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Article Summary: Kendall was one of a group of travelers who had hoped to witness the signing of the Fort Laramie Treaty. Poor weather and bad luck forced them to cut their trip short. They did accompany a US Army detachment from Fort Kearny to the Pawnee Indian villages on the Platte.

Cataloging Information:

Names: George Wilkins Kendall, David Dawson Mitchell, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Henry W Wharton, Orson L Hyde, Perry E Brockus, Itz-cat-a-pa, F Jeffrey Deroine, Samuel Ellis [Allis], Harlow C Kingsbury, Malain, Shi-a-cha-rish, Double Chief, Fatty

Nebraska Place Names: Bellevue, Fort Kearny, Pawnee Loup Village, and Grand Pawnee Village

Members of Kendall's Party: Adam B Chambers, Benjamin Gratz Brown, Henry C King, Henry C Yeatman, W F Newsom, John Blount Robertson, Robert Campbell, J H Dillon, Charles William Wentworth Fitzwilliam, S T Clissold, Edmund F Chouteau

Indian Tribes: Pawnees, Loups, Omahas

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Photographs / Images: Little Blue River ford (Albert Bierstadt photo, 1859); George Wilkins Kendall; map of the area of Kendall's western travels; Fort Kearny (James F Wilkins sketch, 1849); Fort Kearny from the northeast, 1870; Omaha village near Bellevue (George Simons sketch, 1854); Loup Pawnee village (George Simons sketch, 1856); F Jeffrey Deroine, interpreter

George Wilkins Kendall, Newsman,
and a Party of Pleasure Seekers
on the Prairie, 1851

Edited by R. Eli Paul

INTRODUCTION

George Wilkins Kendall began his 1851 trip to the Plains on a confident note. His assurance was reflected in a feature in the *New Orleans Picayune*, the newspaper of which Kendall was the editor and part owner:

By a private letter, dated at St. Louis on the 1st of August, we learn that the party Mr. Kendall accompanied to Fort Laramie and the great Indian treaty, left St. Louis on the 31st July, all in excellent health and spirits and most abundantly provided with every thing calculated to render the trip pleasant and agreeable. . . . The treaty is to be held on the 1st of September, and after a hunt after buffalo, elk and grizzley bear in the Rocky Mountains, the intention of the party is to return to the white settlements early in October. We expect to receive letters from Mr. K. whenever opportunity occurs, giving an account of the progress of the party.¹

Plans went awry as soon as the overland portion of the trip commenced at the Missouri River settlements. Dismal weather and poor planning combined to push the Kendall party farther and farther behind schedule. Concluding that they could never reach the Fort Laramie treaty grounds in time, alternate plans were made at Fort Kearny. In order to salvage the trip and inject some semblance of exotic frontier scenery into their changed itinerary, Kendall and some of his fellow travelers accompanied a US Army detachment from Fort Kearny to the Pawnee Indian villages on the Platte River. From there he went to Peter Sarpy's trading post at Bellevue and then proceeded homeward.

Unlucky traveler that he was, Kendall missed one of the majestic events on the Plains in the 1850s. The Fort Laramie Treaty gathered the largest congregation of Plains Indians yet

seen. From eyewitness accounts an estimated 10,000 Indians attended the treaty council, held not at the fort, as the name implies, but at Horse Creek, a tributary of the North Platte River over 30 miles east of the fort.

Delegations from nine tribes, Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Shoshone, Assiniboin, Mandan, Gros Ventre, and Arikara, met with David Dawson Mitchell, superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis, Thomas Fitzpatrick, agent for the Upper Platte Agency, and a host of interested onlookers.² The treaty proceedings began on September 4, 1851—three days later than Kendall presumed—and did not conclude until September 23. A train of 23 wagons slowly wended its way from Missouri to the treaty grounds, loaded with goods to seal the deal and illustrate the government's good faith. This wagon train, in turn, served as a guide post to Kendall, a means by which he could judge his own schedule and progress on the trail.

Born in New Hampshire in 1809, George Wilkins Kendall emigrated to Louisiana in 1837 and helped found the *New Orleans Picayune*, soon one of the premier newspapers of the South. As its editor he was often in the midst of key events during America's westward expansion of the 1840s. From his vantage point he could roam at will to those places of interest which caught his eye, and, he hoped, the eyes of his readers. Kendall accompanied the Texan Expedition to New Mexico in 1843, was arrested by the Mexican authorities along with the entire American contingent, and sent to a Mexico City prison. Surviving that, he returned in 1846 as a Mexican War correspondent. From such battlegrounds as Monterrey, Cerro Gordo, and Chapultepec, he sent a stream of news and comment back to the states. Forsaking a comfortable life in New Orleans, Kendall moved his family to the Texas frontier in 1856. He became a noted rancher, had his home county named for him, and lived there until his death in 1867.³

Kendall's 1851 trip to the "prairie" mirrored his continued interest in the American frontier and its territories. In keeping with his editorial responsibilities, Kendall played the dutiful correspondent during his trip. He contributed the sum of 11 letters and "prairie sketches" (essays) to the *Picayune*.⁴ All portions relating to his journey are presented here. His literate observations of the Indian lands soon to be known as Nebraska



*Albert Bierstadt photographed this Little Blue River ford in 1859.
Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society.*



*George Wilkins Kendall. From
Kendall of the Picayune by
Fayette Copeland, courtesy of
University of Oklahoma Press.*

and Kansas are accurate and detailed. In addition, as Kendall himself stated in the preface of an earlier travelogue: "The object of the author has been to tell his story in a plain, unvarnished way—in the homely, every-day language which is at once understood by all."⁵

As illustrated by these letters, Kendall kept this same standard for his 1851 western travels, the last of his ventures into the wilds in search of news for the *Picayune*.

THE LETTERS

Kansas [City], Missouri, August 6, 1851 [published August 21].

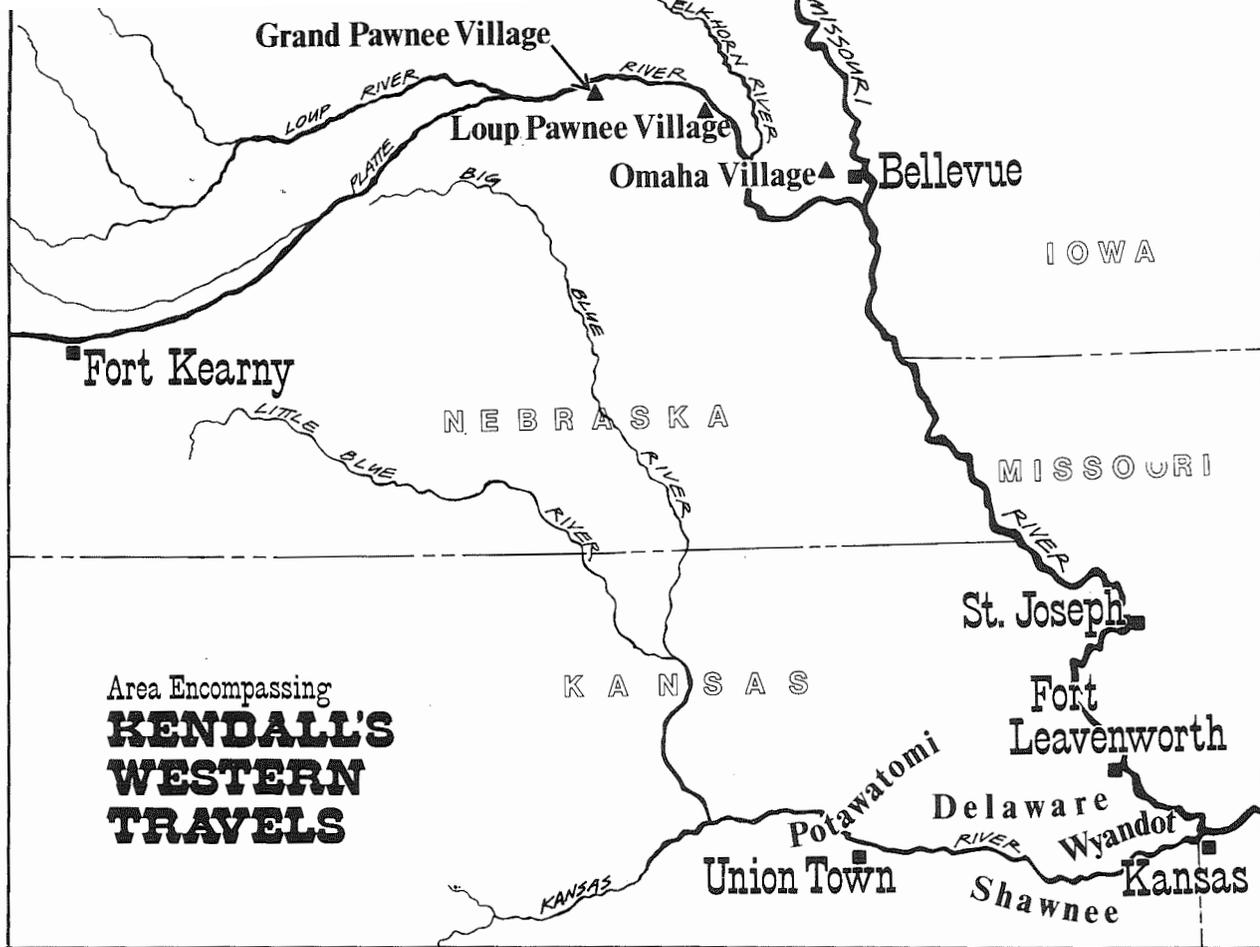
I have not written you a line since I left New Orleans, my main and principal reason being that I have had nothing to say.⁶ I might have told you that the plantations on the Lower Mississippi were suffering greatly from drought; but this you already knew. I might have stated that I found St. Louis increasing rapidly; that new buildings, and magnificent ones, were going up in every part of the city; and that the evidences of thrift and prosperity were every where visible—but even this would not be news to those who have watched the progress of the great city of the West. I might have told you that the cholera had almost every where disappeared on the rivers; yet here again I would have been relating a twice told tale, for the papers give you all such intelligence.⁷ In short, I must repeat that I have had nothing worth giving you which would repay the postage, even under the new and reduced system.

