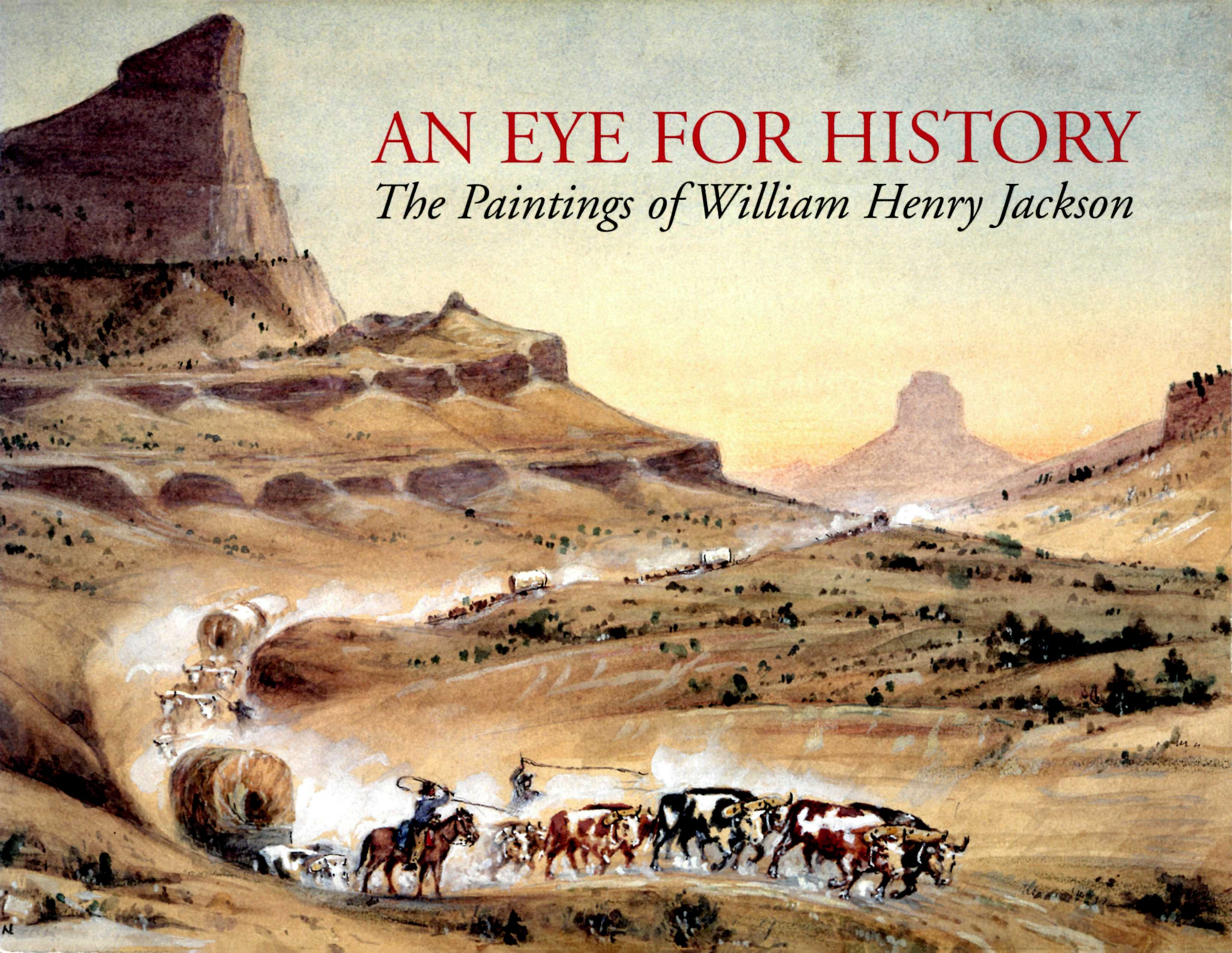


AN EYE FOR HISTORY

The Paintings of William Henry Jackson



AN EYE FOR HISTORY

The Paintings of William Henry Jackson

AN EYE FOR HISTORY

The Paintings of William Henry Jackson

From the Collection at the Oregon Trail Museum

By Dean Knudsen

Dedicated to the memory of Merrill J. Mattes

Friend, Historian, and Inspiration

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	<i>By Marian Albright Schenk</i>	. . . . .	viii
FOREWORD	<i>By Dean Knudsen</i>	. . . . .	x
SECTION 1	<i>Primary Themes of Jackson's Art</i>	. . . . .	1
SECTION 2	<i>Paintings of the Oregon Trail</i>	. . . . .	21
SECTION 3	<i>Historic Scenes From the West</i>	. . . . .	69
BIBLIOGRAPHY		. . . . .	86
INDEX		. . . . .	87

INTRODUCTION

Union soldier in the Civil War, bullwhacker on the Oregon Trail, explorer, photographer and artist for the famous Hayden Surveys of the Territories in the 1870s, author, publisher, world traveler, and businessman—William Henry Jackson was still utilizing and honing his skills until the day of his death. He was then nearly one hundred years old. Retiring from his normal routine of business after 1920, Mr. Jackson entered a new active, exciting, and productive life. From that time until the 1940s, he returned to the scenes of his young manhood in the West, especially those of Yellowstone, the Great Plains, and the Rocky Mountains. He occupied these days with sketching, photographing, writing, identifying historic sites, and dedicating monuments and markers. He was the author and illustrator of books, an active member of the Grand Army of the Republic, and secretary for the American Pioneer Trails Association.

After his ninetieth birthday he wrote his autobiography, *Time Exposure*. He painted murals of the four famous Geological Surveys of the West for the new Department of the Interior Building in Washington, D.C. He created more than one hundred watercolor paintings of early western events, many of which were used to illustrate books, such as Dr. Howard Driggs' *Westward America*, published in 1942. Many of these paintings were based on his nineteenth century pencil sketches and early photographs of western historic places, many of which had long since disappeared. Added to these were his careful notes, made day by day during his early travels, and of course, his incisive memory.

When I was growing up, my favorite person was William Henry Jackson. When I knew him, he was in his nineties, lived alone in his New York apartment in the Latham Hotel, and was

carefully watched over by Arthur Proctor, Joe Robinson, and my dad, Horace Albright. My dad would often bring Mr. Jackson home to spend a weekend with the family. I had heard a great deal about him before he visited us the first time and was totally surprised when he walked in the door. My imagination had made him a tall, rugged, outdoorsman with a booming voice and vigorous physique.

Instead, he still matched the description my dad had made of him at their first meeting in 1925: "When Bob Ellison entered, he had with him a trim little fellow with a neat goatee and a nice head of hair and wearing plus fours." Well of course, Mr. Jackson wasn't wearing plus fours in his nineties, but he wasn't much bigger than I and had a surprisingly high-pitched voice. Not a feeble, elderly voice, just one that was somewhere above a tenor. Anyone meeting him was instantly riveted by his brilliant, sparkling eyes peering out over his spectacles, which were always half-way down his nose. Then the attention would focus on his personality and stream of memories.

When I knew Mr. Jackson was coming for a visit, I would give up girlfriends, boyfriends, movies, and any other pastime to stay around him and hang on every word he uttered. He had done everything, photographed everything, sketched everything, recorded everything, and forgot nothing. He was endlessly fascinating, a natural raconteur. He took you along with him through the Civil War, life on the trails to California, adventures with the Geological Surveys, and visits to unusual places around the world, which revealed his intriguing character, his remarkable memory, and his delightful sense of humor. He was a real one-of-a-kind. My dad used to say that God threw away the mold after he made William Henry Jackson.

Even though Mr. Jackson's photographs, paintings, and writings are in a class by themselves, they fail to reflect the real man. He was such an electric personality and presence that only those privileged to experience him in person can even begin to describe and appreciate him. They can only remember him and miss him, smile quietly and be grateful that this man touched their lives. Never would I, or anyone else that knew him, forget his rapid, high-pitched voice telling an exciting story, his grabbing a pencil and paper to illustrate part of an adventure seventy years before, his burst of laughter recalling an episode from the past, his appreciation of people and his inability to condemn or criticize anyone, and above all his love for his country and its history.

I wrote in my diary about one of his visits. "Mr. Jackson here on the weekend. He told about the Oregon Trail, the one Great-grandmother Albright came across in 1854. He made it all so real, and he seemed to be so proud of our country. He said, 'The Old West was my land.'"

Marian Albright Schenk

November 6, 1997



**William Henry Jackson, 1872—
Photographer, Explorer, Artist.**

FOREWORD

William Henry Jackson was a man driven to record the world around him. He is best known as a pioneering photographer, who captured the first images of Yellowstone, The Tetons, and Mesa Verde. Jackson was an active professional photographer for almost 50 years, and in that time he amassed a huge body of work. However, his efforts to document important events in American history did not end with his camera.

Jackson also kept journals in which he recorded his impressions of the American West when he first saw it in 1866, as well as his experiences in the West with the U.S. Geological Survey from 1869 until 1878. But it is as an artist that Jackson first began to record the things he saw. As a soldier in the Union's Army of the Potomac, Private Jackson sketched his comrades and surroundings, and in the process left a marvelous account of the everyday camplife experienced by a Civil War soldier.

After the war, Jackson sought to escape the confines of society by seeking his fortune in the West. His sketches of his experiences as a freight-hauling bullwhacker bound for the mines of Montana are a fascinating glimpse into life on the frontier before it was changed forever by the coming of the railroads. Jackson never found any silver or gold, but he did find his life's calling. His distinctive photographs reveal an affection for the land as well as a 19th century man's faith in progress and technology.

After a lifetime devoted to photography and approaching the age of 90, Jackson picked up a paintbrush and produced a series of paintings to illustrate books on the American West. These paintings are impressive enough for their attention to detail and the telltale photographer's eye for perspective and composition, but they are all the more remarkable since Jackson had no formal training as an artist.

William Henry Jackson died on April 23, 1942, at the age of 99. A few years after his death, his good friend, Howard Driggs, began to search for a suitable home for the Jackson artwork that had been left to him. Due to Jackson's connection with the overland trails and the Far West, Scotts Bluff National Monument was chosen as a repository. A new wing was built onto the Oregon Trail Museum, and the William Henry Jackson Collection found a new home.

Several other museums and private individuals around the country own works by Jackson, but Scotts Bluff National Monument has the largest single holding of Jackson paintings, and it is this collection that is the focus of this book. Over the years, Jackson's artwork has become increasingly popular as illustrative material for books, magazines, and video documentaries and as such has generated renewed interest among the general public.

This book was written with the dual purposes of showcasing what has become the centerpiece of the Scotts Bluff museum collection, while at the same time making more of the William Henry Jackson Collection available to the general public. In so doing, we are able to tell not only the story of Jackson's long and productive life, but also the history and development of the American West.

Dean Knudsen

Historian

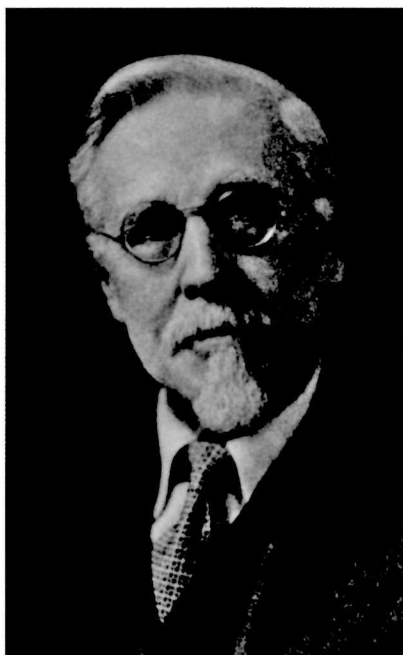
Scotts Bluff National Monument

A high-contrast, black and white portrait of an elderly man. He has light-colored hair, receding at the temples, and is wearing round-rimmed glasses. He has a prominent, light-colored mustache and a goatee. The background is dark and textured. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of his face and the texture of his hair and beard.

SECTION 1

Primary Themes of Jackson's Art

CHALLENGES OF THE TRAIL



In this formal portrait taken in 1935, William Henry Jackson was 92 years old, and was just beginning to produce the paintings that comprise the most important part of the Oregon Trail Museum Collection at Scotts Bluff National Monument. (SCBL 928)

The trials and tribulations posed by life on the overland trails were a subject close to Jackson's heart. He himself had endured these same hardships by crossing the Plains in 1866, and his paintings often focus on the many dangerous incidents that could arise during the 2,000-mile journey.

The first monumental challenge emigrants encountered involved crossing the Missouri River. The river's width, depth and swift current made it unwise to try and float wagons across on individual rafts, and unless crossed in the dead of winter when the river was frozen solid, it was safer to transport the wagons and teams across the river on the small steam ferries operated by opportunistic businessmen.

Long delays while waiting a turn on the ferry were common, and it is this bottleneck that Jackson depicts in his work, *Emigrants at Kanesville*. A handwritten note by Jackson in the upper left corner of the painting describes this as an 1856 river crossing, which would have been near the peak of Mormon emigration.

Kanesville was one of several temporary Mormon settlements that sprang up near present-day Council Bluffs, Iowa. The Mormons—or more properly, the Latter-Day Saints of the Church of Jesus Christ—first arrived at the east bank of the Missouri River in the winter of 1846, after having been forced from their homes in Nauvoo, Illinois. This first winter at Kanesville and Omaha was a difficult time for the Mormons, and several hundred people died of disease and exposure.¹

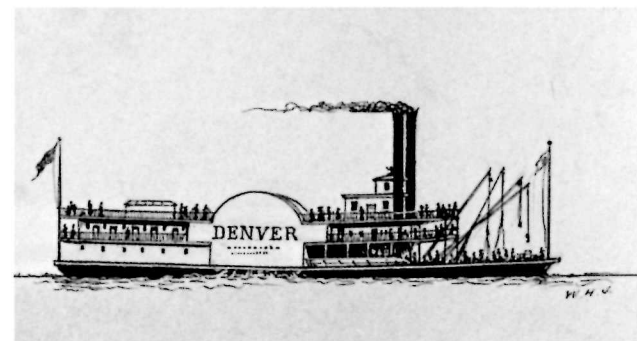
In the spring of 1847, the first group of Mormons ventured out onto the Plains and arrived in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake in July of that same year. In the years that followed, the increased numbers of emigrants and gold-seekers resulted in Omaha, Council Bluffs, Brownville, and Nebraska City developing as major river crossing sites and towns.

The overland trails and the relatively slow pace of the wagon trains were deceptively peaceful. Although normally a placid river, when swollen by melting snow or heavy rains, the Platte River developed dangerous currents. Unstable riverbanks, quicksand

and hidden tree stumps or logs took a heavy toll in drowned teamsters and damaged wagons when unwary emigrants tried to ford the Platte or even the smallest streams. As such, crossings were only attempted when it was absolutely necessary.

Life on the trails was primarily an endurance test. Long hot days of monotonous travel, interspersed with violent storms, lack of fuel and forage, fear of Indian attacks, dust and disease—all took a tremendous physical and psychological toll on the emigrants. No records were kept on how many people gave up and turned back, although in some years the numbers must have been rather high. The wonder is that the majority of the emigrants continued their westward journey.

Jackson's admiration for the courage of those brave souls who continued their trek in spite of the many hardships on the trail is seen in many of his paintings. Rather than depicting patriotic vignettes, Jackson concentrated on the quiet stoicism of people in pursuit of a better life.



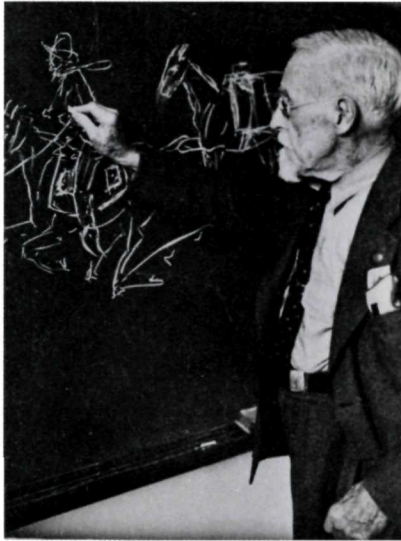
When Jackson first journeyed west in 1866 he did not need to cross the Missouri River at Kanesville, Iowa. Along with many other emigrants he booked passage on the riverboat *Denver* at Kansas City and disembarked on the river's western bank at Nebraska City, Nebraska. (SCBL 91)

¹. Stanley B. Kimball, *Historic Resource Study; The Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1991), 66.



Emigrants at Kanesville. Signed and undated. 25.4 x 38.1 cm. (SCBL 275)

THE PONY EXPRESS



William Henry Jackson's fascination with the American West never wavered, and he did much to instill that same interest in younger generations. A handwritten notation on the back of this photograph reads, "WHJ before high school class at Edison Institute, Ford Museum. Detroit 1936." (SCBL 2696)

Few aspects of frontier history have captured the imaginations of Americans more than the Pony Express. Romantic images persist of a courageous lone rider, crossing a hostile wilderness with saddlebags full of vital letters, ignoring threats from marauding Indians and serving as a mainstay of civilization in the Far West throughout America's western expansion.

While this image has been the subject of hundreds of dime novels and Hollywood screenplays, in reality the Pony Express was designed as a stop-gap operation, intended to provide express mail delivery until the transcontinental telegraph line could be completed. In the short 18 months of its existence, the Pony Express lost so much money that it bankrupted its parent company—Russell, Majors and Waddell.¹

The scope of the Pony Express operation was impressive. A total of 190 stations were established every twenty miles along the 1,600 mile route. Each of these stations was staffed and equipped to provide a fresh horse for each of the eighty riders who made a 120-mile ride before handing the mail off to the next man. In this manner, the mail could be delivered between St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, in just 10 days.

The first run was made on April 3, 1860, and the last was completed on November 20, 1861. The Pony Express has been credited with maintaining the ties between California and the Union in the early days of the Civil War. Although the Pony Express was a financial disaster, it did prove conclusively that the overland trail along the Platte River was an efficient and workable route that within a few years was also used by the transcontinental railroad.

Like so many members of his generation, William Henry Jackson was enamored of the Pony Express. The courage, commitment, and rugged sense of adventure that the Pony Express embodied was especially appealing to an artist, and Jackson did much to immortalize the achievements of the Pony Express. Pony Express riders, as well as the all-important home and relay stations were the subjects of many of his paintings.

Jackson's painting, *Pony Express Rider*, is probably one of his best-known works. Two notes on the back of the painting provide some interesting information about Jackson's subject. A handwritten note reads, "Ideal composition based on old notes and records," while a typed notation reads, "This courier of the first fast mail is speeding up the Valley of the Sweetwater in what is now Wyoming."



Also known as Rocky Ridge Station, St. Mary's Station was located in an especially remote region in central Wyoming. It is interesting that Jackson chose to include several soldiers at the station, at a time when tensions between the North and South were building. (scbl 34)

¹. Raymond W. Settle and Mary Lund Settle, *Saddles and Spurs* (Harrisburg: The Stackpole Company, 1955), 176f



Pony Express Rider . Signed and undated. 25.4 x 38.1 cm. (SCBL 164)

THE EARLY FUR TRADE



Jackson the painter. At a time in life when most men are thinking of rocking chairs and grandchildren, William Henry Jackson embarked on a new career as an artist. His paintings have been used to illustrate many books on the history of the American West. (SCBL 2701)

William Henry Jackson was intrigued by the process by which the Far West became a part of the United States. Jackson saw a logical progression of events that first brought early explorers and fur traders onto the high plains. The knowledge they brought back with them led missionaries and prospectors to try their luck in the West. In time, the trails that they established were used by emigrants in pursuit of new opportunities and a better life, thus simply continuing the well-established American tradition of moving West. At first, the early trails served only as a corridor for people making their way to Oregon and California. There was no particular interest in settling what was then known as the Great American Desert, so the emigrants simply passed through Nebraska and Wyoming, leaving nothing behind but the graves of loved ones who died along the way.

It wasn't until the railroads were completed that settlers claimed homesteads and tried to farm on the High Plains. These settlers may not have been aware of it, but they owed a great debt to the early fur traders who, in the 1820s and 1830s ventured out into the West to make their fortune. At first only a few bales of furs were all a trader could transport back to the East. But soon the market for fur was so good and the supply so great, that these traders brought the first wheeled vehicles onto the Plains to haul the profitable furs back to St. Louis.

Of course these wagons could only be hauled over relatively even ground, and the most practical routes had to be found. This was done by following the already established Indian trails, which themselves had followed migratory buffalo trails. Over time, the buffalo had learned the easiest route was along the Platte River, and benefiting from nature's wisdom, the Oregon Trail was born. Eventually much of this same route was used by the Union Pacific Railroad, and even modern engineers could not improve upon it and decided to take advantage of the old trade route and built Interstate Highway 80 along it.

