring *Bloomer Girl* 14)

- *An “Emancipated Woman” on the Trail.* Writing from Fort Union, New Mexico – she and her husband traveled to New Mexico after their 1858 sojourn in Colorado – on January 25, 1859, Julia asserted, “I am, perhaps, the first woman who has worn the ‘American Costume’ [bloomers] across that prairie sea which divides the great frontier of the states from the Rocky Mountains.” She then went on to relate the

disapproval of the only other woman in the Lawrence Party, who relayed to Julia that the men of the party were saying “you look so queer with that dress on.” Julia retorted, “I cannot afford to dress to please their taste.” Unlike this woman, Julia also refused to ride in a wagon, instead inuring herself to walking. As she recalled, “At first I could not walk over three or four miles without feeling quite weary, but by persevering and walking as far as I could every day, my capacity increased gradually, and in the course of a few weeks I could walk ten miles in the most sultry weather without being exhausted.” She also volunteered for night guard duty, but was rebuffed by the “captain of the guard,” a Virginian who described himself as “conservative up to the eyes” and who “was of the opinion that it would be a disgrace to the gentlemen of the company for them to permit a woman to stand on guard.” Echoing the national debate of the day, she noted that his attitude reflected the view that if a woman did not keep her “place” then she would “not only be no longer an angel but unwomanly.” Unfortunately, there seems to be no record of what the Santa Fe traders, teamsters, muleteers, or army officers who met the Lawrence Party thought of Mrs. Holmes. (Spring *Bloomer Girl* 13, 16, 20-21)

- *The Fruited Plains.* Julia effused about the flora of the trail just as did other women travelers in their diaries or letters. At Cottonwood Creek, she reveled in the scene before her: “We were now fairly launched on the waving prairie. . . . With the blue sky overhead, the endless variety of flowers under foot, it seemed that the ocean’s solitude had united with all the landscape beauties.” Even travel along the Arkansas, a featureless and boring stretch of the trail for many, often enchanted her. As she described it, “After reaching the Great Bend of the Arkansas River, we camped on

Walnut Creek, where we found many new varieties of flowers, some of them exceedingly beautiful. Among others a sensitive rose, a delicate appearing flower, one of the most beautiful I ever saw. . . . In an eastern conservatory it would be the fairy queen among the roses – the queen of flowers.” And surely she must be the only trail traveler who ever wrote, “The Arkansas river is very beautiful. Dotted as it is with many little islands, the banks in all cases adorned with flowers, and in many places lined with trees and shrubs.” (Spring *Bloomer Girl* 15, 21, 25)

- *To the Cimarron “Cutoff”*. At the Arkansas Crossing, Julia and her husband took time to walk down to the river “to see some Santa Fe wagons cross.” Her description is detailed and conveys the flavor of the moment better than other accounts through the years. She says, “The river was here perhaps a mile wide, and the bottom one broad bed of sand, with here and there a channel nearly as deep as the cattle’s backs. After unloading part of their freight, and placing perishable articles above where the water would enter the wagons, they [the freighters] attached twelve or more yoke of cattle and entered the swift running river. It was indeed an amusing scene. Twenty Mexicans with sharp sticks punching the cattle, shouting and tumbling in the water, the leading cattle continually endeavoring to turn back, the wagon master on horseback, swearing in Mexican, now at the cattle and then at the men – creating a wonderful confusion.” She added that some barrels of whiskey in one wagon broke loose and started floating down the Arkansas, but “after a deal of excitement to the Mexicans, and diversion to those on the bank,” the whiskey was saved. (Spring *Bloomer Girl* 24)

As these few excerpts from Julia's letters demonstrate – letters which were written expressly for publication in *The Sybil*, an eastern magazine devoted to “reforms in every department of life, but principally to a reform in dress for women,” – she had an exceptional experience along the Santa Fe Trail, an experience in some ways of her own choice. Nonetheless, she adds to an understanding of the “state of the trail” in the pivotal year of 1858. (Spring *Bloomer Girl* 13)

### Other Emigrants of 1858

The exact number of emigrants who reached Colorado on the Santa Fe Trail by the end of the 1858 travel season will never be known, but there were hundreds in addition to those in the “trail-blazing” Russell and Lawrence parties. As the *Kansas City Journal of Commerce* remarked in its August 27, 1858, issue: “There is a perfect furor in Kansas City on the subject of the Pike’s Peak mines. We have no hesitation in saying that in a fortnight the road from Kansas City to Council Grove and thence west to the mines, will be lined with gold seekers for the new Eldorado.” The *Journal* then went on to recommend the Santa Fe Trail, stating, “This is the best route as there is a splendid road for two-thirds of the distance, good stopping places, plenty of feed for cattle and men for the first two hundred miles, and shorter by several days than any other route.” Among the throng that heeded this advice were individual emigrants such as William Larimer and David Kellogg.

**William Larimer.** William Larimer, a resident of Leavenworth and a wealthy speculator in Kansas land, left for the mines via the Santa Fe Trail – somewhat late for such a journey – on October 3, 1858. Writing to the *Leavenworth Times* from the Little Arkansas on October 14<sup>th</sup>, he mentioned, “Our party, now consisting of eight wagons and thirty-two men, are getting along first rate. . . . The Santa Fe road is the best natural road in the world. . . . We find no trouble in

keeping up with mule teams with our oxen, and my opinion is, after thirteen days' trial, that oxen are in every way better suited for the trip than mules." He even meets up with William Green Russell about 50 miles east of Bent's New Fort – Russell is on his way back to Leavenworth, or as Larimer puts it, "was on his way in" – and although the two men chatted for only a half hour or so, and Russell said he would have discouraged the Larimer party from starting for the mines had he met them before they left, even though, as Larimer says "He claimed to have done tolerably well." Consequently, Larimer concluded, "His statement we considered encouraging and at once felt in high glee." As it eventuated, and as was mentioned above, Larimer did make a fortune, but in real estate, not gold. (Larimer *Leavenworth Times* in Hafen *Colorado Gold Rush* 99-100; Villard 10; Larimer *Reminiscences* 66)

**David Kellogg.** David Kellogg took to the trail for the gold fields in a party of 57 men and one woman, leaving Kansas City on September 17, 1858. Collectively, they had 14 wagons drawn by oxen, though one member of the group had a mule. In his diary Kellogg also noted, "Each man has a rifle, revolver and bowie knife." On September 30<sup>th</sup>, they "nooned at 110 Creek [Osage County, Kansas]," where Kellogg observed, "The trail is as smooth and well-worn as a city street." At Bent's New Fort he provides an intimate glimpse of the Bent family, though expressing some reservations about the reception he received. His diary entry reads: "October 16<sup>th</sup>. We reached Bent's Fort, where we lay over. . . . Bent's wife, who is a Cheyenne, his son Charley, and his daughter Mollie, are here. Three of our party, myself among the number, had known Mollie Bent in the States and had danced with her in Kansas City; but although we were in and out of the fort all day and once in the very room where she sat with her mother, she paid no attention to us. Mollie was dressed like a white woman but her mother wore the blanket." Four days later Kellogg and his compatriots reached Fountain Creek and turned north to the

mines. In an interesting sidelight on the Colorado gold rush, Kellogg and several companions headed back to Missouri in the spring of 1859 on the Platte River Road – but when asked about Colorado they pretended to have come from Salt Lake City to avoid the ire of emigrants headed to the Rockies, emigrants who were beginning to have doubts about the diggings there. (Kellogg 5, 6, 9, 11)

### Hurrah for Young America!

By the fall of 1858, as the above accounts – those of William Green Russell, James H. Pierce, William Parsons, Augustus Voorhees, Julia Archibald Holmes, William Larimer and others – indicate, the stage was set for one of the greatest migrations in United States history – the “Rush to the Rockies.” On October 13, 1858, the *Kansas City Journal of Commerce* recorded, “By the *Sioux City* [steamboat] yesterday morning there arrived in Kansas City a company of Washington, Mo., bound for Pike’s Peak. The company is under the charge of Messrs. Ming & Cooper and consists of ten persons, with six wagons, thirty yoke of oxen and 25,000 pounds of freight. These men are old travelers on the plains, and go out fully prepared to make every edge cut in the new mines. They take the great Santa Fe road to the Arkansas. . . .” And on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, in a fit of “boosterism,” the *Journal* gave notice of the departure for the mines of Dr. R. R. Hall and said of him, “His plan of operation is to prospect the country with his pick and pan, until he is satisfied where to squat, when he will proceed to locate, preempt, survey, plat, map and lay out a town, and go into that line of business on his own hook. Such are the men who are now leaving Kansas City for the gold region. It will not take such boys long to develop the country. Hurrah for young America.”

## *Colorado Gold Rush Guidebooks*

The subject of 1859 Colorado gold rush guidebooks is complex, though at first glance it does not seem so. Several dozen guidebooks appeared in 1859 and others followed into the early 1860s. They could be purchased throughout the United States, but most emigrants, if they bought one, purchased them en route at river ports such as Cincinnati or St. Louis or at a “jumping off” town such as Kansas City, Leavenworth, Nebraska City, Council Bluffs or Omaha. By its nature a guidebook was ephemeral, to be perused, consulted on the trail, and usually disposed of once an emigrant reached the mines.

Booksellers, business houses, railroads, individual authors and civic booster organizations issued or commissioned most guidebooks. Often the authors, sponsors or publishers overtly, and in some cases shamelessly, promoted a chosen route over others – the three routes most often discussed being the Platte River Road, the Santa Fe Trail (or Arkansas Route) and the Smoky Hill Trail. It also was not uncommon for a guidebook to scorn other routes, sometimes with false information. As mentioned above, William N. Byers, editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*, touted the Platte River Road as the best route to the gold fields. As it transpired, the Santa Fe Trail had few boosters. Although a number of parties had left for Colorado from Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1858, in 1859 it became the eastern terminus of the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express and in 1865 the Butterfield Overland Despatch line, the routes of which stretched across northern Kansas. By 1870, the Kansas Pacific Railroad, which essentially followed the Smoky Hill River, had reached Denver. As noted elsewhere in this study, the two towns which could have promoted the Santa Fe Trail as the route to Colorado – Independence and Kansas City – seemed too complacent and traditionally tied into the Santa Fe trade with the southwest to realize the potential of the Colorado emigration and ultimately the

Colorado market. (See Calvin W. Gower, “Aids to Prospective Prospectors,” and Thomas Isern, “The Making of a Gold Rush,” for extensive discussion of “boosterism” and the 1859 Colorado guidebooks.)

The following listing reviews only guidebooks which mention the Santa Fe Trail – for good or for ill – in at least limited detail, or in other cases do not mention it at all but are leading examples of the perverseness of guidebook authors and compilers. The evaluation of the trail in these guidebooks is central to each entry. There are other guidebooks of the era which did not mention the Santa Fe route or just indicated that it existed. These items contain no – or only perfunctory – commentary on the Santa Fe Trail and are not considered here.

Original copies of almost all of these publications are extremely rare, with many extant in only one or two copies. This situation was addressed by Dr. Nolie Mumey and Dr. LeRoy Hafen, who sought out, provided commentary on and reprinted 19 of these rare guidebooks from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. Dr. Mumey was a medical doctor and an aficionado and collector of Colorado history. Dr. Hafen was Colorado State Historian from 1924 to 1954. Today these reprints also have become difficult to consult or obtain. Most libraries restrict their use and buying them is expensive.

Dr. Hafen also collected and edited various volumes of Colorado gold rush material, including letters, journals, diaries, newspaper articles, and guidebooks, including – with specific reference to guidebooks – *Pike’s Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859 by Luke Tierney, William B. Parsons and Summaries of the Other Fifteen*. It was published in 1941 as Volume 9 of The Southwest Historical Series issued by the Arthur H. Clark Company. Hafen’s “Historical Introduction,” in this volume, pp. 19-80, places the guidebooks in the context of the gold rush.

This volume was reprinted as *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks 1859*, by the Porcupine Press, Philadelphia, in 1974.

David A. White provides another source for commentary on and reprints of 1859 guidebooks in two compilations: *News of the Plains and Rockies, 1803-1865: Original Narratives of Overland Travel and Adventure Selected from the Wagner-Camp and Becker Bibliography of Western Americana*, published at Spokane, Washington, by the Arthur H. Clark Company beginning in 1996, and *Plains & Rockies, 1800-1865: One Hundred Twenty Proposed Additions to the Wagner-Camp and Becker Bibliography of Travel and Adventure in the American West, with 33 Selected Reprints* also issued by Arthur H. Clark in 2001. The *News of the Plains and Rockies* is a multi-volume work; Volume 7, Section N, "Gold Seekers, Pike's Peak, 1858-1865" is pertinent to the Colorado gold rush.

It is to be noted that some guidebooks have become and continue to become available full text, online. For complete bibliographic information on the guidebooks excerpted here, see the annotated bibliography for this study. Entries there indicate the guidebooks that have been reprinted and those that are available on the Internet. All spellings, grammar, capitalizations, etc. in quotations in the following notes are not corrected or identified, viz. [sic], but are as they appear in the original. Only abbreviated titles, place of publication and publication date are referenced below since full information is available in the annotated bibliography.

**Obridge Allen.** *Allen's Guide Book and Map.* Washington, D. C., 1859. Allen devotes five pages to "Route No. 1, From Independence, Missouri, via. Kansas City and Westport, by Hall & Porter's Independence and New Mexico overland mail route to Pawnee Fork, thence by Coone creeks, Old Fort Atkinson, Bent's Fort, on Arkansaw, to Denver city at the mouth of Cherry

Creek.” Three of the five pages are a table of distances. The text includes: “The road is fine and hard until it reaches Fort Atkinson, on the Arkansas river; from Fort Atkinson, portions of it is sandy and heavy, passing over spurs of sand-hills; it runs along on the south side of the river, until within 12 miles of the old town of Pueblo. . . .” and “The country between Pawnee Fork and Bent’s new Fort, is infested by roving bands of Camanchee, Cheyenne, Kioway and Pawnee Indians, whose hostile and thievish propensities greatly annoy emigrants.” LeRoy Hafen, in his *Pike’s Peak Guidebooks*, notes, “As to ‘The Route’ the author [Allen] expresses no preference.” Hafen also mentions that no map from Allen’s guidebook is extant. (Allen, 7)

**J. H. and W. B. S. Combs.** *Emigrant’s Guide*. Terre Haute, Indiana, 1859. Only one extant copy of this guidebook is available, at the Denver Public Library. David White writes, “This is one of the few 1859 Pike’s Peak guidebooks written by someone who actually went over the ground in 1858.” He quotes Combs, “There were fifty-six of us in one train who left Westport and Kansas City, and every wagon was drawn by oxen.” The guidebook has a table of distances from Kansas City to Auraria “via the Santa Fe Trail, Arkansas River, Fountain Creek, and Cherry Creek. . . .” White suggests that this was one of the more reliable guidebooks. (White *Plains* 162)

**Samuel Adams Drake.** *Hints and Information*. Leavenworth, Kansas, 1859. Drake’s *Hints and Information* is included in this compilation as an excellent example of a guidebook written to promote a particular town and route, in this case Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Platte River Road. After touting the Platte route, Drake asserts, “The Arkansas or Santa Fé route, is *notoriously unsafe* for travelers. Its entire length is subject to hostile incursions from the most formidable and warlike tribes on the continent, and during the fall and winter passed, the Indians

have been in undisputed possession of the route. *The mails have been plundered and the passengers massacred in cold blood. . . .*” (White News 7:447)

**Lucian J. Eastin.** *Emigrant’s Guide*. Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory, 1859. Eastin promotes Leavenworth as the outfitting point for emigrants headed to Colorado and favors the “Smoky Hill Fork Route” as the “Best Route To The Gold Mines.” His main objection to the Santa Fe Trail is that it is too long, compared to the Smoky Hill Trail. It tends too far south for him. As he says, “If the miner selects the southern [Santa Fe] route, he turns his face southward. . .” and, of course, the Colorado mines lie due west of Leavenworth. His guidebook is accompanied by a map showing the Platte River Road, the “Smoky Hill Fork,” and the “Great Santa Fe Route.”

**Otis Gunn.** *New Map and Hand-book*. Pittsburgh, 1859. Gunn devotes much space to the prospect of the opening of an improved Smoky Hill Trail in 1860. He asks, though, “But how happens it that this route is not already opened?” His answer is, “The reason is obvious. The Santa Fe road has been a great thoroughfare for many years, for nearly 400 miles toward the mines.” With further reference to the Santa Fe Trail, he notes “For those outfitting at Leavenworth, the Northern [Platte River] route is a very few miles the shortest, but the Southern is said to be the easiest road to haul over . . . and water and wood more plenty than on the Northern route.” He includes a table of “Distances to the Mines” for both the Platte River Road and the Santa Fe Trail and the map appended to his guidebook shows both routes and lists the Smoky Hill Trail as “Proposed Route – Central Route.”

**J. W. Gunnison and William Gilpin.** *Guide to the Kansas Gold Mines*. Cincinnati, 1859. Gunnison and Gilpin clearly favor the Santa Fe Trail as the route to the Colorado mines. They

do say that if an emigrant is in “the country bordering the Missouri River in Iowa and Nebraska as far as Council Bluffs and above, probably the best route would be by Fort Laramie [Platte River Road].” But regarding the Santa Fe Trail, they continue, “To all East of the Mississippi, and for a hundred miles west of it, the best route by far is by the great Santa Fe Road to Pawnee Fork, and thence following the Arkansas to Bent’s Fort and the mines. . . . This is the route traveled by the mountain traders for half a century, and is a well beaten, plain wagon road, the entire distance. There have passed over it the present season [1859] over ten thousand wagons, as far as the crossing of the Arkansas. . . . It is also the route which the stock drovers take to California. But to those who may not have access to those who are familiar with the route, they can gain all the information they desire from the reports of Fremont, Beale and Gunnison.”

The only “Table of Distances” provided in this guidebook is for the Santa Fe Trail and it is accompanied by a list of nine “advantages of the Santa Fe and Arkansas over any other route. . . .” This list included:

- “1. It leaves the Missouri river at Kansas City, the nearest point to St. Louis.
2. It is over a natural route for half the distance, with but one bad crossing heretofore, which has been bridged the past season – on the Little Arkansas.
3. The road is made, and has been used for a quarter of a century, by the commerce of New Mexico and the mountains – is traversed by wagons, droves of stock, traders, and the United States mail.
4. There is an abundance of wood, water, and grass, throughout the whole extent.

5. For three hundred miles, there are stopping places where provisions, corn, hay, and all necessaries of life can be obtained, and where lodgings can be procured if desired.

