

Letters From an American Character

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First Reader

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John M. ...", written over a horizontal line.

Second Reader

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Bruce N. ...", written over a horizontal line.

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American history is not something dead and over. It is always alive, always growing, always unfinished—and every American today has his own contribution to make to the great fabric of tradition and hope which binds all Americans, dead and living and yet to be born, in a common faith and a common destiny.

John F. Kennedy (Athearn 7)

Letters written in 1872 by Thomas G. Newnam to his sister Mary inspired the following manuscript. I discovered these letters in the personal archives of Ollie Mae Newnam Crawford, my grandmother, in 1986 while doing some personal genealogical research. These letters are a piece of history, thoughtfully preserved for unknown reasons. What is most important is that these letters, and others like them, were written by one of the millions of Americans who may have gone from the cradle to the grave unknown except to family, friends, and, sometimes, enemies.

The copies I found were typewritten, single-spaced and sixteen in number. The first page was copied on the letterhead of the United State Post Office, Revere, Minnesota, dated 5 July 1960. The man who transcribed them prefaced the letters:

To Whom It May Concern:

As an introduction to the following as well as an explanation, I, Willard V. Newnam, Postmaster at Revere, Minnesota hereby state, [a]fter the death of my Aunt Miss Cora Newnam, Parshall, North Dakota, formerly of Knox County, Missouri, were found the letters which I will copy, verbatim, as I have them. It appears that the writer of these letters, a Mr. Tom Newnam of Pleasant Hill, Cass County, Missouri had kept a Diary of his travels during the years of the late 1850s and then in 1872 wrote from the Diary to his sister Mary.

To begin the search I called the post office in Revere, Minnesota. Margie, a woman who had worked for Willard, gave me the information I needed to continue my search.

Willard V. Newnam, Thomas G. Newnam's grand nephew, was born 20 September 1902 at Rugby, North Dakota. Willard died 11 March 1989 after suffering Alzheimer's disease. Robert Diekmann, the man Margie told me to call, was Willard's neighbor and friend who took care of Willard during his illness and disposed of his possessions to family members after his death. According to Diekmann, Scott (Sears) Newnam-Cordner was the relative who received the original letters. Diekmann also sent me a copy of the list of Willard's heirs which was provided to him by the attorney who handled Willard's estate.

Genealogical research has become very popular to many people who have ever-increasing opportunities to access information courtesy of the information super-highway, the electronic age's equivalent to the invention of the printing press, the Internet. Clearly, major institutions are expending large amounts of funding on Internet access to make this information accessible in response to its popularity. Through one of these genealogical Internet sites Betty Anne Dobberpuhl of Aberdeen, South Dakota, Willard's niece, responded to a query I had placed. She was one of the persons named on the list of heirs, and with her help we found Sears Cordner, who graciously shared a copy of them with me. Not only had I found a potential family member, Betty Anne, but also I found a friend who has provided additional information and support throughout the years of my search for Tom.

From this point on, Thomas G. Newnam, the author of these letters, will be referred to only as Tom. This is for a couple of reasons—not the least of which is that, having been studying his letters for so long, I have developed an affection for this character. I believe, after having been privy to his personal discourse with his sister, it would be difficult for one who reads these letters to maintain a formal distance. His charm, humor, and insight are endearing.

Tom's letters will be introduced in the first section, in their entirety, so that the reader may encounter them as I did, without any idea of who this person was, to whom he was writing, the places about which he was writing, or the people to whom he was referring. If readers share my knowledge at the time I first read these letters, I am certain that they will feel the need to

read my research in order to have answered the many questions Tom's writing stimulates.

There are some readers, however, who will have a greater knowledge base than I did, and who will very quickly identify some of that about which he writes. I hope this only serves to pique the reader's interest to read my work to see if I have analyzed it correctly. Either way, it is important to read the letters first.

Additionally, I have chosen to format this paper using a script font for all of Tom's writing. First, in the research portion of this thesis there is a need to differentiate his writing from mine. Second, it is an attempt to preserve the style of nineteenth century letter writing, and to remind the reader that these letters were handwritten. Anything else was not an option. A nibbed pen dipped into a bottle of ink using a fancy, often flowery, cursive was the method of the day.

Tom's handwriting was bold and consistent. His pen strokes were made with confidence, as though he had been writing much and often. He made very few errors where he had to scratch anything out and his need to commit words to paper while keeping pace with his thoughts was evident in his punctuation. His periods look like his commas, a distinctive characteristic of pen and ink.

I have made only minor editorial corrections. I have made no attempt to correct Tom's grammar. My knowledge of the grammatical structure of this time period and Tom's native region is insufficient to make any corrections. Besides, there are many that enjoy the prose of the nineteenth century. Mark Twain made a fortune and a lasting impression giving us an accurate—though, at times, slightly exaggerated—documentation of the vernacular of his region. There is one downside to leaving Tom's language untouched and that is political correctness. On occasion, Tom makes reference to people and ideas that may be considered offensive. If these are viewed as something common to his time and socialization and not to his beliefs or character, all could be forgiven.

Among the editorial changes I have made is the double "s" construction. Tom occasionally used what appears as an "f" "s" which is the archaic form of double "s." Another

change I made is deleting his practice of hyphenation when he came to the margin of the page. For example, in his letter dated 12 April 1872, he had to separate the words hum=/=ble, con=/=taining, and irregul=/=arity, among others. In transcription I reduced these to humble, containing, irregularity and so on throughout the entire document. In addition, today we write the words “wherever” and “another” as single words. Tom separated these: “where ever” and “an other.” I have left these as he wrote them. I feel it preserves the rhythm of his dialect.

Tom did not write focused or single-subject letters; he told stories. Through his obvious writing abilities in writing this story, he described real life that is always multi-faceted and complex. “History was not made on the grand scale in which we can now view it. It was not made all at once. It was made by single individuals, performing only the feats which their lifetimes and circumstances would allow” (Svoboda).

After much research, I concur with Willard Newnam that these came from a diary. Unfortunately, I have not yet found the diary. Considering the fact that the letters spanned a fourteen year time period, it is doubtful that Tom would have remembered his daily movements this accurately—an accuracy that continues to be confirmed with each discovery—without referring to personal notes. I have, however, discovered several other letters written by Thomas G. Newnam and have been able to use them to supplement the information contained in the above mentioned letters.

Tom’s ability to tell a story only makes not having all of his other letters or his diary even more distressing. Thankfully, we do have these.

Pleasant Hill, Cass County, Missouri

April 12th 1872

Sister Dear:

I had almost decided that I would mark you "tardy" but will accept your excuse, You have spring earlier than we do-I believe with you that "there is a place of torment for the Un Godlike". "To what Church do I belong?" I am one those despised followers of the humble Nazarene that belongs to Gods Church viz: that of the "Divine Humanity" and if I was not affraid to, I would send you one of my Religious papers, I would not have Ma see one for anything so if you will promise to not show it to her or tell her you have it, I will send you one containing loving messages from the Angels. But I'll not send it till you tell me too.

George has doubtless received my last by this time. If I succeed, and I hope there is no doubt about it, there is none in my own mind, I will help you next winter if not sooner, however, I have not received my papers yet owing, I think to the irregularity of the mails now. I do not think it will be longer than two weeks before I am ready to start.

You will get hartily tired of my autobiography before I am through, I am affraid for there is no more romance in me than in last years almanac and you will find is as dry as ----, Well you will find that out yourself soon enough so I'll go on with my "plain unvarnished tale". I left off "and so spend the night away."

That day found me in Monroe County still with a heavy heart and sad without anything happening to me to relieve the dull monotonny untill I was near Paris, I met a lot of drunken men driving a lot of sober hogs and they (the men not the hogs) tried to make my poor old pony throw me, they did not succeed and I was glad when I had passed them.

In Paris I met an acquaintance, but could get no work, he told me that 18 miles further I could get it, so I pushed on untill night and fared better than I did the night before. Next day I arrived at the place-I'll call it "Idlebrook" - where sure enough I got work and it was good that I did for in my pocket I did not have a "Sou Markee" to bless myself with. I worked there 2 or 3 weeks, it was all I could, and managed to save a few dollars (4 or 5 if I remember right) over and above all expenses, and on a "bright and glorious" Sunday morning, Pony and I left "Idlebrook" forever and took up a line of march for Glasgow in Howard County.

About 3 O'clock P.M. arrived at Col. Horners 4 miles from Huntsville Randolph County and stayed till next day, pushed on into Huntsville but could get no work, so onward for Glasgow where I arrived Tuesday A.M., could not get work so I went to Fayette and stayed all night, next A.M. met Tyson Diner, (Rev. I should say) but he did not know me, I made myself known to him but "Ahem, ah Ahem". Excuse me, I have to call on Bros.---- This A.M. today, good day. I shall see you down town I hope, call again. (He was at home) and yet he did not for there was no use of staying in Fayette, (excuse this) how different was the greeting to that which I had been so often greeted by each man on arising from Fathers table, "with capacious paunch with good capons lined" they laid their Reverend hands on my head and said "be a good boy, Thomas".

My next destination was "Arrow Rock" Saline County 18 miles South of Fayette and on the south bank of the "Mighty Missouri" when I arrived at the ferry I had just money enough to pay the ferryman, but fortune smiled and I found work, Pony found a stable in which to rest, I also found a tavern where they would trust me for a weeks board and next morning went to work with comparatively a light heart. The man I went to work for was Pete Rhinehart, I mention it for you to remember, and had for

a shop mate one Jacob Smidt who was a fugitive from his "Faderland" because he was a Red Republican and he seemed to be proud of the badge he wore (a red bandana handkerchief about his throat) still he had travelled all over Germany and Switzerland and many a time he has held me spellbound as he recited stories of his wanderings. I have forgotten nearly all, and they would be out of place here, besides they might not interest you, to me they were intensely so, you may believe when he pictured in his broken English, which left imagination to do its best, how he had climbed the mountains of Switzerland and stood on the banks of the Lake Lemmon of Geneva, climbed Mont Blanc and been in the Fortress of Ehrenbreitach, and how he had escaped to FREE AMERICA. - Pardon me, Sister Dear for saying here parenthetically that we Americans can not do without this Government even if for no other reason than this: "The Noble and Good of the Old World can fly to us from under the Tyrants heel and find protection".

I will digress again and tell you the Singular end of those two men but first I must pick up the thread and tell you that I had worked 8 or 9 months a part of the time boarding with Rhinehart and again at the Tavern untill the summer of 1858 in July, I think, I was discharged, but was still sleeping in the shop when the following catastrophe befell Rhinehart.

I was sitting in front of the Tavern awaiting breakfast, half awake, and half in dreamland, in the cool shade of the house in the early morning.

Suddenly Smidt coming up to where I was sitting and saying, "Tom, Peter is Fut" (gone) "What?" said I for the mans manner frightened me, "Oh 'Peter is Fut", "Oh Mine Gott"--- "What is the matter, Smith?" I asked. "Oh Peter is Fut, is gone, is drownnd" "Where? When? and How? I asked in a breath, without giving him time to answer, I ran down to Mrs. Rhinehart's and found her and her two small children almost crazed with grief. I had her tell me the facts and immediately collected a croud to dive and drag and fish, but it was no use he was drowned in an eddy in the River but had been swept out into the current and this was the last ever seen of Rhinehart by any of his acquaintances. The way it happend was this as gathered by Rhinehart's wife and Smidt. Rhinehart had a small lap dog that he thought as much of as he did of one of his children and he took the dog along when he and Smidt went to bathe very early on the morning in question. The first thing Rhinehart did was wash his dog, which he did while Smidt was bathing and when Smidt came out Rhinehart went in which was his last. Smidt says he was standing with his back to the River when Rhinehart went in and when he came up the last time he gave a

groan that attracted his attention and on looking around he saw the top of Rhinehart's head going under. He said he was scared but comprehending the situation, he plunged in but alas too late, the turbid waters had hid their victim forever.

Now for a singular part of the sad story. I was, as I said before, sleeping in the shop with Smidt. I rose one morning, 2 or 3 days prior to the one on which Rhinehart was drowned and Smidt told me of a, to his, singular dream he had. He said "I dreamed last night that I was in Frankfort on the Main, and that I went out in a boat with a little dog, and that I picked it up and threw it overboard till it was drowned" and "he added, something is going to happen". Now was he warned of that which happened only 2 or 3 days after? I shall always believe he was. There is little more to tell, poor Smidt, after Rhinehart was dead his sad refrain was ever "I will be the next", Why, said I, then he told me that another man Rhinehart and himself had worked shopmates in a room in St. Louis that about a year before the first was drowned in the River about Grafton and now Rhinehart here and said he, "I shall be the next." In vain I ridiculed him, in vain I laughed at him, it was always the same sad song, "I shall be the next". This was in July 1858, the 28th of August I started

for New Mexico, the next year 1859 in December I came back to Glasgow where I learned that in the summer Smidt had come up there and deliberately went into the river and drowned himself, his body was found a few days after and decently buried for he had money.----

But to return to my story, while in Arrow Rock I became acquainted with Clarborn Fox Jackson and several of his sons, Vincent Marmaduke and nearly all the notables of that vicinity. There I stood at the grave of old Dr. Sappington and his wife and read the inscription that adorned the slab that covers their Pascopagus. But the man that was destined to make the greatest change in my life was one whom I met here by the name of Bill Hatcher. A great red-headed man, whose face had been deeply pitted by small pox and who was anything but handsome, I assure you, but whose heart was as big as his person and as flexible to the touch of sorrow as an evening Zephyr is to the granite.

Well he came in from New Mexico as an agent of a Company to buy American sheep for that Territory. He bought about 15,000 head and was collecting them preparatory to a start. I formed his acquaintance in Arrow Rock by trying to engage with him to go out. He said to me "Do you really want to go to New Mexico"? Of course I do, "Well" he said, you are not

able to stand the trip with me, for I can not get any further than the Arkansas River this season and there I shall discharge all my hands and get Mexicans to help me winter my sheep 200 miles this side of New Mexico proper. I expostulated with him to no effect, he said "It will be a hard slavish trip to my men, but I shall have no more than (20 I believe) but I can and will take it easy, you could not do it if you went with me, so, "he continued I'll tell you something better - Jesse Turley is going out, and if you see him you can go with him as an ox driver and, said he, "Tell old Jess that I sent you". In a few days the old man came into town and he was pointed out to me, I introduced myself and told him what I wanted. He eyed me closely and questioned me more closely, but after my telling him a fib as to my ability to drive 4 or 5 yoke of oxen or wild cattle across the plains hitched to a prairie schooner he engaged me at \$25.00 per month and board to be discharged in New Mexico. I grabbed the offer, for, why I could not tell. I had an uncomfortable feeling but an uncontrollable desire to cross the great wilderness of the west, and so on the 28th of August 1858 I your brother Tom, was leaving Arrow Rock, Saline County, Missouri for a trip across the then wild "plains" driving a yoke of oxen, I who had never put

the yoke on an Ox's neck and did not know "Ghee from Hlaw" was on my road for a long trip.

I have a notion to stop here and moralize, but I guess I wont, I'll simply say that I who had thought before that I was a wanderer, began to realize that I had been mistaken, but was destined to soon become one, and you cannot imaging my feelings as this though came into my mind, coupled with, shall I ever get through? Will I ever get back? and a hundred others, all commonplace and not worth repeating. From Arrow Rock to Kansas City we were empty and we went to Marshall 18 miles the first day, and thus far Old Turley went with us, and then he went direct to Kansas City and directed us to go to "Lone Jack" and from there to K. C. so next A.M. we pulled out and I had not gone three miles before my cattle ran down a bank for water and upset the wagon. Pretty good for the second day said I to myself, but I then let a fellow by the name of Hays take the lead with his team and things went better except that we all gost lost and wandered around six days without knowing where we were till the evening of the sixth day we were 16 miles below the Lexington, we had made from 20 to 30 miles per day and were then not more than 30 miles from Arrow Rock. We all swore some, that is Hays, Cooper and I, for we were on the wrong

side of a big creek with no way of getting over except on a rickety old bridge that people told us was not safe, and it was not, but as it was nearly night and a big storm coming up we determined to risk it, I had to cross first so I took off all but one yoke of oxen from the wagon and over I went safe and sound but "fron" my word I would not do it again for all the money in Lafayette County.

Three days more we reached Kansas City and loaded with an assorted stock of merchandise consisting principally of sugar, coffee, clothing, blankets, boots & shoes, whiskey, tobacco and some other things suitable for the market we were destined for, and you will see we were loaded when I tell you we had 15,300 lbs on three wagons drawn by 13 yokes of oxen altogether, 4 yoke each to two wagons, and 5 to the other one, and yet we pulled bravely out from K. C. through Westport and on to Indian Creek where we camped because we had to, Cooper let his team stall in a mud hole and as it was nearly night we had to let it stay till morning, mind you old Jess had stopped back in Kansas City.

Next morning, luckily for us greeners, a genuine train came along, of some 30 wagons all of them "old stagers" that knew what they were about, and on the wagon boss riding up to where we were he ask us, "What are you

doing there"? (We had the road blockaded) I explained, and he said "never mind I'll help you out". He gave directions and successively struck each ox, "just to wake them up," he said then he called several of his own drivers, and said, "all ready" "yes" "go ahead then" and such a yell and screech and hurrah as those fellows set up I never heard before, nor did you either Mary, but the cattle walked the wagon out in less time that it has taken to tell it. But getting stuck in the mud, after a few days travel, loses all its excitement and become, to me, as tiresome as this is to you, (I have not a doubt), but with this difference in our situations, I had to go on while you can throw this aside, and it will be no more than I can expect. Nothing more happened till we reached Council Grove, here I saw as I thought at the time, the wild Indians of the plains, it was a part of the Kaw tribe, and they were sunk so low by their intercommunication with the whites and the demoralizing effects of the association are such that today I think of them as the most degraded Indians I saw during the whole trip.

They were collecting at the "Grove" for their fall hunt so I had a good opportunity of seeing them, and after seeing so many others after, I could but note the difference. As this was the last of the white settlements we tarried in the vicinity of "Council Grove" until next morning, then we

pulled out and that night away after nightfall we camped just beyond "lost spring". Next morning passed "Diamond springs" and camped again that night at "Willow Springs", away again next morning for "Cottonwood fork of the Arkansas River" where we intended to take breakfast about 10 O'clock A.M. and would have done so had it not been for an unlooked for accident that happened to me. I was in the lead and getting along bravely when my lead yoke of cattle ran out to the right hand side of the road to crop the green grass and the other three of course followed which brought "Fore wheels on a lock" under the bed and mashed every spoke out of the right fore wheel. That was very bad luck indeed, but to make matters worse Old Turley had drove on ahead to "Cottonwood" (about three or four miles) in his Carriage to look for a camp ground, so I told the other boys to halt where they were and I would walk down and tell old Jess, which they did and I after buckling on my revolver struck out. I could see him when I was about a mile of him and could see that he was very uneasy, I finally reached him and told him what was the matter, he took it a great deal cooler than I imagined he would so I was relieved for the time being. I hitched up the mules to his buggy and we rode back and I told him all about it on the road, he said he would make Carson, (he had discharged Cooper as incompetent,

and hired Carson in his place, and by the way a nephew of the famed and celebrated Kit Carson of the Novels) stay with my wagon while I hitched my cattle to his team and drove the two teams down to the "Cottonwood" this was necessary because we took all we could pile on the wagon out of mine and it made Carsons wagon very heavy, however Turley went ahead, Hays followed him and I followed Hays so we were alright so far. When we were down to the "Fork" we unyoked all our cattle except two yoke of my team and they all went to feeding with a will. Turley put Hays to getting dinner while we went to look if we could find a lighter wagon to move the remainder of my load down to the "Creek" some ways below where we camped, We found a lone "squatter sovereign" who had a wagon, we went back to camp and I took 2 yoke of my cattle and went down and hitched to it, by this time "grub" was ready so we finished it and then Hays and I went for a load while "Turley" stayed at "Cottonwood" to watch the goods, we were back to the "creek" by 3 o'clock and Carson again stayed back on the hill and this time Turley went back to the broken wagon, Hays driving the ox team and I stayed at the creek to pass the dreary hours as best I could. Turley had to take the "rim" and the "hub" of the broken wheel back 45 miles to Council Grove in his buggy and have it "filled". The weary

hours dragged by slowly, I tell you till the sun began to sink fast in the Western sky but no signs of my returning companions and all imaginable conjectures filled my mind, I thought, may be the Indians have scalped them, and a thousand other things, and the former seemed most likely when I, on looking down the creek saw a troop of Indians riding towards me at, it seemed to me, full speed. How my hair raised on end and now I buckled on my revolver and placed my double barrel shot gun where I could lay my hand on it, you may imagine, on they came, whooping and yelling, and I really believe they did it to try and make me run and hide so they might have a chance to steal, but strange to say, I did neither but stood my ground boldly where they could see me and I them, and "greener" as I was, I thought it was better to put on a bold face which I did and received them more as welcome friends than as wily foes, and my courage rose when they trooped up to where I was without firing a shot at me, as well as I remember I was as cool "as a cucumber" and I think I have a pretty vivid recollection of the affair for I placed my revolver scabbard in front where they could see it and carried my gun on my arm, and whenever they offered to shake hands I invariable gave them my left, and when they commenced frying around I shook my head very significantly at them and said "puck-a-chee, puck-a-

chee. (get away). They loitered around an age it seemed to me, but it must have been nearly an hour, and finally left me as I hoped then, and as it proved, for ever, then my nerves gave away and I sat down and shook like one with the ague, but I was still in misery for the sun had gone down, and I was still alone.

Lonely the night shades were gathering fast and darkness was setting in when I heard the welcome snap of the whip of my companions coming to my relief and I thanked God for it you may believe. I had prepared supper long before the Indians came, for I expected the "boys" back early, so we fell too and dispatched it in haste when we all went to look after the "cattle". We found them all right came back and I rolled up in my blankets, laid down on the bosom of Mother earth and slept as sweetly as ever I did in my life.

I learned after that it was a party of the "Kaw" tribe (there was 40 or 50 of them) out on a hunting excursion.

This is enough for one time, tell me if you want more of the same kind. Mollie says kiss Aunt Mary for her, my wife says she sends her love to all. Mollie had yesterday a hard chill and another today but she is running around now as lively as ever. Tell George if he comes over here to

let me know when he is coming and I'll meet him at the train. I guess he'd know me. For the present, Sister Dear, Good bye and God Bless you is the word of your brother Tom.

Pleasant Hill, Cass County, Missouri

April 14th, 1872

Sister Dear:

I herewith send you another Chapter concerning my wanderings, after reading the previous batch, I expect you have a surfeit of such stuff, but however uninteresting they may be to you, it does me good to live over again the, to me, thrilling scenes thro' which I have passed, the more so as I can do it here in my quiet home and after the wonderful transformation of the last few years. But enough.

I received my patent, sure enough, yesterday and I give my agents, Messers. Munn & Co. of the "Scientific American" credit for the manner in which they have dispatched my claim. I have shown it to several "practical" men here and asked them for an honest opinion and they all with one voice say it is a good thing and will take.

I do not know, but I think that George might make something handsome by taking some "territory", say North East Missouri, and

operating it. As I have said before it is a line that has been entirely overlooked by others and yet it is more necessary than a coffee mill which any one can see by a little reflection. Now there are various ways to work it so as to make it pay, for instance, to re-sell the territory a County at a time, which can be readily done at a handsome advance over the price I ask, or to sell "shop rights" to Blacksmiths, (anyone can make they are so simple of construction) or by having them made and then wholesaling them, and I believe that this latter would be the most paying as my Patent has 17 years to run from the 9th Instant, but this plan would require some Capital while the would require comparatively none, you may very readily ask why I do not do this? I answer, I have too much territory to handle, the whole United States and Territories, and therefore, I offer some of it low, one dollar for each 1000 population, where one takes several Counties, of course single Counties I must sell higher, and as I wrote to George about it, I shall wait till I hear from him or you.

I am, dear sister, your Brother

Tom.

Pleasant Hill, Cass County, Missouri

May 5th, 1972

Sister Dear:

Contrary to previous expectations, I again sit down to continue my narrative, and I really do not know whether I dare address you again? seeing that the secret is no longer a secret to you, vis: what my "Religion" is, and yet being of a religious inclination, it (my religion) just fills the measure of my being. I can believe nothing unless I have the most undoubtable evidence Time, all other systems are to me, a failure, and yet true, we have the Bible, er, others may think they have, I know I have.---- But enough, if at some future time you ask me for "The hope that is within me", I may give it to you, but not now.

I thought I had marked the place where I left off, but for a Dollar I cannot find it, so, if I repeat, just scratch it out and go on,----I believe I told you how these weary and yet exciting moments passed, while those dirty Indians were there with me and I alone. Well we somehow managed to keep a guard look out that night and of course there being three, we watched a third of the night each, but at last, as it always will you know, and even the night of death will have its dawn ushering in the glorious day, the glorious sun rose in all its splendor, we had plenty of time on our hands so we did not hurry breakfast but this over we improvised some fish lines and set

about angling for the finny denizens of Cottonwood Fork of the Arkansas River. I had fair success and by noon we had quite a respectable mess of fish. After dinner the boys proposed to do the laundry business if I would fish and cook and as our linen was by this time none of the purest I gladly acceded to the proposal and I did my part well, while they cheated me by not doing theirs, but so passed the day away. We knew that it would be at least 3 days before Old Jess would be back with the wheel as it was at least 45 miles back to Council Grove we had plenty of time on our hands, the routine of the night before was gone over again, and the second day I did up my washing myself but instead of fishing the boys laid around and slept, another night and another day went by but no Turley nor no Indians disturbed our quiet, but away after night fall Turley came and we went to work getting things to rights in order to take an early start next morning and it was no inconsiderable job for about 5000 pounds of assorted goods lay around the camp on the ground. But next morning bright and early we were up and ready for a start, and start we did.;

Just as we were getting away from camp we saw a large grey wolf, the kind that is on the plains, and no where else that I know of. I fired at

him with my revolver he wheeled around his head to us and showed his large white teeth, and then scampered off, unhurt I guess.

On we went, dragging our weary loads up hill and down across level stretches where the wheel sank nearly to the hubs in pure sand, climbing rocky banks and dragging through the mud, across little turkey creek and big turkey creek and here we saw John Adkins that used to live in Pike. Ma remembered him perhaps, a son of old Noah Adkins that had his arm shot off, by Bill Allison, his step-son, in Pike some years ago. John was down on the Arkansas at the mouth of this same turkey creek, herding cattle for his half brother Bill, he accompanied us several mile for old Turkey knew him, having rode in the stage that "John" was driving from New Mexico to the States some years before. He knew me at sight and gave me the history of his family as far as he knew and I am tempted to give you a part of it here, but it would be out of place.

