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Article Title: Soldiering in the Platte Valley, 1865: A Nebraska Cavalryman's Diary

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Article Summary: After serving in Missouri and Arkansas in the Civil War, the First Nebraska Volunteer Cavalry was transferred to the Platte Valley to guard the transcontinental telegraph line and overland stagecoach stations. Pvt August Scherneckau's diary tells of duty marked by exhausting riding, billowing dust, tormenting insects, chilling winds, numbing boredom, and an occasional dash after Indians.

Cataloging Information:

Cavalrymen: August Scherneckau, William H Ivory, Thomas J Weatherwax, Henry Almsted, Joseph H Beardsley, William Baumer, Thomas J Majors, Joseph Dougherty, Herman Heath, Edward K Donovan, Francis W Lohnes, William Wasmer

Scherneckau's Correspondents: Fred Hedde, Caroline Hedde, Heinrich Egge, Joseph H Beardsley, Thomas Edwin Keen, Theodore Nagel, Christian Wasmer

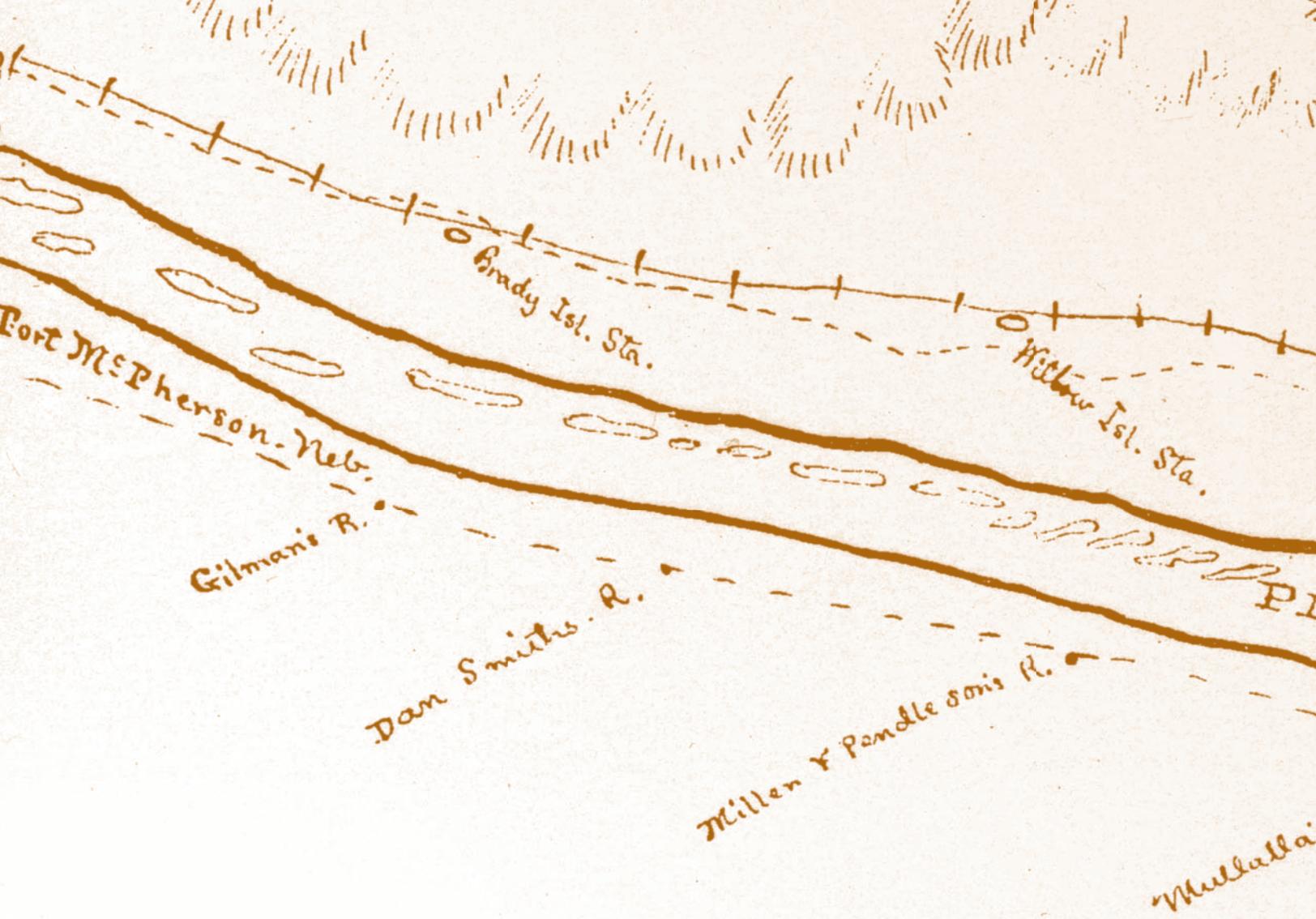
Others Mentioned: Thomas (Pat) Mullally, William Peniston, Andrew J Miller, Ben Holladay, Abraham Lincoln

Platte Valley Stations: Plum Creek Station, Platte River Station, Gilman's Station, Midway Station

Other Nebraska Place Names: Fort Kearny, Fort Cottonwood, Grand Island, Julesburg

Keywords: August Scherneckau, First Nebraska Veteran Volunteer Cavalry, Overland Stage Company, William H Ivory, Edward K Donovan, Fred Hedde, Thomas Edwin Keen, Theodore Nagel, Christian Wasmer, Enfield rifles, Joslyn carbines

Photographs / Images: Platte Valley map drawn during a June 1869 scout by Company C of the Second US Cavalry; Fort Kearny soldiers, including Major Thomas J Majors; Charles McDonald's Cottonwood Springs ranche; Fort Kearny, sketched by an unidentified soldier about 1863; two views of Fort Cottonwood, sketched by Major George M O'Brien in 1864; sketches of Plum Creek Station and its environs, originally drawn by Colonel Lorenzo Sitgreaves; sketches by Sitgreaves of the "Post of Millillas" (at Mullally's Ranch) and its area; illustrations from *The Overland Stage to California*, by Frank A Root and William E Connelley: cavalrymen escorting an overland stagecoach, overland stagecoach leaving Cottonwood Springs, residence and store built by Moses Sydenham near Fort Kearny



SOLDIERING IN THE
PLATTE VALLEY, 1865

A NEBRASKA CAVALRYMAN'S DIARY



BY AUGUST SCHERNECKAU
EDITED BY JAMES E. POTTER AND EDITH ROBBINS
TRANSLATED BY EDITH ROBBINS



Scherneckau was very familiar with the ranches and military enclaves along this stretch of the Platte Valley, both east and west of his post at Midway Station. Midway was adjacent to "Miller and Pendleson's" (Penniston's) Ranche as shown on this map, drawn during a June 1869 scout by Company C of the Second U.S. Cavalry. The Union Pacific tracks and stations on the north side of the river did not exist in Scherneckau's time. Scan from microfilm, RG 393, Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, National Archives and Records Administration

Introduction

A bullet fired carelessly from a comrade's gun threatened to end Pvt. August Scherneckau's enlistment as a Union soldier and perhaps his life. He was wounded in the leg on March 31, 1864, while he and other men of the First Nebraska Volunteer Cavalry guarded a steamboat that had run aground on the White River of northeastern Arkansas. In the weeks since the Nebraskans marched into nearby Batesville on Christmas Day 1863, they had been engaged in a vicious little war with Confederate soldiers and partisans for control of the Arkansas countryside, its hamlets, and its waterways.

Scherneckau (shure-nuh-cow) lay bedfast in a series of makeshift hospitals until mid-June, when many of the First Nebraska soldiers were recalled from the fighting and sent home on furlough as their reward for reenlisting. He accompanied the Nebraska veterans on the steamboat ride to St. Louis, and then made his way back to Grand Island City, his home since 1858 when the young immigrant from Holstein joined his uncle, Fred Hedde, and other Germans who had established a settlement in Nebraska Territory. By the time Scherneckau had recovered from his wound and

returned to his regiment in February 1865, the men of the First Nebraska Veteran Volunteer Cavalry were fighting a new war against a new foe in a new locale: Cheyenne, Sioux, and Arapaho warriors in Nebraska's Platte Valley.

Protecting the overland travel and communications corridor extending along the Platte and over the Rockies to the West Coast had posed a problem for the federal government from the outbreak of the Civil War. While the war continued, only a handful of Union volunteers could be spared for service in the West. Roaming Indian raiders were the main threat, particularly after an 1862 uprising of the Minnesota Sioux and the army's subsequent punitive campaigns in Dakota Territory sparked resentment among the Plains tribes. When warriors swept eastward along the Platte and Little Blue valleys in early August 1864, killing settlers and travelers and leaving road ranches and stage-coach stations as smoking ruins, it was clear more soldiers were needed.

The First Nebraska veterans had expected to return to Arkansas when their furlough expired, to rejoin the recruits and nonveterans who remained behind. But the Indian raids finally prompted the War Department's agreement to pleas that Nebraska officials had been making since 1861.

Maj. Thomas J. Majors of the First Nebraska Veteran Volunteer Cavalry stands at right rear in this photograph said to have been taken at Fort Kearny, a place well known to Scherneckau and his comrades.
NSHS RG2189-05



The territory's volunteer soldiers should be kept at home. Accordingly, the First Nebraska was ordered to reassemble in Omaha, from which it marched in late August 1864 to garrison Forts Kearny, Cottonwood, and several tiny outposts scattered along the Platte.

The soldiers' principal task was protecting the transcontinental telegraph line and overland stagecoach stations, escorting the coaches, and keeping open the Platte River Road for the freight wagons essential to supplying military posts and civilian settlements in the trans-Missouri West. The U.S. mail also had to go through. This duty was marked by exhausting riding, billowing dust, tormenting insects, chilling winds, numbing boredom, and an occasional dash after Indians, whom the soldiers rarely caught. Platte Valley service offered even less romance and recognition than had the sporadic hide-and-seek skirmishing with Confederate bushwhackers in the Arkansas woods and bayous. The men of the First Nebraska would get no respite from the wearisome and lonely assignment until the last of them were finally mustered out in July 1866, their Civil War ending months after the last Confederate armies had surrendered.¹

While many soldiers in the "big war" east of the Missouri recorded their experiences in letters and diaries, personal accounts from the Plains Indian campaigns of the 1860s are far less common. August Scherneckau's diary is an exception that proves the rule. Beginning with his October 1862 enlistment in the First Nebraska and continuing until he was mustered out in October 1865 when his term was up, he wrote almost daily in his diary, except for the few months he was at home recovering from his wound. He kept it largely for the benefit of his relatives and friends in the Grand Island settlement, so they could see the war through his eyes. Scherneckau's account of his three years with the First Nebraska is the richest and most detailed record of a Nebraska soldier's Civil War service that has come to light, with the added bonus of having been written from the perspective of a recent German immigrant.

The majority of Scherneckau's wartime diary, covering the First Nebraska's service in Missouri and Arkansas from 1862 to 1864, was published in 2007 as *Marching With the First Nebraska: A Civil War Diary*, translated from the German by Edith Robbins and edited by Robbins and James E. Potter. Due to the diary's length and its shift in focus and locale during 1865, the book summarized

Scherneckau's Platte Valley experiences and the observations he recorded during the final months of his enlistment.

As a document that provides new details on an important, but often overlooked part of the story of Nebraska's Civil War soldiers, the 1865 diary deserves publication in full. It began when Scherneckau left Grand Island on February 23, 1865, to rejoin his regiment. Five days later he was reunited with his Company H comrades at Midway Station, located at William Peniston and Andrew J. Miller's ranche, some sixty miles west of Fort Kearny. Nearby was a station for Ben Holladay's Overland Stage Company, which was the primary reason soldiers were posted there.

From his vantage point at Midway and from horseback as he rode along the trail, Scherneckau observed a constant parade of stagecoaches, freighting contractors' "bull trains," and emigrant wagons passing up and down the Platte Valley. He witnessed the buildup for Gen. Patrick E. Connor's 1865 Powder River campaign against the Indians, saw the comings and goings of volunteer regiments, and noted important passersby, both military and civilian. The seemingly endless procession provided daily fodder for his pen. He also described the Platte Valley landscape, the military posts, the occasional foray in pursuit of elusive warriors, and the rigors of soldier life.

Upon leaving the army Scherneckau returned to Grand Island, but he soon moved to Oregon, where he spent most of the rest of his life. After his death in 1923 at age eighty-five, he was buried at Oceanview Cemetery near Astoria. In 1984 his Civil War diary was deposited at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland. The Society generously granted permission for its publication, first as *Marching With The First Nebraska*, and now as this article.²

The Diary

(It seems here that a large part of my diary has been lost. Only in February 1865 do I find something reported again until November of the same year. The next page starts with February 1865.)³

Thursday, February 23 – Egge took me up to Hedde's, from where I drove on with a government train of twenty-five wagons to Jackson's on the Wood River, where I was received very warmly, had a very good bed, also the food was good.⁴ The weather was quite pleasant.

“I am really
happy that we
don’t have to go
along, one could
freeze to death;
it’s even too cold
to write!”

Friday, February 24 – This morning by a southeasterly wind we had some snow. I went a little ahead of the train, saw Dugdale and also the Eddie brothers.⁵ We reached the river at about 3 o’clock, and went across to the fort with the government wagons, which were fetching firewood from the islands in the river. I stayed the night in the hospital, where I found several comrades from my company. The captain of our company is also here, but I did not get to see him.⁶ In the evening the weather became milder.

Saturday February 25 – I slept well, since my bed was just as fine as I could wish for. Nevertheless, this morning I went back to my old quarters with our band, where I also ate at noon. Visited Thavenet.⁷

Sunday, February 26 – Last night I slept in the quarters of our band. Then walked around at the fort and was bored. Strong, cold wind.

Monday February 27 – Spoke with Captain Ivory. Then drove with three wagons bound for Plum Creek, where we arrived a little after dark.⁸ Ate and slept in Company I’s quarters. Truly nice weather.

Tuesday, February 28 – Captain Ivory, who was with us, secured us a light wagon, which brought us fifteen miles farther to a ranch, where ten men of our Company H are stationed.⁹ From there still nine miles farther, here where I am writing this, is the headquarters of Company H, probably our home for at least the duration.¹⁰ In any case we are set up here fairly comfortably since the houses and stables appear to be quite solid and warm. The comrades gave me a warm reception. In the evening we had to muster. After we had really pleasant weather during the day, it became cold in the evening. Wrote to West.¹¹

Wednesday, March 1 – The weather is mild, yes, really nice for this time of the year. Almost daily two wagons must be sent out in order to get the necessary wood for our heating. They haul mostly cedars out of the canyons ten to twelve miles away, which run into the Platte valley. The buildings here are all built of cedar logs or are adobe houses. The large stable has room for sixty horses; furthermore, there are several smaller facilities, blacksmith shops, etc. A large, two-story cedar log house is not yet finished. The stage company has a station here to change their teams.¹² The owners of this place are not here. The orderly sergeant of our company told me today that I could serve as company clerk, if I was will-

ing to do it. I took it for the present. The horses and ponies are, in general, quite skinny. There is no hay here, but plenty of corn and oats. Wrote to Egge and Hedde.

Thursday, March 2 – Today it turned quite cold along with a strong south wind. Two young oxen, picked up from the next ranch ten miles west from here, were butchered.¹³ Our meals are quite good, we draw flour and bake the bread ourselves.

Friday, March 3 – A little snow fell, with it sharp air, yet nice weather. Wrote to Egge at the office.

Saturday, March 4 – Nice weather. I did laundry today. The stage stops here rather irregularly now. An escort does not accompany it unless the drivers expressly request it, and even then only one or two men ride along.

Sunday, March 5 – Glorious weather. At 10 o’clock in the morning, the usual company inspection; then the reading of the Articles of War by our captain. A while later we of our company who are mounted went for a ride under orders of the captain.¹⁴ We practiced shooting the revolver while in trot and in gallop, etc. My little pony was very wild, since he is used so little; and even though we did not continually ride hard, he was covered with foam due to his frantic maneuvering.

Monday, March 6 – Since one wagon had to go to the canyons to get a piece of wood for a wagon shaft, I offered to go along as one of the escorts. The river valley (bottom) right here is very wide, the ranch is close to the Platte.¹⁵ The hills bordering the valley, in general called bluffs here, are considerably higher and rise more steeply than I have seen anywhere else on the Platte; so steep at some places, that a wagon can’t drive up, therefore a suitable place must be located. From the top one can see the shiny, silvery ribbon of the Platte far across the valley, and the buildings of our ranch next to the big road are visible from here only to a good eye. Even the team, which is following us at the foot of the hills (bluffs), looks like a little toy.

The plain, where we have stopped now, stretches toward the south as far as one can see. Only the tops of some trees, which appear just above the surface like bushes, reveal that there must be deep ravines in which these trees grow, and so it is. The entire plain is crisscrossed with such ravines, some more, some less deep, commonly called canyons. The edges, almost always very



steep, have a strong resemblance to boulders, but it is all soil, washed out by the rain into all sorts of picturesque shapes. Such cones of soil, standing isolated, completely give the impression of rock-images, at the same time rising steeply up to thirty to forty feet, just like boulders. In these ravines, where the prairie fire cannot easily enter, there is quite a lush vegetation: elms, ash, and hackberry are the main types of trees that grow here, now and then raising their tops over the surface. Cedars have become quite rare here, though now and then a single one is still standing. Farther up on the Platte, near Cottonwood Springs, there is supposed to be more cedar wood. Only at a few places can one drive down into these canyons with a wagon. Usually where the canyons reach the valley is the only place. The bed of the Wood River at Grand Island, at least downstream, looks like these canyons, but not as steep and deep as most of these are here.