6. The United States mail from Kansas City to New Mexico and California, by the Great Central Route, passes over the road, with stations, blacksmith shops, etc., every twenty miles, to the Arkansas, affording opportunities for sending back letters, or getting repairs necessary on the route.

7. It is free from the sand deserts and prickly pear of the northern route [Platte River Road]. . . .

8. It is through a county abounding in buffalo, antelope, grouse, wild turkey, rabbits, and other game, affording fine amusement for sportsmen, and fat living for the emigrant.

9. It is over the healthiest portion of the American continent, where fresh meat cures without salt, and where you can preserve it free from taint at all times.”

(Gunnison and Gilpin, 19-20)

**William Hartley.** *Map and Description.* St. Louis, 1858. William Hartley was a member of the Lawrence Party of gold seekers, the second group after the Russell Party to go to the Colorado gold fields in 1858. David White, in *News of the Plains and Rockies*, discusses the importance of Hartley’s guidebook and reprints it in its entirety along with its accompanying map. White says of the guidebook, “Hartley’s was possibly the earliest of all Pike’s Peak guidebooks, it certainly was the first to offer accurate mileage tables of the Platte and Arkansas routes, and it had the best of all maps of the immediate diggings.” (229)

**William B. Horner.** *The Gold Regions.* Chicago, 1859. Horner's guidebook is long on speculation about the Colorado gold fields and activity there in 1858 but short on information on getting to the mines. The Santa Fe Trail is dismissed in three paragraphs. Horner says the road is good and there are fewer streams to cross than on other routes. Also, he writes, "This route was taken by most of the emigrants who visited the mines in the early part of last year. They were induced to take this road, however, from the impression that the mines would be found more south, than they turned out to be." The only other route Horner indicates is the Platte River Road. There is no table of distances for it or the Santa Fe Trail. His map looks helpful and contains much information on what railroads to take to Missouri River towns, but his Santa Fe Trail is merely a line drawn from Lawrence – which is actually north of the Santa Fe Trail! – to the Great Bend of the Arkansas, then west.

**"How To Get To Pike's Peak Gold Mines."** *Harper's Weekly* (April 2, 1859). This article in the widely read magazine *Harper's Weekly* says nothing about the Santa Fe Trail route to Colorado, recommending only the Platte River Road. However, the map accompanying it does show the Santa Fe Trail, but interestingly the road suggested diverges from the trail east of Bent's Fort, indicating that the trail goes up the "Sandy Fork" [Big Sandy in eastern Colorado today, a tributary of the Arkansas leading to present-day Limon, Colorado]. Any emigrant following this route would have been in trouble, most notably from lack of water.

**Randolph B. Marcy.** *The Prairie Traveler.* New York, 1859. As LeRoy Hafen notes in his *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, "This volume is a general guide for western travelers, rather than one intended exclusively for emigrants to the Pike's Peak gold region. . . ." (252) Marcy does consider almost every conceivable route to Colorado, from southern Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Missouri. His relatively fulsome tables of distance include, "From Fort Smith,

Arkansas, to Santa Fé and Albuquerque, New Mexico,” “From Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fé, by the way of the ferry of the Kansas River and the Cimarron,” and “From Westport, Missouri, to the gold diggings at Pike’s Peak and ‘Cherry Creek,’ N. T., via the Arkansas River.” He also discusses the Cherokee Trail, giving its general direction, but does not have a table of distances for it.

**D. McGowen and George H. Hildt.** *Map of the United States.* St. Louis, 1859. This item has little narrative. Essentially it is a table of distances for various routes as indicated on an accompanying map – one of the best maps of all the Pike’s Peak gold rush guidebooks. The Santa Fe Trail is admirably depicted as “Route from Kansas City to the mines.”

**J. W. Oliver.** *Guide to the New Gold Region.* New York, 1859. LeRoy Hafen in his *Pike’s Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks* concludes that this “book was apparently put out to advance the interests of Leavenworth City,” though its map, in addition to the Santa Fe Trail, indicates “Fremont’s Trail, 1843-44” [Smoky Hill Trail], a “Central Route” [Republican River] and “Road to Oregon” [Platte River – though it shows no connection from the Platte River Road to the Colorado mines]. (254) As for the Santa Fe Trail, a route from Fort Riley is touted, discussed and described, Oliver noting, “In 1855 and 1856 . . . a shorter route from this point was examined, surveyed, graded and bridged, by Lieut. Bryan, U. S. Top. Engineers, which, passing over the rivers and streams west of Fort Riley by good substantial bridges, has shortened the road, to Bent’s Fort and New Mexico, nearly 100 miles over the old route, via Little Arkansas, &c. &c.” A brief table of distances is provided.

**Parker and Huyett.** *The Illustrated Miner’s Handbook.* St. Louis, 1859. This is a lengthy guidebook with much information on “who should go to the mines,” outfitting, and even

“prospects for farmers” in Colorado. In candidness not usual in these guidebooks, the authors write, “Each route to the New Eldorado has its firm friends and its active enemies – their opinions depending principally upon the location of their residence and their interests.” Also unusually, concerning the “Santa Fe Or Arkansas Route,” it is noted, “From the ‘forks of the Santa Fe road,’ there are two routes, the left keeping up the Arkansas, and the right making a cut off by way of the head waters of Coon Creek. This is called the ‘Dry Route,’ having no water, except in pools in the wet part of the season.” There is an excellent map in this guidebook showing the various routes to Colorado.

**William B. Parsons.** *The New Gold Mines.* Cincinnati, 1859. This is one of the great 1859 Colorado gold rush guidebooks. It covers every aspect of emigrating and setting up at the mines. It discusses the routes to the mines in more detail than most other guidebooks, commenting on the various settlements, stream crossings, topography and land cover that the emigrants will encounter. Advice is interspersed with the itinerary and mileages, such as, in the ten fulsome pages on the “Southern Route” [Santa Fe Trail], “*Always cross a creek before camping.*” There is a table of distances for the Santa Fe Trail. Parsons was a member of the Lawrence Party of 1858, which traveled from Leavenworth, Kansas, to Colorado.

**Edwin R. Pease and William Cole.** *Complete Guide.* Chicago, 1859. Pease and Cole’s *Complete Guide* provides no narrative description of any route to the Colorado mines from Missouri River towns. It does carry various tables of distances, such as “Distances by the Southern Route from Kansas City via Arkansas River to Cherry Creek.” It has a splendid map, with the Santa Fe Trail identified as “Southern Road by Bent’s Fort to the Mines – To Cherry Creek Diggins.”

***Pike's Peak. Great Through Line Between the East and West.*** Cincinnati, 1859. This guidebook was published to promote the Ohio & Mississippi Broad-Gauge Railroad from Cincinnati to St. Louis as *the* gateway route to the Colorado mines. It is mentioned here only for its map, which is an example of a map so inadequate it is to be hoped no emigrant relied on it.

**C. N. Pratt.** *Pacific Railroad of Missouri.* Cincinnati, 1859. This guidebook has a more detailed table of distances, "Southern Route From Kansas City to the Gold Mines, via Arkansas River," than most. Otherwise it is unremarkable, though its map does show five routes to the gold fields: a "Military Route," the "Salt Lake Mail Route," "Fremont's route via Republican Fork," the "Smoky Hill Route," and the "Santa Fe and Independence Mail Route." It touts the "Pacific Railroad of Missouri" as "The Old Established and Most Reliable Route to Kansas, Nebraska, and all points on the Missouri River." Of four sentences referring to the "Southern Route," the first two read, "The Southern Route via Arkansas River, has long been opened to the emigrant and can be travelled at all seasons of the year. This being the great Santa Fe Route, numerous small stations will be found on its line."

**John J. Pratt and Francis A. Hunt.** *A Guide to the Gold Mines of Kansas.* Chicago, 1859. This guide, as with many others, has information on outfitting, the prospects in the mining region, and so forth. It provides a table of distances for the "Santa Fe or Southern Route, via Arkansas River and Bent's Fort." It lists a mail station at Diamond Spring, a trading post at Cottonwood Creek, a trading post at "Little Arkansas," and Allison's Ranch at Walnut Creek, giving the trail an aura of settlement. It takes the reader to "Fontaine qui Bouille," – Pueblo, Colorado today, and then lists a number of campgrounds on the Cherokee Trail to Cherry Creek. The map with the guidebook shows three routes west, "South Platte Route," "Republican Route," and the Santa Fe Trail. Interestingly the map indicates the Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail,

in this case from Pueblo, but doesn't depict any topographical features or settlements south of what is now the New Mexico – Colorado border.

**P. K. Randall.** *A Complete Guide.* Boston, 1859. This guide is mentioned here only because David White in his *News of the Plains and Rockies* says, “This ‘Complete Guide’ was about as incomplete as a Pike’s Peak guide could be. . . .” It did not recommend the “Southern Route” or Santa Fe Trail and, anyway, again as White writes, “The rejected southern route was mistakenly said to be ‘via Texas.’” (295)

**James Redpath and Richard Hinton.** *Hand-book to Kansas Territory.* New York, 1859.

Redpath’s guide has only a short paragraph on the Santa Fe Trail as a route to the Colorado mines. In part it says, “This is the route traversed by the Santa Fé traders, and in general is well supplied with wood and water. Its disadvantages seem to be its length. Its advantages, for those who wish to start early, the fact of being the most southerly, and, consequently, grass will be obtainable earlier.” Redpath’s map does not specifically name the Santa Fe Trail or even call it the “Arkansas Route,” though it does say, “Route explored for Pacific R.R. by Capt. Gunnison.”

**Jacob W. Reed.** *Map and Guide to the Kansas Gold Region.* New York, 1859. The author of this guide, Dr. Jacob W. Reed, claimed to have traveled both the Platte River Road and the Santa Fe Trail in 1858, in the company of a Captain J. S. Pemberton. From the detail provided about the routes he does seem to be familiar with them. There is no table of distances, but instead Reed writes in narrative form, giving mileage and commenting on camping places, topographical features, stream crossings, etc. Examples of his style and advice include, of Allison’s Ranch on Walnut Creek: “This being a considerable trading-post you can procure most anything you wish. . . .” Of the region around Pawnee Fork: “You are now in the Cheyenne country, and should it

be late in the fall or winter, you will find most all of that tribe in this section for the purpose of killing buffalo. These are very dangerous Indians, and you should be on your guard both night and day.” And of Puebla [Pueblo]: “Puebla is a small village of Mexicans and Americans, trappers and hunters. This is also a very good spot for resting your stock, which they no doubt need.”

**“Table of Distances From Kansas City To The Gold Regions of Pike’s Peak,”** *Western Journal of Commerce* [Kansas City], November 6, 1858. This compilation is not strictly a guidebook. It is a one page listing of the distances along the route indicated. As a newspaper piece it could have had much wider circulation than any particular guidebook, but its inaccuracies may have flummoxed any emigrant who relied on it.

**Luke Tierney.** *History of the Gold Discoveries.* Pacific City, Iowa, 1859. Tierney was a member of the Russell Party, the first group to go to the Colorado mines from eastern Kansas in 1858. With them he travels the Santa Fe Trail. He provides a detailed narrative of the route and the party’s experiences. On June 4, at the Arkansas Crossing, he records, “The following morning was so cold we were compelled to wear our heaviest apparel.” He describes Bent’s New Fort: “The building is about one hundred feet above high water mark [on the Arkansas River], of oblong shape, three hundred feet long and about two hundred feet wide. It presents a beautiful appearance from without. The interior is divided into spacious apartments, fitted up for various purposes. One of these apartments contains a few barrels of liquor, of which we partook, at a cost of one dollar per pint.”

*Emigrants on the Trail in 1859*

There is no way of determining the number of emigrants who used the Santa Fe Trail as their route to the Colorado gold fields in 1859 and on into the 1860s. Estimates for the total number of emigrants in 1859 alone usually top 100,000, but that includes those who took all the available trails west, including the Platte River Road, the Smoky Hill Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, and various routes from Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. One of the best, though necessarily limited enumerations we have for Santa Fe Trail traffic, comes from the *Kansas City Journal of Commerce*, quoting traders who arrived there on May 25<sup>th</sup> that, “between the Arkansas Crossing and Council Grove they had counted 5,214 men, 220 women, 1,351 wagons, 7,375 oxen, 632 horses and 381 mules on their way to the Pike’s Peak region. They also reported that “the number of gold-seekers on the Santa Fé trail this side of Council Grove ‘exceeded those beyond. . . .’” (Bieber *Diary* 365)

The regional and national newspapers of the day also provide a general indication of the emigrant tide as with, for example, a correspondent to the *Chicago Press and Tribune* [January 31, 1859], who wrote, “A bigger army than Napoleon conquered half of Europe with is already equipping itself for its western march to despoil the plains of their gold. The vanguard has already passed the Rubicon, if I may so metamorphose the muddy Missouri. . . .” And the *Kansas City Journal of Commerce* published a variety of accounts in the spring of 1859 along the lines of an item in the February 20<sup>th</sup> issue, “We see from our exchanges that the hotels of St. Louis are filled with people waiting to go up the Missouri River. Hundreds have taken quarters aboard the boats, paying \$.50 per day for their board. They are bound for the gold mines.” Additionally, thousands of disappointed and disabused emigrants, with the motto “Busted By God” painted on their wagons, from 1859 on returned east along all the trails. They are even more difficult to trace. (Hafen *Colorado Gold Rush* 255, 267)

Given the immense number of emigrants, it is surprising how few journals or diaries on this great migration were kept or are extant. As LeRoy Hafen, the dean of Colorado historians, notes in the “Introduction” to his compilation of several reports, diaries and journals, *To The Pike’s Peak Gold Fields, 1859*, “The California gold rush of 1849 produced numerous diaries. . . . As a result we have a great storehouse of information on that historic trek. The gold rush of a decade later to the Pike’s Peak region, though participated in by as many people as went overland to California in 1849, has produced fewer diaries by far. . . .” As to the reasons for this dearth of diaries, he speculates that “the novelty of a western trip had probably worn off somewhat by 1859. . .” and that the distance was shorter and hence seemingly less daunting and dramatic. (Hafen *Pike’s Peak Gold Fields* xi)

For the Santa Fe Trail, seven diaries are of particular interest – and will be considered here. The diarists include Daniel Ellis Conner of Bardstown, Kentucky; Dr. George M. Willing, of St. Louis; William Salisbury, a native of Warrensburg, Ohio; and Charles C. Post from Decatur, Illinois. These four men followed the old trail from eastern Kansas to Bent’s Old Fort and then took the Cherokee Trail west to the vicinity of Pueblo, Colorado, and north to the mines. Three other diaries also shed light on the use and importance of the trail at this time – A. M. Gass came north from Bonham, Texas, and struck the Santa Fe Trail near the Arkansas Crossing; Sylvester Davis left Colorado in August 1859 and traveled to New Mexico along the Front Range of the Rockies and then over Raton Pass and along the trail to Santa Fe; and in the mid-1860s, G. S. McCain started for Colorado via the Smoky Hill Trail, but dropped south and joined the Santa Fe Trail at Cow Creek, thus providing a glimpse of how alternate routes – and the whims of an emigrant – contributed to travel on the trail. These few accounts stand in for the experiences of all emigrants on the trail and their assessment of the trail itself.

**Daniel Ellis Conner.** Daniel Conner and his emigrant train left the Weston, Missouri – Leavenworth, Kansas, area around April 1, 1859. They joined the Santa Fe Trail at Council Grove, having passed through Lawrence, Kansas. Conner penned his memoir of the journey after the Civil War, which – after an abortive attempt to raise a Confederate force in Colorado – he spent prospecting for gold in New Mexico and Arizona. Among other general trail information, he provides one of the most exhaustive lists of provisions found in any emigrant diary, provisions which his party purchased at “Henry’s and Garrett’s wholesale establishment” in Lawrence. He wrote that when “the list was finally figured up . . . it was astonishing.” It included bacon, flour, coffee, sugar, beans, dried apples, dried peaches, rice, pepper, salt, vinegar, pickles, soap, soda, syrup, tea, fruits, pots, cups, pans, kettles, ox-yokes, couplings, bows, whipstocks, prospecting pans, needles, thread, physic, butcher knives, axes, shovels, picks, nails, mechanic’s tools, gold scales, water kegs, and canteens. This merchandise was in addition to each man’s own clothing, bedding, guns, pistols, and ammunition. All of these supplies got packed into five wagons. There were sixteen men in the initial party. (Connor 10)

Conner comments more extensively than most emigrants on the Native peoples he encountered along the trail, thus affording a glimpse of the state of affairs with regard to the various tribes in 1859, on the eve of the violence which was to follow in the 1860s and 1870s. At Lost Spring he recalled, “The friendly Indians came about our camp in numbers, to trade and barter buffalo rugs, moccasins, etc.” He also perceptively remarks, “It is to be lamented that our public men had hitherto known and cared so little about the Indian character. An Indian is as proud as anybody. . . .” Farther west, among the Cheyenne and Arapaho, he pays particular attention to the activities of women and children, describing a travois with “little brats” upon it and the use of cradleboards, “an oval, elongated contrivance of wickerwork.” He also notices a

mother on a pony with a child in front and another behind. The mother “was . . . attentively engaged in searching for vermin. She supported the little papoose with one hand, caught the vermin with the other, and to make sure of the game, she would bite’em.” He used the language of his day, referring to the children as “pickaninnies” and the women as “squaws,” but in contrast to many emigrants, he was even-handed, remarking of the mother cleaning her child of lice, “Now I don’t make this statement to shock delicate sensibilities, but ask delicacy to hold her breath while I tell her the truth, even upon a small matter, which may sometime or other assist in finding the true position of greater ones.” A cultural anthropologist, a century later, could not have put it more succinctly. (Conner 17, 19, 27-29)

**Dr. George M. Willing.** George Willing left the western Missouri frontier in mid-April 1859. His diary, which consists of two lengthy letters written to his wife, does not begin until he reaches “the Arkansas” on May 25<sup>th</sup>. The twenty men in his train came from Illinois and from Montgomery, Pike, St. Charles and St. Louis counties in Missouri. As with other emigrants, he complains about the barren plains, “Hav’nt seen a spot suitable for human habitation since we left the little Arkansas,” and the weather. Since he has a thermometer with him, a rare encumbrance for an emigrant, he provides rare readings of the temperatures travelers might encounter: “May 29 [east of Bent’s New Fort] – It has been excessively hot to-day, the thermometer at 3 P.M. standing at 112 deg.” and “May 30 [near Bent’s New Fort] – Three o’clock P. M. Thermometer 104 deg. Very warm, and no shade.” He is astounded by the huge temperature variations on the high plains, recording on June 4<sup>th</sup>, as camp was broken in the morning, “Weather cool and fair. Ther. 53 deg.” but then later in the day, “At 2 o’clock to-day the thermometer stood at 104 deg., a temperature which you may readily conceive cannot be considered refreshing.” One other singular incidence of his trip came on May 28<sup>th</sup>, when he