To illustrate the important role played by the first fur

traders, Jackson decided to depict the first party to take wagons into the Far West. This was done by the American Fur Company, owned by Jedediah Smith, William Sublette, and David Jackson, and they are shown leaving St. Louis, Missouri, on April 10, 1830. They were bound for a fur trader's rendezvous in the Rocky Mountains, and within the year they succeeded in returning with ten wagons full of furs. The fur trade proved to be short-lived and began to decline in the 1840s, but the stage had been set for the great westward migration.¹



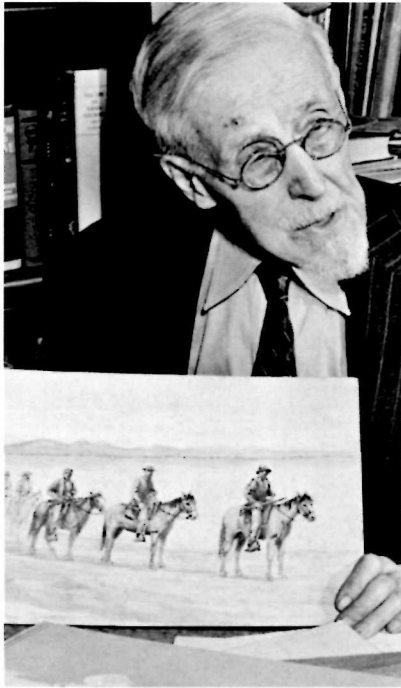
Fur Trader Caravan Leaving St. Louis. A notation by the artist on the back of the painting reads, "The Smith, Jackson, and Sublette train leaving St. Louis April 3, 1830. The first train to cross the plains to the Rocky Mtns." This image is a near duplicate of the painting on the opposite page, and is signed and dated 1930. (SCBL 17)

¹. Leroy R. Hafen, *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1965), 102.



Smith, Jackson and Sublette Expedition. Signed and dated, 1936. 34.1 x 25.3 cm. (SCBL 14)

THE LURE OF GOLD



William Henry Jackson's frailty is showing in this undated photograph. Jackson's normally robust health never fully recovered from a 1937 fall in Cheyenne, Wyoming, in which he chipped a vertebrae in his back. However, even a serious injury such as that did not prevent Jackson from attending a Battle of Gettysburg reunion in 1938. (SCBL 975)

On January 28, 1848, a man employed at Sutter's Fort in California Territory made an entry in his diary; *This day, some kind of metal that looks like gold was found...*¹ No other single event influenced America's westward expansion more than the discovery of gold in California. In a very short time, thousands of people flocked to the new gold strike in hopes that they too could make a fortune. Most of the prospectors were disappointed in their search for gold, but their mere presence in the West changed the frontier forever.

Prior to the discovery of gold in California, the Far West was a quiet, primarily Spanish-speaking territory still struggling to get used to the idea that they had suddenly become Americans. For example, when it was surrendered to the United States by Mexico in 1849, California had a population of only 20,000. California was admitted as a state in the Union in 1850 and by 1852 the population had grown to 225,000.²

This pattern was repeated several times in the settlement of the West. In the late 1850s there was the Pikes Peak Gold Rush to Colorado. In the 1860s it was gold in Montana and silver in Nevada that drew thousands of would-be miners to the frontier. Of course, with all these men scrambling to make their fortunes, there was a ready market for anyone who could supply the miners with tools, food, and other diversions.

Thus was born the second wave of overland travel, the freighting companies whose wagons rolled alongside those of the emigrants making their way west. As a young man, William Henry Jackson took advantage of this commercial effort to supply the mining towns to make his way to the Far West. Although frustrated in his efforts to reach the gold and silver mines in Montana, Jackson eventually made his way to California in 1867.

Throughout the history of the pursuit of mineral wealth on the frontier, little if any thought was given to the effect the mining had on the ecology of the West. Entire valleys were stripped, gouged, dynamited, flooded, polluted and abandoned in a relentless effort to extract ore.

Just reaching California was not an easy task for the would-

be miner. There were two basic ways for a prospector to make his way to California; he could book passage on a ship, or he could make his way overland. Both methods were expensive and had their inherent dangers. Travel by ship was generally faster and more expensive and but offered the advantage of being able to bring more in the way of supplies. In addition, travel by ship allowed a person to leave at any time of year.

It has been estimated that between 1849-1860, 200,335 gold-seekers made the overland journey to California.³ Almost anyone could afford to set out for the goldfields on foot, but they were limited in what they could carry and the vast distances and changing seasons determined when it was feasible to make the journey. No reliable figures are available as to how many died enroute to California, but it has been estimated that as many as 2,000 died of disease during each year of the Gold Rush.⁴



A hand-written note by the artist along the front of this pencil sketch reads, "The Mission Los Angeles April 9, 1867." This drawing dates from Jackson's first visit to California. (SCBL 135)

¹ George R. Stewart, *The California Trail* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 193.

² Joseph Henry Jackson, *The Gold Rush Album*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), vi.

³ John Unruh, *The Plains Across* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 120.

⁴ William E. Hill, *The California Trail Yesterday and Today*, (Boise: Tamarack Books, Inc., 1993), xxv.



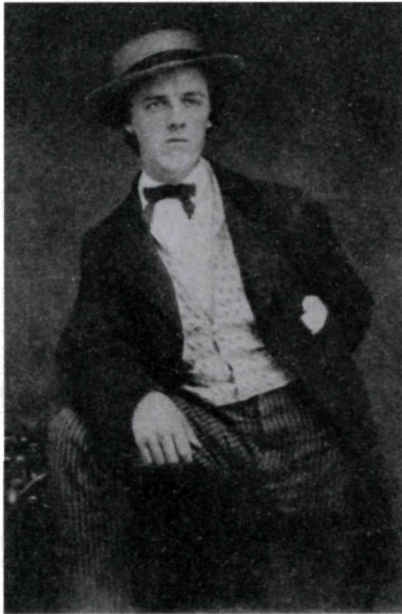
Hydraulic Gold Mining. Initialed and dated, 1936. 25.4 x 35.0 cm. (SCBL 160)

A high-contrast, black and white portrait of an elderly man. He has a full, light-colored mustache and a goatee. He is wearing round, dark-rimmed glasses. His hair is thinning and light-colored. The background is dark and textured. The overall style is grainy and high-contrast, typical of a photocopy or a stylized print.

SECTION 2

Paintings of the Oregon Trail

MISSOURI RIVER TOWNS



This may be the earliest photograph of William Henry Jackson. A notation on the back reads, "William Henry Jackson 1860 —Troy, NY." The nattily dressed young man, complete with a fashionable straw hat, was seventeen years old at the time, and already working as an artist in a photographic studio. (SCBL 2005)

The Missouri River served as the most direct initial means of transport for people making their way west. Steam-powered riverboats could transport cargo from St. Louis and New Orleans, and many emigrants had their wagons and belongings brought down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. They would then steam up the Missouri River to be disembarked at one of the many river towns along the Missouri River.

For several years Independence, Missouri, was the eastern terminus for the Santa Fe, California and Oregon Trails, and nearby Westport Landing was one of the busiest places on the river. Here riverboats were used to ferry emigrants and their wagons across the Missouri. After off-loading the passengers and their wagons, the trains of emigrants would organize themselves and begin their epic overland journey west. In time, other towns along the Missouri River sprang up to serve the river traffic. These included St. Joseph and Weston, Missouri; Brownville, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth, and Omaha, Nebraska Territory.

Before the railroads finally made their way out onto the Plains in the late 1860s, riverboats were the fastest means of moving people and cargo. Some daring captains took their shallow-draft boats as far north as Fort Benton in Montana, but for emigrants wishing to make a new life in the west, the Missouri River towns were the jumping-off points. These towns handled so much boat traffic that they were often referred to as the "Nebraska seacoast."

From each of these river towns, individual trails wound their way westward, forming an informal network of roadways that eventually merged near Fort Kearny in central Nebraska. Jackson's first encounter with a riverboat came on June 19, 1866, when he boarded the steamer, *SAVANNA* at Rock Island, Illinois.¹ A four hour ride down the Mississippi River brought him to Quincy, Illinois, where he and two friends bought railway tickets to St. Joseph, Missouri.

On their arrival the three young adventurers learned of a freighting outfit that was hiring teamsters for a trip to Montana. The catch lay in the fact that applicants had to apply in person at

Nebraska City. Their passage to Nebraska City would be paid by the freighters. However, neither Jackson nor his traveling companions had the \$1.50 commission needed to pay the agency that would hire them. Jackson spent a day unsuccessfully trying to sell his box of watercolors to raise the needed money. Luckily, a new acquaintance generously offered the destitute adventurers five dollars to help the young men on their way²

Thus it was that William Henry Jackson found himself aboard the riverboat *DENVER*, plying its way northward on the Missouri River. Arriving at Nebraska City at 2:30 A.M., Jackson and his friends were ready to pursue their fortunes in the West. Jackson's two nearly-identical paintings of Westport Landing seek to capture the energy and capabilities of these boats, as well as the importance of the river towns they served.



Westport. A note by the artist on the back of this painting, dated 1931 reads, "An imaginary conception of what it may have looked like at Westport Landing, MO, about 1850." (SCBL 19)

¹. Leroy R. Hafen, *The Diaries of William Henry Jackson* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company; 1959) 29.

². William Henry Jackson, *Time Exposure*, (Tucson: The Patrice Press; 1994) 106.



Westport Landing. Signed and dated, 1937. 40.7 x 50.9 cm. (SCBL 280)

ALCOVE SPRINGS



A carte-de-visite of a young William Henry Jackson, dated 1864. At the time, Jackson was 21 years old and had been mustered out of the Union Army the previous year. The carte-de-visite was very popular in the 19th century and served as a combination business card and keepsake. (SCBL 3043)

Located along the Big Blue River in eastern Kansas, Alcove Springs was one of the first landmarks reached by Oregon Trail emigrants after leaving the Missouri River at Westport. This lovely oasis, consisting of a cold-water spring surrounded by a ledge of rocks, was named by Edwin Bryant on May 27, 1846, who was traveling with the ill-fated Donner Party who passed by in the spring of that year.

It was at Alcove Springs that the Donner party suffered their first loss. On May 29, 1846, Sarah Keyes, a blind and deaf 70-year-old member of the party who had been suffering from what was called consumption—or as we know it today, tuberculosis, died. That evening she was buried nearby. The next day, George McKinstry, another man traveling with the Donner Party, made the following entry in his journal:

...about a half mile from Camp up the spring branch on the right hand fork is a most beautiful spring and a fall of over of 12 feet Mr Bryant of our party has named it the 'Alcove Spring' the water is of the most excellent kind the spring is surrounded with Ash Cotton wood & Cedar trees it is an excellent place to camp for a day or two to wash, recruit the cattle etc I this day cut the name of the spring in the rock on Table at the top of the falls...¹

It was this event that Jackson chose to portray in his painting of Alcove Springs.

The early pioneers who made their way onto the Plains did not stop to settle there. Despite the apparent availability of water at places such as Alcove Springs, it was generally felt that the prairie was simply too dry to be farmed. The lack of wood was another factor in their determination to continue westward, as without wood there would be no ready source of fuel or building material.

This attitude changed in the 1870s when railroads and irrigation made settling on the Plains more attractive. Some settlers followed the example of the Pawnee earth lodges and built homes from the thickly matted prairie sod. Depending

on the skill of the builder, a sod house could be quite comfortable. However, the crumbling nature of the sod required a good deal of maintenance and upkeep.



Initialed and dated 1936. Settlement on the treeless western plains did not increase until after 1869, when the growth of railroads made shipping of goods and produce economically feasible. (SCBL 161)

¹. Aubrey L. Haines, *Historic Sites Along the Oregon Trail* (Gerald: The Patrice Press, 1994), 46.



Alcove Springs. Signed and undated. 29.2 x 39.4 cm. (SCBL 20)

EMIGRANTS ON THE TRAIL



Such relaxed moments as portrayed in this informal portrait of Jackson, dated 1869-1870, were rare. Besides operating a photographic studio in Omaha, Nebraska, he married Mollie Greer on May 10, 1869, and the next year he accompanied the U.S. Geological Survey on its first expedition to the Yellowstone country in Wyoming. (SCBL 3058)

Rock Creek Station, also known as East Ranch, is located near present-day Endicott, Nebraska. This historic site once served as a Pony Express and stage station, but is probably most famous for having been the site of a gunfight between James Butler Hickok and David McCandles. The story is told that on July 12, 1861, David McCandles, the owner of Rock Creek Station and two of his hired men were shot and killed by “Wild Bill” Hickok. Circumstances surrounding the fight are unclear, but Hickok later became a famous shootist and lawman.

Such violence made for good reading in the pulp novels of the day, and thanks to Hollywood’s vision of the West, gunplay is generally accepted to have played a major role in America’s westward expansion. However, in reality, the greatest threat of violent death did not come from gunfighters, but rather from the accidental discharge of firearms in the hands of inexperienced travelers.

Perhaps wishing to emphasize the unrelenting exertions of the emigrants on the Oregon Trail, as opposed to the murderous violence that was only an occasional occurrence in the westward movement, Jackson has ignored the Hickok story altogether, and chosen to portray an ox team passing peacefully by Rock Creek Station.

This particular painting provides a number of details about the use of oxen. One advantage pioneers had in using oxen to pull their wagons was the relative simplicity of the hardware that was required. Unlike mules and horses, no special harness, halters and reins were needed. The oxen were placed in heavy wooden yokes, which were attached directly to the tongue of the wagon. The oxen were guided by a bullwhacker who walked alongside the teams.

As can also be seen in the painting, the number of teams used could vary. Heavier wagons, such as the one in the background, would require more oxen (in this case 3 yokes), while the lighter wagon in the foreground only needed two. It was unusual for emigrants to ride in their wagons, as this added to the strain on their draft animals. It was more common for

people to walk alongside the wagons.

For people making their way west, there was another type of violence that intimidated them—that of the weather. Nothing in their experience in the East prepared them for the sudden violence that erupts on the High Plains. Diaries and journals are full of comments about the power and fury of the thunderstorms which would seemingly form in a matter of minutes and buffet the pioneers with torrential rains, high winds, sheet lightning, and hailstones.

Jackson experienced such a storm just after crossing the South Platte River and described the event:

*Then, almost in a moment, the sky filled with black clouds and a strong east wind blew upon us... The storm grew more furious. Our wagons rocked in the gale, and it seemed that we must surely be turned over; and only the tons of goods under the cover kept us upright, and at that, we were blown some little distance in our tracks. The rain beat down so hard that it came through the canvas roof as if it had been a sieve...*¹



Lightning Storm. By using black ink and a few dabs of white paint Jackson captured a group of wet and miserable emigrants as they are startled by lightning striking a nearby telegraph pole. (SCBL 122)

¹. Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 121-122.



Rock Creek Station. Initialed and undated. 26.0 x 36.2 cm. (SCBL 21)

THE FINE ART OF BULLWACKING



As a young man, William Henry Jackson appears to have liked the idea of posing while reading a newspaper. Perhaps he felt the informality helped him appear relaxed, while at the same time looking mature. (SCBL 2004)

By the time William Henry Jackson first stepped onto the Nebraska plains in 1866 he had already worked in a photographic studio and served as a soldier in the Civil War. However, nothing had prepared Jackson for the back-breaking labor he would endure during his brief stint as a bullwhacker.

Jackson and his companions must have presented an amusing sight to the hard-bitten wagonmaster who hired them to work with his freight wagons. These young men in their city clothes undoubtedly had to endure the ridicule and taunts of the more experienced westerners. Added to this was the fact that Jackson had never worked with draft animals before and had to learn his new job from scratch.

Jackson's indoctrination as a bullwhacker began early on a June morning in 1866. As he later described the experience:

My practical education began at dawn on Wednesday morning with the booming cry, "Roll out! Roll out! The bulls are coming!" In an instant the whole camp was alive with swollen-eyed men stumbling over each other... At once the work of yoking up began, and any greenhorn observer would have noted nothing more than a score and a half of men in indiscriminate pursuit of enough steers to pull his own wagon.

But even though most of us were utterly inexperienced, we had already been told how exact the process was: Each driver had his own twelve bulls to identify, beginning with the "wheelers," then the "pointers," the "swing cattle" (three yokes) and the "leaders," six pairs in all, each of which had to be yoked and bowed and chained in proper position.¹

The combination of unbroken oxen and inexperienced teamsters must have been frustrating for even the most patient wagonmaster. Jackson himself sheepishly admitted that it took him eight hours to complete the task of yoking and hitching his oxen the first day on the trail. Such an effort left him and his companions completely exhausted.

Needless to say, this performance cut down on the distances the wagons were able to cover. Allowances were made so that during the first week, the greenhorns only had to make one drive

of about ten miles each day. Later, as Jackson became more accomplished at handling his oxen, he was able to get his animals yoked and ready in less than an hour.

With practice and repetition the work eventually became routine, and the bullwhackers were able to make two drives during the day for a total of fifteen miles. The day began at 4 A.M., and the wagons were kept on the road until about 10 A.M. At that time the men could halt and eat their breakfast while the oxen were allowed to graze. After frying some salt pork and boiling coffee, the freighters greased the hubs of their wagons, and around 2 P.M. the bulls were again yoked and hitched to the wagons so the westward journey could resume until sunset.

This grinding routine repeated itself each day on the trail, and was only interrupted by mechanical breakdowns or severe weather which made travel impossible. Desertions among the bullwhackers were common, as working conditions were rugged and the food poor. Despite the isolation, other passing trains offered ready employment.



In what is almost certainly a self-portrait, Jackson shows how a bullwhip was used to keep several teams of oxen in line. As he wrote in his autobiography, "Only the voice of a master can make twelve bulls gee or haw with a single word. Only a cunning hand can make an 18-foot whip crack out like a rifle shot..." (SCBL 281)

¹. Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 111-112.



Yoking a Wild Bull. Unsigned and undated. 11.0 x 14.1 cm., actual size. (SCBL 48)

FORT KEARNY, NEBRASKA TERRITORY



William Henry Jackson always took pride in dressing well. His journals tell of his buying new shirts and studs at times when he didn't have enough money for food or rent. This personal trait must have been put to the test during his days as a bullwhacker where the hard work reduced his clothes to rags. (SCBL 2003)

For people on the Old Oregon Trail, Fort Kearny in central Nebraska offered a token military presence. Established in 1848, Fort Kearny was the only military outpost between the Missouri River and Fort Laramie—500 miles to the west in Wyoming. The fort provided limited repair facilities and emergency rations could be purchased from the quartermaster. As the only representatives of the federal government on the vast High Plains, the military also provided a reassuring sense of law and order.

After three weeks on the trail, Jackson looked forward to his arrival at Fort Kearny. As he recorded his impressions in his diary:

*July 11th. At last we have reached the first point or place of any importance on our route. We have thought and spoken of Fort Kearney as if it was our destination, and nothing beyond it, but now we regard it as a starting point. Here all routes converge & again diverge. We make no stop but go right on our way.*¹

In early August 1864, the Sioux, Southern Cheyenne, and Arapaho had attacked nearly every stage and relay station along the Platte River and had effectively shut down all traffic on the overland trails for several months. Since that time, there were periodic encounters and no shortage of rumors.

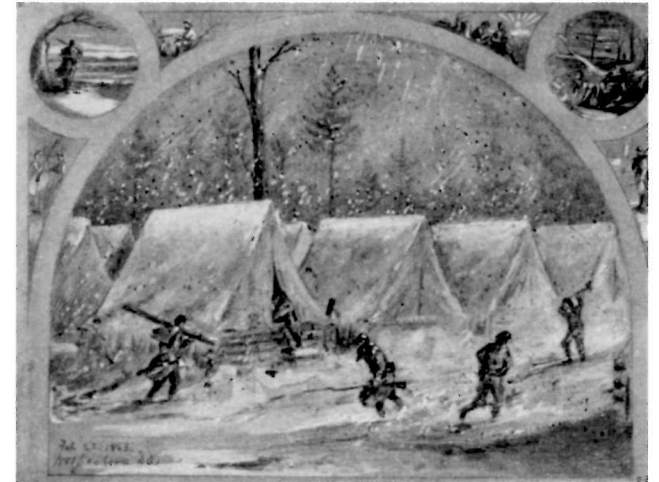
In an effort to assure relative safety, the military commander at Fort Kearny did not allow trains of less than thirty wagons to move westward. As Jackson's outfit consisted of only twenty-five wagons, they had to temporarily join up with another train of ten wagons. Each teamster was armed with a firearm of some kind, generally a Colt revolver was kept readily available, while an assortment of rifles, carbines and shotguns were stored in the wagons.

During his short visit to Fort Kearny, it is reasonable to assume that Jackson reflected on his own recent military experience. A nineteen year-old William Henry Jackson had enlisted in a local Vermont militia unit in 1862, and was eventually mustered into the 12th Vermont Infantry Regiment. Assigned to the Army of the Potomac, Private Jackson's regiment was ordered to guard Washington, D.C., against any Confederate threat.

Later, the 12th Vermont was transferred to northern Virginia. Stationed near Fairfax Court House and Wolf Run

Shoals, Jackson's tour of duty was peaceful and uneventful. Aside from his occasional guard duty and a couple of hours of drilling each day, Jackson had plenty of time on his hands. To fill the idle hours, Jackson sketched his comrades and scenes from their daily lives.

The only time Jackson ever heard guns fired in anger was in early July of 1863. As a part of the huge Federal Army deployed to fight Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, the 12th Vermont was relegated to the reserves during the climactic battle at Gettysburg. Jackson's regiment was never ordered to the front, and soon afterward his term of enlistment expired. Choosing not to re-enlist, Jackson was honorably discharged from the army a few weeks after the famous battle.



Military campaigning during the American Civil War generally came to a halt during the winter when both Northern and Southern armies went into camp until spring. Dated February 22, 1863, this drawing—highlighted with colored pencils—depicts the miseries of these camps. (SCBL 233)

¹. Hafen, *Jackson Diaries*, 44.