Well its all the same, so here it is. Ma remember that old Noah married Bill's mother in Bowling Green, mistreated her, and Bill had a quarrell with him which resulted in old Noah shooting the arm off of Bill. So what does Bill do but take his mother away from old Noah and then lay around till he was well and one day when old Noah was riding from

Bowling Green to Louisiana carrying the mail, Billy laid in ambush for him and filled his back full of Buck shot and then left him for dead for he fell off his horse, unable to move till he was helped and yet he recovered with the loss of an arm and I believe was living in Louisiana when I left there, that is no matter, the Adkins family moved up into Jackson County and "William goes for to be a stage driver across the plains between Salt Lake and some other station this side, this he followed till John Jamison went out there and superceded him as a Conductor on the overland mail Companies Coaches", a thing that cost him and his party his and their lives in a very short time, of course it was reported that the Indians killed Jamison's mail party, but although I have always had very grave suspicions, it will perhaps never be positively known who did it. The next time Billy A is heard of he is keeping a stage station at the crossing of Walnut Creek on the big bend of the Arkansas River and John said was doing "well". We passed there next day but I did not see him then and have never heard of them since and as an old friend of mine used to say "dough want to".

Now to take up the thread of the story again; That evening after pulling hard for several miles through heavy sand we passed what is called "Plum creek" about sundown but as water and forage was scarce we had to travel on

some six or eight miles further and camped on the bank of the Arkansas late at night, we went to bed supperless that is Turley, Hays & Carson did so far as I know. I went out and herded the cattle the first watch and as they were hungry they wandered considerable, and the night was dark as "pitch" and all around on every side, snap, snap, snap I could hear the angry wolves, it seemed to me right at my heels, in front and on all sides, if I was to guess I would say there were thousands judging by their howling and snapping of their teeth and I wonder now if old Turley did not send me out that night to be devoured by them. They had near that place attacked men in open day light, a thing unusual for wolves too. Well let the case be as it may, if he did, I forgive him for it, for thank God and those bright and glorious Angels who have always shielded me when danger encompassed me, I am yet living to tell it to you, Mary. Next day about 10 A.M. we arrived at Allison's "rancho" and crossed Walnut creek, saw another Indian, only one, passed up on the south side of Walnut creek over as beautiful country as ever the sun shone on, finally concluded to take the dry route to the crossing of the "Arkansas" so we went to Pawnee rock but as I am not there yet I will tell of it when we get there, that night we camped on a high prairie and old Turley said that as we were now in the "Pawnee"

country we might let the cattle go, and stand guard over the wagons”.

However so far as I could tell there were no Indians in that part of the country. Next A.M. rolled out bright and early and soon left the level up land and went down on the river bottom, to our right rose high precipices with only now and then a brake in the ragged wall of rock. A few miles further I saw in one of the brake of the wall an Indian standing about half way up the side of the hill (we were never more than a half mile from the hill) I called the attention of the others of the party to the fact but he never moved (the Indian I mean) momentarily I expected to see a troup of them coming down a ravine on us, signaled by their comrade who was on guard on the side of the hill, and that was what was called “Pawnee Rock” but now I will guarantee that if you were going along the same road and were to see it, not knowing that it was an illusion, would be qualified that, that was an Indian and nothing else, I imagined that I could see him move and change position, and would at the time been tempted to swear to it if a man had called it in question. I forgot to say that on turkey creek we saw the first Buffalo of the trip, but after crossing Walnut creek they were more plentiful. We passed Pawnee rock about 10 A.M. and about 3 P.M. arrived at “Pawnee Fork” of the Arkansas river. There we came to the

camp of a party of Mexicans who were hunting Buffaloes and "jerking" the meat. Old Turley spoke the language fluently and so he learned that they were just about ready to start back to "Tacs" (pronounced Toucos) where they lived so he concluded to lay over till next day and they agreed to go out and bring us in some fresh meat next A.M. They gave us a few pounds for supper and better eating I never had, this was because we had been on rations of salt side bacon all the way out and raw as it was it tasted good, I say it was raw, we attempted to fry it in the salt bacon grease and you can no more cook it if you put salt on it than you can cook a stone.

Next morning we were all right for that night Turley took a kettle and put in some clear water and a few "hump ribs" together with strips of the "hump fluce" and let it cook as long as the fire lasted, which I expect was pretty near all night, as the fire was made of "buffalo chips" but let me explain, there is a row of bones growing on the spinal column of the Buffalo from a little in front of the shoulders to near the root of the tail and they commence short and increase in length till they reach just behind the points of the shoulder where they attain their greatest length, then they diminish rearward this is called the "hump" and is far larger in the male than in the female, the muscle grows in the summer very thick along each side of the

"ribs" and is called a "hump fluce" and is really the only part of the meat that is good.

Turley decided to lay over and travel in company with the mexicans for better protection, and they early in the A.M. went out for a final hunt, and while they were gone we broached a ten gallon keg of whiskey, which those who were in camp bought very rapidly, and about 10 O'clock the others came in and they too indulged freely so that by eleven o'clock ten gallons were empty, and some of them were "wild drunk", so we, or rather he, thought it best to push on and leave them he told me privately that if they took the idea in their hands to do so they would massacre us and report that the Indians had done it, and as they were getting troublesome, more so than polite, I though so myself, especially as one of them had met with a misshap in the chase in the A.M. and said in broken english that we were to blame, of course we were not, for how could we help the Buffalo cow running him and his horse down and goring the mare's hind parts so awfully? Not at all, yet it showed that they only wanted an excuse, so I think now Turley was right in rolling out and leaving them to sober off, don't you?

We had very good roads for about ten mites which we made that night before we camped and when we did so it was in a kind of a sink at the head

of a hollow and by the dim starlight it looked like as if the ground was higher all around than it was where we were, it was my first watch again and as on another occasion Turley said guard the camp and let the cattle go which I did and as there was a stiff breeze blowing the others all laid down and rolled up in their blankets and went to sleep. I, after sauntering around a while laid down too, when on looking off toward the west I saw something that made the hair raise on my head, right there, it seemed not more than a hundred yards, I saw as I thought a man raise cautiously up for an instant and then sink, when up it came again and I was sure it was a mans head, however I did not want to alarm the camp needlessly so I did not shoot, taking a circuit to see who it could be, I lost sight of it entirely till all at once I laid flat down, when right before me was a bunch of grass with a cluster of heads on the top, and the wind would bend them low and then allow them to rise again, and in the darkness these looked like a mans head to me "so", thinks I, that does pretty well and now it my time" so I went back to camp and roughly shook old Jess to wake him up and then pointed it out to him, he looked for a while and I imagined he was getting nervous all the time but at last he stammered "its only a bunch of grass I saw it when I laid down", which might have been a fact and might not anyhow I had my

chuckle at him. After which I laid down again and was soon lost in reverie far back into the past my soul went and slowly clambered by life's rugged pathway up to the then present hour and there I lay musing in the silence and loneliness of undisturbed solitude indeed, there stood our 4 wagons, a tempting bait offered to the cupidity of the treacherous red-skins, or to the painted red white skins, who prowled over the plains, there laid three companions, wrapped in the arms of sleep as helpless as children in case of an attack by a wiley foe, and I the guard of all this treasure and life, effecting not only ourselves but others hundreds of miles away and oh! how lonely it seemed we were the sole occupants, so far as I knew of the vast plains, no white man for hundreds of miles behind me and worse than white men before, long I laid, lost in this dream that was a reality.

At last shaking it off I rose to my feet determined to take a walk, not knowing where to go. However I thought I could find our cattle and seek their companionship and after walking around a considerable time I found them all quietly lying down seemingly as fearless and contented as if they were at home in their former green pastures, and their quiet contentment caused me to feel that His or Hers evershadowing guardianship was even there, so, drinking in a full inspiration of the whole scene, I turned and

went back to camp, and as I knew by the stars that it was in the "wee Sun" hours, I awoke the second watch and laid down to sleep and dream of home and friends so far away.

Next A.M. bright and early we were away again, and did not stop until nearly night except once for a few minutes for our cattle to drink out of a mud hole, and they drank with avidity as they had had none since noon the day before, that evening about three o'clock we found a larger water hole where we camped, and as I was nearly famished for water myself, the first thing I did was to take a cup and go to the water. I found it covered with a green scum an eighth of an inch thick, (more or less) but this was a matter of no consequence as I would by a back and forth movement, clear it away so that I could get to the water which was thick, as some Dutch soup I have since drank, but it was sweet nevertheless, if it was warm, and a quart satisfied me, now perhaps you think I am romancing, I am telling exact facts, as I intend to always, for they are bad enough, and I have no desire to exaggerate. But our watch word was H.O: for the Arkansas River next day, so we eat our rations in a good humor, besides we expected our Mexican friends to overtake us that evening and perhaps camp in the neighborhood, but nearly sundown they came along and passed on not stopping till they

arrived at the river, which they did some time that night. Next morning we went to the river, about eight miles distant from our camp of the night before, where we had breakfast of rations and allowed our cattle to graze a couple hours, but we did not see anything of "Los Mexicans", and old Jess thought they had gone on. Our camp here was just below what was called "Old Fort Mann", but there was very little to remind one of any such institution ever having been in that vicinity, a few heaps of earth, and a couple or more holes that looked like the former burial place of one more "unfortunate", who had been buried there, and been dug up by the wolves, was about all that could be pointed out as the site of the former Fort. And, excuse me, if I tell you a story of the refined tastes of the wolves of the plains, it is this: and passes well on the plains. "they will dig up a white man to eat, while they will not touch a Mexican", and is accounted for in various ways, the most Philosophical explanation is, that the mexicans eat such enormous quantities of "chile" colorado (red pepper) (pronounced cheela coloron) that their systems become thoroughly impregnated with it, and it burns the tongues of the wolves so, that they never try it a second time.

Here is where we had our first shot at a Buffalo, altho we had seen thousands, and in fact had once to stop our train to allow a herd to cross the

road just ahead of us, we were camped on the eastern bank of the Arkansas river, some two hundred yards to our right was a long stretch of low hills, and between us and these stood a huge old male Buffalo all alone, old Jess said, "Hays, give me my rifle till I give that old fellow a shot", he took good aim and fired, but the old Buffalo paid no attention at all. Turley said "Hays give me your rifle and I'll try it again", but lo, Hays gun was off fix so no one could shoot it, and Carson had no gun, so I offered my gun, (a double barrell shot gun) but in true Plainsman fashion the old fellow disdained to try mine, and would not let me shoot, but loaded up his gun and fired a second shot, which made the Buffalo arch his back and camper away as fast as he could, so we broke camp and "struck out" for the crossing of the Arkansas a past the "caches" (pronounced cashes) over hill and over valley, through mud holes and under precipices we went, and reached the crossing about noon and it was attended with no little difficulty for we had a precipitious hill to go down, with both hind wheels locked, and when we were down we had to take our cattle all loose and water them to keep them from stopping to drink after we had started to cross for the bed of the river was one mass of "quicksand" and if they stopped only for a moment, the wheels were inextricably sunk into it. So after double teaming we two drivers to a team

started in, the water up to our middle, and cold, as it was in autumn, but we made it alright and as old Jess had promised that we would camp as soon as we got across we worked with a will, and after we were all safely across, we had to hitch up and go several mile up the bottom on the west side of the river before we camped, you may believe me we were all mad and all swore some at old Jess, quietly of course, but angrily, and I believe that had a troop of Redskins come upon us then, they would have met a warm reception - by the way we had not seen a single indian since leaving "Walnut Creek" and only one there, for the reason that Bill Bent had proceeded us only a few days with a whole train full of supplys to deal out to them at his Fort which was about twenty miles up the river from where we were and the Indians were all congregating there, that is at "Bents Fort", to get their winter's supplies, and it showed consumate Generalship in old Jess to take advantage of this circumstance for had it been otherwise we would, in my humble opinion, never have arrived at our destination nor would I have been here to tell you the story.

About 3 or 4 o'clock we went into camp just where the road leaves the river and "strikes out" into the low long line of sand hills that skirt the river,

and beyond which lay the terrible "Jornada" (pronounced whanada) the "Journey of death", sixty miles without water or food for our stock.

We took of course a good rest here, being all next day, but I must not anticipate, the evening we camped in preparing for next day, and after dark awhile our Mexicans came in sight and camped about a mile below us down the river.

That night Turley said "Boys, watch the camp good tonight and let the cattle go to h--l" and said he "all of you that have not ammunition, say so, and load you guns out of mine, and he continued, I'll tell you that black mule has been across the plains before", (referring to one of his pair of mules) and if an Injun comes in smeling distance you'll see her raise h-ell and pull up her picket pin, and go if she can, and you may bet thars Injuns close, then". I need not tell you sister that this was a piece of information that was well calculated to keep me awake ordinarily, and this was an occasion not lost you may believe. It was my first watch again and as the mules were not more than 15 or 20 feet from our wagons, I studied long and solemnly into the nature of all the lower animal and especially into the disposition of the mule, wondering all the while if a mule had better sight, or a better sence of smell than I had? Now I assure you that a sence of fear is

one that I cannot define, as I do not know that I ever felt it, and another thing that is very strange to me, is, that when there is real danger I feel the least afraid, and after the ordeal is past I give way to a nervousness that is entirely uncontrollable, until the crisis comes again, then it is all gone, and I have laughed and joked when others turned pale, account for it if you can, I cannot.

Well on this night I speak of, I was lying on my side resting my head on my elbow and hand, musing more calmly than I am this minute, it must have been eleven or twelve O'clock, the Black mule raised her head as if frightened and gave a snort that it seemed to me ought to awaken the dead, and then commenced careening and trying to get away, (they were between us and the river, along the banks of which the willow bushes grew a dense mass), she gave a tremendous lurch, the picket pin flew and away went the mule, picket pin and all, I of course hastened to waken old Jess and explain the situation in as few words as possible he rose on his elbow, grasping his rifle ready for action and as nervous as one with the ague, said he, "wake the other boys" "where are they"? I explained Flays wa in his wagon and Carson in his, he said, with an oath "pull em out by the heels, make em get up," but it was no easy job to wake the poor fellows, yet by dint

of pulling and shaking I finally got one up and then the other, both rubbing their eyes and swearing at being disturbed, (but I was long enough about getting them up to allow a single indian to have put an arrow through all of us, if there had been one there, that had the disposition so to do, which I do not believe there was, something else frightened the mule and caused it to run off).

Turley becoming reassured he said "Tom, have you hear the 'Bell' lately"? I had not heard it tonight, I told him. (One of my cattle always wore a big ox bell whenever he was loose from the wagon) He said "Hays you and Carson stand guard awhile," They promised of course and we started up the river, as that was the way they started at dark, there was no moon and it was quite dark but we could follow up the river easy enough for the sand hills were on our left and the river on our right, after going about a mile, although it seemed five, we came to where the cattle were lying down, we went on beyond them and started them up and drove them down nearly to our camp where we left them and they all soon laid down again. We went back to camp and put our guns away and Turley ask if "they had seen anything of the mule"? "No, nothing", "Well," said he, "she is gone I spose," I proposed that we should take a look for her, which we did without

effect, and things looked rather blue, I tell you, and Old Jess swore that he would take a five cent piece for the chance of ever getting her again, but while we were talking up came the mule, to our no little surprise for as she had been gone nearly or quite an hour, I felt sure we would not get her that night and I thought that there was a chance, that a straggling Indian from some neighboring camp, perhaps, had been prowling around and had tried to "stampede" the mules, but had succeeded with only one, but after the mule came back, the case was unexplorable I thought, so I did not bother myself anymore but laid down and slept soundly untill the sun was high above the Eastern horizen.

That day we put over cooking our "grub" to last across the "Jornada" fixing and filling our water barrels, greasing wagons, fixing up our arms, washing up our linen, playing cards and sleeping, and as is usual on the plains all the fire was out before sundown, and after looking up the cattle we, so far as I know, all turned in for a nights rest, I was not called to take my turn on guard at all, because I believe the guardsmen went to sleep and did not wake until he was awakened, let it be ast it may, "alls well that ends well" and we were called early to get together the cattle preparitory to a start, and yet we did not leave camp untill afternoon, but was waiting as it

appeared for our Mexican friends to pilot us across, as we would have to travel nights as well as days, in fact continuously. They started out first, and as we had to double team on each wagon through the heavy sand, it was nearly sundown before we were on the level tableland, but we went all night long, no sound could be heard except the occasional jolting of a wagon or the cargo, of some Mexican driver far away somewhere, one could not tell where, to say the least, it was lonesome and that does not half express the feeling, Mary, and yet I do not want to paint it in more glowing colors than I can help, for fear you might think I was trying to make myself a hero, a distinction, I have not the least desire to attain to, even if I might, unless it is great for one to simply to do his or her duty, a thin, I will not allow.

Morning dawned and found us far on our way, about 10 A.M. we passed the "bone-yard" a place of scores of skulls and bones (of cattle) and one solitary grave they told of a whole train, nearly, that perished the year before, and I knew the names of the owners of the train, once but I have forgotten it now. On we went scarcely stopping to eat or drink, our Mexican friends leading the way bravely and so well that towards evening it was evident that they would leave us, and when the sun was not more than an hour high, we saw the last of them going over an elevation far in advance,

but it was no matter for we had arrived at "sand Creek" where was a water hole so that our stock could get water again and as we were within ten miles of the "Cimmaron River", Turley determined to rest untill the next morning, and to us it was a gratefull, and much needed rest, our stock was nearly famished for water and food, so we "corralled" our wagons and prepared supper, but judge of our surprise when just as we were seated, each with his tin plate and pint of coffee before him, ready to commence the repast, to see a big six footer of an indian standing before us, if he had dropped down from above he would not have taken us more by surprise.

We were seated behind our wagons, and he had come up in front of the, with that soft cat-like tread peculiar to the Indian, so But he was first to speak, "HOW HOW", and extended his hand which we all took and then old Jess bade him sit down beside him and he gave him his plate and cup bountifully supplied with "old Ned" and our own make of bread together with coffee, and as he eat enormously we had to cook more before we could finish our own supper, after which we all sat around in a circle and each took whiff of "the pipe of peace" and after more hand shaking he left us and I never saw him again. He was a Kiowa and his party were camped just below what was called "lower springs" on the Cimmaron River. There was some wonderful

stories told of this river, one of which is "that it has been known to rise without any seeming cause till it covered its whole sandy bed", which varies from a few yards to hundreds of yards wide, and sink again into the sand as if touched by the hand of Omnipotence, leaving the bed as dry as any other part of these arid plains. Another is that by digging in the sand anywhere, you can always get the sweetest water, still another is told of two men, on what is called "willow bar" holding at bay several hundred Indians who were hostile, by shifting their positions and firing their rifles every time an indian came within reach, and by the way old Turley pointed out the "willow bar" to me when we reached it, and this spoiled a very pretty story for the "bar" was anything but romantic looking it was simply a patch of willow shrubs that looked to me as though a large sized dog could not hide himself in, much less could a man do so. And yet Old Turley seemed affronted when I suggested as much. But I am getting ahead of my story, to return, Mr Kiowa left us as mysteriously as he came and after putting things to rights we all so far as I know, went to sleep, - I forgot previously to say that we hired one of the Mexicans for a "herder" for the stock and it was his business to look after it, his name was "Domingo" (which in English is Sunday) and as old Jess talked Spanish fluently it may be that Domingo

watched camp as well as the stock. I had a sweet sleep and was up next A.M. early, and we took an early start, and by 10 o'clock we had reached the lower springs on the Cimmaron. About 2 or 3 miles this side of there we went up to the high ground between sand creek and the "river" when to our left 3 or 4 miles there were, it seemed to me, hundreds of the white "lodges" in plain view, farther, grazed hundreds of ponies, and as we neared them we saw that the ponies were in motion towards the "lodges". It was a beautiful sight but I felt all the time as though I wished we were hundreds strong in place of the insignificant five, and I believe it was pardonable Mary, Dont you" However we were a "Host" within ourselves, for on we went brave as men, without vareying to the right or left, till we arrived at the "springs" and there we came up with our Mexican friends again, we unyoked our cattle and Carson drove them down to the water, some 2 or 300 yards and after they were done drinking drove them back again, while Flays and I busied ourselves getting dinner, and we prepared for a number of invited guests (15 or 20) and by the time we had our fire built the Indians came trooping into our camp at least a hundred or a hundred fifty strong, male and female, "papooses" of all sorts and sizes, Chiefs and lay members,

Turley very quickly discerned the Chiefs and such another "HON-HON", and hand shaking all around I never experienced before or since.

The Chiefs seated themselves in a circle leaving a gap large enough for their pale faced friends (our party) and then we all had to seat ourselves and take a "whiff" of the inevitable "pipe", after which we all arose and we announced dinner, the Chiefs, 15 or 20 in number seated themselves again around our "grub pile" and the way it disappeared was a wonder to the uninitiated and Hays, being the smallest one of our party, had to go to cooking again and could hardly supply us as fast as it was needed, and yet everything was conducted with the utmost decorum, for the Indians then prided themselves on their good manners, but at last this came to an end, and we all arose licking our "chops" a few minutes pass and the chiefs seated themselves in a row and the head chief pulled out the last treaty that the Government had made with them, and as we ranged in another row standing in front of them They handed it to old Jess and he pretended to read it, then handed it to me and I did read it, we of course said it was "good" and all shook hands again over it, I wish I had taken a copy of their names, but I did not, I remember some of them were laughable tho.

Then it was our turn again, and in the front of my wagon was several sacks

of old cut and dried smoking tobacco, Old Jess had me take a wooden bucket and fill it with the tobacco and empty it into a corner of the head Chiefs blanket, he holding it, and so on aroun the whole party till I think I emptied two and it may have been three of those sacks. Then they were in for trading, and I like a fool tried to trad my Navy revolver for a pony. I fired it and then handed it to a squaw and she fired it, but "no swap" could I make, thank goodness. One of them ordered the Mexicans to "Vamoose" (pronounced baumose) which they proceeded to do and we too went leisurely about catching up our teams too, the Mexicans having a great many more cattle than we did, we knew we need not hurry and yet we were determined.

Lone Jack, Jackson County, Missouri

May 16th 1872

Dear Sister:

I moved here three days ago is the reason why you have not received this before. I am carrying on a shop here for Mr. O. O. Brown and like the people very much.

I am your brother Tom--T. G. Newnam

P.S. by the way, excuse me sending so large an envelope with nothing in it.

Yours "Tom".

Prologue

When first attempting to analyze the letters, I used the following categories for a preliminary overview: Thomas G. Newnam, religion, education, geography, timeline, terminology, cultures, characters, economics, and technology. The order was chosen at random, but was an attempt to create some organizational structure. As may be recognized, these categories are extremely broad in scope, especially when the following is considered.

Tom's life spanned a time period of approximately sixty-three years and, while his birthplace was on the eastern coast of the United States, his life and travels took him as far as Santa Fe, New Mexico, nearly two thousand miles west. In addition, he was a rolling stone during most of his life. From the information I have to date it appears that he owned only one home, and that was for a period of only two years.

Originally, Tom was affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church. His father and grandfather were both ordained ministers. While there is no evidence that either of them were circuit riders, both his father and grandfather helped establish permanent structures while holding services in their own homes. The social movement of *Methodism ran parallel with, sometimes ahead of and rarely far behind, the social movement of westward expansion.* This subject, Methodism, has spawned several volumes of written discourse. Tom, in the middle of his life, decided to change his religious course. He became affiliated with a denomination that I have yet to identify with any confirmation.

Tom's education has remained elusive, but during his lifetime and within the region in which he lived public education was new and dynamic. Record keeping could rarely stay apace with the changes.

The land distance of the Santa Fe Trail, the journey that Tom made and wrote to his sister about, covers nearly on thousand miles depending on the point of departure. From 1821 until the onset of the Mexican-American War in 1846 trade with Santa Fe was an international one, between the United States and Mexico. At its conclusion in 1848 a new southwestern border between the United States and Mexico was established. As a result, the land of the state of New Mexico as we know it today lay within the United States' borders as a Territory, changing the Santa Fe Trade into one within the domain of the United States. This trade, both international and intra-national, lasted nearly sixty years. In short, both the time and space covered by the Santa Fe Trail were some of the most cataclysmic and dynamic in the history of the United States.

The terminology (much of which he defined for his reader), the cultures he encountered, the characters he named, and the technological devices he used were many and varied.

Economics is an interesting category. There are several sub-categories: the Santa Fe trade for individuals, international trade between the United States of America and Mexico, Tom's socio-economic status throughout his life and the economic life of the frontier region in which he lived as compared to the established eastern states. These are just a few of the directions my research could have taken.

When viewed as a whole, this is a worthy project for historical research—enough to last a lifetime. No category was more interesting than any of the others were, but for the purpose of this thesis the scope had to be narrowed. I decided to follow the trail physically in a weeklong driving trip. When asked how the trip should be approached, one of my graduate instructors said, "Let the letters be your guide" (Rubenstein). Guide me they did. They guided me headlong into the knowledge that it was not physically possible, in one week, to collect all of the information available from the small towns that Tom had named while, at the same time, trying to document the geographical changes

along the path. Even though my son drove while I, with a computer on my lap and a camera on the dashboard, tried to capture images, past and present, we still only made it to the halfway point before having to turn homeward.

Armed with the information that had been gathered, and feeling less like a novice, a second trip was scheduled. This time I devoted two weeks for the road trip. After having processed what had been collected on the first trip, I realized that I had missed much of what the small repositories had stored and available. Many of the stops I planned were to gather that which I had missed. A misfortune dictated that my trip be cut short by a full week and one-hundred-fifty miles shy of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Once again, I returned home loaded with primary sources and additions to my already well-stocked library.

These trips were costly in both time and money. The amount of information I gathered was well worth both, but it was scattered. There was something for each category, but nothing was complete. Libraries both large and small, historical research centers, and many other institutions that serve as repositories for historical documents suffer from a deplorable lack of funding. Resources for making photocopies as well as the human resources for research assistance are limited, and many have none at all. In many cases the institutions have expended their limited funding in Internet listings of holdings. One cannot receive copies from these institutions, nor do they practice inter-library loan, but they do list what they have available. During the year after my second trip, I discovered what was there and that I would have to physically go and get it. I planned a third trip.

My third trip was planned for three weeks. Between scheduled travel time, research facility hours of business, meetings, and an occasional break for a meal, even a flat tire would have been disastrous. The good news was that I was no longer a novice and had prepared so well in advance that I knew nothing remained for me to find at each

place I stopped, after I had gathered what I already knew to be there. For six days everything went as planned. File folders full of copies of irrefutable primary sources were in my possession. Valuable contacts had been made for my future research. Two hundred miles into the research path the trip was—once again—cut short.