“Made the unpleasant discovery this morning that the last drop of my whiskey was lost; the keg having been somehow upset in the night, all the contents escaped. Serious loss in this part of the world. . . .” (Bieber *Diary* 362-365, 369-370)

Some of the situations Willing describes concerning the trail in 1859 are unique to his diary. He sincerely laments the hardships women might encounter, noting, though not of an emigrant family, “In some of the trains there is quite a number of females. . . . With one train, an American is returning to New Mexico, with his family consisting of wife (Mexican) and four grown daughters. On the road one of the daughters was brought to bed of a baby, her husband having died only two days previously. I never have witnessed such distress in my life, and pray I never may again.” But then a few days later down the trail he observes that the baby, too, has died: “Passed, to-day, a little hillock of sand by the road-side; beneath it are the remains of the little infant, born a week ago; it died yesterday. . . . Another sorrow for its unfortunate young mother.” On a less somber note, he meets up with a train of Mexican *carretas* and writes, “I forgot to tell you of the ox-carts we meet on the road. They are made entirely of wood, wheels, hubs, tires, and all. The team consists of a single ox, and on one of the carts we met there was a load of a thousand pounds.” He also does not find the Santa Fe Trail to be the “grand highway” that others appreciated, but instead complains frequently, especially along the Arkansas east of Bent’s New Fort: “The road for several days has been very gravelly, and tells fearfully on the feet of the cattle.” A few days later he mentions, “Old Ball [one of his oxen] became so lame, had to tie a moccasin about one of his hoofs – helped him greatly.” Ultimately, he passes judgment on the trail with the opinion, “The South Platte I suspect is a better route than this, water and grass both more abundant. If I am compelled to return, will take the South Platte

route. . . .” His entry for May 28<sup>th</sup> perhaps sums up his experience of the trail, “I am *so* tired of the plains.” (Bieber *Diary* 362, 63, 64, 67, 69)

**William Salisbury.** William Salisbury was just 20 years old when he left his home in Ohio and struck out for Colorado. Little is known of his party, which passed through Westport on April 30, 1859. The entries in his diary reveal a man with an equitable temper who also was something of a romantic. He was “green,” but could record, “I arose this morning feeling refreshed from a good sleep. . . . Last night was my first experience in camping out. And a right jolly good time we had of it.” Weeks later near Bent’s Old Fort, he was still ebullient: “Friday [June] 3<sup>rd</sup> – “Nothing of importance has occurred today have traveled over a sandy road all day on the flats close to the river . . . We camp tonight on the banks of the river where the noise of the waters would lull us to sleep have traveled 22 miles.” And, “Tuesday [June] 7<sup>th</sup> – This is a beautiful day our camping ground was excelent last night. We arrived at the ruins of Bents old fort a little after noon It was pleasantly situated Would that I could hear those old walls speak and tell of the events that has happened therein.” Salisbury prospected for a short time in the mountains above Denver but by August was headed back east via the Platte River Road. [“Sunday [July] 3<sup>rd</sup> – Have been more homesick today than any other day since I left Home.”] He served in the Union Army during the Civil War, settled permanently in Ohio, teaching school and farming, and died in 1920. (Lindsey, 330-331, 334)

With regard to the trail in 1859, Salisbury presents a thorough list and some commentary on the various towns, settlements and trading ranches stretching west, thus delineating how much the nature of the trail had changed since it had witnessed the California gold rush in 1849. His progress is easily followed in his diary entries. As noted he left Westport on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

- May 3<sup>rd</sup> – “stoped at Paola and got one tree set Paola is a fine growing town”
- May 5<sup>th</sup> – “Reached the old Santiffee road at Brooklin”
- May 6<sup>th</sup> – “it rained all night camped a mile West of Prairie City”
- May 9<sup>th</sup> – “we are 110 miles from Independence found good roads west a great many Government waggons Passed through Burlingame and Wilmington are flourishing little towns”
- May 11<sup>th</sup> – “Passed through Council Grove”
- May 12<sup>th</sup> – “We passed through Diamond Springs about 2 ock today . . . there is now wood scarcely there and but three houses and a grocery”
- May 14<sup>th</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup> – “Here we are camped on Cotton wood crick . . . there is but 2 log huts here one a dwelling the other a grocery. They are occupied by an agent who stops here through emigration, then move back to Council Grove”
- May 16<sup>th</sup> – “have come 19 miles and camped on the little Turkey There is but 1 house here built of turf and covered with tent cloth it is a kind of trading post”
- May 17<sup>th</sup> – “we are camped on the Running Turkey . . . There is wone house here maid of small logs and turf and a grocery in a waggon”
- May 18<sup>th</sup> – “Arrived at little Arcasas at 11 ock toll bridge here 25cts. toll”
- May 21<sup>st</sup> – “Came to Ash crick about noon it is a small trading post one house plenty timber and water” [David Lindsey, editor of Salisbury’s diary, notes: “Salisbury must have made an error here. Certainly he meant Walnut Creek where Bill Allison . . . maintained a trading post.”]

- May 26<sup>th</sup> – “We camped at night near old Fort Atkinson” [Established 1850 – abandoned 1854]
- June 4<sup>th</sup> – “we camped at night near Bents [New] fort”
- And finally, beyond Bent’s Old Fort, following the Cherokee Trail, Salisbury records, on June 10<sup>th</sup> – “arrived at Fountan city [Pueblo, Colorado] at noon  
Left the Arkansas here camped on fountain crick.”

While Salisbury’s trek was – as other of his diary entries reveal – sometimes tedious, sometimes dangerous, and even sometimes pleasant, until he apparently reached Allison’s Ranch at Walnut Creek he, and all other emigrants in 1859, was never more than two or three days travel from some town, trading post, or sign of civilization – crude as any one of them may have been. In ten years the trail had gone from a long and lonely journey across the plains to an era of settlements and supplies. (Lindsey, 325-331)

**Charles C. Post.** Charles C. Post left for the mines from the vicinity of Westport, near Kansas City, on May 13, 1859, with a party of friends from his hometown of Decatur, Illinois. He had taken several rail lines from Decatur to St. Louis. There he boarded a steamboat for Kansas City after purchasing some provisions which he also shipped by steamer. His trip across the plains was uneventful, which is one of the reasons his diary is of interest – it can be regarded as emphasizing the commonplace aspects of travel in 1859, though he, like Salisbury, marks the advance of settlement across Kansas. His diary entry for May 12<sup>th</sup>, incidentally, gives a rare glimpse of how an emigrant kept a daily diary. Post has returned to his camp from Westport, Missouri, where he went to buy a lock chain for a wagon, and finishes his day’s account with, “Got back at dark and am now writing on my knee by candle light.” (Hafen *Pike’s Peak Gold Fields* 29)

Further entries, as mentioned, cover the numerous mundane activities and developments experienced by most emigrants. On May 18<sup>th</sup>, Post observed, “We have up to this day met and passed sixteen Santa Fe trains, averaging about twenty wagons. . . .” On the morning of May 27<sup>th</sup>, in camp just west of Running Turkey Creek, the cry went up “‘Buffalo! Buffalo!!’ from our guard and got up to keep them from stampeding our oxen. The whole of the vast plains seemed alive southward. We fired our guns and turned them from us. We again gave chase and got a fine large bull.” At Big Cow Creek on May 29<sup>th</sup> the party went fishing and netted some catfish. Trouble struck on June 7<sup>th</sup>, when a wagon smashed a wheel “going down a small hill.” The men search for timber to make “false spokes” but cannot find anything suitable, so improvise with “part of top pieces of wagon box, spare ox bows, etc.” and get the wheel “very well fixed. . . .” Post’s train spent most of Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup> encamped along the Arkansas west of Bent’s New Fort, where Post says he, “went swimming, got back sunburned; washed shirts, socks, overalls, towels, hdkfs., etc. Read four chapters of Proverbs, part of ‘As You Like It,’ shot a mark five times, two hundred and thirty yards; ate supper and went to bed.” His party reached Fountain City [Pueblo, Colorado] on June 22<sup>nd</sup> and turned north on the trail to Cherry Creek. (Hafen *Pike’s Peak Gold Fields* 31, 36, 43, 48)

Post included interesting details of some of the old and new settlements along the trail, indicating how the nature of travel on the trail was rapidly changing. For example, on May 22<sup>nd</sup> while camped about one mile from Council Grove, Post decides to “go to town,” after having failed to get a deer while out hunting. He makes particular note of “a large three story stone Mission House under the charge of Methodist Episcopal church South, three large stores, blacksmith shop and seven residences. This is the county seat of Mains [Morris] county. . . . This is the last point where supplies can be had and there is everything here that a man wants if he has

got money enough to buy it with.” [Morris County was organized in 1855; Council Grove, which had long been regarded as the last outpost headed west on the Santa Fe Trail, was incorporated as a city by the Kansas State legislature in 1858.] A week later Post is at Big Cow Creek where he “made the acquaintance of Dr. Beach, who keeps a ranch on east side of creek. He is a young man who together with his father and four hired men are trading with the Indians, the Kiowhas, and slaughtering buffalo, the meat of which they prepare by salting, smoking and drying and hauling to Kansas City, where they find a ready sale of it at twenty-five cents per pound. They are making a fortune.” And then, much farther west, on June 15<sup>th</sup>, he visits Bent’s New Fort, of which he approves: “It is a very good fort built of stone laid in clay mortar, one hundred and fifty feet by two hundred, on a high rocky bluff on very bank of river; can be approached only from one way. Two white, two Mexicans and a family of Arapahoes are now sole tenants.” He goes on to observe that William Bent “this spring sold his fort to government for ten thousand dollars . . .” and that “the fort will soon be encamped by soldiers . . .” which it was, being christened the next year as Fort Wise. (Hafen *Pike’s Peak Gold Fields* 34, 39, 46)

As noted above, the diaries of **A. M. Gass**, **Sylvester Davis**, and **G. S. McCain** are each unique in the literature of the 1859 Colorado gold rush. **A. M. Gass** traveled to the gold fields from Bonham, Texas – from south of the Red River, north to Edwards’ Trading Post [Oklahoma] on the Canadian River, then west on that river to near the present boundary of Oklahoma and Texas, where he again turned north, striking the Arkansas River and the Santa Fe Trail near the Arkansas Crossing. His diary entry for May 21<sup>st</sup> conveys his excitement: “Today we traveled north eight miles, then came in sight of Arkansas river, and Jerusalem, what a sight! Wagons – wagons – Pike’s Peak wagons. Well! there were a few of them – I presume three hundred ox-

wagons, in sight.” He gets soaked crossing the river since it is so deep that he and his horse have to swim. (Hafen *Pike’s Peak Gold Fields* 223)

**Sylvester Davis** reaches Colorado early in the summer of 1859, via the Platte River Road. In August he and a few companions – for reasons not disclosed in his diary – head to New Mexico. He crosses Raton Pass – [“Sept. 8 – we had a nice Mountain Road as ever I saw.”], follows the old trail to the “Rio Valley” [Rayado] which he describes as “a beautiful place where there were thousands of Sheep & Cattle . . .” and where he met “some men cutting Hay for the government cutting and stacking for 5.00 per ton.” His party then headed for Ocate Creek, “following behind 10 government wagons loaded with Hay bound (to) fort Unions.” After visiting Fort Union, he detours to Mora, New Mexico, describing the extensive crops in the Mora Valley: “They Raise wheat, corn, potatoes in abundance & the nicest wheat I ever saw.” He proceeds to Las Vegas: “It is quite a place but business was very Dull & we found nothing to do. . .” and stops over in Anton Chico. From there he sets out for Santa Fe – but east of the city, at Cañoncito, he unexpectedly gets a job tending the boiler at a new saw mill. He ultimately marries into a local family in Galisteo and spends the rest of his life in New Mexico. (Walter 409-415)

**G. S. McCain’s** diary is unusual because he went to Colorado in either 1864 or 1865 – the internal evidence in his diary can be interpreted for either year. He provides one of the few accounts, as noted above, of an emigrant who at first followed the Smoky Hill Trail but then switched to the Santa Fe Trail. It is interesting and enlightening to trace his trip. He sets out on September 10<sup>th</sup> from Atchison, Kansas, then stays for four days in “a little town called Pardee,” takes a bridge across Grasshopper Creek, passes “through Indianola, a town 3 miles from Topeka,” visits St. Mary’s Mission on the “Pottowatomy Reservation,” fords the Big Blue River,

and eventually reaches Fort Riley. He describes Junction City [“a little town of about 300 inhabitants”] and the village of Saline [Salina]. On October 14<sup>th</sup> he reaches “a military post called Ellsworth, guarded by 2 Cos. of soldiers.” Then – he gives no reason why – he dropped straight south to Cow Creek, on the Santa Fe Trail. Now headed west again, he mentions “Port Zaro” [Fort Zarah], Fort Larned [where he receives some mail], and “Fort Dodds” [Fort Dodge]. On October 25<sup>th</sup> he records, “We cross the Colorado line today.” – Colorado Territory had been created in 1861. In Colorado he notes the confluence of Sand Creek with the Arkansas, then gets to Fort Lyon, duly mentions the ruins of Bent’s Old Fort, and reaches Pueblo on November 14<sup>th</sup>. From there he continues west up the Arkansas River to the southern Colorado mining districts, via “Canion City.” Besides his exceptional itinerary, McCain’s trip could also have served as a warning against taking the trail too late in the season. On October 26<sup>th</sup> near present-day Holly, Colorado, on the Arkansas, he laconically notes, “It snowed all the afternoon. Blew up awfull cold in the evening, ground frozen very hard. River froze nearly across.” (McCain 95-100)

As a postscript to these accounts, it can be added that many of the diarists met up with emigrants who had been to the mines and were returning east in disappointment, or with those who, meeting such “Busters,” got discouraged even before they reached the Rockies and turned around. As already mentioned, the number of men and women who made the journey west but then returned or turned back on the Santa Fe Trail will never be known. All we have is anecdotal evidence, as from these diaries. Just east of Bent’s New Fort on May 31, 1859, George Willing “met two packers returning, disheartened. Their all was on their backs, and a scanty all it was. They had not even a weapon for defence. A hard experience had theirs been, with no cheering prospect before them. Soon we may be returning in as pitiable a plight, who knows?” At about the same time but several hundred miles east, on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, William Salisbury recorded, “We met

hundreds of waggons going back reached Pawney Fork about noon met another train going back. our Captain with 2 waggons have gone back . . . but there are 8 waggons of us yet determined to go on.” And even as he exulted at reaching the Arkansas on his trek north from Texas and seeing the multitude of wagons headed west from the Arkansas Crossing, A. M. Gass found that, “Some that are going on, say that they have met three hundred wagons coming back, so convinced are they that there is no gold. One man came from the mines, and has some gold dust in a quill, and says there is no coarse gold there, a man cannot earn his provisions. We are going to see for ourselves.” Only occasionally, meeting someone headed east, would the news be positive, as with Charles Post at the confluence of the Arkansas River and Coon Creek: “Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Camp No. 21. – We here met a Pike’s Peaker who had gone to the mines in september last. He gave us encouraging news, says from one to three dollars [per day?] can or could be made there in winter or spring.” And then, daily life on the trail continued, with Post ending this day’s entry, “We all took a bath in the river, which is here from one to four feet deep.” (Bieber *Diary* 366-367; Lindsey 329; Hafen *Pike’s Peak Gold Fields* 223; 41)

*Freighting on the Santa Fe Trail to the Colorado Mines, 1859-1870*

The use of the Santa Fe Trail by traders and merchant houses to supply the Colorado mining regions is perhaps the most neglected aspect of the role of the trail in the Colorado gold rush. This period lasted from 1859 and the opening of the gold fields until 1870, when the Kansas Pacific Railroad reached Denver, having been built across Kansas from Atchison, on the Missouri River. The old trail was, of course, primarily a freight route throughout its life, emigrant travel during the California and Colorado gold rush periods notwithstanding. William Becknell had taken trade goods to Santa Fe in 1821, the value of the annual trade topped \$1 million by the mid-1830s, and supplying army posts in the Southwest became big business on the

trail after the American conquest of that region in the Mexican-American War. From 1859, then, Colorado was a new destination and offered lucrative business opportunities for established traders and newcomers to undertake freighting along the trail.

There are several reasons this aspect of Santa Fe Trail history has been overlooked. First and foremost, the vast proportion of provisions and merchandise shipped to Denver and the mining districts from the east came via the Platte River Road. That route was some 200 miles shorter than the Santa Fe Trail from Kansas City or Leavenworth to eastern Colorado and then north from Pueblo. As noted elsewhere in this study, the editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*, William N. Byers, also heavily promoted the use of the Platte River Road, as did merchants and town “boosters,” in cities such as Council Bluffs, Nebraska City, and Omaha. Consequently, historians have paid more attention to the Platte River Road. Second, the evidence for freighting on the trail to Colorado is mostly anecdotal. It has to be gleaned from the newspapers at either end of the trail, such as the *Canon City Times*, the *Rocky Mountain News*, and the *Kansas City Journal of Commerce*. Sometimes the editors of these papers noted the departure or arrival of a merchant train along the Santa Fe Trail, but often they took such trade as a given or, frustratingly for the modern researcher, particularly with the *Rocky Mountain News*, observed that a train had arrived in Denver with goods for a particular merchant house, but did not specify the route taken. Third, there have been no major studies of any merchant firms or merchant entrepreneurs who traded along the trail either west from Missouri or north from New Mexico during the years 1859-1870. It could be that the business records necessary for such studies are not extant or are limited in scope. To reiterate – the evidence is anecdotal and difficult to interpret.

The development of the Colorado mining trade along the Santa Fe Trail begins in 1859 when an estimated 100,000 emigrants went to Colorado and who, once their own provisions

were gone, had to be fed, housed, and provided with mining equipment. As already mentioned, the Santa Fe Trail figured in the initial trade, with freighters leaving the trail at Bent's Old Fort, where the Mountain Route headed southwest. They proceeded along the Arkansas River to Pueblo and then north to Denver. By the end of 1859, merchants in New Mexico began to send provisions north, especially flour and other farm produce, along the old trail from Santa Fe to Las Vegas [where some merchants also had their headquarters], over Raton Pass, and then to Pueblo and Denver. In the early 1860s more Colorado mining regions opened, notably for traffic on the Santa Fe Trail, in south-central and southwestern Colorado, such as in South Park and the San Juan Mountains. Ephemeral as some of these "strikes" were, miners still needed provisions and, while trans-shipments were made from Denver, enterprising traders developed the route along the Santa Fe Trail and the Arkansas River to Bent's Old Fort and thence to Pueblo, Cañon City, and the new "diggings."