There is one item I can give our readers, however, which may be new—I found at St. Louis that [Joseph M.] Field had broken ground for his new theatre, and that it is to go up rapidly. It will be a neat and commodious structure, and under Field's able management, and located as it is in a city offering such great present and prospective advantages, its success cannot be doubted.⁸

The two short days we spent at St. Louis were entirely occupied in purchasing horses, picking up groceries, ammunition, and all kinds of camp equipage, and getting in readiness for the long prairie journey before us. We found that Col. D. D. Mitchell, the Indian Agent, had already left for this place, to collect his wagon train, arrange his fitting out, and make all preparation for a start.⁹ And here perhaps it may not be amiss to give the objects of his expedition to Fort Laramie.

The 1st of September was some months ago appointed as the day on which Col. Mitchell, as the agent of our Government, would meet as many of the prairie tribes as could be induced to go in to Laramie, to hold a grand talk with them, and to make treaties with such tribes as the United States have heretofore held no stipulations with. The different bands of the great Sioux nation will undoubtedly be present, the Arapahoes and Cheyennes will also be in attendance, and it is confidently hoped that the Crows and Snakes from the North will at least send delegations, if they do not appear in large bodies. In the meantime, it is stated that Major Fitzpatrick,¹⁰ sent some time since to the South, is already on his way to Laramie with delegations, and numerous ones, from Camanche [Comanche], Caygua [Kiowa] and Utah [Ute] tribes, while if the Pawnee bands can be assured of protection from their old enemies, they may also come into the treaty in numbers. Of course, all Indians are most uncertain in their movements, and capricious in keeping their promises, yet it is to be hoped that a large body may be drawn in at Laramie previous to the 1st of September.

Some fifty wagons, loaded with Indian presents and provisions, will accompany the expedition, escorted by a company of U.S. dragoons. Of amateurs, who are just going along for the novelty and fun of the thing, I believe that there are some ten in all, and, in the forcible language of the mates of our Western steamers, there is not a man among them that will not "do to tie to." I wish that the anxious friends and relatives of the different members of the party could see them as I now do, working and packing, and busily employed in getting ready. Some of them are engaged in mounting and trying all sorts of wild and skittish ponies untractable to a degree, which are cavorting about and cutting up all sorts of strange antics. Others are running bullets, others again are cleaning out their guns and Colt's revolvers—all are busy. And then their outward appearance would entitle them to instant admission to any *fraternite, democratique et sociale*, located in the most outlying faubourg [suburb] of Paris. All of them have their hair cropped short, so that the Indians can gain no great advantage over them in the scalping line, while their slouched hats and loose habiliments would indicate that their personal comfort rather than their personal appearance has been studied. We have now reached the jumping off place—are



about to plunge into the immense wilderness of prairies stretching away to the Rocky Mountains—and all are as well prepared for the trip as may be. In the selection of groceries, and all kinds of creature comforts, each individual member seems to have been fully impressed with the deep importance of the ancient Roman maxim, that life is entirely too short to afford to indulge in common “doins,” and hence I see, legibly inscribed on the numerous boxes, cases and demijohns by which I am now surrounded, such labels as “Old Bourbon,” “Sazarac, 95,” “Potted Lobsters,” “French Preserved Meats,” “Pate de Foie-gras”—I might go on with a page of fools cap and the inventory would not be half taken. I think we shall live—at least such is the general impression.

As regards the composition of our little party, I know that I shall transgress no rules of propriety by giving the names. We have Col. A[dam]. B. Chambers along, the well known and popular editor of the *St. Louis Republican*, and B[enjamin]. Gratz Brown, a distinguished lawyer of the same city. Then we have H[enry]. C. King, a young gentleman from Georgia, and H[enry]. C. Yeatman and W. F. Newsom from Nashville, Tennessee, J[ohn]. B[lount]. Robertson, now of New Orleans but formerly from Tennessee, is also along. Col. Robert Campbell, an old Indian trader, accompanies the expedition, and besides we have three English gentlemen in the party—J. H. Dillon, C[harles]. W[illiam]. W[entworth]. Fitzwilliam and S. T. Clissold—all good men and true. These, with a goodly array of servants, cooks and what not, make up our party.¹¹

I have but just arrived, and cannot give you the precise time of starting, but before we leave I will give you a hurried line.

Westport, Missouri, August 8, 1851 [published August 21].

We have made a start, and have got over four miles of the six hundred lying between this and Fort Laramie. Col. Mitchell started three days since, with the wagons and escort, but by hurrying we shall catch up with him before he reaches the crossing of the Kansas.¹²

In the midst of a most terrific storm of rain, thunder and lightning, we took refuge last night in the loft of a warehouse. Some of the green hands have already had more than a sprinkling of the life before them, and this morning looked a little

seedy as they crawled out from under their wet blankets. Such a rain few of them had ever been out in before, and had it not been for friendly shelter they might have been tempted to have turned their faces homeward. You have heard of its pouring cats and dogs, have you not, besides pitchforks and other agricultural instruments? They all came down last night, and in the midst of the storm a drunken Wyondotte accidentally fell into the swift current of the Missouri, and would have been drowned had it not been for a friendly plank we threw into the stream, and which he seized. The drunken scoundrel, sobered partially by his accidental bath, stalked off, after we dragged him ashore, and without once thanking us. The land of the Wyondottes lies directly opposite this, and the groceries of the whites are decidedly too near for the well-being of at least many of them.

We had another addition to our party at Kansas in the person of E[dmund]. F. Cho[u]teau, better known all through this region as Guesseau, who will go with us at least as far as Fort Kearny. He knows the Indians and prairies by heart, is a good fellow in every acceptation of the term, and will prove a most agreeable as well as valuable acquisition to our mess and camp fire.¹³

For the first one hundred and fifty miles of our route, or until we get beyond the lands of the half-civilized Delawares, Shawnees, Pottawattomies and other border tribes, we are told that we shall meet prairie hens in abundance, the chickens just getting large enough and fat enough to grace a gridiron. The chances now are that we shall have game all the way to Fort Laramie, as beyond the prairie hens we come upon deer and antelope, wild turkeys, &c., and still further along we shall reach the buffalo range.

In the letter I wrote you from Kansas I believe I said that cholera had entirely left the river. In this I was mistaken, as it still lingers at many points along the Missouri, and the type of the disease is of the severest nature. Few taken down recover, and among the Indians in particular it creates the greatest alarm. At St. Charles, near the mouth of the Missouri, I heard of four or five cases which had recently occurred, and which the inhabitants called the sweating cholera. The victims were suddenly attacked—not with vomiting, cramps, as the usual symptoms—but with a cold and profuse perspiration, and

after lingering two or three days all of them die. I believe that this is a new feature of the disease.

The weather, since the great storm, has been warm but clear, and with good prospects of remaining settled. In this connection I might mention that throughout this section of Missouri, during the past three months, the farmers have been blessed with an abundance of rain, and that crops are most flourishing.

The post office here is the last one I shall see until I return, yet I will send you an account of our progress by every opportunity that may occur. We all launch into the wilderness in good health and spirits.

*Pottawattamie Post,*¹⁴ *On the Kansas, August 16, 1851*
[published September 7].

Thus far into the bowels of the prairies have we marched on with great impediment, sticking and hanging along, and occupying eight days in getting over ground we should have passed in four.

From the day we left Kansas we have had a succession of heavy showers, drenching all hands completely, and rendering the roads all but impassable. The first night out these rains commenced—the very first time we encamped the party were benefited with a soaking shower. As they crawled out of their wet blankets in the morning, no one could help laughing outright at the forlorn appearance of at least those new to prairie and out-door life.

But our real difficulties commenced at the creeks and gullies we were obliged to cross. Of course our wagons—we have two for a party of eight persons—were overloaded; all wagons are overloaded on first entering the plains. Of course, too, our wagons got stuck fast in the mud—not in one creek, but in every one—and as the mules could not drag them out, and as they would not budge an inch of themselves, we were all compelled to put our own shoulders to the wheels and help them. Covered from head to foot with mud, tired and worn down, we passed the first two days, and on the morning of the third, in the Shawnee country, we commenced lightening the wagons. We threw over at least five hundred pounds of wet and damaged sugar, coffee and meat; but still the heavy rains followed us, and still we were hard at work in the mud by day

and soaked through and through by night. There has not been even sun enough to dry our blankets, and gentlemen who have certainly made at least a respectable appearance in Chartres street, Broadway and Regent street, have cut but sorry figures hereaways. In all my prairie wanderings I have never experienced such a succession of heavy showers, the accompaniments of thunder and lightning being on a scale which would not disgrace the tropics. One of our party, who had crawled into a wagon and made his nest upon a pile of loaded guns, rifles and pistols, found a most uneasy bed when told they would attract some straggling flash of lightning, and that they would all go off.

So far we have journeyed entirely through the Shawnee and Pottawattamie country. Many of these Indians are rich, live in well made log-houses, have fields of corn, oats and wheat, numbers of cattle, and many of the comforts of life about them; yet all can see that they are discontented. They have been moved once by the United States, and they are fearful that the whites will again want their lands, and start them westward towards the Rocky Mountains. Several intelligent men among them have told me they would make additional improvements, and bring more land into cultivation, were they certain they could remain; but they are not; and hence merely raise enough to supply their ordinary wants.

The Pottawattamie women have a style of riding on horseback slightly different from that considered appropriate among ladies in the settlements. Although their skirts are as long as the longest, they still, to use a Western expression, put one foot on one side of their horses, and one on the other. The style seems peculiarly adapted to the Bloomer costume, but it certainly has not made its appearance thus far West.

We learn here that Col. Mitchell, with Cols. Chambers and Campbell, are three days ahead of us. We shall push on towards Fort Kearny as fast as horse and mule flesh will carry us, and if we can have any thing like fair weather, hope soon to overtake them. The prospect is now better for clear skies than we have yet had.

This place, containing some dozen log houses, is but a trading post, where all the Indians for miles and miles come to purchase their supplies. It is called Uniontown, and is the last settlement we meet of any kind until we reach Fort Kearny,

two hundred miles distant. To-morrow we cross the Kansas, strike into the prairies in earnest, soon enter the Pawnee country, and then farewell to any thing bearing the most remote resemblance to civilization.