I have told this story of my efforts to emphasize how difficult research can be. It is, at times, painstakingly slow and frustrating. At other times, it is the most thrilling and fulfilling thing one can do. There is a librarian in Lone Jack, Missouri whose ears are probably still ringing from the screech of excitement I could not suppress when I found a particularly surprising bit of information about Tom. Research is vital for accurate reporting. It is also a slippery slope. When the scope of a project is as large as I have already shown in my original overview, it can be overwhelming. Years after I began this project, I had to remind myself of my original intent. I wanted to find Tom, the man that had written these letters. I also had to remind myself that I was writing a thesis for my Master's degree, something that has restrictions of time and reasonable length. The overview for this thesis has, therefore, changed into a focus on Tom's life.

The information for his early years was pieced together using genealogical information gathered from family members, not yet entirely confirmed, and census records and news clippings among other primary and secondary sources about his immediate family. I included this section to give the reader some idea of Tom's background and the environment in which he had been raised.

The next two sections of the body of this thesis are more detailed since they combine his life and the letters, which are the best of primary sources. Tom's time in Arrow Rock and his life on the trail are the areas I have researched most completely, and the information included is the most comprehensive.

Although, in the beginning, I was greedy for the information I gathered, I realized that Tom's adventures after his time on the trail and his activities during the Civil War

would take me on tangents from which I may never recover. I purposely avoided these areas and subjects while collecting only enough to carry the thread of his story. Aside from this, his letters contained nothing about that period of his life.

His letters did, however, include what he was doing in 1872, and what his plans and intentions were for building his future. This included his application for, and receipt of, a patent. This information will be discussed in the last section of this thesis.

Tom was a fair-minded person. He was not quick to share in the prejudice or aggression that could be found in the collective American thought during the mid-nineteenth century, especially in the region through which he traveled.

Tom was not a sharpshooter hired to defend a wagon or wagon train loaded with valuable trade items; he was just hired to drive the wagon. Tom was not a military genius who rose to a high rank at an early age, destined to safeguard the passage of the thousands of travelers on the Santa Fe Trail. Tom was simply a young man who needed a job, who was willing to tell a fib to get one, and one who knew within the first twenty-four hours of his employment that he might have bitten off more than he could chew. He was a scared, adventurous young guy who bravely, diplomatically—and alone—met with a whole band of Indians. He was a clown who could laugh at himself for being scared by a weed top waving in the breeze and who woke his boss in the middle of the night hoping that he, too, would be fooled. He was a man who had high hopes and big dreams about the economic potential of his patented invention.

Tom was not a man who was made legendary by his feats in battle during the Civil War. Tom did not become one of America's leading scientists. His name cannot be found in school textbooks. However, Tom met famous and infamous people, had frightening encounters, made exciting discoveries, and learned things about himself and told his sister about them. Now, 129 years later, he is telling us about them, too.

Tom's Early Years

Tom was born 1833 in Baltimore, Maryland to Lorenzo D. Newnam (22 April 1810 – 5 January 1857) and Paulina G. Newnam (31 May c.1819 – 19 October 1877). His father was a member of Eastern Shore of Maryland settlers dating back to the late 1600s. His mother was born in Kentucky (Honaker).

By 1837 they had moved to Louisiana, Pike County, Missouri. There four brothers and one sister were born: Charles W. (1837 – 8 February 1924), Frances Asbury (17 February 1839 – 3 September 1922), Jason (b. 1842 – 18 July 1887), George S. (March 1848 - ?), and Mary (1851 - ?) (Census Records, Newnam-Cordner).

Missouri, during most of Tom's early years, was known as "the frontier." The only part of it that could truly be called settled was along the eastern border on the bank of the Mississippi River, an area made familiar by reading The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Adventures of Huck Finn, both written by Mark Twain.

Other than learning his father's trade of shoemaking, I do not know what kind or how much of an education Tom received. It is possible that in addition to a minimal formal education he learned from a household that stressed the ability to read and write in order to further the message of the church inasmuch as the household served as a place of worship.

As a minister, Tom's father was active in the community. He was also politically active. In 1851 Lorenzo D. Newnam was among a group of men from Pike County, Missouri who signed a letter of endorsement to Henry Clay.

To the careful student of the current of events it was plain that there was trouble ahead. Already the mutterings of war were heard in the distance. Men of all parties were anxious to avert the coming conflict. Pike County was not an indifferent observer, but was anxious to contribute her part in seconding the labors of those who were endeavoring to bring about a compromise. Much was expected from the 'compromise bill' introduced January 29, 1850, in the United State Congress, by the illustrious Henry Clay. The friends of this measure, without respect to party, were solicited to meet in mass convention to give expression to their sentiments on this subject; and it is but justice to the

patriotism and sagacity of the men who sign the call to publish their names.
(History of Pike County 250-251).

Lorenzo, Tom's father, was on this list.¹

In 1851 Tom's family and he moved to northeastern Missouri to Edina, Knox County where Tom and his father continued in the shoemaking business. While his father helped build a church for the community, Tom was "a mail contractor (a sub) on line running from Newark in Knox [County], to Memphis, Scotland [County] all in Missouri" (Pension Letters, October 1883). The church with which Tom's father was affiliated was Methodist Episcopal South. Not only was the country divided in sectional dispute, so was the Methodist Church. As the name implies, Tom's father's church, while not encouraging the ownership of slaves, had the philosophy that individuals and the governments of the states in which they lived still had the right to make the decision of slave ownership for themselves.

This division over slavery began years before the Civil War officially began in 1861. As a result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, the Kansas Territory needed to create a constitution and to decide whether or not to be a slave state. Bands of men, the so-called Border Ruffians, crossed over into Kansas from Missouri to intimidate Kansas' residents to vote for slavery. Eastern emigrant abolitionists, Free-soilers, were equally brutal in their techniques; thus, the region was nicknamed "bleeding Kansas." On January 29, 1861 Kansas was accepted into the United States as a free state.

Lorenzo died on 5 January 1857. Surprisingly, Tom, the eldest child, left home, his widowed mother and four of his siblings, the youngest of whom was six years old. He may have

¹ This caused some confusion because family lore says that he was a signatory of the "Missouri Compromise." There were two. The first was in 1820. Tom's father would have been ten years old. The Missouri Compromise was, in essence, an appeasement to both the northern anti-slavery states and the southern pro-slavery states. It stated that slavery would forever be prohibited forever from Louisiana Purchase territories north of 36° 30' and that Missouri and Maine would enter the Union at the same time, thereby ensuring sectional equality in the Senate. The one in which Tom's father was involved, in 1851, eventually led to new legislation that repealed the original Missouri Compromise and became the Kansas-Nebraska Act where the slavery position would be decided by "popular sovereignty," or the will of the residents.

gone first to where his brother, seventeen-year-old Jason was living and working as a “devil” on the Monroe County newspaper, the Paris Mercury. As Tom said in his letters, in 1857 he found himself in Monroe County “*heavy hearted*.” He followed the Missouri River and ended up in central Missouri, in Arrow Rock, Saline County where he worked for a year employed by Pete Rinehart, a German immigrant.

As Tom was growing up, this young state was becoming increasingly important. It had the overland shipping routes to supply the western territories that, also, were becoming increasingly important. In 1803 the land of Missouri was part of the Louisiana Purchase. In 1836 the Republic of Texas was formed when settlers revolted against Mexican ownership; Texas was annexed as part of the United States in 1845. In 1848 the area that is now New Mexico, Arizona, and California was ceded to the United States with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War. The Gadsden Purchase (1853) of what are now the southern portions of Arizona and New Mexico completed the present southern border of the United States.

This was the time and the place where American/Mexican international trade became firmly entrenched. Any person who had a few manufactured items to sell, or any idea or desire to become rich, could set out to do so—and perhaps succeed. Missouri was the starting point for traders, emigrants, gold-miners, explorers, good guys, bad guys, and all others who had a reason to go from the eastern portion of the country to the western portion. From this point, Missouri, all trails leading west began: the Santa Fe Trail, 1821; the Old Spanish Trail, 1829; the Oregon Trail, 1830-40; the California Trail, 1841; the Mormon Trail, 1846; the Central Overland Mail Route, 1850; the Butterfield Overland Mail Route, 1860; the Pony Express, 1860-61; and, the Transcontinental Railroads, 1869 (Grolier).

The political situation was volatile. The geographic location was paramount. The population was growing exponentially through emigration (both of white Americans and of

American Indians forced westward) and mass immigration—specifically from Germany and Ireland.

The intersection of “American” and American Indian culture is one that was extremely important. When American Indians were forcibly removed from their homes into locations with which they were unfamiliar, when one tribal culture was forced to co-habit with another after centuries of being at war—or, at least, in agreement to disagree—there was conflict. There was conflict with each other and with those who forced the situation upon them. This was the situation in Missouri and all territories adjacent to it. This was the society and environment in which Tom grew to adulthood.

Tom in Arrow Rock

In 1858 while living in Arrow Rock, Missouri, Tom was a witness to the cruel aftermath of a horrible tragedy. One thing that should be noticed about this story is how well Tom wrote it. He used dialogue to emphasize to his sister the emergency of the situation. As a result he was also able to communicate the distinctive vernacular and dialect of his friend, the German immigrant.

** * * My next destination was "Arrow Rock" Saline County 18 miles South of Fayette and on the south bank of the "Mighty Missouri" when I arrived at the ferry I had just money enough to pay the ferryman, but fortune smiled and I found work, Pony found a stable in which to rest, I also found a tavern where they would trust me for a weeks board and next morning went to work with comparatively a light heart. The man I went to work for was Pete Rhinehart, I mention it for you to remember, and had for a shop mate one Jacob Smidt who was a fugitive from his "Faderland" because he was a Red Republican and he seemed to be proud of the badge he wore (a red bandana handkerchief about his throat) still he had travelled all over Germany and Switzerland and many a time he has held me spellbound as he recited stories of his wanderings. I have forgotten nearly all, and they would be out of place here, besides they might not interest you, to me they were intensely so, you may believe when he pictured in his broken English, which left imagination to do its best, how he had climbed the mountains of Switzerland and stood on the banks of the Lake Lehmon of Geneva, climbed Mont Blanc and been in the Fortress of Erhenbriecht, and how he had escaped to F R E E A M E R I C A. - Pardon me, Sister Dear for saying here parenthetically that we Americans can not do without this Government even if for no other reason than this: "The Noble and Good of the Old World can fly to us from under the Tyrants heel and find protection". I will digress again and tell you the Singular end of those two men but first I must pick up the thread and tell you that I had*

worked 8 or 9 months a part of the time boarding with Rhinehart and again at the Tavern untill the summer of 1858 in July, I think, I was discharged, but was still sleeping in the shop when the following catastrophe befell Rhinehart. I was sitting in front of the Tavern awaiting breakfast, half awake, and half in dreamland, in the cool shade of the house in the early morning. Suddenly Smidt coming up to where I was sitting and saying, "Tom, Peter is Fut" (gone) "What?" said I for the mans manner frightened me, "Oh' Peter is Fut", "Oh Mine Gott"--- "What is the matter, Smith?" I asked. "Oh Peter is Fut, is gone, is drownnd" "Where? When? and How?" I asked in a breath, without giving him time to answer, I ran down to Mrs. Rhinehart's and found her and her two small children almost crazed with grief. I had her tell me the facts and immediately collected a croud to dive and drag and fish, but it was no use he was drowned in an eddy in the River but had been swept out into the current and this was the last ever seen of Rhinehart by any of his acquaintances. The way it happend was this as gathered by Rhinehart's wife and Smidt. Rhinehart had a small lap dog that he thought as much of as he did of one of his children and he took the dog along when he and Smidt went to bathe very early on the morning in question. The first thing Rhinehart did was wash his dog, which he did while Smidt was bathing and when Smidt came out Rhinehart went in which was his last. Smidt says he was standing with his back to the River when Rhinehart went in and when he came up the last time he gave a groan that attracted his attention and on looking around he saw the top of Rhinehart's head going under. He said he was scared but comprehending the situation, he plunged in but alas too late, the turbid waters had hid their victim forever.

Now for a singular part of the sad story. I was, as I said before, sleeping in the shop with Smidt. I rose one morning, 2 or 3 days prior to the one on which Rhinehart was drowned and Smidt told me of a, to him, singular dream he had. He said "I dreamed last night that I was in Frankfort on the Main, and that I went out in a boat with a little dog, and that I picked it up and threw it overboard till it was drowned" and "he

*added, something is going to happen". Now was he warned of that which happened only 2 or 3 days after? I shall always believe he was. There is little more to tell, poor Smidt, after Rhinehart was dead his sad refrain was ever "I will be the next", Why, said I, then he told me that another man Rhinehart and himself had worked shopmates in a room in St. Louis that about a year before the first was drowned in the River about Grafton¹ and now Rhinehart here and said he, "I shall be the next." In vain I ridiculed him, in vain I laughed at him, it was always the same sad song, "I shall be the next". This was in July 1858, the 28th of August I started for New Mexico, the next year 1859 in December I came back to Glasgow where I learned that in the summer Smidt had come up there and deliberately went into the river and drowned himself, his body was found a few days after and decently buried for he had money² * * **

Arrow Rock, named Pierre a Fleche by French cartographers as early as 1723, was named for the bluffs, upon which it sits, and of which pieces were once used by American Indians to make flint arrow tips.³

At one time the Missouri River flowed very close to the flint bluffs, though they would still have had a long way to run, but, over the years, course changes in the river have moved the bank away, about one-half mile distance, leaving a marshy area filled with grasses and small trees (Parsons). To see this muddy river, one would have to

¹ Grafton is on the eastern side of the Mississippi, within the state of Illinois, just north of the city of St. Louis. I have not yet researched the newspapers of the area.

² A thorough search of the public library in Glasgow turned up no proof of Smidt having died or been buried in the area. The records there, however, are incomplete and they do not possess microfilms of newspapers of the time. Further research is planned.

³ Thomas Claiborne Rainey was asked by the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) in c. 1914 to write a series of "reminiscences of pioneer life in Saline County, Missouri..." (Rainey 2) which he did. Rainey said, "So far as I have heard, no one knows how these arrow heads were fashioned so perfectly out of a hard and brittle stone, liable to break in any direction. They were brought into perfect form without the aid of any metallic tool. I am told that even by the use of the finest steel implements no one can now produce a perfect flint arrow head" (Rainey 11). This is not completely true. There are people, even today, whom have the skill to create arrowheads, flint strikers for flintlock rifles, and other implements made of flint. However, Rainey's point was that it took outstanding craftsmen to be able to perfect this skill.

wonder that anyone could think to bathe in its brown waters. The ebb and flow of the brown water looks like boiling chocolate pudding before it has a chance to set.

The ferry, on which Tom and Pony crossed the Missouri River, had already been in operation for nearly fifty years. Its origins were simple. "Below Grand River a ferry had been established across the Missouri at Arrow Rock by Henry Becknell.⁴ The ferryboat was made, as was the custom with the first settlers, by two canoes lashed together with a flat platform covering them both, and surrounded by a slight rail to prevent cattle and stock falling off into the river" (Houck 158). By the time Tom was crossing, however, the ferryboats had become more elaborate though probably still manually powered.



Photo by Author

The two-and-a-half story tavern, built in the federalist architectural style is still there and is in operation as a restaurant though it no longer offers overnight accommodations. It is a plain red brick building with very simple sets of concrete steps on one of which Tom must have sat. Huston's Tavern, "...the town's most familiar landmark" (Simmons 28) was built in 1834 by Joseph Huston (1784-1865). He was a

⁴ His brother was William Becknell, commonly referred to as the "father of the Santa Fe Trail," but this will be discussed later.

“...merchant, judge, and one of the commissioners who laid out the town in 1829...” (Hamilton 17). As the photograph shows, there was a store connected to the tavern that was being run by Joseph Huston’s son, thirty-one-year old and newly remarried, Joseph Huston (History of Saline County 775). According to Hamilton, Huston’s Tavern was visited by such persons as “Washington Irving [the author], Senator [Thomas Hart] Benton, [Christopher] Kit Carson and their contemporaries” (16).

During the September of 1999 research trip my time in Arrow Rock was limited because of a tightly scheduled itinerary. This was most unfortunate because after introducing myself to Mike Dickey, director of the Arrow Rock State Historic Site Visitor Center, and telling him my purpose, he led me to his office and, after a bit more discussion, he began opening the many drawers of the bank of file cabinets that lined the wall. The first item he placed into my hands was an original guest register for Huston’s Tavern, which dates back to the year 1859. Although I was crestfallen to discover that the register began the year after Tom had been a boarder, it was exciting to discover that records like this exist and are made available to researchers. He offered this to me to peruse at my leisure as well as whatever else his files may have contained including minutes taken during town meetings dating back nearly to its origins. As I said, I was restricted by time and in no way found all that I might have, including the men named Rheinhardt and Smidt.

German immigration was very high during this time. “The census of 1860 showed that of 31 million people in this country, 4,136,000 were foreign-born...The two largest groups had emigrated from Ireland and Germany; a third group came from England, Scotland, and Wales. The rest were emigrants from Canada or from less populous European countries, such as the Norwegians who went to Wisconsin and Minnesota and the Dutch who found homes in Michigan” (Boorstin189). The draw of St.

Louis as a major river port and the opportunities offered by the frontier town of Arrow Rock, and other towns like it, was irresistible for skilled foreigners.

Kenneth M. Stamp, author of America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink, characterized the year 1857 as "... a crucial year in the antebellum American sectional conflict" (vii). He stated that one of the reasons for the increased tension was that "... a politically sensitive social problem grew out of the huge influx of immigrants to the United States—two and a half million during the 1850s, reaching a peak just prior to 1857—most of whom constituted half the population of New York City and were a majority in western cities such as St. Louis, Chicago and Milwaukee" (36). He added that

... more than two million came from Germany and southern Ireland. Though the country was still sparsely settled and labor was in short supply, large numbers of native-born citizens reacted with hostility to the recent immigrants in their midst. Many seemed to feel threatened by the sheer number of newcomers. Some xenophobes accused the immigrants of clannishness and undue fondness for Old World customs and habits of dress and, unfamiliar with the concept of cultural pluralism, believed that they could not be assimilated. (36-37)

William C. Davis, author of The American Frontier: Pioneers, Settlers & Cowboys 1800-1899, opined that "Almost all were poor, arriving with nothing but their clothing, and almost all of them craved one thing—land—and that meant the West" (127). Arrow Rock was exactly that during this time—within a hundred miles or so of being the western edge of the United States of America and a stopping point on the route that led into the newly acquired New Mexico Territory.

Aside from the huge difference in population, there were other differences between Arrow Rock and the cities Stamp mentioned. One difference was slave labor. With the exception of St. Louis, all mentioned were in northern anti-slavery states. Arrow Rock and vicinity depended on its slave labor—and had plenty of it. In fact, "By 1860, Arrow Rock had become Saline County's most important river port, with a population of more than 1,000. Nearly half that number were African-Americans" ("A Bit

of Arrow Rock History”). Most of these slaves, however, were not formally trained in the trades that immigrants brought with them. Their jobs were mainly agricultural and they would not have felt threatened that newcomers would replace them in their forced servitude.

Another reason that this small town and its populace might have appreciated rather than resented immigrants was its high proportion of aristocrats, men who felt no threat from the nature of the immigrant, the skilled tradesman. “Here in a compact frontier area, over a sixty year span, lived more men important in local, state, and national affairs and development than in any one place except possibly Tidewater, Virginia” (Hamilton 4): three governors, a world renowned doctor and an artist, among others. Being a “most important river port” on the Missouri River and the Santa Fe Trail, and a continual host to visiting dignitaries, Arrow Rock had relatively few residents with time to devote to skilled trades. “Those [immigrants] who would not farm came instead to provide services to the farmers. Trades like blacksmithing, tanning and harness making, carpentry and cooperage, predominated, along with a smattering of doctors, teachers, and the inevitable lawyer” (Davis 132). Arrow Rock needed these immigrants, and Tom fit right in with them.

I doubt the original settler residents of this community would have ever had occasion to notice any “clannishness” or odd dress of a people who were no threat to their established power base; therefore, they gave no thought to whether or not “they could be assimilated.” In other words, “the red bandana handkerchief about his throat, the badge of a Red Republican,” would never have elicited even passing notice.

Tom expresses none of this animosity toward immigrants although he does exhibit the patriotism that is so often reinforced in American religious institutions (Marston). Given the environment, he probably had no cause to be concerned, or to be

uncomfortable about the differences between himself, as a native-born citizen, and the two men with whom he worked.

Presumably, Pete Rhinehart, Jacob Smidt and Tom all worked together as shoemakers or blacksmiths inasmuch as Tom's early training was in shoemaking and later evidence of a patent he received supports his ability to have done blacksmithing (Newnam-Cordner). I would suspect that both types of businesses had fluctuations where at times more help was needed than at others. Shipping along the Santa Fe Trail was seasonal for two reasons: the extraordinary heat and dry climate made mid-summer hazardous because of minimal forage and water supplies; the winters on the prairie often caused live animals to freeze where they stood.

As a rule, shoemakers were proficient in leather work and did not specialize entirely, but, instead, used their leather-working skills for things like saddles, harnesses, and other accoutrements. In fact, Tom, later, found himself working at Fort Union in New Mexico making "pistol scabbards" [holsters] for the military (Newnam-Cordner). My guess is that Tom was discharged due to a diminished workload rather than any disagreements since he "was still sleeping in the shop." The cursory inspection of Mike Dickey's files revealed no records of an establishment owned by Pete Rhinehart, nor did Mr. Dickey recognize the name.

Before concluding his discussion of immigrants, Stamp made another observation that is pertinent: "All of these fears had contributed to the upsurge of antforeign sentiment, but to the nativists by far the most distressing fact about the newcomers was that most of them—about half of the Germans and nearly all of the Irish—were Roman Catholics" (37). What make this so important is that this alone may have been reason enough for Tom to act differently than he did. Tom's family was of Eastern Shore, Maryland descent from about the year 1692. That, by itself, would have bred an intense feeling of ownership of the country. He was also born to a family whose

religious affiliation was protestant, Methodist to be exact, a product of the Wesleyan movement and an offshoot of the Anglican Church. Tom's reaction to Rhinehart and Smidt did not reflect any of the animosity this may have bred. His reaction did appear, however, to have some of the snobbery of which Americans have been accused, the we-who-have-been-here-in-"Free America"-forever attitude.

Davis helps to define what Smidt may have meant by "Free America." "They [the immigrants] sought more freedom than they had known in their old homes, land that the crowded, aristocracy-ridden Europeans did not have to spare, and came with a general conviction that out here they could make of themselves almost whatever they set their sights on" (131). All of this aside, Tom exhibited a sincere interest in Smidt's stories and seemed to genuinely care about these men.

Sadly, Tom's story about Pete Rinehart was confirmed by the discovery of an article published in the newspaper, the Marshall Democrat issued August 13, 1858:

Accidental Drowning—A shoemaker, named Peter Rheinart, was drowned in the Missouri River, at Arrow Rock, on Saturday morning, the 7th inst. [August 7, 1858]. Mr. Rheinart had gone in the river to bathe, and probably took the cramp, as the water is very cold at all seasons of the year, and the current is so strong that it is dangerous to the best of swimmers. Efforts have been made to recover the body, but so far without success. Mr. Rheinart is represented as a good citizen and an industrious man. He leaves a wife and two children in indigent circumstances. (2)

If we examine the story Tom tells a little more closely, there are more possibilities than Tom suggested. For those who believe in Extra Sensory Perception (E.S.P.) or psychic phenomena, or premonition, this story of Jacob Smidt's lends one more article of proof.

For those who lean toward logic, Tom's story illustrates the possibility of a heart attack. Although many pioneer families had children later in life, the children Rhinehart (Rheinart) left were young, possibly indicating his youth, as well, making a heart attack

less likely. An accurate medical diagnosis is difficult with so little information and being so many years distant.

For those, however, that are more cynical and suspicious, here is a story that would make a Mickey Spillane knock-off. What if Peter Rhinehart (Rheinhardt) and the man from St. Louis who had drowned the year before were victims of this Jacob Smidt's insanity? What if Jacob drowned himself because he was unable to live with his former actions? Obviously, Tom was not a suspicious author who lives in the twentieth century, who has watched too many movies with twisted plots.

Another possibility is that Rhinehart (Rheinhardt) committed suicide. Tom may have been "discharged" because there was not enough work to support Tom's employ. Tom does not say that Jacob had or had not also been discharged, but the article does say that Rhinehart's wife and children were "left in indigent circumstances." Who owned the shop in which the three men were working? Tom said it was Rhinehart's. Had he lost it? Or, was he only leasing? Was he faced with complete financial ruin and the support of a young family? In his chapter entitled "Flush Time and an Autumn Panic," Stampf recounts the panic and recession during the end of 1857 and the "...accompanying economic recession [that] was equally severe and lasted much longer" (213-224). He also said "The West suffered from the drastic decline in land values and commodity prices and from a shortage of credit. Rhinehart was a newcomer to Arrow Rock. Had he overextended himself on credit? Could he have floundered through the spring and summer only to find that he was unable to recover his losses? These questions, for now, must go unanswered but it is something that should be taken into consideration when examining a tragedy like this.

Tom, however, did not suggest any alternative other than what appeared to be. He seemed perfectly willing to believe the drowning was an accident and to believe in Jacob's ability to forecast the future.

After the dreadful drowning incident of his “*shopmate*,” he probably figured that it was time for him to move on, and to find a new job. Bill Hatcher was the man to whom Tom first applied for a position.

But the man that was destined to make the greatest change in my life was one whom I met here by the name of Bill Hatcher. A great red-headed man, whose face had been deeply pitted by small pox and who was anything but handsome, I assure you, but whose heart was as big as his person and as flexible to the touch of sorrow as an evening Zephyr is to the granite. Well he came in from New Mexico as an agent of a Company to buy American sheep for that Territory. He bought about 15,000 head and was collecting them preparatory to a start. I formed his acquaintance in Arrow Rock by trying to engage with him to go out.

As Tom wrote, Hatcher was planning to transport about 15,000 head of sheep to the New Mexico Territory. Sheep are a hardy, grazing animal that can feed on nearly any plant. They are followers, not mindless wanderers that require constant attention to prevent their straying. When they stampede, they do not have the potential for knocking down any fence with which they come into contact. They require water, but not in the massive quantities a larger animal would need. They can be shorn when it is too warm and they have their own coats to protect them from the cold. Their wool provides a bonus retail item. They breed well in captivity. Sheep were ideal to drive in massive herds across the Great Plains to the hungry gold miners in California; and, they could be sold to their target market for an obscenely high profit. In 1853, Kit Carson and Lucien Maxwell teamed up with several others to drive a herd of sheep to the California Trail. “The sheep cost not more than fifty cents each and were sold at \$5.50 per head” (Hafen 185). Traders along many points of the Santa Fe Trail recognized the potential and, for a short period, it was a booming business.

According to Jane Lenz Elder and David J. Weber, authors of Trading in Santa Fe: John M. Kingsbury's Correspondence with James Josiah Webb 1853-1861, "Sheep ranching in particular boomed between 1851 and 1861 with the appearance of a new, lucrative market in the gold fields of California. In 1853, for example, a group of Hispanic New Mexicans drove a flock of over 25,000 sheep to California, selling them for \$5.50 a head and returning home with a net profit of \$70,000" (xxxi). The numbers of sheep that were herded across the plains were nearly as incredible as the profits made from them.