All three of these aspects concerning the Colorado gold rush and freighting via the Santa Trail – supplying Denver, the New Mexico trade, and opening the southern mines – were discussed above through the lens of the *Rocky Mountain News* and its editor William N. Byers. His coverage of the gold rush, the mines, the routes from the east, and the growth of Denver provides a vivid first-hand account of these developments and their relation to freighting on the Santa Fe Trail. But further evidence can add to Byers' immediate and sometimes biased picture.

#### Supplying Denver and the Mining Regions via the Santa Fe Trail.

The volume of freighting on the Santa Fe Trail from Kansas City, Leavenworth, or Westport to Denver is impossible to calculate for any year of the trade. As Walker Wyman flatly states in one of the few studies that considers it, "The extent of the miners' trade is not known,

nor is the total overland commerce. . . .” For 1859, quoting the *Missouri Republican* of August 15, he notes that 1,970 wagons crossed *to Santa Fe* between March 1<sup>st</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup>, but that total was incomplete and of course did not take the trade with Denver into account. He also points out that Leavenworth and not Kansas City or Westport “captured a fair proportion of the miners’ trade,” in part because Leavenworth merchants opened “branch firms in the mountain valleys” and their rivals did not. This trade included both provisions freighted to Colorado and the supplies miners departing from Leavenworth bought to take with them. And, again – there are no complete statistics for either of these commercial activities. (Wyman 9)

The *New York Herald* in its November 27, 1869 issue did publish a summary of trade across the plains which is intriguing, but on closer examination doesn’t provide all that much information only on the trade with Colorado or, even more specifically, just along the Santa Fe Trail. The section with statistics, evidently for the trade in 1869 – the only designation given is “overland traffic during the season just closed” – is headlined, “Statement Showing The Extent Of The Overland Transportation Business Of Various Missouri River Towns To New Mexico, The Pike’s Peak Gold Regions, Utah, And Points On The Plains.” It then breaks down the figures for, unfortunately, “Leavenworth City to Pike’s Peak, Utah, And Intermediate Points,” and “Atchison To Pike’s Peak, And Intermediate Points.” In each instance, the amount of freight hauled by individual firms is listed – i.e. Russell, Majors & Waddell, Jones & Cartwright, and half a dozen others – but, as noted, the strictly Colorado totals are not broken out. The only separate figure for Colorado is \$6,000,000 for “the value of exports and imports,” again “for the season just closed.” (See “Great West” in bibliography)

Henry Pickering Walker, in his treatment of *The Wagonmasters: High Plains Freighting from the Earliest Days of the Santa Fe Trail to 1880*, like Wyman, briefly glances at the

commerce with Colorado. He remarks that there were times in the spring and summer of 1859 when provisions ran alarmingly low in Denver and at the mines, and adds, “but back in the Missouri Valley, alert merchants were making plans for a more systematic supply. As early as November 24, 1858, William H. Russell wrote to his partner, William B. Waddell, suggesting that they send a train of supplies to Denver in the following spring. Their first train left Leavenworth, Kansas, in the following July.” Drawing on episodic reports in the *Kansas City Journal of Commerce*, Pickering also asserts that “ox trains could make two, or even three, round trips in a single season, while mule trains could make three or four. As early as 1860 the train of Baily and Dunn pulled into Kansas City in mid-July, having been gone a little over two months on the first trip. This was in spite of having a two-week layover in Denver and an extra ten days on the way home to rest the cattle. Within two weeks they had loaded and started out again – 12 wagons, 124 head of oxen and 53,000 pounds of freight. . . .” (Walker 181, 192)

Other incidental evidence from the *Journal of Commerce* includes a rare letter from a trader, John W. Lee, who compares freighting on the Platte River Road with that on the Santa Fe Trail. His correspondence was published in the August 24, 1859, issue. He boldly stated, “Let me say one word about Kansas City and the Arkansas road. You have without a doubt the best road in the world to the mines, and I am surprised that no efforts are made to secure this business and establish expresses on this route. I had positively rather freight for 10 cents over the Arkansas route than get 15 cents on the Platte. I know there are many who think different, but they have never taken heavy trains over both roads like I have. I speak from the record.”

William H. Russell and John S. Jones, each long involved in freighting on the trail, might have echoed Lee’s sentiments, for they did go into business shipping produce and supplies to Denver. A correspondent for the *Missouri Democrat*, writing from Denver on June 3, 1859 [published

June 15<sup>th</sup>] gratefully observed, “The first supply train sent out by Messrs. Russell and Jones, consisting of twenty-five wagons drawn by six splendid mules each, and loaded principally with groceries, arrived a few minutes ago. It is a real godsend in view of the general scarcity of almost all articles of trade in this place. The animals look as sleek as though they had just left Leavenworth City.” But nonetheless, this evidence aside, it has to be emphasized again, that the Platte River Road was the main freighting route to Denver. It is telling that in the first issue of the *Rocky Mountain News* [April 23, 1859], while editor Byers did print a “Map of the Gold Region with the Routes Thereto,” all the advertisement for outfitters, provision houses and “forwarding merchants” in that number were for firms in Omaha and Council Bluffs, and none for Kansas City, Westport, Independence or Leavenworth. The same was true for the next issue, May 7<sup>th</sup>, which also included a “Table of Distances,” but tellingly only for the Platte River Road from “Omaha, N.T., to the Cherry Creek and South Platte Gold Mines.” Meanwhile, however, the old trail was heavily in use from Santa Fe and northern New Mexico to Denver, both by emigrants – many coming from California – and more importantly by traders supplying Colorado with agricultural produce. (Hafen *Wildman* 131; Hafen *Colorado* 367)

### The New Mexico Connection

Richens Lacey Wootton, “Uncle Dick Wootton,” is one of the more well-known and colorful figures in the history of Colorado and New Mexico in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Although he is perhaps primarily remembered as the proprietor of the toll road over Raton Pass, which he built in 1866, he also was a famed mountain main and fur trapper. And, as early as December, 1858, he opened a store in Denver to tap into the mining trade, with goods freighted from New Mexico. His entry into the mercantile business was accidental rather than planned. As he recalled in his memoirs, he anticipated retiring back east – “While I had not amassed a great

fortune, I had enough to live on very comfortably . . .” – but he decided to make one last trading trip north to “trade with the Indians on the upper Platte.” He left New Mexico in October and, “followed what is now the line of the Santa Fe Railroad from Fort Union to Trinidad, and from there went due north by way of the Pueblo, to where Denver now is.” He found the few hundred residents of the fledging community in dire need of provisions: “There was no such thing as a store or anything like one in the place. . . . I was at once surrounded by the miners, who wanted flour and sugar, and other merchandise that I had with me.” Consequently, he remembered, “All my plans and I suppose the whole course of my after life was changed.” Having sold all his goods, he “concluded to go into the merchandising business regularly.” Two years later, Henry Villard, visiting Denver to report on the gold rush as a correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune*, observed that “Uncle Dick” had a “store house on Ferry, near Fourth street . . . built of hewn pine logs, 20 by 32 feet in size, one and-a-half stories high. . . . An upper floor was laid with boards sawed by hand, with a whip-saw – the first plank floor in the country.” Other merchants from New Mexico soon also saw the opportunities for trade in Denver and followed “Uncle Dick’s” precedent. (Conard 371-375; Villard 14)

Some of the leading men in the economic life of the Southwest engaged in the trade between New Mexico and Colorado but, as indicated above, no complete biographies of them or accounts of their business activities have been written. Many of them began their careers as fur trappers, then entered the commercial trade between Missouri and Santa Fe, and often even old Mexico, and eventually opened permanent mercantile houses in Santa Fe, Las Vegas, and smaller New Mexican communities. These men included Joseph B. Doyle, Augustus P. Vasquez, Andre Dold, and Ceran St. Vrain, as well as, somewhat peripherally, Alexander Barclay and William Kroenig. The most comprehensive treatment of the pursuits of some of

these entrepreneurs can be found in Janet Lecompte's study *Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn: The Upper Arkansas, 1832-1856*.

Ceran St. Vrain can serve as an example of these businessmen. Born in 1802 just north of St. Louis, he was engaged as a fur trapper with Pratte, Cabanne and Company by the early 1820s and made his first trading expedition to Santa Fe in 1824. Together with William and Charles Bent he founded Bent St. Vrain Company, the most successful trading and freighting enterprise in the Southwest of its day. In 1843, he and Cornelio Vigil received a vast Mexican land grant in Colorado. It stretched from the Purgatoire River west to the Wet Mountains and from the Arkansas River south to Trinidad. After the American occupation of New Mexico in 1846, St. Vrain, who organized a militia to suppress the Taos Revolt, began to supply flour and other produce to the U. S. Army as well as to encourage farmers in northern New Mexico to expand their production for this and other new markets. He built a flour mill in Mora, New Mexico, which became his home. He was the publisher of the *Santa Fe Gazette* and public printer for New Mexico Territory. And he saw the commercial opportunities of the mining trade in Colorado after 1859.

In a short biographical monograph of St. Vrain, Edward Broadhead mentions, "In Denver . . . St. Vrain brought trade goods and made a fortune. . . . He came . . . in the spring [of 1859] with whiskey, bacon, coffee, tobacco, shoes, and flour from his own mill in the San Luis Valley." Thus, St. Vrain was an important figure of Denver's early days, with his travels duly noted by the *Rocky Mountain News*, as on November 17, 1860: "Col. St. Vrain left for his New Mexican home on Thursday last. His visit here has been a pleasant one for himself and friends." Unfortunately, as already noted here, there is little more information on his vast business empire or that of his rivals and compatriots. (Broadhead 41)

Another unique perspective on the trade between New Mexico and the Colorado gold fields is provided in the correspondence of John M. Kingsbury, partner in the firm of Webb & Kingsbury, freighters on the Santa Fe Trail and merchants in Santa Fe. The “Webb” in this enterprise was James Josiah Webb, a major Santa Fe trader in the 1840s and 1850s. Kingsbury conducted the Santa Fe end of the business, residing there from 1853 to 1861. Webb & Kingsbury did not itself join in the Colorado trade, but from time to time in his voluminous correspondence with James Webb, who by this time lived in Connecticut, Kingsbury mused on the impact that the opening of the Colorado mines was having on Santa Fe and the rest of New Mexico. As early as August 1, 1858, he heard rumors of gold strikes “on the north fork of the Platt” and observed, “If this turns out true it may help New Mexico some.” Just a few months later, in a letter dated November 20<sup>th</sup>, he reports, “Col. St. Vrain is about starting a train loaded principally with Flour. . . . This is about the first benefit I can see that New Mexico has got from the discovery.” Kingsbury nursed hopes that Colorado-bound emigrants passing through Santa Fe, most likely from California or Arizona, might boost his sales, but most of them had their own provisions. In one of his final, brief comments on trade with Colorado, writing to Webb on May 6, 1860, he somewhat ruefully admits, “Taos is at present in better condition than any other part of the Territory. Their wheat last year was good. Pikes Peak was a good market for their Flour and this has helped out the whole upper country. Flour and Taos lightening brings a good lot of dust from the Peak,” though somewhat enigmatically he adds, “not much of it comes to the credit of those engaged, St. Vrain, Doyle, Peter Joseph, Rutherford, Posthoff & some others.” A year later, on May 20, 1861, Kingsbury left Santa Fe. (Elder and Weber, 104, 127, 231)

It can be inferred from the evidence available, such as notices in the *Rocky Mountain News* and John M. Kingsbury’s letters, that trade between New Mexico and Colorado flowed

into the 1860s, through the Civil War and on into the 1870s. The use of the Santa Fe Trail between Santa Fe and Trinidad, Colorado, in this commerce has not received the attention it merits. Although the old trail became more and more truncated after 1866 by the westward advance of the Kansas Pacific and Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroads in the late 1860s and on into the 1870s and 1880s, remnants of the trail over Raton Pass and via Rayado, Ocate, Fort Union, Las Vegas, Tecolote, and San Miguel to Santa Fe remained vital transportation routes. Tellingly, when New Mexico came to build its first major state highway in the early 1900s, *El Camino Real*, south from Raton Pass, it followed the old trail. (Olsen “UU Bar Ranch Case”)

The Santa Fe Trail as a Freight Route to Pueblo, Cañon City and New Mine Fields in South Park and the San Juan Mountains.

The editor of the *Canon City Times* was ecstatic in the November 24, 1860 issue of the paper, reporting on a visit to the city by Alexander Majors. Majors, of course, was one of the leading entrepreneurs of western transportation and freighting, one of the founders of the Pony Express and a partner in the prominent firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell. As the editor highlighted it: “Personal – We had the pleasure of a visit from A. Majors this week. He sojourned with us a day or two, and expressed himself highly satisfied with the present progress and future prosperity of our city. To quote his own words, ‘we have the situation.’ The opinion of this gentleman is founded on no myth, but arrived at by experience and sound reasoning . . . . His dictum we hail almost with prophetic assurance.” In the same issue an item noted the arrival of wagon trains from the east along the Santa Fe Trail, including that of Mr. Majors: “Majors train of twenty-six wagons, and Curtis & Stevens train of nineteen, arrived this week, heavily loaded with groceries and provisions. There are several other trains within a week’s travel of this place.” (*Daily Rocky Mountain News*, November 28, 1860)

Beginning in 1860, Cañon City touted itself as the gateway to the newly opened Colorado mines – as opposed to routes via Denver or Colorado City [through Ute Pass west of present-day Colorado Springs]. After the initial 1859 rush to Cherry Creek and then west into the Front Range above Denver, prospectors had fanned out across the Rockies, including to South Park and the San Juan Mountains in south central and southwestern Colorado, encompassing present-day communities such as Creede, Lake City, Silverton, Ouray and Telluride. As the editor of the *Canon City Times* never tired of explaining, the natural route to these gold fields, both for emigrants and in freighting supplies, was along the Santa Fe Trail to Bent’s Old Fort, then up the Arkansas to Pueblo and west to Cañon City.

The *Times* began publication late in the summer of 1860. [Early copies of this newspaper are no longer extant, but William N. Byers reprinted many articles and letters from the *Times* in his *Rocky Mountain News*.] Throughout that autumn the editor beat the drum for his city, as in mid-October: “The position of Canon City is doing and will do much towards the furtherance of its prosperity. Situated at the terminus of the Arkansas – a route that can be traveled in six weeks earlier than any other – it is, without doubt, the finest natural road leading to the mountains. . . . It is at this point [Cañon City] that the natural pass opens into the mountains, and where the Arkansas rolls from its rocky fastness.” (*Weekly Rocky Mountain News*, November 11, 1860)

Emigrant and freight traffic throughout the spring of 1861 supported the editor’s predictions, as these items demonstrate:

- “Last week two teams arrived from the states up the Arkansas. They were from Missouri and destined for the mines. This is early in the season.” (*Daily Rocky Mountain News* March 28, 1861, reprinting *Canon City Times* for March 23)

- “A goodly number of teams have passed through here in the past week, bound for the mines. Gold seekers will be on the increase now – pouring out of New Mexico, the Arkansas Valley country and the States. This will give a fullness to our streets and a plethora to our purses.” (*Daily Rocky Mountain News*, April 5, 1861)
- “Emigrants Arriving – Brise & Keene’s train of emigrants, with seven wagons and thirty-five men, arrived Tuesday, from Putnam county, Mo., only twenty days from Leavenworth city. They report having passed a large number of emigrants on the Arkansas route, bound for the southern mines.” (*Daily Rocky Mountain News*, May 13, 1861, from the *Canon City Times*, date unspecified)
- “Orville Thompson’s train of six wagons, from Council Grove, arrived on Tuesday. It is freighted with provisions for the mines. Mr. Thompson reports a large emigration within four or five days’ travel of this place. He speaks in the highest terms of the Arkansas route, and says that its excellence only need be known to invite the bulk of Pike’s Peak travel.” (*Daily Rocky Mountain News*, May 24, 1861, from the *Canon City Times* of May 17<sup>th</sup>.)

The *Times* also kept close watch on the building of roads to the mines in the interior, as with the following report in late January, 1861: “THE SAN JUAN MINES. Messrs. Graham, Green, and Howard who returned, last week from a very satisfactory exploration of a route to these news diggings, are preparing to make a road, which the purpose [is] to finish by the first of March.” (*Daily Rocky Mountain News*, February 5, 1861, from the *Canon City Times*, date unspecified)

Unfortunately, these sporadic items from the *Canon City Times*, together with a few other biased reports from Editor William N. Byers in the *Rocky Mountain News*, perhaps constitute the bulk of the contemporary evidence for the use of the Santa Fe Trail and the opening of the

southern Colorado mines. This activity on the trail all but ceased by the end of 1861 with the onslaught of the Civil War, and by the time mining in this region revived, railroads had opened the route to the Rockies.