Old Fort Kearny. Unsigned and undated. 25.4 x 35.5 cm. (SCBL 276)

LEAVING CIVILIZATION BEHIND



In this 1865 double exposure, Jackson makes it appear he and a friend are being visited by a ghost. In reality, it was the shame of a lover's spat that haunted Jackson for the rest of his life. When Jackson died in 1942, a portrait of his first love, Caddie Eastman, was found among his personal effects. The ambrotype is now in the possession of the Brigham Young University Library. (SCBL 3049)

When William Henry Jackson's wagon train departed Fort Kearny in June of 1866 he was literally leaving civilization behind. And that is exactly what he had in mind when he decided to follow Horace Greeley's advice to "Go west, young man." Jackson's stated goal in going west was to make his fortune in the goldfields of Montana—but in reality, he was a fugitive.

Jackson was not running away from creditors or the law, but rather, he was seeking escape from an affair of the heart. When he left the army in 1863 and returned to civilian life, the young Jackson immediately got a job as an artist in a photographic gallery in Burlington, Vermont. Soon he was making good money, spending it extravagantly, enjoying himself in an exclusive social circle—and he was very much in love.

The object of Jackson's affections was a young lady named Caroline "Caddie" Eastman. The product of a prominent Vermont family, she and Jackson reached an "understanding" in 1864, and were engaged to be married. As so often happens with young sweethearts, they had a minor argument. Things were said that neither really meant, but feelings were hurt and their wedding was called off. Jackson wrote:

*She had spirit. I was bull-headed, and the quarrel grew. I was, so to speak, discharged. And since I found it impossible in my shame to face the world, I renounced it... There was only one course open to me; I must leave Vermont forever.*¹

Too embarrassed to face his family and friends, Jackson packed a few belongings and left town for the anonymity of New York City. There he happened to meet a Civil War comrade who was also at loose ends, and together they decided to seek their fortunes in the West. With very little money, the young vagabonds eventually made their way to the frontier, and that is how they came to find themselves setting out onto the seemingly endless plains of Nebraska.

If Jackson really went West in order to "forget," he did a rather poor job of it. In his autobiography he remarks that throughout his western travels he always made sure to leave a forwarding address, obviously in the hope that Miss Eastman

might relent and ask him to return home. However, no such letter ever arrived and the heartbroken Jackson continued his wanderings on the High Plains.

An artifact of this affair survives in the form of a pencil sketch entitled "Remembrances 1866." The drawing depicts a melancholy young man reflecting on a lost love. This portrait of a disappointed lover in the depths of despair is obviously a reflection of Jackson's own tortured emotions.



Remembrances 1866. Although Jackson claimed to have forgotten what sparked the argument that resulted in the termination of his engagement to Caddie Eastman, this is almost certainly a subterfuge, as Jackson's memory of events both before and after the incident was crystal clear for the remaining sixty-six years of his life. (SCBL 115)

¹. Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 82-83.



West of Fort Kearny. Unsigned and undated. 25.4 x 35.5 cm. (SCBL 22)

JULESBURG



After their first full year of business, William Henry Jackson left the day-to-day operation of his Omaha Studio to his brothers Ed and Fred, while he ventured out in search of interesting subjects. He found one in the new Union Pacific Railroad. In this image, dated 1869, Jackson is looking at a glass plate negative. (SCBL 933)

Thirteen days after leaving Fort Kearny, Jackson's train of freight wagons pulled into Julesburg, Colorado Territory. In 1866, Julesburg was only a small hamlet but it already abounded in history—most of it of an extremely violent nature. Julesburg has the dubious distinction of being the only western town ever to be attacked by Indians.

The attack occurred on January 7, 1865, and was in retaliation for the massacre of the Southern Cheyenne at Sand Creek five weeks earlier. A small cavalry detachment, consisting of forty men of Company F, 7th Iowa Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, was decoyed away from Camp Rankin—a small fort located one mile south of Julesburg, where they were ambushed by a large force of approximately 1,500 warriors. Thirteen soldiers were killed in the desperate fighting before the survivors regained the safety of the post.

As if to add insult to injury, the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors returned three weeks later and attacked Julesburg a second time! However, the soldiers at Camp Rankin had learned their lesson and prudently remained behind their protective sod walls until after the warriors had sacked and burned the town and moved on to the north.

When Jackson arrived on July 24, 1866, Julesburg had just been relocated in its second site, three miles east of its first site. However, within a year, the town was moved again—this time to the north side of the South Platte River, where it was situated next to the newly constructed Union Pacific Railroad.¹

Julesburg was Jackson's first experience in getting his freight wagon across a large river. As he recalled the event:

About ten o'clock we reached the fording place three or four miles past town. It was a great picture. The South Platte was about half a mile wide at this point, and on both sides were wagon trains preparing to cross, while the river itself was the scene of the heaviest traffic we had yet witnessed. Oxen bellowed, men shouted and swore, and the air resounded with an incessant cracking of whips...

At best it was a difficult undertaking. The water was never more than three to four feet deep; but the current was swift and

the sandy, gravelly bottom became quickly undercut if a wagon stopped for more than a few seconds anywhere between the banks.

Twelve yokes of oxen, instead of the customary six, were chained to each wagon; and instead of one driver, ten or twelve of us we needed to start the reluctant beasts through the water. Then followed two hours of whipping, shouting, and heaving to negotiate a distance of eight or nine hundred yards.²

Jackson returned to Julesburg in 1867. On this occasion he was working his way back east with some horse herders. In the short span of only a year, great changes had occurred at Julesburg once the railroad had progressed into the region. As Jackson described it:

The present Julesburgh is but a temporary arrangement. Will probably disappear with the progress of the RR. All the buildings are mere board shanties put up in a day. 4/5th of all are either gambling, drinking or dancing halls. More gambling, drunkenness & fighting going on than in any place I was ever in.³



In 1867 Jackson added the job of horse wrangler to his resume by hiring on to work with an outfit moving a herd of wild horses to Omaha. When he left the herders in Julesburg he was paid the princely sum of twenty dollars for his efforts, which he used to buy a new suit. (SCBL 286)

¹. Dallas Williams, *Fort Sedgwick, Colorado Territory: Hell Hole on the Plains* (Julesburg: Fort Sedgwick Historical Society, 1993), 45-51.

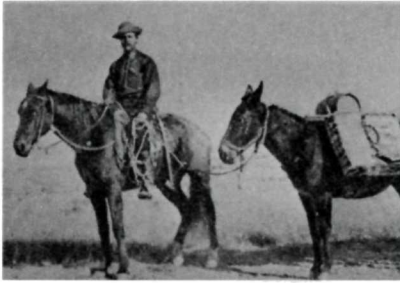
². Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 120.

³. Hafen, *Jackson Diaries*, 201.



Crossing the South Platte. Signed and undated. 33.5 x 51.0 cm. (SCBL 23)

THE SAND HILLS



William Henry Jackson's experience with draft animals paid off when he had to rely on them to haul his bulky photographic equipment through the wilds of Wyoming for the U.S. Geological Survey. Dated 1870, this photograph shows the 27 year-old Jackson on horseback leading his trusty pack mule, "Hypo." (SCBL 2788)

The Nebraska Sand Hills held a fascination for emigrants and freighters making their way along the south bank of the Platte River. The otherwise featureless Oregon Trail was occasionally treated with a view of the mysterious sandhills on the northern horizon. Part of the mystery undoubtedly arose from their inaccessibility, as it was inconvenient to cross the Platte River and explore the hills, while at the same time, the otherwise monotonous terrain left so little to the imagination that the overlanders were starved for anything that could distract their attention.

The sand hills are a geological feature unique to Nebraska. These rolling, treeless dunes are remnants of an ancient time of inland seas and huge sand dunes. To those making their way west, the dunes took on the appearance of an ocean, the hills seeming to move like waves.

Jackson's painting of the sand hills does much to capture this aspect of the Oregon Trail, while also depicting some interesting details about life on the trail. Notice how most of the emigrants are walking alongside their wagons rather than riding. This was done to lessen the burden on the oxen. Besides, riding in a heavy wooden wagon without any kind of shock-absorbing springs did not make for a very comfortable ride.

You will also notice that there are men on horseback acting as guards. This was generally done to keep an eye open for any danger. The general fear was of encountering warlike Indians, but such incidents were actually very rare on the Oregon Trail. If anything, the guards were just as necessary to keep curious children and distracted adults from wandering off and getting lost.

One of the real dangers facing emigrants is depicted in this particular painting. Notice how those people walking are being careful to keep a respectful distance from the wagons. This was especially important for children, as emigrant diaries are remarkable for the frequent entries describing accidents. Children running in front of the oxen or trying to climb up into a moving wagon were all too vulnerable to being tram-

pled or falling under the wheels with tragic results.²

In something of a humorous note, Jackson's eye for composition is legendary, but in this painting he seems to have made a major mistake. Since the sandhills are located to the north of the overland trails, this wagon train is going the wrong way! If they are indeed making the trek west, they should be marching in the other direction.



Another advantage of Jackson's experience on the overland trails is that his drawings provide a wealth of detailed information. In this drawing, entitled *Grub Pile*, we are shown how meals were prepared over an open fire with frying pans, dutch ovens, and the ever-present coffee pot. (SCBL 49)

¹. Unruh, *The Plains Across*, 413.



Sand Hills of the Platte. Signed and dated 1932. 26.0 x 38.0 cm. (SCBL 278)

CHIMNEY ROCK



In 1871 William Henry Jackson made his second trip into the wilds of Wyoming with the U.S. Geological Survey. Under the leadership of Ferdinand Hayden, the expedition entered the legendary Yellowstone country. In this photograph of an informal meal Jackson is standing to the right, while Hayden is seated in front of him. (SCBL 2774)

Early emigrants on the Oregon and California Trails followed along the south bank of the Platte River, but after 400 miles of relatively simple traveling, they reached a point where they had to get their wagons across the river so they could follow the trail up the North Platte River Valley. There were a number of possible fords from which to choose.

The first was located near present-day North Platte, Nebraska and was known as Fremont's Ford.¹ Named after John C. Fremont, who used the ford during his explorations of the West in 1842, this site was not used very often by later emigrants. For the next 40 miles there were a series of possible crossing sites, known by various names—such as the Lower, Middle and Upper Fords. Probably the most popular ford was the Lower California Crossing, near present-day Brule, Nebraska. It owes its name to the number of forty-niners who used it.

By 1866, when Jackson was making his way west, most of the road traffic used the Upper California Crossing, near Julesburg, Colorado. Here the wagons crossed the South Platte River, then followed Lodgepole Creek west before turning north. This route avoided the steep hills around Ash Hollow, but required the emigrants to travel for two days without fresh water.

After passing Mud Springs, which was actually a welcome stopover, the wagon trains first came within view of some of the most famous rock formations in the West. The first to come into view was Courthouse and Jail Rock, which could be seen to the northwest. A few miles farther north the trail struck the North Platte River and turned west once again. After passing Courthouse Rock, the emigrants encountered a series of captivating rock formations, and the first of these was Chimney Rock.

Chimney Rock is undoubtedly the best known landmark on the Oregon Trail. After the long and monotonous trip across the Nebraska Plains, the early emigrants were starved for something different on the horizon. And these bluffs, of which

Chimney Rock is only one feature, certainly filled the bill. Few emigrants failed to mention Chimney Rock in their journals, and William Henry Jackson was no exception.

*Wednesday August 1st. Out quite early and reached Chimney Rock. Distances are very deceptive, particularly so in the case of this rock. The other rocks in this neighborhood are quite fantastic. Made several sketches.*¹

Jackson made a pencil sketch of Chimney Rock and its neighbor, Castle Rock, at the time, and later referred to his sketch when composing what has become his best known painting, *Approaching Chimney Rock*. The composition is striking and gives the work a depth which stretches to the far horizon. Both the wagon trains and the bluffs seem to stretch off into infinity, and the bright yellow sky with a tinge of orange gives the impression that the viewer has entered an uncommon world unlike anything seen before.



This painting, *The North Platte River Valley*, was recently donated to the Scotts Bluff National Monument museum collection by a descendant of William Henry Jackson. It was completed in 1932 and is very similar to *Approaching Chimney Rock*. (SCBL 2207)

¹. Haines, *Historic Sites*, 71-78.

². Hafen, *Jackson Diary*, 58.



Approaching Chimney Rock. Signed and dated 1931. 25.4 x 38.0 cm. (SCBL 25)

SCOTTS BLUFF



In 1936 William Henry Jackson served as the main speaker during ceremonies that dedicated the newly completed Oregon Trail Museum. During this visit, Jackson walked out into Mitchell Pass and showed where his wagon train had camped in 1866. (SCBL 2794)

Scotts Bluff is named after Hiram Scott, an early fur trader who had the misfortune of dying nearby in 1828. The circumstances surrounding his death are unclear and seem to have become more clouded each time the story was told around a campfire. One story has Scott wounded by Indians and abandoned by his nervous companions. In another version, an injured Scott urges his companions to leave him so he can die in peace.

When William Henry Jackson first saw Scotts Bluff in 1866, the fur traders, the Oregon Trail pioneers, the Mormon exodus, the California gold seekers, and the Pony Express riders had already used the bluff as a landmark and then faded into history. Traffic on the trail was still heavy, but now in addition to emigrants, there were trains of wagons hauling supplies to Denver, Salt Lake City, and points west.

In the early years, most overland traffic actually went around Scotts Bluff by swinging south and going through Robidoux Pass. This route took the wagons away from the Platte River and added several miles to their journey, but the deep cuts and coulees in Mitchell Pass seemed to be impassible. Then, sometime in 1851, improvements were made in Mitchell Pass, which allowed wagons to make it through.

There are two theories about who would have been able to do all this work. One view holds that a detachment was sent over from Fort Laramie, and under the watchful eye of an officer with engineering training, they were able to cut their way through the soft, silty soil. The second theory holds that a fur company hired men to do the work in Mitchell Pass in order to put a rival trading post located in Robidoux Pass out of business.

William Henry Jackson's career as a bullwhacker almost came to an abrupt end at Scotts Bluff. Jackson was walking alongside his freight wagons in Mitchell Pass when disaster almost struck.

Going down a slight grade my miserable bulls suddenly swung into a tearing gallop, and in an instant the second part, or "back-action" of my wagon was half-way over the edge of the road, skid-

*ding on its axles, and threatening to drag with it the front half, all the bulls, and myself. For once I could use my whip at full strength without a qualm. Frantically all of us fought to stay on top; and then with a mighty heave, the frightened animals hauled the back-action up to the trail once more.*¹

Seventy years after his close call, Jackson returned to Scotts Bluff, this time to deliver a speech during dedication ceremonies for the opening of the Oregon Trail Museum at Scotts Bluff National Monument. After his speech, Jackson revisited the site of his near demise and drove a stake into the ground to mark the site of his 1866 campsite. Jackson's last visit to Scotts Bluff was in 1938, when he attended the annual meeting of the Oregon Trail Memorial Association.²



The perspective of this painting, Mitchell Pass, is almost identical to the campsite Jackson pointed out in 1936–70 years later. The pyramid-shaped formation to the left is known as Eagle Rock, while the stone pillar in the distance is Dome Rock. (SCBL 27)

¹. Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 124–125.

². *Ibid.*, 337.



Scotts Bluff. Signed and dated 1937. 23.5 x 33.6 cm. (SCBL 26)

FORT MITCHELL



Jackson set up his camera and then posed with his horse while his assistant removed the lens cap to make the exposure. This photograph was made in 1872 as the USGS explored the Grand Teton Range in Wyoming. (SCBL 931)

The military outpost known as Fort Mitchell was something of a poor step-child. Constructed in 1864, the land was never technically owned by the federal government. This oversight was compounded by the fact that there is no official record of when the post was abandoned 3 years later. Despite existing in a bureaucratic limbo, Fort Mitchell was a prominent feature on the overland trail when William Henry Jackson made his way through Mitchell Pass in 1866.

In 1864 relations between the Plains tribes—the Sioux, Cheyenne, and the Arapaho, and the increasing number of emigrants on the trails were becoming strained. To provide protection for travelers on the trail, in the fall of 1864, soldiers were stationed at the various telegraph and stage stations along the Platte River, and two new posts were constructed. One was Fort Rankin (later renamed Fort Sedgwick), near Julesburg, Colorado Territory, and the second was Fort Mitchell near Scotts Bluff.

Prior to the construction of Fort Mitchell near a bend in the North Platte River, there had been a Pony Express station and a trading post at the site, but these had apparently fallen into disrepair. Owing to the lack of lumber, the soldiers used sod to construct the walls for the small outpost. While requiring a good deal of periodic maintenance, sod had the dual advantages of being easy to work with as well as being fireproof.

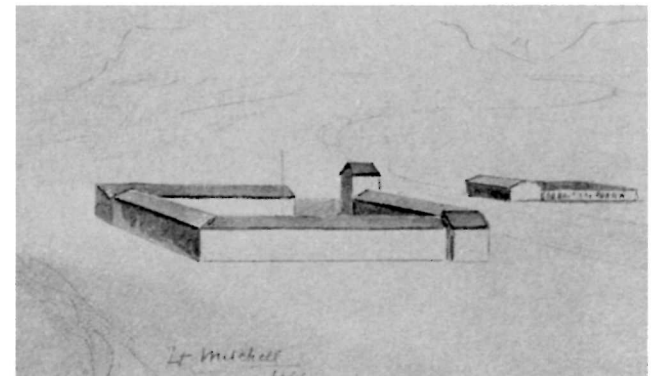
Built by the men of Company F 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, the new post was initially known as Camp Shuman—after their captain, Jacob Shuman. However, rank has its privileges, and in a short time the post was re-named Fort Mitchell—after General Robert Mitchell, military commander of the Nebraska Territory. By the time Jackson made his appearance at Fort Mitchell in 1866, the Ohio volunteer troopers had been relieved by a company of the 18th U.S. Infantry Regiment.

Jackson is one of a very few artists who left a record of what Fort Mitchell actually looked like. The post was in existence for such a short time, and was reduced to rubble so soon after being abandoned, that very little notice was given to the site. Jackson's

painting closely reflects the original floor plan as drawn by Lt. Caspar Collins, and it shows the post's location in relation to the Platte River and Scotts Bluff.

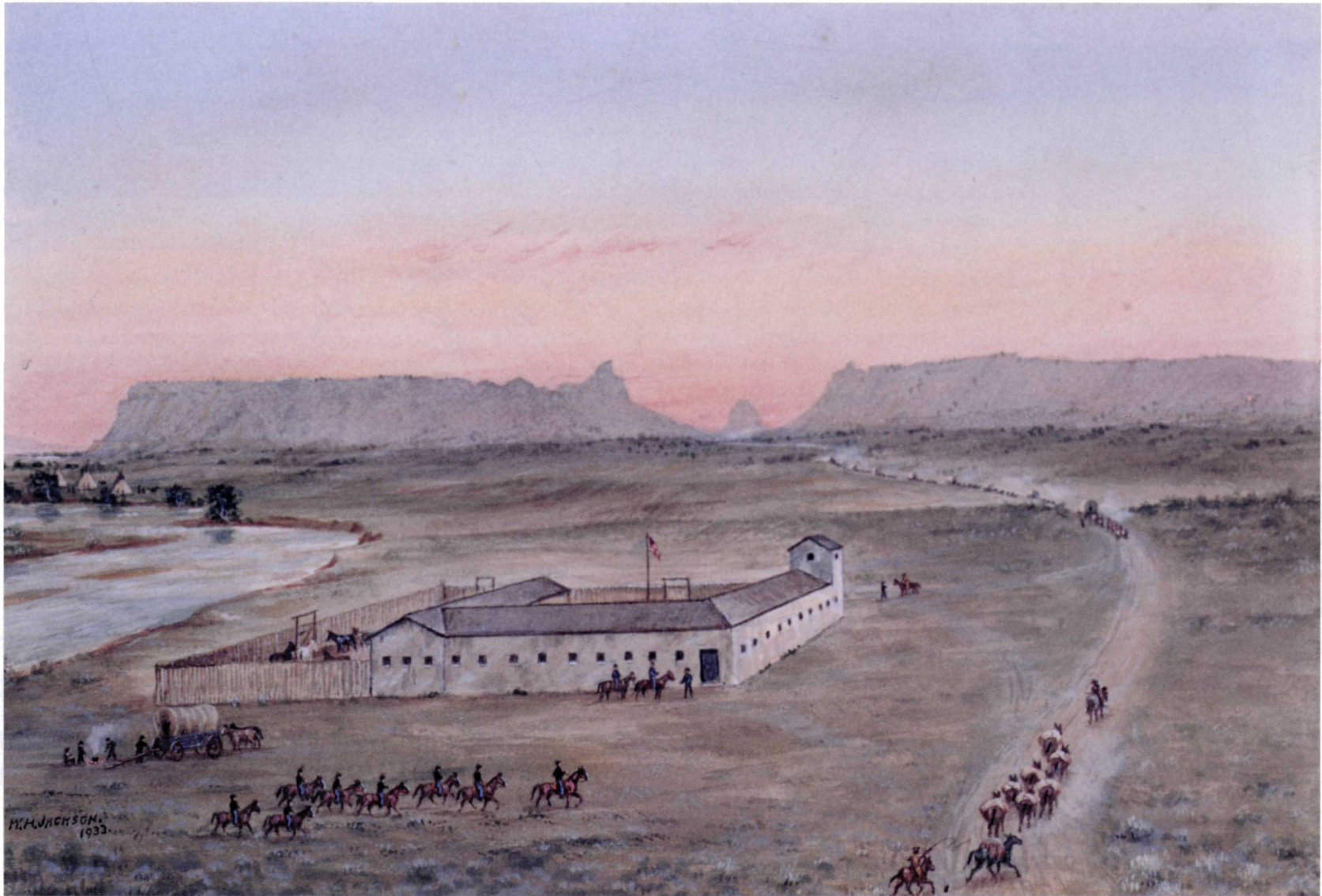
No official records dealing with Fort Mitchell survive from after 1867, and it is generally assumed that the post was simply abandoned sometime during that year. Useful items such as doors, gates, and window frames, were quickly scavenged by emigrants, and without the constant attention of the soldiers the sod walls quickly crumbled and fell into disrepair. Within a few years there were no physical reminders that Fort Mitchell had ever existed.¹

It is interesting to note that Jackson exercised a little artistic license in his depiction of Mitchell Pass. His painting allows you to see Dome Rock, a prominent geological feature east of the bluff through the middle of the pass, but if you actually stand on the site of Fort Mitchell, Dome Rock is blocked by Scotts Bluff, and is not visible. Jackson's version is undoubtedly more dramatic.