For some reason Bill Hatcher did not think that Tom would be suitable for the job. There is no record of Tom ever having had experience with shepherding before this application, or after. I am presuming, however, that his experience with leatherworks—he was raised as a shoemaker—and with blacksmithing—he would later become partners with a blacksmith in the manufacturing of his patented item, a forged tool—would make him a suitable candidate for working with a team of draft animals. Thus, Hatcher referred Tom to Jesse Turley.

** * * [Bill Hatcher said] you could not do it if you went with me, so, "he continued I'll tell you something better - Jesse Turley is going out, and if you see him you can go with him as an ox driver and, said he, "Tell old Jess that I sent you". In a few days the old man came into town and he was pointed out to me, I introduced myself and told him what I wanted. He eyed me closely and questioned me more closely, but after my telling him a fib as to my ability to drive 4 or 5 yoke of oxen or wild cattle across the plains hitched to a prairie schooner he engaged me at \$25.00 per month and board to be discharged in New Mexico. I grabbed the offer, for, why I could not tell. I had an uncomfortable feeling but an uncontrollable desire to cross the great wilderness of the west, and so on the 28th of August 1858 I your brother Tom, was leaving Arrow Rock, Saline County, Missouri for a trip across the then wild "plains"*

driving a yoke of oxen, I who had never put the yoke on an Ox's neck and did not know "Ghee from Haw" was on my road for a long trip. * **

One must assume that the experienced and trail-hardened fifty-seven-year-old Jesse knew that the naïve twenty-five-year-old Tom was lying through his teeth. I have tried to picture what the interview must have been like. What could Tom have been thinking? By this time Turley had been across the nearly thousand mile trail several times, in the blistering heat, in the searing cold, with no water and with too much water. Turley had to have been both the cheater and the cheated with the American Indians and the white men he had encountered.

The following description Jesse B. Turley was found in biography written mostly about John D. Turley, Jesse's son, in the History of Howard and Cooper Counties:

It is the possession of strong traits of character that distinguish men, some above others. Whoever is gifted with what is called force of character in any useful direction, will necessarily become a marked man from those around him. ...Jesse B. Turley...was a man of the most remarkable enterprise, resolution and determination, and such a man as would have carved out success in life from any surroundings. An early settler in Cooper county, [Missouri] when the field for business enterprise was exceedingly circumscribed, he established a trade across the trackless plains with Santa Fe, New Mexico, which he kept up year after year for a generation, making his trips back and forth as regularly as the seasons come and go, until at last he was stricken down by the hand of death in the city of the cactus and semi-civilized Mexican. To follow this business, as he followed it, required greater resolution and energy than was necessary for the great 'Pathfinder' to make his way a single trip across the continent. But this Jesse Turley followed, and thus carved out a comfortable fortune for himself and family, where others would have shrunk from the thought of it. (997-998)

Turley had been successfully wheeling and dealing in an international trade with a culture known for its skill in graft and corruption. "Monopoly, corruption, and unscrupulousness were the governing themes of Spanish colonial commerce. ...It was similar selfishly narrow policies that inhibited commercial development in Mexico and created a corrupt, overly taxed, and overly regulated economy. It was within the

framework of this two-century old system that merchants learned to function” (Connor and Skaggs 23).

Jesse B. Turley, the son of Benjamin Turley, “...a Revolutionary War veteran...” (Dyer 11), and Ann Malloe Noland Turley, was born on May 30, 1801 (Reitter). He married Julia Riddle on February 14, 1822 (Reitter) and had ten children with her, the oldest of whom was ten years Tom’s senior, and the youngest of whom was thirteen years old when Tom went to work for him in 1858 (Reitter). Jesse, a slave owner (Turley Papers) was the landowner of a homestead which by 1883 consisted of “...nearly 400 acres of land and is well improved” (History of Howard and Cooper Counties, 998).

Young Tom, five feet and ten and one half inches tall, with dark hair and dark eyes (Pension Records) was a poor, single guy who only a year before barely had enough money for a ferry crossing. He must have stood there, sweating from every pore, not just from the sweltering heat of a Missouri river-bank town in mid-August, but from nerves. All I can believe is that Jesse needed another weak mind and strong back to help get his load through to New Mexico Territory. Jesse needed a driver and here was a man willing to try. Jesse also knew that he could test the mettle of this young man in the relatively safe seventy or so miles separating Arrow Rock, Missouri and Lone Jack, Missouri. Additionally, it could be done void of any valuable cargo. From Arrow Rock to Kansas City Jesse probably hoped that Tom would learn right from left, “Ghee from Haw.”⁵

The first thing Tom had to learn was about the animals. Jesse chose to have his wagons drawn by oxen. According to Rod Gragg, author The Old West Quiz & Fact Book, “Mule teams were surefooted, smarter and faster than oxen, but a mule’s temper and stubbornness were legendary. Oxen...were much slower than a mule team, but

⁵ A right turn is Gee and a left is turn Haw.

oxen ate less, were easier to care for and could pull heavier loads. In addition, oxen cost about fifty dollars each in the mid-nineteenth century, while a mule cost ninety dollars" (105). George R. Stewart, author of "Prairie Schooner" said, "One price list of the period [mid-nineteenth century] gives the cost of a mule as \$75 and of an ox as \$25" (272). It can be assumed that prices fluctuated because of supply and demand then, as they do now. "The number of oxen to the wagon varied considerably. Four--that is, two yoke--was the minimum. Three yoke was perhaps the average, but four was not uncommon... The bigger teams could haul heavier loads, and the strain on the individual animal was less. On the other hand, the more animals, the more work to guard and care for them, and pasturage had to be found" (Stewart 272). As Tom stated, he was driving four or five yoke, that is eight to ten animals that weighed approximately one half ton each, all with minds of their own. By his own admission he did not even know basic commands. It must have been an exciting learning experience.

The wagon, long a symbol of mass westward migration, was an integral part of the Santa Fe trade. "The wagon consisted of three parts--body, top, and running gear. The body, or bed, was a wooden box--often, indeed, so-called--nine or ten feet long and about four feet wide. Generally the sides and ends, about two feet high, went up perpendicularly, but on wagons of the so-called Murphy type they flared outward, as if imitating the Conestoga in miniature" (Stewart 268). However, the Conestoga wagons looked like sailing ships, thus the nickname "prairie schooners." "The top effectively protected goods and people against the weather...the tops, like the boxes, produced few problems...Not so the running gear...even the best materials and workmanship could not always produce a vehicle that would get through without breakage" (Stewart 269).

Some potential problems of which Jesse may have been aware were that, "Tongues snapped on sharp turns. Front axles gave way on sudden down-drops. These were the commonest accidents, and were taken almost as routine" (Stewart 269).

“Wheels, however, were irreplaceable; if one broke, the wagon might have to be abandoned. But usually, wheels were extremely tough and rarely gave way except in the roughest mountain passages. True, many a wheel gave trouble because of shrinkage in the dry air of the desert, but then wedges could be driven under the tire. Eventually the tire might have to be taken off, heated red-hot, and reset on the wheel” (Stewart 269). There is one minor correction to Stewart’s explanation about wedging the tire. It is better explained by saying that wedges were placed between the wooden wheel and the flat metal band that surrounded the wheel. This flat metal band protected the wooden wheel from abrasion, gouging and cracking.

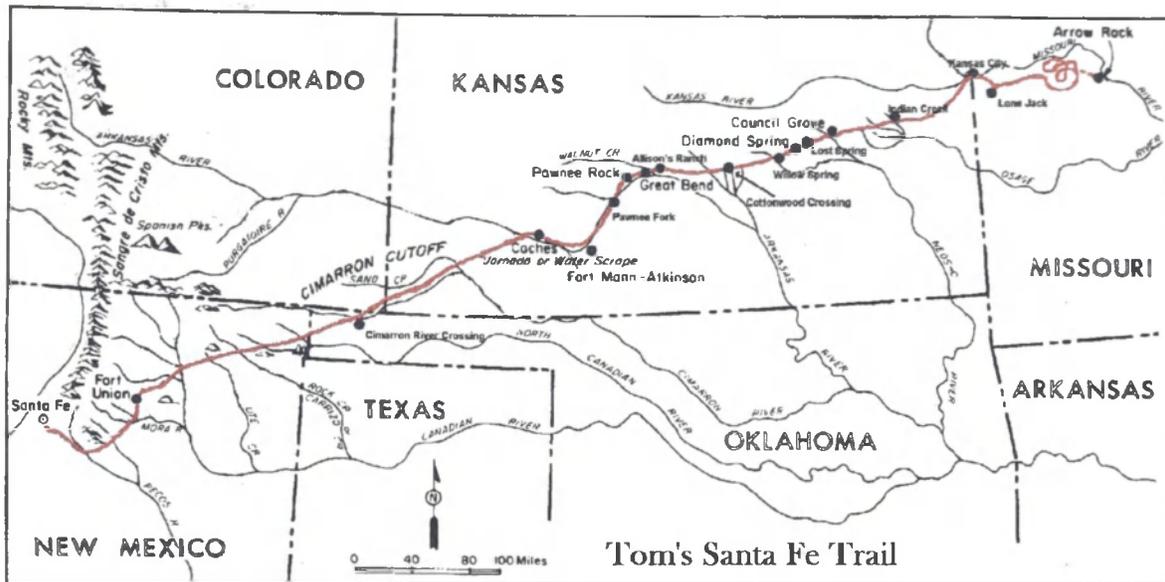
Jesse took a chance by hiring Tom, but there is a clue that Jesse knew he was hiring a novice. He offered Tom twenty-five dollars per month plus board. According to Jean Tyree Hamilton, “...the wage for teamsters and packers, [was] \$25 to \$50 plus rations per month” (Napton 4). Majors said, The average salary paid the men was \$1 a day and expenses” (105). That would have been thirty dollars, and Alan Axelrod and Charles Phillips, authors of What Every American Should Know About AmericanHistory: 200 Events that Shaped the Nation, wrote that this was an “...age when a common laborer earned a dollar a day” (Axelrod 155). Tom was a tradesman and the chances are that he could have made more than a common laborer. Regardless, take the job he did and Jesse would have reason to be glad he was not paying top dollar.

Throughout my research I found that the driver had a multitude of names: teamster, wagoneer, and bullwhacker, to name a few. I noticed that they were mentioned in nearly every reference to the Santa Fe Trail. I also recognized that they were only mentioned. Seldom did I find a manuscript in which these men were the focal point. For example, James A. Crutchfield, author of The Santa Fe Trail, wrote an article for Muzzleloader entitled “The Bullwhacker of the Plains.” He wrote three introductory paragraphs and the rest of the one page article was devoted to an excerpt of two pages

from a book entitled The Pacific Tourist: J. R. Bowman's Illustrated Trans-Continental Guide of Travel, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, written circa 1882.

The bullwhacker deserves more than honorable mention. He was the foundation upon which the economic institution of international commerce with Mexico was established. Without him, the wagons would have remained stationary in the factories in which they were made and the oxen that pulled them would be wandering around the prairies as wild and bushy as the buffalo that once roamed the Great Plains. His sturdiness was necessary and his personality legendary. "Of the bullwhacker, it is said that his oath and his whip are both the longest ever known. He is more profane than the mate of a Mississippi River packet, and his own word is good to the effect that he 'kin drink more whiskey.'" (Crutchfield, Jim 38). I cannot vouch for how profane Tom was or was not, but he did, indeed, become a bullwhacker.

Tom on the Trail



Original Map Source: Smanons, Marc. *Following the Santa Fe Trail: A Guide for Modern Travelers*. 1986.
 From Larry M. Beachum, *William Becknell: Father of the Santa Fe Trade* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1982). Used with permission.

According to Daniel Boorstin, author of *The Americans: The National Experience*, the Santa Fe Trail was “opened by Robert McKnight and his small caravan in 1821 and defined by Captain William Becknell in 1821...” (54). I decided on this particular quote because most often trail historians credit the opening of the Santa Fe Trail entirely to Becknell with no mention of any of the others who had gone west to Santa Fe before him. The reasoning is that he “... was the first to be successful. Earlier expeditions were seized by the Spanish” (Rubenstein). Regardless of who was first, it was a road hewn into the earth by hundreds of thousands if not millions of feet, hooves, and wheels. The Santa Fe Trail as a trade route lasted for a period of only about sixty years, eventually being replaced by the railroad, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe on 16 February 1880 (Conner and Skaggs 194).

This road carried traders and the military; it also served others who felt the draw of the land and wealth the west had to offer. This wanderlust continues today. I felt it and feel it still.

Willing to suffer the effects of poison ivy, undaunted by the thought of mud-caked suede shoes, heedless of the thorns of vine-like branches attempting to slow foot travel, one must touch them, feel them, listen to them, smell them, the ruts made by so many wagons, made by so many animal and human feet, made so long ago.

Once there, standing in the long-lived depressions in the earth's surface, the disease can be contracted. It is as infectious as laughter and there is no cure. It is not physically debilitating and its outward signs are few. One might experience glazed-over eyes that see a setting sun even at mid-day. This is often accompanied by a wistful expression and slightly cocked head as though one is listening to distant creaks and groans of dry wood under stress, the rhythmic growl of wooden wheels rotating on iron axles, straining leather, metal rings clanging one against another, punctuated by the startling crack of a bullwhip. If one is especially susceptible to the influence of the trail, the sound of shouts and laughter can still be heard bouncing through the air one hundred fifty years later. The last sign is a twitch of the nose or a slight flare of the nostrils as nerve endings detect imaginary results of sixty plus years worth of animal waste and plant life rotting in the moist soil.

Actually, standing in a preserved portion of trail ruts was one of the most fulfilling opportunities I have ever had. These depressions had been etched into the earth as deeply as the letters had etched themselves into my mind and heart. I was as close as I may ever come to standing where Tom stood, or walking where Tom walked. Of course, the men of Jesse's crew had no idea that they were responsible for helping make either trench.

These men, Cooper, Hays, Carson and Domingo, as well as Tom, were all employees of Jesse B. Turley during his August 1858 trip from Arrow Rock, Missouri to the New Mexico Territory.

The name Hays is also listed as a pioneering family, but they can be found further west than Coopers, Carsons, Turleys or Newnams, as far west as the Council Grove area of Kansas. The Hays family owned businesses as the last outfitters available on the eastern edge of the Santa Fe Trail, and today the Hays Restaurant in Council Grove is the longest continuously running restaurant west of the Mississippi River. They serve some of the best food I tasted while on the road.

Cooper was probably a relative of the Coopers who built Cooper's Fort in central Missouri during the War of 1812. Jesse B. Turley and his family lived at the fort during the conflict. The Coopers, along with Carsons, Boones, Turleys, etc. were several of the pioneering families of central Missouri just after the Louisiana Purchase (Turley Papers).

Carson, as Tom wrote, was probably related to Kit Carson, given the closeness between him and Jesse B. Turley¹. If a young man wanted to travel away from his family, it was usually in the company of a family friend.

** * From Arrow Rock to Kansas City we were empty and we went to Marshall 18 miles the first day, and thus far Old Turley went with us, and then he went direct to Kansas City and directed us to go to "Lone Jack" and from there to H. C. * * **

Trail historians, especially, will find the former passage interesting, but puzzling. Lone Jack, Missouri, to my knowledge, was not a typical stop on the trail route. It is a

¹ Jesse was instrumental in getting Kit to write his autobiography and Jesse was made a beneficiary of any proceeds from it. Unfortunately, it didn't make either man rich (Quaife).

minimum of a thirty mile round-trip southern detour off of the well-worn route. It would have added a minimum of a day and a half to the length of the trip.

There is no evidence that the town offered any special type of merchandise not found in the major river port of Kansas City. It is possible that Jesse sent them there, not for what, but for whom. There were at least two names in the area recognizable by their association with the Santa Fe Trade and with the Turley family: Smallwood V. Noland², and Aleck Majors³, both early pioneer settlers (History of Jackson County 237, 334). It is possible that Tom and his crew were given a message to deliver or receive rather than picking up freight while Jesse went to Kansas City to arrange for the merchandise they were to transport.

** * * so next A.M. we pulled out and I had not gone three miles before my cattle ran down a bank for water and upset the wagon. Pretty good for the second day said I to myself, but I then let a fellow by the name of Hays take the lead with his team and things went better except that we all got lost and wandered around six days without knowing where we were till the evening of the sixth day we were 16 miles below the Lexington, we had made from 20 to 30 miles per day and were then not more than 30 miles from Arrow Rock. We all swore some, that is Hays, Cooper and I, for we were on the wrong side of a big creek with no way of getting over except on a rickety old bridge that people told us was not safe, and it was not* * **

² Smallwood V. Noland was a first cousin of Ann Malloe Noland Turley, Jesse's mother (Lester Turley Missouri Historical Society). "Noland was one of the pioneer settlers in Jackson county, Missouri, and for a number of years was a representative from that district in the State legislature. In 1838 he became proprietor of the Washington Hotel in Independence. This building was destroyed by fire on the night of February 19, 1845; but he soon erected another and larger structure and called it the Noland House. Noland's hotel, or tavern, was widely known throughout the West and was patronized by Santa Fe traders" (Webb 174n).

³ Aleck [Alexander] Majors (1814-1900). In December 1854 Alexander Majors, William H. Russell, and William B. Waddell formed a partnership. "Majors an experienced trader, had the field experience. Waddell had much knowledge about business and trade, and Russell had financial connections and experience in promotion. The firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell sought to establish a monopoly in freighting of government supplies and civilian merchandise" (Majors 8).

Rickety bridges were a common complaint. This was a time when a landowner would build his own and there was no great reliance on government built bridges designed by civil engineers. Often these privately owned bridges were a source of income through tolls.

** * * Three days more we reached Kansas City and loaded with an assorted stock of merchandise consisting principally of sugar, coffee, clothing, blankets, boots & shoes, whiskey, tobacco and some other things suitable for the market we were destined for, and you will see we were loaded when I tell you we had 15,300 lbs on three wagons drawn by 13 yokes of oxen altogether, 4 yoke each to two wagons, and 5 to the other one, and yet we pulled bravely out from K. C. through Westport and on to Indian Creek where we camped because we had to, Cooper let his team stall in a mud hole and as it was nearly night we had to let it stay till morning, mind you old Jess had stopped back in Kansas City. * * **

	Quantity	Cost each	Source	Total
Oxen	26	\$25	Stewart 272	\$650
Wagons	3	150	Oliva 10, 51	450
wheel yokes	3	2.25	Hamilton 4	6.75
Foreward yokes	7	1.25	Hamilton 4	8.75
Employee wages (x 2 months approx.)	4	50		200
Total cost of transportation equipment and manpower				\$1,315.50

Table 1

Table one is a cursory summation of the fixed costs Jesse incurred for this trip, not including supplies or merchandise. In 1858, using the figure of twenty-five dollars per acre cited previously in this essay, Jesse could have purchased over fifty acres of land for the same cost as this trade investment. Jean Tyree Hamilton cites Colonel Henry Inman, author of The Old Santa Fe Trail, "According to Inman, the going freight

charge at that time [1857] from Independence to Santa Fe was \$10 per hundredweight, or \$500 to \$600 per wagon..." (Napton 4). Using these figures, Jesse would have charged \$1530 to ship the trade goods Tom listed. If Jesse had invested nothing more than has been shown, he would have made a profit of \$214.50. If he had purchased the goods and planned to resell them in Santa Fe, his profit margin could have been incredible for the single trip.

Jesse was also responsible for his employees' board. "The ordinary supplies for each man were about fifty pounds of flour, the same of bacon, ten pounds of coffee, twenty pounds of sugar and some salt...while sometimes, crackers, beans and other articles of food are found on the train" (History of Jackson County 173). In addition to food it appears that some apparel was the responsibility of the employer. "The most common substantial clothing is provided for the men, some with linsey or leather hunting clothes, other with jeans, and still others with flannel suits" (173).

Although Tom listed only a few of the items they were shipping, there were a variety of goods crossing the country. "...American and Mexican traders hauled tons of cloth, tools, jewelry, guns, even canaries, in wagons headed to Santa Fe and deep into Mexico. Silver, wool, mules, and hides were hauled to Missouri and the United States by eastbound traders" (Historical marker at the Neosho River crossing).

It is surprising that Jesse would have stayed behind, sending ahead the same crew that had gotten lost for six days, delaying his loaded departure by nine days. About 6 September 1858 Jesse's crew pulled out of Kansas City with a lot of money invested in men, animals, equipment and cargo.

Jesse caught up with his drivers after they got stuck in a mud hole and were rescued by a more experienced wagon train. They got through Council Grove, Lost Spring, Diamond Spring, Willow Spring and were headed for the Cottonwood Fork of the

Arkansas River. Once again, Jesse trusted the men to continue on their own. He had ridden ahead to scout for a campsite.

Tom wrote,

I was in the lead and getting along bravely when my lead yoke of cattle ran out to the right hand side of the road to crop the green grass and the other three of course followed which brought "Fore wheels on a lock" under the bed and mashed every spoke out of the right fore wheel. That was very bad luck indeed, but to make matters worse Old Furley had drove on ahead to "Cottonwood" (about three or four miles) in his Carriage to look for a camp ground, so I told the other boys to halt where they were and I would walk down and tell old Jess, which they did and I after buckling on my revolver struck out. I could see him when I was about a mile of him and could see that he was very uneasy, I finally reached him and told him what was the matter, he took it a great deal cooler than I imagined he would so I was relieved for the time being. I hitched up the mules to his buggy and we rode back and I told him all about it on the road, he said he would make Carson, (he had discharged Cooper as incompetent, and hired Carson in his place, and by the way a nephew of the famed and celebrated Kit Carson of the Novels) stay with my wagon while I hitched my cattle to his team and drove the two teams down to the "Cottonwood" this was necessary because we took all we could pile on the wagon out of mine and it made Carsons wagon very heavy, however Furley went ahead, Hays followed him and I followed Hays so we were alright so far. When we were down to the "Fork" we unyoked all our cattle except two yoke of my team and they all went to feeding with a will. Furley put Hays to getting dinner while we went to look if we could find a lighter wagon to move the remainder of my load down to the "Creek" some ways below where we camped, We found a lone "squatter sovereign" who had a wagon, we went back to camp and I took 2 yoke of my cattle and went down and hitched to it, by this time "grub" was ready so we finished it and then Hays and I went for a load while "Furley" stayed at "Cottonwood" to

*watch the goods, we were back to the "creek" by 3 o'clock and Carson again stayed back on the hill and this time Turley went back to the broken wagon, Hays driving the ox team and I stayed at the creek to pass the dreary hours as best I could. Turley had to take the "rim" and the "hub" of the broken wheel back 45 miles to Council Grove in his buggy and have it "filled". * * **

By this time Jesse had to be thinking that Tom had not been a wise gamble. The road they had already traveled was the easy part. It surprised me that Cooper was the one fired for incompetence. What must he have done when compared to Tom, who kept letting his cattle run away from him and Hays who led the boys around in circles for six days?

When beginning the trip in the spring, traders had to worry about being delayed and running into hot weather and dry stretches of the route. When beginning in the autumn, they could expect warm weather only for a while. Of great concern was the winter-come-early weather, the ice-blowing-sideways-freezing-an-animal-in-its-tracks kind of weather. Delays did not always just cost money; quite often delays cost men and animals their lives. Fortunately, they found the means to shift the load so Jesse could have repairs made.

The term squatter sovereign is an oxymoron. Squatter means "one that settles on land without right or title, and sovereign, the person wielding or exercising supreme political power in a political state." It also describes perfectly those people who flocked to populate Kansas before it was a state.

Thomas Goodrich, author of War to the Knife: Bleeding Kansas, 1854-1861, said "From the very birth of the nation, Americans had been painfully aware that human bondage was an anachronism in a republican form of government. The Declaration of

Independence, the Constitution, the Rights of Man, liberty, freedom, justice—all seemed a mockery as long as one American remained enslaved” (7).

Having said that, however, Goodrich also introduced the opposing perspective. “Many southerners had earlier commiserated with all Americans over the dilemma they faced regarding slavery, but by the middle of the nineteenth century human bondage had become such a fundamental part of their life that to talk of destroying the one was to talk of destroying the other” (7). Without putting too fine a point on it, this was an issue of a balance of power that had been teetering on a precarious fulcrum since the creation of the thirteen colonies.

...[M]ainly under pressure from railway promoters... (New Standard Encyclopedia K-20) the “Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed by Congress in 1854” (World Book 244). It provided that two new territories, Kansas and Nebraska, were to be made from the Indian land that lay west of the bend of the Missouri River and north of 37 degrees north latitude...” [Steven A. Douglas of Illinois]...included in his bill a provision for ‘popular sovereignty’ in Kansas and Nebraska. This provision stated that all questions of slavery in the new territories were to be decided by the settlers... The slavery provision was directly contrary to the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which had declared that all land in the Louisiana Purchase north of 36° 30’, except for the state of Missouri, was to be free... (World Book 244)

As a result, “This provision made Kansas a battleground, with proslaver ‘border ruffians’ and ‘bushwhackers’ from Missouri clashing with anti-slavery ‘jayhawkers’ from Kansas. The bloodshed, including incidents in 1856 at Osawatomie and Potawatomie involving John Brown⁴, caused Kansas to be known as ‘bleeding Kansas,’ and stirred passions

⁴ John Brown was called a butcher by some and a savior by others. His zealous belief in and actions in the name of abolition were the ignition to the bloodshed giving its name to Bleeding Kansas. “In May 1856 they [John Brown, his four sons, and two others] rode into the small proslavery settlement at Pottawatomie Creek, dragged five men out of their homes, and killed them. Brown claimed that he had God’s support for this murderous action” (Jordan 323).

that pushed the United States farther along the road to the Civil War⁵ (New Standard Encyclopedia K-20).

The super-heated rhetoric in Washington served as a cattle prod in the rumps of strong-willed, wealthy and influential people. Goodrich quoted Senator William H. Seward of New York: "Come on then, gentlemen of the slave states! ... Since there is no escaping your challenge, I accept it, in behalf of freedom we will engage in a competition for the virgin soil of Kansas and God give the victory to the side that is stronger in numbers, as it is in right!" (9).

Goodrich described one of those who felt the electric rhetoric, Eli Thayer. "Unlike the armchair abolitionists and pessimists around him, who waged war on slavery with treatises, tracts, and high-sounding though impotent declarations, the Massachusetts businessman was a philanthropist who believed in deeds over words" (9). Goodrich continued by saying that "...the promoter's plan was to literally transplant as much of New England to the plains as possible by forming a company of wealthy stockholders who would, for a profit, equip, pay passage, and establish colonies in the new territories. The focus of the New England Emigrant Aid Society would be Kansas" (9-10).