We soon found what we needed and early in the afternoon we were home again. I then wrote a little for the company. The weather was glorious. I am also more pleased with my horse, although I have to watch out, because he loves to be quite capricious. Despite the warm weather the rest of

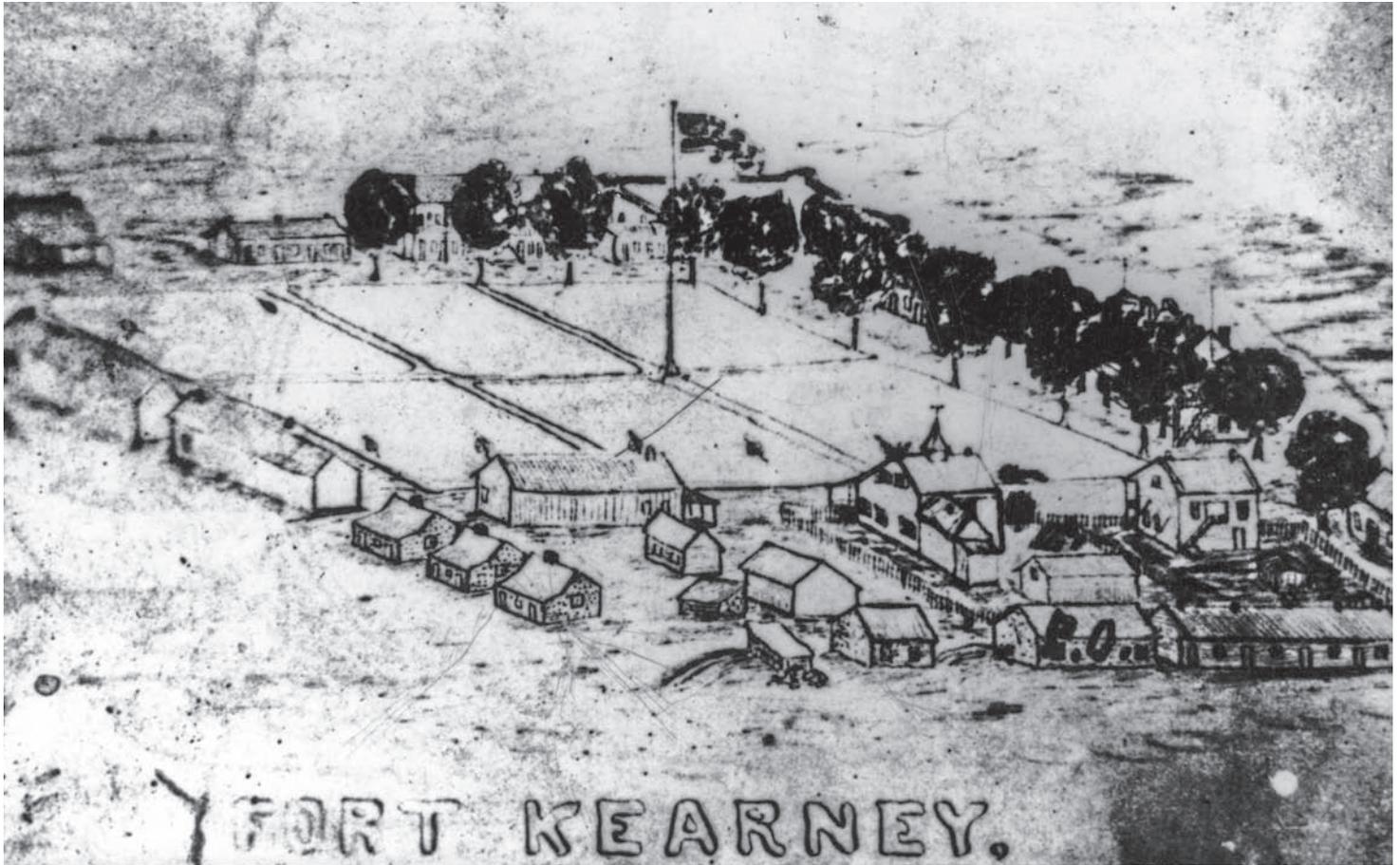
the men from the company did not go out with us, but were eagerly getting the ice out of the river into a cellar, which was to serve as the icehouse. However, it is doubtful if the ice will still be there when we need it. Today one stage came from each direction.

Tuesday, March 7 – The weather got colder. I had some writing to do at the office. In the afternoon Captain Majors and Lieutenant Talbot came through here with an escort, going ahead of the main force, which is to advance against the hostile Indians.¹⁶ The vanguard, some twenty men from our regiment, arrived here this evening and stayed overnight. The weather became colder.

Wednesday, March 8 – Very cold and a snowstorm. Despite the bad weather our men forming the *avantguard* of the larger division proceeded. I am really happy that we don't have to go along, one could freeze to death; it's even too cold to write! In the afternoon Burmester and family arrived here and stayed overnight, as well as the remaining part of his small train.¹⁷ It was very cold and I had great trouble keeping warm in bed.

Thursday, March 9 – Weather was nicer, but still a sharp wind. I wrote to Hedde; received a letter

Charles McDonald's Cottonwood Springs ranche was constructed of cedar logs cut in the canyons south of the Platte River. In October 1863 the ranche provided temporary headquarters for the Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry, which began building Fort Cottonwood just to the west. NSHS RG2469:PH1



An unidentified soldier sketched Fort Kearney about 1863. NSHS RG2102-4-10

from W. West. Several wagonloads of ice have been stowed away in our ice cellar. Company F from our regiment came through here with a cannon from Fort Kearney on the way to the west. In the evening the Eleventh Kansas Cavalry Regiment camped here.¹⁸ This night it was again quite cold.

Friday, March 10 – This morning the Kansas Regiment proceeded on its march to Cottonwood Springs. I had to make out the muster rolls for our company. In the evening I received a letter from Hedde.

Saturday, March 11 – Nice weather, but windy. Had a haircut today and was “made pretty.” Wrote for the company. Two men from our regiment came back from the excursion, which was out, to go to Plum Creek, since they had suffered greatly from the cold. Wrote to Hedde.

Sunday, March 12 – Weather pleasant. The usual inspection of the troops and horses. In the afternoon quite a large train arrived from Denver, staying here overnight. Since there is still room in the stable, the stable guard does a good business, since it takes in fifty cents for every team of horses that is put up overnight. Of course, we also have hay [for sale?].

Monday, March 13 – The weather became colder and it looked like snow. I copied and also wrote to Egge.

Tuesday, March 14 – About one inch of snow fell last night, which had, however, completely disappeared by today. A company of six men, including me, went out on an excursion today to inspect the area to some extent, and if possible, to kill game. Since the ice on the river did not allow us to ride over to the big island across from our ranch, we took to the hills (bluffs), about ten miles south of the station. The area is covered with deep-cutting ravines, which have no water and only little timber. The animal life is very insignificant in this area, probably due to the lack of water. We saw only three black-tail deer, which, however, escaped without harm.

We have the short Enfield rifles, one of the best firearms in the army, but not on horseback. A part of our regiment has now received the Joslyn carbine, a rear loader, with copper shells (without the copper cap). These are, of course, more appropriate for mounted men than the antiquated system of the front-loaders with copper cap.¹⁹ Major

Armstrong was here as district inspector; however, the inspection was already over when we returned shortly past noon.²⁰ We made about twenty-five miles.

Wednesday, March 15 – Captain Ivory went by stage to Plum Creek. I again worked on the muster rolls. The weather was cold. I borrowed \$60 from Sam Vogan.²¹

Thursday, March 16 – Finished the rolls today. Made out a receipt for the money from Vogan. Weather nice. Captain returned with the stage last night. Two coaches came up the river yesterday and one from the west.²²

Friday, March 17 – A terrible storm arose, which forced dust through all the cracks and splits of our old sod houses. Never before have I experienced so much dust, although indeed, I had previously seen quite a bit of it, especially here in Nebraska. But I was never before in such a dusty and sandy area. Everything was packed with fine sand and dust. A train of government wagons came through here at the same time, escorted by the company of Pawnee Indians, now on good ponies, equipped and armed just as we are.²³ It was a miserable day to have to ride in such dust. We were not even twenty paces from the large, very busy road, yet the dust clouds were so dense and thick that often we could not see the vehicles passing by. Yet toward evening it became calm, really nice weather.

Saturday, March 18 – Weather still windy.

Sunday March 19 – Very warm, but nice weather. Inspection, as always. The advance guard of the Sixteenth Kansas Cavalry Regiment came through here with a number of loose horses, also a government train of some one hundred wagons.²⁴ I wrote to Egge. Sent \$50 to Kearny through Riber.²⁵ In the evening the tenant of this place arrived with a load of merchandise.

Monday, March 20 – Wrote for the company. Our wagons left for Fort Kearny. Again it was very stormy and became colder. Received a letter from Hedde.

Tuesday, March 21 – The weather is nice and warm. Six men from our company, who wanted to go hunting on the north side of the river, were nearly all wet from head to toe in an attempt to cross the river on horseback. They had to turn back. Shortly after, we saw something moving south of us toward the bluffs there, perhaps five to six miles away, which we thought were buffaloes. Five or six of us who had saddled up quickly and

chased out there soon realized that this was herds of antelopes, which rapidly ran away. However, one of our hunters who followed them brought down one of the animals. Therefore, we had a roast of antelope this evening. We really do not have to rely on hunting, since fresh meat is delivered daily. Wrote to Keen and Hedde.²⁶

**“The dust clouds were so dense
and thick that often we could not
see the vehicles passing by.”**

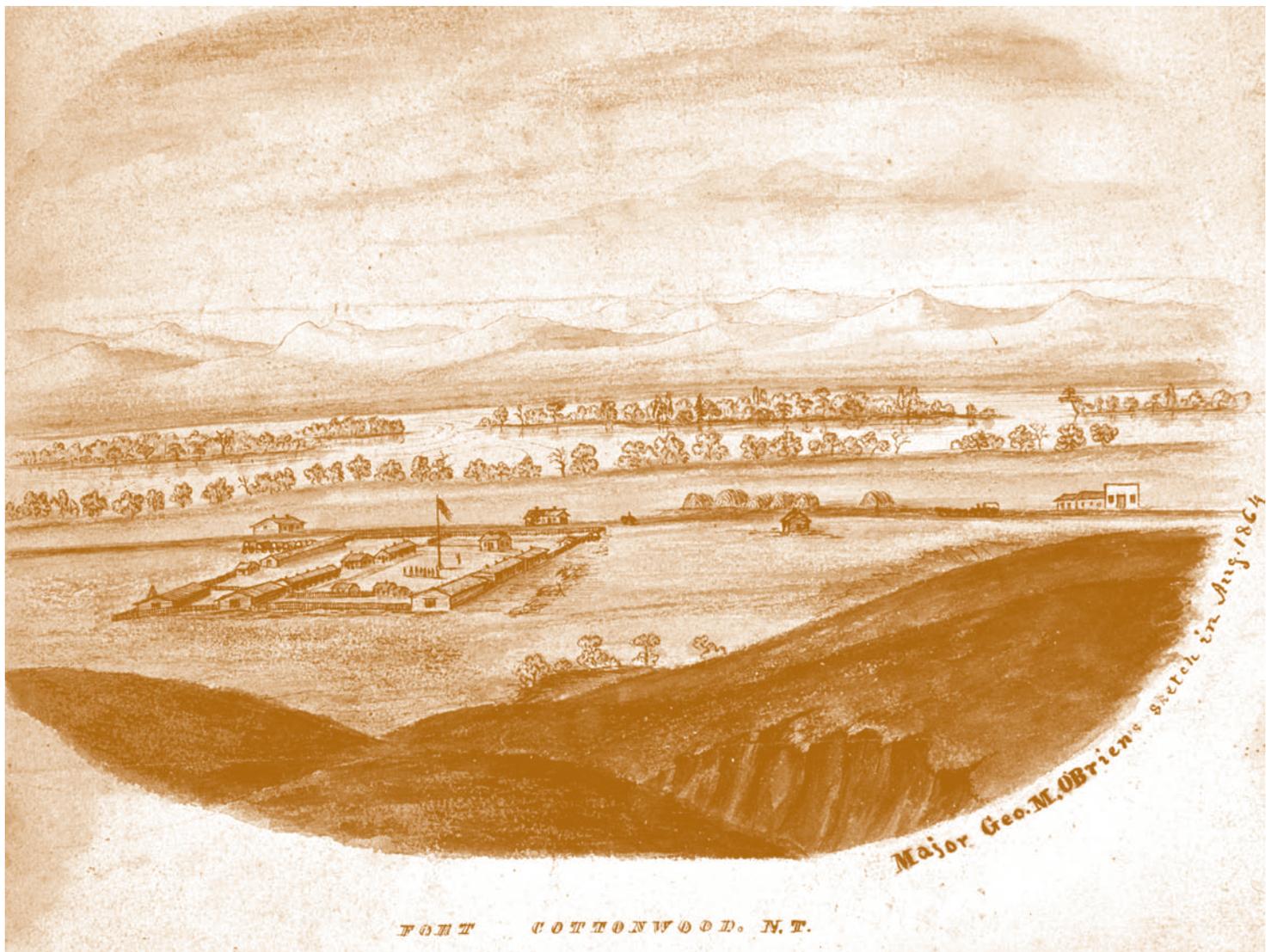
Wednesday, March 22 – Today, another hunting party of six men went out south from here into the canyons and came back again toward evening without having shot or even seen anything. I wrote a little at the office, copied a card, and the like. Yesterday and again today the stage did not bring any mail. Some wind, otherwise really nice weather. The scouts sent out to the south had been down to Plum Creek, almost directly south, made about forty miles.

Thursday, March 23 – Especially nice, warm weather. Captain went hunting with several men, since herds of antelopes had been seen in the south between us and the bluffs, only a few miles away. In the evening a government train arrived at camp, escorted by a detachment of our regiment from Plum Creek [station].

Friday, March 24 – Since we were to provide the escort for the train, I arranged that I would be allowed to go along. The train went to Gilman’s ranch, twenty miles from here.²⁷ Halfway between here and there is Smith’s ranch, to where we rode back and stayed overnight after we had taken the train safely into camp. Southwest wind and very dusty.

Saturday, March 25 – Early this morning we were back here again. Since the wind was still strong, it made our return trip very unpleasant. Toward evening it began to rain. We drew clothing. Letters from Hedde and Egge.

Sunday, March 26 – It rained quite steadily last night and still today. We had the usual inspection, but fell in without weapons due to the wet weather. Wrote to Egge.



Maj. George M. O'Brien of the Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry commanded Fort Cottonwood in 1864 and made this sketch. NSHS RG0951-01a

Monday, March 27 – Today the rain changed to snow, with northwest wind. Yet toward evening the weather became clear.

Tuesday, March 28 – A large train went through here today, escorted by the Eleventh Kansas Cavalry Regiment, mostly destined for Denver. Received a letter from Hedde. The weather was quite good.

Wednesday, March 29 – Generals Connor and Mitchell, coming from the west, passed through here.²⁸

Thursday, March 30 – Nice warm weather. The headquarters of the regiment with the regimental band came through here today on the way to Cottonwood Springs, where the headquarters is to be established.²⁹ I went along with several men as escort to Smith's Ranch. At sunset we were back here again.

Friday, March 31 – Very nice and warm weather. I worked a little at the office and finished a letter to Egge. In the evening a second prayer meeting was held by Fred Harris and J. Young.³⁰

Saturday, April 1 – Weather like yesterday. Captain rode my pony to Plum Creek. Received a letter from Hedde, dated the twenty-ninth of last month. Wrote to Nagel and sent him the *Nebraska Republican*.³¹ A large train came through here from the west today, another going west stayed here overnight.

Sunday, April 2 – Today fairly heavy rain. We had the usual inspection. An ox-train with loose cattle came from the west, as well as one harnessed with mule teams. Church this evening, but not as well attended as the last time. Captain Ivory not back yet.

Monday, April 3 – Wrote to Mrs. [Caroline] Hedde. I received a letter from Keen, through Schuller. The weather was warm, but it looked like rain. Some thunderstorms in the evening. I worked at the office. Captain came back.

Tuesday, April 4 – During the night it snowed a little, but the snow disappeared soon. Wrote at the office.

Wednesday, April 5 – A severe wind came up during the night and this morning we had the prettiest snowstorm, which continued almost all day and blew together sizeable drifts. Was lying in bed almost all day.

Thursday, April 6 – The sky is clear again, but still cold weather. In protected areas the snow melts in the sun. A large train, going to Denver, stayed here overnight. I bought a case of butter. We received the first news of the taking of Richmond. A cold night.

Friday, April 7 – To celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Shiloh we hung out a large flag.³² The Sixteenth Kansas Regiment marched past with a wagon train and five hundred pack mules. I received a box with three-dozen eggs via a driver, for which I paid three dollars freight. The weather was quite pleasant. Received a letter from Egge.

Sunday [Saturday], April 8 – Cold southeast wind, it looks like rain. I went with both our teams to the bluffs and we got two loads of firewood. Wrote to Hedde and Egge.

Monday [Sunday], April 9 – Heavy snow fell this morning, yet it was quiet and warm. Three of us had to leave for [Fort] Cottonwood with two prisoners. We had the wind at our back and it was not as bad as it seemed at first, although the snow fell so heavily that we often could not see over one hundred paces ahead. The tracks in the road were completely covered with snow and only after we met several wagons and a government train did it get better, although it was very difficult and hard on our horses. It snowed all day with only small interruptions. We arrived at Cottonwood at retreat.

The Platte has fairly good timber here on the islands, mainly cottonwood, but also cedars. The bluffs stretch out close to the river and the canyons hold lots of cedar. All buildings here have been built of nice cedar logs. East of the fort there are two to three ranches, stores, the post office, etc.³³ The government buildings, barracks, and stables, and so on, form a square, which on the outside is surrounded by a kind of crude palisade, not over five feet high and constructed of cedar

posts and logs. The open square in the center has a flagpole just like in the square of Fort Kearny. Also a row of trees is planted around the square, but they do not seem to thrive especially well.

We put our horses in one of the stables, received corn and hay for them, and found a place to stay with our regimental band, which received us warmly. We had to deliver our two prisoners to the guardhouse, where the accommodations are not very special. It seems to me that this place has many advantages over Fort Kearny as far as location is concerned. Also, as a fortified place, at least against Indians, it is also worthwhile. But the members of our band are not especially happy here and would rather have remained in their old quarters in Kearny. However, I must say that this new place certainly appeals to me more than the dismal Kearny. Everything is cedar here and nothing but cedar wood is burned. The Sixteenth Kansas Regiment is still in camp nearby. Also a part of the signal corps of this department is now here, in order, I believe, to go out with the expedition against the Indians.³⁴

Monday, April 10 – Potts and I slept marvelously after yesterday's ride.³⁵ Today it is still snowing just as hard as yesterday. We remained safely here; the snow is about six inches deep, yet it is warm. This noon the officer de jour came with a telegram signed by [Secretary of War Edwin] Stanton and A. Lincoln, which reported the surrender of Lee and his army. Our regimental band played several national melodies, and despite the bad weather, general cheerfulness prevailed. This very evening both of our prisoners, delivered here, were set free and slept with us in the quarters of the band.³⁶ The wind was still easterly and it looks like more snow.

Tuesday, April 11 – Since it had stopped snowing we began our return trip at 8:30 o'clock. In the morning the road was still very bad and difficult for the horses. But around noon the weather cleared up and the snow disappeared quicker than it had come. On the whole we made this trip faster than on the way up and by 3 o'clock in the afternoon we were home again.

Wednesday, April 12 – A nice day. I packed up things for Egge; wrote to Egge and Hedde. It is drying up a little. A lot of wagons from the west passed by here.

Thursday, April 13 – Nice weather, I made laundry. Quite a few teams went up, also several trains came from the west. A detachment of the

Eleventh Ohio Cavalry Regiment with horses came through here going to Fort Laramie.³⁷ The headquarters of our regiment with the band came through here on three wagons, back to Kearny again, where it is to remain. It was quite windy. Captain Ivory went by stage to Plum Creek.

Friday, April 14 – The day was nice, but windy. It is drying up quickly. An empty government train came through here from the west. In the evening Captain Ivory returned from Plum Creek by stage. I received a letter from Egge, sent one off to Theo. Nagel. Miller, the real owner of this place arrived here yesterday.

“Yesterday evening, through a passenger on the stage, we received the first reports of the murder of the president. It was very depressing. Many debates about the value of Lincoln. Several put him even higher than Washington.”

Saturday, April 15 – Nice day. The Third U.S.V.[olunteer] Infantry Regiment came through here this morning, eight companies strong.³⁸ Wrote to Egge.

Sunday, April 16 – Warm, nice weather. The usual company inspection. Yesterday evening, through a passenger on the stage, we received the first reports of the murder of the president. It was very depressing. Many debates about the value of Lincoln. Several put him even higher than Washington. Our wagons returned from Fort Kearny with a load of corn.

Monday, April 17 – The weather today is stormy. I wrote a little at the office and to Pyper and Robertson.³⁹ Several large trains, harnessed with beautiful horses and mules, went westward.

Tuesday, April 18 – I wrote to Hedde, Egge, and Behrens. Very stormy and the dust was unbearable. Our company wagons went to Kearny, I sent a box to Hedde, addressed to Pyper and

Robertson. A detail of five men, supplied for three days, crossed the Platte today to the north side of the river to hunt and to learn more about the area. Buffalo Creek empties into the Platte just about opposite Plum Creek, but then remains in the bottom of the Platte for nearly ten miles going west, until, almost across from Smith’s ranch, it divides into several arms and passes into the bluffs. The valley of the Platte, by the way, is very wide here and the bottom on the north side of the river even more extensive than on this side. I received a letter from Hedde.