This unfinished sketch of Fort Mitchell has a notation in pencil that simply reads, "Fort Mitchell 1866." The building to the right in the distance may have been the old Scotts Bluff Pony Express station. (SCBL 184)

¹. Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 473-479.



Fort Mitchell. Signed and dated 1933. 21.1 x 32.1 cm. (SCBL 28)

FORT LARAMIE



This photographic portrait captures William Henry Jackson at his most stylish. Dating from the same period, this image may have been made on the occasion of Jackson's 1873 marriage to his second wife, Emilie Painter. (SCBL 925)

One would assume that the long, hard days on the trail would have been enough to distract the thoughts of a lovelorn young man, but that was not the case with William Henry Jackson. In fact, the grinding monotony only served to give him more time on which to dwell on his failed relationship. By the time he reached Fort Laramie, Jackson had worked himself up to the hope that there would be a letter waiting for him at the post, telling him to come home.

A person can easily imagine the expectation Jackson experienced when Fort Laramie's postmaster handed him several letters with postmarks from home—only to experience a crushing disappointment when the realization came that none of the letters were from his sweetheart. This emotional turmoil probably explains why Jackson made little mention of Fort Laramie in his diary and why no sketches of the post exist.

The two paintings that Jackson later produced of the site depict a much earlier view of Fort Laramie, before the fur trading post—known as Fort John, was purchased by the US Army in 1849. The adobe-walled structure with the prominent towers was the only stockade Fort Laramie ever had—but it had been torn down prior to Jackson's arrival in 1866. The fort Jackson visited had no defensive wall, and simply consisted of a number of buildings surrounding a large parade ground.

In 1866 Fort Laramie was an extremely active military post in the midst of a major transformation. The end of the American Civil War resulted in an increase in the number of emigrants on the trail, and it also meant that the volunteer soldiers who had been stationed at Fort Laramie had to be mustered out of the service and replaced by officers and soldiers of the regular army. This all took time, and when Jackson arrived at Fort Laramie on August 7, 1866, the last of the volunteers had only just been relieved by the 18th US Infantry a few weeks before—more than a year after the end of the war.

Jackson had also just missed the signing of a treaty at Fort Laramie between the government and the Brule Sioux. Hoping to bring an end to the warfare that had inflamed the Plains since

1864, Colonel Henry E. Maynedier and Indian Agent E.B. Taylor had been conducting negotiations with the various bands of the Sioux since June. Unfortunately the arrival of the 18th U.S. Infantry during these negotiations caused the wary Sioux leader Red Cloud to withdraw. The treaty that was signed was worthless and the warfare continued for another two years.

Bypassed by the transcontinental railroad and relegated to functioning as a supply base after the end of the Sioux Wars in 1877, the fort was eventually abandoned by the army in 1890. Some of the buildings were used by people who homesteaded on the grounds of the old fort, while other buildings were sold at auction and dismantled for use elsewhere. Jackson revisited Fort Laramie in 1937 and his efforts to document its history undoubtedly assisted the efforts that finally resulted in the post becoming a National Historic Site and being protected by the National Park Service.



The site that later became Fort Laramie was originally a fur trading post known as Fort John. This image is very similar to the painting, "Fort Laramie" and differs only in that it offers a closer view of the fort. (SCBL 162)

¹ Remi Nadeau, *Fort Laramie and the Sioux* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 201-212.



Fort Laramie. Signed and undated. 23.5 x 36.9 cm. (SCBL 29)

FOOTHILLS OF THE ROCKIES



These six desperados are actually members of the 1875 U.S. Geological Survey team, which explored the Southwest. William Henry Jackson is the third from the left. (SCBL 669)

After leaving Fort Laramie, the freight wagons continued to follow the south bank of the Platte River. But the landscape was changing and there was a noticeable increase in the road's grade. They were climbing ever higher and the reason for this was becoming all too obvious. In the distance was a dark mountain range, and the wagon train was headed straight for it.

In those days, those mountains were referred to as "the Black Hills" and ought not be confused with the South Dakota mountains of the same name. Today, they are known as the Laramie Range, and they are considered to be the first foothills to the Rocky Mountains. On Thursday, August 9, 1866, Jackson made the following notation in his diary:

*The roads are beginning to be terribly rocky & stony. There are some awful pitches and it is a wonder we don't all smash up... Had two bad breaks today that delayed us two or three hours.*¹

The next day the wagon master had to make an important decision. A new route, known as the Bozeman Trail, had just been opened which turned north and passed through Wyoming's Powder River country on its way to Virginia City in Montana. This route was much shorter, but it also had a much higher risk of encountering Sioux war parties. Jackson agreed wholeheartedly with the wagon master's conservative decision to stick with the longer but safer route through Salt Lake City.

By Saturday August 10th, the slow-moving wagons reached the mountains and the going got even tougher. Jackson continued:

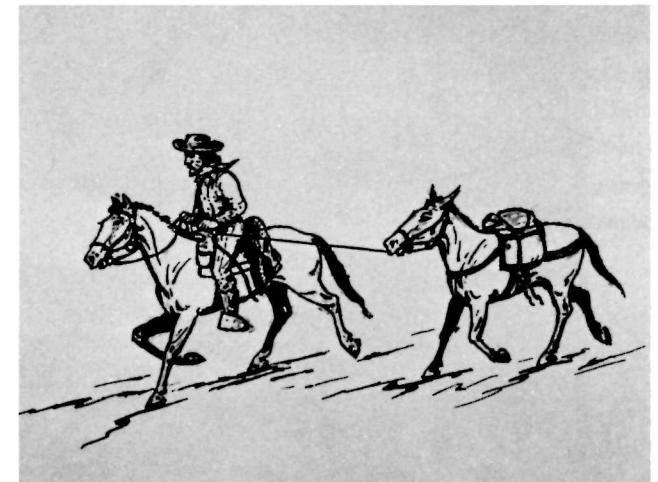
*Crossed the eastern slope of the Black Hills in the morning & had a fearfully hard pull up a steep hill and over a ridge. Pulled out again in p.m. and reached springs at the foot of a steep hill.*²

The next day the trail became so steep that a special effort had to be made to haul the wagons through the hills.

Doubled up teams and pulled up to the top of the hill where we unyoked and got breakfast. Made a sketch of Laramie Peak that has been in sight for a week or two past. In the p.m. made a

*long and hard drive over the hills to La Bonta. It was quite dark & it is a wonder that more accidents did not occur.*³

Although Jackson's sketch of Laramie Peak does not seem to have survived, his painting of the forbidding Black Hills with the tiny wagons slowly making their way down the steep slopes near La Bonte Creek, captures the rugged terrain and imminent danger that the young teamster experienced so many years before.



In 1873, a mule named Gimlet, who Jackson described as "evil" slipped his pack and broke several glass plate negatives. Undaunted, Jackson simply retraced his steps and re-photographed those lost scenes. (SCBL 92)

¹. Hafen, *Jackson Diaries*, 63-64.

². Ibid., 65.

³. Ibid., 65-66.



LaBonte Creek. Signed and dated 1939. 23.5 x 36.9 cm. (SCBL 30)

RED BUTTES, WYOMING TERRITORY



William Henry Jackson identified this portrait as having been taken in 1876. The stamp on the back reads, "M.P. Rice, A.I. Rice—Photographers 1217/1219 Penna. Avenue, Washington, D.C." (SCBL 3076)

Located on the North Platte River about ten miles southwest of present-day Casper, Wyoming, Red Buttes was a station for the Pony Express. By the time Jackson passed through Wyoming, the Pony Express had already been out of business for five years. However, Jackson used his paintbrush to tell the story of the demise of the Pony Express by showing a rider galloping out onto the high plains, even while the technological advancement that eventually put him out of work is being installed—the telegraph.

Named after a distinctive hill composed of soil rich in iron ore, the Red Buttes area is an especially rugged section of the overland trails. Early fur traders returning from the Oregon country are known to have camped nearby in 1812. In fact, it was their initial success in making the overland journey through South Pass that provided a route for people to emigrate westward on what came to be called the Oregon Trail.

History of a grimmer nature was also made in the area only one year before Jackson's western journey. On July 26, 1865, Sioux warriors attacked and destroyed an army wagon train—killing 23 men under the command of Sergeant Amos Custard of the 11th Kansas Cavalry. A relief party, led by Lt. Caspar Collins, of the 11th Ohio Cavalry, rode out from a military outpost at Platte River Bridge, but was unable to reach the wagons.¹

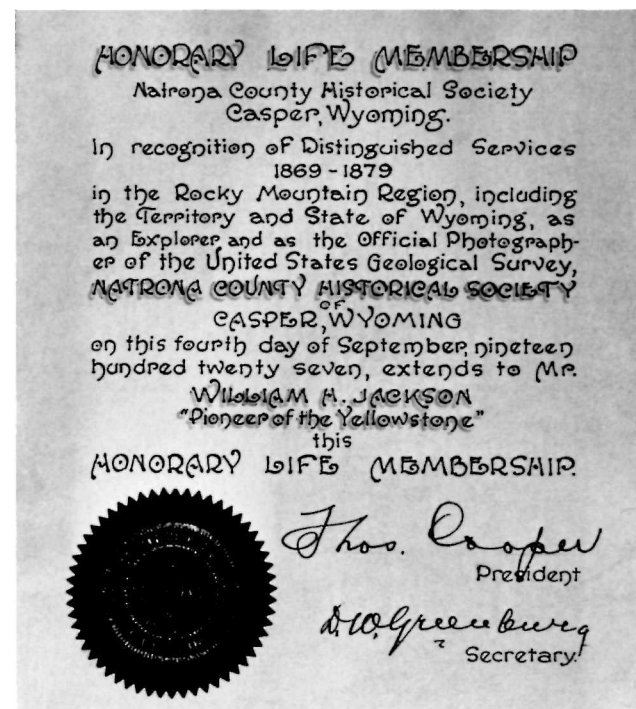
Young Collins, the only son of the regiment's colonel, and four men under his command were killed during the unsuccessful rescue attempt, and the nearby post's name was changed to Fort Caspar in his memory. Unfortunately, the town that eventually grew up around the Platte River Bridge site, misspelled the name and is known today as "Casper," Wyoming.

Fear of an attack was still prevalent when Jackson's wagon train pulled into Fort Caspar on August 11, 1866. As Jackson described it:

At nightfall we came to Platte Bridge, site of the present city of Casper, and not many miles south of Teapot Dome, destined to be famous in a later day. We crossed at once over the very finest—if only

because it was the first—bridge we had yet encountered, a sturdy and workmanlike structure of logs...

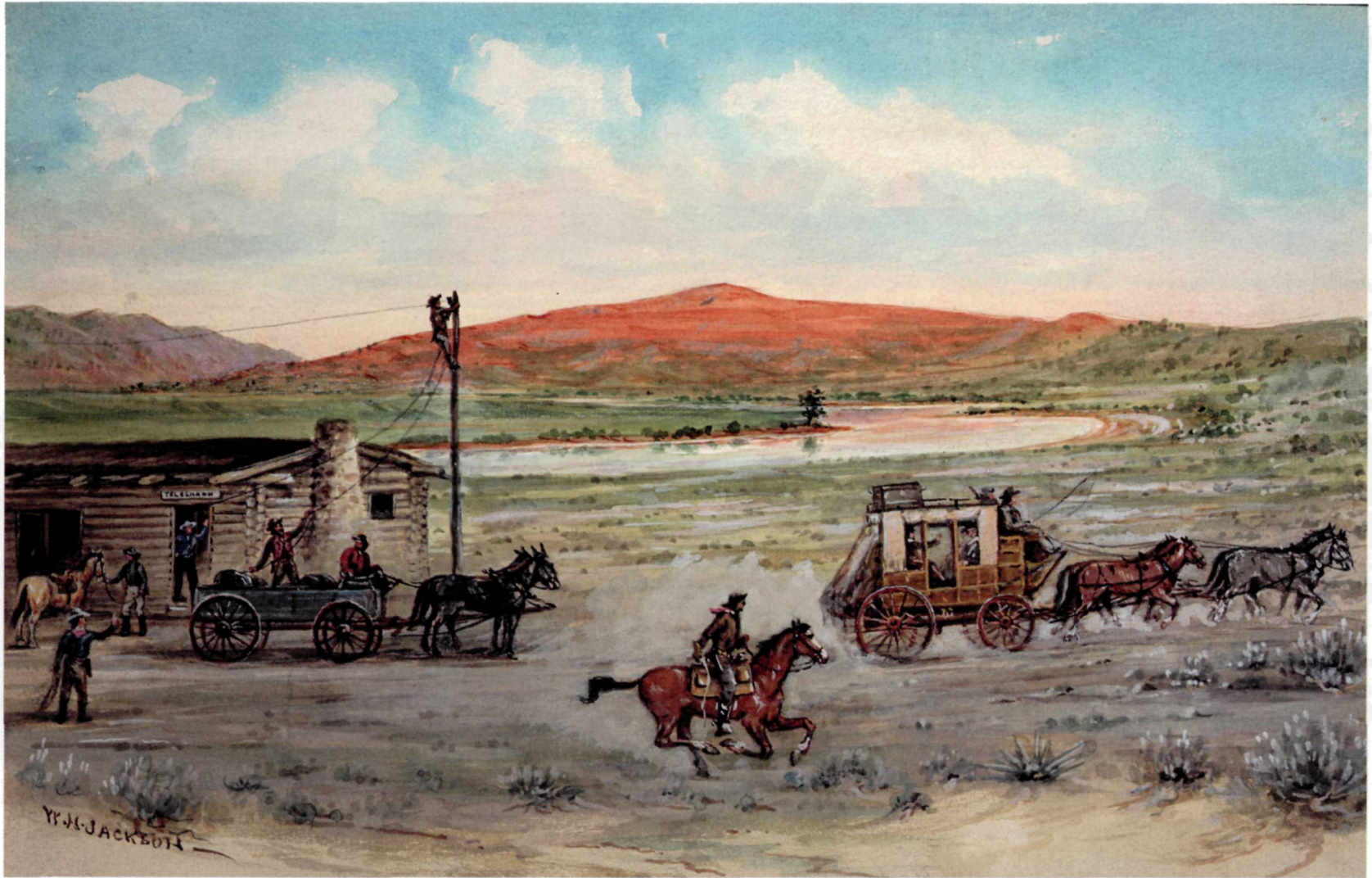
On Sunday, August 18, we made the long, dusty descent to the foot of Red Buttes. The clouds kicked up by the bulls was so heavy as to render the first yoke or two invisible from the point where I ran alongside. Here the only course was to lock the wheels and pray that your wagon wouldn't crash into others that had already reached the bottom.²



On September 4, 1927, The Natrona County Historical Society of Casper, Wyoming, granted William Henry Jackson an honorary life membership for his services to the state of Wyoming. Jackson was 84 years old at the time. (SCBL 1043)

¹ J.W. Vaughn, *The Battle of Platte Bridge* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 44f.

² Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 128.



Red Buttes. Signed and undated. 25.4 x 38.1 cm. (SCBL I48)

INDEPENDENCE ROCK



An enigmatic notation on the back of this photograph reads, "Mexican Central R.R. 1883 Private car." The people are identified as W.H. Holmes, Mrs. Emilie Jackson, Mrs. and Mr. J.A. O'Hara, and William Henry Jackson. (SCBL 1036)

After following the Platte River since passing Fort Kearny, Nebraska Territory, and after crossing the Platte River Bridge, William Henry Jackson's wagons turned due west to follow the Sweetwater River through central Wyoming. The river is aptly named, as this portion of the trail was increasingly dry and barren, and any water was much appreciated by everyone on the trail.

However, the lack of grass was especially hard on the oxen, and the animals belonging to Jackson's train began to die at an alarming rate. The loss of oxen put the entire wagon train in danger, for if too many of the animals died, the freight wagons would be stranded and unable to move. To make matters all the more urgent, the chances of obtaining fresh animals were very slim as there were no trading posts between Fort Laramie and Fort Bridger.

The going grew tougher as both men and animals became exhausted by the long hours and hard work. Tensions reached a flashpoint on August 21st when the wagon master caught two men taking sugar from one of the wagons, and threatened to dock their pay. Harsh words were exchanged and the situation deteriorated to the point that two men quit and left the train, despite the fact that they were practically in the middle of nowhere.¹

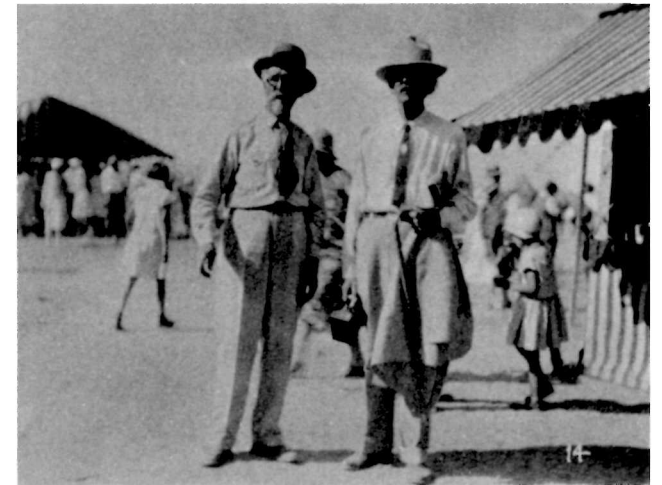
One of the men who left the train was Ruel "Rock" Rounds, Jackson's Civil War comrade and traveling companion since they had agreed to head West after a chance meeting in New York City earlier that year. Jackson never saw Rock again, but later learned that he had died in Boise, Idaho, in 1890.²

Needless to say, Jackson and the remainder of the teamsters were in a somber mood on August 23, 1866, as they passed the next major trail landmark, Independence Rock. The tension among the bullwhackers and the absence of his friend must have been extraordinarily distracting and may explain an uncharacteristic omission, as Jackson does not even mention Independence Rock in his journal.

It is generally believed that Independence Rock received its

name from the fact that an early fur trading caravan had camped there on July 4, 1824.³ As the number of emigrants on the trail grew over the years, Independence Rock became something of a pioneer repository, as many people carved or painted their names on it. Messages were also left marked on the rock for those coming along in later trains, and many of these names and notations are still visible on protected surfaces.

William Henry Jackson is known to have revisited Independence Rock on at least two occasions. In 1870, four years after his bullwhacking experience, Jackson returned to Independence Rock as a member of the Hayden Survey.³ Sixty years later, as a member of the Oregon Trail Memorial Association, Jackson again visited Independence Rock.



On July 4, 1930, William Henry Jackson returned to Independence Rock to attend the festivities known as the Covered Wagon Centennial. Jackson's companion is identified as "Bill" Hoover. (SCBL 2688)

¹. Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 130.

². Ibid., 131.

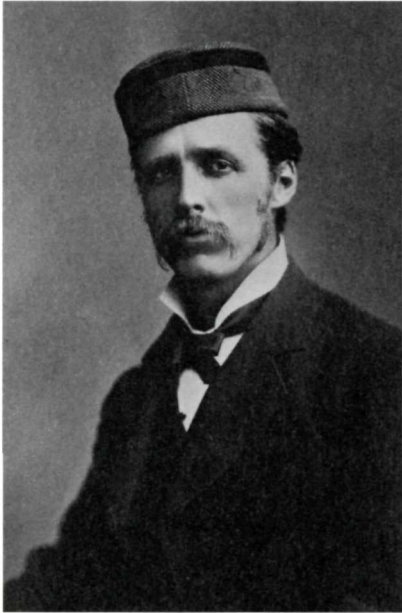
³. Haines, *Historic Sites*, 197.

⁴. Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 190.



Independence Rock. Signed and dated 1936. 25.4 x 38.0 cm. (SCBL 31)

HIGH PLAINS TRANSPORT



This image of Jackson is dated 1881, a time when Jackson was operating a photographic studio in Denver. A notation on the back of the photograph informs us that it is the result of a new "dry plate negative" process that presumably simplified the laborious procedure of preparing each individual negative just prior to exposure. (SCBL 1033)

In this painting, Jackson once again uses his talents to tell a story. In addition to depicting Sweetwater Station near Split Rock, the various types of transportation and communication available on the western frontier are shown in one painting. It is doubtful that a diverse cavalcade such as this ever crossed paths as shown here, but Jackson opted to use his artistic license to make a point.