Goodrich went on to explain Thayer's reasoning.

Straddled by the rough and raw Slave State of Missouri to the east, the full blast of the South would undoubtedly be aimed at Kansas. ... If such outposts could hang on and weather the initial southern storm, they could then serve as bulwarks for the other free-soilers who came later from Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Should the plan succeed and should Kansas be admitted to the Union as a Free-State, not only would another territory be saved for freedom, but the political setback to the South might cause the entire structure of slavery to come crashing down. (9-10)

In other words, to weigh heavy in that balance of power, they that accepted this offer would stop the dreaded spread of "that peculiar institution," slavery, into the recently

⁵ "Kansas turned into a battleground on which more than two hundred people eventually died in a miniature civil war" (Jordan 323).

acquired western territories, so that it would "...die on the vine for want of sustenance."
(7).

While the New England Emigrant Aid Society was recruiting easterners who saw an opportunity for free land and passage on trains heading west,

...in a mass migration reminiscent of the Gold Rush days, from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and other states of the old northwest, thousands of small farmers, merchants, and mechanics were unceremoniously packing family and furniture, setting their sights on Kansas. For most of these immigrants the opening of the territory was viewed not as an opportunity to either end or extend slavery, but as a chance to better themselves. (Goodrich 13)

To the people who were obligated to transplant abolitionist ideals were thus added those who carried their own beliefs into the new territory; however, the likelihood of them being pro-slavery was negligible in that they had been residing in free states previously.

There was a third group rushing to squatter sovereignty, however.

Meanwhile, on the untamed plains of Kansas, proslavery Missourians were already rushing in. ...As was often the case, after laying down a token of foundation of logs or rocks, the Missourians tacked notes of ownership to trees and promptly returned home, satisfied that their claims were secure. ...Understandably, many Missourians considered Kansas their birthright. 'Missouri wagons had left deep scars upon the plains to witness possession by the right of conquest,' one observer explained, referring to the Santa Fe trade. ...And what belonged to Missouri belonged to the South. (Goodrich 12).

The squatter sovereign was a political pawn either self-created or created by influential people who probably did not want to give up the luxury of their eastern seaboard homes or their underpaid, usually foreign-born wait-staffs to move to a lawless, unprotected environment. According to the above information there were now three ideologically different types of people who were destined to make a decision for the whole of the republic. There was a fourth ideology that should have had a voice.

Not only was the land entirely different from that which they had ever known, it was already occupied. Once the “great white father” could say that his people were living in an area, he felt justified in sending agents to form treaties—at best—or—at worst—troops to remove the Indians. Indeed, they were the original squatters sovereign.

James Buchanan, fifteenth President of the United States, was voted into office with 174 electoral votes “carrying only four [“five” (Rubenstein)] of the fourteen northern States” (Graff 200) and only 45.3% of the popular vote (692). Buchanan’s “...platform had endorsed popular sovereignty but had conveniently left unspecified the point at which the decision on slavery would be made” (201).

In his inaugural address on Wednesday, 4 March 1857 there was an incredible disregard for the undeclared Civil War that had been raging in the western frontier.

...What a happy conception, then, was it for Congress to apply this simple rule, that the will of the majority shall govern, to the settlement of the question of domestic slavery in the Territories. Congress is neither ‘to legislate slavery into any Territory or State nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. ...Most happy will it be for the country when the public mind shall be diverted from this question to others of more pressing and practical importance. Throughout the whole progress of this agitation, which has scarcely known any intermission for more than twenty years, whilst it has been productive of no positive good to any human being it has been the prolific source of great evils to the master, to the slave, and to the whole country. (Buchanan, Making of America).

To the “bushwhackers” and the “border ruffians,” to the “jayhawkers” and the “free-soilers,” to the innocent settlers who were just trying to make a living from under the sod, and to the Indians who were reminding all others that they already lived there and had for centuries, there were probably very few matters “of more pressing and practical importance.”

Then along came Tom and his bullwhacking buddies into the area. Being newly initiated to the trade he may not have been as vigilant as necessary, and he allowed his team of oxen to take a serious wrong turn. As a consequence, his wagon wheel was seriously damaged and they needed to get his cargo to a safer place until the damage could be repaired. They needed to borrow an empty wagon.

As with most pioneers, these squatters chose to build near avenues of transportation, usually rivers. Most of them settled just west of the Missouri River on the eastern side of Kansas. There were a few, however, who went further west and built along the Arkansas River and, in this case, along the established Santa Fe trail. This was in 1858 and "At the time of statehood, [1861] Kansas had only 10 towns with 500 or more residents" (New Standard Encyclopedia K-20). In other words, they were lucky to find someone to help them.

They were even luckier not to have encountered a political zealot, given the fact that Jesse and Tom, the ones who went to ask for help, were Missourians and Jesse was a well-known slaveholder. Keep in mind that although the Missourians were among the types to have taken up squatter sovereignty, they also went home to Missouri after posting their signs. Once they had moved to Kansas, it was more difficult for those from the East Coast to go home.

Tom and Jesse were most lucky, however, not to have found a sign on the door. "Visitors to an isolated homestead far out on the Great Plains found this inscription scrawled on the door of the vacant cabin by the defeated settler who had once lived there: '250 miles to the nearest post office; 100 mile to wood; 20 mile to water; 6 inches to hell. Gone to live with wife's folks' " (Gragg 150).

At this point, Turley and his crew were closer to the eastern side of present day Kansas than they were to the western side. They still had a good seven hundred miles to travel before they could unload in Santa Fe.

Council Grove is an interesting place. It was even more so in 1858. Council Grove is where all travelers met and grouped into caravans so that they could travel safely in large numbers, or, during the period of the Indian Wars (1840 - 1890), where they could be escorted by the United States Army. Although some groups did not travel in large numbers, and it appears that Tom's group did not, most travelers did so in caravans. Council Grove was also the last stand of any type of hardwood trees suitable for fixing the wagons and wagon wheels for hundreds of miles. The prairies supported grasses and nothing more substantial than willows around the water sources.

When we have a flat tire, with any luck, we can get out and fix it right there and then. Having every spoke in his wheel mashed out was one of the worst possible things that could have happened to Tom. Alexander Majors wrote, "The average distance traveled with loaded wagons was from twelve to fifteen miles per day, although in some instances, when roads were fine and there was necessity for rapid movement, I have known them to travel twenty miles. But this was faster traveling than they could keep up for any length of time. Returning with empty wagons they could average twenty miles a day without injury to animals" (103). Turley had to drive forty-five miles back to Council Grove, back to the wood that could be used to fix the wheel--certainly more complicated and time-consuming than putting on a mini-spare. Fortunately he was alone in his mule-drawn carriage, a much faster means of transportation.

** * * we had plenty of time on our hands so we did not hurry breakfast but this over we improvised some fish lines and set about angling for the finny denizens of Cottonwood Fork of the Arkansas River. I had fair success and by noon we had quite a respectable mess of fish. After dinner the boys proposed to do the laundry business if I would fish and cook and as our linen was by this time none of the purest I gladly acceded to the proposal and I did my part well, while they cheated me by not doing theirs, but so passed the day away. We knew that it*

would be at least 3 days before Old Jess would be back with the wheel ast it was at least 45 miles back to Council Grove we had plenty of time on our hands, the routine of the night before was gone over agaoon, and the second day I did up my washing myself but instead of fishing the boys laid around and slept * **

[Three full days later], "*...away after night fall Turley came and we went to work getting things to rights in order to take an early start next morning * **

He did return and after having repaired the damage they set out once again.

John [Atkins] was down on the Arkansas [River] at the mouth of this same turkey creek, herding cattle for his half brother Bill [Allison], he accompanied us several miles for old Turley knew him, having rode in the stage that "John" was driving from New Mexico to the States some years before. * **

"The ranch at Walnut Creek Crossing, built in 1855 by William Allison and Francis Booth, was located in the heart of the buffalo range, 132 miles beyond Council Grove and surrounded by Indians. The venture invited risks as well as rewards. As former U.S. mail carriers on the Santa Fe Trail, Allison and Booth were fully aware of the hazards" (Van Meter McCoy 118).

John Atkins and his stepbrother, Bill Allison had worked for an Overland Mail Company Coach line. Today hauling freight one way and returning empty is called dead-heading. Though he probably did not prefer to do it, we can be fairly certain that Jesse had to resort to returning to Missouri without freight on occasion. That is not to say he was empty handed when he returned to the states, for he probably brought back

receipts and bank notes as well as specie. These are things he could have carried on his person or in his luggage rather than using a team and wagon or a carriage.⁶

Having found no water and little forage at Plum Creek, they continued heading west for another six or eight miles. Too exhausted to eat supper, the rest of the crew retired for the night.

** * * I went out and herded the cattle the first watch and as they were hungry they wandered considerable, and the night was dark as "pitch" and all around on every side, snap, snap, snap I could hear the angry wolves, it seemed to me right at my heels, in front and on all sides, if I was to guess I would say there were thousands judging by their howling and snapping of their teeth and I wonder now if old Turley did not send me out that night to be devoured by them. They had near that place attacked men in open day light, a thing unusual for wolves too. Well let the case be as it may, if he did, I forgive him for it, for thank God and those bright and glorious Angels who have always shielded me when danger encompassed me, I am yet living to tell it to you, Mary. * * **

I am nearly certain that, after all of the foul-ups, Jesse would have gladly thrown the rookies to the wolves, but he needed them to do a job.

Nearly all trail travelers had a story about wolves. Their howling had a life of its own once it left their bodies. It flew free through the night air, moving right and moving left, circling around until it finally landed on a human eardrum. From there it tumbled down through the center of the spine until it finally landed somewhere near the bowels.

⁶ "For those who desired a faster way to Santa Fe than that provided by the slow-moving ox and mule trains, stage service was available beginning in 1850. One-way tickets in 1857 sold for \$125 (May to November) and \$150 (winter). It was not exactly a first-class ride. Instead of the famous Concord coach, passengers often rode in light wagons called ambulances. Because stage stations were then non-existent between Council Grove and Fort Union, stages stopped for the night under the stars, some passengers curling up to sleep on the sacks carrying corn for the stage mules. Daily meals were cooked and served on the prairie" (Gardner 10). For an entertaining and interesting description of a ride across the Plains in one of these mail coaches, read Mark Twain's Roughing It. After having learned so much about Jesse Turley, I am hard pressed to imagine him in as undignified a position as Samuel Clemens was in, though.

"...and the night was dark as "pitch" and all around on every side, snap, snap, snap I could hear the angry wolves, it seemed to me right at my heels, in front and on all sides, if I was to guess I would say there were thousands judging by their howling and snapping of their teeth and I wonder now if old Turley did not send me out that night to be devoured by them." Tom was

no different than any other traveler who had lain awake finding himself the target of those lively howls.

In the light of day the men shared stories of wolves. Tom still remembered the howling and told his sister one of the stories he had been told fourteen years after he heard it.

And, excuse me, if I tell you a story of the refined tastes of the wolves of the plains, it is this: and passes well on the plains. "they will dig up a white man to eat, while they will not touch a Mexican", and is accounted for in various ways, the most Philosophical explanation is, that the mexicans eat such enormous quantities of "chile" colorado (red pepper) (pronounced cheela coloron) that their systems become thoroughly impregnated with it, and it burns the tongues of the wolves so, that they never try it a second time.

This was not a story that Jesse made up to frighten his young recruits. It was one that was passed from man to man, caravan to caravan, until it passed for truth on the plains. Alexander Majors, of the transportation firm of Russell, Waddell and Majors, wrote, "It frequently happened that when the Indians killed a party on the Santa Fé Road there were both Mexicans and American left dead upon the same spot. When found the bodies of the Americans would invariably be eaten, and the bodies of the Mexicans lying

intact without any interference at all. ... Some thought it was because the Mexicans were so saturated with red pepper, they making that a part of their diet” (138).

As if this story was insufficient, another and even more outrageous one existed. “Others thought it was because they were such inveterate smokers and were always smoking cigarettes...and there are many American boys to-day who would not be eaten by wolves, so impregnated are they with nicotine” (Majors 138-139). Majors was very strict with his employees. He believed that clean living, moderate temper, and proper language and behavior made a better employee. This story may have begun and ended with him; however, if true, Tom need not have worried since I am certain he was a smoker. Beginning in 1860 Tom worked for several years as a tobacconist for a very large tobacco farmer in Glasgow, Missouri and, although he did contract pneumonia while on duty during the Civil War, the diagnosis for his medical pension was rheumatism and lung disease—probably emphysema.

Regardless of their “refined tastes,” wolves made an impact in other ways. Josiah Gregg, author of Commerce of the Prairies, considered a “classic of the Santa Fe Trail” for its wealth of information, wrote,

... being only now and then disturbed at night by the hideous howlings of wolves, a pack of which had constituted themselves into a kind of ‘guard of honor,’ and followed in our wake for several hundred miles... They were at first attracted no doubt by the remains of the buffalo which were killed by us upon the high plains, and afterwards enticed on by an occasional fagged animal, which we were compelled to leave behind, as well as by the bones and scraps of food, which they picked up about our camps. (216)

This repugnant image reminds me of seagulls gathering in a parking lot after a visiting carnival leaves town. They scavenge on spilled bags of popcorn and shreds of cotton candy sticking to the pavement—not a noble animal by this description.

The sheepherders cared even less for the wolf. “We also experienced considerable damage in our stock of sheep, a number of them having been devoured by

wolves” (Gregg 321). The easy prey of slow moving, comparatively defenseless sheep would have been sport when compared to the tough, large buffalo, but kill buffalo they did. “Although the buffalo is the largest, he has by no means the control among the prairie animals: the sceptre of authority has been lodged with the large *gray wolf*. Though but little larger than the wolf of the United States, he is much more ferocious. ...[T]hey often kill horses, mules and cattle of all sizes; and on the Prairies they make considerable havoc among the buffalo” (Gregg 375).

The wolf was demonized, glamorized, and in some cultures, revered. It was hunted to near extinction for its fur and the belief that it was a pest, nothing more than a danger to livestock and a hazard to man. There is much more to be learned about the large gray wolf of the prairies. In other words there are more stories to be told—later.

Probably because this crew of Keystone Cowboys had already lost valuable time, Jesse * * * *finally concluded to take the dry route to the crossing of the*

“Arkansas” * * * Contemporary writers referred to the dry route as the Cutoff.

Such a destination was offered in contrast to the Wet Route which followed the meanderings of the Arkansas River around its south bend and northwesterly to the Caches⁷. ...The difference between the Wet Route’s distance to the Caches and that of the Dry Route was 11.5 miles” (Clapsaddle “The Dry Route Revisited” 9). Doing this saved almost a full day’s travel.

⁷ The Caches are located about twenty miles west of present day Dodge City, Kansas. “It gained its name from an adventure of some traders who set out for Santa Fe in the fall of 1822. Samuel Chambers and James Baird (Beard) were caught by winter and had to stay over until spring. Having lost their animals they had to dig a couple of holes to store and protect their goods until they could later retrieve them” (Vestal 133-134).

** * *that night we camped on a high prairie and old Turley said that as we were now in the "Pawnee" country we might let the cattle go, and stand guard over the wagons". * * **

"Speakers of a dialect of the Caddoan language family, the Pawnee had long farmed their ancestral lands in what is now east Texas near the Gulf of Mexico... When the Pawnee moved north during the 13th century, ...they brought along their ancient Morning Star ceremony, which included the ritual killing of a captive girl, making them the only Plains culture to practice human sacrifice" (Buffalo Hunters 14). Over the centuries "The Pawnee traveled more than 300 miles before settling along the Platte River in southeastern Nebraska... By the turn of the 18th century, a few of these villages had expanded to as many as 150 to 300 lodges with total populations of up to 3,000 people..." (Buffalo Hunters 15). A great many of the Pawnee, however, were still in central Kansas in this area Turley characterized as Pawnee country and "...their earthen lodge villages spread as far west as the foothills of the Rockies" (Buffalo Hunters 18).

They were distinctive looking and easily recognizable. "The word 'Pawnee' probably comes from the word *pariki*, meaning 'horn,' which refers to a peculiar way in which the Pawnee men wore their hair. They shaved their heads and left a narrow strip of hair down the center of their head resembling a horn. Some experts believe the word may also be a Choctaw word, *pana*, which refers to the scalp lock" (Powers 50). Though their appearance may have been startling, their actions would have been downright frightening for a "greener" like Tom.

The Pawnee were notorious for stampeding livestock away from wagon trains. When the drivers and guards of the cavallard went to retrieve them, the Pawnee would rob the merchandise and trade goods. "Even when these Indians were not openly hostile to caravans passing through their hunting grounds, they were always a potential

menace and a nuisance. They stole horses, mules, and oxen. They openly plundered camps whose defenders frequently suffered this in preference to outright battle. And they arrogantly demanded food and gifts from many frightened travelers" (Conner and Skaggs 39).



PAWNEE ROCK.

Source: History of Jackson County, 1881
Artist unknown

A few miles further I saw in one of the brake of the wall an Indian standing about half way up the side of the hill (we were never more than a half mile from the hill) I called the attention of the others of the party to the fact but he never moved (the Indian I mean) momentarily I expected to see a troupe of them coming down a ravine on us, signaled by their comrade who was on guard on the side of the hill, and that was what was called "Pawnee Rock" but now I will guarantee that if you were going along the same road and were to see it, not knowing that it was an illusion,

would be qualified that, that was an Indian and nothing else, I imagined that I could see him move and change position, and would at the time been tempted to swear to it if a man had called it in question.



Pawnee Rock 1997

Photo by Author

The drawing, published in 1881 and the photograph made in 1997 are of the same sandstone formation, however the upper portion was quarried in the late 1800s for building materials (Historical Site Marker). Marc Simmons, in his book entitled Following the Santa Fe Trail: A Guide for Modern Travelers, described it this way. “The most famous natural landmark along the SFT in Kansas, Pawnee Rock was an Indian ambush site and a major campground for the caravans. ... Practically everyone who wrote about the trail took pains to describe Pawnee Rock, which is merely a small hill with a rock face. Anywhere but on the flat plains of Kansas it would pass unnoticed” (98). Both parts are true. Tom was no exception. He, too, wrote about the hill of rock. I am no exception. I am writing about it. Even today it is still discordant with the surrounding terrain. Standing on the top and being able to see miles in every direction is so different to that with which I am familiar. Here in Michigan the horizon is always broken by trees it seems. There, the only natural line of trees runs along the Arkansas River.

I was also no exception in that I took hours scrambling around its remaining sides, looking for any graffiti Tom may have left behind. It is odd how many of us revere this particular defacement of public property. Unfortunately, the earliest inscription I found was from 1892. Although I resisted the impulse to scratch my initials in the soft stone, others have not. I am uncertain how I feel about that.

** * * We passed Pawnee rock about 10 A.M. and about 3 P.M. arrived at “Pawnee Fork” of the Arkansas river. There we came to the camp of a party of Mexicans who were hunting Buffaloes and “jerking” the meat. Old Turley spoke the language fluently and so he learned that they were just about ready to start back to “Tacos” (pronounced Toucos) where they lived so he concluded to lay over till next day and they agreed to go out and bring us in some fresh meat next A.M. * * **

They spent the day hunting and putting up meat for the rest of the trip. Doing this was a standard practice according to many travel accounts. Tom, as most writers of the trail, reported finding, hunting, and cooking buffalo on the trail. The desecration of the buffalo herds of the great prairies is a black mark in American history. "The American buffalo ranged on early Kansas prairies in great herds. Now, around 325 wander through the state's game preserves and many more on private ranches" (5 Kansas Travel & Event Guide, Topeka, KS, published by Kansas Department of Commerce & Housing, Travel & Tourism Development Division: 1998).

I have encountered many references to the American buffalo throughout my research. There were several reports of travelers being stopped cold in the journey to let herds of buffalo pass, sometimes days at a time. The numbers were mind boggling and the attitude toward their demise was astonishing. It ranged from a total lack of interest to intentional slaughter. The two most prominent reasons were to rid the prairies of what were considered pests to agriculture and travel and to rid the prairies of the Indians whose livelihood depended upon the buffalo.

Other than staples like flour and sugar, the supplies they carried from the starting point were meant only to last until reaching this area highly inhabited by buffalo, or were meant to be sold at the destination for remarkably high profit.

** * * Turley decided to lay over and travel in company with the mexicans for better protection, and they early in the A.M. went out for a final hunt, and while they were gone we broached a ten gallon keg of whiskey, which those who were in camp bought very rapidly, and about 10 O'clock the others came in and they too indulged freely so that by eleven o'clock ten gallons were empty, and some of them were "wild drunk", so we, or rather he, thought it best to push on and leave them he told me privately that if they took the idea in their hands to do so they would massacre us and report that the Indians had done it, * * **

The atmosphere did get ugly caused by a hunting accident where a horse belonging to one of the Mexicans had been gored by a buffalo. "Outlaws took advantage of the vast distances and the isolation of frontier life, whether on the plains, mountains, or deserts. These conditions demanded long and unprotected lines of transportation to move goods, people, and money, a situation that road agents (stage robbers) and train robbers exploited" (Grolier). This is not to imply that the Mexican caravan was a group of outlaws, it was meant to illustrate the fact that outlaw behavior did occur. I posit that it occurred far more often than history texts have reported in the past. * * * *so I think now Turley was right in rolling out and leaving them to sober off, don't you? * * **

As many and varied as the reasons for people to follow the trail, were the people themselves. In 1832 Washington Irving⁸ took a trip across the Plains. From the journals he kept, he wrote A Tour on the Prairies, which was published in 1835. In it he said, "There is something exciting to the imagination and stirring to the feelings, while traversing these hostile plains, in seeing a horseman prowling along the horizon. It is like descrying a sail at sea in time of war, when it may be either a privateer or a pirate" (84). Tom was seldom lacking in imagination.

** * * it was my first watch again and as on another occasion Turley said guard the camp and let the cattle go which I did and as there was a stiff breeze blowing the others all laid down and rolled up in their blankets and went to sleep. I, after sauntering around a while laid down too, when on looking off toward the west I saw something that made the hair raise on my head, right there, it seemed not more than a hundred yards, I saw as I thought a man raise cautiously up for an instant*

⁸ Washington Irving is best known for his book entitled Legend of Sleepy Hollow.

*and then sink, when up it came again and I was sure it was a mans head, however I did not want to alarm the camp needlessly so I did not shoot, taking a circuit to see who it could be, I lost sight of it entirely till all at once I laid flat down, when right before me was a bunch of grass with a cluster of heads on the top, and the wind would bend them low and then allow them to rise again, and in the darkness these looked like a mans head to me "so", thinks I, that does pretty well and now is my time" so I went back to camp and roughly shook old Jess to wake him up and then pointed it out to him, he looked for a while and I imagined he was getting nervous all the time but at last he stammered "its only a bunch of grass I saw it when I laid down", which might have been a fact and might not anyhow I had my chuckle at him. * * **

Jesse must have had a pretty good sense of humor about things. He obviously had not been abusive or mean-spirited about the many mishaps or Tom would never have had the nerve to play this practical joke.

** * * camped on the eastern bank of the Arkansas river, some two hundred yards to our right was a long stretch of low hills, and between us and these stood a huge old male Buffalo all alone, old Jess said, "Hays, give me my rifle till I give that old fellow a shot", he took good aim and fired, but the old Buffalo paid no attention atall. Turley said "Hays give me your rifle and I'll try it again", but lo, Hays gun was off fix so no one could shoot it, and Carson had no gun, so I offered my gun, (a double barrell shot gun) but in true Plainsman fashion the old fellow disdained to try mine, and would not let me shoot, but loaded up his gun and fired a second shot, which made the Buffalo arch his back and camper away as fast as he could, so we broke camp and "struck out" for the crossing of the Arkansas a past the "caches" (pronounced cashes) * * **

The stereotypical myth of the American cowboy: when a pistol appeared, a dead body littering the street or saloon surely followed. When a rifle was drawn from the

saddle scabbard, either a trophy-sized buffalo, bear, or Indian would fall dead in their tracks at least half a mile away from the man who fired. Either he was seated on the back of a statuesque stallion or perched backward on a wildly careening stagecoach holding the reins in one hand with the rifle clutched under the opposite arm. His aim was always true. His ammunition was always infinite. His demeanor was always unflappable. The bounty was always collected. That was not so with any cowboy outside of Hollywood, California and especially so with these guys—my Keystone Cowboys.

The problem was their deplorable state of preparedness. Hays' gun was "off fix," meaning the sights were not adjusted. Carson did not even have a gun. How far afield of the American Cowboy stereotype this is.

** * * we made it alright and as old Jess had promised that we would camp as soon as we got across we worked with a will, and after we were all safely across, we had to hitch up and go several mile up the bottom on the west side of the river before we camped, you may believe me we were all mad and all swore some at old Jess, quietly of course, but angrily, and I believe that had a troop of Redskins come upon us then, they would have met a warm reception * * **

In this region a river that you could step across could swell to life endangering proportions with a torrential Missouri downpour. This practice of crossing before camping became a routine no matter how tired the crew was or how far they had come. Not crossing beforehand could mean serious delays, or, worse, loss of life and property. "Caravans usually forded rivers before stopping for the night in case overnight storms raised river levels..." (Historical Marker at the Neosho River crossing).

** * * by the way we had not seen a single indian since leaving "Walnut Creek" and only one there, for the reason that Bill Bent had proceeded us only a few days with a whole train full of supphys to deal out to them at his Fort which was about*

*twenty miles up the river from where we were and the Indians were all congregating there, that is at "Bent's Fort"⁹, to get their winter's supplies¹⁰, and it showed consummate Generalship in old Jess to take advantage of this circumstance for had it been otherwise we would, in my humble opinion, never have arrived at our destination nor would I have been here to tell you the story. * * **

It can be presumed that Jesse shared stories of some of his experiences with Tom and the crew about the Indian tribes he had encountered in the past. Tom may have been prejudiced by these anecdotes. His last statement indicates that, at least for his sister's benefit, he was implying the possibility of evil intent on the part of the Indians had they not been preoccupied. However, this information was being shared in a private forum; the information would have had little impact on the rest of the world. There were travelers, however, who had larger voices and who could plant seeds of suspicion and fear in many ears around the world.

As I mentioned before, Washington Irving traveled the trail and this is what he reported. "There is always some wild untamed tribe of Indians, who form, for a time, the terror of a frontier, and about whom all kinds of fearful stories are told. Such, at present, was the case with the Pawnees, who rove the regions between the Arkansas and the Red River, and the prairies of Texas. ...[S]ometimes engaged in hunting the deer and buffalo, sometimes in warlike and predatory expeditions; for, ...their hand is against every one, and every one's hand against them" (Irving 75-76). Although not entirely untrue, statements like these led readers to believe that any encounter would inevitably lead to conflict.