### Stagecoach and Mail Service and the Coming of the Railroads

With the growth of cities, towns and mining camps in Colorado from 1859 on, residents began to clamor for regular stagecoach and mail service with the east. Initially, as might be expected, such connections came first to Denver, but not via the Santa Fe Trail. The Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express began offering stage service to Denver in the spring of 1859. Its first coach left Leavenworth, Kansas, on April 18, 1859 and arrived in Denver on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Its route was northerly, following the Smoky Hill, Solomon and Republican rivers west. Within a few months, beginning on July 2, 1859, it abandoned this route and switched to the Platte River Road. David Butterfield inaugurated stage and freighting service along the length of the Smoky Hill River and trail in 1865, sending the first coach of the Butterfield Overland Despatch out from Atchison, Kansas on September 11, 1865. It arrived in Denver on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The BOD, as it was known, remained in business until the Kansas Pacific Railroad reached Denver in 1870, its route becoming shorter and shorter as the railroad built west. (Lee *Trails* 19-135)

To the south, the mail route from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, launched in 1850, changed in the early 1860s with the commissioning of Fort Wise and the use of the Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail instead of the Cimarron Route as Indian depredations increased during the early years of the Civil War. This development raised hopes in Pueblo and Cañon City that scheduled stagecoach service to those points would be established, as it was. The first coach from the east, carrying two passengers, rolled into Cañon City on May 13, 1861. As the

*Canon City Times* reported, its arrival was celebrated with a buffet supper, followed by dancing until dawn. One further advance was the opening of direct stage connections between Denver and Santa Fe, passing through Pueblo, Trinidad, over Raton Pass and then south along the old Santa Fe Trail. This direct route was not available until the spring of 1867. Until then, passengers between the two cities had to take a coach via Fort Lyon [Fort Wise], at least a hundred miles out of their way to the southeast, and then on to Santa Fe. (Taylor 71-83)

By the late 1860s, railroad service west from the Missouri River began to eclipse emigration and freighting along the Santa Fe Trail to Colorado. Each new section of track shortened the old traditional trail and spawned links between the temporary rail towns at the “end of the tracks” and points west. The Union Pacific Eastern Division reached Junction City, Kansas in 1866, Hays City [Hays] in 1867, and, renamed the Kansas Pacific, leapt in 1870 from Kit Carson, Colorado, to Denver. In the fall of 1873, competing for territory with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, the Kansas Pacific advanced a spur line to Las Animas, on the Arkansas River. The AT&SF, meanwhile, had reached Dodge City, Kansas, in 1872 and Granada, Colorado in 1873. These two rail lines then competed for access to New Mexico across Raton Pass, with the AT&SF triumphing in a dramatic showdown at Raton Pass early in 1878. More importantly for the old Santa Fe Trail as a pathway to the southern Colorado mines, both the Kansas Pacific and the AT&SF built into La Junta, Colorado, by December, 1875. And by March, 1876 the AT&SF had arrived in Pueblo. The era of emigration and freighting along the Santa Fe Trail and the role of the trail in the Colorado gold rush faded into the letters, diaries, journals and memoirs of those who had traveled it. (Norris “Geographical History”)

## *The Significance of the Santa Fe Trail in the Colorado Gold Rush of 1859*

A consideration of the significance of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1859 Colorado gold rush is more a matter of new interpretations of events rather than identification and exposition of selected sites along the trail. This situation differs from that of the 1849 California gold rush when many commented on a particular landmark, river crossing, or alternative route. As indicated elsewhere in this study, the trail in 1859, as compared to 1849, was more settled, shorter in both distance and time for emigrants, and less of an adventure. Those who went to the Colorado gold fields knew relatively well where they were going and how to get there, and they wanted to complete their journey as expeditiously as possible.

Colorado travelers left the old Santa Fe Trail at the ruins of Bent's Old Fort and continued up the Arkansas River to the mouth of Fountain Creek, at present-day Pueblo Colorado. Thus they were using a portion of the Cherokee Trail. Should this trail eventually be designated as a National Historic Trail, various places along it will need to be connected to the experiences of the Colorado-bound miners. While these places can be seen as related to the development of the Santa Fe Trail, they are not on the trail itself.

As the second part of this study has demonstrated, there were several changes along the Santa Fe Trail associated with the "Rush to the Rockies" which should alter contemporary understanding and appreciation of the trail's history and heritage during this era. These changes include:

1. The growth of settlement – towns, farms, trading posts – along the trail, especially in Kansas, thus making the trail much "tamer" than it had been even ten years previously, during the 1849 California gold rush.

2. The establishment of “trading ranches” on outlying portions of the trail, again in Kansas. This development has not been factored into the articles, studies, books and on-site interpretative materials being produced about the trail in recent years.
3. The central function the trail played in the history of Colorado beginning in 1859. Too often the Santa Fe Trail is seen by Coloradans as the Mountain Route in the southeastern part of the state, leading to New Mexico, rather than as a major factor in the state’s early economic development – as the rise of cities and economic growth in southeastern and southern Colorado attest.

In this final section of this study considering the Santa Fe Trail and the 1859 Colorado gold rush, these three elements will be examined and serve as a summary and conclusion.

#### Settlement in Eastern Kansas

As mentioned in this study, emigrants to Colorado in 1859 experienced a Santa Fe Trail markedly different than that of the emigrants bound for California in 1849. Kansas was created by the U. S. Congress as a distinct governmental unit – a U. S. territory – in 1854 and became a state in 1861. By 1860 the eastern one-third of the state was well-settled, the region was divided into functioning counties, and the public land surveys extended well into central Kansas. What had once been trading outposts along the trail from Kansas City to Council Grove and even farther west had grown into nascent communities. Two reminiscences of old-time trail travelers cited above describe features of this transition – James R. Mead’s “Trails in Southern Kansas,” which mentions changes in the town of Burlingame, and Thomas E. Burns’ “The Town of Wilmington on the Santa Fe Trail.” But, this aspect of the history and heritage of the Santa Fe Trail has not been investigated or interpreted in depth. Various questions occur: What became of

the old trail – was it abandoned, did it become a city street, a market road between one town and another, or, later, a state or federal highway? How did the residents of the new communities along the old trail or the farmers in their fields regard the lingering vestiges of the trail? When did a concern to preserve the heritage of the trail arise in the region – as with the marking of the trail by the Daughters of the American Revolution beginning in the early 1900s? What motivated these folks to preserve the trail? Historians of the Santa Fe Trail need to answer these and related questions both because this transformation is part of the story of the trail and also because it illuminates the progress from reality to memory to myth in the trail’s national significance and “place” in American culture.

### Trading Ranches

Nearly every 1859 Colorado-bound emigrant who passed by mentioned “Allison’s Ranch” on Walnut Creek. Reading between the lines in their diaries, journals and letters, there is a sense of relief in their remarks – relief that even this far out on the prairies there was “civilized” habitation, crude though it might be; relief that they could replenish basic supplies; and relief that the “ranche” could serve as a touchstone – the Rockies were within striking distance but if they had to turn back, Allison’s Ranch would be there. Dr. David Clapsaddle, in the pages of the Santa Fe Trail Association’s magazine *Wagon Tracks*, as discussed above and indicated in the bibliography to this study, has done extensive research on the individual “ranches.” But, their story – and there were others, as at Cottonwood Creek, Diamond Spring and the Little Arkansas – needs to be integrated in the general history of the trail in the 1850s and 1860s, and they need to be recognized through increased interpretation and signage on the ground.

*Note: This study includes all the trading ranches mentioned by emigrants in their accounts as referenced here. There were others established along the Santa Fe Trail by 1859, such as Fuller's Ranch at the Running Turkey Creek Campground [near present-day Galva, Kansas]. It can only be surmised why some ranches were not noted – perhaps they were so numerous that emigrants “forgot” to mark them in their diaries, letters or journals or, of those accounts which have survived, luck would have it that those particular emigrants did not visit those posts. The existence of these other ranches is well-documented in other sources, but not in emigrant narratives.*

### The 1859 Gold Rush and Freightage on the Trail to Colorado

As previously mentioned several times in this section of this study, perhaps the most overlooked aspect of the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the Colorado gold rush story is that of the development of freightage, merchant moguls and trading empires. This consideration encompasses the whole expanse of the trail, from Missouri businesses to the advance of agriculture in New Mexico to the blazing of “extensions” of the Santa Fe and Cherokee trails into the southern interior of Colorado, via Pueblo and Cañon City. Supplies, provisions and mining machinery flowed from Missouri west while flour, onions and “Taos Lightning” rolled in from New Mexico – all along sections of the old trail. Economic history never seems glamorous – it is difficult to compete with the snap of bullwhips or cries of “All’s set, All’s set,” that echo along the trail. However, there is romance, drama, and a story in the careers of trail freighters and entrepreneurs in the 1850s and 1860s – men such as Alexander Majors, Ceran St. Vrain or Joseph B. Doyle. Their business activities merit study – not only as part of the heritage of the Santa Fe Trail, but also to illuminate the contribution of the trail and its people to the

economy and overall growth of the state of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain West. This is a fertile field for the next generation of Santa Fe Trail “buffs,” aficionados and scholars.

### *Ho! For Colorado! 1859 Gold Rush Bibliography*

During the years of the 1859 gold rush, the Santa Fe Trail was regarded as the easiest, though longest route to take to the Colorado mines. It also served as the link for subsidiary routes, such as the Cherokee Trail, the road from Bent’s Old Fort to Pueblo, Colorado, and extensions into central Colorado via Ute Pass or routes along the Arkansas River. The Santa Fe Trail had a prominent role in the initial opening of the Colorado gold regions, in an emigrant’s choice of routes to the gold fields from the east, with regard to the men and material that subsequently moved over these routes and in the trade between Missouri River towns and new settlements such as Denver, Colorado City [precursor to Colorado Springs], Cañon City and the South Park region of the upper Arkansas and South Platte rivers. This bibliography particularly reflects these elements in the history and heritage of the trail in the 1859 Colorado gold rush.

The following items are divided into four sections: newspapers, primary sources, 1859 guidebooks and secondary sources. The primary sources are extensively annotated to highlight their importance to the story of the Santa Fe Trail in the Colorado gold rush. Some secondary sources are similarly annotated; those not annotated are not central to the interpretation of the history and heritage of the trail in the late 1850s and 1860s with respect to the gold rush but provide pertinent information. All spellings, grammar, capitalizations, etc. in quotations in the following annotations are not corrected or identified, viz. [sic], but are as they appear in the original.

### Newspapers Cited or Referenced

<i>Canon City Times</i>	Cañon City, CO
<i>Daily Rocky Mountain News</i>	Denver, CO
<i>Journal of Commerce</i>	Kansas City, MO
<i>Lawrence Republican</i>	Lawrence, KS
<i>Leavenworth Times</i>	Leavenworth, KS
<i>Missouri Republican</i>	St. Louis, MO
<i>New York Herald Tribune</i>	New York City, NY
<i>Rocky Mountain Weekly News</i>	Denver, CO

### Primary Sources

Bieber, Ralph P., ed. "Diary of a Journey to the Pike's Peak Gold Mines in 1859." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 14 (December 1927): 360-378. Diary of George M. Willing. This article is available online from institutions subscribing to the service JSTOR, at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/0161391X.html>. Accessed August 27, 2012 at Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

George M. Willing took the Santa Fe Trail to Pueblo, and then the Cherokee Trail to Denver and the mines. He left western Missouri sometime in the middle of April, 1859. His diary opens "On the Arkansas, May 25<sup>th</sup>," and closes June 21<sup>st</sup>, when he notes, "Have been to the mountains. . . ." (362, 377) His trip to the mines evidently was not a pleasant experience. Of the journey west along the Arkansas, he writes, "Still creeping up the left bank of this interminable, abominable river, in the direction of Fort Bent, which seems to recede as we advance." Also, "It seems we are never to come up to that Fort, nor yet in sight of the Mountains." (363, 364)

Burns, Thomas F. "The Town of Wilmington and the Santa Fe Trail." *Kansas Historical Collections* 11 (1909-1910): 597-599. Accessed online November 16, 2012 at <http://www.wabaunsee.org/index.php/a-earlyhist-2/ex-pp?showall=&start=2>.

Burns provides a snapshot of Wilmington, Kansas, where he settled in 1859. Wilmington was "then a stage station on the Santa Fe trail," as Burns describes it. He continues, "The village or station of Wilmington in 1859 consisted of one two-story

house of some half a dozen rooms (used as a hotel), a blacksmith shop, a wagon maker's shop and several dwelling houses, all build of concrete.” (598) This is the scene, then, that 1859 gold seekers on the Santa Fe Trail would have encountered.

Carvalho, Solomon Nunes. *Incidents of travel and adventure in the Far West: with Col. Frémont's last expedition across the Rocky Mountains ; including three months' residence in Utah, and a perilous trip across the great American desert to the Pacific*. New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860. Accessed online June 25, 2012 at <http://archive.org/details/incidentsoftrave00carviala>.

Solomon Nunes Carvalho was a portrait painter in New York City who, in the 1840s or early 1850s, learned the new daguerreotype filming process, realizing that photography might undermine his portraiture business. He was hired as a photographer by John Charles Frémont to accompany his ill-fated Fourth Expedition of 1848-1849. This expedition moved west from Westport, on the Missouri River, to Fort Riley, up the Solomon Fork of the Smoky Hill, and then southwest to the Arkansas River and the Santa Fe Trail. Frémont's party followed the Arkansas via the Bent's Old Fort to Pueblo, Colorado, and thence attempted to cross the Rockies. Carvalho chronicles the usual incidents of trail travel, including buffalo hunts and encounters with Native peoples. Though his book was published in 1860, there is no evidence of its use by a Colorado gold seeker, but it does provide a glimpse of the Santa Fe Trail just a few years before the 1859 gold rush. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Conard, Howard Louis. *“Uncle Dick Wootton, The Pioneer Frontiersman of the Rocky Mountain Region*. Chicago: W. E. Dibble & Co, 1890. Available in later editions. Can be read online at <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89066075789#page/9/mode/1up>, but only with requisite subscription service.

Richens Lacy Wootton is one of the most well-known figures in the history of the fur and Indian trade in the Southwest and is central to the economic development of

southeastern Colorado. It is always best to corroborate “Uncle Dick’s” memories with other sources, though his basic chronology is sound.

Conner, Daniel Ellis. *A Confederate in the Colorado Gold Fields*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970. Edited by Donald J. Berthrong and Odessa Davenport.

This is one of the better and more accessible accounts of an emigrant journey to Colorado in 1859 along the Santa Fe Trail. Conner and his party left the Weston, Missouri/Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, area in early April, 1859. From that point on, Conner is vague on dates but long on detail. He comments at greater length than almost any other emigrant on interaction with the Plains Indians, from central Kansas into southeastern Colorado. He also presents a full picture of the territory between Bent’s New Fort [Fort Wise/Fort Lyon] and Pueblo. His party took the Cherokee Trail north to Denver and the mines. Conner wrote this narrative after the Civil War, using notes taken during his trip to Colorado.

Elder, Jane Lenz and David J. Weber, eds. *Trading in Santa Fe: John M. Kingsbury’s Correspondence with James Josiah Webb, 1853-1861*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, DeGolyer Library, 1996.

John M. Kingsbury was the junior partner in the prominent Santa Fe Trading firm of Webb and Kingsbury. As such, he represented the business in Santa Fe and wrote numerous letters from there to his partner, James Josiah Webb, who spent much of his time “back east.” Although there is not a lot of information in these letters on the receipt or impact of the news of gold discoveries in Colorado in 1858 and 1859, Kingsbury does offer an “on the scene” glimpse of the situation, including the beginning of trade between New Mexico and the Colorado mining communities. On November 20, 1858, he writes, “We have favorable reports from Pikes Peak. There is no question about there being

plenty of gold there. For the best information I can get it is from 3[00] or to 350 miles from here. However, it has created no excitement here, and I think very few will go from here unless it attracts a few of the Gamblers which we shall be glad to get shed of. Col. [Ceran] St. Vrain is about starting a train loaded principally with Flour under charge of St. James.” (127)

“The Great West; the Commerce of the Great Plains of North America. The Past and Present Condition of the Great Overland Traffic with New Mexico, the Pike’s Peak Gold Regions and Utah.” *The New York Herald*, November 27, 1860. Available online from various subscription-only full-text newspaper sites.

In the early 1860s many newspapers around the United States printed, or reprinted, assessments of the Colorado gold rush and the political, social and economic circumstances in the West and Southwest at the time. This long article from the *New York Herald* is one of the best, on several levels. Although it considers all the routes to the mines, it provides a long history of the Santa Fe Trail and trade and emphasizes the dominant role of Kansas City in the Southwestern trade. There is a detailed presentation of a “Statement Showing the Extent of the Overland Transportation Business of Various Missouri river Towns to New Mexico, the Pike’s Peak Gold Regions, Utah and Points on the Plains,” c. 1860, including numbers of men, mules, oxen, wagons and weight of freight carried by various freighting firms. Nationalist sentiments also are expressed, such as in the opening paragraph: “Of all modern conquerors, Anglo-American civilization is one of the most peaceable and successful. Under the accelerating influence of that perhaps most powerful of Anglo-American impulses – love of gain – its steady march progresses from East to West in ever quickening strides.”

Greeley, Horace. “The Kansas Gold Mines,” *Weekly Rocky Mountain News*, 1:6 (June 11, 1859), 5. Available online through the Colorado Historical Society’s “Colorado’s

Historical Newspapers,” at <http://www.historycolorado.org/researchers/online-research>. Accessed August 27, 2012.

This “manifesto” reporting on the state of affairs in the Colorado gold fields in the spring of 1859 is one of the most famous and influential reports of the day. Although it is signed by Horace Greeley, A. D. Richardson, and Henry Villard, it was published in the *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* as “Greeley’s Report.” It is not central to understanding the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the Colorado rush, but it should not be overlooked. Of the journey across the plains, regardless of what route was taken, they wrote, “Part of this distance is a desert, yielding grass, wood, and water only at intervals of several miles, and then very scantily. To attempt to cross this desert on foot is madness – suicide – murder.” This report has been widely reprinted. It is perhaps most readily accessible in print in LeRoy R. Hafen, *Colorado Gold Rush: Contemporary Letters and Reports, 1858-1859*. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Hafen, LeRoy R. *Colorado Gold Rush: Contemporary Letters and Reports, 1858-1859*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1941. Reissued by the Porcupine Press, Philadelphia, 1974.

This volume reprints hundreds of letters, articles, “reports from correspondents,” etc., found in dozens of newspapers from 1858 and 1859 concerning the rush to Colorado and developments in the mining regions. There is a wealth of material for evaluating the role of the Santa Fe Trail as a route to the mines. Especially important are items culled from the Kansas City *Journal of Commerce*. This entire compilation is indispensable.

Hafen, LeRoy R. *Reports from Colorado. The Wildman Letters, 1859-1865, with other related letters and newspaper reports, 1859*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1961.

This volume of Hafen's primary material relating to the Colorado gold rush is less important for Santa Fe Trail material than his other book-length publications. Thomas Wildman and his party, for instance, in Hafen's words, "is traveling the route through central Kansas," though it is not clear whether or not this is the Smoky Hill Trail. Various extracts from the *Kansas City Journal of Commerce* and other newspapers have some value, particularly concerning freighting supplies from Missouri River towns to Colorado via the Santa Fe Trail.

Hafen, LeRoy R. *To the Pike's Peak Gold Fields, 1859*. Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark, 1942. Reprinted, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.