So far the party are all well, and with the prospect of good weather certainly seem more cheerful. You shall hear from me by every opportunity.

Fort Kearny, ¹⁵ August 30, 1851 [published October 5].

We have finally reached this military post on the Platte, and at least ten days behind our time. For a week after leaving the Pottawattamie trading post on the Kansas we were daily visited by drenching showers, swelling the smaller streams, cutting up the roads, and rendering our progress almost impossible. At one crossing we were fairly compelled to unhitch the mules from the wagons, and let the latter down the steep bank by means of ropes, every other hope of getting over being impossible. In going down another steep bank the spokes in one of the wagon wheels all started, crippling it so that we were in constant fear of a regular break down, and while coming down a gully getting into the stream known as the Little Blue, some fifty miles from this place, another wheel of the same wagon literally fell all in pieces, leaving us perfectly helpless.

Here was a fix for a party of pleasure seekers—broke down, without the power of moving, and two days' travel from any aid—yet happening to recollect that we had seen an old wagon wheel lying by the side of the trail, some eight miles back and the remains of a wreck probably left by some unfortunate party of California emigrants, we sent two of our servants back after it. It was a world too large, and somewhat rickety from long exposure to sun and storm; yet by cutting off a portion of the hub, and applying bountiful lashings of rope and raw hide to the weaker parts, we made out to get along with it after a fashion. In this way, and with jaded and worn out mules, we finally reached this post, into which I may say we fairly put in sore distress. Had it not been for the old wheel by the road side we should have been compelled to leave one of our wagons by the way, and either to *cache* our "plunder" as they call all sorts of effects hereaways, or leave it to the first straggling band of Pawnees passing along the trail. As it turned out, we reached

this friendly post in three days' travel. The old wheel wobbled about in the most erratic manner, and creaked and groaned as though every revolution pained it sorely; but it served our turn and has our thanks.

Here we have met every attention from the kind and gentlemanly commander of the post, Capt. [Henry W.] Wharton, and his amiable family, and also from Dr. [William A.] Hammond, the surgeon.¹⁶ To us Fort Kearny has fairly risen an oasis in a wide desert of difficulties. Not only have our physical wants, and they have been many, been cared for, but the injuries to our wagons have all been repaired, and with fresh animals we are again ready to start towards the mountains.

The talk here is that Col. Mitchell, who is some week or ten days ahead of us, will endeavor to bring the Sioux and other Indians down to a point one hundred miles this side of Fort Laramie where buffalo and all sorts of game may be found in the greatest abundance.¹⁷ The long train of wagons containing Indian presents is still behind, and can hardly reach Laramie before the 20th September.¹⁸ By that time all the game and sustenance of the different tribes represented will have been completely exhausted, so that as a matter of policy it is to be hoped the Indians will come down. The promise of an abundance of provisions, and of receiving their presents earlier, it is thought will have the effect of inducing them to move this way.

We learn that the Utahs and Arrappahoes, or delegations from those tribes, have come in with Major Fitzpatrick, but that the Camanches utterly refuse to send a man. It is reported here, but I know not whether the story is entitled to credence, that some of the head Camanche chiefs told Major F. they wanted to make no more treaties with the whites—they were at war with them, and intended to continue at war until the end.¹⁹

So far, we have met with few adventures worthy of special mention. At the crossing of the Vermillion, just after we had encamped upon its banks, a small war party of Kansas Indians came suddenly upon us, causing not a little excitement for a few moments. There were only fourteen of them in all; but as they streamed up over a bank hard by, it seemed as though they might be the vanguard of at least fourteen hundred. With

the exception of a few feathers, not a soul among them had a sign of any kind of head covering; and as the style of dressing the hair among these Indians is to leave a small ridge about three inches long, sticking up like bristles upon a hog's back, the personal appearance of these warriors was any thing but prepossessing or amiable. With little ceremony they stalked into our camp, laid down their arms, and after shaking hands all round, seated themselves quietly on the grass, took out a pipe, and after filling it with *kinnikinick*, which they drew from a pole-cat's skin, commenced smoking with stoical unconcern. We have a half-breed Pottawattamie hunter with us—one that we hired at Uniontown—and through signs he made out to understand from them that they had been out on a war expedition against the Pawnees, that they had been unsuccessful not only in meeting their enemies, but with any game, that they had been three days without tasting food of any kind, and that they desired we should furnish them.

From their lank and hungry appearance, it was evident they had neither fared abundantly nor sumptuously of late; and as we had a lot of meat which was a trifle too far gone for our consumption, we handed it over to these Kansas gentlemen. They received it without any manifestation of gratitude, which would probably have been the case had it been fresh killed, and cooking it after their own fashion, they all laid down outside our camp to rest from their fatigues. At 1 o'clock in the morning, after sleeping four or five hours, they all took their departure, and we saw no more of them. I have forgotten to state that some of our party carried on rather a brisk traffic with these Indians for a space, in the way of bartering tobacco for kinnikinick and badly made moccasins.

So far we have seen little of the Pawnees, but the sneaking, thieving rascals have not allowed us to pass through their country without levying their customary toll upon at least one of our party. While encamped near a water hole between the Big and Little Blue, and while two of our party were standing guard over our animals, which were closely picketed around us, some skulking scoundrel stealthily crept into the camp, cut the rawhide lariat with which Mr. Dillon's horse was fast tied, and made off with him while one of the guard was scarcely thirty steps off. And so quietly was this robbery effected, that until we commenced bringing in our animals to saddle in the



James F. Wilkins sketched Fort Kearny in 1849. Courtesy of State Historical Society of Wisconsin. . . (Below) Fort Kearny from the northeast, 1870. Courtesy of University of Wyoming Library, Laramie.



morning, not a suspicion that one of them had been spirited away, after the true Pawnee fashion, was aroused. He was a fine, large, powerful gray gelding, and the rascal who stole him is probably now showing off in grand style with his prize.

We have so far encountered many travelers on the route; far more than we expected. They have been mostly made up of returning Californians, mounted upon mules, dressed in leather, and with beards and mustaches of most luxuriant growth. So far as we can gather, their animals are not oppressively loaded down with the dust, but on the contrary are coming in with lighter weights than they left. The head of one party told us that on the average his companions would get back to their homes, after two years' absence, about as well off in the world as when they left, and thought themselves lucky at that.

For the last three days we have been traveling through an antelope range, and although they have been shy, we have supplied ourselves abundantly. A few straggling buffalo bulls, the van or rear guard of the immense herds said to be before us, have already been seen. To-morrow or next day we shall be among them, and then for sport and excitement.

I will write you by every opportunity, and trust that something of interest may turn up before I again have a chance of sending a letter.

Fort Kearny, September 6, 1851 [published October 7].

Since my last, dated at this place, we have been up the Platte to a point some six miles above the mouth of Plum Creek,²⁰ and have fairly had a surfeit of buffalo hunting. We met them by hundreds within twenty miles, by thousands within thirty, and by tens of thousands within forty, and from the first our camps have fairly smoked with tongues, hump, ribs and marrow bones. We have also met with great numbers of antelope, and myriads of wolves have nightly serenaded us, after feasting themselves upon what we left of the buffalo killed. A finer game country than this can hardly be met with, situated as it is on a species of neutral ground between the Sioux and Pawnee.²¹

A break down of one of our wagons, a wheel smashing all to pieces while crossing a deep gully, first detained us at Plum Creek. As there was no means of repairing it on the road, we

were forced to send it back to this place. On the return of the driver, he brought us a terrible account of a foray the Pawnees had made on a train of wagons coming up from Fort Leavenworth, and he further told us that Capt. Wharton, with fifty men and a 12-pound howitzer, was to start out at once to compel them to give up their plunder or chastise them severely. The driver, who had been fairly sold or humbugged by some of the soldiers about the fort here, even brought us a detailed account that they were rapidly baking bread and making hasty preparations for their departure. Our chances of getting to Fort Laramie, at least in season to be present at the treaty, had already become slim on account of the frequent annoying delays we had met with on the road; here was a new opening, and one nearer home, to have a touch of savage life and see a little excitement, and all hands determined at once to return to this place, and, if necessary, volunteer our services to the commander. So, hastily packing up, and leaving the buffalo and antelope to a greater share of tranquillity than they had enjoyed for a week, we took the back track, and arrived here this evening.

It was at once ascertained that we had been hoaxed in relation to the expedition to the Pawnee camp, not a word of all that had been told the driver being true. Yet the return to the fort has really been necessary, for we found that two wheels belonging to another wagon were in such rickety condition they could not last, and we were even compelled to lash the tire upon one of them to prevent a regular break down. Since the heavy rains—in fact for a fortnight—not a sprinkle of a shower have we had; but a dry wind has been blowing nearly all the time, which has so dried the timber of the wagon wheels that they seem ready to fall in pieces. Here we can have the tire cut down and shortened, preparatory to taking a fresh start.

The express rider, who is to take this scrawl down to the settlements, is ready to start and waits with much uneasiness; I must therefore close immediately.²² Some three or four of our party of eight, who are called to the States by business, will leave to-morrow for St. Joseph and Fort Leavenworth, and I shall accompany them. The others of the company talk of rigging and fitting out afresh, and taking a new start towards Laramie and the mountains. All is yet, however, unsettled in

relation to the future movements of such of our party who have time on their hand.²³

I will write you again from the first post office.

*Sarpy's Trading House,*²⁴ *Nebraska Territory, September 18, 1851 [published October 11].*

I write this letter at the old trading post and mission of the Omaha Indians, at Council Bluffs, and directly upon the banks of the Missouri, a point not one of our party certainly expected to see ten days since.