Here, no fewer than nine different modes of transportation are depicted. In the background is a small party of Plains Indians on horseback. With the horse, the native tribes were able to follow the buffalo herds and hunt at will. Also, by using travois with their horses, the Plains Indians were able to haul larger loads faster and more efficiently.

A little closer to the viewer is an ox-drawn freight wagon of the type Jackson used in 1866. In contrast to this heavy wagon, which is being pulled by five yokes of oxen, out ahead of it is a small, two-wheeled cart drawn by a single mule. Two-wheeled carts were commonly used early on the Plains, before the network of road ranches and stage stations were established along the overland routes. While carts could not haul as large a load, they were easier to repair and maintain.

Passing in the opposite direction is another freight wagon. In this case it is being pulled by eight teams of mules. A major difference between the use of oxen and mules lie in how they were handled. The much larger and more powerful oxen were simply yoked together, and the yoke was attached directly to the wagon tongue.

One step closer to the viewer, the two most famous modes of rapid transit on the Plains are seen passing each other. The horse-drawn stagecoach was introduced to the frontier in the late 1850s and carried passengers and mail. Despite the bouncing and dusty seventeen-day ride from Kansas to California that the stagecoaches offered, they were a common sight in the West, until finally replaced by railroads.

The Pony Express rider shown doffing his hat to the stagecoach's passengers has become a mythic figure in American his-

tory. Perhaps it is the fact that he rode alone across a wilderness, dedicated to delivering mail to America's farflung outposts that has so captured our imagination. However, it should not be forgotten that for every heroic rider there were hundreds of men who operated the isolated relay stations that made his ride possible. In the 18 months the Pony Express was in operation, sixteen employees were killed, seven stations burned, and 150 horses were lost.¹

In the foreground are some of the less romantic, but most efficient methods of hauling goods in the form of the pack mule and the pack horse. The pack mule offered the means of hauling a medium-sized load with relative ease, and was most often used by prospectors and single men making their way west during the California Gold Rush. The pack horse could carry a similar-sized load over short distances, and was a method Jackson himself used to transport his camera and glass plate negatives through the Rocky Mountains.



A note in the margin of this painting reads: "Wind River Mountains from the Little Sandy." The Wind River Mountains are located to the northwest of the Old Oregon Trail, and their snow-capped peaks must have presented a torturous vista for emigrants on the dry, arid trail. (SCBL 35)

¹. Settles & Settles, *Saddles and Spurs*, 160.



Along the Sweetwater, Near Split Rock. Signed and undated. 24.2 x 36.9 cm. (SCBL 32)

THREE CROSSINGS STATION



In 1926 William Henry Jackson revisited the site of Three Crossings Station.

About the only thing left were the grave markers of soldiers killed in the raids that had taken place 50 years earlier. A note identifies the men as simply, “Newburg, WHJ and Ellison.” (SCBL 2685)

The Sweetwater River, in central Wyoming, is notorious for twisting back on itself. This sometimes made it necessary for overland emigrants to cross the meandering stream several times within a short distance. Such a place on the Oregon Trail became the site for a road ranch that started out as station for the Pony Express. An early description of this station is given by Richard Burton, an English traveler and adventurer who visited Three Crossings Station in August of 1860. Burton found a surprisingly civilized home in the middle of the Wyoming wilderness:

*The little ranch was neatly swept and garnished, papered and ornamented... The tablecloth was clean, so was the cooking... After a copious breakfast, which broke the fast of four days that had dragged on since our civilized refectation at Fort Laramie, we spread our buffalos and water-proofs under the ample eaves of the ranch, and spent the day... snoozing, dozing, chatting, smoking, and contemplating the novel.*¹

Burton apparently had plenty of time to form a positive impression of the station, despite its isolation:

*Straight before us rose the Rattlesnake Hills, a nude and grim horizon, frowning over the soft and placid scene below, while at their feet flowed the little river—purling over its pebbly bed with graceful meanderings... While contrasting with the Green River Valley and the scorched and tawny rock-wall, patches of sand-hill, raised by the wind, here and there cumbered the ground... We supped in the evening merrily. It was the best coffee we had tasted since leaving New Orleans...*²

During the Civil War, a military outpost was established near Three Crossings Station. The Pony Express was no longer running, but the soldiers were needed to protect overland travelers and maintain the transcontinental telegraph line. A detachment of Company G, 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, was detailed to serve at Three Crossings, and in 1864 and 1865, all of the stations on the Sweetwater River, including Three Crossings Station were repeatedly attacked by Sioux and Cheyenne war parties.

When Jackson camped near Three Crossings Station on the evening of August 25, 1866, the prospect of Indian attacks and the tensions among the teamsters weighed heavily on his mind. As such, he made little mention of what he saw there, other than to make the cryptic notation:

*In P.M. made quite a long drive & corralled under the bluffs near the 3 crossings. The country looks more desolate than ever, if possible. The howling of the wolves at night is still as prevalent as ever.*³

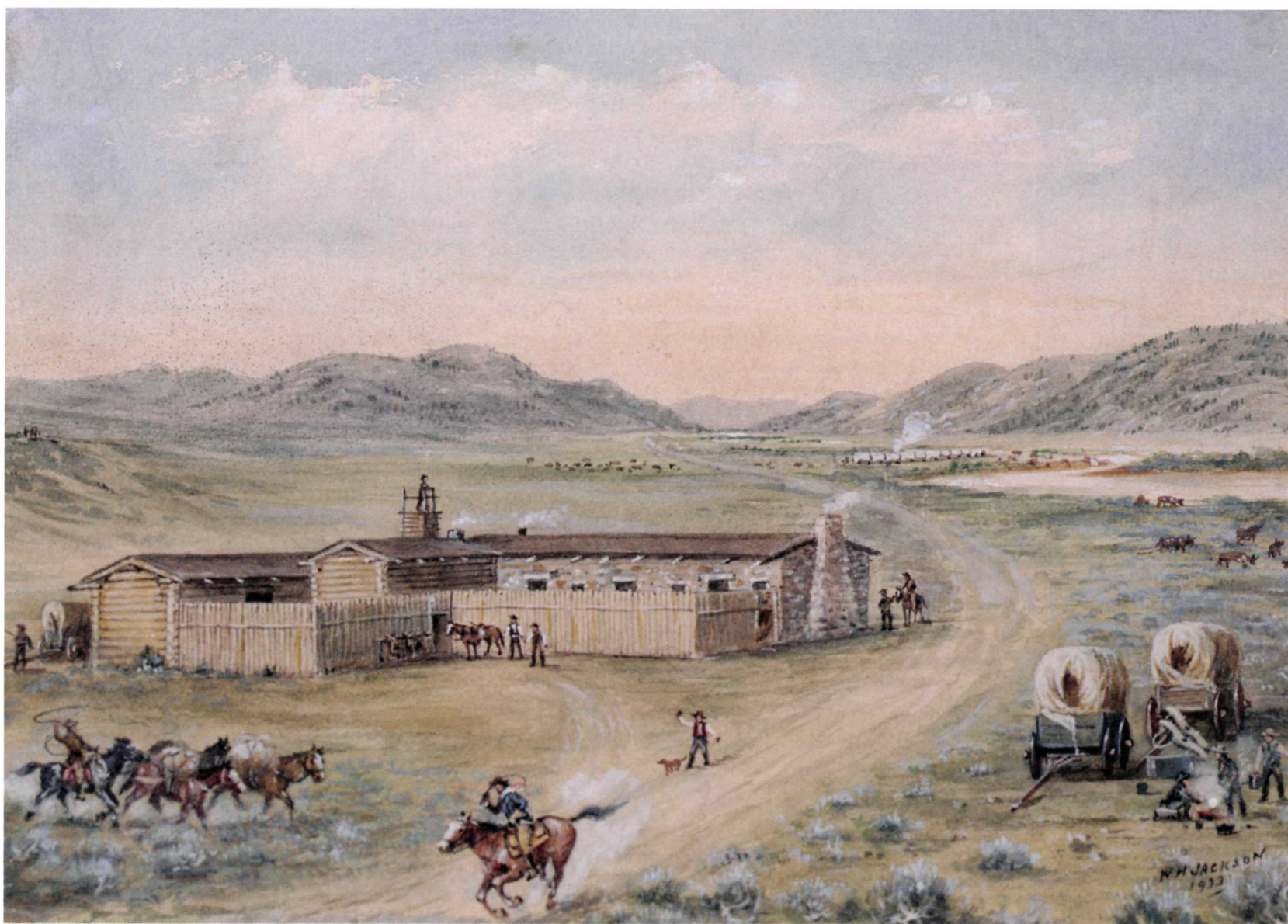


“Virginia Dale Station”—Jackson based this painting on a photograph he had taken in the 1870s. Located in southeastern Wyoming on the Overland Trail, this stage station saw much more traffic when the Platte River route was temporarily closed in 1864. (SCBL 277)

¹. Richard Burton, *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 154.

². *Ibid.*, 157.

³. Hafen, *Jackson Diaries*, 69.



Three Crossings Station, Signed and dated 1933. 23.5 x 33.0 cm. (SCBL 33)

THE DEVIL'S GATE



In 1884, like thousands of people before and since, William Henry Jackson simply could not resist the temptation to be photographed standing on the outcropping of Glacier Point in Yosemite. (SCBL 1018)

Devil's Gate is a long, narrow gorge that has been cut through a ridge of solid rock. While the Sweetwater River is able to make its way through, the cut is impassible to road traffic, and emigrant wagons had to swing south of the river. Devil's Gate is visible for miles and was the topic of much speculation among the overland emigrants.

Some early pioneers, who camped nearby and must have had time on their hands climbed into the Gate and marveled at the echoes they could generate. Some even carved their names in the walls. In 1866, Jackson made little mention of Devil's Gate, and one can only assume that he was working very hard and consumed with the increasing tensions among his fellow teamsters.

In the early summer of 1869 Jackson returned to Devil's Gate.¹ At this time Jackson was working out of his studio in Omaha, but had made a trip to Promontory Point, Utah, to photograph the site where the transcontinental railway had been joined on May 10, 1869. Unable to be present on that historic occasion as that happened to be the day of Jackson's marriage to Mollie Greer, Jackson had great hopes of cashing in on the interest the new railroad was generating in the general public.²

Jackson and his assistant had planned to spend a month taking photographs all along the newly completed railroad, but they ran into financial problems. Apparently the whole trip was run on a shoestring, and although the photographers were able to capture many striking scenes they were certain they could sell, they didn't have the money to buy the chemicals needed to develop the prints.

Eventually the money was raised, and the financially embarrassed photographers were able to make the trip pay for itself. The stark scenery of Devil's Gate lent itself to Jackson's eye for landscapes, and provided several images that sold very well and helped him to keep body and soul together.

A year later, Jackson returned to Devil's Gate, this time with Hayden's U.S. Geological Survey.³ This was his first

experience with the survey, and he wanted very much to record as many of the landmarks he had first seen four years earlier. Many years later, Jackson once again decided to capture the Devil's Gate, this time in a painting.

Jackson's painting views the Devil's Gate from the southerly detour that the early pioneers had to take. This painting reveals several interesting details about life on the trail. First notice that while the roadbed has narrowed, the emigrants are still trying to form at least two columns so they can cut down on the amount of choking dust their wagons stir up.

Secondly, fresh meat was always preferable to the salted beef and pork that was the staple of the emigrant's diet. So whenever a buffalo herd came within reach of the wagon trains, everyone with a gun felt the desire to put meat on the table. Unfortunately, this haste coupled with an unfamiliarity with firearms, explains a good number of the tragic self-inflicted gunshot injuries that occurred on the trail.



Although not very dramatic in appearance, South Pass in western Wyoming provided the most practical route through the Rocky Mountains and made the overland migrations to Oregon, Utah and California possible. (SCBL 289)

¹. William Henry Jackson and Howard Driggs, *Pioneer Photographer*, (Yonkers-on-Hudson: World Book Company; 1929) 31.

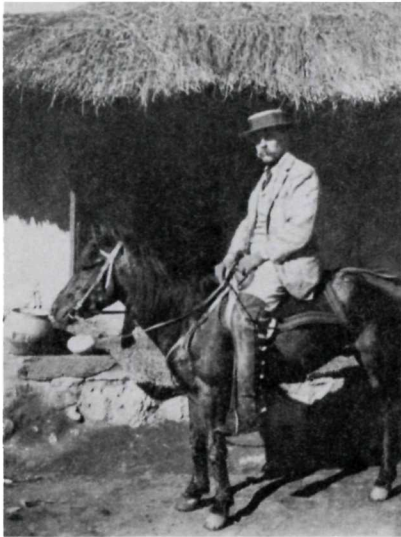
². Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 175.

³. Jackson & Driggs, *Pioneer Photographer*, 86.



Beyond the Devil's Gate. Initialed and undated. 25.4 x 35.0 cm. (SCBL 156)

THE MORMON TRAIL



In 1895 William Henry Jackson embarked on a trip around the world on behalf of the World Trade Commission. Here Jackson is testing the fortitude of a Manchurian pony during a stopover in Korea. (SCBL 3117)

The Mormon exodus to the Far West was a unique facet of America's westward expansion. From 1846 until 1869, approximately 70,000 Mormon faithful made their way west in hopes of settling a new homeland where they could live and Church is filled with incidents of intolerance and violent persecution. In fact, Joseph Smith and his followers had been forced to relocate several times after first settling in New York, Ohio, Missouri and Illinois.

The violence reached a climax in 1844 when Joseph Smith was murdered by an angry mob. Hoping to avoid any further confrontations, the Mormon leaders began planning for another move—this time into the sparsely populated Rocky Mountains. After several months of preparation, the trek began in February of 1846 when the first group of Mormon citizens of Nauvoo, Illinois, crossed the frozen Mississippi River into Iowa, and slowly made their way west.

The Mormons gathered at Winter Quarters, near present-day Omaha, Nebraska, and organized themselves before venturing out onto the Plains. The Pioneer group of 120 Mormons, led by Brigham Young, set out across Nebraska in April 1847. Following the route of the old fur traders and early explorers such as John Fremont, the Mormons made their way along the north bank of the Platte River, then crossed to the south bank near Fort Laramie before heading out into central Wyoming. After four exhausting months on the trail, the Mormons finally arrived at the steep-walled Echo Canyon in eastern Utah.

The Mormon experience on the overland trail was quite different from that of other emigrants. First, the Mormons were much more organized. Each Mormon wagon train had clearly defined leaders and each individual was assigned particular duties and responsibilities. Second, rather than simply moving individuals or single families, the Mormons were literally relocating entire communities. For this reason, the Mormons were much more concerned about making improvements along the trail, such as establishing ferries across rivers, as this would make the trip easier for those who would follow them.

One well-known chapter in the history of the Mormon Trail was the handcart experiment. Due to the efforts of Mormon missionaries, hundreds of poor European converts began arriving in America in the mid-1850s all of them hoping to make the trek to Utah. Unfortunately, their lack of money made the purchase of wagons and draft animals impossible. Beginning in 1856, the Mormon Church began organizing companies of emigrants in Iowa City, Iowa, who would make the journey west using two-wheeled handcarts.

Over the next four years a total of ten handcart companies made the journey across Nebraska and Wyoming. In 1856 two companies were caught in an early blizzard and several hundred people died before rescue parties arrived. The last handcarts made the journey in 1860, and completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 signaled an end to the overland route known as the Mormon Trail.



On the back of the painting, a note by the artist reads, "An imaginary conception of the Mormon handcart immigration of 1856. Landscape from sketches made near Fort Bridger in 1866." (SCBL 40)

¹. Kimball, *Mormon Pioneer Trail*, 134-135.



Echo Canyon. Signed and dated 1934. 25.4 x 38.1 cm. (SCBL 165)

THE PROMISED LAND



For a man who spent his life climbing into the most remote corners of the North American continent, the Egyptian pyramids did not seem to pose much of a challenge. (SCBL 3112)

William Henry Jackson arrived in Salt Lake City on October 18, 1866, by following the same route the Mormon Pioneers had used almost 20 years earlier. Unlike the Mormons, Jackson entered the Salt Lake Valley disillusioned and desperate. Five weeks earlier, he had decided to leave the freighting outfit and give up his dream of finding gold in Montana.¹ Jackson's decision to quit his job was made near Fort Bridger, when he learned that the wagon boss intended to bypass Salt Lake City. Apparently the personal conflicts that had plagued the teamsters took their toll on Jackson and he was thinking about returning home. As Jackson later related it:

*In a flash—and for no assignable reason, except that I thought it would be easier to return to the East from there, by way of San Francisco!—I decided to go to Salt Lake. Montana, goal of my dreams these many months, dissolved into thin air.*²

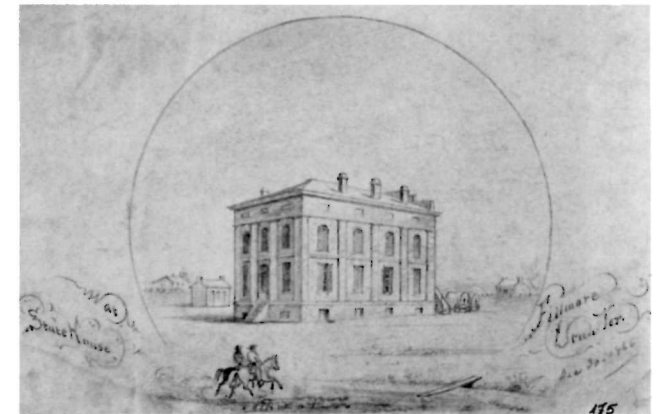
Virtually penniless, Jackson spent the next two months in Salt Lake City, where he eked out a living working as a farm laborer. Providentially, Jackson's father sent him \$100, which allowed Jackson to book passage with a wagon train bound for California. During his brief stay in Salt Lake City, the homesick young man considered the possibility of setting up a portrait studio, but his thoughts were still of the girl he had left behind. As he recorded in his journal:

*Could I make money in any reasonable amount so that I could live here respectably, I should be very contented to remain here during the winter, & then go west in the spring. Writing that letter to Caddie gave me a real set of blues... O! how I wish & have wished that I only had some money ahead so that I might at once go to the states & be in a position to consummate every desire were everything else all favorable.*³

The painting, "Salt Lake Valley" was completed 70 years after Jackson's first visit, and it depicts Mormon emigrants as they finally arrive at a place where they could look out over the valley that was to be their new home. In the distance, to the right, is the Great Salt Lake. This is substantially the same view Jackson would have had in 1866, except that by that time

Salt Lake City had developed into a thriving community.

The wagon train winding its way past the foreground is entering what is known today as Emigration Canyon. Emigration Canyon is where Brigham Young, who was lying ill in a wagon, first saw the Salt Lake Valley. Despite the fact that the valley was basically an arid desert, Young turned to his fellow Mormons and is alleged to have said, "This is the Place!" This was the land that they would make into a new homeland.



A penciled note incorporated into this drawing reads, "State House at Fillmore, Utah Dec 30, 1866" (SCBL 175)

¹. Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 132-137.

². Ibid., 133.

³. Hafen, *Jackson Diaries*, 95.



The Salt Lake Valley. Signed and undated. 24.2 x 34.3 cm. (SCBL 41)

THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL



With William Henry Jackson's experience as a bullwhacker it is tempting to speculate about his thoughts as to the amount of freight that could have been hauled using the elephants he encountered in his 1895 trip to India. (SCBL 3115)

By the time William Henry Jackson left Salt Lake City in December of 1866, the overland trail to California was a well-worn road. The California Gold Rush had peaked in 1852, and the number of emigrants had dropped considerably in the intervening years. However, in Jackson's time there was still a steady stream of wagons hauling freight from Salt Lake City to California that continued until the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

Jackson's experience on the California Trail was very different from what he had known on the Platte. For one thing, he was a paying passenger, and the demands on his energy and stamina were much less tiring. Also, the pace that these freighters set was almost leisurely. Early starts were rare and the travel day was considerably shorter than when Jackson had been a teamster.

The trail Jackson followed wound south of the Great Salt Lake before joining up with the primary route and heading to the southwest. Initially there were several small Mormon communities along the trail. These included the towns of Nephi, Cedar Creek and Fillmore.¹

Traveling through the Nevada desert in December must have been unusually pleasant as Jackson makes little mention of any difficulties or discomfort. Jackson did sketch wagons climbing out of the Valley of the Virgin River, and the grade does look impossibly steep, but his notes only express a concern about the sobriety of the teamsters.