⁹ Bent's Fort "[In 1833 Ceran] St. Vrain and two well-known trapper brothers, William and Charles Bent, chose a site on the Arkansas River [in present day Colorado] and built Bent's Fort, which became a primary stop on the Santa Fe Trail" (Gragg 29).

¹⁰ David Lavender, author of Bent's Fort wrote, "So on September 15 [1858] the [Kansas City] Journal of Commerce sent a reporter to the docks for a direct interview. ...Shortly after talking to the reporter, William [Bent] started toward the fort" (361).

** * * That night Turley said "Boys, watch the camp good tonight and let the cattle go to h--l" and said he "all of you that have not ammunition, say so, and load your guns out of mine, and he continued, I'll tell you that black mule has been across the plains before", (referring to one of his pair of mules) and if an Injun comes in smeling distance you'll see her raise h-ell and pull up her picket pin, and go if she can, and you may bet thars Injuns close, then" * * **

Although Jesse's stories and statements seem bigoted and prejudicial, he did have at least one experience on which to base his beliefs. Recall that records indicate that he had to request remuneration from the United States government for merchandise losses at the hands of Indians. "They [Indians] had little compunction and much skill at stealing from the emigrants [and traders], paying special attention to livestock" (Jennings 368). On this trip Jesse was more concerned about losing the trade items than he was about the livestock. He had no intention of making the greater profit from the animals.

According to Reitter, "The following was reported by the U. S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs of the 32nd Congress:

The committee on Indian Affairs have examined the Memorial of Henry C. Miller, and Phillip W. Thompson praying indemnity for Indian depredations, also, the Memorial of Jesse B. Turley of the same tenor and to the same effect, and find the following facts established by competent testimony. The Memorialists [sic] in the Spring of 1847 started from the State of Missouri with goods wares, and Merchandize in wagons bound for Santa fae [sic], New Mexico, whilst on their way across the plains. [T]hey were attacked by Indians supposed to be Osages, on the Arkansas River; the Indians succeeded in the attact [sic] and took from the Memorialists and drove off fifty-five oxen, forty three of them the property of Miller, and Thompson, the remainder the property of Turley. [I]t appears that there was neither fault or negligence on the part of the Memorialist, the United States were at peace with all the Indian tribes on the prairies at that time. [T]he Memorialists were engaged in a lawfull [sic] calling, and were lawfully in the Indian Country. [N]o attempt at reprisals has been made by the Memorialists. The Memorialists claim from the Government indemnity not only for the value of the property taken by the Indians, but all the damages which they suppose they have sustained in consequence of the act of robbery. The Committee are [sic]

of the opinion that this case come[s] within the provisions of the law regulating intercourse with the Indian tribes approved June 30th 1834 and that the Memorialists are entitled to the benefit of its provisions; and nothing more, and therefore report a Bill to enable them to have the benefit of said act. In the Senate of the United States, March 1852. Ordered to be printed Mr. Atchison made the following REPORT to accompany bill S. 307. Senate bill S-307 was read the third time and was passed in the Senate 13 August 1852.

Reitter wrote, "It was then sent to the House of Representatives and the Journal only reports the receipt of the bill and not that it was passed, so it is not known whether Jesse B. Turley was paid for his losses to the Indians in 1847" (Turley Papers, Arrow Rock Visitor Center). I have not yet searched the records to discover whether or not he was paid.

Jesse was protecting his investment and knew that there was a great threat to that investment in this area. Turley was correct in his assessment that all should be wary.

** * * it must have been eleven or twelve O'clock, the Black mule raised her head as if frightened and gave a snort that it seemed to me ought to awaken the dead, and then commenced careening and trying to get away, (they were between us and the river, along the banks of which the willow bushes grew a dense mass), she gave a tremendous lurch, the picket pin flew and away went the mule, picket pin and all, I of course hastened to waken old Jess and explain the situation in as few words as possible he rose on his elbow, grasping his rifle ready for action and as nervous as one with the ague, said he, "wake the other boys" "where are they"? I explained Hays was in his wagon and Carson in his, he said, with an oath "pull em out by the heels, make em get up," but it was no easy job to wake the poor fellows, yet by dint of pulling and shaking I finally got one up and then the other, both rubbing their eyes and swearing at being disturbed, (but I was long enough about getting them up to allow a single indian to have put an arrow*

through all of us¹¹, if there had been one there, that had the disposition so to do, which I do not believe there was, something else frightened the mule and caused it to run off).

Turley becoming reassured he said "Tom, have you hear the 'Bell' lately"? I had not heard it tonight, I told him. (One of my cattle always wore a big ox bell whenever he was loose from the wagon) He said "Hays you and Carson stand guard awhile," They promised of course and we started up the river, as that was the way they started at dark, there was no moon and it was quite dark but we could follow up the river easy enough for the sand hills were on our left and the river on our right, after going about a mile, although it seemed five, we came to where the cattle were lying down, we went on beyond them and started them up and drove them down nearly to our camp where we left them and they all soon laid down again.

*We went back to camp and put our guns away and Turley ask if "they had seen anything of the mule"? "No, nothing", "Well," said he, "she is gone I spose," I proposed that we should take a look for her, which we did without effect, and things looked rather blue, I tell you, and Old Jess swore that he would take a five cent piece for the chance of ever getting her again, but while we were talking up came the mule, to our no little surprise for as she had been gone nearly or quite an hour, I felt sure we would not get her that night and I thought that there was a chance, that a straggling Indian from some neighboring camp, perhaps, had been prowling around and had tried to "stampede" the mules, but had succeeded with only one, but after the mule came back, the case was unexplinable I thought, so I did not bother myself anymore but laid down and slept soundly untill the sun was high above the Eastern horizen. * * **

¹¹ Not a difficult feat in that the bow and arrow had long proven to be a worthy opponent to the muzzle-loaded long gun. "The Sioux, who were constantly engaged in war with the Pawnee in the early days, had great respect for the Pawnee's use of the bow and arrow in battle. One Sioux told me that the Pawnee were capable of shooting their arrows in such a manner 'that arrows would curve right up under your shield and wound you.' While this seems highly unlikely, it at least shows the degree of respect the Sioux had for their traditional enemy's prowess in battle" (Powers 51).

The pride of the American West, these sons of pioneers, hated being awakened. Fortunately, there were no intruders with which to contend, the mule found her way back and they returned to their slumber.

Jesse chose to cross the Jornada—a sixty-mile stretch of waterless land. Beginning in present day Lakin, Kansas, just west of present day Dodge City, Santa Fe Trail travelers had two route options. The Mountain Route through Raton Pass in Colorado was one—and the first—and the other was the Cimarron Route. The mountain route was harder to traverse because rocks, boulders, and fallen trees often blocked the path. Many places in the road were barely wide enough for a wagon to have all four wheels on it. The steep inclines and declines were no picnic for the beasts of burden or the drivers who hoped to maintain control of them. Winter comes earlier and harshly in higher elevations.

The Cimarron Route took an immediate southwesterly direction, passed through the southwest corner of Kansas, nearly bisected the Oklahoma panhandle and ran directly into the northwest corner of New Mexico.¹² The route was fairly flat but it was sandy. Anyone who has walked any distance on a beach knows how difficult it is on muscles. Even more difficult is pulling a vehicle weighing in excess of two and a half tons on hard wooden wheels little more than five or six inches wide. There were few landmarks to follow, which made getting lost frighteningly easy, and there was virtually no water or forage for the animals. The potential for Indian attack was also much greater on this route. "...[It] was considered an uninhabitable desert, a place to be gotten through quickly" (Simmons 145-146). Why did Turley choose this one? If all went well, this route could shave ten or eleven days off of the time it took to make it into Santa Fe. The indications are that Turley was more interested in his cargo getting there

¹² The state names and boundary designations were created after Tom was on the Trail and have been used for the reader's convenience.

safely than he was about his livestock. He did not have to worry about keeping weight on his animals for sale. They carried their own water, to be used sparingly, and he knew that many of the Indians had gone to Bent's Fort. Most important, he had to make up the time that had been already lost. It was well into October by the time they reached this point.

** * * we had arrived at "sand Creek" where was a water hole so that our stock could get water again and as we were within ten miles of the "Cimmaron River", Turley determined to rest untill the next morning, and to us it was a gratefull, and much needed rest, our stock was nearly famished for water and food, so we "corralled" our wagons and prepared supper * * **

"Soon after entering the present state of Oklahoma, the SFT crossed to the south bank of the Cimarron River at a well-known site called Willow Bar. It took its name from a stand of willow trees growing on a sandbar in midstream" (Simmons 148). While here at the Willow Bar Jesse must have told the crew some of its history. There are several stories, most of which are too lengthy and have no place here.

** * * still another is told of two men, on what is called "willow bar" holding at bay several hundred Indians who were hostile, by shifting their positions and firing their rifles every time an indian came within reach, and by the way old Turley pointed out the "willow bar" to me when we reached it, and this spoiled a very pretty story for the "bar" was anything but romantic looking it was simply a patch of willow shrubs that looked to me as though a large sized dog could not hide himself in, much less could a man do so. And yet Old Turley seemed affronted when I suggested as much. * * **

According to records, by 1858 Jesse had been traveling this trail for nearly thirty years. He must have heard many reports from friends and acquaintances as well as

having had experiences of his own. If the situation he described had involved someone he knew, it was small wonder he was "*affronted*."

While they were camped a lone man walked in and surprised them. Tom described him as "...*a big six footer of an Indian*." It appears that he had come to investigate because he and his party were camped nearby. They shared supper and smoked "*the pipe of peace*" with him. Although it is more likely that he spoke English, it is possible that Turley communicated in the language of the Kiowa. Tom did not say.

** * * But I am getting ahead of my story, to return, Mr Kiowa left us as mysteriously as he came and after putting things to rights we all so far as I know, went to sleep, - I forgot previously to say that we hired one of the Mexicans for a "herder" for the stock and it was his business to look after it, his name was "Domingo" (which in English is Sunday) and as old Jess talked Spanish fluently it may be that Domingo watched camp as well as the stock. * * **

Domingo will be the most difficult person to trace. Much more has been written about the trail running from the east to the west than there has been written about the trail originating in the west. I would like to stress here that it was a two-way economic institution and that much work needs to be done to illuminate the importance of Mexican caravans, and their contribution to the success of the Santa Fe Trail.

When they arrived at Lower Springs they found the camp from which "*Mr. Kiowa*" had come. Turley must have sent an invitation, through their lone visitor, for a dinner meeting. Even now, for anyone to entertain fifteen or twenty guests, a significant amount of food must be prepared. Even for a simple meal we pull out a thirty-cup coffee maker and throw a large casserole into the oven. Turley's crew had neither. They had coffeepots that were filled with water to which the grounds were added directly and they

had the same utensils to use for thirty as they did for the original five. Most important, they did not have an oven and they did not have wood for a fire. They had to use buffalo chips (dried buffalo feces) and scrub twigs.

** * * and we prepared for a number of invited guests (15 or 20) and by the time we had our fire built the Indians came trooping into our camp at least a hundred or a hundred fifty strong, male and female, "paposes" of all sorts and sizes, Chiefs and lay members, Turley very quickly discerned the Chiefs and such another "HON-HON", and hand shaking all around I never experienced before or since. * * **

Turley had chosen his crew well. Fear or anxiety or anger overcame none of them; they managed. It seems that the work responsibilities were shared by all and that no one person had a designated job. This was unusual—then again, so was the size of Jesse's caravan. In larger caravans nearly everyone had designated responsibilities. There were cowboys who watched the livestock. There were cooks, usually one for each mess, or group, of six or eight people. There was a wagonmaster and his assistant. "The duty of the wagonmaster was about the same as that of a captain of a steamboat or ship, his commands being implicitly obeyed... The assistant wagonmaster's duty was to carry out the wagonmaster's instructions, and he would often be at one end of the train while the master was at the other, as the train was moving" (Majors 103-105).

As Tom said, *"everything was conducted with the utmost decorum."*

When supper was finished, ** * * the chiefs seated themselves in a row and the head chief pulled out the last treaty that the Government had made with them, and as we ranged in another row standing in front of them They*

handed it to old Jess and he pretended to read it, then handed it to me and I did read it³, we of course said it was "good" and all shook hands again over it * **

According to Jean Tyree Hamilton, "The Kiowas and Comanches had signed a treaty in 1853 with the government that pledged them to remain peaceful for ten years. The government agreed to pay them \$18,000 in commodities yearly. The Indians found the treaty difficult to keep and beginning in 1858 they became a serious and constant threat to the trail" (3). Tom did not say what the treaty he read was about. There is little chance of ever knowing for certain what treaty it was. Unfortunately, government treaties with the American Indians were no laughing matters. Usually made to be broken when whites deemed it necessary, these treaties rarely pacified the Indians for long. None too amazing either was asking for confirmation about what had been written.

There were times when language barriers, being unable to read, and irascible behavior created negative results.

"Outwardly, Peacock¹⁴ and Kiowa Chief Satank were 'great friends and chums [source not cited].' Actually Peacock ridiculed Satank. The Indian had asked Peacock to write a letter of recommendation, a sort of good character reference, which he could show, to whites on the trail. When Satank showed the letter to caravan [sic] captains and others, he was chased off. Suspecting something was wrong with the letter, he asked someone to read it. It said that Satank was the 'dirtiest, laziest, lousiest vagabond on the Plains. If he comes to your camp, kick him out [source not cited].' Upon learning of Peacock's written betrayal, Satank lured Peacock out into the open on September 9, 1860, then shot and scalped him" (McCoy 119).

Trust is often abused and too often it can be mistaken for weakness or child-like innocence. Cultural differences were never more clearly illustrated than when the journalist Horace Greeley tried to define Indians for the benefit of his white readers.

¹³ Tom implied that Jesse had not read the treaty, but that he, Tom, had. Jesse's ability to read is placed in doubt.

But the Indians are children...Some few of the chiefs have a narrow and short-sighted shrewdness,..they are utterly incompetent to cope in any way with the European or Caucasian race...Any band of schoolboys, from ten to fifteen years of age, are quite as capable of ruling their appetites, devising and upholding a public policy, constituting and conducting a state or community, as an average Indian tribe...the aborigines of this country will be practically extinct within the next fifty years” (Greeley 151).

He was somewhat correct in predicting extinction. The Indian way of life, as they knew it, was crushed before the end of the century. His assessment of their behavior, however, is not at all like that which Tom reported. According to Gene and Mary Martin, Jesse and his crew had done the impossible. “[In 1858] It was almost impossible to travel the Cimarron Cutoff for the next two years as the hostile Comanche and Kiowa Indians were on the warpath” and the very next year, “The Kiowas declared war on the United States (9). The statesmanship of Turley and his crew and the group of Kiowa Indians brought about a peaceful conclusion to this meeting.

** * * Old Jess had me take a wooden bucket and fill it with the tobacco and empty it into a corner of the head Chief's blanket, he holding it, and so on around the whole party till I think I emptied two and it may have been three of those sacks. Then they were in for trading, and I like a fool tried to trade my Navy revolver for a pony. I fired it and then handed it to a squaw and she fired it, but “no swap” could I make, thank goodness * * **

Frances Jennings, author of The Founders of America From Earliest Migration to the Present, wrote, “Most of the persons involved in the migration, Anglos and Indians alike, were sensible, practical people who made the best arrangements possible in the circumstances” (368). Fortunately for everyone involved the picture that was presented was a huge outdoor market in the middle of a sandy nowhere.

¹⁴ Peacock was the proprietor and owner of Allison's Ranch after William Allison died in 1859.

Unfortunately, Tom's letters ended before telling his sister about the completion of his Santa Fe Trail journey with Jesse Turley. In 1883 he wrote a very brief statement about his trip and he said that he, personally, stopped at Ft. Union and spent some time there before pressing on into Santa Fe.

Before ending this section, I would like to include an essay that had originally been written to fulfill a requirement for the 1999 Winter Session graduate class at the University of Michigan-Flint, for Dr. Bruce Rubenstein, Professor and Chair of History. I am doing this for two reasons.

First, I omitted and reserved one of Tom's experiences from the former section because it was one that gave me the greatest sense of Tom's character. His behavior, as he reported it to his sister, was far from stereotypical. To me, it was extraordinary. After much research, I have found that this behavior was not extraordinary. In fact, it was the type of behavior that enabled so many people of diverse backgrounds to interact within the environment of the Santa Fe Trail and within the institution of international trade the trail facilitated.

The second reason I have given it a place of its own is as an example of the type of work I would eventually like to do with these letters: to take each subject, to research it to my satisfaction, then to share my work with others. There are many such pieces in process. Tom's letters were that rich in subject matter.

Tom and the Kaw

He is a dark skinned, war-painted, sharp-featured, nearly naked, screaming man wearing a war bonnet with feathers trailing behind him in the wind, carrying in one hand a tomahawk and in the other the bloody scalp of a young, long-haired, blonde woman. He sits astride a painted horse with no saddle. He is juiced into a killing frenzy by firewater; or, ready to get into a fight in a bar because he is juiced on firewater. The

image of the drunken pagan still lingers. This is the ultimate boogey man. This is the wild savage that lives on wild game, berries, nuts and fruit. This is the creature that is different in every way, except one, from the white Christian. The only similarity is that the Indian walks upright.

It has been over one hundred years since the Indian Wars officially ended. This image has withstood the Civil War, two world wars, Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq—in which American Indians fought side-by-side with white Americans. It has withstood the equal rights movement of the 1960s and the politically correct movement of the 1990s. Not the only image, but—when admitted—it is still the most prevalent.

My purpose is to present a man who experienced none of the societal influences which may have changed his image of American Indians—other than the Civil War—yet one who was, from his writing, more inclined to develop his own images. He seemed to allow circumstances to dictate his actions, rather than depend on stereotype.

This essay is about, twenty-five-year-old Thomas G. Newnam's interactions with, and opinions of the American Indians whom he saw and met while driving a wagon-load of trade goods with Jesse Turley and three other wagoners from Arrow Rock, Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico, on the Santa Fe Trail. Tom's comments have been taken from letters that he wrote to his sister in 1872 about his adventures in 1858.

Born in 1833, nearly his entire life was spent west of the Mississippi River, a good portion of it wandering through the ever-changing western frontier, at a time when the United States was at war with American Indians. Given the climate of the times and the environment in which he found himself, one must find him an admirable character in depending on his own judgement rather than succumbing to prejudice and bigotry.

A question about Tom that begs to be answered is what he knew and when and how did he find it out. What did he know about the American Indians that he might encounter? From whom or what had he received his information? Obviously, he was not exposed to national news television broadcasts as we are today. He did, however, have access to newspapers—albeit, doubtfully, the same day they were printed as we have today. "In a free society where newspapers are readily available, the editorial pages serve as an irrefutable guide to the things that matter. Events, situations, or ideas that are of little or no intrinsic importance may be of dramatic consequence if the public perceives them so. And at the same time, those things that rightfully should be of concern may go unnoticed until the editorial writers call them to public attention" (Hays xxiii).

Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, was notorious for his derogatory comments about the American Indian. "To the prosaic observer, the average Indian of the woods and prairies is a being who does little credit to human nature—a slave of appetite and sloth..." (Bender 134). This is the information that Tom had. Of course, he also heard rumors and wild reports spread by word-of-mouth as he resided in Arrow Rock, Missouri that, at one time, was the point at which the Santa Fe Trail began with outbound traffic, and ended with inbound traffic. "The famous Santa Fe Trail... became an important highway of frontier traffic, and the South Plains tribes watched and sometimes raided the caravans" (Debo 105). This was absolutely true, and I am sure that Tom listened with bated breath as he sat in Huston's tavern in Arrow Rock. I am also certain that the stories got better and grislier with each repetition—and with each shot of whiskey.

Here is one story that exemplifies the stories that might have been told.

The cavalier Kiowas were given ample offense in difficulties with tradesmen along the Santa Fe Trail, and for years the shout of 'Kioway!' was the most dreaded of the Trail's alarms. Some footloose parties, however, were quite honestly out for loot, an employment as old and honorable as humanity. One such, made up apparently of a few Comanche youths, was idling along the Cimarron cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail in the summer of 1831, and there met the Galahad of mountain men, Jedediah Strong Smith... They told someone later, it seems, that they joked with him while they casually used the mirrors hanging in their hair to blind Jed's horse, causing him to spook, and while Jed was busy trying to manage the horse they ran him through with lances... His pistols turned up for sale in Taos. (Brandon 380)

Admittedly, these letters were written fourteen years after Tom was on the trail and these may not have been his exact thoughts and reactions at the time; however, in 1872 the "Indian Wars" were more violent and extreme than those in 1858.

In Tom's first letter, dated April 12, 1872, he explains how he lied to get the job with Jesse Turley. He wrote about how he and his colleagues got lost and wandered around for six days and nights. He told her about getting a wagon stuck in the muddy bottom of a river and being helped out by a more experienced crew. After loading the wagons with trade goods in Kansas City, Missouri, and driving an additional one hundred fifty miles into Kansas, he comes to a point in his narrative where he tells her for the first time about meeting some American Indians.

** * * Nothing more happened till we reached Council Grove, here I saw as I thought at the time, the wild Indians of the plains, it was a part of the Kaw tribe, and they were sunk so low by their intercommunication with the whites and the demoralizing effects of the association are such that today I think of them as the most degraded Indians I saw during the whole trip. They were collecting at the "Grove" for their fall hunt so I had a good opportunity of seeing them, and after seeing so many others after, I could but note the difference. As this was the last of the white settlements we tarried in the vicinity of "Council Grove" until next morning. * * **

After having read the editorial remark from the newspaper in 1857, and, through retrospect, assuming that this was not an aberrant statement, it is interesting that Tom would have attributed the state of the people to "intercommunication" rather than to some inherent tendencies of American Indian people in general. Tom was absolutely correct in his assessment. The "Kaw" were, by this time, 1858, a dependent and broken tribe.

The Kaw Indians are also called Kansa, Kanze, Kansas, Kanza. "The Kansa...received their name from the Osage who called them *Konce* referring to 'wind' or 'southwind people' " (Powers 34), and before they were disturbed by the removals of the eastern tribes, "their original home was in the vicinity of Topeka [Kansas]" (Powers 34). The state of Kansas was named after the tribe.

Council Grove, to which Tom refers, was not only the place where many caravans met in order to travel together in safety, but it was also the place where this particular tribe was assigned to an agency. It was also the site of the Kaw Mission, one of the schools run by the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. As one of the agreements made by the U. S. government, the mission was designed—and paid for from the proceeds directed toward the Kaw for the lands they ceded—to educate Kaw children in the hopes of enabling them to assimilate with the white population. It, like other such institutions, was a failure and was no longer in service when Tom went through.

"They [Kaw] are one of the...Siouan linguistic family..." (Powers 34, Debo 11, Lowie 5), "...had patrilineal clans" (Lowie 97), and "they were divided into three bands: the *Gaholi*, or 'Creek' band...; the *Monhazuli* or 'Yellow cutbank' band...; and *Bigiu*, or 'Nickel' band (so called because they were first to receive five-cent pieces)... The three bands were in turn divided into numerous subdivisions. The tribe was governed by the

leaders of the five most important clans and the office was hereditary..." (Powers 34).
 The term patrilineal means "...the common ancestor was traced through the father..."
 (Powers 90).

Never a large tribe when compared to other Plains tribes, the following chart was taken from several sources to illustrate its decline.

	Estimated Population of the Kaw Tribe
1780	3,300
1822	1,850
1850*	1,700
1855‡	1,150
1900‡	200
1937	515

Sources: (Lowie 12), *(Powers 36), ‡(Thornton 127).

Why the decline? Disease and starvation, lies, and wars. "That Amerindian history in and of itself did not stand still is eminently clear, but with the incursion of the European, historical events led toward a crescendo of disaster that brought the Indian peoples to the brink of extermination. In different parts of the continent the process was more or less accelerated in its pace, but the Plains were the scene of its most dramatic expression" (Leacock [Weltfish] 200).

DISEASE AND STARVATION

The Kaw, among other Plains tribes, had been exposed to white men's diseases to which they had no natural immunities. According to Russell Thornton, author of American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492 and Henry F. Dobyns, in his 1983 publication Their Number Became Thinned,

...27 nineteenth-century epidemics of Old World pathogens among North American Indians: 13 of smallpox, five of measles three of cholera, two of influenza, and one each of diphtheria (in Canada), scarlet fever (in Canada), tularemia, and malaria. According to Dobyns, more epidemics occurred between 1800 and 1900 than during any of the three previous centuries (although this may indicate only greater information about American Indians of the nineteenth century). Other diseases, such as syphilis and tuberculosis, also devastated American Indians during the century. (91)

Thornton also lists whooping cough as a mortal disease (126). Even those who survived the diseases were still at risk. "...The Kansa population was further reduced by over 1,000, in part because of measles and whooping cough, in large part because of malnutrition and exposure, 'conditions that slowly but certainly made the afflicted individuals succumb to the ravages of respiratory and digestive disorders, as well as outright starvation' (Unrau, 1973: 322)" (Thornton 126).

Where did these come from? Prior to 1836 "...It is said that the smallpox was brought to the northern plains by a steamboat traveling the Missouri River, and killed 10,000 American Indians there in but a few weeks including '2,000 Pawnee' and '100 Kansa' in a 'very short time'... In a Kiowa winter count, the winter of 1839-40 is noted as Ta'dalkop Sai ('Smallpox Winter')" (Thornton 94). Friendly and unfriendly intermingling of all the Plains tribes, Northern and Southern, created extreme decreases in population. Consider where the Plains tribes were located and how extensive was the territory they covered. Their culture area covered what is currently northern Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, eastern Colorado, eastern Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, western Wisconsin, Minnesota, South and North Dakota, Montana and about 160,000 square miles north into Canada (Children's 49).

More questions one might ask: Did white Americans know about this? Was anything done to prevent it? Thornton reports yes as the answer to both questions.

During the presidency of Andrew Jackson the United States government enacted the following legislation on May 5, 1832: 'That it shall be the duty of several Indian agents and sub-agents under the direction of the Secretary of War to take such measures as he shall deem most efficient to convene the Indian tribes in their respective towns, or in such other places and numbers and at such seasons as shall be most convenient to the Indian populations, for the purpose of arresting the progress of smallpox among the several tribes by vaccination' (quoted in Stearn and Stearn, 1945: 62-63). There was a huge appropriation of \$12,000 to carry out the act.