My last was written at Fort Kearny, on the Platte. I there informed you—in great haste as the express rider was just starting out for the settlements—that after a week or ten days spent among the buffalo, we had given up our contemplated trip to Fort Laramie. Our reasons for this change were numerous. We were some fifteen or twenty days behind our time, owing to the horrible weather we experienced in the Shawnee and Pottawattamie countries; our wagons were fast falling to pieces, owing to their having been over loaded during the wet weather, and from the shrinkage of spokes, hubs, &c., during the dry and windy spell which followed; our draught mules were becoming jaded and broken down from previous hard work, and from now being pestered by the myriads of mosquitoes which this summer have swarmed upon the Platte. Mr. Dillon, as has previously been mentioned, had had a large and valuable horse stolen by the Indians, near the Blue, while both Mr. Clissold and Mr. King were left minus each an excellent pony, the animals taking it into their heads to *stampede* during a heavy thunder squall which followed a hard buffalo chase; the horses of some of the other gentlemen, from hard chasing after wolves and buffalo, from want of grain, and from being harrassed by the legions of mosquitoes, were also fast failing, and little able to make the journey of two hundred and fifty miles still intervening between us and Fort Laramie; our provisions, in the way especially of breadstuffs, were growing a little short—such were some of the reasons which rendered our farther advance towards the Rocky Mountains difficult if not impossible. And to these should be added the fact that we knew that Col. Campbell's wagon train, with presents to be used by Col. Mitchell at the Indian treaty, had not even reached Fort Kearny as late as the

4th of this month—at least one month behind time—and that the treaty could not come off in season for us to get back to the States before November.²⁵ Farther than all this, some of us had already obtained more than a passing glimpse of the prairie elephant, and were longing, after an absence of nearly six weeks, for the beds, breakfasts and musquito bars of the white settlements; so that when one of our drivers returned to Plum Creek with a partially patched wagon, and told his tale of the preparations Capt. Wharton was making at Kearny for an expedition into the heart of the Pawnee country, we at once decided upon setting our faces homeward. The grand village of the Pawnees we knew to be but little off the direct route between Forts Kearny and Leavenworth, and this was a farther inducement to take that course home; we had seen the Big and the Little Blue—had seen quite enough of them—and anything for a change.

As I have stated in a former letter, we reached Kearny, on our return, late in the evening of Saturday, the 5th of this month, and were not long in ascertaining that the tale brought back by our driver, if not entirely untrue, was at least much exaggerated. It was true that Capt. Wharton had for some weeks contemplated paying the Pawnees a visit, for the purpose of holding a talk with them and compelling them to give up certain horses and other property they had stolen from the emigrants, and, if possible, to seize upon the perpetrators; yet on our return he was not prepared to go out with a force sufficiently large, even with the addition of our party, to carry out any coercive measures circumstances might compel him to adopt. His entire force then at Kearny numbered but about eighty men, and of these some twenty were engaged in getting hay and wood for the winter. A portion were also constantly detailed for hospital and other duties, leaving but few available men for even a short expedition.

So soon as it was ascertained that a military command was not to move in the direction of the Pawnee villages, three of our party of eight, Messrs. Fitzwilliam, Clissold and King, determined upon recommencing the trip towards Laramie. The latter gentleman purchased a little Cheyenne mare, noted for her great endurance and as being a first rate buffalo nag; Mr. Clissold still had a good horse left, and Mr. Fitzwilliam two; so that the party were tolerably well mounted. As an ad-

dition to their strength, an English gentleman named Foster had arrived at Kearny, and procuring a horse at the fort set about making preparations to accompany them.²⁶

In the meantime, such of us as were compelled to turn our faces homeward, after giving our jaded animals two days' rest, were getting in readiness to start on the afternoon of the 8th, when Capt. Wharton changed his mind in relation to his expedition.²⁷ He ascertained that he could draw off twenty-four men from his command [Company I, 6th Infantry]; and as our party, including servants, numbered nine, all well armed, he could start with a force of over thirty. In addition, he placed a small [12 lb.] howitzer, with forty rounds of ammunition, in readiness, and on the morning of the 9th inst., the soldiers in wagons drawn by six mules, we left Fort Kearny and its hospitable entertainers, and struck down the valley of the Platte towards the Grand Pawnee Village, as it is called. At the same time Fitzwilliam's party started up the Platte towards Laramie, Col. Campbell's train having meanwhile arrived at Kearny and moved on in the same direction. In taking leave of our friends we could only wish them all success, pleasure and sport on their trip towards the Rocky Mountains. Some of them contemplated to cross from Laramie to Fort St. Pierre,²⁸ if possible, and return to the settlements by way of the Missouri.

The distance from Fort Kearny to the Grand Pawnee Village is called one hundred and fifty miles, the road leading along the bottom of the Platte, in a course nearly east. Had not Capt. Wharton accompanied us, we should probably have visited the main Pawnee village, situated some sixteen miles to the left of the direct road leading to old Fort Kearny, on the Missouri, and then have struck directly across the prairies until we had regained this road. This would lengthen our journey some fifty miles; but as an offset we could see the Pawnees at home, where they are far less dangerous than when out on their marauding expeditions, and at the same time could reach the settlements and find grain for the animals four or five days sooner than by the nearer and more direct road to Fort Leavenworth.

The trip down the Platte was pleasant enough. For the first two days antelope abounded in the bottom of the river, while deer and occasionally elk are found upon the sparsely timbered

islands formed by the innumerable currents of the stream. We rattled on at too rapid a rate, however—some thirty miles a day—to devote much time to hunting. On the third evening, after encamping, some five hundred weight of cat fish were killed with sticks by the party. They were of different sizes, weighing from a pound and a half to forty pounds each, and the smaller ones we found most delicious. The wide bed of the Platte was at this time almost dry, and we found these fish collected in shallow holes where escape was impossible. It was the first time a greater portion of our party had started out fishing with clubs, and for a space the sport was exciting.

By the middle of the fourth day we had reached a point within twelve miles of the Grand Pawnee Village, and could easily see that our approach was heralded by means of telegraph signals on the higher hills which crown the bluffs of the Platte.²⁹ Always upon the lookout for their enemies the Sioux, the Pawnees upon the heights discovered us long before their village was in sight, and when we reached a small stream which skirts it on the west, a rabble had emerged from the town to see us. This rabble was composed mainly of boys and the lower classes of men—their objects principally to beg tobacco and steal any small articles they could lay their thieving hands upon.

Once across the creek—no easy matter as the banks were high and steep—Capt. Wharton turned off to the left and pitched his camp upon a high swell about a mile from the village; the farther you can get from the Pawnee residences the better. The population of the village before us has been computed at four thousand five hundred souls—the population of each individual member of the body politic, about the same number.³⁰ While crossing the creek Capt. W. had signified his wish to hold a council with the chiefs and head men of the tribe at once, and soon a throng—some on foot and some on horseback—was seen pouring out of the village, and making towards our encampment.

The Pawnees are divided into four different bands, the Grand Pawnees, the Republican Pawnees, the Pawnee Tapage, and the Pawnee Loups or Wolves. Of these, the three former, and the greater number, live immediately in the village before us; the Loups, and they are really the most wolfish band of all, in a village thirty miles distant, and direct-

ly on the banks of the Platte near its confluence with the Missouri. Why the different bands do not live together is more than I can say.³¹ All raise corn, and we arrived among them just as it was passing from the roasting-ear into the ripening stage. They also cultivate beans and pumpkins, the women doing all the work; but their main dependence is upon buffalo meat, of which they kill an immense amount every season.

The head or principal chief of the confederated bands—the man they have for years all looked up to as their civil ruler at least—is Chief Malain [Ma-laigne],³² or the Cross Chief, a Grand Pawnee by birth I believe, although his mother was an Otoe woman. In his younger days he was a great warrior; but he has already numbered some seventy summers, and although he still stands erect, and his intellect remains clear, he has not as much influence in restraining the young braves from committing depredations as formerly. He was absent on our arrival, having started off a few days previously on a visit to the Omahas and the trading house at this place.

The principal chief of the Grand Pawnees is Shi-a-cha-rish [Sharitarish or Sha-re-ta-riche]—(I am not responsible for this spelling of his name, as he did not send his card). Belonging to the same band as Chief Malain, and being a warrior of much consequence, he was looked upon as principal in the absence of the old man. Another prominent brave is La-sha-da Bed-co [La-sha-pit-ko or Le-shar-o Pit-ko, Twice a Chief], or the Double Chief, he being considered a leader both among the Republican and Tapage Pawnees. Another chief among the latter is familiarly known among the whites as Fatty, a short, rotund round-faced little fellow, with a shirt which had never had acquaintance with water. Fatty is considered the greatest orator among them all, and he certainly gave us, when his turn came to speak in the council, a very flowery speech—a much better one than could have been expected from such a fat and greasy-looking rascal. Nearly all the chiefs owe their distinction to a certain extent to hereditary rights—of all the leading spirits in the Pawnee Nation at present I believe that only one, La-sha-da Bed-co, has risen purely through his own great merits, and these merits are all comprised in the simple fact that in early life he was the greatest and most successful horse thief among them all.³³

When the chiefs and principal braves had arrived at Capt.

Wharton's camp, the council was at once commenced. In the centre of a half circle, upon one of the smaller ends of an old case which had in its day contained claret wine, sat Capt. W.; on either side, upon inverted feed boxes taken from the wagons, were ranged Shi-a-cha-rish and some of the leading chiefs, with members of our own party. Farther along in the circle were seated some of the minor braves, while the background of the wild tableau was made up of our own soldiers, servants, and a miscellaneous assortment of Indians, young and old. Jeffrey, a mulatto well known as a sharp and skillful interpreter, was present standing inside the circle,³⁴ and after a little preliminary smoking the business of the council commenced.

Capt. Wharton began by stating that he had been sent out by the Great Father at Washington into the Indian country, to protect as well the whites as the natives of the prairies. He wished to be friendly to the latter—he was friendly to them—and so was their Great Father. He next spoke of some outrages which had been committed in the neighborhood of the Big and Little Blue, and stated that he was determined upon finding and punishing the perpetrators. He also alluded to the robbery of the Mormon [Orson L.] Hyde and Mr. [Perry E.] Brockus [Brocchus], on the eastern side of the Platte,³⁵ and next spoke of a promise the Pawnees had made him, when they went out on their spring buffalo hunt, to return by way of Fort Kearny and hold a talk with him, which promise they had not fulfilled. He finally spoke of the promise they had made him to send a delegation at least to the Indian treaty Col. Mitchell was to hold with the different tribes at Fort Laramie, and which promise they had also broken. After repeating that he was friendly to them all and wished to do every thing in his power to further their best interests, he sat down and waited a reply. I have given but a mere outline of what Capt. W. said in his talk, but believe I have left out no prominent point. Messrs. Dillon, Yeatman, Newsom and Robertson were within the circle at that time, and the scene was certainly one of singular wildness and interest.