In this volume Hafen edits two diaries of interest for the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1859 Colorado gold rush, that of Charles C. Post ("The Arkansas River Route") and of A. M. Gass ("From Texas to Pike's Peak"). Charles Post left Decatur, Illinois, where he practiced law, on May 3, 1859 and arrived at the "head of Cherry Creek" on June 26<sup>th</sup>. His diary is of interest given his observations on the mundane aspects of trail travel – broken axles, washing clothes in the Arkansas, fixing meals, and reading Shakespeare's *As You Like It* along the way! Gass's journey is an unusual one. He leaves Bonham, Texas, south of the Red River, on April 11, 1859, travels north to strike the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Road at Edwards' Trading Post on the Canadian River [Oklahoma], follows the Canadian to the region of Antelope Hills [today near the Texas-Oklahoma border], then heads due north across the Oklahoma Panhandle to the Arkansas River, which he reaches near the Cimarron Crossing. He follows the Arkansas, and hence the Santa Fe Trail, to Bent's New Fort, then on to Fountain City [Pueblo], Colorado, and then heads north on the Cherokee Trail to the mines. When he gets to the

Arkansas he exclaims, “Wagons – wagons – Pike’s Peak wagons. Well! there were a few of them – I presume three hundred ox-wagons in sight.” (223)

Hafen, LeRoy R. “The Voorhees Diary of the Lawrence Party’s Trip to Pike’s Peak, 1858.” *Colorado Magazine* 12 (March 1935): 42-54.

Augustus Voorhees was a member of the Lawrence Party, the second group of gold seekers to venture west to Colorado in 1858. It was two weeks behind the Russell Party. Both are famous in the history of the Colorado gold rush. Both the Russell and Lawrence parties followed the Santa Fe Trail. Besides offering a picture of the trail and gold seekers in 1858, Hafen’s notes for the diary, especially with reference to geographic locations, are very valuable. As an addendum, Hafen reprints a “log” of the route and distances published by William B. Parsons, one of the members of the Lawrence Party, in his guidebook *The New Gold Mines of Western Kansas*, which he issued upon his return from Colorado in December 1858.

Kellogg, David. “Across The Plains in 1858.” *The Trail* 5:7 (December 1912): 5-10, and 5:8 (January 1913): 5-12. Available online through a subscriber-only service at <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000638720>. Accessed August 27, 2012 at Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

This account is one of the most fascinating accounts of the “Pike’s Peak or Bust” syndrome. Kellogg and his party leave Kansas City on September 17, 1858, for Colorado via the Santa Fe Trail. His depiction of the trail is detailed – and laconic: “September 30<sup>th</sup>. Drove to Cow Creek and camped. Caught some fish in this stream. . . . We shoot much at prairie dogs but none of the party has yet been able to get one. At the flash of the rifle they drop into their holes and disappear.” (5:7, 6) He spends the winter of 1858-1859 prospecting, undergoing great hardship. On March 13<sup>th</sup> he records, “Drove to Auraria and camped. Dick Wooten has opened up a store here with goods brought from

New Mexico.” (5:8, 10) In the spring he and several companions head back to Missouri via the Platte River Road – and pretend that they are coming from Salt Lake City to avoid the ire of emigrants headed west to the Colorado mines who are beginning to have doubts about the wealth of gold there. It is an interesting twist to the Colorado gold rush story.

Larimer, William. *The Reminiscences of General William Larimer and of his son William H. H. Larimer, Two of the Founders of Denver City*. Pittsburg: William Larimer Mellon, 1918. Accessed online November 19, 2012 at <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101074863737#page/1/mode/1up>.

Lindsey, David, ed. “The Journal of an 1859 Pike’s Peak Gold Seeker,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 22 (Winter 1956), 321-341. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly/13286>.

This is the diary of William Salisbury, who left Cleveland, Ohio, for the Colorado mines on April 4, 1859. He and his party pass through Westport, Missouri, on April 30<sup>th</sup> and camp five miles beyond, headed west on the Santa Fe Trail. He notes the communities of Burlingame and Wilmington and says of Running Turkey Creek, “There is no timber here and poore water There is wone house here maid of small logs and turf and a grocery in a wagon . . . The nearest timber is within 8 miles.” (328) He offers many insights into daily life traveling along the trail and in camp, such as, on Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>: “It was decided last night to remain here [22 miles west of Bent’s Old Fort] today. I have been working and mending. Been down to the River to swim Have been reading some. It has been a beautiful day.” (331) His party arrives at Fountain City [Pueblo] on June 9<sup>th</sup> and turns north on the Cherokee Trail.

Majors, Alexander. *Seventy Years on the Frontier*. Columbus, OH: Long’s College Book Company, 1950. First published in 1893. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://archive.org/details/yearsonseventyfr00majorich>.

It is difficult to assess Alexander Majors' *Seventy Years on the Frontier*. Majors was involved in just about every important aspect of transportation through the years to New Mexico, Colorado, and other points west. He was, of course, the "Majors" of the famous firm of "Russell, Majors and Waddell," which was involved in freighting, stagecoach lines and, most notably, the Pony Express. These memoirs have to be "mined" for information on the Santa Fe Trail and the Colorado gold rush, but there are chapters entitled, "The Gold Fever," "The Denver of Early Days," and "Kansas City before the War," which are informative.

McCain, G. S. "A Trip from Atchison, Kansas, to Laurette, Colorado, Diary of G. S. McCain." *Colorado Magazine* 27 (April 1950): 95-102.

The value of this diary is two-fold. First, though it is undated, it most likely is from 1864 or 1865, making it a relatively rare account of Santa Fe Trail emigrant travel. Second, McCain's party initially journeys via Fort Riley and the Smoky Hill Trail but at Ellsworth, Kansas, it turns south and strike out for the Santa Fe Trail, joining it at Cow Creek. As they trek west, McCain mentions the various military posts on the trail. He and his party head for the Colorado mines through "Canion City." McCain has a sense of humor. The very first entry is for September 10<sup>th</sup>: "Yoked up wild cattle. Had lots of fun. One got so cross we had to shoot him." (95)

Mead, James R. "The Saline River Country in 1859." *Kansas Historical Collections* 9 (1905-1906): 8-19.

James Mead did not follow the Santa Fe Trail to Colorado. He did move to central Kansas in 1859 and open a "ranch" in the Smoky Hill Valley. He makes various comments highlighting the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the emigration westward in 1859. Of trade on the trail that year he writes, "Any camping-place on the Santa Fe Trail was as

good a point for business as the main street of a town. . . . The Santa Fe Trail was about 100 feet wide, worn smooth and hard by the broad tires of countless wagons. . . . Among others we met Colonel [William] Bent, with a train-load of buffalo-robbs and furs from his fort up the Arkansas. Some of these trains were accompanied by merchants from Santa Fe, riding in carriages and carrying large amounts of specie.” (10)

Mead, James R. “Trails in Southern Kansas.” *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society* 5 (1889-1896): 88-93.

James Mead moved to central Kansas in 1859. He did not join the emigration to the Colorado gold fields, but in his memoirs commented on the state of the Santa Fe Trail at the time. In this particular article, he writes, “At Burlingame the writer first saw the great Santa Fe trail, connecting people of diverse race and language, separated by hundreds of miles of savage wilderness. This huge trail, 60 to 100 feet wide, was worn smooth and solid by constant travel of ponderous wagon carrying 8,000 to 10,000 pounds each. Sometimes three wagons trailed together; from 10 to 30 constituting a wagon train; drawn by 8, 16, or 20 oxen or mules each; coming in from New Mexico loaded with wool, hides, robes, or silver, returning with almost everything used by man, woman, or child.” (91)

Möllhausen, H.B. “Over the Santa Fe Trail Through Kansas in 1858.” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 16 (November 1948), 337-380. Translated by John A. Burzel, edited and annotated by Robert Taft. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly/13286>.

Although Heinrich Balduin Möllhausen travelled the Santa Fe Trail in 1858 – from Santa Fe east to Leavenworth, Kansas – a year before the great rush to the Rockies in 1859, his extensive and effusive diary provides one of the more detailed pictures of the trail at the beginning of the Colorado gold rush. In particular, he describes various towns

and settlements which the “‘59ers” would encounter, including Allison’s Ranch, farming and trading at Diamond Spring, Council Grove and Leavenworth. Möllhausen had begun this trip through the West [he made two others] in 1857 as a member of Lieut. Joseph C. Ives’ exploration of the lower Colorado River. This expedition was abandoned in the spring of 1858 at Fort Defiance, Arizona. Möllhausen and other expedition members then wended their way to Santa Fe, heading east from there via the Santa Fe Trail on June 16, 1858. Möllhausen would not have met either the Russell Party or the Lawrence Party, the two groups which traveled from Kansas to the gold fields in 1858. The Russell Party was already in Colorado when Möllhausen left Santa Fe; the Lawrence party had passed beyond the Arkansas Crossing of the Arkansas by the time Möllhausen reached it. He does not mention the news of the Colorado gold fields which was beginning to surface at the time. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Parsons, William B. “Report of William B. Parsons.” Reprinted in LeRoy Hafen, *Pike’s Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859 by Luke Tierney, William B. Parsons and Summaries of the Other Fifteen*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1941, 322-335. Originally published in the *Lawrence Republican*, October 28, 1858.

William Parsons was a member of the Lawrence Company which took the Santa Fe Trail to the Colorado mines in the spring of 1858. This is his firsthand and fresh account of the trip with details of weather, terrain, stream crossings, and encounters with U. S. Army detachments and Native peoples. It is a snapshot of the trail in 1858.

Parsons was also the author of one of the better 1859 guidebooks, issued at Cincinnati in 1859, *The New Gold Mines of Western Kansas: Being a Complete Description of the Newly Discovered Gold Mines; the Different Routes, Camping Places, Tools and Outfit; and Containing Everything Important for the Emigrant and Miner to Know*.

Root, George A., ed. "Extracts from Diary of Captain Lambert Bowman Wolf." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1 (May 1932): 195-210. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly/13286>.

From 1856 to 1861, Captain Wolf "served in Company K, First U. S. cavalry, serving with his troops on the plains of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado and Indian Territory, and on a trip to Utah during the Mormon war." (195) During the summer of 1859, Wolf and his men patrolled the Santa Fe Trail out of Fort Riley. His entry for June 10<sup>th</sup> reads, in part, "Our summer's work is to guard emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail." (199) In the course of their duties, they visited [and Wolf briefly described] Beach's Ranch on Cow Creek and Allison's Ranch on Walnut Creek. He has routine dealings with the Kiowa and a violent encounter with a Pawnee. The command returned to Fort Riley on October 2, 1859.

Spring, Agnes Wright, ed. *A Bloomer Girl on Pike's Peak, 1858: Julia Archibald Holmes, First White Woman to Climb Pike's Peak*. Denver: Denver Public Library, 1949.

Julia Archibald Holmes, with her husband and her brother, traveled the Santa Fe Trail with the Lawrence Party, the second group to head for the purported Colorado gold fields in 1858. She provides an intimate and breezy account of that party's progress along the trail in letters addressed to a friend, "Sister Sayer," which were published in two eastern newspapers in 1859. Of her departure from Kansas, Holmes writes, "We were on our farm on the Neosho River, in Kansas, when news reached us that a company was fitting out in Lawrence for a gold adventure to Pike's Peak. Animated more by a desire to cross the plains and behold the great mountain chain of North America, than by an expectation of realizing the floating gold stories, we hastily laid a supply of provisions in the covered wagon, and two days thereafter, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of last June, were on the road to

join the Lawrence company. The next morning we reached the great Santa Fe Road, and passed the last frontier Post office, Council Grove.” (14)

Udell, John. *Journal Kept during a Trip across the Plains Containing An Account Of The Massacre Of A Portion Of His Party By The Mojave Indians In 1859*. Los Angeles: N. A. Kovach, 1946.

John Udell crossed the plains via the Santa Fe Trail in 1858, but he was headed for California, not Colorado. As he explained in his journal, “During the month of March I was engaged in preparing to emigrate to California with my aged wife – she being in the sixty-fifth year of her age, and I in the sixty-fourth year of my age. Our object in starting on so long and dangerous a journey, at such an advanced age, was, to have the care of, and to be sustained by, our children residing in California, in our feeble old age.” (1)

Though Udell’s traverse of the Santa Fe Trail was more or less routine, he does paint a relatively detailed picture of trail life for the 1858 season. His party took the Cimarron Route. As the editor of this journal, Lyle Wright, explains in his introduction, “At Albuquerque [the Udells] were persuaded to take Beale’s new road to the Colorado River, at which place tragedy befell them and they were compelled to retrace their steps to Albuquerque. . . .” In the spring of 1859, Udell resumed his trip to California, traveling with Beale’s road-construction party as far as the Colorado. (ix-x) This trip was beset with bad weather and altercations with Indians. The Udells eventually reached their goal, San Francisco.

Villard, Henry. *The Past and Present of the Pike’s Peak Gold Regions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932. Reprinted from the edition of 1860. Accessed online January 19, 2012 at <http://books.google.com/books?id=pxgeAAAAMAAJ>.

Henry Villard was one of the leading railroad moguls and newspaper owners in America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. But in 1859 he was a journalist/correspondent for the

*Cincinnati Commercial-Gazette*, which sent him to Colorado to report on the gold rush. One product of his tour was this book, *The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Regions*. While he never specifically deals with the Santa Fe Trail as a route to the mines, his account of the events of 1858, particularly regarding the Russell and Lawrence parties who did come via the trail, is valuable. He also comments on the general character, hopes, dreams and disappointments of Pikes Peak gold seekers.

Walter, Paul A. F., ed. "Diary of Sylvester Davis." *New Mexico Historical Review* 6 (October 1931): 383-416. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://archive.org/details/newmexicohistori06univrich>.

The value of this diary lies in the unique trip Sylvester Davis took once he reached the Colorado gold mines in the summer of 1859. He had come via the Platte River Road. For reasons not given in the diary, he and several companions decided in late August to travel to Santa Fe. They followed the Cherokee Trail along Fountain Creek to Pueblo, proceed from Pueblo to Raton Pass, and took the Santa Fe Trail through Rayado, Ocate Crossing, and Fort Union. Davis never returned to Colorado, instead marrying into a local family in Galisteo, New Mexico, where he remained for the rest of his life. He presents a unique view of a portion of the Santa Fe Trail during the gold fever of 1859.

### 1859 Gold Rush Guidebooks

The subject of 1859 Colorado gold rush guidebooks is complex, though at first glance it doesn't seem so. Booksellers, business houses, railroads and individual authors issued several dozen from 1858 into the early 1860s. Original copies of almost all of these publications are extremely rare, with many extant in only one or two copies. This situation was addressed by Dr.

Nolie Mumey and Dr. LeRoy Hafen, who sought out, provided commentary and reprinted 19 of these rare guidebook from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. Dr. Mumey was a medical doctor and aficionado and collector of Colorado history. Dr. Hafen was Colorado State Historian from 1924 to 1954. Today these reprints also have become difficult to consult or obtain. Most libraries restrict their use and buying them is expensive. The following annotations identify the Mumey and Hafen reprints.

Dr. Hafen also collected and edited various volumes of Colorado gold rush material, including letters, journals, diaries, newspaper articles, and guidebooks. The volume relating to guidebooks is cited immediately below; his other compilations are treated in other sections of this annotated bibliography.

David A. White provides another source for commentary on and reprints of 1859 guidebooks, in the publications listed immediately below. His *News of the Plains and Rockies* is a multi-volume work; Volume 7, Section N, "Gold Seekers, Pike's Peak, 1858-1865" is pertinent to the Colorado gold rush.

It is also notable that some guidebooks have become and continue to become available full text, online. Those available as of the writing of this study are so referenced.

Hafen, LeRoy, ed. *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859 by Luke Tierney, William B. Parsons and Summaries of the Other Fifteen*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1941.

This is Volume 9 in The Southwest Historical Series issued by the Arthur H. Clark Company. Hafen's "Historical Introduction," pp. 19-80, places the guidebooks in the context of the gold rush. This volume was reprinted as *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks 1859*, by the Porcupine Press, Philadelphia, 1974.

White, David A., compiler and annotator. *News of the Plains and Rockies, 1803-1865: Original Narratives of Overland Travel and Adventure Selected from the Wagner-Camp and Becker Bibliography of Western Americana*. Spokane, WA: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1996 - .

White, David A., compiler and annotator. *Plains & Rockies, 1800-1865: One Hundred Twenty Proposed Additions to the Wagner-Camp and Becker Bibliography of Travel and Adventure in the American West, with 33 Selected Reprints*. Spokane, WA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2001.

*Note: All spellings, grammar, capitalizations, etc. in quotations in the following annotations are not corrected or identified, viz. [sic], but are as they appear in the original.*

Allen, Obridge. *Allen's Guide Book and Map to the Gold Fields of Kansas & Nebraska and Great Salt Lake City*. Washington: R. A. Waters, 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, 1953. Summary in Hafen, *Pike's Peak Guidebooks*.

Allen devotes five pages to "Route No. 1, *From Independence, Missouri, via. Kansas City and Westport, by Hall & Porter's Independence and New Mexico overland mail route to Pawnee Fork, thence by Coone creeks, Old Fort Atkinson, Bent's Fort, on Arkansaw, to Denver city at the mouth of Cherry Creek.*" Three of the five pages are a table of distances. The text includes: "The road is fine and hard until it reaches Fort Atkinson, on the Arkansas river; from Fort Atkinson, portions of it is sandy and heavy, passing over spurs of sand-hills; it runs along on the south side of the river, until within 12 miles of the old town of Pueblo. . . ." Also, "The country between Pawnee Fork and Bent's new Fort, is infested by roving bands of Camanchee, Cheyenne, Kioway and Pawnee Indians, whose hostile and thievish propensities greatly annoy emigrants." Hafen, in his *Pike's Peak Guidebooks*, notes, "As to 'The Route' the author [Allen] expresses no preference." Hafen also mentions that no map from Allen's guidebook is extant.

Combs, J. H. and W. B. S. *Emigrant's Guide to the South Platte and Pike's Peak Gold Mines*. Terre Haute, IN: R. H. Simpson & Co., 1859. Summarized in David White, *News of the Plains & Rockies*, 7:162-163.

Only one extant copy of this guidebook is available, at the Denver Public Library. White in his summary writes, “This is one of the few 1859 Pike’s Peak guidebooks written by someone who actually went over the ground in 1858.” He quotes Combs, “There were fifty-six of us in one train who left Westport and Kansas City, and every wagon was drawn by oxen.” The guidebook has a table of distances from Kansas City to Auraria “via the Santa Fe Trail, Arkansas River, Fountain Creek, and Cherry Creek. . . .” (162) White suggests that this was one of the more reliable guidebooks.

Drake, Samuel Adams. *Hints and Information for the Use of Emigrants to Pike’s Peak, Embracing a Concise and Comprehensive Sketch of the Gold Region, the Best Routes, Points of Outfit*. Leavenworth, Kansas: [no publisher listed], 1859. Reprinted in White, *News of the Plains and Rockies*, 7:443-456.