Wednesday, April 19 – This noon we fired a salute of twenty-one shots each from our carbines for the funeral of our president. It was raw and windy.⁴⁰

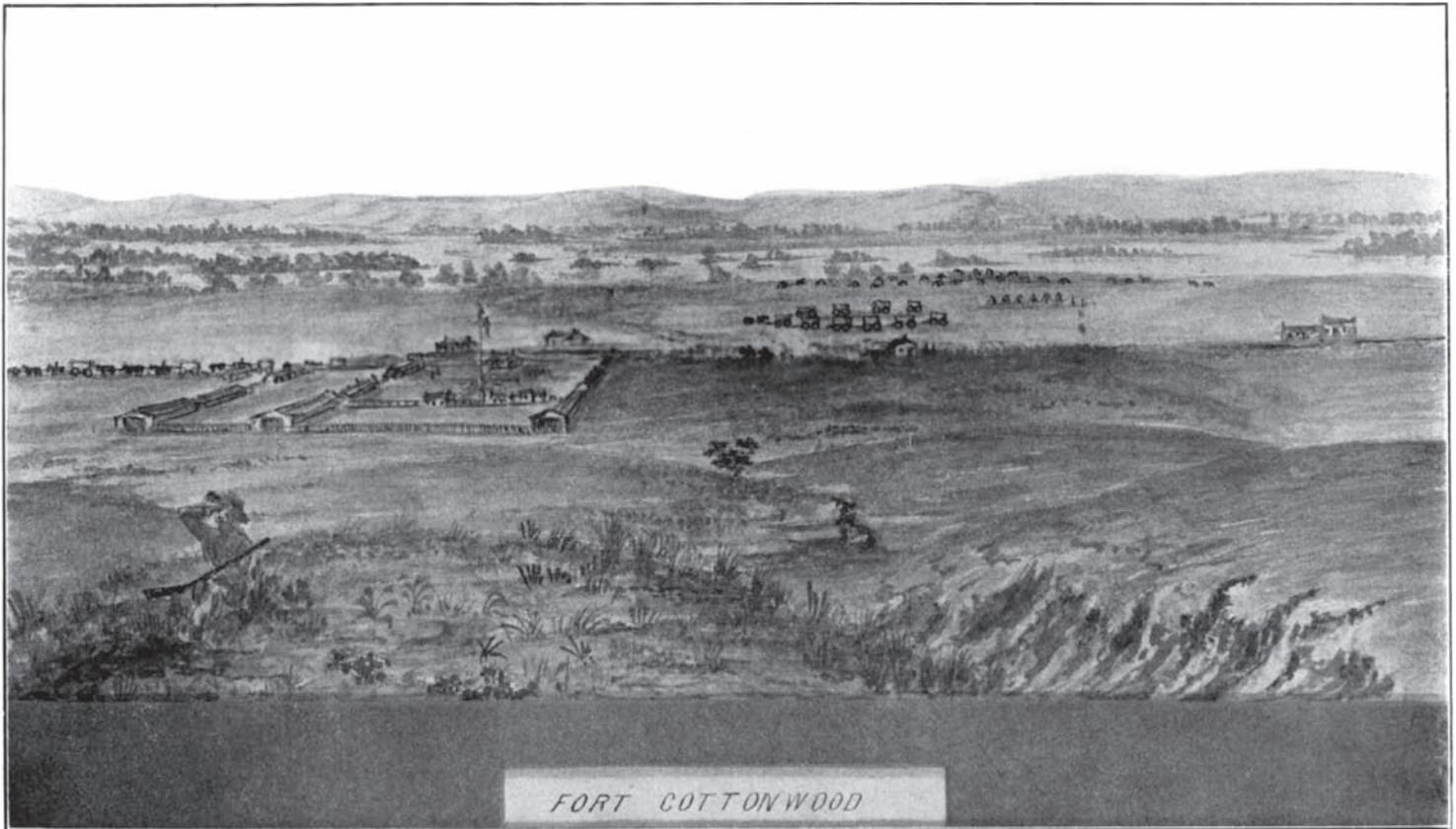
Thursday, April 20 – Windy and cold. Some small trains passed. Our scouting party returned from the north side of the river. They had shot an antelope and a deer and had seen several buffaloes. They probably had been some sixty miles north from here.

Friday, April 21 – Like yesterday.

Saturday, April 22 – Raw; several trains passed. I wrote at the office.

Sunday, April 23 – A detail of six men under Elwood’s command went today to the “Republican” fork of the Platte south of here in order to become better acquainted with the area between here and the river valley there, and at the same time to reconnoiter whether Indians might be over there, since rumors are circulating here that a band of them, about eight hundred men, had crossed the road below Julesburg.⁴¹ Besides, we were expected to hunt and bring in game.

The day was nice. We went southwest, crossed Plum Creek quite close to its source. Here it did not have water but there was some timber on the edge. We estimated that we were about fifteen miles away from our quarters on the Platte. At first we crossed the divide between the Platte and Republican and soon reached ravines, which led to the last mentioned river or at least to its tributaries. The area was quite rugged, even though we always had a good path and no trouble getting through, even on horseback. Soon we were at a dry bed of a creek; we followed its bed where there were still some trees. We followed its course for about five miles where it began to have some water. As soon as we found a good location, we made camp. This creek has more timber on its banks, and in the many bends created on its



course, than our Wood River, at least as far as we know the Wood River downstream. We saw a few antelopes; a rattlesnake (viper) was killed. The night was cold, we took turns standing guard, also we did not have a fire since we did not know who our neighbors were, if there were some close by. Made about twenty-five miles.

Monday, April 24 – We followed the creek on top of some kind of bluff on its left bank. In doing so we had to cross three or four creeks, its tributaries, and also a number of more or less deep ravines. I saw on this creek, as well as on some of its branches, sandstone rocks appearing, a very soft type, giving the area a character that we are not used to seeing in this part of Nebraska. We saw more antelopes and also a few turkeys, occasionally a wolf, and prairie dog villages in abundance. It was quite warm.

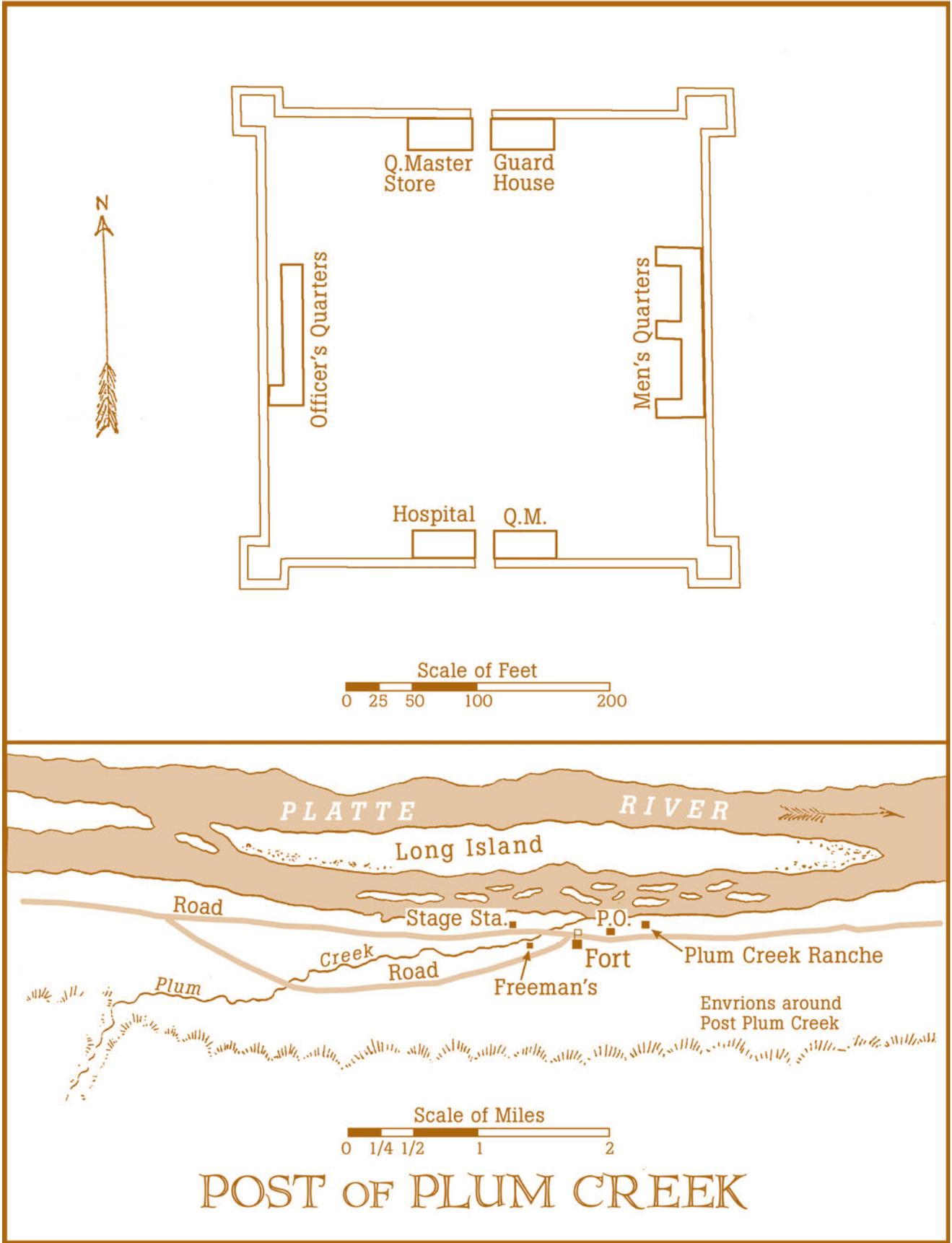
Around noon we caught sight of the Republican fork. We camped where our creek leaves the bluffs as such and continues still in the bottom of the Republican for miles in a southeasterly direction until it empties into it. The bottom, that is, the flat land here at the river, is just about as high above its run as on the Wood River, only now and then strips of low land in the bends. From where we

were we could see three or four creeks that all empty into the Republican in a similar way. They were between ten to fifteen miles apart and recognizable by timber growing besides. After we had rested a little, Elwood and I went hunting, brought down an antelope and a turkey. At night we dried the meat of the antelope in Indian fashion. The night was pleasant. We had made about twenty miles.

Tuesday, April 25 – Today was stifling warm. We packed our game on the mule that we had brought with us to transport horse feed and our provisions. We had enough food with us for five days and corn for the horses for three days. We again followed the creek, which, flowing almost eastward now through the valley of the Republican, emptied into it after about five miles. Four of us followed the bends of the creek on foot, while the other two led the horses. A little below the mouth of the creek on the Republican, we rested for a couple of hours and let the horses graze.

Around noon we set out again, following the river valley downstream. After several miles we reached a small creek without a name, which we crossed, and then still had about ten miles until we came to a larger creek, called Mud Creek.⁴² Here

Another view of Fort Cottonwood (McPherson), likely also drawn by Maj. O'Brien. NSHS RG0951-01



Left: Col. Lorenzo Sitgreaves, a topographical engineer in the Department of Kansas, sketched several of the Platte Valley military posts in 1864. Plum Creek Station, thirty-five miles west of Fort Kearny, was one of the more important sub-posts. Original sketch adapted by Steve Ryan, Nebraska State Historical Society

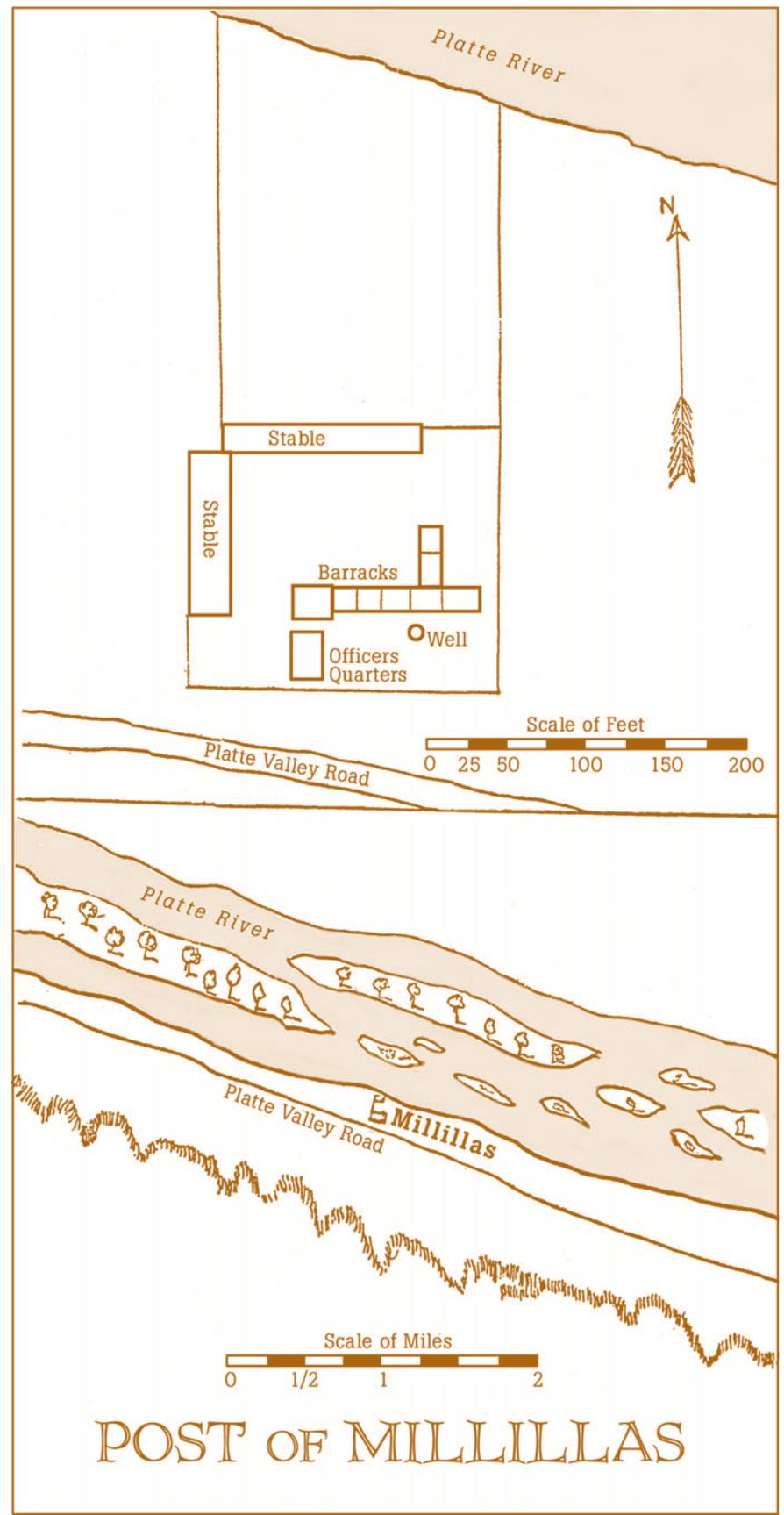
we found a trail and followed it, which went along the river and had been made by General Mitchell's expedition last winter, also large Indian camps and where they had buried their dead in their own way during their stop here last fall.⁴³ But no signs that redskins were here recently, even though we searched for them carefully.

We went upstream on the right bank of Mud Creek and camped there about ten miles from the Republican. Saw many elk tracks, but not the animals themselves. We saw black-tail deer and turkeys, shot a raccoon. It seems that the Republican here has less timber on its banks than there is on most of the creeks emptying into it. The night was stormy and the sky looked like rain; made some fifteen miles.

Wednesday, April 26 – We started early this morning, followed a divide pretty much along the creek bed until it went too far to the west and split into several branches. We then crossed it, keeping a more northern direction. Upstream of this creek were the sandstone rocks again, but in general a very brittle type. After we left the creek we soon reached another, going straight north, which we rode up until it ran out at the divide of Plum Creek. We went across and descended into its valley. Although the creek had a deep bed here, it had no water, but a lot of timber on its banks. We let our horses graze here for an hour; we ate a cracker and some dried meat, then the saddle girths were pulled tighter, after that we continued our march, which soon brought us onto a more level plain.

While we were riding along here, we saw a few objects northeast of us, maybe five to six miles away, which could either be buffaloes, Indians, or a team. We had not observed the objects for very long when they suddenly disappeared, for they turned and were heading into the opposite

Right: The "Post of Millillas" as sketched by Lorenzo Sitgreaves was at Thomas "Pat" Mullally's ranche, a few miles southwest of modern Lexington, Nebraska. If Sitgreaves drew a plat of Scherneckau's Midway Station, it has not come to light. Original sketch adapted by Steve Ryan, Nebraska State Historical Society



“We put our horses to a gallop toward that point where we had seen them last, but did not find anything since a number of canyons branch off at this point where these persons had vanished.”

direction. We put our horses to a gallop toward that point where we had seen them last, but did not find anything since a number of canyons branch off at this point where these persons had vanished. These ravines open up directly into the valley of the Platte, and it was here that the men from our regiment were killed last fall.⁴⁴

We searched the area, but could not detect animals or tracks of any kind.

We then followed one of the ravines, which brought us into the valley of the Platte at about five miles below Mullally's Ranch. Ten men from our company are stationed here, and we, as well as our horses, were soon well taken care of. We saw many antelopes today, at which we fired repeatedly, but without success. Probably made no less than forty miles today.

Thursday, April 27 – We leisurely rode the nine miles to our quarters this morning and were home again at about 10 o'clock. I received a letter from Egge. Wrote to Eddie [Keen]. It looks like rain.

Friday, April 28 – Stormy. Wrote in my diary, etc. Trains with loose oxen came from the west. I helped to catch one of the so-called prairie dogs; we have two of them here in a cage, also a young eagle. Two of our men, who had been on a hunt, shot two black-tail deer.

Saturday, April 29 – Very stormy. Large wagon trains with many oxen come from the west.

Sunday, April 30 – The usual inspection and muster for two month's pay. The weather was better.

Monday, May 1 – Very windy. I worked some at the office, sent two *Harper's Weekly* to Egge.

Tuesday, May 2 – Both our wagons went to Fort Kearny and I rode with them. Camped at Plum Creek.

Wednesday, May 3 – Reached Fort Kearny; I ate with Company K and slept in the adjutant's office with Beardsley.⁴⁵ Received news about the murder of Mr. [Story] on the Wood River. A patrol was sent out in pursuit.⁴⁶

Thursday, May 4 – Our wagons were loaded with the horse feed and started back around noon. I was ordered by Captain Gillette to go together with Q.M. Sergeant McGill to Grand Island.⁴⁷ We drove off at 2 o'clock in the afternoon on a spring wagon, hitched with a four-mule team. We drove to Jackson's house, where we stayed overnight.