After a pause of a few moments, during which the warriors relit their pipes and exchanged a few words with each other, Shi-a-cha-rish arose to answer the talk of his white brother as he termed our commander. He is a tall, straight, well-formed

and intelligent looking man of some sixty years of age, graceful in his gestures, easy in his manners, and evidently a natural orator of no little power. He commenced by stating that he knew nothing of any depredations committed on the Big or Little Blue. He admitted that some of his young men were wild and unrestrainable—hard to govern and disposed to commit overt acts upon the prairies when alone—yet at the same time he significantly hinted that there were other Indians besides the Pawnees, and that the latter were too frequently saddled with the blame of all.

In relation to the robbery of Hyde and Brockus, on the eastern banks of the Platte, he knew nothing—he was convinced his young men had no hand in that outrage. As regards the promise made to come in to Fort Kearny, after the spring buffalo hunt, it was made in good faith, but they had good reasons for not keeping it. Just before the return from the buffalo region a party of their enemies, the Cheyennes, had been hospitably entertained at the fort, had procured powder and lead, and on leaving it and almost within sight, had fallen upon and killed some of his own people.³⁶ They did not know what to think of this, and had avoided the fort on their return. In relation to attending Col. Mitchell's treaty at Fort Laramie, they had at first intended sending a large delegation; but at a council of all the chiefs and braves they had reconsidered the matter, and determined upon staying away. They had learned that the Sioux, Arapahoes and Cheyennes—their old and natural enemies—would be present at the treaty in large numbers—it was to be held directly in their country. They had farther learned that their enemies had intimated that they might come to the treaty freely and without molestation, have their talk and receive their presents without hindrance, but while returning to their homes they had openly given out their intention to fall upon, rob, and murder them, and this without mercy. The Pawnees were not so simple as to run any risks of this kind. After a few other remarks, during which he acknowledged the great power of his white brothers and expressed his wish to live upon the most friendly terms with them, he sat down.

At this point Capt. Wharton arose and made explanations in relation to certain matters significantly hinted at by Shi-a-charish. He knew that the robbery of Hyde and Brockus was com-

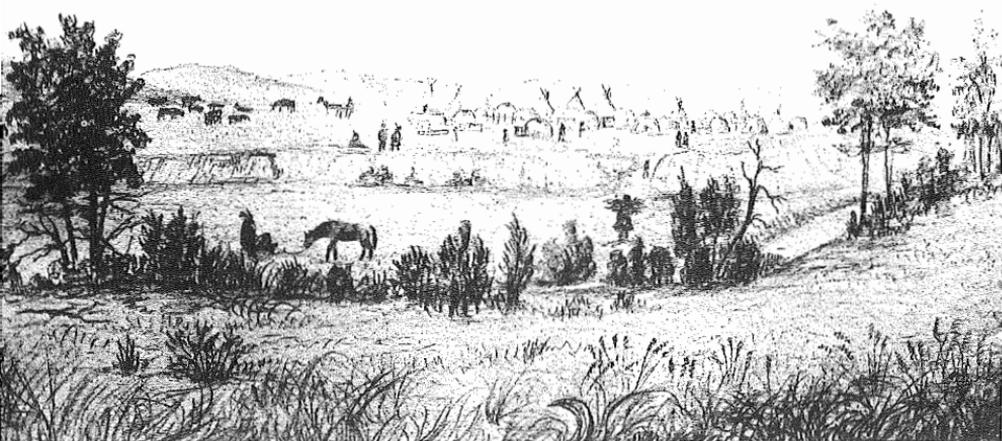
mitted by the Loups, and therefore made no allusions to it; he said that the Cheyennes had acted badly, and that he had sent out a party with the intention of arresting and bringing them back to the fort, but without success. The Great Father was friendly to all the prairie tribes, and in the vicinity of his post at least, if he could prevent it, they should not war against each other. He reiterated his wish to be on good terms with the Pawnees, and again sat down.

After a few moments' delay, the Double Chief, Fatty, and other braves, addressed the council, but in the main their remarks were but repetitions of what had been offered by Shi-a-cha-rish. All regretted that old Chief Malain was not present to take part in their deliberations, but they said that their white brother would meet him before his return. At dark, after some two hours' talk, the council broke up, Capt. Wharton telling Shi-a-cha-rish that some of his friends desired to visit the village, and hoping that they would not be molested. Some weak coffee, well sweetened, was offered to the principal chiefs, together with some tobacco, after which they retired; but a rabble of Pawnee loafers—the most inveterate beggars and thieves in existence—hung about our camp to the last, importuning us for tobacco and lying their hands upon any trifling article which might be left exposed.

After supper, a number of our party visited the village, and we were certainly all well received in the large and strongly built lodges. We saw many of their dances, besides a series of religious ceremonies or mummeries in one of the chief's residences, but even an outline of a description I will not attempt in this letter. Columns could hardly do justice in the way of describing the Grand Pawnee Village.

On Sunday, the 14th, we arrived at the Pawnee Loup Village,³⁷ after a long and tedious march made during a heavy rain. On the following day a long talk was held with Iz-cat-apa [Iskatappe],³⁸ the head chief of the Loup band, and his principal men, which resulted in their giving up all the property in their possession which had been stolen from the whites east of the Platte. But it was only until they were threatened with the entire destruction of their village that they were brought to terms. In another letter I will describe this scene.

I commenced this dry and lengthy epistle at Sarpy's Trading House, hoping I could finish it and send it off by the steamboat



*George Simons sketched the Omaha village near Bellevue in 1854;
and the Loup Pawnee village (below) in 1856.*



Duroc; but she took her departure too early.³⁹ I have finished it on the Missouri river after a most interesting journey down its fertile bluffs and bottoms as far as St. Joseph.

On Board Steamboat Pocahontas, Independence, Missouri, September 26, 1851 [published October 12].

We have just taken on board, at this place, a party of gentlemen attached to the Mexican Boundary Commission,⁴⁰ who arrived here yesterday in the mail wagon from Santa Fe. They left that place on the 2d inst., and the news they bring is of no inconsiderable interest.

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P.S.—I have already written you a long account of our trip to the Grand Pawnee Village; so soon as I can find time, or rather an hour's quiet on a shaky steamboat, I will give you the particulars of our visit to the Pawnee Loups.

Sketches of Prairie Life [published October 19, 1851].

The following account of a visit to the Pawnee Loup Village, during a recent tour upon the great Western prairies, is drawn more from recollection than any notes taken at the time. The writer, one of the editors of this paper, intended giving the account in his regular correspondence, but was prevented, by an attack of illness contracted in the new and unhealthy districts of Western Iowa and Missouri, from carrying out his design. An account of his visit to the Grand Pawnee Village has already been given in the *Picayune*; from time to time other incidents of wilderness travel, under the head of "Sketches of Prairie Life," may be offered. In case some of the readers of the *Picayune* may not have read his previous letters, it may here be stated that the writer, with four of his friends and as many hired hunters and servants, accompanied Capt. Wharton, of the U.S. Army, from Fort Kearny into the heart of the Pawnee territory, the object of that officer being to hold a talk with these wild denizens of the prairies upon different matters, and more particularly with the design of compelling them to give up certain horses, mules, and other property, which it was known the Loup or Wolf band had stolen from emigrants, journeying towards the Great Salt Lake and California by the trail heading along the eastern banks of the

Platte. Capt. W.'s force consisted of twenty-four men of the 6th U.S. Infantry, with a small howitzer. The addition of our party increased his force to thirty-four men all told, and with this small command he set out with the full determination of compelling the savages to give up their plunder. It will be seen in the sequel that he fully succeeded. After these prefatory remarks, which the writer deemed necessary, he will describe the

Visit to the Pawnee Loups.

The council or talk at the Grand Pawnee Village, where the confederated bands of the Republican, Tapage and Grand Pawnees were represented, was held on the evening of the 13th September. Knowing that we were to start early on the following morning for the Loup Village, some thirty-five miles distant, and anxious to visit the large village of the three above named bands before leaving the country, a small party of us, with Jeffrey as interpreter, left our camp at 10 o'clock at night, and proceeded on foot to the town, about a mile distant and compactly built within an amphitheatre surrounded on all sides save one by high bluffs. The village, town, or city—it might be called a city—contains from four to six thousand souls, and at the time of our visit it was said that all the inhabitants were at home. It is certain that there were enough of them.

After usual unfriendly salutations from the dogs, which seem to infest every Indian village or encampment, we found ourselves inside the town and for hours we rambled from lodge to lodge. We visited every noted chief in particular, and although rather late to make evening calls, we were every where treated with politeness. Long after midnight we returned to our camp, and at an early hour in the morning, anxious to see how our Pawnee friends looked by daylight, we paid them another hurried visit; but to attempt a description of the lodges, the household utensils, and the domestic economy generally of these the wildest of all the prairie tribes would occupy too much space in the present sketch.

The sky was dark and sombre as we left the village on the morning of the 14th September, and before we had got well away from the scattered corn patches in the vicinity, a heavy mist commenced falling. This mist—or drizzling rain perhaps it might be termed—lasted nearly the entire day, and it was

nearly night before the Loup Village, built upon a high and steep bluff overlooking the Platte, appeared in sight. But notwithstanding the dark and drizzly weather, our approach had been heralded by the ever-watchful savages; for as we neared the village groups of the inhabitants were seen standing upon the tops of the lodges, or else pouring out and making towards the spot Capt. Wharton had selected for his encampment. This was a strong position, some four hundred yards from the village, and was chosen as a good point of either attack or defence in case the Loups would not accede to every demand Capt. W. had determined to press upon them. Word was at once sent to the head chiefs of the band, through the interpreter, that they must appear and hold a talk early on the following morning, and when darkness fell the camp was cleared of all the idle rabble which had loitered about our wagons, begging tobacco or ready to lay their hands upon any little article which might tempt them. The mist which had fallen during the day settled down into a heavy, beating rain during the night, drenching many of us completely; but we were used to these things, and arose in the morning feeling as well as though we had a palace instead of a bald prairie for our resting place.