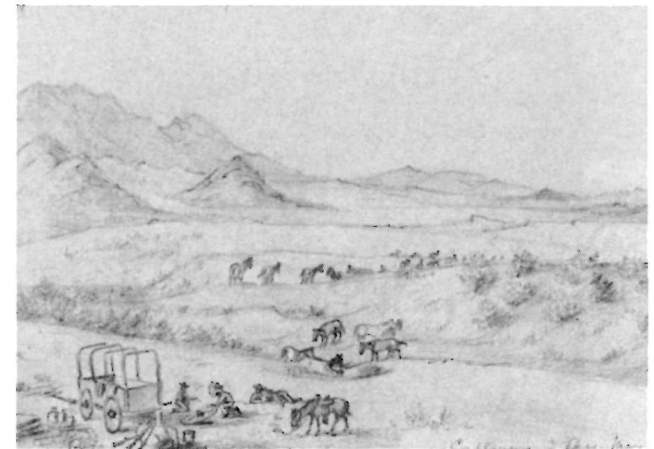
Another subject noticeably absent from his diary is any further mention of pursuing his fortune at any of California's gold sites. After a little more than a month on the California Trail, William Henry Jackson's wagon train arrived in Los Angeles. In describing the Los Angeles he first visited, Jackson also reveals his opinion of the city it later became:

Los Angeles, a town of less than 5,000, had in 1867 all the charm it lacks today. Single-storied Mexican houses were almost universal—the genuine article, not a professional booster's Spanish nightmare. Orange and lime trees lined the streets, and

*traffic was sparse and slow-moving. Los Angeles was honestly quaint, rather than merely blatant.*²

Of course, by that time the gold fever in California had subsided. New strikes had been made in Montana and Nevada and most of the original "forty-niners" had moved on to new ventures. However, Jackson was undoubtedly exposed to the stories of the few men who struck it rich, as well as those of the many who never did hit paydirt.

After the many months of effort to reach the West Coast, Jackson suddenly found himself at a loss as to what he would do. Apparently he did not entertain any idea of staying very long. Instead he worked at odd jobs to make enough money to support himself, while also taking the time to enjoy the climate and relaxed atmosphere. However, within a few months Jackson was anxious to make his way back east—his dreams of striking it rich forgotten.



The Nevada desert was an especially difficult section of the road to California. William Henry Jackson apparently sketched this portion of what he called the "Salt Lake & Los Angeles Trail" during his return trip to the East in 1867. (SCBL 136)

1. Hafen, *Jackson Diaries*, 103-106.

2. Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 150-151.



Marshall Finds Gold. Signed and dated 1941. 23.5 x 33.7 cm. (SCBL 42)

THE OREGON TRAIL



An enigmatic note on the back of this photograph reads, “Honey, please have my PB (pinched-back?) suit pressed and ink taken out.” This image probably dates from around 1910. (SCBL 2637)

After separating from the California and Mormon Trails in western Wyoming, the Oregon Trail veered to the northwest across Idaho toward Fort Hall. Even then, there really wasn't any “One” Oregon Trail. Rather, the Oregon Trail consisted of a network of shortcuts and cutoffs that were used at various times and with varying degrees of success.

For example, while still in Wyoming, emigrants had the option of following what was known as the Lander Road or Cutoff. East of South Pass, this trail struck off to the northwest to Fort Hall. If they had continued on the trail past South Pass, the emigrants again had a decision to make. In this case there was the option of taking the Sublette Cutoff which sought to save many miles. It eventually joined up with the main route of the Oregon Trail, which jogged south to Fort Bridger before swinging back to the northwest into Idaho. This part of the trail was referred to as the Bear River Divide.

It was the wagon master's decision to use the Bear River Cutoff and by-pass Salt Lake City that caused William Henry Jackson to quit his job with the freight wagons and make his way to Utah. If Jackson had continued on the Oregon Trail, he would have come to Soda Springs, which is where the trail branched again—this time to the west. This route was taken by many people bound for California. Farther along on the Oregon Trail, the road branched off to the north, and this is the route Jackson's wagon would have taken into western Montana.

One of the most unique and dramatic crossings of any river along the Oregon Trail took place in south central Idaho. Although river crossings were avoided unless there no other alternative, fording the Snake River at this point offered emigrants a difficult choice. They could remain safely on the south bank of the river until they were about ten miles west of Fort Boise, however, the trail on the north bank offered easy access to fresh water and a less difficult roadbed.

Oftentimes the choice would depend on the water level of the river, for while nature provided some small islands to serve as stepping stones for the wagon trains, the final channel was

fairly deep and the current could be very swift. In high water the crossing could be very dangerous, and there are stories of several accidents that took place here.

An 1845 account by Samuel Hancock describes the risky procedures that were used at Three Island Crossing:

We now made preparations for crossing the river, which was very rapid and deep, and perhaps 200 yards wide; the crossing was affected by propping up the wagon beds above the reach of the water and having three men on horseback by the team of the first wagon, to which the others were all chained to the preceding one, and with a man on horseback to keep the teams straight, we reached the opposite bank safely...¹

Eventually these two branches of the Oregon Trail came together again near Fort Boise, which was located near the border of present-day Oregon. Although the emigrants had covered 1500 miles to this point, some of the most difficult terrain was in the 400 miles still ahead of them.



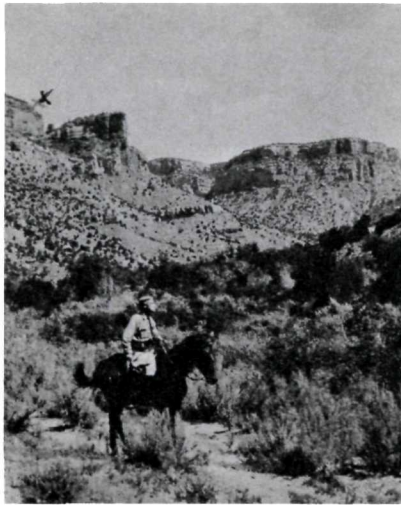
A notation in Jackson's handwriting reads, “From the Blue Mountains to the Valley of the Columbia in Oregon. Ideal composition by W.H. Jackson.” (SCBL 44)

¹. Samuel Hancock, *Samuel Hancock 1845-1860*, (New York City: R.M. McBride & Co., 1927), 26.



Three Island Crossing. Signed and undated. 23.5 x 35.8 cm. (SCBL 43)

NEARING THE JOURNEY'S END



William Henry Jackson provided his own caption on the back of this photograph. It reads, "Sept. 30, 1921. WHJ in Mancos Canyon—under the X at the top of the mesa is located the 2 story cliff house discovered and photographed by him in 1874." (SCBL 1048)

Two hundred miles west of Three Island Crossing, emigrants on the Oregon Trail caught their first glimpse of the Blue Mountains. These mountains formed a natural barrier along the eastern border of the Oregon Territory, and emigrants had to be sure to make their way through them before the first heavy snowfall, or risk the fate suffered by the Donner Party in the Sierra Nevada mountains in California.

After walking halfway across a continent, and making hundreds of decisions about such things as what type of wagon they should use, when to leave, how much food to bring along, what tools and furniture will they need, which cut-off to take, and so on—at this point there was only one last major decision to make. Should they pay a toll and continue overland, or should they build a raft and float down the Columbia River?

The Barlow Toll Road was established in 1846 by an enterprising businessman named Samuel Barlow. When Barlow first saw the Columbia River in 1845, he did not want to risk rafting. So he and several other people blazed a trail south of the river. Although their efforts nearly cost them their lives due to becoming snowbound, they proved that the new route could work, and the next year Barlow set up the toll road.

While most emigrants complained about having to pay any kind of toll, the improved 30 mile roadway was undoubtedly a welcomed experience after 1,900 miles on the trail. Emigrants had to make the climb up to Barlow Pass, which was the primary route through the Cascade Range. After passing south of Mount Hood the road then made a fairly easy descent into the northern end of the Willamette Valley, south of present-day Portland, Oregon. This toll road was in operation from 1846-1912.

The alternative of floating wagons downriver on rafts was both faster and more dangerous. The river offered an uninterrupted route into the heart of the Oregon Territory, except for the Cascades of the Columbia, where the rafts and their contents had to be hauled several miles around the impassable rapids. The rafts were then reassembled and the perilous journey could be resumed.

An 1847 emigrant named Josiah Beal left this account of his arduous experience on the river:

As soon as the botes were finished, were filled with contents of our wagons and a few wagons were taken to pieces & stowed in the Bote. Stock driven down the Indian Trail. When we got to the cascades we had to unlode our botes and set up our wagons & fill them and make a drive of 5 miles to the lower cascades. The botes were run over the falls and caught below by some Indians that were hired to look after them.¹

No one knows for certain how many people made the westward journey on the Oregon Trail. John Unruh, a highly respected scholar of the westward movement has estimated that between 1840 and 1860, 53,062 people emigrated to Oregon, with 1852 as the peak year.² The problem with these statistics is the inconsistency in which records were kept. The military kept a haphazard count as people passed Fort Laramie, but these are incomplete and sketchy at best, so no irrefutable figures are available.



Completed in 1941, this painting depicts the assembly of early pioneers voting to establish the Oregon Territory. This event took place at Champoege, along the Willamette River on May 2, 1843—one month before Jackson's birth. (SCBL 47)

¹. Haines, *Historic Sites*, 393.

². Unruh, *The Plains Across*, 120.



The Barlow Cutoff. Signed and dated 1930. 23.5 x 36.3 cm. (SCBL 46)

A black and white portrait of an elderly man with a mustache and goatee, wearing round glasses. The man is looking slightly to the left of the camera. The background is dark and out of focus.

SECTION 3

Historic Scenes from the West

ENCOUNTERS



In this 1935 photograph, William Henry Jackson poses in the Lincoln Room during a visit to Gettysburg. The Lincoln Room is in the home of David Wills, where Lincoln stayed the night prior to delivering the Gettysburg Address. (SCBL 2662)

The early fur trade resulted in many of the first contacts between Euro-Americans and the Plains tribes. Enterprising fur trappers and traders quickly learned to bring gifts and trade goods for Indian tribes living in the prime hunting grounds. At first, the gifts were intended to gain permission to trap beaver on tribal lands. However, eventually the fur dealers traded directly with the Indians, who would exchange furs for manufactured items that made their lives easier; guns, knives, iron cooking pots, blankets and bolts of cloth.

When the demand for furs declined in the 1830s, many of these early mountain men used their language skills and knowledge of the land to serve as intermediaries between the native tribes and those Americans who were just beginning to venture into the Far West. Some mountaineers, such as Kit Carson served as scouts for the U.S. Army, while others, like Jim Bridger, guided wagon trains to California and Oregon.

The diversity and complexities of Native American cultures have fascinated Americans for centuries, and William Henry Jackson was no exception to the rule. Jackson's 1866 transcontinental journey resulted in very few encounters with American Indians. However, his interest was piqued and when he opened his photographic studio in Omaha, Nebraska, Jackson left the lucrative portrait work to his brother and visited the Omaha and Otoe Reservations just north of town.

On these reservations, Jackson produced a number of photographic images that first brought him public attention. Sales of these prints were brisk, and their publication was noticed by Ferdinand Hayden, who was organizing an expedition for the U.S. Geological Survey to explore the Yellowstone Country, and it occurred to him that it might prove useful to have a photographer along. He visited Jackson in Omaha and offered him the position—without pay! The newly-married Jackson leaped at the opportunity and within a year his images of Yellowstone's wonders made him a household name.

Jackson's travels throughout the West gave him the opportunity to meet and photograph many different American Indians.

Among those recorded on film were the Ute, Bannock, and Shoshone of the western mountains, as well as the Navajo of the Southwest.

William Henry Jackson's painting, "Council" depicts a parley between Plains Indians and a party of early fur trappers. The mountain peaks in the background are the Grand Tetons of western Wyoming, which Jackson first visited in 1872. At that time he described them as follows:

The Teton region at this time was a game paradise. Our various parties were kept supplied with fresh meat without having to hunt for it, deer, moose, or mountain sheep being nearly always in sight when needed. It was equally easy to get a mess of trout from the streams nearby. Bears were abundant also. The first day in the main camp, two of the younger boys went fishing and unexpectedly happened on bruin. This was larger game than they expected to meet, but they succeeded in killing the bear with pistols only.¹



During his travels with the U.S. Geological Survey, William Henry Jackson did not only photograph landscapes. The various native American tribes he encountered also interested him. This photograph is captioned, "Shoshone village—War Chief's tent." (SCBL 2761)

¹. Jackson & Driggs, *The Pioneer Photographer*, 132.



Council. Initialed and dated 1936. 25.4 x 35.0 cm. (SCBL 159)

BUFFALO HUNT



When William Henry Jackson moved to New York in 1929 he decided to live in the Explorer's Club. In 1932 he moved into the Army and Navy Club. In this undated photograph, Jackson is seated in his room at the Explorer's Club, surrounded by some of his paintings. (SCBL 2644)

If any creature can be said to symbolize the American West, it would have to be the buffalo. Prior to the encroachment of the Euro-Americans, millions of the animals thundered across the high plains in single, massive herds. Native American tribes had hunted the buffalo for thousands of years.

Prior to the acquisition of the horse, Plains Indians could only hunt the buffalo herds on foot, and movement was limited by what they could carry. This lack of mobility limited the amount of game that could be taken and carried away at any one time.

To overcome these limitations, early native hunters sometimes drove buffalo over "jumps," where their herd instinct, poor vision and the sheer weight of numbers would force the animals over a cliff. Those animals not killed in the fall could be dispatched with relative ease and safety.

The popular image of nomadic tribes following the herds of migrating buffalo and living free on the wide open prairie is accurate—to a point. But it should be remembered that the culture that evolved around the buffalo and the horse was a recent development, since only three generations of Lakota had lived on the Plains prior to the Lewis and Clark Expedition.¹

Before 1700 the prairies were very sparsely populated. Plains tribes spent most of the year in semi-permanent villages along the major rivers and relied on farming for subsistence, and only ventured onto the Plains to supplement their diets with annual buffalo hunts.² The vast distances on the prairies simply made travel by foot impractical, and it was the acquisition of the horse that revolutionized the culture of the Plains Indians.

For example, the Sioux had been an eastern Woodland people living in Minnesota, and only became buffalo hunters when conflict with the larger Cree tribe forced them out onto the Plains in the late 18th Century.³ Their transformation into a culture based on the horse and buffalo was both rapid and stunning. No longer limited to traveling on foot, Sioux horsemen were able to follow the buffalo herds and raid enemy camps with impunity.

Other tribes developed similar cultures; the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Kiowa, and Comanche are primary examples of peoples who re-fashioned their cultures to suit their new Plains environment. The use of the horse and the mobility it offered made year-round life on the prairie possible. This culture which flowered for only a short time, developed such powerful cultural features—such as the tipi, flowing eagle feather headdresses, and sun dances, that they have become fixed in the mind of the general public as representing all Native American tribes.

William Henry Jackson had the good fortune to personally witness many of these Plains peoples before they were relegated to reservations, and their distinctive cultures were altered forever. This is undoubtedly the reason Jackson chose to portray an old-fashioned buffalo hunt in one of his paintings.



In an explanatory note on the back of this painting, Jackson wrote, "On the plains pioneers frequently encountered vast herds of bison or buffalo, and at times met with serious difficulty." (SCBL 153)

¹. Royal B. Hassrick, *The Sioux; Life and Customs of a Warrior Society* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 64.

². Robert H. Lowie, *Indians of the Plains* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 13.

³. Hassrick, *The Sioux*, 62.



Indians Driving Buffalo Over a Cliff. Initialed and undated. 25.4 x 38.1 cm. (SCBL 157)

LEWIS AND CLARK



In 1934 Yellowstone National Park sponsored a special exhibit of the work of William Henry Jackson. In this photograph the men are identified as Farley, Jackson, and Wyoming Governor O'Mahoney. (SCBL 2708)

The importance of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the opening of the Far West cannot be overstated. Although the expedition failed to find an easy trade route to the Northwest, this epic two-year journey up the Missouri River, across the Rocky Mountains, and down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean proved that it was possible to travel safely through the vastness of the Far West.

An added bonus that paid dividends for later explorers came in the form of the meticulous maps and observations that Meriwether Lewis and William Clark made of the people, land features, animals and plants that they saw along the way. The final success of the expedition, if not their very survival, may have been due to the presence of a Shoshone woman named Sacagawea.

Few individuals in American history have been the subject of as much romantic speculation as Sacagawea. The facts that are known about this woman are sparse. What is known is that Sacagawea had been kidnapped as a young girl and raised by the Minitaris. Later she was purchased and made a wife of Toussaint Charbonneau, a fur trading French-Canadian employed by the Northwest Company.

Charbonneau was hired as an interpreter and guide in November 1804 while Lewis and Clark were spending the winter at the Mandan villages on the upper Missouri River. Although Sacagawea was pregnant at the time, Lewis and Clark allowed her to accompany the expedition when their westward journey was resumed in the spring of 1805. Lewis and Clark knew that having a Shoshone along might help them to establish good relations when they came into contact with that powerful tribe.¹

Jackson's painting, "*Historic Homecoming*" depicts Lewis and Clark returning Sacagawea to her Shoshone tribe on Horse Prairie Creek, in western Montana. This event took place on the morning of August 15, 1805, near a site that came to be known as Camp Fortunate. No better name could have been chosen, for during a council with a Shoshone chieftain named

Cameahwait, Sacagawea recognized him as her brother.² Needless to say, Sacagawea's presence on this particular occasion justified the decision to bring her on the expedition.



This photograph of the Lower Falls of the Yellowstone was taken by Jackson in 1871. Images such as this were very popular, and were sold as prints and stereo cards, which when seen through a special viewer appeared to be three-dimensional. (SCBL 989)

¹. Roy E. Appleman, *Lewis and Clark* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1975), 114-115.

². *Ibid.*, 160-161.



Historic Homcoming. Signed and dated 1940. 28.0 x 38.1 cm. (SCBL 152)

THE FUR TRADE



After a lifetime of photographic experience, William Henry Jackson had every right to look proud and confident in a darkroom. (SCBL 930)

The opening of the West owed a great deal to the lives and efforts of the early fur traders. Before the first emigrants ventured out onto the plains, fur trappers and traders had explored the West looking for the most lucrative sources of beaver. Furs have always been a popular and practical way of staying warm, and in the early years of the 19th Century, when it became fashionable to wear top hats fashioned from beaver pelts, the fur market became extremely lucrative.

The reports of Lewis and Clark proved that the American Far West offered an abundant supply of fur-bearing animals. Within a few years several different concerns, such as the Rocky Mountain, Missouri, and Columbia trading companies were competing with John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company and the British Hudson's Bay Company in the attempt to profit from some of this wealth.

These companies used three primary methods of obtaining furs. They could buy them from independent or "free trappers;" they could hire their own crews to trap and skin the beaver; or they could offer trade goods to Native American tribes in return for furs. Each of these methods were used simultaneously, but trade with the Indians proved to be the most profitable, as valuable furs could be obtained in return for whiskey and trinkets.

An interesting development in the fur trade was what came to be known as the "rendezvous." During the years between 1825 and 1840 fur trappers and Indian hunters gathered at prearranged sites throughout the Rocky Mountains, where they awaited the arrival of the traders. By bringing supplies and trade goods to the mountains the traders could deal directly with the trappers, while the fur trappers were spared the necessity of hauling their bales of furs all the way to St. Louis.

These rendezvous were notoriously rowdy and seemed to serve as an outlet for the men who spent long months in rugged isolation. At the cost of a few bumps and bruises and some monumental hangovers, the trappers were able to obtain the supplies and equipment they would need for another year in the West. An important by-product of the rendezvous was the fact that since

the traders needed wagons to haul in the good and supplies, as well as haul out their pelts, practical overland routes had to be found—and in time these same routes became parts of the Oregon and California trails.

Unfortunately for the fur trappers, in 1840, silk hats were introduced and beaver-felt hats were no longer fashionable. Coupled with the depletion of the beaver population by over-trapping, the once-lucrative market for furs declined drastically. Almost overnight the trappers were out of work. Providentially, this coincided with the first wave of emigrants, and many fur trappers used their knowledge of the West to serve as guides for the wagon trains.

Many of these fur trappers and traders became famous figures in America's frontier history. Men such as Jim Bridger, Hugh Glass, Kit Carson, Thomas Fitzpatrick, John Colter, Robert Stuart and Jedediah Smith explored and exploited the Far West, and in turn were displaced by the demands by an advancing nation.



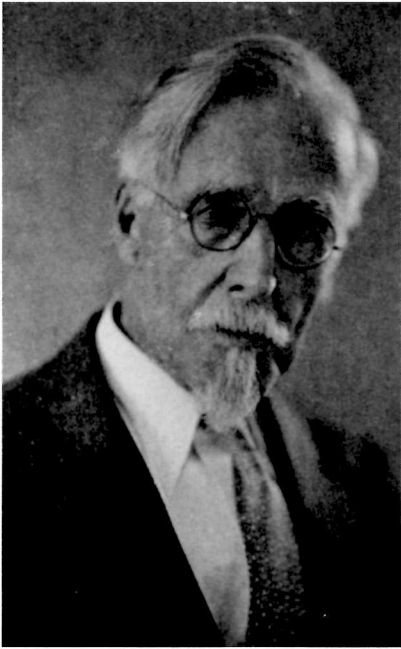
In this 1941 painting, William Henry Jackson depicts an 1812 meeting between the Robert Stuart expedition meeting with Arapaho tribesmen near Red Butte in Wyoming. (SCBL 154)

¹. Merrill J. Mattes, *Fur Traders and Trappers of the Old West* (Yellowstone Library and Museum Association, 1945), 4f.



Rendezvous. Signed and undated. 22.1 x 35.0 cm. (SCBL 18)

HIDE HUNTERS



William Henry Jackson may have been aware of the contributions that buffalo hunters made to the conquest of the West, but later in life he took an active role in preserving buffalo, and in 1937 was elected to the Board of Managers of the American Bison Society. (SCBL 2006)

For people on the frontier during the first half of the 19th Century, it must have seemed as if the herds of buffalo were inexhaustible. Several witnesses described herds so large that they extended to the far horizon, and when the animals were on the move, the earth trembled.