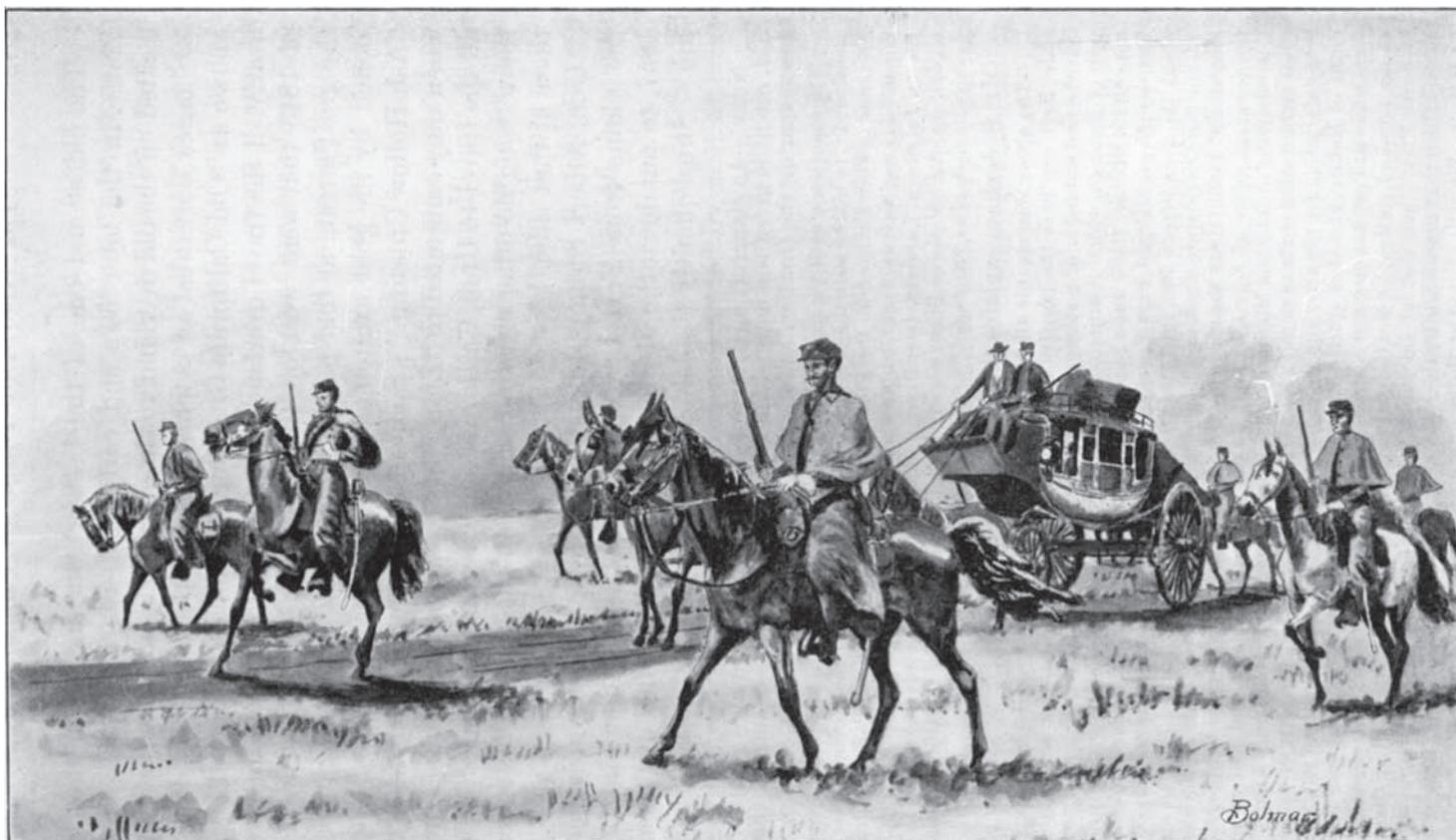
Friday, May 5 – It rained some. Reached the settlement in good time. Visited friends and stayed overnight with Egge.

“A comrade from my company was wounded in the hip by an arrow, a sergeant from the Black Horse Cavalry fatally, and three others lightly. One of our horses had three arrows in his haunch. The Indians had several dead; one of them fell into our hands.”

Saturday, May 6 – Left Grand Island this morning. Heard the first reports of the attack and the theft of livestock below Mullally's.⁴⁸ At noon we stopped at Jackson's and at sunset were in Fort Kearny again. I spoke for a moment with Hedde, whom I met in Esther's [?] old house. Lodged with Beardsley.

Sunday, May 7 – Boring day here in Kearny, General Connor came in the evening.⁴⁹

Monday, May 8 – This morning forty infantrymen were sent to the west from here to reinforce the garrison of the different stage stations.⁵⁰ I put my things on one of their wagons and rode with them. The weather was cool and pleasant. I called on Townsley for a moment.⁵¹ The infantry made camp at the seventeen-mile point. I rode three miles farther on to the next stage station, where I stayed overnight with three men from Company K.⁵²



Tuesday, May 9 – Went up to Plum Creek today. The entire garrison under Captain Weatherwax had already moved out to pursue Indians.⁵³

Wednesday, May 10 – Went with my infantrymen to Mullally’s Ranch, where the last ten remained. Another empty government wagon, en route with an escort for the Gen. Quartermaster [regimental quartermaster?], took my things along to our ranch. On the previous day two Indians had tried to drive away the four horses of the owner, Mullally. But two of our men stationed there had recovered them, not being able to capture the thieves themselves. Captain Weatherwax pursued this band, numbering ten head, over to the Republican Fork. Today, we received a number of horses, all ponies, in the main wretched things. Many of them were still unbroken, never ridden.

Thursday, May 11 – Captain Weatherwax returned from the Republican with his detachment pursuing redskins without having seen the Indians at all.

Friday, May 12 – Lieutenant Donovan, also being inspector of this district, inspected us this morning.⁵⁴ He then rode on to the next station

with our captain, a comrade and I going along as escort. When we arrived at Smith’s ranch the fight with the Indians had just ended and they were across the river on the north side with forty head of cattle. A comrade from my company was wounded in the hip by an arrow, a sergeant from the Black Horse Cavalry fatally, and three others lightly. One of our horses had three arrows in his haunch. The Indians had several dead; one of them fell into our hands.⁵⁵

Captain Porter’s company from the next station above [Gilman’s] soon arrived here and went with his men across the river at the same point that had been used by the Indians.⁵⁶ However several horses were lost in the rising river, also rifles, carbines, and other equipment, and almost all their ammunition got wet. Captain Ivory went back to our post. We met our company, which had come up to cross the river with Porter’s company. But all of us went back to our ranch, where preparations were underway to cross the river to the north side. Since it got dark in the meantime, it had to be postponed until the following morning. Captain Weatherwax and his detail came up from Mullally’s to cross the river with us.

Cavalrymen escorting the overland stagecoach, a duty that Scherneckau often described. Frank A. Root and William E. Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka, 1901)

Saturday, May 13 – It was cold and looked like rain. The crossing was to be accomplished early in the morning. Four men with the best horses were sent off to try the crossing, but they returned without success, almost losing a few horses there. I wrote to Hedde. In the evening I had to go to Smith's ranch as escort with the stage; returned at daybreak. This duty is quite strenuous, especially for the horses, since the stage drives fast indeed and we, of course, must remain with the coaches, on the way up as well as back.⁵⁷

Sunday, May 14 – The usual Sunday inspection. In the evening, with the stage again. Captain Weatherwax is now trying to cross the river with his detachment upstream from our location. The night was dark and stormy.

Monday, May 15 – We drilled some and with the new horses, but I kept my old war horse, since not many of these newly delivered horses are as good as my horse. In the evening I had to go down with the stage. The night was nice, some rain before midnight.

Tuesday, May 16 – Off duty at Mullally's ranch today; returned this evening with the coach going up. At each stage station ten infantrymen of the Third U.S. Volunteer Regiment are now stationed. These former rebel soldiers make good comrades and there are many decent men among them.

Wednesday, May 17 – We had to drill a bit with our new horses to get them used to the firing of our pistols. Many of the horses were simply difficult to tame, bridle-bit and spurs had to be put to use to the extreme. Our Negro cook broke one of them with only the saddle and bridle.⁵⁸ None of the men felt brave enough to risk his life in taming this animal. So much for the despised black race. The detachment under Captain Weatherwax came back from the west. They had been unable to cross the river. The other detachment under Porter came back through here as well. They had been fortunate to reach the north side of the Platte and had then followed the Indians for some fifty or sixty miles. But since they realized that the same were a band of about five hundred warriors, while only twenty-four soldiers had successfully crossed the river and most of these had gotten their ammunition wet, they gave up the chase.⁵⁹ Our wagons went to Fort Kearny to get corn.

Thursday, May 18 – Today I was assigned to watch over the horses. Every man of the company who is on duty has a horse picketed in the grass close to our quarters, to have it ready to saddle in

case of a sudden departure. Two men guard the rest of the horses during the day. The grass in the area close to the ranch has nearly been grazed bare by the constant grazing of the trains with many loose cattle, always more or less staying overnight, as well as by our own horses. In the evening some drill. A nice, but warm day.

Friday, May 19 – A nice warm day. Finished and sent off a letter to my parents.

“Many of the horses were simply difficult to tame, bridle-bit and spurs had to be put to use to the extreme. Our Negro cook broke one of them with only the saddle and bridle. None of the men felt brave enough to risk his life in taming this animal. So much for the despised black race.”

Saturday, May 20 – Wrote to Mr. Thomson and Car[oline] Hedde. Very windy.

Sunday, May 21 – A nice day. The usual inspection. Wrote to Beardsley.

Monday, May 22 – Worked in the office, nice weather.

Tuesday, May 23 – Very warm. Our newly delivered ponies were inspected. A number of wagons with ox-teams belonging to the owner of this ranch went with men from our company as drivers and as escort for two days to the bluffs to get wood. Wrote to Egge. Our team arrived with a load of corn from Kearny.

Wednesday, May 24 – A rather strong thunderstorm with heavy rain burst over us today. I did a bit of writing in the office. Our second team returned from Kearny.

Thursday, May 25 – One of our wagons left for Kearny. The men who had come up with our team yesterday saw fire signals during the night to the south, seven miles below Plum Creek and others north on the other side of the Platte. Today nine men from our company went to the next station

west of here [Smith's] in order to serve as escort for the stage. Warm and nice.

Friday, May 26 – Watched horses today. We keep the horses on a small island near this side of the river, where there is nice grass. The Indians attacked an ox train going to the east, about twelve miles from here, near Mullally's ranch. They succeeded in driving off only a few of the oxen. It appears that the men with this train have defended themselves better against the Indians than usually seems to be the case. The Indians, or at least a few of them, followed the stage escort, which had arrived here from the east last night. However, they did not attack it.

Company E of our regiment went through here today. It is escorting Captain Weatherwax, who is going to Fort Laramie as mustering officer. One of the men, Joseph Dougherty, shot a half-breed Indian just about a half a mile below this ranch. The Indian had been employed by the government as a guide and translator and was on his way to headquarters in Julesburg. The soldier was drunk and deserted after the deed.⁶⁰

I had the pleasure of taking a shot at a few "citizens" we had detected through a binocular about five miles away. Yet we assumed they were only horses or runaway cattle that were roaming about so close to the bluffs. Since my horse was saddled, I rode after them and was perhaps still a mile away, when I discovered that these were humans sitting or lying on the ground there, but I could not figure out exactly what was the matter. I assumed they were Indians, who tried to conceal themselves in order to draw me closer, all the more since exactly here ended one of the deep canyons that traverse these hills, where throngs of redskins could hide.

Now about eight hundred to a thousand paces away from them, I fired a shot from one of my revolvers. This had the desired effect. Immediately, three men mounted the horses and rode separately toward the bluffs. I was now convinced they were Indians and threw my horse around, since I was almost five miles from home and did not trust my horse to be a match for Indian ponies on such a long distance, all the more since, at any moment, I expected to see still more Indians coming out of the canyon nearby.

However, I barely had turned my horse homeward when I noticed that my three friends also turned around and were following me, one riding behind the other, just like Indians. I always kept the same distance from them until I could see our

ranch about three miles away. On the road a large train had stopped close to our station, as I assumed, to defend itself in case of an attack.

I now let the riders come closer, yet they never were close enough that I was able to shoot at them successfully or be able to say whether they were Indians or whites. They seemed to avoid me on purpose, and seemed to maneuver diagonally toward the train. One of them had placed a rifle before him across the saddle. Several times I raised my pistol to fire at them. This caused them to jump from their horses in a hurry.

All this happened less than three miles from our quarters, from where I expected to see some of my comrades coming. But nobody showed up. I therefore left my three riders and rode to the ranch. There I found them all busy as usual, since they believed I had discovered my mistake, and was slowly riding toward the road with the three men.

"I was now convinced they were Indians and threw my horse around, since I was almost five miles from home and did not trust my horse to be a match for Indian ponies on such a long distance."

They were, of course, three of the men from the train, who had been hunting and were busily plucking a duck when I first discovered them. They did not know what would be best to do after I had shot at them. The bullet from my revolver had kicked up dust at close range, as one told me, although I was certainly three-fourths of a mile away from them. The fear of being shot by me kept them from coming closer and being identified.

Saturday, May 27 – Nice, but windy. Eight or nine teams went out into the canyons to get cedar wood for Peniston and Miller. They, of course, pay our men for the work. However, this work just makes the duty for the rest of the men that much more difficult. A train went past here on the north side of the river toward the west. Wrote to Nagel.

Sunday, May 28 – Captain Ivory went to Plum Creek. Very warm and windy.

Monday, May 29 – Large trains are now going through here to California. Received a letter from Beardsley, wrote to Egge.

Tuesday, May 30 – Very dusty and windy. Indians were seen both below, as well as above this place. However, they likely did not consider it advisable to attack us. A little after dark I went to Smith's ranch as escort for the stage.

Wednesday, May 31 – Came down again with the stage this evening. Spoke with an old Hanoverian, a dyer by profession, who had gone alone on foot to California, and had returned the same way last fall. Grasshoppers, still very small, are becoming quite numerous, as I noticed today. Large trains came through here today, going west.

Thursday, June 1 – Large trains in almost uninterrupted lines go constantly westward. Very windy and dusty. This evening I had to go with the stage to the next station west of here. Made the eleven miles in less than fifty minutes. This quick pace is very trying on our horses. Wrote to Ed. Keen.

Friday, June 2 – As yesterday, immense trains going west. Very dusty. At 9 o'clock in the evening we went back again with the stage to our post.

Saturday, June 3 – Thirty condemned horses, most of them just recently received, were sent to Kearny today. We kept only about twenty horses, but expect that in a short time we shall have more and better ones.⁶¹ Wagon after wagon passed by today. Very warm. Received a letter from Eddie, wrote to Hedde.

Sunday, June 4 – Very warm, windy, and dusty. The usual inspection. Although good times for us soldiers, life here is terribly boring. As I always had feared, this sort of a soldier's life here is very tiring. Had to go with the stagecoach to Mullally's ranch in the evening. Halfway there we met the escort of the post coming up and switched positions, in that each detail went back to where it had come from.

Monday, June 5 – A team went into the bluffs to get firewood. The wind, and as a result, the dust, are unbearable on this well-traveled road. Often one sees nothing but an immense dust cloud in the entire area when a large train is moving. It seems to me that we have much more wind here than in Grand Island, where it is also very windy indeed. Anyway, there is more dust here since the area is much sandier. We are located directly on

the road, which in summertime, day or night is, so to speak, never empty of wagons or loose cattle. In fact, if it were to be this dusty in Grand Island, I would hardly feel obliged to live there again. Even what we eat and drink grinds between the teeth; nothing is wrapped tightly enough to keep out the dust.

Another regiment of rebel infantry has arrived in Fort Kearny. We expect that they will be mounted and then will take over from us here on the road.⁶² Sent two newspapers to Egge. Mr. Miller, one of the owners of this ranch, has a striking similarity to Stolley; I believe he is also just such a man in other respects.⁶³

**“Even what we eat and drink
grinds between the teeth;
nothing is wrapped tightly
enough to keep out the dust.”**

Tuesday, June 6 – During the night a thunderstorm came with heavy rain. It lasted until noon. A train, loaded with government goods, received an escort from here up to the next ranch. I went along as one of them; we were back again in the evening. Company F of our regiment returned from Fort Laramie. Received a letter from W. Behrens.

Wednesday, June 7 – Lt. Charles Thompson arrived here from Kearny, as he has been appointed to be first lieutenant of our company. Lieutenant Clarke has been appointed captain on General Fisk's staff. Our second lieutenant Moore resigned and Lieutenant Belden of the veteran battalion, Nebraska Cavalry, was assigned in his place and is now post adjutant in Fort Kearny.⁶⁴ The weather is stormy and it rained almost continuously during the entire day. A few trains passed by, but most of them stopped. This evening I had to go to Smith's ranch with the stage. Wrote to Eddie [Keen] in Pella, Marion County, Iowa.

Thursday, June 8 – It rained very hard last night, and despite the good coat I was soaked thoroughly. Having arrived at the station, it was then about midnight, there was not a dry spot to be found, since all roofs are made of sod and are neglected, leaking awfully. I spent the rest of

the night not particularly pleasantly in wet clothing and under a wet blanket. Since it was raining during the day too, we had no chance to dry our clothing. Toward evening the stage arrived and we went home with it. Received a letter from Behrens.

“There was not a dry spot to be found, since all roofs are made of sod and are neglected, leaking awfully. I spent the rest of the night not particularly pleasantly in wet clothing and under a wet blanket.”

Friday, June 9 – Looks like rain, yet the large trains are moving again. The Sixth U.S. Volunteer Infantry Regiment went through here today on the way west. The road dried quickly, our team returned from Kearny with corn. J. Dougherty, who recently had shot the half-breed Indian, stopped here yesterday after he, with the help of comrades, had escaped from the guardhouse. A raft was built and he is now on his way downstream with it.⁶⁵

Saturday, June 10 – Nice, bright weather; was loafing around. The night also was silent and lovely.

Sunday, June 11 – At daybreak the stage arrived; we went with it to Smith’s ranch to the west. Lay around there until we arrived home about midnight with the eastbound stage. Trains loaded with machines of all kinds, even entire steam engines, came by going west. Company D of the Nebraska veteran battalion came down from Cottonwood on the way to Kearny. Received a letter from Nagel.

Monday, June 12 – Wrote to Nagel. Overcast sky, looks like rain. The construction of new barracks for us was begun today. They are located just east of the houses that we now occupy. They belong to Peniston and Miller, who now want to use them. We have started with the construction of a kitchen, thirty-five by twenty feet. The sod, which in general is cut with the spade, is our building material, of course. We worked at it diligently and made some good progress as well—even for soldiers.

Tuesday, June 13 – Worked same as yesterday. Trains and loose cattle are going past, almost without a break. Nice weather, received a letter from C.[hristian] v. Wasmer.

Wednesday, June 14 – I worked until noon, was then detailed as escort for the mail coach going east. Nice warm weather. Large wagon trains going west passed in endless lines. At sunset I rode with the stage to Mullally’s ranch. It was very dark. A little after midnight the stage came up again and about 2 o’clock we were here once again. It rained very hard and I was soaked thoroughly.

Thursday, June 15 – Some rain today, but the sandy ground here dries off quickly. Wrote to C. v. Wasmer. Since it was too wet, nothing was done on the construction of the house.

Friday, June 16 – Quite windy, nice weather. Worked until noon, when I was detailed as escort for the mail coach going west. Sent two *Harper’s Weekly* to Egge.

Saturday, June 17 – The stage arrived at about 2 o’clock this morning. At daybreak we were at the other station [Smith’s]. It was cold and had rained a little during the night. Laid over there during the day, at dark the coach came from the west and soon we were home again. The weather was cool.

Sunday, June 18 – A detail was sent out to find a site where good cedar wood for our house construction would be growing. Company C of our regiment came by as escort for a few surveyors who are going to Bridger’s Pass to start the preparations for the line of a future Pacific railroad. Cool weather. We have here many cases of scurvy among our men. One was recently sent to the hospital in Fort Kearny. Several suffer from it. I also have cracked lips, but I don’t believe my condition is scurvy.⁶⁶ Wrote to W. Behrens. About one hundred horses of a train stampeded, a train that camped near here and is on the way to Julesburg to take six hundred head there for the government.⁶⁷ One part ran past, another was caught here. Many ran into the bluffs all the way to Plum Creek. All but four or five were caught again. However, several were injured more or less, a few even killed, by wounds caused by the picket pins at the end of the long ropes they had been tied down with, which they had torn out of the ground and were then dragging along.