By 9 o'clock in the morning all the principal chiefs and head braves of the Loup band, with a miscellaneous rabble of old men, young would-be warriors, and boys, had assembled around Capt. Wharton's headquarters, when the talk was at once commenced. The same order or disposition of the different parties obtained here that had characterized the formation of the council at the Grand Pawnee Village. Capt. Wharton seated himself in the centre of a species of half circle; by his side sat Itz-cat-a-pa, the head chief of the Loups; the members of our party, mingled haphazard with chiefs and warriors, sat upon inverted feed boxes or logs on either wing of the circle, while our own soldiers and servants, with a crowd of Loups of the lower grades, formed the back-ground of the picture. A searching rain, accompanied by a raw east wind, prevailed at the time, while the smoke from a large fire in the centre of the circle, as it was blown about by the chilling and fitful gusts, did not add materially to our comfort.

We were not present at the opening of the council, having been absent on a visit to the village hard by searching for moc-

casins or some other savage nic-nacs, but know that it commenced with a general smoke. The main features of Capt. Wharton's remarks were the same as those made use of at the talk at the Grand Pawnee Village; but in the talk with the Loups, Itz-cat-a-pa and the other chiefs were told distinctly that they had possession of the horses, mules, blankets and other property taken from Messrs. Hyde and Brockus and other travelers on the eastern side of the Platte. They were told so positively that these animals were in their possession, that even Indian subtlety could make no denial; yet they attempted, by arguments replete with the deepest sophistry, to make it appear that they had not stolen the property. Whenever they found themselves cornered on one point, they would shift the subject to another in the most ingenious manner—better special pleaders cannot be found in any of our courts of law than are these wild Pawnee Loups.

As a wind-up to the argument, Capt. Wharton told the chiefs that all the animals must be brought into camp and delivered up by a certain time. His demand was imperative, the chiefs promised that every thing should be restored, and the council broke up; but at the appointed hour only a single animal, out of some eight which had been stolen, was brought in. Itz-cat-a-pa, who lingered about the camp after the council was over, made some excuse for the delay, and another time was set. This hour came in turn, but still nothing was seen of the stolen animals and other property. The shades of evening finally fell, the head chief hanging listlessly about the fires ready to swallow any coffee or food offered him, and even still there was no sign that the demand made upon him would be complied with. Annoyed at this delay, which certainly had every appearance of being intentional, Capt. Wharton finally ordered the interpreter to tell Itz-cat-a-pa that he would be trifled with no longer; he would wait till sunrise the next morning for compliance with his just demands, and no longer. If by that time the stolen property—animals, blankets, and all—were not brought to his camp, he said he would advance upon the village and destroy it. This was a bold threat to make with so few men as Capt. W. had under his command, and many of us thought from the half-insolent bearing of the Indians present, that it would bring on a collision in the morning. There was that in the action of the savages which denoted

that they would not give up their plunder until the last.

A few minutes after Capt. Wharton had delivered his ultimatum, if it may be so termed, Itz-cat-a-pa mounted his horse, and at a terrific pace bent his way to the village. He had no sooner entered it than a succession of wild whoops and yells were raised, denoting the greatest state of excitement. The Pottawattamie hunter who accompanied us, and who had been enough among the Pawnees to know their ways, told us that the yells were warlike, and coolly went to work loading all his arms. We did the same, and every disposition was certainly made, in case the Loups should prove hostile, to give them a warm reception.

Meanwhile, as the night wore, the whooping and yelling in the village hard by continued, accompanied with singing and dancing, every discordant sound reaching our encampment. And as if to add to the din, a funeral party, upon a roll of the prairie within two hundred yards of us, set up a dismal howling and screaming in chorus. Some old man had died during the day, and at dusk the female members of the family had brought his body out, buried it, and sat moaning, wailing and crying in the most doleful manner for hours and hours in token of their sorrow. Not one of those present will forget the last night spent near the Pawnee Loup Village.

With daylight in the morning came down a portion of the stolen property demanded, and by sunrise, to the surprise at least of some of us, it was all in camp. The horses and mules were brought in and the blankets, axes, knives and other property, piled in a heap near Capt. Wharton's tent, proved that his final threats had been heeded. Whatever thoughts of resistance may have been entertained the evening previous, the older and cooler heads among the Loups certainly must have come to the conclusion that the better policy would be to accede to the demands of their white brother.

The object of his trip being now fully accomplished, Capt. Wharton at once commenced his preparations for returning to Fort Kearny. Our little party at the same time harnessed and saddled up to start in the direction of the white settlements, and after bidding farewell to our friends we got under way for the Omaha territory and Council Bluffs. Our adventures in crossing the Platte, with other matters of interest, will be recorded in another sketch.

Sketches of Prairie Life [published October 22, 1851].

Crossing of the Platte.

It was on the morning of the 15th [16th] September that Capt. Wharton started back for Fort Kearny from the Pawnee Loup Village, after having, as has been already stated, fully accomplished the objects of his expedition—the compelling the rascally savages to give up all the stolen property in their possession. At the same time we got in readiness—nine of us including hunters and servants—to move towards the Omaha Village and Council Bluffs. The distance to the latter was called thirty miles—we found it more than forty, and very long ones at that, before we got through.

Two of our wagon mules being completely tired down, and unable to work, through the interpreter, Jeffrey, we hired a couple of mules which the Pawnees had evidently stolen, although their owners were unknown. A couple of Indians, to go along and assist us, were also included in the bargain, and for the services of both mules and men we stipulated to pay two blankets and a small quantity of powder on reaching Sarpy's Trading-House at Council Bluffs. That Itz-cat-a-pa, the head chief of the Loups, was the entire or part owner of the mules, we shall always believe; he had much to say in making the bargain, and by way of a clincher remarked that he expected we would send him back, by one of the men, a bottle of whiskey and a butcher knife. This we promised, little dreaming that we should have any difficulty in procuring the whiskey at Sarpy's.

In this connection it should be stated that the Pawnees, as a body, have never suffered from the evil effects of whiskey to any extent. Among the Loups, living nearer the trading posts and brought more in contact with the whites, a fondness for the poisonous fluid has sprung up, but at the Grand Pawnee Village we heard neither chief nor warrior ask for liquor. An inordinate fondness for coffee, well sweetened, they have all imbibed, but the difficulties thrown in the way of obtaining whiskey have been so great that few have ever tasted it. Itz-cat-a-pa however was an exception; he had tasted and felt the influence of the intoxicating cup, and, Indian like, hankered after the poison. A finer looking savage than this same Itz-cat-a-pa it would be difficult to find—tall, straight, exceedingly

well-formed, and with a face rather indicative of good nature than any other quality. When but a young man—he cannot be more than forty at this time—he was noted as the most untiring and daring warrior among the Loups, and his encounters with the Sioux and other tribes are recounted as of the bravest. Latterly he has grown more indolent and sluggish, much to the annoyance of the younger, more active, and more ambitious braves of the band, who have taken advantage of his lethargy to undermine his popularity. In consideration of his former deeds, and certain hereditary rights, he still however retains much of his ascendancy.

In our stipulation in relation to the mules, as before stated, it was a condition of the bargain that we should send Itz-cat-apa a bottle of whiskey and a knife—the whiskey, in particular, he appeared very anxious to obtain. As another auxiliary, to assist us across the Platte and other streams, the promise of a blanket induced a Pawnee called John to accompany us. A more noble looking specimen of humanity than this fellow we had never seen; his limbs, free from any kind of covering, would command the admiration of the best of sculptors or painters, while his face had an expression of great benevolence and good nature. After much fumbling about a package of rags, John drew forth a paper which he was anxious we should inspect. This paper contained a recommendation, signed by some Missouri captain of volunteers, setting forth that John had been of great service on a former occasion, but wound up with this caution: “John will bear watching!” And John was watched, but no act impeaching his honesty was discovered. A frying-pan, and several unimportant articles, were missing the first night after we started, but the charge of stealing them could not well be laid at his door.

This thing of giving Indians recommendations is very common on the prairies, and all are anxious to get them. At the Omaha Mission we heard of a Pawnee who brought a paper to a gentleman there, with the contents of which he was of course unacquainted, but which he thought would serve as a perfect letter of credit should there be any necessity for his services. It read something in this wise: “The bearer of this is the greatest rascal now running—give him a thrashing and let him slide. N.B.—Given at his own request.”⁴¹ But we will return to the crossing of the Platte.

Half a mile beyond the Loup Village a zig-zag trail leads down the steep and rugged bluffs of the river; but after a short delay we found ourselves safely upon the lower and level bottom of the stream. Above the Loup Fork of the Platte the bed of the stream, at this season of the year, presents nothing but a flat expanse of sand, stretching away from a mile and a half to three miles in width, and at many points not a drop of water is to be seen. By digging into the sand, water can easily be obtained, and it is generally found cool, healthy and palatable. At some points a silver thread, winding along through the wilderness of sand, may be discovered, but it is not until the Loup Fork empties its waters into the Platte that it assumes the appearance of a river. The mouth of this fork is some sixty or eighty miles above the Loup Village, and opposite the latter we found a wide stream of shallow but swift running water. It was slowly rising, too, and chilly from the recent easterly winds and rain, and to cross it as soon as possible was the aim of all.

The two Pawnees in charge of the hired mules stalked at once into the stream, wading about to find the more shallow points, and sticking small willows along as guide posts to direct us. The width of the stream was here over a mile, the water some four feet in depth in places, and the bed of the river full of treacherous quicksands. Jeffrey, the interpreter, accompanied us down to the banks to see us well over, and was of great service. A gang of some ten or fifteen Pawnees, with two sinister-looking Omahas, also followed us, ready to assist if paid for their trouble, or steal any little article if occasion offered.