Drake’s *Hints and Information* is included in this compilation as an excellent example of a guidebook written to promote a particular town and route, in this case Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Platte River Road. After touting the Platte River Road, Drake asserts, “[T]he Arkansas or Santa Fé route, is *notoriously unsafe* for travelers. Its entire length is subject to hostile incursions from the most formidable and warlike tribes on the continent, and during the fall and winter passed, the Indians have been in undisputed possession of the route. *The mails have been plundered and the passengers massacred in cold blood. . . .*” (447)

Eastin, Lucian J. *Emigrant’s Guide to Pike’s Peak*. Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory: L. J. Eastin, 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, 1959. See also Hafen, *Pike’s Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 229-234, and White, *News of the Plains and Rockies*, 7:243-294.

Eastin promotes Leavenworth as the outfitting point for emigrants headed to Colorado and favors the “Smoky Hill Fork Route” as the “Best Route To The Gold Mines.” His main objection to the Santa Fe Trail is that it is too long, compared to the

Smoky Hill Trail. It tends too far south for him. As he says, “If the miner selects the southern route, he turns his face southward. . .” and, of course, the Colorado mines lie due west of Leavenworth. His guidebook is accompanied by a map showing the Platte River Road, the “Smoky Hill Fork”, and the “Great Santa Fe Route.” Hafen notes that only one original copy of Eastin is known to be extant. It is housed at the University of Kansas, Lawrence.

Gunn, Otis. *New Map and Hand-Book of Kansas & the Gold Mines: Containing Descriptions and Statistics of the Indian Tribes, Settlement, Soil, Productions, Climate, Roads, Rail Roads, Telegraphs, Mail Routes, Land Districts, Legislatures &c.: with Description of All the Routes to the New Gold Mines, Outfits for Miners, and a Variety of Other Useful Information.* Pittsburg: W. S. Haven, 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, 1952. See also Hafen, *Pike’s Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 235-240.

Gunn devotes much space to the prospect of the opening of an improved Smoky Hill Trail in 1860. He asks, though, “But how happens it that this route is not already opened?” His answer is, “The reason is obvious. The Santa Fe road has been a great thoroughfare for many years, for nearly 400 miles toward the mines.” With further reference to the Santa Fe Trail, he notes “For those outfitting at Leavenworth, the Northern [Platte River] route is a very few miles the shortest, but the Southern [Santa Fe Trail] is said to be the easiest road to haul over . . . and water and wood more plenty than on the Northern route.” (42-43) He includes a table of “Distances to the Mines” for both the Platte River Road and the Santa Fe Trail and the map appended to his guidebook shows both routes and lists the Smoky Hill Trail as “Proposed Route – Central Route.”

Gunnison, J. W. and William Gilpin. *Guide to the Kansas Gold Mines at Pike’s Peak: Describing the Routes, Camping Places, Tools, Outfits, Etc.* Cincinnati: E. Mendenhall, 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, 1952. See also, Hafen, *Pike’s Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 241-246.

Gunnison and Gilpin clearly favor the Santa Fe Trail as the route to the Colorado mines. They do say that if an emigrant is in “the country bordering the Missouri River in Iowa and Nebraska as far as Council Bluffs and above, probably the best route would be by Fort Laramie [Platte River Road].” But regarding the Santa Fe Trail, they continue, “To all East of the Mississippi, and for a hundred miles west of it, the best route by far is by the great Santa Fe Road to Pawnee Fork, and thence following the Arkansas to Bent’s Fort and the mines. . . . This is the route traveled by the mountain traders for half a century, and is a well beaten, plain wagon road, the entire distance. There have passed over it the present season over ten thousand wagons, as far as the crossing of the Arkansas. . . . It is also the route which the stock drovers take to California. But to those who may not have access to those who are familiar with the route, they can gain all the information they desire from the reports of Fremont, Beale and Gunnison.” (8-9) The only “Table of Distances” provided is for the Santa Fe Trail and it is accompanied by a list of nine “advantages of the Santa Fe and Arkansas over any other route. . . .” (19)

Hartley, William. *Map and Description of the Gold Regions in Western Kansas & Nebraska, with a Guide for Emigrants*. St. Louis: Wm. Hartley & Co., 1858. Discussed and reprinted in White, *News of the Plains and Rockies*, 7:229-241.

William Hartley was a member of the Lawrence Party of goldseekers, the next group after the Russell Party go to the Colorado gold fields in 1858. White, in *News of the Plains and Rockies*, discusses the importance of Hartley’s guidebook and reprints it and its accompanying map in its entirety. White says of the guidebook, “Hartley’s was possibly the earliest of all Pike’s Peak guidebooks, it certainly was the first to offer accurate mileage tables of the Platte and Arkansas routes, and it had the best of all maps

of the immediate diggings.” (229) An online copy of Hartley’s map can be viewed at <http://www.stcharlescapital.com/firm/history.php>. Accessed June 27, 2012.

Horner, William B. *The Gold Regions of Kansas and Nebraska: Being a Complete History of the First Year’s Mining Operations*. Chicago: W.H. Tobey & Co., 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, 1949. See also Hafen, *Pike’s Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 247-251.

Horner’s lengthy guidebook [67 pages plus advertisements] is long on speculation about the Colorado gold fields and activity there in 1858 but short on information on getting to the mines. The Santa Fe Trail is dismissed in three paragraphs. Horner says the road is good and there are fewer streams to cross than on other routes. Also, he writes, “This route was taken by most of the emigrants who visited the mines in the early part of last year. They were induced to take this road, however, from the impression that the mines would be found more south, than they turned out to be.” (54) The only other route Horner indicates is the Platte River Road. There is no table of distances for it or the Santa Fe Trail. His map looks helpful and contains much information on what railroads to take to Missouri River towns, but his Santa Fe Trail is merely a line drawn from Lawrence to the Great Bend of the Arkansas, then west.

“How To Get To Pike’s Peak Gold Mines.” *Harper’s Weekly* (2 April 1859), 220. Reprinted in White, *Plains & Rockies*, 440-444.

This article in the widely read magazine *Harper’s Weekly* says nothing about the Santa Fe Trail route to Colorado, recommending only the Platte River Road. However, the map accompanying it does show the Santa Fe Trail, but interestingly the road suggested diverges from the trail east of Bent’s Old Fort, showing the route going up the “Sandy Fork” [Big Sandy Creek in eastern Colorado today, a tributary of the Arkansas

leading to present-day Limon, Colorado]. Any emigrant following this route would have been in trouble, most notably from lack of water.

Marcy, Randolph B. *The Prairie Traveler, A Handbook for Overland Expeditions, with Maps, Illustrations, and Itineraries of the Principal Routes between the Mississippi and the Pacific*. See also Hafen, *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 252-253. Accessed online January 19, 2012 at <http://ebooks.library.ualberta.ca/local/prairietravelerh00marcuoft>.

As LeRoy Hafen notes in his *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, "This volume is a general guide for western travelers, rather than one intended exclusively for emigrants to the Pike's Peak gold region. . . ." (252) Marcy does consider almost every conceivable route to Colorado, from southern Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Missouri. His relatively detailed tables of distance include, "From Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Santa Fé and Albuquerque, New Mexico," "From Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fé, by the way of the ferry of the Kansas River and the Cimarron," and "From Westport, Missouri, to the gold diggings at Pike's Peak and 'Cherry Creek,' N. T., via the Arkansas River." He also discusses the Cherokee Trail, giving its general direction, but does not have a table of distances for it.

McGowen, D. and George H. Hildt. *Map of the United States West of the Mississippi Showing the Routes to Pike's Peak, Overland Mail Route to California and Pacific Railroad Surveys*. St. Louis: Leopold Gast & Bro., 1859. Reprinted in White, *News of the Plains and Rockies*, 7: 324-334. Just the map from this guidebook is available at <http://130.132.81.65/PATREQIMG/size3/D1073/1052467.jpg>. Accessed June 28, 2012.

This item has little narrative. Essentially it is a table of distances for various routes as indicated on an accompanying map – one of the best maps of all the Pike's Peak gold rush guidebooks. The Santa Fe Trail is admirably covered as "Route from Kansas City to the mines." David White provides an analysis of the map's value and accuracy.

Oliver, J. W. *Guide to the New Gold Region of Western Kansas and Nebraska: with Table of Distances and Accurate Map*. New York: J. W. Oliver, 1859. Reprinted by Nolie

Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, 1951. See also Hafen, *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 254-260.

Hafen in his *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks* concludes that this "book was apparently put out to advance the interests of Leavenworth City," though its map, in addition to the Santa Fe Trail, indicates "Fremont's Trail, 1843-44" [Smoky Hill Trail], a "Central Route" [Republican River] and "Road to Oregon" [Platte River – though it shows no connection from the Platte River road to the Colorado mines]. (254) As for the Santa Fe Trail, the route from Fort Riley is discussed and described, Oliver noting, "In 1855 and 1856 . . . a shorter route from this point was examined, surveyed, graded and bridged, by Lieut. Bryan, U. S. Top. Engineers, which, passing over the rivers and streams west of Fort Riley by good substantial bridges, has shortened the road, to Bent's Fort and New Mexico nearly 100 miles over the old route, via Little Arkansas, &c. &c." (18) A brief table of distances is provided.

Parker and Huyett. *The Illustrated Miners' Hand-book and Guide to Pike's Peak: with a New and Reliable Map, Showing all the Routes, and the Gold Regions of Western Kansas and Nebraska*. St. Louis: Parker & Huyett, 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, c. 1947. See also, Hafen, *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*), 261-269.

This is a lengthy guidebook with much information on "who should go to the mines," outfitting, and even "prospects for farmers" in Colorado. In a candidness not usual in these guidebooks, the authors write, "Each route to the New Eldorado has its firm friends and its active enemies – their opinions depending principally upon the location of their residence and their interests." (53) Also unusually, concerning the "Santa Fe Or Arkansas Route," it is noted, "From the 'forks of the Santa Fe road,' there are two routes, the left keeping up the Arkansas, and the right making a cut off by way of the head waters of Coon Creek. This is called the 'Dry Route,' having no water, except

in pools in the wet part of the season.” (54) There is an excellent map in this guidebook showing the various routes to Colorado.

Parsons, William B. *The New Gold Mines of Western Kansas: Being a Complete Description of the Newly Discovered Gold Mines; the Different Routes, Camping Places, Tools and Outfit; and Containing Everything Important for the Emigrant and Miner to Know.* Cincinnati: Geo. S. Blanchard, 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, 1951. See also Hafen, *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 155-205.

This is one of the great 1859 Colorado gold rush guidebooks. It covers every aspect of emigrating and setting up at the mines. It discusses the routes to the mines in more detail than most other guidebooks, commenting on the various settlements, stream crossings, topography and land cover that the emigrants will encounter. Advice is interspersed with the itinerary and mileages, such as, in the ten fulsome pages on the “Southern Route” [Santa Fe Trail]: “*Always cross a creek before camping.*” (28). There is a table of distances for the Santa Fe Trail. Hafen in *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks* reprints Parsons in its entirety.

Pease, Edwin R. and William Cole. *Complete Guide to the Gold Districts of Kansas & Nebraska: Containing Valuable Information with regard to Routes, Distances, Etc.* Chicago: William H. Rand, Printer, 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, 1959. See also, Hafen, *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 270-274.

Pease and Cole's *Complete Guide* provides no narrative description of any route to the Colorado mines from Missouri River towns. It does carry various tables of distance, such as “Distances by the Southern Route from Kansas City via Arkansas River to Cherry Creek.” (10) It has a splendid map, with the Santa Fe Trail identified as “Southern Road by Bent's Fort to the Mines – To Cherry Creek Diggins.”

*Pike's Peak. Great Through Line Between the East and West, via Cincinnati and St. Louis by the Ohio & Mississippi Broad-gauge Railroad; with Map of Western Connections, including the Kansas Gold Fields.* Cincinnati: Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Company, 1859. See

Hafen, *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 275-277, and White, *News of the Plains and Rockies*, 7:387-393.

This guidebook was published to promote the Ohio & Mississippi Broad-Gauge Railroad from Cincinnati to St. Louis as *the* gateway route to the Colorado mines. It is mentioned here only for its map, which is an example of a map so inadequate it is to be hoped no emigrant relied on it.

Pratt, C. N. *Pacific Railroad of Missouri: the Old Established and Most Reliable Route to Kansas, Nebraska, and All Points on the Missouri River: the Most Direct Route to the Newly Discovered Gold Fields of Pike's Peak and Cherry Creek*. Cincinnati, [no printer indicated], 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey, 1963. See also, White, *News of the Plains and Rockies*, 7: 395-406.

This guidebook has a more detailed table of distances, "Southern Route From Kansas City to the Gold Mines, via Arkansas River," than most other guidebooks. Otherwise it is unremarkable, though its map does show five routes to the gold fields: a "Military Route," the "Salt Lake Mail Route," "Fremont's route via Republican Fork," the "Smoky Hill Route," and the "Santa Fe and Independence Mail Route." It touts the "Pacific Railroad of Missouri" as "The Old Established and Most Reliable Route to Kansas, Nebraska, and all points on the Missouri River." Of four sentences referring to the "Southern Route," the first two read, "The Southern Route via Arkansas River, has long been opened to the emigrant and can be travelled at all seasons of the year. This being the great Santa Fe Route, numerous small stations will be found on its line." (5)

Pratt, John J. and Francis A. Hunt. *A Guide to the Gold Mines of Kansas: Containing an Accurate Account and Reliable Map of the Most Direct Railroad Routes from the Atlantic Cities to the Farthest Point West Now Reached by Railroad Communication via HANNIBAL & ST. JOE R. R., and from thence to the Gold Mines; also, All Other Practicable Routes*. Chicago: C. Scott & Co., 1859. Reprinted by Noley Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, c. 1950. See also Hafen, *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 278-283.

This guide, as with many others, has information on outfitting, the prospects in the mining regions, and so forth. It provides a table of distances for the “Santa Fe or Southern Route, via Arkansas River and Bent’s Fort.” It lists a mail station at Diamond Spring, a trading post at Cottonwood Creek, a trading post at “Little Arkansas,” and “Allison’s Ranche” at Walnut Creek, giving the trail an aura of settlement. It takes the reader to “Fontaine qui Bouille,” – Pueblo, Colorado, today, and then lists a number of camp grounds on the Cherokee Trail to Cherry Creek. The map with the guidebook shows three routes west, “South Platte Route,” “Republican Route,” and the Santa Fe Trail. Interestingly the map indicates the Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail, in this case from Pueblo, but doesn’t depict any topographical features or settlements south of what is now the New Mexico-Colorado border.

Randall, P. K. *A Complete Guide To The Gold Mines In Kansas And Nebraska*. Boston: Rand & Avery Printers, 1859. Full text in LeRoy Hafen, *Pike’s Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 225-228, and reprinted in David White, *News of the Plains and Rockies*, 7: 295-300.

This guide is mentioned here only because David White in his *News of the Plains and Rockies* says, “This ‘Complete Guide’ was about as incomplete as a Pike’s Peak guide could be. . . .” It did not recommend the “Southern Route” or Santa Fe Trail and, anyway, again as White writes, “The rejected southern route was mistakenly said to be ‘via Texas.’” (295)

Redpath, James and Richard Hinton. *Hand-book to Kansas Territory and the Rocky Mountains’ Gold Region; Accompanied by Reliable Maps and a Preliminary Treatise on the Pre-emption Laws of the United States*. New York: J. H. Colton, 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey and LeRoy Hafen, 1954. See also Hafen, *Pike’s Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 284-290.

Redpath’s guide has only a short paragraph on the Santa Fe Trail as a route to the Colorado mines. In part it says, “This is the route traversed by the Santa Fé traders, and

in general is well supplied with wood and water. Its disadvantages seem to be its length. Its advantages, for those who wish to start early, the fact of being the most southerly, and, consequently, grass will be obtainable earlier.” (149) Redpath’s map does not specifically name the Santa Fe Trail or even call it the “Arkansas Route,” though it does say, “Route explored for Pacific R.R. by Capt. Gunnison.”

Reed, Jacob W. *Map of and Guide to the Kansas Gold Region*. New York: J. H. Colton, 1859. Reprinted by Nolie Mumey, 1959. Reprinted also in White, *News of the Plains and Rockies*, 7: 407-422.

The author of this guide, Dr. Jacob W. Reed, claimed to have traveled both the Platte River Road and the Santa Fe Trail in 1858, in the company of a Captain J. S. Pemberton. From the detail provided about the routes he does seem to be familiar with them. There is no table of distances, but instead Reed writes in narrative form, giving mileage and commenting on camping places, topographical features, stream crossings, etc. Examples of his style and advice include, of Allison’s Ranch, “This being a considerable trading-post you can procure most anything you wish;” of the region around Pawnee Fork, “You are now in the Cheyenne country, and should it be late in the fall or winter, you will find most all of that tribe in this section for the purpose of killing buffalo. These are very dangerous Indians, and you should be on your guard both night and day;” of Puebla [Pueblo]: “Puebla is a small village of Mexicans and Americans, trappers and hunters. This is also a very good spot for resting your stock, which they no doubt need.” (21-23)

“Table of Distances From Kansas City To The Gold Regions of Pike’s Peak,” *Western Journal of Commerce* [Kansas City], November 6, 1858. Reprinted in Louise Barry, “The Ranch at Walnut Creek Crossing.” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 36 (Summer 1971), 121-147.

This compilation is not strictly a guidebook. It is a one page listing of distances “From Kansas City to the Gold Regions of Pike’s Peak,” which appeared in the *Western Journal of Commerce*, Kansas City, November 6, 1858. As a newspaper piece it could have had much wider circulation than any particular guidebook. Barry in “The Ranch at Walnut Creek Crossing,” notes, “At least two mail stations were not located where the table indicates they were. A post office was established at ‘Beach Valley’ (Big Cow creek) in February, 1859, so the mail station undoubtedly was there, rather than at Little Cow creek. At Walnut Creek Crossing (site of Allison’s Ranch) a mail station was built on the west side sometime in the latter half of 1858 (thus eliminating ‘Big Bend of Arkansas’ as such a site).” (Unpaginated, between 136 and 137)

Tierney, Luke. *History of the Gold Discoveries on the South Platte River, to which is appended a Guide to the Route by Smith and Oaks*. Pacific City, Iowa: Herald Office, A. Thomson, Printer, 1859. Reprinted in Hafen, *Pike’s Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks*, 91-127.