Monday, June 19 – Both our wagons and a team, sent from Fort Kearny yesterday, went into the bluffs to get cedar wood for construction. The large train of horses came past today. All nice

animals, no ponies, as we had received! The weather is nice! Freight and emigrant trains are passing by almost constantly. Captain Ivory went with the stage to Fort Kearny.

Tuesday, June 20 – Nice weather. Wrote to Egge and sent diary. Today General Henry came through from Denver with an escort.⁶⁸ A General Heath passed by here on the stage on his way west.⁶⁹ It is said he has command of a cavalry brigade, consisting of the Third Illinois, Twelfth Missouri, and Seventeenth Indiana regiments. At midnight we again returned with the coach going down, after we had escorted the general up. Our teams came back from the bluffs with cedar wood. At noon the wagons went to the bluffs again. Large trains passed here going to the west. Machinery of all sorts is going out, saw-, quartz- and grinding-mills, mowing and threshing machines by the dozens.⁷⁰

Thursday, June 22 – Very warm. Luebbes came by here on his way back from Denver.⁷¹ I sent a crate with him to Egge. Our teams returned from the canyons with cedar wood for the construction. The trouble with the mosquitoes is now almost unbearable. But I now have the best quarters in the stable, since it is completely dark. With a little smoke we can keep the pest entirely at arms length.

Friday, June 23 – Today our two teams went to Fort Kearny. The stage came a little after noon and I went along to Smith's ranch as one of the escort. It was humid and very warm. The mosquitoes were horrible until a wind came up at about 9 o'clock and soon after a severe thunderstorm with heavy rain broke loose above us. Even though I went into the house to sleep I still was soaked thoroughly, since the neglected roof leaked so badly. Spent another unpleasant night in these barracks. A little after daybreak the coach arrived. Wrote to [Fred] Wiebe and Egge.

Saturday, June 24 – It is quite a bit cooler. Received a letter from my parents, from Wasmer, and from Egge.⁷²

Sunday, June 25 – The stage came up again during the night, and I once more had to go along to Smith's ranch, where we arrived near daybreak. Spent the day over there. The next coach did not arrive from the west much before daybreak and early in the morning on

Monday, June 26 – I returned to my quarters, after I almost had lost another night's sleep. I wrote to Car[oline] Hedde. Had to work on the building

in the afternoon. We are putting a roof over the kitchen, which is almost finished. Warm, yet a cooling wind. Looking like a thunderstorm in the evening.

“The trouble with the mosquitoes is now almost unbearable. But I now have the best quarters in the stable, since it is completely dark. With a little smoke we can keep the pest entirely at arms length.”

Tuesday, June 27 – Worked on the kitchen. In the afternoon a fifty-foot-high flagpole was raised. I helped to saw a cedar block into boards. Our kitchen department moved into the newly constructed building. Threatening thunderstorm.

Wednesday, June 28 – Worked on the construction of the quarters until noon. In the afternoon we had some thunderstorms. In the evening the stage came, I arrived with it at Smith's ranch around midnight. It was very dark riding.

Thursday, June 29 – Stayed there during the day until the coach again came down just before dark and I went home with it. General Henry went west again, had an escort from our company up to Cottonwood. It was warm. Our teams returned from Fort Kearny.

Friday, June 30 – Warm. Wrote to Chr.[istian] v. Wasmer. Received one of the Joslyn carbines. Mustered for two-month's wages. Our carbines have 56/100, the rifles 58/100, the revolver 44/100 bullets. We turned in our rifles, and for the first time we are actually equipped as cavalymen. Working on the building. In the evening I went with the stage to Mullally's, ten miles east of here, returned home with the westbound coach at midnight. Fred Elwood came back from his leave.

Saturday, July 1 – I had to work writing out the payrolls. Eight men went out on a reconnaissance to the Republican, supplied for three days. Worked a little on the building of the barracks. Warm, yet nice. Received a letter from Hedde.

Sunday, July 2 – The usual inspection. Warm. Wrote to Egge. Thunderstorm approaching. Received a letter from Eddie.

Monday, July 3 – Very warm. I worked writing out the muster rolls. Work was done on the construction of the quarters. Our hunters came back, had shot three deer, no sign of Indians. Large trains, some for the government, some loaded with all kinds of machinery, as well as Mormon trains, are now coming through here.

Tuesday, July 4 – Warm, a good deal wind with it and therefore a lot of dust. Large freight trains went past to the west. Today most of our men are on a spree, as they call it; they get insanely drunk, as drunk as only Americans can be. Very delightful company!! Very boring day! I just drank a glass of bad ale, which only makes matters worse.

Wednesday, July 5 – Our teams (four) went into the canyons today to get cedar wood for the construction of our barracks. Warm. The stage came in the afternoon and, indeed, before sunset I was at the next station [Smith's]. It rained some during the night and the mosquitoes were persistent.

“Today most of our men are on a spree, as they call it; they get insanely drunk, as drunk as only Americans can be. Very delightful company!!”

Thursday, July 6 – The day was warm, looking like rain. Paymaster Almstedt, who had been here with General Curtis last fall, went up to Fort Laramie today. Will not pay us off until his return.⁷³ At dark we were back again with the stage from the west. Received letters from Nagel and Behrens.

Friday, July 7 – Warm and quite windy. At noon our teams returned again with four large loads of timber. Wrote to Nagel.

Saturday, July 8 – Left our Midway station with four wagons going to Fort Kearny. Around 1 o'clock in the afternoon we were in Plum Creek, where we camped near the fort erected there.

Sunday, July 9 – It rained a little last evening. I, however, slept well and dry under one of the wagons. We started at about 4 o'clock in the morning and then made a stop at the twenty-two-mile point, where we ate our breakfast. Around 2 o'clock we reached Kearny. Yesterday we met the Sixth Michigan Cavalry Regiment, some five hundred men strong, going west; today twelve miles from Kearny the Seventh Michigan Cavalry Regiment, seven hundred men strong, both with large wagon trains.⁷⁴ Many such trains are now on the way, since the government is moving large quantities of supplies of all sorts to the west. I was quartered with Company K of our regiment. The section of our regiment that is now located here in Kearny and the Nebraska black horse battalion are housed in shelter tents, east of the fort.

Monday, July 10 – The night was cool and I slept excellently in J. Clark's tent.⁷⁵ Colonel Livingston, our former Lieutenant Thompson, as well as the entire regimental staff were mustered out today, as well as several privates from the hospital. The black horse battalion was incorporated into the regiment at the same time.⁷⁶ I wrote to Egge and Hedde. It was quite cold; some snow fell.

Tuesday, July 11 – In the afternoon we started to load our wagons. We had to return the two wagons that had been sent from Kearny to aid us in the construction, because all wagons now were being sent out from Fort Kearny to take supplies to the west. Therefore we had only two wagons left. We loaded one with forty-five sacks of corn, the other mostly with material to build the quarters: two hundred feet of pine boards, ten pine doors, thirty-six window frames with the required glass, one hundred pounds of nails, a trunk with clothing, and axes, spades, and other tools. We left Kearny toward evening, and at sunset we were at Townsley's, where we camped.

Wednesday, July 12 – For four sacks of corn we all received supper and breakfast. I did not feel very well. We started quite late and made our way through heat and dust to Plum Creek, where we camped.

Thursday, July 13 – Today we were already on the road early. It was very hot and dusty. A little after noon we were back at Midway station. I was not well.

Friday, July 14 – Was sick. It was hot and dusty, had some rain, but not enough to settle the dust. One of our escorts had to go to Cottonwood as escort for an ox train loaded with government freight. Wrote to Eddie.

Saturday, July 15 – Windy and dusty. In the morning, worked some on construction of the quarters. Lieutenant Donovan, inspecting officer of this district, arrived here this afternoon. The inspection took place in the evening. The air cooled down greatly. The mosquitoes have not been as bad this summer as I really thought. Trains come and go to the west in large numbers.

Sunday, July 16 – It rained in the morning, sometimes severely. Was quite cool during the night, and also again today. The Sanitary Commission sent us many little pamphlets and sauerkraut, dominoes, paper, ink, several primers, etc.⁷⁷ While I was in Kearny the wives of both of the partners of this firm arrived here with the stage. Most likely they have now moved into the almost finished residence.⁷⁸

(Here again, about ten days of my notes are missing.)

Wednesday, July 26 – Went from Egge's down to Menck's on his horse. I then rode to Hedde's. Again drove with Hedde's team to the settlement. Was at Menck's and Doll's, then stayed overnight at Egge's.

Thursday, July 27 – Today drove to [Henry] Rheder's, Doll's, Spethmann's, Schaaf's, and Menck's; then was at Hedde's again shortly after noon. Around 6 o'clock in the evening Hedde and I drove to Kearny. It became very dark, lost our way and drove into the prairie. Stopped for the night and the morning found us not far from Thorspeken's house.⁷⁹

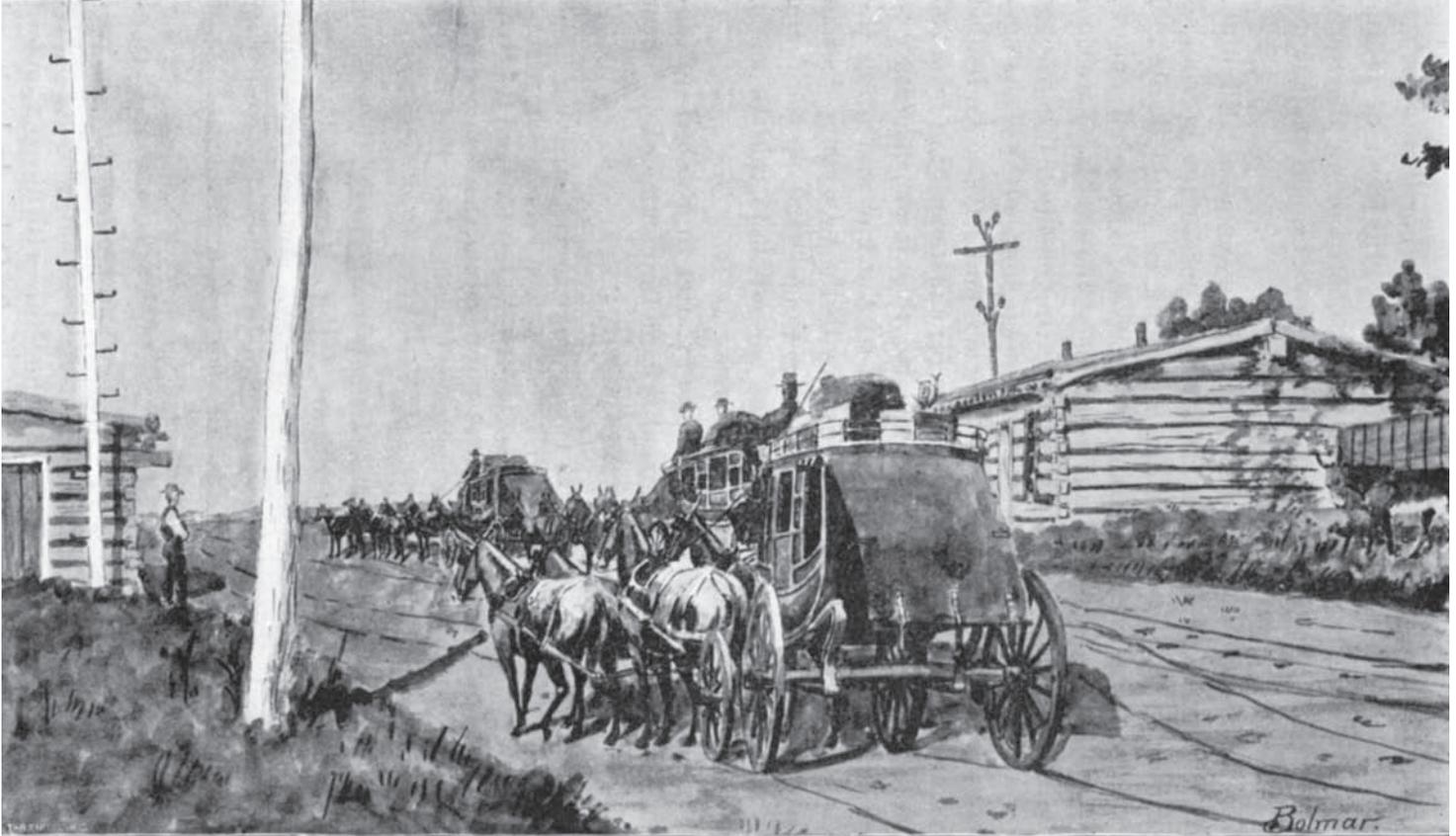
Friday, July 28 – Shortly after sunrise we drove off from there; met Keuscher. Stopped for breakfast at Peck's last old place. At 12 o'clock we came to the river; went on to the ox channel; a government wagon helped us bring a part of the things across. We made it across successfully. Saw [John] Hann and [Charles] Boehl, as well as [H. A.] Rose. I went to the fort. Hedde began to sell the things we had brought. Spoke to Colonel Baumer, ate at Captain Kuhl's at noon. In the evening ate at Baumer's. Captain Ivory, who I saw after dark, hoped I might return to the company.⁸⁰ Drove with Hedde to Kearny City, stayed overnight there in Robinson's corral.⁸¹

Saturday, July 29 – Had breakfast at Robinson's. Hedde sold most of his things. I sent a sack of vegetables to Peniston and Miller. Hedde drove back to Grand Island.⁸² I went ahead with the train to Townsley's where I ate lunch, then to the station where I stayed overnight at the garrison of the place.⁸³ Some were former soldiers of the Southern army, then prisoners of war who, as galvanized Yanks voluntarily entered into the service of Uncle Sam against the Indians. Almost every second man seems to play the violin. Songs and dancing alternated and kept us all awake for a long time. On an average, the men of the Northern armies are much less talented when it comes to music, than what I have seen so far of the enemy brethren of the South. The fleas are a real plague here, only late did we get to sleep.

Sunday, July 30 – Very windy. Colonel Baumer went past here in the afternoon, also our teams from the west. I returned with them to Kearny again.

Monday, July 31 – In the morning I wrote to Peniston and Miller at Midway station and to Egge at the quarters of Company I. It appears that discipline is now applied more firmly in the regiment. Because of thievery an Indian soldier had to march up and down in camp with a board on his back on which thief was written.⁸⁴ In the afternoon we loaded corn as well as some blacksmith tools. Not until evening did we drive off, camped a mile west of Kearny City. Bought a carbine with shell-pouch from W. Brown, left it with Mr. Robinson.⁸⁵ During the night we had an ongoing thunderstorm and very heavy rain, however, I slept dry on top of the sacks of corn in the wagon. Most of the men, though, were lying under the wagons and since they were drunk, got thoroughly wet from the rain. A more severe night I have rarely encountered.

Tuesday, August 1 – Very stormy and looking like more rain. The road was, of course, very bad, and we did not get farther than MacLane's, twelve miles from Kearny. Lieutenant [George] Belden, previously a private in Company C, now a lieutenant in Company I, was with us on his way to Cottonwood, a sly ne'r-do-well! Our mule drivers had taken two extra mules and two horses along from Fort Kearny. Also, three more sacks of corn were counted out by the Q.M. Sergt. at Fort Kearny than he was charging us for. At Townsley's one sack of corn was traded for bread.



Wednesday, August 2 – It rained and blew very hard last night, I slept in the wagon. Exceptionally cold, yet no rain. I rode a white horse ahead of the wagons. However, the horse got so sick before I had ridden ten miles that I had to unsaddle it and wait for the teams. The horse died and it took three or four hours until the wagons reached me. I then saddled another horse and rode through Plum Creek to Mullally's ranch, where I arrived slightly after nightfall. Fred Elwood is in command here. Our company now has to cover the road from Plum Creek to Cottonwood; there are five different stations. The men from Company B and D of the Nebraska black horse battalion have now been merged with our company.

Thursday, August 3 – Our teams arrived around noon and after we had unloaded most of the corn we drove on to our station, Midway. Here I found that the sack I had sent with food had arrived successfully. Peniston and Miller had kept the largest part for themselves. I took the rest, sold some of it, and gave the rest to our cook who was cooking for our company. Received two shirts, two pairs of underwear, and six pairs of socks. Many things have changed in my absence, so many new faces, that one is not sure he is in his own

company. The second lieutenant who is here now in command, seems to be quite a good officer.⁸⁶ I wrote to E. Keen.

Friday, August 4 – Had to go to Cottonwood this morning to get six slaughter oxen. We rode today only to Gilman's ranch, where a detachment of our company is located. The owner is not present now; quite a few buildings, all built of cedar logs.

Saturday, August 5 – This morning we went on until about four miles this side of Cottonwood, where the cattle were.⁸⁷ By noon we were back again; it was very warm.

Sunday, August 6 – During last night four horses were stolen out of the stable, among them my pony. The thieves wore moccasins. The tracks led to the river. I rode home on a mule, arriving with the cattle a little after noon. These are all two- to three-year-old fat and strong oxen, which will provide nice meat. Our wagons met us going to Cottonwood.

Monday, August 7 – Warm weather. I wrote to the gentlemen: Thomson, Hedde, and Egge. Captain Ivory came up here again from Fort Kearny. I received another horse, strong boned and larger than my old pony.

The overland stagecoach leaving Cottonwood Springs near Fort Cottonwood (later Fort McPherson). Frank A. Root and William E. Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka: 1901)

Tuesday, August 8 – Heavy traffic, endless trains going through to the west, from the large wagons pulled by six to seven yoke of oxen, to the carts, with only one yoke of oxen, which have one driver for every three [carts]. A Nevada mining company came through here today with its own train. These latter wagons are the largest and strongest that I have ever seen so far. They were hitched up to eight mules each and harnessed like the military wagons. Our army wagons are real buggies compared to these. The wide tires of the wheels were one inch thick, the back wheels of the wagons almost seven feet in diameter; everything else in proportion. I received a letter from Eddie.

“The fleas are worse here than I have ever before experienced. I am tormented day and night.”

Wednesday, August 9 – I wrote some in the office. Our team went to Fort Kearny to get six hundred feet of pine boards. Three other wagons are to bring corn from Cottonwood. The fleas are really unbearable here, sometimes at night the mosquitoes also.

Thursday, August 10 – I rode to Mullally’s ranch yesterday evening to talk to Elwood, who is stationed there. The night was warm and pleasant. Many trains on the road. This morning rode up here again. Wrote a bit in the office and to Hedde. Warm and looking like rain. [Corp. James] Young received his discharge because of disability. A train passed through here today going west, which was loaded exclusively with blacksmith iron in all dimensions. Each wagon had seven yoke of oxen, and each was loaded with eight to nine thousand pounds.

Friday, August 11 – Had some rain last night. The traffic on the road is very brisk. A section of the Eleventh Kansas Cavalry Regiment came from the west through here to go to Leavenworth to be dismissed from service, since their time is up. Peniston and Miller received a load of household effects to furnish their new house, very valuable furniture of all kinds. Our three teams returned

from Cottonwood with corn. [Pvt. Francis] Lohnes went to Kearny.⁸⁸

Saturday, August 12 – Hot and humid weather. Wrote some in the office.

Sunday, August 13 – Warm. The bugs are unbearable. The fleas are worse here than I have ever before experienced. I am tormented day and night. The more frequent change of laundry doesn’t help, they seem to be everywhere in this sandy soil. Time seems to pass very slowly. I have no further duty, other than to do some occasional writing. The horse that I received for the stolen pony, has a sore back, which I must cure before I can ride again. We had the usual inspection.