So soon as the leading Indians had found what they deemed the best crossing, they made signs for us to enter the stream. Our order of march was planned as follows: the Pawnees, on foot, were in the advance; then came such of us as were on horseback, double file, to tread down and harden the sand; while the wagon, with four mules attached, brought up the rear. Scarcely had we got well into the current before a spirited mare we were riding suddenly disappeared almost entirely, going down in a quicksand until her nose only was out of water. To leave her was the work of only a small portion of a second's time, and after floundering violently she finally extricated herself. Soon another animal went down in the same

manner, almost out of sight, its rider dismounting as suddenly as we did. In less time than it takes to relate it the wagon mules, following closely in our footsteps, sank completely out of sight in the treacherous quicksands, a violent bubbling and commotion in the water being the only guide to the spot where they had so suddenly disappeared.

Here was a fix for a party of pleasure seekers! By strenuous efforts, in which the Pawnees and Omahas certainly were of great assistance, the heads of the unfortunate mules were drawn above water, and after kicking and floundering violently for a few moments, they were extricated from the harness which encumbered them, and safely set upon their feet. Our next business was to get all the animals across, an undertaking safely accomplished, after some half hour's winding and wading about among the quicksands, and in water nearly up to our necks in places.

Once over the Platte, and our worried animals all tied safely to the willows upon the banks, we had still our wagon and all our baggage to cross. To dash into the stream, to wade back a mile, and to carry our blankets, bags, and a miscellaneous assortment of Indian curiosities upon our heads or shoulders, was instantly determined upon. There were nearly thirty of us in all, Indians and retainers included, and a single trip, each man packing himself with a burthen as heavy as he could stagger under, saw all our baggage safely over. The work was terribly tiresome, for the water was deep, the current swift in places, and the bed of the stream sandy and uneven; yet there was no other remedy than to do the work with a will, and with a will it was done.

The wagon now only remained upon the opposite side, and here was the most laborious and difficult task of all. To harness the mules was impossible—they could hardly stem the current by themselves—so we were fain for the time to make draught animals of ourselves, and drag the wagon over by main strength. Picket ropes were attached to the single-trees; as many as could get hold of the tongue laid hands upon it; others pushed lustily at the tail of the wagon, while at each wheel a man was stationed to lift and hoist as best he might. In this way, all hands yelling and whooping after the manner of the Indians, we finally got the wagon over. At times it would stick fast in the sands, the water would rush into its bed, and it

would seem as though we must leave it behind; but another determined pull, accompanied by a fresh chorus of whoops and yells, the like of which few have ever heard, and the old wagon would be fairly lifted along.

Thus, after hours of toil, we crossed the noted Platte. And here for a space, our clothes completely drenched and with a heavy rain storm impending over our heads, we must leave the reader. It was remarked at the time that Bonaparte might have crossed the Alps in his day, but the person who hazarded this remark at the same time asserted, in the most positive manner, that Bonaparte never saw the Platte.⁴²

Sketches of Prairie Life [published October 28, 1851].

The Omaha Country.

At the conclusion of our last sketch we were standing on the left bank of the Platte, drenched through and through after our difficult and laborious crossing, and with every prospect that a black cloud sweeping down the stream would give us another soaking. The two Pawnee mules we had hired, to relieve our own tired animals, were after great trouble harnessed to the wagon, along with a pair of more sober and discreet brutes, and after a series of plunges, bolts and kicks,

F. Jeffrey Deroine (Derroway, Doraway), mulatto interpreter. From The Iowa by William Harvey Miner (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1911).



all to show the natural obstinacy of the animal, finally settled down into a demeanor far more quiet and gentle than their first cavortings induced us to believe they would ever adopt.

We had now left the Pawnee range and had entered the territory of their neighbors, the Omahas. Within a mile of us was the old road first traversed we believe by Col. Fremont, and which in the early days of Oregon and California emigration was the main thoroughfare.⁴³ We had hardly got underway, after our difficulty in harnessing the wild and refractory mules, before the threatening cloud commenced discounting freely; but we were used to water, no friendly shelter was in sight, and we kept steadily on our course. On reaching the old trail we found it nearly concealed by tall and luxuriant grass; in some places it was so grown up that no one could believe that thousands of Mormons and other emigrants had ever passed over it. The Indians who still accompanied us knew the course, however, and kept on towards the Big Horn, or Elk Horn as it is called on the maps, without deviating an inch from the true route. We were fearful that the rains would raise this stream so high that we should be compelled to swim it, and hence we hurried on with all the speed we could make.

By 4 o'clock in the afternoon we were upon its banks, and on sending in some of the Pawnees we at once saw that, although the stream was not deep enough to swim our animals, there was still too much water to get the wagon over without unloading it. In all prairie or wilderness travel, no person of experience ever thinks of camping on *this* side of a stream—all prudent men invariably cross to the opposite bank. Many a party neglecting this rule have found themselves water-bound of a morning, a single heavy shower frequently raising a shallow or dry creek into a deep and raging river in the course of a few hours. By far the best ground and grass for a camp was on the bank where we now stood; the bluffs on the opposite side rose rough and perpendicular almost from the water's edge; yet the shows we had already had during the day, the threatening aspect of the heavens, and the fact that the stream was now rising, admonished us that we should hasten over. Including the two Omahas on their way to the village, now some fifteen miles distant, we still had twelve Indian followers with us, and packing the entire party down with as heavy loads as they could well stagger under, we soon

had our baggage on the opposite bank. The wagon, half swimming, was next dragged across, the savage rascals yelling and whooping wildly while performing the work, and then entering the stream ourselves we were all well over by sundown.

To cook a hasty supper, to send the Indians back across the stream to cut grass for our animals, and to make such preparations as we could to guard against a heavy shower fast coming up, was the next work before us. Some dried buffalo meat we had brought with us beyond Fort Kearny, and which had not materially improved under the different soakings it had received, we rationed out among our savage retainers, and then, after assigning them a space within camp where they were to sleep, by signs made them understand they were not to move during the night under the penalty of being shot. We half distrusted some of these fellows, who had followed us unasked. Our next care was to picket our animals, eleven in all, close around us, then to form a guard not only to prevent any outside Indians who might be prowling about from stealing the brutes, but to keep those inside our camp on their good behavior. We had already had more horses stolen and stampeded than we could afford, and had no particular desire to be left on foot just as we were about to leave the Indian country.

Our arrangements proved effectual, the night passing without a serious alarm. It is true that a Pottawattamie dog we had with us commenced barking furiously at one time, bringing every Pawnee instantly to his feet; but we soon learned that the fright of the dog was caused by a mule crowding too closely upon the spot where he was crouching. The discomforts and annoyances of that night, however, will not easily be forgotten by any of the party. A succession of heavy showers continued to follow each other until morning, the lightning played about us in frightful flashes, the deep and muttering thunder shook the earth, while torrents of water, sweeping down the precipitous bluffs under which we bivouacked all exposed, threatened at times to wash us completely into the stream at our feet. The lightning, it is true, had its uses; it enabled us, at every flash, to count the Indians curled up among us, and our own animals as well; but the gloom which followed was blackness itself, and we were all thankful when daylight came to relieve us of our anxieties.

As the sun rose the heavy clouds broke away, a clear but warm forenoon followed, and hastening on we reached the Papillon by 11 o'clock. Here was a narrow but deep stream to cross, with a muddy bottom; but setting our Indians to work, with the promise of being well paid on reaching Sarpy's Trading House, they soon packed our baggage across. Here we were compelled to take our wagon into pieces, and carry it over part by part—a tedious undertaking. There was no remedy, however, and the work was performed by our Pawnee allies. Our animals, many of them sticking fast in the mud, were next got safely over after much floundering, and in another hour we were once more upon the road.

By the middle of the afternoon we reached the Omaha Village, located upon a bluff overlooking a fork of the Papillon.⁴⁴ The site of this village is certainly most picturesque, while the surrounding fields of waving corn, now just ripening, gave evidence that these Indians live in not a little comfort. The appearance of ploughs and hoes, with other implements of the manufacture of the whites, gave evidence, too, that the efforts of the missionaries have had some effect in bringing them into a state of partial civilization. Yet so far as we could learn the Omahas are as great thieves as their neighbors the Pawnees, and from a couple of rascally specimens who followed us, begging at every step, they are not as trustworthy. They have contracted, too, a fondness for whiskey, and many of them neglect no opportunity of getting drunk that may offer.

We had hoped to reach Sarpy's before nightfall; but darkness found us at a muddy and difficult slough within three miles, and here we were obliged to camp. We had no rain, however, and starting with daylight on the following morning we soon passed the Omaha Mission house on the banks of the Missouri. In half an hour more we reached the Trading-House at Council Bluffs, found ourselves once more in the white settlements after a tour of nearly two months' duration upon the prairies of the Nebraska Territory and not a little rejoiced once more to see the chimneys and the smoke of civilization around us.

Sketches of Prairie Life [published October 31, 1851].

Our Pawnee Retainers, &c.

After reaching Sarpy's Trading-House at Council Bluffs, we had the greatest difficulty in settling with our Pawnee allies—the fellows who had followed us all the way from the Loup Village on the Platte. We in the first place conscientiously paid them every thing we had promised—blankets, knives, powder, tobacco, &c.—but all this did not satisfy the rascals. They importuned us for vermilion, strounding,⁴⁵ calico, beads, and what not, all without the least shadow of right or reason, and with a pertinacity that could not be shaken off. We distributed among them a large assortment of camp equipage, for which we had no farther use—kettles, cups, axes, hatchets and the like—but still they would not be satisfied. Their eyes fell upon and coveted the Indian gewgaws arranged upon the shelves of the trading-house, and they begged us to supply their wants until we finally became so annoyed that we shut the gate down against farther extortion. Finding they could get nothing more out of us, they started off towards their home beyond the Platte. And they seemed desirous of parting good friends with us, too, for they shook hands cordially with every member of the party. They had been really doubly paid for all their labor, and perhaps were anxious to part amicably with the hope of seeing some of us again. The bottle of whiskey we promised Itz-cat-a-pa, the head chief of the Loups, we endeavored to obtain, anxious to keep our promise; but nothing of the kind was to be purchased at Sarpy's. We made up the worth of it in tobacco, however, and have at least the satisfaction of knowing that we saved him from a debauch and a head-ache.