Yet despite the act it took a long time for American Indians to be vaccinated, even when they were in imminent danger of smallpox infection, for example, during the great smallpox pandemic between 1836 and 1840. This was due partially to Indian resistance. For example, among the Plains Indians, it was said that 'they see white men urging the operation so earnestly they decide that it must be some new mode or trick of the pale face by which they hope to gain some new advantage over them' (quoted in Stearn and Stearn, 1943: 608-609). Most of the failure to vaccinate Indians, however, probably was due to lack of interest on the part of United States officials. The Kansa Indians were not vaccinated though they lived near the Santa Fe Trail, a locale making them vulnerable to smallpox and other contagious disease carried along it by settlers: 'Not surprisingly, then, their ranks were reduced with a vengeance in the middle of June 1855, and before the summer was over more than four hundred had died' (Unrau, 1973: 319). Equally appalling is a concurrent comment by the U.S. Indian agent for the Kansa: '[smallpox] has continued fatally with a greater number of them, it seems, to the great satisfaction and admiration of all those [who] have any acquaintance with [them]' (quoted in Unrau, 1973: 319-20). (Thornton 101)

Notice the reference to the Santa Fe Trail. Obviously in the three-year period between the epidemic and Tom's contact there had been no improvement in the condition of the Kaw Indians. There is ample evidence to support the fact that even more damage was done during this period, as will be discussed later. Notice also the attitude that is so unlike Tom's. He did not have "great satisfaction" about this devastation.

Brian W. Dippie, author of The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy agrees with Thornton and Unrau that the Indians were partially at fault. "With Edward Jenner's discovery in 1797 that a cowpox culture would safely and

effectively immunize humans against smallpox, all-out vaccination programs were urged as the Indians' one hope for survival, and became government policy after an epidemic in 1831-1832 decimated the Pawnees and other tribes along the Platte River. The western tribes remained highly suspicious of vaccination, while they were healthy, turning to it only as a last, belated resort" (37). As the reader will soon see, there were definitely reasons why they may have been suspicious of the white government's motives.

These deaths affected not only the tribe's population but the power and kinship structures, as well. In short, the numbers of people as a group and the numbers of people within the leadership were not only being depleted, but also the opportunity for procreation was being minimized. "In our own system it is clear whom we can or cannot marry... However, according to what system is followed, the Indian may consider those people we call distant relatives as blood relatives. Consequently, some marriages sanctioned by our system would not be sanctioned by Indians" (Powers 89). Remember, not only were these diseases affecting the common people and their potential for suitable marriages (and subsequent regeneration) they were also affecting the leaders and the potential hereditary leadership.

Disease was not the only thing that resulted in starvation. More direct was the lack of food. As a semi-sedentary people the Kaw depended not only upon the buffalo, but also upon the crops they could grow. Everyone was involved in some way in the cultivation of these crops. Sick, or dead, people cannot tend a garden. If the garden is not planted, or tended, it does not grow. If it does not grow, there will be no stores to put up for the winter and further sickness and starvation will result.

As dependent as they were upon their gardens, the dependence upon the buffalo cannot be stressed strongly enough. The Kaw were being pushed away from their

familiar hunting grounds by whites who wanted to settle the land and by competition with other tribes and whites for the buffalo that were being diminished at a startling rate.

Among the tribes Thornton lists as having been dependent upon buffalo are the Kansa, the Kiowa, and the Pawnee. "...At each destruction of a village there went up in smoke not only the immediate food supply of jerked meat and pemmican but the product of years of hunting and work. Buffalo robes, beaded clothes, thousands of arrows, tipis and their hard-to-get poles, painstakingly manufactured articles of all kinds, were burned by the museum-load" (Brandon 380). The military, white land-grabbers and other tribes could think of no better way to so completely remove Indians from the land.

When thinking about American Indians and the buffalo, rarely is considered all that the animals provided to them.

Aside from nourishing the Plains Indians, buffalo furnished them with nearly all their tools and trappings. The animal's horns were carved into cups, or boiled until soft and shaped into spoons and ladles. Its hoofs were turned into glue; its bones into sleds, awls, hoes, and other implements; its hair into braided lariats and pillow stuffing; its sinews into thread for sewing; its stomach, paunch, and heart lining into waterproof containers; its tail into a handy fly switch. Dried buffalo dung not only served nicely as campfire fuel but also could be pounded fine and applied to infants as a soothing baby powder. The tough rawhide of the buffalo was used to make shields, drumheads, moccasin soles, ropes, belts, bags, and coverings for the small rounded vessels known as bullboats. The tanned hide, meanwhile, was tailored into tipi covers, shirts and leggings, robes, blankets, and diapers. (Buffalo Hunters 109)

What would we do if our homes burned to the ground? We would cry about the pictures of our children, our families, and our friends, that could not be replaced. We would then re-build. What if there was no lumber—or trees—to replace the structure, no drywall, no more wire? What if there were no longer any stores from which to buy building supplies? What if there was no insurance money and we lost our jobs at the same time the fire was destroying our home? There would be no way to make more

money to re-build even if the supplies were available. That was the destruction of the buffalo and the more-than-occasional destruction of villages suffered by the Plains tribes.

At the risk of belaboring the importance of the buffalo, I would like to point out some staggering statistics that will emphasize the devastation that took place.

The Indians themselves had always sold dressed hides or even raw hides to the traders, but it had made no noticeable diminution in the great herds... The buffalo furnished the main food supply for the railway construction crews. William F. ('Buffalo Bill') Cody, who was engaged to supply the laborers on the Kansas Pacific with meat, killed 4,280 in one year and a half, with no prospect of running short. In 1868, a train on the Kansas Pacific ran 120 miles through one mighty herd. It took General Sheridan three days to ride through another. There had been some killing by hide hunters during the Civil War, but the business boomed when the war ended. Even so, an estimated fifteen million remained on the Plains in 1870... The one firm of Rath and Wright shipped out more than two hundred thousand hides from Dodge City, Kansas, the first season after the Santa Fe Railroad reached that place in 1872, and it was Wright's opinion that other dealers handled at least an equal amount. In the single year 1873, it is estimated that five million of the beasts were slain. By 1875 the Southern herd was dwindling; by 1878 it was virtually annihilated. The Northern herd was about finished by 1883. The whole country stank from the rotting flesh, and soon the prairie was littered with bones... No white person could understand the anger and despair of the Indians as they watched the source of their whole economic life—food, lodging, bedding, tools, household utensils—and even the basis of their religion, disappear... With these developments undermining their existence, no treaties could hold the Indians at peace. (Debo 213-214)

LIES

In his preface to an excerpt of a letter written by Stephen A. Douglas, Virgil J. Vogel stated that Professor James C. Malin of the University of Kansas [1972] argued that the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 was not entirely aimed at slavery as has most often been reported. Malin opined " '...that the aims of Douglas and his supporters were to get rid of the 'Indian barrier' to westward expansion, to open the way for railroads and settlements by halting the placement of expatriated Eastern Indians in this region, and to organize governments to protect settlers' " (142). This cannot be a

surprising development when one considers that most of the actions taken by government officials were, and are, wrought with ulterior motives—usually money, or the means to acquire it, and rarely social philanthropy. The way to open this land to settlers and progress was through treaties.

The Mexican War and United States territorial acquisitions resulting from it brought new pressures on the Indians by 1850. ... The tribes in Kansas began to receive feelers about new cessions... Among the Indians concerned, native tribes like the Pawnees and Kaws... was the customary inability to resist the proposals made to them. As usual, government agents presented the plans for new cessions under the guise of tribal interest. They argued... that the tribes held more than they could use and the surplus was a constant temptation to the whites. The solution was new treaties that would establish diminished reserves and in some instances allot farms to individual Indians. The surplus land would be held in trust by the Office of Indian Affairs until it could be sold and the proceeds credited to the tribal account. In 1854 alone, twelve treaties resulted in the cession of nearly 18,000,000 acres to the United States: the Indians retained less than 1,500,000 acres of their original holdings. (Hagan 98)

The United States government developed two treaties with the Kansa tribe in 1825. The first treaty, June 3, was under the supervision of William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs. There is much of interest in this treaty, however, for the sake of brevity and the constraints of this paper, I may only point out a few. First, it was obvious to me that the document was written using the Treaty of Greenville as its master. According to Dr. Bruce Rubenstein, Professor of History, University of Michigan-Flint, "the Treaty of Greenville was the model which would be used for every subsequent land cession treaty with the American Indians." This treaty with the Kansa did, indeed, follow the formula. It ceded a vast amount of land—nearly the entire state of Missouri—for a small amount of money: \$3,500 "per annum, for twenty successive years..." for a total of \$70,000. The treaty also included teachers and instructors with "...such lands as may be necessary for them within this reservation" (Kappler 222).

As Rubenstein said, these treaties would include the goods and services necessary to teach the Indians to become farmers. Included were "...three hundred head of cattle, three hundred hogs, five hundred domestic fowls, three yoke of oxen, and two carts, with such implements of agriculture as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs may think necessary; and shall employ such persons to aid and instruct them in their agriculture..." (Kappler 222).

Other than the loopholes built in to legally protect whites who perpetrated crimes of thievery against the Kansa, the most important thing to present here is that this land cession pushed the Kansa Indians westward into Kansas. The twelve Chiefs who signed the tribe into the move and away from their homes received an additional two thousand dollars for doing so. According to the estimated population of the Kansa at the time, these twelve Chiefs presumed to speak for a people numbering nearly 2,000-- these people whose culture was one of the community representing the community. Without putting too fine a point on it, this was either greed on the part of the twelve or a terrible misunderstanding that put the whites in the position of taking advantage of the Kansa people. Either way, this treaty in retrospect was a travesty only made worse by a treaty that was developed two months later.

The treaty with the Kansa and the United States government dated 16 August 1825, two months after the first, was a concession for a right-of-way through the land to which they had been pushed. The United States wanted to "...survey and mark out a road, in such manner as they may think proper, through any of the territory owned or claimed by the said Kansas Tribe or nation of Indians" (Kappler 249). This right-of-way, to be surveyed by George C. Sibley, cost the United States five hundred dollars to the Kansa (plus three hundred dollars to the chiefs as gifts before the signing). It does not appear that any of the same chiefs were involved in this treaty as were involved in the last one.

One last treaty I discovered was one between the government of the United States and the Kansa dated 14 January 1846. The most prominent article in this treaty was as follows: "In consideration of the great distance which the Kansas Indians will be removed from the white settlements and their present agent, and their exposure to difficulties with other Indian tribes, it is agreed that the United States shall cause to reside among the Kansas Indians a sub-agent, who shall be especially charged with the direction of their farming operations, and general improvement, and to be continued as long as the President of the United States should consider it advantageous to the Kansas" (Kappler 553). This removal placed them directly in the midst of their traditional enemies the Pawnee and it encroached on the territory claimed by the Kiowa. One sub-agent and the few troops that were traditionally directed to an operation such as this would have been like arming buffalo hunters with B-B Guns—completely ineffectual.

In an article entitled "The Present and Future of Missouri" found in an issue of DeBow's Review dated August of 1858 the land that had been ceded to the United States "...are held at prices ranging from \$2 to \$25 [per acre]; the higher prices being asked for land lying near the Mississippi and Missouri rivers." Granted, this was eight years later, however many would like to see a return like this on a \$70,000 investment.

Although in exchange for land cessions the Kansa were assured the minimal necessities of life by treaties with the U.S. government (Unrau, 1973: 323), they did not receive what was due them. What happened after the treaties between 1828 and 1872 are chronicled in reports by the U.S. government:

April, 1828: 'Starving condition, truly deplorable'

January, 1831: 'remarkable improvidence'

September, 1838: 'none of the comforts of neighboring tribes'

February, 1846: 'very ill with autumnal diseases'

August, 1855: 'have lost all confidence in each other due to destitution'

October, 1861: 'many are sick and without clothes'

April, 1862: 'completely destitute'

June, 1862: 'many deaths for want of medicine'

January, 1866: 'completely destitute'

August, 1866: 'very destitute condition'

February, 1868: 'completely out of blankets and food... have disposed of all saleable property and have exhausted their credit'

February, 1869: 'We now ask, shall we starve?' (question posed by nine chiefs and ten warriors)

March, 1872: 'absolutely destitute; are living on a little corn and dead animals they can find lying around'

(Quoted in Unrau, 1973: 323)

So much for U.S. government treaties with American Indians! By 1900 there were only about 200 Kansa Indians... (Thornton 127).

It truly is no wonder that Tom considered the Kaw the most "degraded" Indians he had seen. They were. Now, to continue with Tom's letters.

Tom, the novice wagoneer, had allowed his team of oxen to run toward the water, turning the wagon so sharply that it went into "forewheel-on-a-lock," meaning it went contrary to its steering direction, and busted the wooden wheel to pieces. Council Grove was the last stand of hardwoods on the trail and the service station was two days back in the wrong direction. The others were several miles back with their own loads.

** * * I stayed at the creek to pass the dreary hours as best I could. Turley had to take the "rim" and the "hub" of the broken wheel back 45 miles to Council Grove in his buggy and have it "filled". The weary hours dragged by slowly, I tell you till the sun began to sink fast in the Western sky but no signs of my returning companions and all imaginable conjectures filled my mind, I thought, may be the Indians have scalped them, and a thousand other things, and the former seemed most likely when I, on looking down the creek saw a troop of Indians riding towards me at, it seemed to me, full speed. How my hair raised on end and now I buckled on my revolver and placed my double barrel shot gun where I could lay my hand on it, you may imagine, on they came, whooping and yelling, and I*

*really believe they did it to try and make me run and hide so they might have a chance to steal, but strange to say, I did neither but stood my ground boldly where they could see me and I them, and "greener"¹⁵ as I was, I thought it was better to put on a bold face which I did and received them more as welcome friends than as wily foes, and my courage rose when they trooped up to where I was without firing a shot at me, as well as I remember I was as cool "as a cucumber" and I think I have a pretty vivid recollection of the affair for I placed my revolver scabbard in front where they could see it and carried my gun on my arm, and whenever they offered to shake hands I invariably gave them my left, and when they commenced prying around I shook my head very significantly at them and said "puck-a-chee, puck-a-chee. (get away). They loitered around an age it seemed to me, but it must have been nearly an hour, and finally left me as I hoped then, and as it proved, for ever, then my nerves gave away and I sat down and shook like one with the ague, but I was still in misery for the sun had gone down, and I was still alone. * * **

I learned after that it was a party of the "Haw"¹⁶ tribe (there was 40 or 50 of them) out on a hunting excursion.

Naturally, Tom was badly shaken. Being outnumbered forty-to-one it would have been suicide to begin shooting, but I do not believe that would have been Tom's way. Within his schema was the knowledge of "degraded" Indians, not necessarily "savage" ones. "Essentially, such raiding parties were of two types: those maddened by attacks of whites and seeking revenge and those looking for loot. As the attrition of years of white military operations took its toll, both types naturally increased. ... But it was also this long attrition that drove more and more men and boys to the business of looting,

¹⁵ Greener was a slang term for being a novice, a rookie.

¹⁶ "The Kansa...familiar during the mid-19th century to travelers along the eastern stretches of the Santa Fe Trail...[were] recognizable by their distinctive haircut: the head shaved or plucked except for a lock at the back" (Brandon 252).

especially since the business of looting became constantly easier and more tempting as the plains filled up [with] the green pilgrims and settlers" (Brandon 380). For being such a "greener," Tom instinctively realized that the tactic they would employ would be to simply make him run away. What he may not have known is how the hunting party was structured. There were probably leaders within the group that maintained the decorum followed. These leaders were probably members of the soldier society. The Kansa soldier society was called *Akida* (Powers 98). "Though military societies were instrumental in organizing war expeditions, it was not their sole function. Some method of maintaining order in the camp, on the hunt or in time of attack was needed. Most tribes therefore had what is usually called a soldier society whose job was to serve as the camp police" (Powers 98). These "police" were responsible for keeping the more zealous warriors or hunters from striking out too soon or too far in front of the rest of the group.

WARS

To this point, the Kansa tribe has been presented as one that was decimated through no fault of its own, or through circumstances beyond its control. This implies that they were not responsible for anything. In essence it denies the fact that they made any decisions affecting their own fate. That is not my intention. They did indeed incite problems for themselves, not only with whites but with other tribes, as well. "Prayers and offerings were commonly made and frequently the suppliant vowed that he would render gifts provided his wishes were fulfilled... The contractual relation assumed between the spirit and the worshiper is illustrated in the invocation of the Sun by a Kansa war captain: 'I wish to kill a Pawnee! I desire to bring horses when I return. I long to pull down an enemy! I promise you a calico shirt and a robe. I will give you a blanket also, O Wakanda, if you allow me to return in safety after killing a Pawnee!' " (Lowie 185).

This intertribal warfare was also responsible for the spread of disease and the loss of accumulated wealth—and life.

It is also fair, at this point, to report a statistic that would deny accusations toward the whites for atrocities perpetrated against the American Indian for no good reasons.

Hostilities between red and white remain a touchy subject since they bring into sharp focus the white man's role as a direct factor in Indian decrease. Contemporary discussions tended to minimize or skirt the issue, creating a historical vacuum that has too often been filled with exaggerated estimates of the number of Indians 'massacred' by United States troops in pursuance of the government's 'genocidal' Indian policy. The available data will not sustain the charge of wholesale slaughter. One estimate is that, between 1789 and 1898, Indians killed some 7,000 white soldiers and civilians and in turn suffered losses in the area of 4,000 dead—a fraction of one percent of the total number of Indians who lived during this period. (Dippie 39)

I posit that the key words in this statement are "available data." It is difficult to make statements that direct fault to one side or the other because of the lack of accurate information.

Tom's second letter was about events that were current. They included nothing that is pertinent here. Tom attempts, in his third letter, to pick up the thread of the narrative.

** * * ...I believe I told you how these weary and yet exciting moments passed, while those dirty Indians were there with me and I alone. Well we somehow managed to keep a guard look out that night and of course there being three, we watched a third of the night each, but at last, as it always will you know, and even the night of death will have its dawn ushering in the glorious day * * **

The tone of this statement is less sympathetic than it appeared to be when he was speaking of the experience before. It is an attempt, instead, to bring his reader into

the danger of the situation—as well as an opportunity to carry the religious element that can be found within his letters, also.

This next entry is interesting because he, once again, returns to his position of doubting the veracity of reports of Indian perpetrated atrocities.

** * * ...John Jamison went out there...as a Conductor on the overland mail Companies Coaches”, a thing that cost him and his party his and their lives in a very short time, of course it was reported that the Indians killed Jamison’s mail party, but although I have always had very grave suspicions, it will perhaps never be positively known who did it. * * **

What is important here is to consider Tom’s interpretation of the information he received. He did not appear to believe everything he was told without having some proof.

In conclusion, the Kaw Indians are still a very small tribe. "In 1872, Congress began a series of acts acquiring the land of...the small Kaw or Kansa tribe, and this buffeted people bought a tract of land from the Osages, where they slowly recovered from the losses of their Kansas experience" (Debo 210). The Osages had been "treated" as the Kaw had been. "The remnants of the Kansa currently live in Kay County, Oklahoma" (Powers 36). Kay County is about 120 miles south of Council Grove, Kansas where they had the historic meeting with George Sibley who would survey the path for the Santa Fe Railway.

It is not very often that new primary information becomes available. It is important to have Tom's perspective of his interaction with these particular tribes. So often, the only information available is from those who had something to gain, or some ulterior motive, from or for the statements they made about the relationship between White Americans and American Indians. Tom was simply telling his sister what happened to him and what he thought about it.

For the most part, in retrospect, he was accurate in his assessments.

Tom's Late Years

On August 28, 1858 Tom "...started overland for New Mexico and landed in Fort Union NM in autumn [of the] same year. From F. Union to Santa Fee [sic], same fall. Occupation Shoe making" (Pension Letters October 1883). Tom worked for Lieutenant Wilkins and Adjutant Major Donaldson, Quartermaster of the Department of New Mexico in Santa Fe where he spent the winter of 1858-59.

Fort Union in New Mexico, though important, had a relatively short life span. Records are available but difficult to get because the site itself is just now being established as an historical site. The records have been stored, but the resources are just now reaching a point where the records can be archived correctly. In other words, I could get them, but I would have to go to the site to help find them.

In April of 1859 Tom moved back to Fort Union where he spent about a month making "...Dragoon Pistol holsters for the Dept Capt—Shoemaker com'd'ng the Ordinance Stores" (Pension Letters October 1883).

In May of 1859 Tom succumbed to the Denver, Colorado Gold Rush fever. He tried his hand at mining and worked herding cattle. I presume that, like so many others, it did not take him long to find that the work involved was hard and seldom rewarded with real riches. By July he had returned to Missouri, the city of St. Joseph in Buchanan County to work as a shoemaker.

Before the end of 1859, Tom moved twice more. First, he moved to Weston in Platte County, Missouri, again working as a shoemaker, then he moved back to central Missouri, Glasgow, Howard County in 1860 (Howard County census record). In Glasgow he worked for a very well respected and wealthy man named Thomas J. Bartholow.

I had an interesting experience in Glasgow, pronounced Glass-gō. Few records are kept in the small town library. Most have been sent to the Missouri State Historical Society located in Columbia, Missouri on the Missouri State University campus. After discovering this, I decided to go down to the waterfront to make some photographs. Glasgow is located on the Missouri River.

Characteristics shared by most small towns is that businesses come and go while buildings become old and torn down, but the streets, usually, stay the same as when the town was first established. Once in a while a sharp corner will be softened into a gentle curve, but Main Street is and was Main Street. Streets running perpendicular to Main Street are often numbered First St., Second St. and Third St. meaning the first street heading out of town, the second street heading out of town, and so on. In the



Photo by author

spirit of this incredible lack of originality, but definite longevity, the street running parallel to the waterfront is called— Waterfront or Water Street. Glasgow is no exception. I snapped a few photos on Water Street including the one to the left. It is nothing impressive, simply the back of some older

buildings, used mostly for freight entrances.

Afterwards, I walked into a pharmacy on the main street of town because I needed an antacid (too much caffeine and not enough food). This old-fashioned

drugstore still has a working soda fountain and is the kind that still stocks handkerchiefs for ladies, loose face powder and a full assortment of denture adhesive. The wooden floors creaked a welcome and there were no

plastic panels to detect stolen

merchandise inside

the doorway. As I

stood at the counter

paying for the items,

my research partner

stood behind me

looking around. I had

asked her to be my

second set of eyes. She nudged me with her elbow and when I looked up I understood

the look on her face. On the wall above the cashier was hanging an old photograph.

Though it is difficult to see, there is a horse-drawn freight wagon sitting in front of one of the stores. That is one of the subtle changes that are often made in small towns. What was a store front is now the back entrance, where dumpsters for refuse are stored and diesel-fume-spewing eighteen wheelers park to make their deliveries. There is only one recognizable building left. Throughout this research I have often wondered what Tom would think of all the changes. I have wondered if he would be able to recognize anything from his life. He spent a very important part of it in this town.

Henderson's Pharmacy is one of those businesses that were passed down from generation to generation. It was in operation during the time that Tom lived there. When asked if they had kept any of the receipts they sadly informed me that they had kept all of their records, but that everything had been destroyed by fire shortly after World War II.



Source: Henderson's Pharmacy, Glasgow, Missouri
Photographer Unknown

They rebuilt on the same location, however the present store and the records are only about fifty years old.

As already stated, Tom worked as a tobacconist for a wealthy tobacco farmer named Thomas J. Bartholow, (Pension Records). The census record of 1860 shows that he was living in a household with another single man, who also worked as a tobacconist, and a married couple. The husband worked as a tobacconist and the wife was a “domestic,” which means she kept house for all four of them. I posit that Bartholow owned the house in which the four of them were living. The husband reported having a “value of personal estate” in the amount of 600 dollars and no real estate. The other single man had 2,000 dollars and no real estate. No values were reported in Tom’s columns, at all. Meanwhile, Bartholow, whose occupation was listed as “Tobacco Dealer,” was enumerated with a “Value of Real Estate” in the amount of 10,000 dollars and a “Value of Personal Estate” in the amount of 32,000 dollars. This work must have agreed with Tom because he stayed in this place for much longer than his prior record had shown.

What was missing from the letters he wrote to his sister, between his Santa Fe Trail adventures in 1858 and the time in which he wrote them, 1872, was a very important part of the United States’ history—the Civil War. Although there is no evidence that his father owned slaves, his church believed slave ownership should be legal. Contrary to his upbringing, and in contrast to his brother, Charles, who had joined the Confederacy, Tom joined on the side of the Union.

He joined the Missouri State Militia 9th Cavalry under the leadership of Thomas J. Bartholow in 1862 (Pension Records). This was a union allied force, which was also strange inasmuch as Glasgow had a predominantly confederate population and political sympathies were with other slave-holding states.

The photograph above was made in 1864, during the Civil War, and this town was the place from which Tom was sent on missions, one of which was to try and catch some "bushwhackers." Although he was never wounded, his service would eventually have a long-lasting affect on his life. While chasing the bushwhackers through the central Missouri countryside, Tom contracted pneumonia caused, he said, by a night's sleep in the open with nothing but his saddle for a pillow. After his recovery, in 1865, he was placed in charge of several other men and sent to St. Louis for their discharge from the military (Pension Records).

Tom married a woman named Josephine sometime between 1862 (Tom's 1862 enlistment records reported him to be single) and 1868 when their first child was born. To date I have been unable to find any marriage record. Among the casualties of that horrible war were both public and private records. Many courthouses were burned.

Josephine was born in Indiana, her birth date was circa 1834 and her father and mother were born in North Carolina and New York, respectively (Census Records). As is so often the case, it is difficult to trace women through historical records.

Tom and Josephine had a daughter and named her Mary Josephine Bartholow Newnam. Her nickname was "Mollie" (Tom's letters). Her birthplace is listed as Missouri in the Cass County, Missouri census records. Notice Mollie's middle name. Quite often parents would give as a middle name to one of their children the mother's maiden name. My hypothesis was that Josephine was Tom's boss's sister or cousin or daughter. I have found that she could not have been his daughter because Thomas Bartholow was only seven years older than Tom. I have been unable to find evidence of any other relationship even though I have a considerable amount of information about Bartholow.

There is little more to tell about Tom during these few years. As I have stated before, I have avoided delving very deeply into Civil War records. Although the amount of information about Missouri and the militia does not equal the amount of that dedicated

to the eastern states or the federal and confederate soldiers, there is still much to be processed and it would be better suited to another manuscript.

Tom, Josephine and Mary were enumerated in the 1870 census living in Wadesburg, Grand River Twp., Cass County, Missouri. Tom was thirty-seven years old, Josephine was thirty-six, and Mary was two. My copy of the census record is incomplete and the column listing "Place of Employment of Occupation" is cut off. It appears, however, that Tom was working with "Boot..." Boot and shoe repair was a necessary service regardless of location and it was a trade to which Tom frequently returned.

According to Tom's letters, they had moved to Pleasant Hill, Cass County, Missouri by 1872. During that same summer, they moved to Lone Jack, which is in Jackson County, Missouri, and Tom was working for Mr. O. O. Brown. Both Pleasant Hill and Lone Jack are near the western border of Missouri, a short distance south of Kansas City.

Mary Moore Newnam, Tom's sister, born in 1851 in Louisiana, Pike County, Missouri, was eighteen years younger than he was. She was the only girl with five older brothers. She was the person to whom Tom wrote the letters.