Monday, August 14 – Humid, some rain in the evening. Three of our teams went to the canyons to get cedar wood for the construction of the barracks. The Twenty-first New York Cavalry Regiment, between four hundred and five hundred men strong, went past here at noon, going west.⁸⁹ The men on the average were well mounted, had horses that were almost too heavy for the duty. Were armed with star [Starr] carbines. I wrote in the office. The traffic is still very heavy. Received a letter from Hedde.

Tuesday, August 15 – Very warm. The infantry detachment of Company D of the Third U.S.V. Regiment, which was stationed here up to now, was ordered off yesterday and left us. The Sixth [West] Virginia Cavalry Regiment came through here around noon, reduced from 500 men to 150 due to desertion. Nice horses, [the men] were armed with Sharps carbines.⁹⁰ Wrote and copied in the office. Very dusty, some thunder- and rainstorms in the evening.

Wednesday, August 16 – Lieutenant Donovan, inspector of the district, inspected us this morning. Afterwards I rode with him to Mullally’s ranch on Lohnes’s “wild” horse, which behaved quite well. Rode back again in the afternoon. Dusty, and the insects were unbearable. In my company there are now two Germans, both Holsteiners and brothers, who come from the Panker estate and their name is Martisen; also a Probsteier, Schneckloth, who like the other two, comes from St. Mary. However the latter is not stationed here with us. It is indeed new for me to speak some Low German again amid all the English.⁹¹ One of our recent additions deserted today and took with him a few extra revolvers.⁹² Paymaster Almstedt camped here last night, going down to get more money.

Thursday, August 17 – Our teams returned from the canyons today, where they had taken logs. The company received only one wagonload; the owners of the ranch received the other two wagonloads. The captain no doubt will get his money one way or another.

Friday, August 18 – Captain Ivory rode to Cottonwood. The lieutenant and I took an inventory of the items that will be turned over from Ivory to the lieutenant. The dwelling being used up to now as officers' quarters had to be vacated today since the owners wanted to lodge their own men there, who returned today with their teams from Julesburg.

Saturday, August 19 – I wrote in the office. Very warm. Governor Saunders, General Dodge and Brigadier General Williamson with several other officers went by today going west, escorted by a company of the Fourteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment.⁹³ Lohnes returned, after General Heath had awarded him with a medal for demonstrated bravery.

Sunday, August 20 – Warm and tending toward thunderstorms. Wrote to Hedde. Yesterday the owners of the ranch sent their men across the river with machines to mow the grass on the north side. They pay their ox drivers \$50 a month and board. Captain Ivory came back from Cottonwood this evening. Some rain with a thunderstorm.

Monday, August 21 – Warm and dusty. In the afternoon Governor Saunders and Hurford came back from the west.⁹⁴ Captain Ivory went with them in the refreshing cool of the evening to Mullally's, where they stayed overnight. I rode with them and slept there, had a really good night's rest, the first for a long time, since here it is unbearable due to the fleas and mosquitoes.

Tuesday, August 22 – Rode back to Midway this morning. Overcast sky. Around noon received an order to have payrolls signed. Therefore, I rode with them to Mullally's right after noon where they were signed, and then were sent down to the next ranch. I waited until they returned with signatures from there. I rode back here with them and then on a fresh horse farther on to Smith's ranch, from there to Julesburg [Gilman's?], where we arrived sometime after midnight. Since noon I had ridden forty miles.⁹⁵

Wednesday, August 23 – At 9:30 we were in Cottonwood, where I delivered my papers. The place has certainly been improved since last winter. We put our horses into the stable of Company K of our regiment and also ate there.⁹⁶ No duty

during the day. Paymaster Almsted arrived here today. The band of the Eleventh Kansas Cavalry Regiment played in the evening. Very pleasant weather. A large haystack has been put together for the quartermaster near the fort, the infantry is still working on it. A sawmill, driven by twelve horses, is also set up, but it does not seem to have produced much as yet. Colonel Baumer, quite drunk, wanted to send me to Grand Island to get vegetables just after the men were paid off.⁹⁷ Drank something new, that is beer brewed here, which was very bad.

Thursday, August 24 – We rode off this morning at 8 o'clock, ate lunch at Smith's ranch with our men stationed there and were at home by 4 o'clock. Fairly warm day.

Friday, August 25 – Received a letter from F. Schiffmann and some lines from Father. Wrote to Fritz again right away. It was very warm and humid. Flies, mosquitoes, and fleas do their best to make life miserable for us.

“In the last four weeks ten men from our company have deserted; some took horses and all the equipment, others not even their revolver.”

Saturday, August 26 – A Mormon train came through here today on its way to Salt Lake. Very warm. I wrote to Egge.

Sunday, August 27 – The usual inspection. Dusty and warm. The Third Massachusetts Cavalry Regiment came through here today, going to the west; also Company F of our regiment to Cottonwood.⁹⁸

Monday, August 28 – Dusty and very windy. Received a letter from Keen and answered it right away.

Tuesday, August 29 – Hot and dusty. The bugs are unbearable. I had to leave the stable and now at night, I often sleep in one of the wagons. The traffic is still substantial. This evening Luebbes went by stage to Cottonwood.

Wednesday, August 30 – Today I had to write out the muster rolls. In the evening Paymaster Almstedt arrived here from Cottonwood. Another

paymaster arrived here at the same time from Fort Kearny, but returned with the next stage. The Third Massachusetts Cavalry Regiment came back to be mustered out.

Thursday August 31 – We were paid off this morning for six months. I received \$244.95.⁹⁹ Alstedt then went back to Kearny. Very dusty and windy. The last section of the Eleventh Kansas Regiment came through here today to be mustered out. I wrote to Baumer. Worked on the muster rolls. Mustered for two months' pay in the evening.

Friday, September 1 – Very hot and extremely dusty. The men who have been paid off have already started to desert. Worked intensely on the muster rolls, which make a lot of work this time. William Wasmer went through here with his and Luebbe's team, together with Captain Porter and Kuhl and the first sergeant, down to the next ranch. Received a letter from Egge.

Saturday, September 2 – Not quite as dusty. Lieutenant Nosler rode to Cottonwood. I worked on the muster rolls. Today West came through here from Cottonwood to be mustered out since his time is up.

Sunday, September 3 – Worked on the muster rolls. Warm. Our four teams went to Cottonwood to get our forage for the month. In the last four weeks ten men from our company have deserted; some took horses and all the equipment, others not even their revolver.¹⁰⁰ The lieutenant came back this evening. The owners of the ranch here are losing a lot of money with our men. As has been stated they owe over \$3,000 for whiskey etc., and only \$900 of this has been recovered so far.

Monday, September 4 – The weather is cooler. Worked intensely on the muster rolls and the reports. The fleas are still very annoying.

Tuesday, September 5 – Pleasant weather. Traffic still fantastic. Worked as yesterday; wrote to Egge. The owners of the ranch have started to haul their hay through the river across from the north side, where they have cut it with a machine for three weeks. They have six to twelve yoke of oxen on the wagons, and despite this, still sometimes get stuck in the water. Our teams came back from Cottonwood.

Wednesday and Thursday, September 6 and 7 – Dusty. Still had to work some on the muster rolls, finished them, and sent one of them to the adjutant general, Washington, D.C. Received a letter from Sophie and Ludwig.¹⁰¹ Wrote to Eddie. A major-general came through here on the stage on

his way to the west, to relieve General Connor, as they said.¹⁰² Received a letter from Germany.

Friday, September 8 – Extremely unpleasant and windy. Wrote mainly in the office. The dust is unbearable, and while writing, is spreading constantly over the paper. Received a letter from C. Wasmer, via Fort Laramie, dated from the eighth of July.

Saturday, September 9 – Still dusty. Also W. Wasmer came down from Cottonwood yesterday evening by stage going to Omaha. He was quite drunk and got me out of bed. In the morning wrote to D. Schuller and W. Wasmer.¹⁰³ Wrote for William to his mother. The wind changed to northwest and it got quite cold.

Sunday, September 10 – It must have frozen during the night, it was so cold. Also the wind is still so blustery and at the same time knifelike. The usual company inspection was held this morning. A grass-mowing machine was sent up to us from Kearny, however parts are missing, as well as from the horse rake which came with it. Therefore the hay harvest still has long ways to go. Besides, we have nobody left to do the work, since the duty requires all available men.

Monday, September 11 – Windy and dusty, as indeed during the last few days. Six government wagon trains with mules went up yesterday and today with the machinery for a steam sawmill. Twelve mules were hitched to every wagon on which the boilers were loaded. Wrote mainly in the office today. A battery of six cannons, [each] pulled by six horses, without crew, went through here today going west. The traffic is huge and the dust, which is thrown into the air by the wagon trains continuously passing through, often darkens the sky for miles along the road. The owners of the ranch here have again opened their blacksmith shop and employ the blacksmith for \$125 a month. There is a lot of blacksmith work to be done on the thousands of wagons passing by here. Charcoal is now being burned for the forges, mostly of cedar wood. Wrote to Hedde.

Tuesday, September 12 – As yesterday made out returns and such for the last month. Miller and Peniston received new merchandise. In order to bring the hay across from the north side of the river they engage daily thirty yoke of oxen hitched to five large wagons, and have hired ten laborers for \$55 to \$75 a month. A machine with a horse rake on wheels, on which the driver also rides, has mowed and raked daily for four weeks.

Wednesday, September 13 – This morning Riber and I went with one of Miller's teams over to the north side of the Platte. The ford in the river is now quite good, the sand fairly firm and the water very low, only in a few small spots did it come up to the front axle of the wagons. On the north side, across from the ranch, is a low-lying bottom, where quite good grass is growing, but it is not very wide. The ground soon rises and the grass there is short. The actual river valley on this north side is no less than twelve to fourteen miles wide, in which Buffalo Creek for a long time runs parallel to the Platte. Between the river and the creek the land is high and barren like near the Wood River. The lieutenant and another man were following us and shot one of the many antelopes, while we were not so lucky. At noon we were home again. In the afternoon I wrote, etc.

"The three Indians in our company signed the list for clothing received all in their own handwriting, while ten to twelve of the civilized Americans, who often had an opportunity to get a good education, indicated their name with an x for want of something better."

Thursday, September 14 – I went over into the canyons with two of our teams and we brought two loads of dry firewood, elm wood. It was quite warm and unusually dusty, that is to say only on the road since we are close by. Three of our men were out hunting and brought back an antelope. We therefore can eat quite a bit of wild game. Company A of our regiment, going to Cottonwood, camped here last night. Lieutenants Cutler and Whitelock were in command.¹⁰⁴

Friday, September 15 – Received a letter from and wrote to Egge. Dusty and windy as usual. Our wagon went to Cottonwood to get clothing and the rest of the corn. Saw the "venerable" Simpson coming from the west.¹⁰⁵

Saturday, September 16 – Nice weather. A government train of twenty, six-mule teams came through here today going to Kearny loaded with cedar logs for the fort. Took a bath in the evening. Quite warm. W. Wasmer came through here from Omaha. I paid him \$175 that he had left for me with D. Schuller in Grand Island. No receipt.

Sunday, September 17 – Nice warm weather. Today the government wagon brought us forty-five more Joslyn carbines with ten thousand shells. Lieutenant Donovan, inspector of the district, and Colonel Baumer came through here and stayed over noon. Had inspection. Four mowing machines with crew and horses came here from the west to make hay for the stage company. They went over to the north side of the river. Peniston and Miller are already selling some of their hay for two cents a pound. It is said that on this side at Cottonwood it goes for three cents a pound. Our wagons returned from Cottonwood, we received and issued clothing. The three Indians in our company signed the list for clothing received all in their own handwriting, while ten to twelve of the civilized Americans, who often had an opportunity to get a good education, indicated their name with an x for want of something better.¹⁰⁶ The poor ignorant Reds and Blacks in this Promised Land! Quite a bit of whiskey and therefore fights among the laborers employed by the ranch-keepers.

Monday, September 18 – This morning a buffalo came here out of the canyons close to a mile from the house. Five to six mounted men went out and shot down the animal. Lieutenant Nosler and I drove to the stations between here and Plum Creek, where some of our men were stationed and brought them clothing and also a Joslyn carbine for those who do not have this weapon yet. Stayed at Mullally's overnight. Received a letter from Hedde.

Monday [Tuesday], September 19 – Bought a pony with saddle for \$85 from Shannon; paid \$25 of it.¹⁰⁷ We drove up here again this morning. I then handed out more clothing and also carbines. Had to write a lot.

Tuesday [Wednesday], September 20 – Wrote constantly. Unpleasant windy and dusty. Today work was done again on the construction of our quarters.

Wednesday [Thursday], September 21– Very windy and dusty. Busy at writing. Work continues again on construction of our quarters. The emigration is still heavy. The trains pass this place almost without a break.

(Here again ten days of my notes have been lost.)

Saturday, September 30 – Very nice warm day. We moved slightly farther west with our company, in line with Company F of our regiment. Sergeant Shaw, Riber, Elwood, and I have a double tent, each occupying a fourth of it. The front of it is to the north, the horses between us and the buildings.¹⁰⁸

Sunday, October 1 – Pitched a tent today for the lieutenant and as office. Began writing the necessary reports, etc. Nice, but warm weather. Wrote to Egge.

Monday, October 2 – Wrote constantly. Very windy. Men on fatigue duty and ten men went away as escorts to Laramie and Fort Mitchell. Reports of Indians. Paymaster Almstedt is here. Wrote to Hedde.

Tuesday, October 3 – Wrote in the office tent constantly. Men working regularly on fatigue duty. Windy.

Wednesday, October 4 – Very windy. Worked on the quartermaster reports, etc., which are due at the last day of each month. Since the first of September, fourteen horses and three mules have been stolen from our company by deserters.

Thursday, October 5 – Rained some during the night; more pleasant, yet looking like more rain. Our three teams were sent off to Midway.¹⁰⁹ Wrote to Potts. Worked on the monthly reports.

Friday, October 6 – Pleasant weather. Received a letter from Clarke in Cottonwood. Wrote a little in the office.

Saturday, October 7 – Really nice weather. Wrote some in the office. Wrote to Egge. Received letters from M. Wilhelm and Mr. Spethmann.

Sunday, October 8 – Nice weather. Dress parade in the evening, the first I have attended for a long time and hopefully also the last.

Monday, October 9 – Nice warm weather, some wind. Wrote constantly. A mustering officer here is going back to Kearny. Onions are forty cents a pound.

Tuesday, October 10 – Very stormy. Toward evening the wind turned more to the northwest and it became colder. The Iowa troops stationed

here voted today. There were also poll books and tickets for our Nebraska election here, but no polls were opened.¹¹⁰ Wrote up various reports.

“A gang of whites or Indians . . . drove off eleven head of horses and mules . . . They were tracked and followed with their loot to the North Platte, but they were such a large gang that those who were following them did not dare to attack them.”

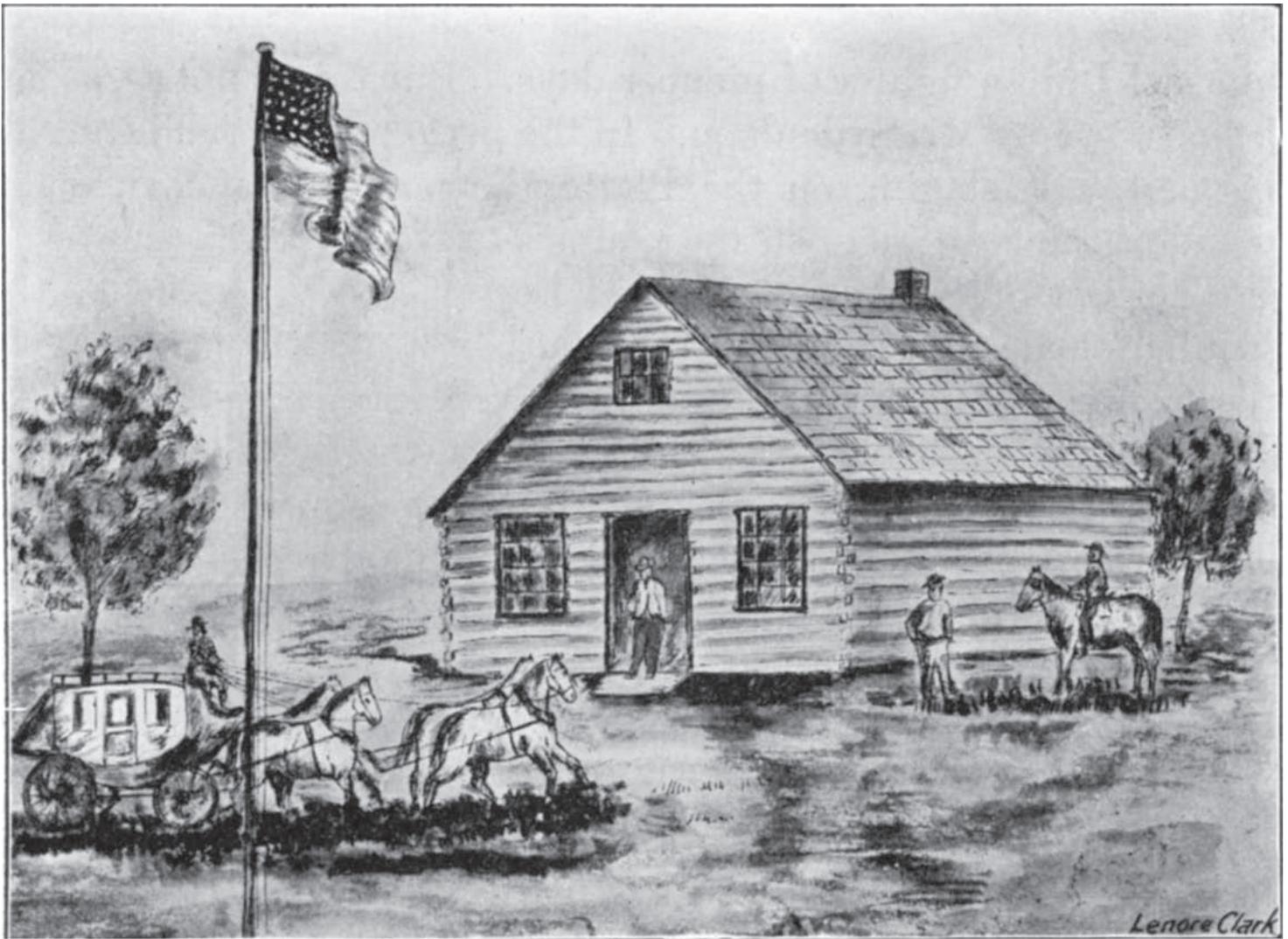
Wednesday, October 11 – It was quite a cold night. However, today it is warmer and pleasant. Toward evening, it is looking like rain and colder. I worked on our discharge papers.

Thursday, October 12 – Yesterday evening it rained and then became quite cold. Slept dry but quite cold under our tarpaulin. Received merchandise for the company.

Friday, October 13 – Was very busy to finish the documents for the company. The company received orders to go to Mud Springs and Pole Creek station, to escort the mail to Laramie.¹¹¹ Wrote out affidavits for the adjutant, Lieutenant Wadsworth, for the weapons, etc. Quite warm and pleasant. Spoke with Captain Kuhl. Pawnee Indians came down from Fort Laramie and had a big dance festival here.¹¹² Wrote to Mr. Spethmann.

Saturday, October 14 – Five men deserted again last night with horses, weapons, and the complete equipment. At night really cold, but I slept quite warm, together with Elwood.