Who could have foreseen that the American bison, which have been estimated to have once numbered 30,000,000¹ would be nearly extinct in a period of only twenty-five years. Several factors contributed to the near eradication of the buffalo. Significant among these were the railroads. Men such as William F. Cody, made a name for themselves when they were hired to bring in buffalo meat to feed the railroad's construction workers.

With the completion of the railroads, the iron rails effectively divided the buffalo, which had once ranged from Texas to Canada, into smaller northern and southern herds. Railroad passengers often amused themselves by shooting buffalo for sport from the comfort of their Pullman car. The railroad also made it economically profitable for buffalo hides to be shipped to the East where they were made into winter coats and lap robes, or tanned and cut into the belts that powered factories in the United States and Europe.

With this ready market, thousands of hunters took to the Plains with high-powered rifles and an eye for making some quick money. In a very short time the West was littered with the stinking carcasses of buffalo that had been shot for their hides. Soon other hunters found that they didn't need to work that hard and were killing buffalo simply for their tongues, which were considered to be a delicacy.

As the Indian Wars dragged on between 1864 and 1877, the US Army came to realize that if the buffalo were removed, the Plains Indians who relied on the buffalo, would become dependent on government rations and thereby be forced onto reservations. To this end, soldiers and civilians alike were encouraged to shoot buffalo on sight, simply to deny them to Indian hunters.

All these factors contributed to the rapid decline in the numbers of buffalo, until the animal which had once been so common in the West became a rarity. In 1889, William Hornaday, a taxidermist for the U.S. National Museum, in search of an exhibit specimen, was startled to learn that only one thousand buffalo still remained in the United States, and most of these were kept on private ranches and reserves.²

In 1905 a concerted effort to preserve the endangered animals was made by the American Bison Society. Over a period of twenty-five years this group published a number of articles that alerted the general public to the threat of the buffalo's extinction, and funds were raised for the purchase of lands and stock to ensure the buffalo's survival. These efforts were so successful that by 1930 there was an estimated buffalo population of 20,000.³



Jackson generally did a good job of identifying his subjects, however all that is known about this man is the cryptic notation, "Hunter for the Survey, Yellowstone." (SCBL 1003)

¹. Tom McHugh, *The Time of the Buffalo* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 291.

². Ibid.

³. Martin S. Garretson, *The American Bison*, (New York City: New York Zoological Society, 1938), 212-213.



White Men Hunting Buffalo. Initialed and dated 1936. 25.4 x 35.0 cm. (SCBL 158)

WESTWARD AMERICA



William Henry Jackson's contribution to the advance of transportation technology was his "dark room on wheels." Developed during the time he was based in Omaha, Jackson used this rig while photographing local Indian tribes. (SCBL 2787)

In his painting, *Westward America*, William Henry Jackson tells the story of the advances made in transportation in the United States. Moving from left to right, the viewer is shown how the earliest Americans had to get around on foot. In time, the horse is acquired, allowing both more rapid mobility and the hauling of heavier loads. Progress continues through the use of pack horses, ox-drawn wagons, stage coaches, railroads, and ending in automobiles. At the far right, there is even an airplane, showing that commercial aviation can improve our mobility even more.

Intended as a visual story of the evolution of transportation, the painting can just as well be seen as a commentary on some of the changes that had occurred in America during the artist's lifetime. At the time of his birth in 1843, the most common method of getting around was still on foot. The fastest a person could travel was on horseback. During his ninety-nine years, Jackson personally witnessed and chroni-

cled the technological advances that transformed the United States from a rural, agrarian society to a fast-paced industrial nation.

A product of his times, Jackson saw these changes in a generally positive light. His reaction to his seeing his first automobile is revealing, "What a fine way to get around with a camera!"¹ To him, human inventiveness was simply making life better. Obstacles of nature were there to be overcome. He shared America's faith that science, technology and determination could solve any problem. Although occasionally nostalgic for the "good old days," little if any thought was given to the consequences of introducing technological change into America's Far West.

Depending on your point of view, a case can be made that the American frontier either benefited or suffered from this technical revolution. On the one hand, the previously insurmountable distances of the West could be more easily traversed



when railroads were built. The existence of railroads made it economically feasible to transport goods produced in America's heartland. This, in turn, led to the homesteading and settling of the plains in the late Nineteenth century.

However, these advances have come at a price. Unaware of the fragility of the Plains' ecosystem, marginal farm lands were tilled. Occasional droughts resulted in the "boom and bust" economics that have typified the settlement of the high Plains. Ecologically, early farming practices caused extensive erosion, of which the Dust Bowl of the 1930s is the most extreme example. Today, while we try to be more mindful of the environment, the arguments of development versus conservation continue.

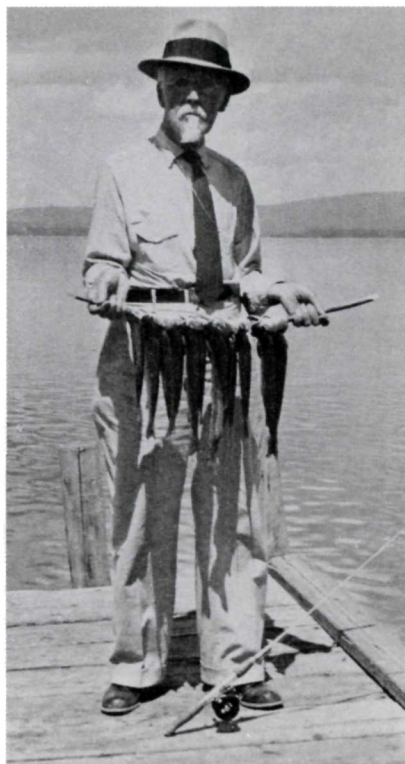
¹. Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 327.



During the last decade of his life commercial aviation was becoming quite common. Journeys that had required months could now be completed in hours. Here Jackson is disembarking from an American Airlines dc-3 in March 1939. (SCBL 815)

Westward America. Signed and dated 1931. 24.1 x 140.0 cm. (SCBL 37)

WHITMAN MISSION



During a 1937 visit William Henry Jackson is credited with catching these trout at Yellowstone Lake. While not an ardent fisherman, he did enjoy golf. According to Jackson, "If we duffers seldom broke a hundred, we always made it up at the 'nineteenth hole' afterward." (SCBL 2686)

The Whitman Mission at Waiilatpu, near present-day Walla Walla, Washington, was established in 1836 by Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. Two of the most famous missionaries on the western frontier, the Whitmans were among the earliest to make their way to Oregon. By successfully reaching Oregon, the Whitmans were the first to prove that both a wagon and a family could make the trip. By way of the letters they mailed home, the Whitmans also proved to be effective at persuading others to make the journey to Oregon.

The Whitmans were less successful in their efforts to bring the Christian faith to the Cayuse Indians. Although the Whitmans operated a hospital and school for the tribe, most of the Cayuse resisted the missionaries' attempts to convert to Christianity. Over time, resentment and frustration on both sides combined to form an uneasy atmosphere at the mission.

In first few years after being established, the mission was located directly on the primary route into Oregon and served as a popular stopover for travelers on the Oregon Trail who needed supplies, wagon repairs, or medical attention. However, after 1844, a shorter route was developed to the south which effectively bypassed the mission altogether.

For the next three years, the only emigrants who visited the mission were those in desperate need, and this proved to be the Whitman's undoing. The problem came in the form of a measles epidemic which broke out on the trail in the fall of 1847. As a physician, Marcus Whitman offered the only hope for those with the disease. Unfortunately, there was little he could do and many of the emigrants died.

To make matters worse, some of the Cayuse who came down to trade dried fish and corn with the emigrants contracted the disease. Lacking any immunity to measles, the Cayuse suffered terribly and nearly half of the tribe died while Whitman was helpless to do anything. Resentful and suspicious, some of the Cayuse came to believe that Whitman was deliberately poisoning the Indians so that the new emigrants could take over their land.

On November 29, 1847, there was a violent outbreak, and Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and eleven other people were killed by the vengeful Cayuse. Forty seven people, many of them children, were taken captive and held for several weeks until a ransom was paid.¹ Despite the violence, emigration to Oregon continued unabated. In 1848 Oregon was established as an American territory, and statehood was achieved in 1859.

It is not known if Jackson visited the Whitman Mission prior to attending the site's centennial in August of 1936,² or if he simply based his paintings on historic drawings or narratives. However, the Whitmans were important pioneers on the Oregon Trail, and their deaths at the hands of the people they had come to save is a tragic chapter in the history of the Oregon Trail.



This undated painting is very similar to Whitman Mission, Washington, but has a slightly different perspective. (SCBL 151)

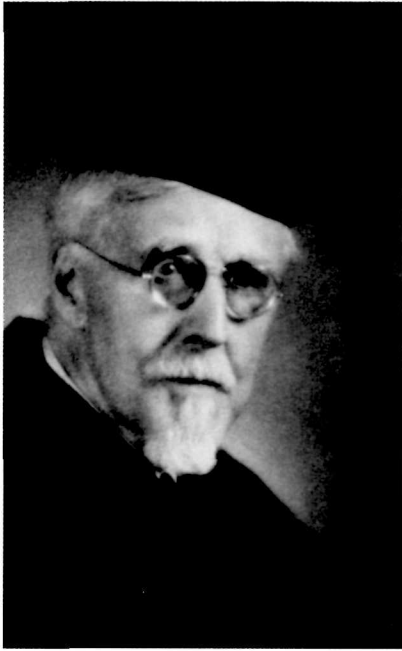
¹. David Lavender, *Westward Vision, The Story of the Oregon Trail*, (New York City: Bison Books, 1985), 398-399.

². Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 336.



Whitman Mission. Signed and dated 1940. 23.5 x 36.9 cm. (SCBL 45)

STRIKING IT RICH



On June 14, 1937, The University of Colorado awarded “William B. Jackson” a medal for distinguished service to Colorado and the West. Jackson was so pleased that, “...being accorded the distinction of a Latin eulogy far outweighs the discomfort of having my middle initial altered.” (SCBL 2704)

When William Henry Jackson first went west in 1866, his goal was the mining camps of Montana. There he hoped to make his fortune and join his sorrows with those miseries of the wealthy. Gold had been discovered in Montana in 1856, but it wasn't until 1863, when Henry Edgar and Bill Fairweather made an accidental strike in Alder Gulch, that the rush to Montana began in earnest.

Almost overnight, a town sprang up near the diggings which came to be known as Virginia City. So quickly did this community grow, that on February 7, 1865, Virginia City temporarily became the second territorial capital of Montana. This “boomtown” was described in the inaugural issue of its own newspaper, the Montana Post on August 27, 1864:

*On arriving at this place what astonishes any stranger is the size, appearance and vast amount of business that is here beheld. Though our city is but a year old, fine and substantial buildings have been erected, and others are rapidly going up. One hundred buildings are being erected each week in Virginia City and environs. Nevada and Central cities are equally prosperous. Indeed the whole appears to be the work of magic—the vision of a dream. But Virginia City is not a myth, a paper town, but a reality... The placer diggings will require years to work out.*¹

This truly seemed to be the case, as fueled in part by the economic demands of the Civil War, in the first year of mining operations, \$10,000,000 worth of gold was recovered from the Virginia City mines! For the next couple of years Virginia City was a prosperous and energetic city, that boasted theaters and orchestras.

However, despite the optimistic predictions, the veins began to play out and the miners moved on to other strikes. By 1870 Virginia City's population had fallen to 2,500. Gold and silver were still being found, but the prosperous days were over, and by 1880 the population was reduced to only 600.

In its second incarnation, Virginia City became a business and agricultural town.

William Henry Jackson's decision, made near Salt Lake

City, to turn away from the Montana goldfields may well have saved him from years of frustrating struggle and hard labor. As it was, Jackson did eventually make it to Virginia City in 1871—but this time he was in search of another kind of riches—as the photographer for the U.S. Geological Survey and on his first trip into the Yellowstone country.

Jackson recorded his feelings about belatedly making it to the Montana goldfields:

*We were to enter the Yellowstone from the north, then the easiest route. On the way through upper Utah and across Idaho I took a few pictures. Up in Montana I made a few more pictures. No one could understand what I found to interest me in Virginia City, by that time nearly played out as a mining center; but, of course, no one knew how hard I had worked to go most of the way there five summers before.*²



The West changed a great deal during Jackson's lifetime. On his first trip into the frontier, Jackson sketched these people he described as, “Immigrants on C&RI RR (Chicago and Rock Island Railroad) May 29, 1866” (SCBL 119)

¹. Muriel Sibell Wolle, *The Bonanza Trail; Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of the West* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), 181.

². Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 197.



Virginia City. Signed and dated 1941. 35.4 x 38.1 cm. (SCBL 149)

THE CATTLE INDUSTRY



During the 1935 Gettysburg veteran's reunion, William Henry Jackson was photographed in front of his tent with his new 35mm camera. Jackson jokingly referred to this camera as his "vest pocket" or "miniature" camera. (SCBL 978)

Cattle have played a key role in the frontier economy ever since their introduction by Spanish explorers in the Sixteenth century. The rolling, grass-covered prairies offer an environment in which cattle can thrive in their millions, but if they cannot be brought to a ready market they are of little value to the producers.

Thus was born the cowboy and the cattle drive. Cattle drives have actually been a feature of the American economy for centuries. Herds of cattle were moved from Florida up into New England as early as the American Revolution, but it is the Texas cattle drives of the 1860s and 1870s that are credited with the development of the American cowboy.

In spite of the long hours and short life expectancy, the romantic life of a cowboy has come to play a dominant role in the literature of the West. Popular authors such as Owen Wister, Zane Gray and Louis Lamour have created fictional characters of few words and mighty deeds who wanted nothing but to be left to their thoughts on the open range.

Of course, the reality of a cowboy's life was anything but romantic. As a rule the cowboy's day was harsh and dangerous. By its very nature, the job offered a wide variety of ways to get killed or crippled and very few ways to grow old gracefully. William Henry Jackson first encountered the West's cattle culture as he began his journey back east in 1867. As he describes it:

Crossing a broad valley grown over with sagebrush and cactus, we saw a sizeable herd of cattle off to our right. Then we noted that the animals were moving toward us. Soon the thudding of their hoofs had increased to an ominous rumble, and we realized that the longhorns were preparing to stampede. With no mounted herdsmen in sight to cut them off, Bill and I had to stop them—or else.

We shouted and waved our hats and jumped into the air. We yelled and whirled our coats and jumped even higher. Still they came on, until not more than a hundred feet lay between the animals and ourselves. Then the herd leader, a black bull, slowed.

*At fifty feet he was dubious about continuing—but the pressure from behind forced him to within fifteen or twenty feet of us before we felt even moderately safe.*¹

Beginning in 1849 the California Gold Rush offered an irresistible market of hungry miners, and drives of Texas beef were made across the Southwest.² The two most famous cattle routes came into use after the Civil War: the Chisholm Trail which drove due north from Texas into central Kansas; and the Goodnight-Loving Trail which swung west into New Mexico before turning north into Colorado.³

It was on these epic drives that the myth of the American cowboy took shape. Unfortunately the myth does not take into account either the drudgery and bone-numbing fatigue that actually characterized life on a cattle drive, or the diverse contributions made by other cattle drives to the American economy.



In February of 1867 Jackson and a traveling companion named Bill Maddern had to save themselves from a cattle stampede by waving their jackets and shouting at the top of their lungs. This incident took place in the Mojave Desert. (SCBL 141)

¹ Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 152-153.

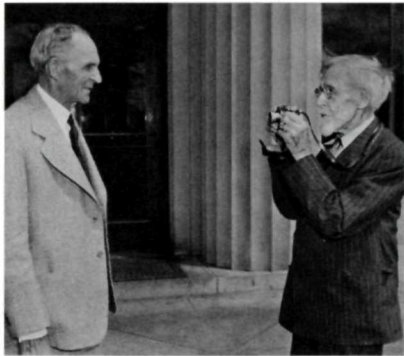
² Garnet M. Brayer and Herbert O. Brater, *American Cattle Trails, 1590-1900* (Denver: The Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1952), 39.

³ *Ibid.*, 55f.



The Chisholm Trail. Signed and dated 1941. 25.4 x 38.1 cm. (SCBL 163)

THE SANTA FE TRAIL



William Henry Jackson had a way of surrounding himself with distinguished friends. A note on the back of this photograph identifies the two men simply as “Henry and Bill;” “Henry” is none other than Henry Ford. (SCBL 3029)

In addition to the Oregon and California Trails, there was another major overland route known as the Santa Fe Trail. Although a few pioneers did make their way west on this road, the Santa Fe Trail was primarily devoted to commerce. In the early Nineteenth century several enterprising American businessmen tried to open up trade with the Spanish Southwest. Unfortunately, the Spanish were suspicious of the Americans’ motives and laws were passed which forbid Spanish citizens from doing business with Americans.

Over the years, American fur trappers, traders, and explorers occasionally ventured into Spanish territory. During these visits they noticed an ample supply of silver and furs as well as a lack of manufactured goods. Reports of this potential market for American goods soon made their way back to the United States, however, several individuals who attempted to capitalize on this situation quickly found themselves in Spanish jails.

In 1821, an American desperately in need of money by the name of William Becknell decided to try again. He loaded several pack mules with tools, pots and pans, and linens and hauled them the 900 miles from Missouri to Santa Fe. Becknell was very lucky. By the time he arrived in Santa Fe on November 16, 1821, Mexico had succeeded in achieving its independence from Spain, so instead of becoming a prisoner he became a wealthy man.¹

Becknell’s success signalled the opening of an important trade route that was used for the next fifty years. Almost overnight, a virtually endless stream of freight wagons were winding their way across the plains of Kansas and New Mexico. In the intervening years, the trailhead moved several times. First it was located in Franklin, Missouri. Then it moved to Independence, Missouri, until with the burgeoning riverboat trade it was eventually moved to Westport Landing—later known as Kansas City.

Unlike the Oregon Trail, which was made up of a mind-boggling network of intertwined cutoffs and shortcuts, the

Santa Fe Trail was a relatively simple trail with only two major cutoffs. These consisted of the Mountain Branch, which veered west into Colorado before dropping down into New Mexico; and the Cimarron Cutoff, which angled down through the panhandle of Oklahoma before rejoining with the Mountain Branch.

Like the Oregon Trail, the Santa Fe Trail was eventually replaced by railroads, which were introduced to the plains of Kansas. By 1867, steam locomotives made the old trail east of Larned, Kansas, obsolete. By 1880 the railroads had taken over virtually all commercial traffic in the American Southwest.

William Henry Jackson’s painting, “Los Americanos,” depicts the arrival of William Becknell in Santa Fe in 1821—an event that took place twenty-two years before his own birth. While Jackson was obviously more interested in the California, Mormon, and Oregon Trails—since he experienced them firsthand, he was fully aware of the role the Santa Fe Trail played in America’s westward expansion and did not want anyone to forget it.



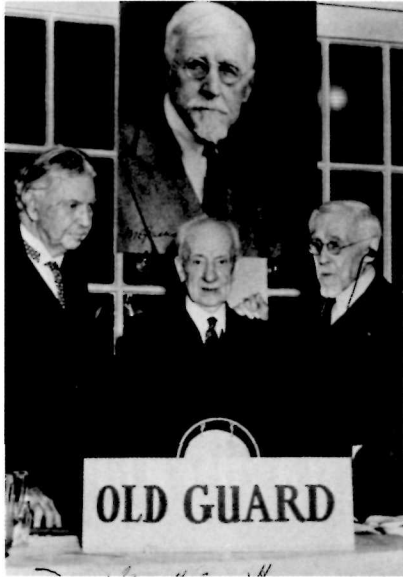
This neatly executed watercolor depicts Santa Fe in 1877. Such drawings were all Jackson had to show for that year, as he experimented with a new process and all 400 photographs made that season failed to turn out. (SCBL 106)

¹. Gregory M. Franzwa, *Maps of the Santa Fe Trail* (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1989), 1.



Los Americanos. Signed and dated 1941. 25.4 x 38.1 cm. (SCBL 155)

THE GRAND TETONS



The circumstances behind this occasion, in which William Henry Jackson is being honored are not known. However, the men are identified as Jackson, E. Deming and James Hare, and the photograph is dated April 17, 1940. (SCBL 2703)

William Henry Jackson first explored the Grand Teton mountain range during the Hayden Survey of 1872. This was Jackson's third expedition with the U.S. Geological Survey, and it followed in the wake of the survey's spectacular success the previous year when they had explored the wonders of Yellowstone. The next year the survey returned to Yellowstone, but with the intention of widening the scope of their explorations by making a brief side trip into the Tetons, as they made their way north into Yellowstone.