** * * Tell George if he comes over here to let me know when he is coming and I'll meet him at the train. I guess he'd know me * * **

Given that Tom was writing about his activities from as far back as 1857 and he added the statement "I guess he'd know me," I surmise that Tom had not been directly involved with his brother in many years.

By the time the 1870 census was taken, their mother had remarried and had once again been widowed. Mary, her mother, and her brother George were living in the same household in Canton, Lewis County, Missouri which is on the northeastern side of the state, on the banks of the Mississippi River, about thirty miles north of Hannibal,

Samuel Clemens' (a.k.a. Mark Twain's) home town. Paulina, Mary and Tom's mother, was listed as "keeping house," George was a "painter" (family lore says artist), and Mary was a teacher. This is where she was living, in 1872, when Tom wrote the letters to her.

Tom's first reference to his patent was in his letter dated 12 April 1872. He began his letter, "*Sister Dear: ... George has doubtless received my last by this time. If I succeed, and I hope there is no doubt about it, there is none in my own mind, I will help you next winter if not sooner, however, I have not received my papers yet owing, I think to the irregularity of the mails now. I do not think it will be longer than two weeks before I am ready to start.*"

I do not know what it was that he was hoping to help Mary with "*next winter.*"

I think it may have been a maintenance chore, or something that Mary, their mother, or their brother could not afford to do. Jason, another of Tom's brothers, lived in Monroe County in central Missouri, which was closer than where Tom lived on the opposite side of the state. The other two brothers lived much further away, one in North Dakota and the other in Texas.

The other thing I am still investigating is why there was a delay in the receipt of mail. If this had been during the 1850s, I could give evidence of other Missouri communities that had major complaints about mail delivery. The newspapers rarely failed to report—and loudly complain—of the delays. Usually, it was the result of washed out bridges or incompetence of the local postmasters (Glasgow Times). This was, however, twenty years later. Railroads had already been established in the state

and bridges were built to support the trains. No longer were opposing Civil War troops creating the delays.

In his letter dated 14 April 1872, written two days after the first letter we have, is a clarification of the “papers” Tom had not yet received.

*Sister Dear: * * * I received my patent, sure enough, yesterday and I give my agents, Messers. Munn & Co. of the “Scientific American” credit for the manner in which they have dispatched my claim. I have shown it to several “practical” men here and asked them for an honest opinion and they all with one voice say it is a good thing and will take. I do not know, but I think that George might make something handsome by taking some “territory”, say North East Missouri, and operating it. As I have said before it is a line that has been entirely overlooked by others and yet it is more necessary than a coffee mill which any one can see by a little reflection. Now there are various ways to work it so as to make it pay, for instance, to re-sell the territory a County at a time, which can be readily done at a handsome advance over the price I ask, or to sell “shop rights” to Blacksmiths, (anyone can make they are so simple of construction) or by having them made and then wholesaling them, and I believe that this latter would be the most paying as my Patent has 17 years to run from the 9th Instant¹, but this plan would require some Capital while the would require comparatively none, you may very readily ask why I do not do this? I answer, I have too much territory to handle, the whole United States and Territories, and therefore, I offer some of it low, one dollar for each 1000 population, where one takes several Counties, of course single Counties I must sell higher, and as I wrote to George about it, I shall wait till I hear from him or you. I am, dear sister, your Brother
Tom.*

¹ Meaning that his patent was good until 9 April 1889.

First, a copy of Tom's patent was obtained from Sears Newnam-Cordner, the one who is in possession of the original letters. The patent is in two parts: a written description and a drawing. I have always thought that having an idea unique enough to be patented is important, but I was unfamiliar with the history of it or the process by which it could be acquired.

This invention did not come from great foresightedness. He was not looking to create a new type of heating or cooking device, or to change the type of fuel by which they were powered. His invention was simply an improvement to make the handling of the existing method easier. Although I have no evidence to support the following statement, I would say that most inventions patented made slight improvements on that which was already in place. Progress, not in leaps and bounds, but progress nonetheless. We cannot all be Thomas Edison or Dr. Diesel.

According to William I. Wyman, in "The Patent Office and Invention Since 1845: How the Government Has Kept Pace With the Inventor," found in Hopkin's Our Country and Its Resources, the American patent system was founded under the act of 1790... Thomas Jefferson, the first Secretary of State, was in effect the first Commissioner of Patents and the first examiner." Wyman further states that "Only three patents were permitted to see the light of day in 1790" (199). The patent system, however, was reorganized in 1836 to more closely resemble that which we have today (200). I have created a table using Wyman's figures to emphasize how early in the process Tom received his patent. Tom's patent dated April 9, 1872 is numbered 125,480 (Newnam-Cordner).

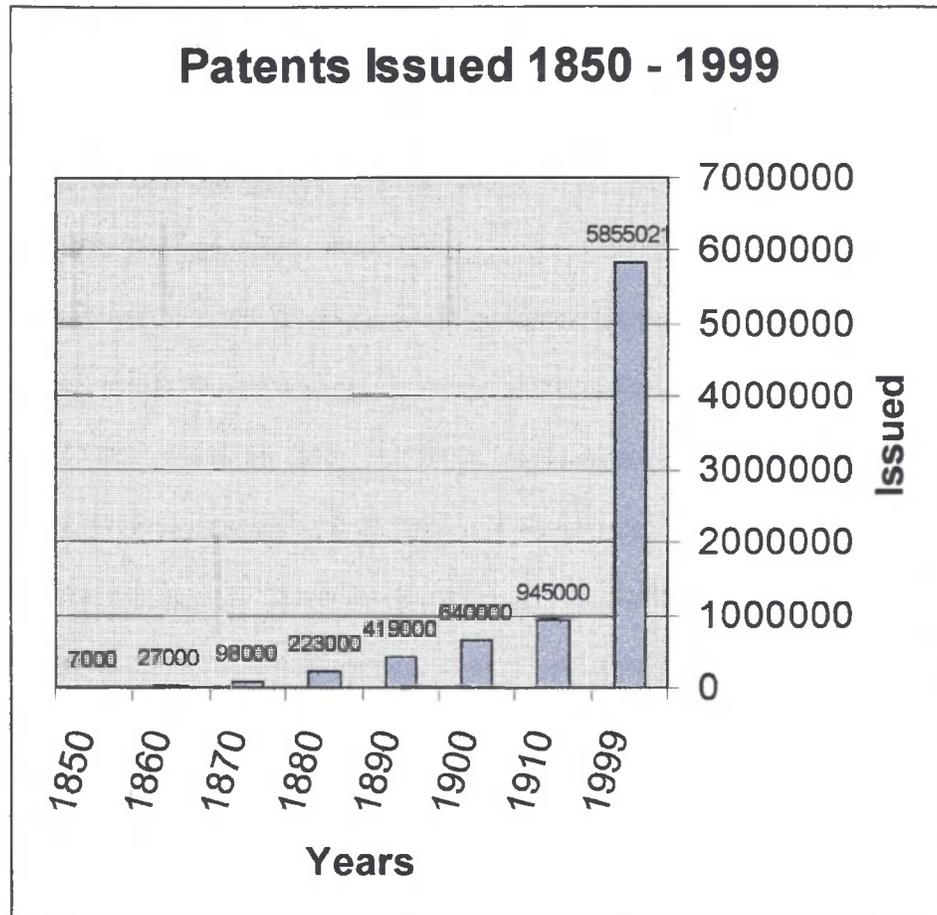


Table 2

As of the end of 1999, there were “5,855,021” United States patents issued—not including copyrights, defense publications or improvement patents

(www.uspto.gov/web/menu/pats.html). Wyman stated that

“The act of 1793 was the only one which provided for the grant of a patent without examination. In 1836 the modern examination system was instituted, by which a search through patents and publications was made to determine the question of novelty. This act also for the first time made a positive requirement for the inclusion of a claim in the specification in the following terms: ‘He [the inventor] shall positively specify and point out the part, improvement or combination which he claims as his own invention or discovery.’” (Hopkins 200).

By examining nothing more than this article and the documents supplied by Newnam-Cordner, it would seem that the process had two basic steps: application with

the inclusion of a written description and drawing or blue print, then archival research and rejection or acceptance. The former is the responsibility of the applicant and the latter the responsibility of the United States Patent Office.

To continue with the history, Wyman wrote, "Then [after the Civil War] began a period of true national expansion—the further developing of the West, with strenuous enterprise in reaching out with new railroads, building of steel mills and locomotive works—marking an inflation of energy, industry and finance, which culminated in the severe panic of 1873" (Hopkins 203). As the investigation of this portion of Tom's letter continues, it should be understood that "timing is everything."

Who were the agents "Messers. Munn & Co." and what was the 'Scientific American'? The answer to both questions begins with a man, an inventor, named Rufus Porter (1792 – 1884).² "He founded Scientific American in 1845 while experimenting with electrotyping process and ten months latter [sic] sold it for a [sic] eight hundred dollars to twenty-two-year-old Orson Desaix Munn (Jun. 11, 1824 – Feb. 28, 1907) and nineteen-year-old Alfred Ely Beach (Sep. 1, 1826 – Jan. 1, 1896). ...Beach's father was an editor and publisher of the New York Sun... Munn had the business experience and his focus was on making Scientific American a commercial success, together they founded Munn & Company" (E-Library). The youth of the men explains how they were still involved when Tom was patenting his invention improvement.

"The first volume [of the Scientific American] was a four page 15 x 20 newspaper that provided the reader poetry, religious news, interesting tid-bits from around the

² Rufus Porter was a multi-patented inventor. He sold the rights to one of his inventions for \$100 to Samuel Colt—the revolving rifle (E-Library, Copyright 1997, Phillip A. Cannon). There may be some confusion about whether this was the patent for a rifle as the source stated or for a pistol—by which Colt is more popularly known. According to Carl P. Russell, author of Firearms, Traps, & Tools of the Mountain Men, University of New Mexico Press, 1996, Colt did, in fact, manufacture a revolving-cylinder rifle (63). Colt Firearms, in their website WWW.colt.com/html/i1a_historyofcolt.html, also states that they manufactured revolving rifles.

country and technical news and instruction” (E-Library). Today, it is a publishing company that issues a magazine of the same name as well as books, series of books, sourcebooks, and electronic media reporting on all aspects of science and technology.

The full written description and drawing are included in Appendix A, however, a brief description and comments are provided here. This was “...a new and Improved Combined Shovel and Tongs... for handling live or other coals, brands of fire, and other articles, designed to be use[d] as a substitute for the separate shovel and tongs in common use...” Basically, the handle of a wrought-iron rake was placed through a slot in the handle of a wrought-iron shovel resembling a large pair of scissors or “tongs,” the length of which probably did not exceed twenty-four inches. The rake could be extended forward to scoop something onto the shovel, then held in place for any movement (Newnam-Cordner).

Tom said that the “...’practical’ men... say it is a good thing...” and so it must have been. Any work-saving device was probably appreciated given the labor-intensive chores required of homemakers in the nineteenth century (A Country Kitchen, 1850). Tom also said it was “...more necessary than a coffee mill...” Personally, I would dispute this because I find very little of greater importance, or “more necessary” than a strongly-brewed-from-grounds cup of coffee.

Evidently this patent gave him the right to sell his shovel/tongs either on paper or as a finished product. The area of Northeast Missouri that he was offering to George would probably have included the counties of Schuyler, Scotland, Clark, Adair, Knox, Lewis, Macon, Shelby, Marion, Randolph, Monroe, Ralls, Audrain and Pike. (This is the geographical boundary established by the Northeast Missouri Genealogical Society and a logical assumption based upon viewing a map of the counties of Missouri.) For the

Without further investigation it is impossible to say for certain for which type of firearm was this patent.

purpose of this essay it would put too fine a point on it to calculate the estimated income given United States population statistics of 1872, although it will be very interesting for further research.

I do not know whether George ever took Tom up on his offer. An interesting point here is that it appears as though he was also making the offer to his sister—I do not know, since she was single, living on a teacher’s wages, that she bought into it, either. From my research thus far, I would say no, they had not.

Later records indicate that Tom never saw this to be a lucrative enterprise. He did, however, begin to do as he had originally suggested as the most profitable way—“...having them made and then wholesaling them.” This brings the reader to the last of the extant letters he had written to Mary:

Lone Jack, Jackson County, Missouri

May 16th 1872

Dear Sister:

I moved here three days ago is the reason why you have not received this before. I am carrying on a shop here for Mr. O. O. Brown³ and like the people very much.

I am your brother Tom--T. G. Newnam

P.S. by the way, excuse me sending so large an envelope with nothing in it.

Yours "Tom".

³ I do not yet know who Mr. O. O. Brown was, nor do I know what kind of establishment he owned.

Nothing he said here would indicate anything about his patent or his occupation while in the employ of Mr. O. O. Brown. When I went to Lone Jack, Jackson County, Missouri, I went to the library. While looking in the local history section in an attempt to find anything about Mr. Brown, I discovered a small booklet written by a former resident of this little town with a big history. The town will be discussed elsewhere, but the monumental discovery I made in that little booklet will be discussed here.

Romulus L. Travis wrote Story of Lone Jack in 1907, seventy-five years after the village of Lone Jack was founded. The Jackson County Historical society reprinted it in 1963. In it, I found this:

During Christmas week of 1873 probably the Masonic lodge here was assisted in special installation exercises, a part of which was public, by a neighboring lodge. It was a success from a Lone Jack viewpoint at least but in the next number of the 'Review,' the weekly newspaper of the town, appeared a letter from the pen of a Christian minister, one of the visitors, in which the several enterprises and institutions of this place were lampooned and satirized in a very discourteous and even disgraceful manner. Especial mention was made of the wind mill there of a man named Newnam then in the course of construction near the blacksmith's shop where he was engaged. Col. John W. Tate contributed a very fitting reply to the above said letter. Newnam was to use the power derived from his wind mill, which was indeed the laughing stock of the vicinity, to manufacture a combination shovel and tongs that he had already patented, or was about to do so, but the project fell through before it materialized, for it was never finished. Daniel Parrow⁴ was a partner with Newnam in the blacksmith shop. (24)

Sadly, there is no record that any copies of the Review exist. It would have been interesting to read the criticism and the rebuttal. I have found that this type of public mudslinging happened often. What is even more astounding is that this community of people could not see the advantage of wind-powered energy. It would seem that this was much more important than the tool they were attempting to manufacture, however, that argument is out of place here.

The patent did, indeed, exist. It is clear that his intentions were to manufacture the product. His location was favorable to marketing his product in both the east and the west. Why, then, did it not come to fruition? What prevented Tom from completing this project? Did he succumb to the naysaying of his peers? Was it, possibly, the “panic of 1873” to which Wyman alluded earlier? Though difficult questions to ever answer completely, letters he wrote answering his Civil War pension inquiry have shed some light on the matter. It was concluded that he had contracted “Lung Disease and Rheumatism” during his 1862 to 1865 tenure with the Missouri State Militia Cavalry, 9th Regiment (Newnam-Cordner). Although there may have been any number of other reasons for the failure of the business—not the least of which is disinterest—these ailments would have been a hindrance to this line of work.

I have made arrangements with James Bevan, a Kansas blacksmith, to collaborate in further research. Jim was the subject of the article “Keeping the Home Fires Burning” in the Spring 2000 issue of Kansas Heritage: A Magazine of the Kansas State Historical Society. “In 1988 he was invited to join the Kansas State Historical Society’s Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program as its only blacksmith” (13). Hopefully, we will be able to discover much more about this interesting patent process and Tom’s place in it.

By 1880 Tom, Josephine and Mollie had moved back to Holden, Missouri and Tom was listed in a business directory as having returned to his former occupation of shoemaking (History of Johnson County 478). While living here, throughout 1883, 1884, 1885 and 1886 Tom had to submit requests and affidavits for his military pension. He did receive it—eventually—although the process was an arduous one. If we, in twenty-first century America, have ever thought that the paperwork connected to government

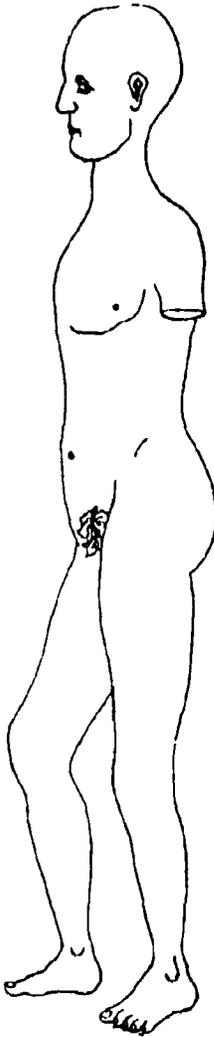
⁴ According to the History of Jackson County, Missouri, written in 1881, there was a man named Daniel B. Porrow who was a Justice of the Peace during the time in which Tom lived in Lone Jack

institutions was complicated, time consuming, or ridiculous, we must certainly empathize with Tom and his experience with the pension process.

Without going into any great detail on the contents of the pension letters there are a couple of things I discovered that are very interesting. First, the "Surgeon's Certificate" contained four anatomical drawings. The first two were line drawings of the

skeletal structure of a man: one from the front, one from behind.

These were crude and unexceptional. The second two line drawings included two side views, sans arms. Note the fig leaf. I presume the restrictive attitudes of the 19th century required modesty even on the part of physicians, especially those in government employment.



Source: Civil War Pension Records

Tom's written responses were also humorous. In Tom's letter of response, dated October 1883, describing any medical treatment he had received for his ailments he said, "Never have had an attack of any acute disease since, except those traceable to my disability. Have always been my own physician for myself and family, and occasionally for my acquaintances. If it had been otherwise I verily believe I would have been dead years ago."

In one of several more letters of response, this one dated 18 February 1884, he must have been getting a little frustrated. He said, "I solemnly swear that after having consulted Doctor—Smith in Leavenworth in 1865 (he is dead now) I have never been under treatment of any Doctor, except an occasionall treatment of Doctor

W. W. Dedman in Lone Jack Jackson Co Mo in 1872 and 1873. (He is dead).” Perhaps they would not have been so if they had followed Tom’s medical advice, especially if he had prescribed the following medications he designed for himself. They are as follows:

1st Formula. For Tuberculosis

Spirits (whiskey) 90% alcohol, one pint

Simple syrup of rock candy ad Libitum

“ “ “ Tolu one fluid ounce

Glycerine 60 drops. mix

Dose a Table spoonful to a wine glassful, ad Libitum.

2nd Formula, for Sciatic Rhumatism

one pint aqua pura

4 ounces Juniper berries evaporated (boiled to half pint)

one ounce senna leaves in water evaporated until a strong

decoction is formed

2 ounces Iceland Moss evaporated in water the whole to be filtered together bottled and corked.

Dose a teaspoonful to a table spoonful three time a day two or three hours after eating.

3rd Formula, counter irritant,

A plaster of cantharides to the affected part, or an application by bathing with “Perry Davis’ Pain Killer” warmed in by the application of a hot sad iron until a good blister is formed.

4th For Paralysis an application of electricy from an ordinary battery.

He immediately followed these recipes by stating, “And I do further solemnly swear that from June 1865 to the present time I have never been able to do an ordinary man’s days work (have repeatedly tried to) at any ‘manual labor.’ “

Although I have presented the former material in a humorous light, I presume that some of these medicines, if not downright poisonous, may have been responsible for his inability to function. Although I have not yet consulted a modern physician, it is my plan to do so for further research.

According to the final diagnosis stated in his pension records, at age fifty, he suffered from "Lung Consumption also Sciatica Rhumatism." Given the fact that he worked as a tobacconist for a tobacco farmer for many years, it is not a stretch to believe that he was a smoker, and to suggest that the "lung disease" was emphysema.

Sometime during her life, Mollie became blind. Family lore says that she was institutionalized in a school for the blind in St. Louis, Missouri (Newnam-Cordner). Tom was listed in the special Veterans and Widows of Veterans census records of 1890, living at 1127 Washington Avenue in St. Louis, Missouri. Although I have no confirmation, I suspect that Josephine had died before 1890 and that Tom had moved to St. Louis to be near his daughter because of his failing health. I cannot confirm how Tom died. I can say with near certainty that it was prior to May of 1896 inasmuch as his pension was diverted to his daughter.

Conclusion

Tom's letters were full of names and places to rediscover and examine. Even though I have been examining the letters closely since 1996, I still discover things that surprise me or things I had never before noticed.

For example, once I have found all of the information that I can about each one of the women in Tom's life, I would like to examine and discuss their lives. The women in Tom's life stayed home and worked to maintain permanence for the rest of their family. Tom's mother and sister and young brother lived alone during the Civil War. As far as I can tell, they had only Mary's income from teaching. Tom's brother was an artist and it is doubtful that many were commissioning portraits when more important matters were at issue.

Recall that Tom told a story about a family acquaintance, William Allison, who had gotten into a gunfight and then had gone out west to earn a living. Historians to this day believe that Allison's nemesis, Noah Atkins, was killed in the encounter. I have irrefutable evidence that Tom was correct and Atkins was not killed. Noah lived to continue his anti-social behavior.

The Santa Fe Trail was approximately 900 miles long. Camp places became common to trail travelers. Eventually, these camp places evolved into settlements that evolved into towns. Some of these towns had boom times, then went bust. They all have stories and they are all interesting. Two historians, Marc Simmons and Gregory Franzwa, have written travel guides for the trail. The stories of the important places of the trail have often been told, but they are scattered. I would like to collect trail narratives and unite the stories for each place.

Religion, particularly Methodism, ran a parallel course with the westward movement. The vehicle for that movement was the circuit-riding preacher. There is no

evidence that Tom's father was a circuit rider although his home served as a place of worship. Tom did, however, mention a man who rode the circuit and was a rip roaring revivalist minister, Tyson Dines who was a colleague to Lorenzo. The essay I would like to write would be entitled "Politics and the Pulpit." Tyson Dines was a zealot and he worked himself literally to death to spread the word of God and his church. He spent a year during the Civil War imprisoned.

Although there was horror on the trail, there was also humor. Tom's crew wandered around for six days, lost, bullwhackers, teams and wagons, one following the other, in circles. There is one story of a teamster who, having gotten too warm, hung his jacket on the horns of his tame ox, Daniel. Seeing this, other cattle got spooked, stampeded, and spread wagons, cargo and men for a radius of fifteen miles (Dary). I would like to collect stories like these and put them into a book that is for pure enjoyment.

The trail as an economic institution has been underemphasized by any other than historians of the American West. I would like to collect data to see exactly how great an impact the Santa Fe Trail had on the economy of the United States.

The problem with doing research like this is location, location, and location. Living seven hundred miles from the nearest point on the trail has been the greatest hindrance. I have had tremendous cooperation in my efforts to gather files and documents and manuscripts. Many institutions, however, have limited human resources, as well as tight budgets. As helpful as they would like to be, they just cannot cater to researchers who cannot come to them. There are many document files waiting to be collected. Until I can get to them, I cannot call a subject finished.

The point I have been trying to make is that Tom's letters sparked a lifetime of investigation for me. There is so much that I did not know, so much that I learned and more that I have yet to learn, so the work will continue.

Appendix A

"Alphabetical list of patentees for the year 1872"
 UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE, 1872 page 133

No. 125,480

Name, residence, and invention: Newnam, Thomas G.
 Pleasant Hill, Mo.
 combined shovel and tongs

Patent date: April 9, 1872

Official Gazette: vol. 1, page 141

125,480

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

* THOMAS G. NEWNAM, OF PLEASANT HILL, MISSOURI *

IMPROVEMENT IN COMBINED SHOVELS AND TONGS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 125,480,
 dated April 9, 1872.

Specification describing a new and Improved Combined Shovel and Tongs, invented by Thomas G. Newnam, of Pleasant Hill in the county of Cass and State of Missouri.

This invention relates to a new and useful improvement in an implement for handling live or other coals, brands of fire, and other articles, designed to be use as a substitute for the separate shovel and tongs in common use; and it consists in a shovel-blade on a slotted handle, and in a wire brush or rake on the end of a handle, which works in the slot of parts being as hereinafter more fully described.

In the drawing, Figure 1 represents a sectional plan view of the two parts, the section being on the line x x of Fig. 2 is an end view.

Similar letter of reference indicate corresponding parts.

A is the combined shovel and tongs. B is the shovel bowl or blade. C is the shovel handle, in which is a long slot, D. This handle is bent so as to form two arcs of circles, with a ringhandle, E, at the end to take hold of. F is a brush or fine rake on the end of the handle G. This handle passes through the slot D in the shovelhandle, where it is allowed to play longitudinally, and up and down, according to the purpose for which the implement is to be used. The form of this handle G is seen in Fig. 1 H is a shoulder, which limits the distance which this handle G extends through the slot D. I is a ringhandle to take hold of on the end of G.

It will be seen that the shovel can be used to take up ashes, & etc., and that coals can be raked onto the shovel by a longitudinal movement of the handle G, and that a brand of fire, stick or wood, or other article can be griped between the parts and handled as with a pair of tongs.

I do not confine myself to the precise form or arrangement of the parts described, as they may be varied in many ways without departing from my invention.

Having thus described my invention, I claim as new and desire to

secure by Letters Patent--

The combined shovel and tongs A, constructed substantially as shown and described.

THOMAS G. NEWMAM.

Witnesses:

WM. NEINS,
GEO. STOLY.

THOMAS G. NEWMAM.

Combined Shovel and Tongs.

No. 125,480.

Fig. 1.

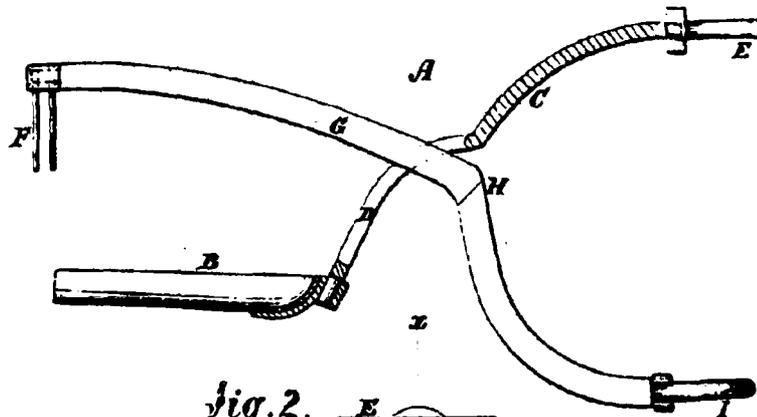
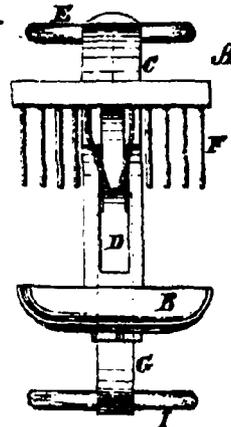


Fig. 2.



Witnesses:

A. Bonner
Geo. W. Mabe

Inventor:

T. G. Newnam

PER

M. Muff

Attorney.

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