Sunday, October 15 – Early in the morning we saddled up, leaving my blankets and other things with W. Odd, who was just about to leave with an ox team from Julesburg. We rode off with delight.¹¹³ The Sixth Michigan Cavalry Regiment camped several miles down from us. The weather was cool and pleasant. At the first stage station, nine miles below Julesburg, where an acquaintance of one of my comrades is stationmaster, we received a nice pie and some milk to drink.¹¹⁴ At 5 o'clock in the afternoon we reached Beauvais ranch, where



Company C of the Seventh Iowa Regiment is stationed.¹¹⁵ We had a friendly reception and received hay and corn for our horses and something to eat for us, slept outside, close to the horses.

Monday, October 16 – After we had breakfast we were moving on, met many trains, were at Alkali around 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Company C of our regiment is stationed here.¹¹⁶ A part of it was out to go after a gang of whites or Indians, who drove off eleven head of horses and mules between here and Beauvais ranch several nights ago. They were tracked and followed with their loot to the North Platte, but they were such a large gang that those who were following them did not dare to attack them. A gentleman coming from Central City lost his horses this way and we agreed to take down his light wagon with our horses. We slept in the hay, which we had purchased for the horses.

Tuesday, October 17 – We hitched up our horses, which immediately took off as if they had been doing this every day. The weather was cold and inclement. The wind from the northeast made it so unpleasant. We met our teams at a ranch six miles this side of O'Fallon's Bluff. Received the note from Major O'Brien, went then still two miles farther eastward from O'Fallon's Bluff, where we stopped at Kirby's ranch at the haystack and slept, cooked in the house.¹¹⁷

Wednesday, October 18 – It froze quite severely last night. A little after 8 o'clock we were on our way again. At Bishop's ranch we had a lunch break, had made twenty-four miles. At 2 o'clock we reached J. Morrows' imposing buildings, twelve miles from Cottonwood, at 4:30 we arrived at Cottonwood.¹¹⁸ I spoke with Major Majors and Major O'Brien. Stopped with our team in the backyard of the fort, where Company K had its horses. Ate with Company K.

Fort Kearny postmaster Moses Sydenham built a residence and store at Hopeville, some sixteen miles west of Fort Kearny, for his widowed mother and siblings who emigrated from England. Frank A. Root and William E. Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka, 1901)

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Thursday, October 19 – A total solar eclipse this morning. It was cold and during its duration an awkward feeling took hold of me. It was decreasing as we reached Kuhl's and Luebbes' ranch, and had started even before we had left Cottonwood.¹¹⁹ W. Wasmer had gone to Omaha. I met Richter and drove with him, our two wagons staying together. Stopped at Smith's ranch at noon where we overtook the Pawnee company. After we had eaten, we drove on. Near Midway station a group of surveyors was camped, surveying the railroad line over the river. At Peniston and Miller's I loaded my things on Richter's wagon, paid what I owed, and on we went to Mullally's, where we arrived just after dark. Made forty-five miles today. From now on I ate with Richter, made coffee for us. This night I slept in the ranch.

Friday, October 20 – Today we drove more slowly. The weather remained pleasant, like the last days. Stopped at Plum Creek for lunch and went from there to the next, Mullally's ranch, twelve miles east of Plum Creek where, however, we did not have hay for our horses.¹²⁰

Saturday, October 21 – Arrived at Kearny City at 2 o'clock, where we fed [the horses] at Pyper's. I went to the fort and spoke with Beard-sley, who told me the prospects were quite encouraging. I hurried back to get the comrades. We then went to the mustering officer, who found our papers to be all right and promised to muster us out of service the next morning. We received provisions for three men for fourteen days. We camped very close to the fort, and for a change I slept in the wagon, but poorly.

Sunday, October 22 – Was up early this morning, C. Coder received his descriptive roll and went on his way to Leavenworth. After guard mount was over, I went to the mustering officer, where I worked on the muster-out rolls until noon. I then received Shannon's and my papers, that is, three muster-out rolls and for each of us a discharge. With that we were released from service without further formalities.¹²¹ 

Edith Robbins, a native German and transplanted Nebraskan, is an independent scholar specializing in the experiences of German emigrants to the United States.

Nebraska Press, 1960). Recent studies of the 1864-65 war are Ronald Becher, *Massacre Along the Medicine Road: A Social History of the Indian War of 1864 in Nebraska Territory* (Caldwell, Id.: Caxton Press, 1999), and John D. McDermott, *Circle of Fire: The Indian War of 1865* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2003).

² MSS2698, August Scherneckau Diaries, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland, Oregon. Scherneckau's biography, details about how his diary came to be discovered by Edith Robbins, and procedures used in its translation and editing, are provided in the preface and introduction to August Scherneckau, *Marching With the First Nebraska: A Civil War Diary* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007).

³ Scherneckau added this and other asides appearing in parenthesis when he began transcribing his diary about 1899. He did not continue his diary in the summer of 1864, while he was living among his friends and relatives in Grand Island. By the time he revisited his Civil War writings, perhaps he could not remember whether this gap was due to loss, or simply neglecting to write. The diary, as the editors found it, ends in November 1865. Editorial insertions appear in brackets.

⁴ Fred Hedde was Scherneckau's uncle, and one of the founders of the Grand Island German settlement. Heinrich Egge was another of Grand Island's first settlers. Jackson's was a road ranche operated by James Jackson, located a few miles west of the present-day town of Wood River, Nebraska. "Description of the Route, Camping Places, Ranches, etc. etc. from Collins' Emigrant's Guide to the Gold Mines of the Rocky Mountains," *Omaha Daily Telegraph*, Apr. 9, 1861.

⁵ Henry Dugdale settled on Wood River near present Shelton in 1859. A. T. Andreas, comp., *History of Nebraska* (Chicago: The Western Historical Company, 1882), 415.

⁶ Scherneckau had crossed the Platte River to reach Fort Kearny. William H. Ivory was promoted captain of Scherneckau's Company H on Sept. 7, 1862. He was on sick leave at Fort Kearny at this time. He was mustered out on July 1, 1866. Edgar S. Dudley, comp., *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers from 1861 to 1865* (Hastings, Nebr.: Wigton and Evans, 1888), 90-91.

⁷ There was a George Thavenet in the Grand Island settlement, and a Wilhelm Thavenet helped William Stolley construct "Fort Independence" at Grand Island in August 1864. A. F. Buechler, R. J. Barr, and Dale P. Stough, *History of Hall County, Nebraska* (Lincoln: Western Pub. & Eng. Co., 1920), 160; William Stolley, "History of the First Settlement of Hall County," trans. Harry Weingart, special issue, *Nebraska History* (1946): 53.

⁸ Plum Creek Station was an important military subpost located some ten miles southeast of present-day Lexington, Nebraska, and about thirty-five miles west of Fort Kearny. A list of stage stations and mileage between them, Fort Kearny to Julesburg, is appended to Maj. George O'Brien to Capt. George F. Price, June 10, 1865, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vol. (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1880-1901), ser. 1, vol. 48:2, 850 (hereafter cited as *OR*). See also, Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), 272.

⁹ Thomas (Pat) Mullally's Ranche, also known as Willow Island. *OR*, "List of Stations"; Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, 273; Ware, *The Indian War of 1864*, 443.

¹⁰ Midway Station, located southwest of present Cozad, Nebraska. At this time Midway was William Peniston and Andrew J. Miller's road ranche masquerading as a military post, because the soldiers and their horses occupied the ranche buildings. Not until June 12, as Scherneckau says, did construc-

NOTES

¹ A succinct summary of the causes of the Indian war of 1864-65 and the importance of keeping the Platte Valley route open for overland freighting is found in William E. Lass, *From the Missouri to the Great Salt Lake: An Account of Overland Freighting* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1972), chap. 6. A classic eyewitness account is Eugene F. Ware, *The Indian War of 1864*, ed. Clyde C. Walton (Lincoln: University of

tion begin on new barracks and other buildings for the troops.

¹¹ Corp. William C. West of Company H was waiting at Fort Kearny for his commission in a regiment of black troops, but the commission did not come through, and he returned to the regiment in July 1865. Special Orders No. 97, Cairo, Ill., June 3, 1864, microfilm roll 3, RG18, Records of the Nebraska Military Department, Nebraska State Historical Society (hereafter NSHS); Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 92-93.

¹² Ben Holladay's Overland Stage Company, which carried the U.S. mail. Frank A. Root and William E. Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka, Kan.: 1901), 47-48.

¹³ This was Dan Smith's Rancho. OR, "List of Stations"; Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, 274; Ware, *The Indian War of 1864*, 440.

¹⁴ Although the First Nebraska was a cavalry regiment, few horses were available when the veterans were recalled from furlough in August 1864, and the shortage had not yet been made up by spring 1865. On Sept. 14, 1864, First Nebraska Lt. Col. William Baumer wrote to Capt. John Pratt, A.A.G, District of Nebraska, reporting that five companies of the regiment at Fort Kearny and Plum Creek were dismounted and waiting for horses. Letters Sent, Fort Kearny, N.T., RG393, Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, National Archives and Records Administration, microfilm at NSHS as RG506, roll 6. On Mar. 5, 1865, Company H listed seven serviceable horses and fourteen unserviceable horses, along with a complement of one officer and thirty-two enlisted men at Midway Station. Company H morning report, March 1865, RG18, roll 3.

¹⁵ Scherneckau made the parenthetical insertions when he was transcribing his diary.

¹⁶ Thomas J. Majors, originally captain of Company C, commissioned major on May 1, 1864, and Lt. John Talbot of Company A, First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 4-5, 30-31, 128-29. The officers were leading a column including Company F of the First Nebraska, Company D of the First Battalion, and a detachment of Company A of the First Battalion, plus Iowa and Kansas troops, on a march to Fort Laramie. Majors and the Nebraska soldiers returned to Plum Creek Station by May. OR, ser. 1, v. 48:2, 275; Post Returns, Plum Creek Station (National Archives Microfilm Publication, M617, roll 1532, Returns from U.S. Military Posts), RG94, Records of the Office of the Adjutant General.

¹⁷ Adolph and Emil Burmester, both Germans, had served in Company B of the First Nebraska, but both had been mustered out of service by this time. Evidently one of them had started freighting across the Plains. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 22-23, 26-27.

¹⁸ The Eleventh Kansas Volunteer Cavalry was one of the units ordered west to join Gen. Patrick E. Connor, who had been assigned the task of protecting the overland route between Salt Lake City and Fort Kearny. On March 28, 1865, Connor was given official command of the newly created District of the Plains, which included Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. Connor was to assemble troops for an expedition in the spring to strike the Indians in their stronghold of the Powder River country between the Black Hills and Big Horn Mountains. McDermott, *Circle of Fire*, 47-49. At this time the Kansas regiment was en route to Fort Laramie. Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (Des Moines: Dyer Co., 1908), 1184.

¹⁹ When the First Nebraska was ordered to the Platte Valley in late summer 1864, Enfield muzzle-loading rifles, an infantry arm, were requisitioned in Omaha. Although it had served as cavalry since the fall of 1863, the First Nebraska had never

been issued cavalry carbines suitable for use on horseback. One of the Enfields issued to Company H First Sgt. James I. Shaw in August 1864 is in the collections of the NSHS. By summer 1864 breechloading carbines were slowly becoming available for volunteer units on the Plains. Several of the First Nebraska companies received Merrill's carbines in the fall of 1864, while others retained the Enfields. By spring 1865 the Joslyn carbine, which used a rim-fire cartridge, was being issued to the regiment, and most of the soldiers were armed with it by fall 1865. Ordnance reports and other documents on the small arms of the First Nebraska are found in MS129, Robert R. Livingston papers, and RG18, box 2, NSHS.

²⁰ Maj. George Armstrong, Company A, First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers, Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 128-29.

²¹ Pvt. Samuel Vogan, Company H, First Nebraska Veteran Volunteer Cavalry. *Ibid.*, 102-3.

²² He means two westbound coaches and one eastbound coach.

²³ This was Company A of the Pawnee Scouts under Capt. Frank North, which would participate in Connor's summer Powder River campaign. McDermott, *Circle of Fire*, 50.

²⁴ The Sixteenth Kansas Volunteer Cavalry, organized in 1863, was en route from Fort Leavenworth to join the Powder River campaign. *Ibid.*; Dyer, *Compendium*, 1185.

²⁵ Sgt. John W. Riber, Company H. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 90-91.

²⁶ Pvt. Thomas Keen served with Scherneckau in Company H until Keen was discharged on July 7, 1864, at the expiration of his enlistment. His letters to his family appear in James E. Potter, ed., "I Thought It My Duty to Go": The Civil War Letters of Thomas Edwin Keen, First Nebraska Volunteer Infantry," *Nebraska History* 81 (Winter 2000): 134-69.

²⁷ The story of Gilman's Rancho is in Musetta Gilman, *Pump on the Prairie: A Chronicle of a Road Ranch, 1859-1868* (Detroit: Harlo Press, 1975). The proprietors were brothers John and Jeremiah Gilman.

²⁸ Brig. Gen. Patrick Connor had just been given command of the District of the Plains with headquarters in Denver. Fred B. Rogers, *Soldiers of the Overland: Being Some Account of the Services of General Patrick Edward Connor and His Volunteers in the Old West* (San Francisco: The Grabhorn Press, 1938), 149. Gen. Robert E. Mitchell had just been relieved of command of the District of Nebraska to assume command of the District of North Kansas, OR, ser.1, vol. 48:1, 1285.

²⁹ Cottonwood Springs, near present Maxwell, Nebraska, was the site of road ranches before the army in 1863 established a military post nearby. First known as Cantonment McKean and later Post at Cottonwood, the post would become Fort McPherson in 1866. Louis A. Holmes, *Fort McPherson, Nebraska, Fort Cottonwood, N.T.: Guardian of the Tracks and Trails* (Lincoln: Johnsen Publishing Co., 1963) and Ware, *Indian War of 1864*, 443. When Scherneckau says Cottonwood Springs, he means the military post.

³⁰ Q.M. Sgt. Frederick Harris and Corp. James Young. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 90-93.

³¹ Theodor Nagel, one of the early settlers in the Grand Island vicinity. Many of the other persons Scherneckau mentions by name are also acquaintances from Grand Island and will not be further identified.

³² The First Nebraska had fought on the second day of the Battle of Shiloh, Apr. 7, 1862, before Scherneckau joined the regiment.

³³ The principal ranche at Cottonwood Springs was that of Charles McDonald. Ware describes it in *The Indian War of 1864*, 46, with additional notes at 440.

³⁴ Fifteen men of the Signal Corps of U.S. Volunteers, commanded by Lt. J. Willard Brown, would be part of the coming Powder River Expedition. McDermott, *Circle of Fire*, 100.

³⁵ Corp. Jonathan J. Potts of Gage County had enlisted in Company H in 1861. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 92-93.

³⁶ The two prisoners were Pvts. Edward P. Goulding and J. C. Douglas of Company H. Why they were arrested and then so quickly released is unknown. Company H morning report, April 1865, RG18, roll 3.

³⁷ The Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, commanded by Col. William O. Collins, had been sent west in 1862 to guard the overland trails and telegraph line. McDermott, *Circle of Fire*, 179n28; 192n12; Dyer, *Compendium*, 1479. Ware, *The Indian War of 1864*, 448-49, gives details of the regiment's history from the Ohio adjutant general's reports.

³⁸ This was one of the regiments of "Galvanized Yankees," former Confederate prisoners of war. D. Alexander Brown, *The Galvanized Yankees* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), 17; Dyer, *Compendium*, 1717.

³⁹ The *Kearny Herald*, Apr. 30, 1865, published at Kearny City ("Dobytown"), carried an advertisement for Pyper and Co., groceries, liquor, and general outfitting. In 1861 the firm of Peck and Robertson had a road ranche on Wood River northeast of Fort Kearny. "Description of the Route," *Omaha Daily Telegraph*, Apr. 9, 1861. Evidently a new partnership had evolved between Pyper and Robertson by fall 1865, when the firm is mentioned in the Oct. 27, 1865, issue of the *Omaha Weekly Herald*.

⁴⁰ The funeral was in Washington, D.C. Lincoln's burial at Springfield, Illinois, did not occur until May 4, following a lengthy cross-country journey by the special train bearing his body.

⁴¹ Corp. Frederick Elwood, also of Company H. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 96-97. Although Scherneckau used the term "fork," the Republican River is not a tributary of the Platte.

⁴² Muddy Creek enters the Republican River near present-day Arapahoe in Furnas County. The scouting expedition traversed parts of today's Frontier, Furnas, and Gosper counties.

⁴³ In January 1865 Gen. Robert Mitchell led troops from Post Cottonwood on a march to the Republican and its tributaries in southwestern Nebraska and northwestern Kansas, seeking the Sioux and Cheyennes who had attacked Julesburg earlier in the month. The campaign found no Indians, but the bitter winter weather disabled many of Mitchell's soldiers and horses. McDermott, *Circle of Fire*, 24-27. Ware, *The Indian War of 1864*, 329-55, provides an eyewitness account.

⁴⁴ After Indians fired on a stagecoach between Plum Creek and Post Cottonwood on Oct. 12, 1864, a scouting party of Company I, First Nebraska, was sent in pursuit. On the evening of Oct. 13 the thirteen men were attacked by Indians near Mullally's Ranche and Pvts. Lewis C. Jackson and Samuel J. Kelly were killed. *Omaha Weekly Republican*, Oct. 28, 1864; Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 112-13; Company I morning report, October 1864, RG 18, roll 3.

⁴⁵ Corp. Joseph H. Beardsley, Company K. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 118-19.

⁴⁶ A report of Indian activity in the East Sub-district of Nebraska by Lt. and Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. William R. Bowen, dated Oct. 31, 1865, notes the killing of a "Mr. Story" on Wood

River, fifteen miles northeast of Fort Kearny, which occurred May 3. The attack was attributed to Pawnees, "avenging the killing of one of their tribe by some unknown citizen." *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 48:2, 1251.

⁴⁷ Capt. Lee P. Gillette, Company A, First Nebraska, was then in command of Fort Kearny. RG18, roll 3. John T. McGill was commissary sergeant, not quartermaster sergeant, of Company C. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 32-33. The detail was sent to Grand Island to get supplies.

⁴⁸ According to Bowen's Oct. 31 report, 150 Indians attacked a wagon train three miles east of Mullally's on May 5, killing one man and running off 150 head of stock. *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 48:2, 1251.

⁴⁹ Connor was on his way to St. Louis to confer with Department of the Missouri commander Grenville Dodge. Rogers, *Soldiers of the Overland*, 153.

⁵⁰ These were soldiers from the Third U.S. Volunteers.

⁵¹ M. Townsley operated a ranche and sawmill on Wood River in 1861. "Description of the Route," *Omaha Daily Telegraph*, Apr. 9, 1861. Evidently he had relocated to the Fort Kearny vicinity by 1865, because Townsley's ranche appears west of Kearny City on the south side of the Platte on a June 1869 map of a scout by Company C, Second U.S. Cavalry, RG393, Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, NARA, microfilm at NSHS as RG533, roll 2.

⁵² This would have been Platte Station, according to the mileage given in *OR*, "List of Stations." Despite several sources that mention road ranches and stage stations, the mileages given are often contradictory, as are the names by which these places were known, making difficult the precise identification of some of the lesser localities.

⁵³ Following the May 5 raid on the wagon train, Capt. Thomas J. Weatherwax and men of his Company G of the First Nebraska attempted to pursue the Indians, but his detachment was unable to ford the Platte River. Receiving word that other Indians had run off stock from Mullally's, he led his men south toward the Republican, but failed to find anything. His report is in *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 48:1, 261-62.

⁵⁴ First Lt. Edward K. Donovan, Company K. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 116-17.