Tierney’s “History” is more of a journal than a guidebook, but was issued in conjunction with “A Guide of the Route,” by Smith and Oaks. Tierney was a member of the Russell Party, the first group to go to the Colorado mines from eastern Kansas in 1858. He travels the Santa Fe Trail with them. He provides a detailed narrative of the route and the party’s experiences. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, at the Cimarron Crossing, he records, “The following morning was so cold we were compelled to wear our heaviest apparel.” (Hafen, 100) He describes Bent’s New Fort: “The building is about one hundred feet above high water mark [on the Arkansas River], of oblong shape, three hundred feet long and about two hundred feet wide. It presents a beautiful appearance from without. The interior is divided into spacious apartments, fitted up for various purposes. One of these

apartments contains a few barrels of liquor, of which we partook, at a cost of one dollar per pint.” (Hafen, 101)

### Secondary Sources

Barry, Louise. “The Ranch at Walnut Creek Crossing.” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 36 (Summer 1971): 121-147. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly/13286>.

By the 1859 gold rush a series of trading posts, or “ranches” as they were then called, had been established along the Santa Fe Trail. “The Ranch at Walnut Creek Crossing,” was one of them. William Allison and Francis Booth, “two hardy, experienced plainsmen,” in Barry’s words, established this post in 1855. By the gold rush era it was well-known, and was mentioned in at least one 1859 guidebook, Obridge Allen’s *Guide Book and Map to the Gold Fields of Kansas and Nebraska*. Barry reviews its entire history. Of developments in 1860, she writes, “Again this year, as in 1859, the Santa Fe road was a busy thoroughfare. . . . All this traffic . . . passed Walnut Creek ranch,” including Pike’s Peak emigrant wagons. (135) She also covers in detail the state of Indian affairs and military operations that swirled around the ranch in the late 1850s and 1860s, as well as changes to the Santa Fe Trail, such as the building of bridges across regional watercourses.

Boyle, Susan Calafate. *Los Capitalistas, Hispano Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997.

Broadhead, Edward. *Ceran St. Vrain, 1802-1870*. Pueblo, CO: Pueblo County Historical Society, 1982, 1987.

Clapsaddle, David. “Ash Creek Crossing,” *Wagon Tracks: Santa Fe Trail Association Quarterly* 15 (November 2000): 17-18. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.santafetrail.org/publications/wagon-tracks/online.html>.

A trading post (ranch) was established at this crossing in 1860. The crossing is mentioned in Randolph Marcy's *The Prairie Traveler* (1859) and other guidebooks.

*Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Clapsaddle, David. "Bent's Fort Road," *Wagon Tracks: Santa Fe Trail Association Quarterly* 24 (November 2009): 21-24. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.santafetrail.org/publications/wagon-tracks/online.html>.

This article discusses the stretch of the Santa Fe Trail from the various crossings of the Arkansas River that constituted the beginning of the Cimarron Route, to Bent's Old Fort, along the north bank of the Arkansas. Gold seekers in both 1849 and 1859 followed this route, and then proceeded farther west to the confluence of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas [Pueblo, Colorado]. Clapsaddle reviews the sources for the 1859 use of the route by emigrants. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Clapsaddle, David. "A Frail Thin Line: Trading Establishments on the SFT, Part I," *Wagon Tracks: Santa Fe Trail Association Quarterly* 24 (February 2010): 21-26. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.santafetrail.org/publications/wagon-tracks/online.html>.

By the gold rush of 1859, a series of trading posts had been established along the Santa Fe Trail, posts which the 1859 emigrants encountered and commented on. The trail was no longer as lonely as it had been for 1849 gold seekers. Clapsaddle reviews the development of some of these posts. The location of one considered by Clapsaddle is disputed by Steve Schmidt in a letter to the *Wagon Tracks* editor, *Wagon Tracks: Santa Fe Trail Association Quarterly* 24 (May 2010): 11-12.

Clapsaddle, David. "A Frail Thin Line: Trading Establishments on the SFT, Part II," *Wagon Tracks: Santa Fe Trail Association Quarterly* 24 (May 2010): 14-23. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.santafetrail.org/publications/wagon-tracks/online.html>.

David Clapsaddle continues his assessment of various trading posts established along the Santa Fe Trail in the 1850s and 1860s. See the entry immediately above. *Note:*

*This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Clapsaddle, David. "The Fort Leavenworth-Round Grove/Lone Elm Road: The Army's First Link to the Santa Fe Trail," *Wagon Tracks: Santa Fe Trail Association Quarterly* 8 (November 1993): 10-13. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.santafetrail.org/publications/wagon-tracks/online.html>.

This connection between Fort Leavenworth [and thus the town of Leavenworth, Kansas] and the Santa Fe Trail was extensively used by gold rush emigrants both in the 1849 and 1859 migrations. Clapsaddle mentions their use of the trail, citing from contemporary sources, and traces its development by the U. S. Army. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Clapsaddle, David. "Trade Ranches on the Fort Riley-Fort Larned Road, Part I: The Other Ranch at Walnut Creek," *Wagon Tracks: Santa Fe Trail Association Quarterly* 12 (February 1998): 19-21. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.santafetrail.org/publications/wagon-tracks/online.html>.

Discusses in detail the trading post (ranch) established by Wilhelm Greiffenstein at Walnut Creek in 1860, encountered by 1860 emigrants to the Colorado gold fields.

*Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Gower, Calvin W. "Aids to Prospective Prospectors: Guidebooks and Letters from Kansas Territory, 1858-1860," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 43 (Spring 1977): 67-77. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly/13286>.

Gower surveys the field of Pike's Peak gold rush guidebooks written by Kansans between 1859 and 1860. He notes, "Approximately 20 Pike's Peak guidebooks appeared from 1858 through 1860, and individuals who resided in, or had resided in, Kansas territory wrote almost half of these guides." (74) Beyond general remarks about these guidebooks and their authors, Gower considers four in depth – those written by William

Parsons, O. B. Gunn, L. J. Eastin, and Luke Tierney. He analyzes the veracity, contents, contemporary reception, and impact of each. He finds the guidebooks he considers to have been worthwhile for gold rush emigrants, concluding, “The guidebooks generally provided helpful suggestions concerning outfitting points, outfits, and routes to the gold region, although they may have overstated the richness of the gold deposits in far western Kansas.” (75)

Hafen, LeRoy R. *The Overland Mail, 1849-1869, Promoter of Settlement, Precursor of Railroads*. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1926.

Hafen’s consideration of postal routes beginning in 1859 is included here more for what it does not say about the Santa Fe Trail than what it does. In his chapter, “Mail Service to the Pike’s Peak Region, 1858-1860,” Hafen demonstrates that mail service from Missouri River towns and eastern Kansas to Denver and the Colorado mines was via a variant of the Smoky Hill Trail, carried by the “Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express,” and then later along the Platte River Road. There was no mail service to Denver by the Santa Fe Trail. His chapters, “The Pony Express, Demonstrator of the Central Route,” and “The Fight for a Daily Mail on the Central Route, 1859-1861,” reinforce the conclusion that the Santa Fe Trail was more of a secondary route to the Colorado mines, at least for the Denver area. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Henderson, Charles W. *Mining in Colorado: A History of Discovery, Development and Production*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/11757546/PP-138-Mining-in-Colorado-Charles-Henderson>.

Henderson reprints James Pierce’s manuscript account of the journey of the Russell and Cherokee parties of gold seekers via the Santa Fe Trail to Cherry Creek and

other potential gold regions in Colorado in 1858. These two parties met at the “Big Bend” of the Arkansas on April 25, 1858 and then traveled west together. Henderson also provides a useful chronology of the mining history of Colorado from Pike’s expedition in 1807 through the 1860s and beyond.

Isern, Thomas D. “The Making of a Gold Rush: Pike’s Peak, 1858-1860.” Master’s thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1975.

This is a remarkable M.A. thesis. Isern demonstrates that much of the “hoopla” or propaganda disseminated by newspapers and guidebooks as to the “best” road to take to the Colorado mines was based upon community “boosterism.” Besides touting the route that began or passed through their particular town, editors organized or reported on civic meetings promoting “their” road, praised local businesses that could supply emigrants, and called for road improvements such as ferries or bridges at river crossings. Isern also extensively reviews many of the 1859 guidebooks and analyzes their authors’ intentions and prejudices. With specific reference to the use of the Santa Fe Trail by emigrants, he questions the low number of gold seekers from southern states, as listed by the *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver) for 1859 and 1860, but speculates that economically these states were better off in the late 1850s than Midwestern states and hence provided fewer emigrants, who would naturally have followed the Santa Fe Trail. Thus, he explains the heavier use of the Platte River Road over the Santa Fe Trail. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Lecompte, Janet. *Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn: The Upper Arkansas, 1832-1856*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978.

Lecompte lays a foundation for understanding the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1859 Colorado gold rush as it unfolded in the territory from Bent’s Old Fort to Pueblo,

Cañon City and South Park, or north to Cherry Creek and the mines in that region via the Cherokee Trail. The Arkansas Valley was not a wilderness when encountered by gold seekers, but had been trapped, settled, grazed, and farmed for decades. The communities there – Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn and others, had long-standing cultural and economic ties with New Mexico, ties which subsequently could be exploited in supplying food and other provisions for the Colorado mines, even though by the time the 1859 rush began some of the settlements Lecompte discusses had been largely abandoned.

Lee, Wayne C. and Howard C. Raynesford. *Trails of the Smoky Hill*. Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, 1980, 2008.

The history and lore of the Smoky Hill River valley and the Smoky Hill Trail from Coronado to the 1870s.

“Map Showing the Progress of the Public Surveys in the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska to accompany the Annual Report of the Surveyor General, 1860,” at Digitized Historical Kansas Maps, <http://specialcollections.wichita.edu/collections/maps>. Accessed November 16, 2012.

Norris, Frank, “A Geographical History of the Santa Fe Trail,” *Journal of the West* 50:3 (Summer 2012): 91-100.

Oliva, Leo. *Fort Larned, Guardian of the Santa Fe Trail*. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1982. Originally published as *Fort Larned on the Santa Fe Trail*.

The U. S. Army established Fort Larned on the Pawnee Fork of the Arkansas River in Kansas in 1859 to protect trade and travel on the Santa Fe Trail. This volume discusses Fort Larned’s predecessor in the region, Fort Atkinson, as well as the evolution of Fort Larned itself. Traffic on the trail had been heavy since the 1820s, but increased in volume with the rush to Colorado beginning in 1858. As Oliva notes, “By 1859 the value of goods shipped and equipment traveling over the trail was estimated at from three to ten million dollars annually. A Missouri newspaper reports that, between March 1 and July

31, 1859, 2,300 men, 1,970 wagons, 840 horses, 4,000 mules, 15,000 oxen, 73 carriages, and more than 1,900 tons of freight has moved westward on the trail. These estimates were considered conservative because the Colorado gold seekers were ‘too numerous to count.’”( 8) *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Oliva, Leo. *Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967.

Oliva’s *Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail* is central to understanding the military situation and relations with Native peoples along the trail both for developments in the 1840s leading up to the California gold rush and, in the 1850s, impacting the Colorado gold emigration. The background to the establishment of various military posts on the trail – whether ephemeral, obscure, doomed, and permanent, such as Fort Larned – is especially valuable. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Olsen, Michael, “The UU Bar Ranch Case: A History of the Traces, Trails, Roads, and Highways Connecting Rayado, New Mexico, and the Crossing of Ocate Creek,” *Wagon Tracks: Santa Fe Trail Association Quarterly* 19:4 (August 2005): 7-16. Accessed online January 28, 2013 at <http://www.santafetrail.org/publications/wagon-tracks/online.html>.

Socolofsky, Homer. *Historical Atlas of Kansas*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1988.

Spring, Agnes Wright. “Rush to the Rockies, 1859, Colorado’s Gold Rush of 1859.” *Colorado Magazine* 36 (April 1959): 82-121.

Spring’s account of the “Rush to the Rockies, 1859,” is more detailed and revealing of early parties who went to Colorado, especially the Russell and Lawrence expeditions, than of later developments. She reprints many original accounts, such as that of Russell, which first appeared in the *Leavenworth Times*, October 19, 1859. She traces an especially intriguing connection between the Lawrence Party and the Santa Fe Trail, the route that party took to Colorado. In 1857 a U.S. Army contingent under the command of Major General John Sedgwick had followed the Santa Fe Trail, beginning at

Fort Leavenworth, up the Arkansas to Fountain Creek [Pueblo], then north to Cherry Creek. The expedition's guide was a Delaware Indian from Kansas, Fall Leaf. He returned to his reservation near Lawrence, displaying a gold nugget brought from Colorado. Spurred by this evidence of gold, the Lawrence Party contracted with Fall Leaf to lead them to the gold diggings in 1858. In the event, Fall Leaf did not guide them, but they did take the Santa Fe Trail in May 1858.

Taylor, Morris F. *First Mail West: Stagecoach Lines on the Santa Fe Trail*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971.

Taylor has never been surpassed in the study of the development of mail and stage coach routes from Missouri and eastern Kansas to New Mexico and then Colorado. His coverage is detailed, accurate, and exhaustive. He carries the story from 1849 to 1880. Taylor is especially important for his consideration of the development of mail and stagecoach lines in Colorado beginning with the gold rush in 1859 and continuing on into the 1860s. For example, after much planning and some false starts, Slemmons, Roberts and Company inaugurated express mail and coach service between Cañon City and Kansas City in 1861. Taylor notes, "Bent's Old Fort was the division point where connections could be made for all points in New Mexico and for Kansas City and all eastern lines. . . . In Santa Fe connections could be made for western Texas and Arizona, and from Canon City express coaches ran to California Gulch and Denver City." (81)

Walker, Henry Pickering. *The Wagonmasters: High Plains Freighting from the Earliest Days of the Santa Fe Trail to 1880*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966.

While Walker's study covers a broad swath of Santa Fe Trail history, encompassing all of the trails crossing the high plains during much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, his chapter, "Slow Freight To Denver," provides a concise and inclusive summary of

trading activity stimulated by the Colorado gold rush. Again, he covers all the trails involved – Santa Fe, Smoky Hill, and Overland (Platte River Road) – but he discusses traders, trading houses, goods and merchandise in greater detail than almost any other secondary source. He notes, of the lack of goods and provisions in Denver in the spring of 1859, “It was a hand-to-mouth existence for Denver, but back in the Missouri Valley, alert merchants were making plans for a more systematic supply.” (181)

West, Elliott. *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, & the Rush to Colorado*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998.

West’s title says it all – he is concerned about the conflict that erupts between Native peoples and the westward migration of Americans on the plains of western Kansas and eastern Colorado during and as a result of the Colorado gold rush of 1859. His perspective was innovative for its time and has remained relevant – he is interested in the environmental, cultural, economic, military and political aspects of this “contest,” and places special emphasis on how the Cheyenne and Arapaho in particular were impacted and changed or adapted. His summary of the role of the Santa Fe Trail in this story, plus his overview of 1859 gold rush guidebooks and the spreading grip of the U. S. Army though the establishment of forts in the region from 1859 is especially valuable. For example, he notes, “A few guidebooks were guilty of appalling incompetence or outright fraud.” (128)

Wheat, Carl I. *Mapping the Transmississippi West, 1540-1861*. San Francisco: Institute of Historical Cartography, 1957-1963. Volume 4: *From the Pacific Railroad Surveys to the Onset of the Civil War, 1855-1860*. [1960]

This six-volume comprehensive study of hundreds of maps of the American West is one of the central references for understanding any given development or event falling within its time frame. Volume 4 includes maps relevant to the role of the Santa Fe Trail

in the 1859 gold rush. Most pertinent is Chapter XXXIX, “The Pike’s Peak Gold Rush of 1859,” although Chapter XXXV “The Maps of 1858” also can be consulted. Wheat’s discussion and evaluation of maps found in 1859 gold rush guidebooks is especially important. For example, he says of W. B. Horner’s guide to *The Gold Regions of Kansas and Nebraska*, “This is a well-balanced and well-prepared guide, though it nowhere appears that the author ever trod the soil of the Kansas gold fields.” (170) *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

White, David. “Gold Seekers, Pike’s Peak, 1858-1865: Perspective,” in *News of the Plains and Rockies, 1803-1865* (Spokane, WA: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1996-2000, 7: 219-227.

Volume 7 in White’s *News of the Plains and Rockies* is devoted in part to a review, or in some cases a reprinting, of manuscript sources for “Gold seekers, Pike’s Peak, 1858-1865.” Those sources of importance for the role of the Santa Fe Trail in the Colorado gold rush are assessed below in this annotated bibliography. However, White’s introduction, or “Perspective” is valuable for its overview of the gold rush emigration during these years, and its discussion of the nature, reliability, and publishing history of many 1859 guidebooks.

Whiteley, Lee. *The Cherokee Trail, Bent’s Old Fort To Fort Bridger*. N.p.: Denver Posse of the Westerners, 1999.

Whiteley provides an intimate picture of the Cherokee Trail in Colorado and Wyoming, with background information, citations from primary sources, many maps, and photographs. He has covered this ground himself and his personal perspective is evident. Pertinent for the role of the Santa Fe Trail in both the 1849 and 1859 gold rushes is his chapter “The Cherokee Trail in Colorado,” (42-92), especially his tracing of the Cherokee Trail from Bent’s Fort [La Junta, Colorado] to the confluence of Fountain Creek and the

Arkansas River [Pueblo, Colorado], then up Fountain Creek to Denver and the mining regions. *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Willard, James F. "Sidelights on the Pike's Peak Gold Rush, 1858-59." *Colorado Magazine* 12 (January 1935): 3-13.

Willard asks the important question, "Why did Pike's Peak emigrants chose one route west over another," for instance, the Santa Fe Trail over the Smoky Hill Trail? He then analyzes the perspectives of the various newspapers published in Missouri Valley towns, which published "testimonials" from their own correspondents and unsolicited letters from emigrants. He writes, perceptively, "I have a great deal of sympathy with the emigrant who reached the great bend of the Missouri in the spring of 1859, and who had the problem of deciding which route to take to the mines. He was met by clamorous advisers who were certain of the advantage of the route beginning at their town, and, if he read the papers offered him, his confusion would only be worse confused." (4) *Note: This item is not cited in the text of this study.*

Wyman, Walker D. "Kansas City, Mo., a Famous Freighter Capital." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 6 (February 1937): 3-13. Accessed online August 27, 2012 at <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly/13286>.

In this general overview of the impact of the Santa Fe Trail trade on the economy of Kansas City, Wyman concludes, with reference to the 1859 Colorado gold rush, "The gold discovery at Cherry Creek was not greatly to affect the economic life of Kansas City." But he tempers this assertion by continuing, "Certainly its position as border depot was not so dependent upon it, as was any river town above there." (8) Also, he then notes that the business community of Kansas City became more concerned about the trade with Colorado as Leavenworth garnered more and more of the western trade, finally

bestirring itself to promote the Santa Fe Trail and Kansas City's connection to it as a route to the mines.