The Teton Range is easily the most recognizable mountain range in Wyoming and has a long and storied past. During the days of the fur trade, the Tetons served as the locale for many of the fur traders' annual rendezvous. By 1872, the fur trade was a distant memory, but the Hayden Survey found the Tetons to still be a hunter's paradise. As Jackson later recounted:

*Our various parties were kept supplied with fresh meat without having to hunt for it, deer, moose, or mountain sheep being nearly always in sight when needed. It was equally easy to get a mess of trout from the streams nearby.*¹

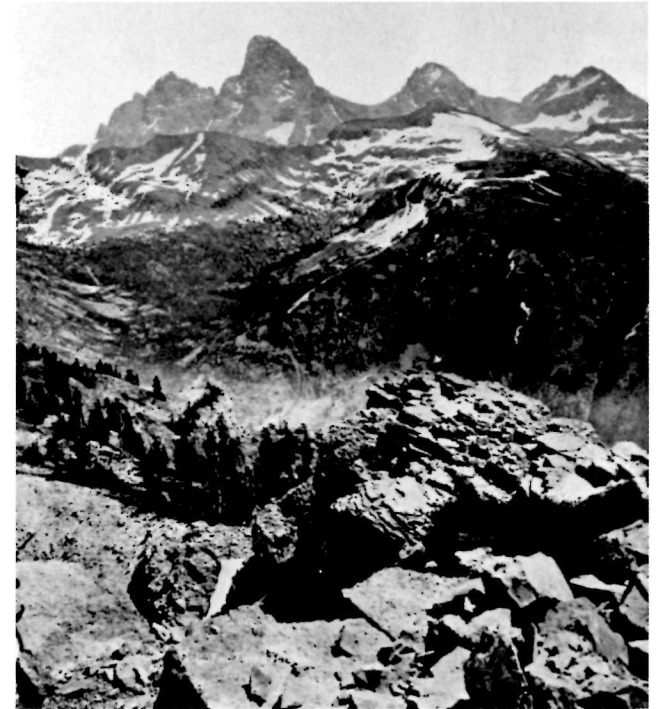
Jackson found the area to be rich in subject matter for his camera. Although occasionally inconvenienced by the difficulty in hauling his bulky equipment, Jackson was able to capture some of the most rewarding images of his career. As Jackson described it:

*At one place we had to pass around a narrow, high ledge, an extremely dangerous undertaking through the deep, sloping snow. But we made it, and almost immediately we were rewarded with one of the most stupendous panoramas in all America. Thousands of feet below us lay the icy gorge of Glacier Creek, while on the Eastern horizon the main range shimmered in the mid-morning sun. Above all this towered the sharp cone of the Grand Teton, nearly 14,000 feet above sea level.*²

While Jackson hurried to produce his images, two members of the survey could not resist the temptation to scale one of the imposing peaks.

At the foot of the Grand Teton, [N.P.] Langford and [James]

Stevenson decided without further preparation to attempt its ascent. Since they had no way of knowing that it would later be regarded as one of the truly difficult peaks of North America, they simply went ahead and climbed it. That, in my mind, is the way to climb a mountain. Sometimes there is an awful lot of nonsense about it.*³



Jackson first visited the Teton Range in western Wyoming in 1871. The view seen in this photograph reappears in Jackson's painting, "Under the Tetons." (SCBL 898)

* Langford had explored the Teton area in 1870 and later became the first superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, while Stevenson was serving as a quartermaster for the 1872 USGS expedition.

¹. Jackson & Driggs, *Pioneer Photographer*, 132.

². Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 206-207.

³. Ibid., 208.



Under the Tetons. Signed and dated 1940. 28.0 x 38.1 cm. (SCBL 150)

A LEGENDARY MOUNTAIN



William Henry Jackson in his element. Here Jackson is photographing E.W. Deming, J. Hare and Stephen Horgan. (SCBL 2700)

If William Henry Jackson's photographs of Yellowstone established him as one of America's premier photographers, his photographs of the Mount of the Holy Cross made him a household name. Ever since the early days of the fur trade, stories about a snow-capped Colorado mountain with a huge cross etched in its side circulated throughout the West. Many people claimed to have seen the fabled cross, but proof of its existence was always elusive.

Jackson's instincts told him that if he were able to capture the snowy cross on film that he would be able to sell thousands of prints. Therefore, in 1873, when the U.S. Geological Survey was scheduled to explore and map Colorado, one of Jackson's goals was to find the mythic mountain. On May 14, 1873, the survey's photographic division, led by Jackson, arrived in the survey's headquarters near Denver and received its final instructions. Jackson was to explore the Snowy Range and make his way south to Pikes Peak. From Pikes Peak, they were to cross the Sawatch Range and explore the Elk Mountains.

After spending three months photographing the mountains of central Colorado, Jackson finally approached the Elk Mountains, where the Mount of the Holy Cross was reportedly located. On August 23 Jackson began an ascent of Notch Mountain, which he hoped would provide a view of the mountain with a snowy cross. The going was difficult, as all the equipment had to be carried on the men's backs.

As Jackson later told the story:

When prospecting for views it was my custom to keep well ahead of my companions, for in that way they could often be spared the meanderings that I had to make. On this day, as usual, I pushed on ahead, and thus it was that I became the first member of the Survey to sight the cross. Near the top of the ridge I emerged above the timber line and the clouds, and suddenly, as I clambered over a vast mass of jagged rocks, I discovered the great shining cross dead before me, tilted against the mountainside.¹

Unfortunately, by the time Jackson and his comrades had all arrived at the summit, there was not enough light to make

an exposure. Rather than climb back down and return the next day, they decided to spend the night on the mountain and take the pictures they wanted so desperately in the morning. Without food, coats or blankets, the men returned to the timberline and spent a cold, sleepless the night huddled around a fire—hoping the next day's weather would allow them to successfully photograph the cross.



A note on the back of this drawing simply reads, "Camera in High Places." This caption could well be used to describe not only William Henry Jackson's efforts at the Mount of the Holy Cross, but also his career as an explorer and an innovator. (SCBL 52)

¹. Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 217.



The Mount of the Holy Cross. Signed and undated. 75.0 x 62.0 cm. (SCBL 2130)

THE HOLY CROSS



On April 4, 1942, William Henry Jackson celebrated his 99th birthday. Sadly it was to be his last, as he passed away 3 months later. A revealing note on the back of this photograph simply reads, "100 springs." (SCBL 2721)

After spending a long cold night on an exposed mountain, dawn was welcomed by Jackson and his comrades. With the light, the photographers again began to make their way back up to the peak and were rewarded by an unobstructed view of the Mount of the Holy Cross. There wasn't a cloud in the sky. But there was one problem. There wasn't any water to be used to prepare the emulsion for the glass plate negatives!

After enduring the previous evening's hardships, Jackson was in no mood to allow a simple matter like that to keep him from the opportunity of a lifetime. After a short time, the warmth of the sun began to melt the snow, and soon there was enough water to prepare eight of the delicate glass plates. Working quickly and confidently, Jackson set up his cameras and went to work.

*It was a perfect day for the making of the first photographs of the Mountain of the Holy Cross. The early morning is just the time, too, for this particular subject. I do not think it can be successfully photographed later in the day. Having but one point of view from which to make the negatives, I was through by noon. Quick time was made in assembling and repacking the apparatus, and we got down the mountain in very much less time than it took to go up.*¹

Jackson was so confident of his work, and anxious to join the rest of the survey team that he uncharacteristically waited to complete the development process until after leaving the field. Jackson's efforts were rewarded with eight striking photographic images of the cross. He later wrote,

*Since 1873 I have been back four or five times. I have used the best cameras and the most sensitive emulsions on the market. I have snapped my shutter morning, noon, and afternoon. And I have never come close to matching those first plates.*²

Photographing of the Mount of the Holy Cross was a pivotal moment in Jackson's life. Just as he had done with Yellowstone, William Henry Jackson used his skills as an intrepid photographer to prove the existence of a phenomenon that had generally been dismissed as mythical. The pho-

tographs and the exploit made him famous and it helped make him financially secure.

In August of 1893, twenty years after taking the first photographs of the Mount of the Holy Cross, Jackson returned to the site, accompanied by his son Clarence, to commemorate the occasion. Much later in life, Jackson used his artistic skills to tell the story of his excursions in the Colorado Rockies by combining images based on his original photographs with those from 1893 to compose these two paintings.³ The images on these final two pages are the only oil paintings in the William Henry Jackson collection at Scotts Bluff National Monument.



One of the 8 photographs that William Henry Jackson took of the elusive mountain in 1873, this image was recreated in his painting, "Photographing the Mount of the Holy Cross." (SCBL 805)

¹ Jackson & Driggs, *Pioneer Photographer*, 186-187.

² Jackson, *Time Exposure*, 218.

³ Clarence S. Jackson and Lawrence W. Marshall, *Quest of the Holy Cross* (Denver: University of Denver Press, 1952), 32f.



Photographing the Mount of the Holy Cross. Signed and dated 1936. 62.0 x 75.0 cm. (SCBL 2129)

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Appleman, Roy E. *Lewis and Clark*. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1975
- Brayer, Garnet M. and Brater, Herbert O. *American Cattle Trails, 1590-1900*. Denver: The Smith-Brooks Printing Company, 1952
- Burton, Richard *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963
- Franzwa, Gregory *Maps of the Santa Fe Trail*. St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1989
- Garretson, Martin S. *The American Bison*. New York: New York Zoological Society, 1938
- Hafen, Leroy *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*. Glendale: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1965
- Hafen, Leroy *The Diaries of William Henry Jackson*. Glendale: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1959
- Haines, Aubrey L. *Historic Sites Along the Oregon Trail*. Gerald: The Patrice Press, 1994
- Hancock, S. *Samuel Hancock 1845-1860*. New York: R.M. McBride & Co., 1927
- Hassrick, Royal *The Sioux; Life and Customs of a Warrior Society*. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1989
- Hill, William *The California Trail Yesterday and Today*. Boise: Tamarack Books, 1993
- Jackson, Joseph Henry *The Gold Rush Album*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949
- Jackson, Clarence S. and Marshall, Lawrence W. *Quest of the Holy Cross*. Denver: The University of Denver Press, 1952
- Jackson, William H. *Time Exposure*. Tucson: The Patrice Press, 1994
- Jackson, W.H. and Driggs, H.R. *Pioneer Photographer*. Yonkers-on-Hudson: World Book Company, 1929
- Kimball, Stanley *Historic Resource Study: The Mormon Trail*. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service 1991
- Lavender, David *Westward Vision*. New York: Bison Books, 1985
- Lowie, Robert *Indians of the Plains*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1985
- Mattes, Merrill *Fur Traders and Trappers of the Old West*. Yellowstone Library and Museum Association, 1945
- Mattes, Merrill *The Great Platte River Road*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1993
- McHugh, Tom *The Time of the Buffalo*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971
- Nadeau, Remi *Fort Laramie and the Sioux*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1982
- Settle, Raymond E. and Settle, Mary Lund *Saddles and Spurs*. Harrisburg: The Stackpole Company, 1955
- Stewart, George R. *The California Trail*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1983
- Unruh, John *The Plains Across*. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1978
- Vaughn, J.W. *The Battle of Platte Bridge*. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1963
- Williams, Dallas *Fort Sedgwick: Colorado Territory; Hell Hole on the Plains*. Julesburg: Fort Sedgwick Historical Society, 1933
- Wolle, Muriel Sibell *The Bonanza Trail; Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of the West*. Bloomington: The Indiana University Press, 1955

INDEX

- Alcove Springs, 14, 15
Alder Gulch, 74
American Airlines, 71
American Bison Society, 68
American Fur Company, 6, 66
Arapaho, 20, 24, 32, 62, 66
Army and Navy Club, 62
Army of the Potomac, 20
Ash Hollow, 28
Astor, John Jacob, 66
- Barlow, Samuel, 56
Barlow Pass, 56
Barlow Toll Road, 56
Bannock, 60
Beal, Josiah, 56
Bear River Divide, 54
Becknell, William, 78
Big Blue River, 14
Black Hills, 36
Blue Mountains, 54, 56
Bozeman Trail, 36
Bridger, Jim, 34, 60, 66
Brigham Young University, 22
Brownville, Nebraska, 2, 12
Brule, Nebraska 28
Bryant, Edwin, 14
buffalo, 62, 63, 68, 69
Burlington, Vermont, 22
Burton, Richard, 44
- California Gold Rush, 8, 42, 52, 76
California Trail, 12, 28, 30, 50, 52, 54, 66
Cameahwait, 64
Camp Fortunate, 64
Camp Rankin, Colorado, 24
Carson, Kit, 60, 66
Cascade Range, 56
Casper, Wyoming, 38
Castle Rock, 38
cattle, 76
Cayuse, 72
Cedar Creek, Utah, 52
Champoeg, Oregon, 56
Charbonneau, Toussaint, 64
Cheyenne, 20, 24, 32, 44, 62
Cheyenne, Wyoming, 8
Chicago and Rock Island Railroad, 74
Chimney Rock, 28, 29
Chisholm Trail, 76, 77
Cimarron Cutoff, 78
Civil War, 18, 20, 34, 44, 74
Cody, William F., 34, 68
Collins, Caspar, 29, 35
Colter, John, 32, 38
Columbia River, 56, 64
Council Bluffs, Iowa, 2
Comanche, 62
Courthouse Rock, 28
Covered Wagon Centennial, 40
Cree, 62
Crow, 62
Custard, Amos, 38
- Deming, E., 80, 86
Denver, 2, 12
Denver, Colorado, 30, 42
Devil's Gate, 46, 47,
Dome Rock, 30, 32
Donner Party, 14, 56
Dust Bowl, 71
Eagle Rock, 30
East Ranch, 16
Eastman, Caroline "Caddie", 22
Echo Canyon, 48, 49
Edison Institute, 4
Edgar, Henry, 74
Egyptian pyramids, 50
18th U.S. Infantry Regiment, 32, 34
11th Kansas Cavalry Regiment, 38
11th Ohio Cavalry Regiment, 32, 38, 44
Elk Mountains, 82
Emigration Canyon, Utah, 50
Endicott, Nebraska, 16
Explorer's Club, 62
- Fairfax Court House, 20
Fairweather, Bill, 74
Fillmore, Utah, 50, 52
Fitzpatrick, Thomas, 66
Ford, Henry, 78
Fort Benton, Montana, 12
Fort Bridger, 40, 48, 50, 54
Fort Boise, 54
Fort Caspar, 38
Fort Hall, 54
Fort John, 34
Fort Kearny, Nebraska, 20, 21, 22, 24, 40
Fort Laramie, Wyoming, 22, 30, 34, 35, 36, 40, 48, 56
Fort Mitchell, Nebraska, 32, 33
Fort Rankin, Colorado, 32
Fort Sedgwick, Colorado, 32
Franklin, Missouri, 78
Fremont's Ford, 28

- Fremont, John C., 28, 48
 Galvanized Yankees, 44
 Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 8, 20, 60, 76
 Gimlet, 36
 Glacier Creek, 80
 Glacier Point, 46
 Glass, Hugh, 66
 Goodnight-Loving Trail, 76
 Grand Teton Range, 32, 60, 80, 81
 Gray, Zane, 76
 Great American Desert, 6
 Great Salt Lake, 50
 Greeley, Horace, 22
 Greer, Mollie, (Jackson) 16, 46

 Hancock, Samuel, 54
 handcars, 48
 Hare, James, 80, 82
 Hayden, Ferdinand, 28, 60, 64
 Hayden Survey, 46, 80
 Hickok, James Butler, 16
 Holmes, W.H., 40
 Hoover, Bill, 40
 Horgan, Stephen, 82
 Hornaday, William, 68
 Horse Prairie Creek, 64
 Hudson Bay Company, 66

 Independence, Missouri, 12, 78
 Independence Rock, 40, 41
 India, 52
 Iowa City, Iowa, 48

 Jackson, Clarence, 84
 Jackson, David, 6
 Jackson, Ed, 24
 Jackson, Fred, 24
 Jail Rock, 28
 Julesburg, Colorado, 24, 28

 Kaneshville, Iowa, 2
 Kansas City, Missouri, 2
 Keyes, Sarah, 14
 Kiowa, 62
 Korea, 48

 LaBonte Creek, 36, 37
 Lakota (see Sioux)
 Lamour, Louis, 76
 Lander Road or Cutoff, 54
 Langford, N.P., 80
 Laramie Peak, 36
 Larned, Kansas, 78
 Lee, Robert E., 20
 Lewis and Clark Expedition, 62, 64
 Lodgepole Creek, 28
 Los Angeles, California, 8, 52
 Lower California Crossing, 28

 McCanles, David, 16
 McKinstry, George, 14
 Maddern, Bill, 76
 Mancos Canyon, 56
 Mandan, 64
 Maynedier, Henry E., 36
 Merritt, Wesley, 36
 Mexican Central Railroad, 40
 Minitaris, 64
 Mississippi River, 12, 48
 Missouri River, 2, 12, 14, 20, 64
 Mitchell Pass, 30, 32
 Mitchell, Robert, 32
 Mojave Desert, 76
 Mormon Trail, 2, 30, 48, 50, 54
 Mount Hood, 56
 Mount of the Holy Cross, 82, 83, 84, 85
 Mountain Branch, 78

 Natrona County Historical Society, 38
 Nauvoo, Illinois, 2, 48
 Navajo, 60
 Nebraska City, Nebraska, 2, 12
 Nephi, Utah, 52
 Nevada desert, 52
 New Orleans, 12, 44
 Northwest Company, 64
 North Platte, Nebraska, 28, 32
 North Platte River, 38
 Notch Mountain, 82

 O'Hara, J.H., 40
 O'Mahoney, Joseph, 64
 Ohio River, 12
 Omaha, 60
 Omaha, Nebraska, 2, 12, 16, 24, 46, 49, 60
 Oregon Territory, 56
 Oregon Trail, 6, 12, 14, 20, 26, 28, 30, 38, 40, 42, 44, 54, 56, 66, 72, 78
 Oregon Trail Memorial Association, 30, 40
 Oregon Trail Museum, 20, 30
 Otoe, 60
 Overland Trail, 44
 Painter, Emilie (Jackson), 34, 40
 Pawnee, 14
 Pike's Peak, 82

Pike's Peak Gold Rush, 8
 Platte River, 2, 65, 28, 30, 32, 36, 40, 48
 Platte River Bridge, 38, 40
 Platte River Road, 30, 44
 Plattsmouth, Nebraska, 12
 Pony Express, 4, 5, 16, 30, 38, 42, 44
 Portland, Oregon, 56
 Powder River, 36
 Promontory Point, 46

 Quincy, Illinois, 12

 Rattlesnake Hills, 44
 Red Buttes, 38, 39, 66
 Red Cloud, 34
 Rice, A.I., 38
 Rice, M.P., 38
 Robidoux Pass, 30
 Rock Creek Station, 16, 17
 Rock Island, Illinois, 12
 Rocky Mountains, 6, 36, 46
 Rocky Ridge Station, 4
 Rounds, Ruel, 40
 Russell, Majors and Waddell, 4

 St. Joseph, Missouri, 4, 12
 St. Louis, Missouri, 6, 12, 66
 St. Mary's Station, 4
 Sacagawea, 64
 Sacramento, California, 2
 Salt Lake City, Utah, 30, 36, 50, 52, 54, 74
 San Francisco, 50
 Sand Creek, Colorado, 24
 Sand Hills, 26, 27

 Santa Fe Trail, 12, 78
 Savanna, 12
 Scott, Hiram, 30
 Scotts Bluff, 30, 31, 32
 Scotts Bluff National Monument, 30, 84
 7th Iowa Cavalry Regiment, 24
 Shoshone, 60, 64
 Shuman, Jacob, 32
 Sierra Nevada mountains, 56
 Sioux, 20, 24, 30, 34, 36, 38, 44, 62
 Smith, Jedediah, 6, 66
 Smith, Joseph, 48
 Snake River, 54
 Soda Springs, 54
 South Pass, 36, 46, 54
 South Platte River, 16, 24, 25
 Split Rock, 42
 Spotted Tail, 34
 Stevenson, James, 80
 Stuart, Robert, 66
 Sublette, William, 6
 Sutter's Fort, California 8
 Sweetwater River, 40, 43, 44, 46
 Sweetwater Station, 42

 Taylor, E.B., 34
 Teapot Dome, 38
 telegraph, 38
 Three Crossings Station, 44, 45
 Three Island Crossing, 54, 55, 56
 transcontinental railroad, 48, 52
 Troy, New York, 12
 Twain, Mark, 34
 12th Vermont Infantry Regiment, 20

 Union Pacific Railroad, 6, 24
 Upper California Crossing, 28
 U.S. Geological Survey, 16, 26, 28, 32, 36, 46, 60, 64, 74, 80, 82
 U.S. National Museum, 68
 University of Colorado, 74
 Unruh, John, 56
 Ute, 60

 Valley of the Columbia, 54
 Valley of the Great Salt Lake, 2
 Valley of the Virgin River, 52
 Virginia City, Montana, 36, 74, 75
 Virginia Dale Station, 44

 Wailatpu, 72
 Walla Walla, Washington, 72
 Weston, Missouri, 12
 Westport Landing, 12, 13, 14, 78
 Whitman Mission, 72, 73
 Whitman, Marcus, 72
 Whitman, Narcissa, 72
 Willamette Valley, 56
 Wills, David, 60
 Wind River Mountains, 42
 Winter Quarters, 48
 Wister, Owen, 76
 Wolf Run Shoals, 20
 World Trade Commission, 48

 Yellowstone, 16, 28, 60, 64, 72, 74, 80, 84
 Yosemite, 46
 Young, Brigham, 48, 50



Photo courtesy of Tom Downey

Scotts Bluff National Monument is located 1 mile west of Gering, Nebraska on State Highway 92. Established in 1919, the monument consists of 3,000 acres of prairie and scenic sandstone bluffs, and is dedicated to preserving the legacy of America's westward movement. Vestiges of the old trail can still be seen, and the Oregon Trail Museum offers a variety of exhibits that tell the stories of early pioneers.

For more information, write to: Superintendent, Scotts Bluff National Monument, PO Box 27, Gering, NE 69341