⁵⁵ The wounded soldier from Company H was Pvt. Francis W. Lohnes; Sgt. Hiram Creighton of Company A, First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers, died from his wounds. The story of the skirmish and the career of Private Lohnes, who was later awarded the Medal of Honor for his action on May 12, is found in James E. Potter, "A Congressional Medal of Honor for a Nebraska Soldier: The Case of Private Francis W. Lohnes," *Nebraska History* 65 (Summer 1984): 245-56. The First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers, also known as the "Black Horse Cavalry," comprised four companies including many men who had formerly served in the Second Nebraska Volunteer Cavalry. The Second Nebraska was mustered out in late 1863. The roster and other details of the First Battalion's organization are found in Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*.

⁵⁶ Capt. Charles F. Porter and Company A, First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 128-29.

⁵⁷ The stagecoach stations, and hence the places where troops were posted, were approximately ten miles apart. The military escorts would accompany the stages "ten miles out and ten miles back." Brown, *Galvanized Yankees*, 21. When stages happened to be moving in both directions along the

same section of the trail, the escorts sometimes met in the middle and returned to their respective stations the same day.

⁵⁸ Harrison Johnson, an African American who had enlisted at Batesville, Arkansas, and whom Scherneckau first mentioned in his entry for June 21, 1864, in Potter and Robbins, eds. *Marching With the First Nebraska*. Although Johnson was only an "undercook" and not considered the equal of the other soldiers, it is clear that Scherneckau thought highly of him. Johnson earned further respect when Indians attacked a Company H detail escorting the mail near Lodgepole Creek on Nov. 6, 1865, and Captain Ivory reported that "Harrison Johnson, col'd cook . . . behaved very well, fired several shots." Manuscript History of Company H, First Nebraska Veteran Volunteers, RG18. Johnson remained in Nebraska after the war and is buried in the veterans' circle at Lincoln's Wyuka Cemetery. *Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln), May 23, 1900.

⁵⁹ Porter's report of this scout seemingly does not appear in the *OR*, but a manuscript report, dated May 30, 1865, is located in the Farley Collection, University of Oklahoma Western History Collection, copy provided to James E. Potter by Bob Rea, Fort Supply Historic Site, Fort Supply, OK.

⁶⁰ Pvt. Joseph Dougherty shot and killed Joe Jewett, a mixed-blood guide. Both men had gotten drunk at Mullally's ranche, according to Capt. William H. Ivory to A.A.A.G. John Q. Lewis, May 27, 1865, Dougherty service record, roll 7, Compiled Service Records, First Nebraska Volunteer Infantry/Cavalry and Second Nebraska Volunteer Cavalry. National Archives Microfilm Publication M1787, RG94, Records of the Office of the Adjutant General, microfilm at NSHS (hereafter Compiled Service Records). Ware, *The Indian War of 1864*, 139, 245, and 342, identifies Jewett as an old hunter and stage driver, who had been a guide on General Mitchell's January 1865 Indian expedition.

⁶¹ McDermott, *Circle of Fire*, 158-59, called the lack of good horses the army's "Achilles heel" during the Plains campaigns. Many of the horses the army purchased were unserviceable at the outset. Moreover, the horses' need for grain tied the army to cumbersome wagon trains, limiting its ability to mount the swift-moving expeditions necessary to catch Indians.

⁶² This was the Sixth U.S. Volunteer Infantry, another regiment of "Galvanized Yankees." Dyer, *Compendium*, 1717.

⁶³ William H. Stolley, one of the founders of Grand Island.

⁶⁴ Charles A. Thompson had risen through the ranks to become regimental quartermaster by May 1862. William T. Clarke had remained in Missouri to serve on Gen. Clinton B. Fisk's staff. Stephen W. Moore resigned in March 1865. Lt. George P. Belden began his career as a musician in Company C, First Nebraska Infantry, and was discharged for disability at Ironton, Missouri, in April 1863. He enlisted as a private in Company E, Second Nebraska Volunteer Cavalry, in June 1863, joined Company A of the First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers in 1864 as sergeant, was promoted to second lieutenant, Company C of the First Battalion, and finally, was transferred as second lieutenant of Company I, First Nebraska Veteran Volunteer Cavalry. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 4-5, 34-35, 90-91, 104-5, 128-29, 144-45, 173. Belden later gained a measure of fame as the subject of a book, *The White Chief*, a collection of tales in which Belden is the hero in many harrowing exploits, including some alleged to have occurred during his service along the Platte in 1865. Belden's book and his post-army life and death are discussed by Jack Matthews (who calls Belden a "self-legendizer") in Matthews's introduction to a reprint edition. James S. Brisbin, ed., *Belden, The White Chief, or Twelve Years Among the Wild Indians of the Plains, From the Diaries and Manuscripts of George P. Belden* (Cincinnati

and New York: C. F. Vent, 1870; reprint Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974).

⁶⁵ Dougherty had been in trouble before, having served time in the federal military prison at Alton, Illinois, in 1862. He was captured for the murder of Joe Jewett a few days afterwards and confined in the Fort Kearny guardhouse. While in the guardhouse, Dougherty wrote to his mother, a domestic employed by H. D. Cooke of the financial firm of Jay Cooke and Company, which was in charge of selling bonds to finance the Union war effort. The soldier asked his mother to request Cooke to intercede on his behalf with government officials. Cooke wrote Gen. John Pope, commanding the Military Division of the Missouri, asking clemency for Dougherty. Although Dougherty escaped in the meantime, as Scherneckau says, the clemency plea brought results with the issue of Special Orders No. 46, Headquarters of the Army, Feb. 22, 1866, which ordered Dougherty restored to duty without trial. He rejoined his company and was mustered out of the service on July 7, 1866. Dougherty file, Compiled Service Records, roll 7; Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 60-61.

⁶⁶ Long after understanding that scurvy could be prevented by the consumption of fresh vegetables, the army often failed to provide its soldiers with this basic dietary component. John D. McDermott, "No Small Potatoes: Problems of Food and Health at Fort Laramie," *Nebraska History* 79 (Winter 1998): 162-70.

⁶⁷ These horses were probably destined for the pending Powder River campaign. Another account of this stampede is Dennis Farrell, "Adventures on the Plains, 1865-67," *Nebraska State Historical Society Publications* 17 (1913): 247-48.

⁶⁸ Bvt. Brig. Gen. Guy V. Henry, who had been relieved as commander of the South Sub-district of the Plains. Rogers, *Soldiers of the Overland*, 149; *OR*, ser.1, vol. 48:2, 850.

⁶⁹ Bvt. Brig. Gen. Herman Heath was major of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry. He had command at Fort Kearny in the fall of 1863 and was district provost marshal at Fort Leavenworth in early 1865 before being appointed commander of the East Sub-district of the Plains in July 1865, after Colonel Livingston, the former commander of the sub-district, was mustered out. *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 48:2, 951; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, 2 vol. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1903), 1:519. Eugene Ware claimed Heath's advancement was due to political connections, and called him "a self-important, dictatorial wind-bag." Ware, *Indian War of 1864*, 95-97, 435.

⁷⁰ This machinery likely was destined for the Montana gold-mining camps. Chap. 6, "The Freighting Boom, 1864-1865," in Lass, *From the Missouri to the Great Salt Lake*, provides a discussion of this peak period of overland freighting across the Plains, and the military and civilian demand that supported it.

⁷¹ Perhaps Theodore Luebbes, who had been a lieutenant in Company B of the First Nebraska before being discharged on Aug. 26, 1864, and who was now involved in freighting to Denver. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 22-23.

⁷² Scherneckau frequently corresponded with his parents and other family members in Germany.

⁷³ Henry Almstedt had joined the Missouri Reserve Corps in 1861, served as colonel of the Second Missouri Cavalry, 1861-63, and was paymaster of volunteers from 1864 to 1866. Heitman, *Historical Register*, 161. Maj. Gen. Samuel Curtis was commander of the Department of Kansas until January 30, 1865, which included the District of Nebraska. Stewart Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Union* (New York: Facts on File, 1988), 99.

⁷⁴ The two Michigan Cavalry regiments were en route to Fort Laramie. Dyer, *Compendium*, 1272-74. The Sixth Michigan

would participate in the Powder River Expedition.

⁷⁵ Corp. James W. Clark, Company K. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 118-19.

⁷⁶ Special Orders No. 49 from the War Department, Jan. 31, 1865, ordered the consolidation of the First Nebraska Veteran Volunteer Cavalry and the First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers to make a single, nearly full-strength regiment. Under the regulations, a consolidated regiment was not entitled to a colonel and Col. Robert R. Livingston, who had led the First Nebraska for much of its nearly four-year service, was mustered out. The consolidated regiment continued to be known as the First Nebraska Veteran Volunteer Cavalry and the First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers ceased to exist. *Nebraska Adjutant General's Report, 1871* (Des Moines: Mills and Co., 1871), 17-18.

⁷⁷ The U.S. Sanitary Commission was a civilian organization created to provide for the needs of Union soldiers and to promote their health.

⁷⁸ When Company H arrived at Peniston and Miller's in February to establish Midway Station, the soldiers lived in the ranche buildings. When the owners signaled their plans to occupy them, the soldiers began constructing new quarters. The "almost finished residence" is the original ranchehouse, not the new barracks.

⁷⁹ The persons mentioned are residents of the settlement at Grand Island. Dr. A. Thorspecken was the doctor who treated Scherneckau when he came home in 1864 to recover from his gunshot wound. Scherneckau file, Compiled Service Records, roll 20. Scherneckau may have received a furlough or was on detached duty to Grand Island. The Company H morning reports for July and August 1865 list several men (no names given) as absent with leave. RG18, roll 3. His return to Grand Island may explain the lack of diary entries for several days.

⁸⁰ Henry Kuhl was captain of Company F, and had been transferred from Company C of the First Battalion upon the consolidation. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 66-67, 144-45. William Baumer, a native of Prussia, had helped raise a company of Germans for the First Nebraska in 1861 and was later promoted the regiment's lieutenant colonel. Following the muster-out of Colonel Livingston, Baumer ascended to command of the First Nebraska. *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁸¹ Kearny City was the infamous "Dobytown" just off the military reservation to the west of the fort.

⁸² It seems clear the Grand Island settlers were hauling food-stuffs to sell to the army at Fort Kearny, or to travelers along the Platte Valley trails. According to Hedde's biography in J. Sterling Morton, succeeded by Albert Watkins, *Illustrated History of Nebraska*, 2 vol. (Lincoln: Jacob North Co., 1905-6), 2:677, he had opened a store in 1864.

⁸³ Either Craig's or Platte. *OR*, "List of Stations."

⁸⁴ This man probably was one of several Omaha Indians who served in the First Nebraska. In his entry for Sept. 17, 1865, Scherneckau mentions some of them.

⁸⁵ Possibly Pvt. William S. Brown of Company H. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 96-97.

⁸⁶ Lt. James N. Nosler, who had been transferred from Company B, First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers, upon the consolidation with the First Nebraska.

⁸⁷ Dan Trout's Station. *OR*, "List of Stations."

⁸⁸ Lohnes would receive the Medal of Honor on Aug. 15 at Fort Kearny for his actions in the May 12 skirmish near Smith's Ranche. Potter, "A Congressional Medal of Honor," 249.

⁸⁹ The Twenty-first New York Volunteer Cavalry was mustered out at Denver and Fort Laramie in the spring of 1866. Dyer, *Compendium*, 1381.

⁹⁰ The Sixth West Virginia Volunteer Cavalry was en route to Julesburg and Post Cottonwood. The regiment was mustered out in May 1866. *Ibid.*, 1658.

⁹¹ Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 98-101, lists the men as Carl and Ludwig Matthienson, and Hans Schneckloth, all enlisted at Omaha, and all transferred to Company H from Company B, First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers, at the consolidation. According to Edith Robbins, Probstei is a region in Holstein.

⁹² Probably William J. Wright, a transfer from the First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Volunteers, who is recorded as having deserted from Gilman's Ranch on Aug. 16. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 102-3.

⁹³ Alvin Saunders was governor of Nebraska Territory. Maj. Gen. Grenville M. Dodge had been in command of the Department of the Missouri since November 1864. McDermott, *Circle of Fire*, 46. Brig. Gen. James A. Williamson had been assigned briefly for duty on the Plains before being mustered out in August 1865. *OR*, ser 1, vol. 48:2, 1112; Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Union*, 456-57. The Fourteenth Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry was about to be mustered out after having served a short time on the Plains. Dyer, *Compendium*, 1565.

⁹⁴ O. P. Hurford was commander of the first brigade of the Nebraska Territorial Militia, and a partner with George L. Miller in the post tradership at Fort Kearny. He was also involved in freighting. Andreas, *History of Nebraska*, 377.

⁹⁵ He clearly misspoke. Julesburg would have been well over one hundred miles from Midway. Judging from the mileage and station locations, he likely reached Gilman's that night and, as he says, rode into Post Cottonwood the next day.

⁹⁶ Company K had been transferred from Fort Kearny to Post Cottonwood in late July. RG18, roll 3.

⁹⁷ Although Scherneckau had consistently praised Baumer, and the officer seemed to have a good record with respect to military affairs, he was not immune to the intemperance that plagued many soldiers. On an earlier occasion, Baumer had been accused of being under the influence when he got into an altercation with a woman and her traveling companion on board a stagecoach near Beauvais Station in May 1865. Letters about this incident by fellow officers appear in Baumer's file, Compiled Service Records, roll 2. When Colonel Livingston was about to be mustered out, Gen. Patrick Connor urged General Dodge to retain Livingston, because Baumer, the First Nebraska's lieutenant colonel "has habits which unfit him for the service." *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 48:2, 1066.

⁹⁸ The Third Massachusetts Volunteer Cavalry was en route to Post Cottonwood before being mustered out in late September 1865. Dyer, *Compendium*, 1240.

⁹⁹ The large amount of this payment may reflect that Scherneckau was receiving some of his government bounty for his enlistment as a recruit in 1862, in addition to his regular pay. The balance of enlistment bounties was supposed to be paid at the time a soldier was mustered out.

¹⁰⁰ Now that the Civil War had ended, the volunteer units remaining on the Plains began to lose many men by desertion. On Aug. 23, 1865, Division of the Missouri Commander John Pope remarked in a letter to District of Nebraska Commander Frank Wheaton, "There is so much dissatisfaction and insubordination in the volunteer regiments . . . arising from the belief that as the war is ended they are entitled to discharge . . . that

they are not efficient, and will be less so every day." *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 48:2, 1206-8. In July, a portion of the First Nebraska mutinied at Fort Kearny, though the soldiers apparently soon settled down. *Ibid.*, 1112. The morning reports and correspondence of the various companies of the First Nebraska in RG18 reflect a high rate of desertion throughout the fall and winter of 1865, including Medal of Honor recipient Francis Lohnes.

¹⁰¹ His sister and brother or brother-in-law in Germany.

¹⁰² Bvt. Maj. Gen. Frank Wheaton, who was assigned to command the District of Nebraska on Aug. 22, 1865. *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 48:2, 1201, 1206

¹⁰³ He must mean he wrote to C. Wasmer, as William was there with him.

¹⁰⁴ Martin B. Cutler and John G. Whitelock. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 8-9.

¹⁰⁵ This may be James H. Simpson, a U.S. Army topographical engineer who had surveyed wagon roads in the West before the Civil War. Simpson had been appointed by the president to examine a proposal by the Union Pacific Railroad to change its route, and made his survey in the summer of 1865. Dan L. Thrapp, *Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography*, vol. 3 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press Bison Books, 1988), 1311-12; Andreas, *History of Nebraska*, 194-95.

¹⁰⁶ Probably George Martin, Thomas McCauley, and James Springer, all of whom were listed in Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 98-101, as residents of Decatur, N.T., which was located on the Omaha Reservation. They may have been mixed-bloods. All had transferred to Company H from the First Battalion, Nebraska Veteran Cavalry.

¹⁰⁷ Pvt. George Shannon. *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ During the period covered by the lost notes, Company H was ordered to Fort Sedgwick at Julesburg on Sept. 23, according to the Company H morning report, RG18, roll 3. This move was unexpected and outraged Captain Ivory and his men, since they had spent most of the summer building quarters at Midway Station, in which they expected to spend the winter.

¹⁰⁹ Presumably to retrieve some of the supplies or building materials left behind at Midway.

¹¹⁰ The election of 1865 decided only the races for territorial auditor and treasurer, along with the seats in the legislature's lower house. Morton-Watkins, *History of Nebraska*, 1:503-5. Under the territorial system, the governor was an administration appointee.

¹¹¹ The stage route and telegraph line went north from Julesburg through the Nebraska panhandle to intersect the North Platte valley near Chimney Rock. Mud Springs was a former Pony Express and current telegraph station that had been attacked by Indians in February 1865. John D. McDermott, "We Had a Terribly Hard Time Letting Them Go: The Battles of Mud Springs and Rush Creek, February 1865," *Nebraska History* 77 (Summer 1996): 78-88.

¹¹² Captain Kuhl was mustered out on Oct. 11, 1865. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 144-45. The Indians were the Pawnee Scouts returning from the Powder River Expedition.

¹¹³ Scherneckau, George Shannon, and Corp. Charles Coder were being sent east to receive their discharge. Company H morning report, October 1865, RG18, roll 3. Odd must have been a civilian.

¹¹⁴ Butte Station, *OR*, "List of Stations;" Butt's ranche in Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, 279.

¹¹⁵ Beauvais Ranche, at the Old California Crossing of the South Platte River. Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, 279; Ware, *Indian War of 1864*, 465-66.

¹¹⁶ Alkali Station was about seven miles west of present Paxton, Nebraska. Six days after Scherneckau was there, Indians killed three members of Company C, Corporals Dewitt Chase, James Gruwell, and Francis M. Stanley, in an Oct. 22 skirmish. Dudley, *Roster of Nebraska Volunteers*, 33-35. The station was raided again on Oct. 28, and Gen. Herman Heath led troops in pursuit. Accounts of the raids and expedition appear in the *Omaha Weekly Republican*, Nov. 17 and Dec. 1, 1865. Also see Heath to Wheaton, Nov. 8, 1865, Letters Received by the Department of the Missouri, Fort Kearny, N.T., RG393, Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, NARA, microfilm at NSHS as RG505, roll 4.

¹¹⁷ Williams's ranche was five to six miles west of the O'Fallon's Bluff military post and Kirby's ranche was to the east. The latter was apparently also called Buffalo Ranche. Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, 277-78. The officer was probably Maj. George O'Brien of the Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry, though his younger brother, Capt. Nicholas O'Brien, also served in that regiment. Ware, *Indian War of 1864*, 435, 443.

¹¹⁸ Bishop's ranche was about halfway between North Platte and Hershey, Nebraska. Jack Morrow's ranche, one of the more famous along the trail, was just east of the confluence of the North and South Platte rivers. Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, 276-77; Ware, *Indian War of 1864*, 442.

¹¹⁹ Former officers Theodore Luebbes and Henry Kuhl must have established a road ranche. Earlier, Scherneckau mentioned that Luebbes was also doing some freighting.

¹²⁰ In earlier entries, Scherneckau consistently identified Mullally's ranche as being west of Plum Creek Station. Evidently Mullally had established a second ranch east of Plum Creek by this time. A map of a scout by Company C, Second U.S. Cavalry, in June 1869 (RG393), shows two Mullally's Ranches, one east and one west of Plum Creek.

¹²¹ Following his discharge, Scherneckau continued his diary for barely two weeks. The entries from this period, which have not been included here, record personal affairs and his return to civilian life in the Grand Island settlement. When he went back to Fort Kearny on November 8, 1865, to receive the last installment of his army pay, Scherneckau wrote the final entry in the diary he began keeping on November 1, 1862.