We remained at Council Bluffs two days, comfortably lodged under the shelter of the trading-house and obtaining our meals at the dwelling of Mr. [Samuel] Ellis [Allis], who has a school of Pawnee and Omaha children under his roof.⁴⁶ Tomatoes, cucumbers and melons were just getting ripe in this far-off northern region, and we really fared sumptuously with our hospitable entertainer. One brings back an appetite, after a two months' trip upon the prairies, that a city gourmand would envy, and we found everything that could satisfy it at the house of Mr. Ellis. There is something, too, about such

superfluous household articles as tables, chairs, knives, forks and clean napkins, that a person rather affects than otherwise, after being for weeks deprived of their use.

We might have taken a steamboat directly from Council Bluffs for St. Louis; but we were told by Mr. [John E.] Barrow, the gentlemanly Pawnee agent,⁴⁷ that the Missouri was unusually low and full of snags, the roads good through the bottoms and along the bluffs as far as St. Joseph, and the country well worth seeing, and taking his advice we came to the determination of continuing our journey with the wagon. One gentleman, however, anxious to reach the Mississippi as soon as possible, took the boat, and arrived in St. Louis three days before us.

Crossing the Missouri at the ferry at Council Bluffs, we found ourselves at what may be termed the lower end of the Mormon region. Kanessville is their main town, situated some twelve miles above Sarpy's,⁴⁸ but we met them scattered along through the section through which we were traveling, and we found them civil and quiet people enough. In several attempts to trade off our broken-down animals we thought it a little strange that every horse offered for barter should be exactly five years old, should be perfectly sound and gentle withal, and well broken to harness; yet we have known jockies outside the Mormon region entertain the same good opinion of any animals they might happen to have on hand to sell or swap, and therefore the followers of Jo Smith should escape being considered peculiarly eccentric in this particular.

For the first forty miles we kept down what is called the bottom road, the route by the bluffs being some ten miles farther. The land we found uncommonly rich, and the corn crop most luxuriant, but as an offset or drawback we also found by far the greater part of the settlers down sick with remitting fevers or chills and fevers. At one log house, where we stopped to inquire about the road, every person in a family numbering nine was prostrate. A pale and sallow female, the only soul able to reach the door, had barely strength to answer our inquiries, and the direction she gave us we ascertained to be incorrect in every particular. In other families we found half the members down, while those still able to be on their feet were haggard from long watching and care over the sick. This part of Iowa and Missouri—in fact all the country lying upon the upper

ivers—had been unusually sickly the present season, the high waters of last spring being set down as the great cause. We can only say that we have never met so much sickness, in the same distance and among the same number of inhabitants, as we encountered about the middle of September in the Missouri bottom. After we got upon the bluffs, some forty miles south of Sarpy's, we also found remitting fevers and chills and fevers very prevalent, but in the higher lands there were at least enough of well persons to attend to the sick.

Our first night in the Missouri bottom we spent at the house of a Yankee named [Harlow C.] Kingsbury,⁴⁹ a fact which we give for the information of any one who may happen to be traveling that way. He gave us a clean and capitably cooked supper and breakfast, fed our animals most abundantly with well cured oats, and has a well of the coolest and most delicious water—points not to be overlooked by travelers through new countries. Kingsbury was once a stage-driver, served afterwards as a volunteer in one of the Missouri regiments, and has finally settled down as a farmer. He told us that the shakes had had a hold upon him, but that he had fought them off with quinine and determination. We could see the latter in every movement he made, and if he does not become one of the richest farmers in his neighborhood it will be because his health will prevent him from bustling about with that activity the Yankee carries with him wherever he goes.

On the fourth day after leaving Council Bluffs we reached St. Joseph, or St. Jo as it is universally called in that section, one of the most growing and thrifty places on the Missouri river. It was at this point we unharnessed our wagon mules for the last time, and after waiting two days a steamer came along upon which we all took passage for St. Louis. During a high stage of water the trip down is made in two days—we considered ourselves lucky to make it in six, and to get safely over the bars and snags for which the Missouri is noted.⁵⁰

NOTES

1. *New Orleans Picayune*, August 14, 1851.
2. Accounts of the treaty council include: Rev. P. J. DeSmet, *Western Missions and Missionaries: A Series of Letters* (New York: James B. Kirker, 1863), 99-111; Editorial correspondence of the *Missouri Republican* (St. Louis), October 24, 26, November 2, 9, 23, 30, 1851; Percival G. Lowe, *Five Years a Dragoon* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 62-73; and "Report of Supt. Mitchell, transmitting treaty with Prairie and Mountain tribes at Fort Laramie, November 11, 1851," *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1851* (Washington: Gideon and Co., 1851), 27-29.
3. Biographical information on George Wilkins Kendall can be found in Nicholas Canaday, Jr., "Letters from the West: A Survey of Reports by Travelers in the New Orleans *Picayune*, 1837-60," *Travelers on the Western Frontier*, John Francis McDermott, editor (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 241-244; Fayette Copeland, *Kendall of the Picayune* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943); and George Wilkins Kendall, *Letters from a Texas Sheep Ranch*, Harry James Brown, editor (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1959).
4. The Kendall letters were brought to the attention of the editor by the late Paul D. Riley, Research Associate of the Nebraska State Historical Society.
5. George Wilkins Kendall, *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition*, I (London: Wiley and Putnam, 1844), i.
6. Kendall left New Orleans aboard the steamboat *Bulletin No. 2* on July 22, 1851. *New Orleans Picayune*, July 22, 1851. He arrived in St. Louis on July 29, 1851. *Missouri Republican*, July 30, 1851.
7. Cholera conditions were commonly reported in the newspapers of the day and were of the utmost interest to prospective travelers. For 1851 examples of this, see Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 1010-1011.
8. Joseph M. Field opened his Varieties Theater in St. Louis on May 10, 1852. *Missouri Republican*, May 11, 1852.
9. D. D. Mitchell left St. Louis on July 24, 1851, aboard the *Cataract*. *Missouri Republican*, July 25, 1851. Appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1841, Mitchell held this office, except for Mexican War service, almost continuously until 1853. Ray H. Mattison, "David Dawson Mitchell," LeRoy R. Hafen, editor, *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*, 2 (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1965), 241-246.
10. The actions in 1851 of Thomas Fitzpatrick, Indian agent for the Upper Platte Agency, are detailed in the biography *Broken Hand* by LeRoy R. Hafen and W. J. Ghent (Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1931), 223-250.
11. Adam B. Chambers, editor of the *Missouri Republican*, served as secretary for the commissioners negotiating the treaty. Benjamin Gratz Brown, Chambers' personal secretary during the negotiations, was a young, St. Louis lawyer interested in politics. He later became a United States Senator, governor of Missouri, and unsuccessful vice-presidential candidate. Norma L. Peterson, *Freedom and Franchise: The Political Career of B. Gratz Brown* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1965). Henry C. King, a close friend of Kendall's, settled near his Texas ranch in 1860. Fayette Copeland, 297-298. Henry C. Yeatman was the son of prosperous Nashville merchant Thomas Yeatman who died in 1833. His mother, Jane Erwin Yeatman, married John Bell, unsuccessful Presidential candidate in 1860. Joseph Howard Parks, *John Bell of Tennessee* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 115. No biographical information is known concerning W. F. Newsom of Nashville. J. B. Robertson could be John Blount Robertson, author of *Reminiscences of a Campaign in Mexico by a Member of the Bloody-First* (Nashville: John York and Company, 1849). Robert Campbell, former fur trader and later successful St. Louis businessman, con-

tracted to supply the goods to be delivered to the tribes at the treaty grounds. Harvey L. Carter, "Robert Campbell," *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*, 8, LeRoy R. Hafen, editor (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1971), 49-60. J. H. Dillon, an English friend of Kendall's for many years, served as best man at his wedding in London in 1849. Fayette Copeland, 249. Charles William Wentworth Fitzwilliam was the son of the third Earl Fitzwilliam. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, editors, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, 7 (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), 224-225. S. T. Clissold was Fitzwilliam's traveling companion during a Mexican trip earlier in the year. *London Times*, August 6, 1851.

12. Mitchell's military escort consisted of Company B, 1st Dragoons, commanded by Captain Robert H. Chilton, under orders to travel to Fort Laramie from Fort Leavenworth. Post Returns, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, August, 1851, *Records of the Office of the Adjutant General*, Record Group 94, United States War Department, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.

13. Edmund F. (Guesso) Chouteau, eldest son of Francis G. Chouteau, served as an interpreter at the Fort Laramie Treaty Council. He is listed as a witness to its signing. Louise Barry, 474. Charles J. Kappler, editor, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, 2 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1903), 596.

14. The trading post for the Potawatomi Indians at Union Town was founded in 1848 and located on the Kansas River in present day Shawnee County, Kansas. Louise Barry, 737-738. Another traveler describes it in a letter to the *Missouri Republican*, September 5, 1851.

15. Erected in 1848, Fort Kearny on the Platte River was strategically located. All the various branches of the Platte Valley overland route converged there. Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), 192-193.

16. The hospitality that Kendall received at Fort Kearny from Captain Henry W. Wharton, 6th Infantry, and Assistant Surgeon William A. Hammond, Medical Department, was apparently frequently tendered to travelers. See Mrs. Benjamin G. Ferris, 1852, *The Mormons at Home* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856), 46. Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, 1 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1903), 496, 1022.

17. Kendall was correct about the move but wrong about the distance. It was not 100 miles but closer to 35.

18. The wagon train arrived on the evening of September 20th. *Missouri Republican*, October 22, 1851.

19. The version of why the Comanches did not show for the treaty council is also told in the *St. Joseph Gazette*, September 17, 1851, where it was reported that they would remain "the white man's friendly enemy." However, Fitzpatrick made no mention of any beligerence, but rather attributed their absence to a reluctance to be "among such notorious horse-thieves as the Sioux and the Crows." Hafen and Ghent, 225. The Comanches signed a treaty with the United States government two years later. Kappler, 2, 600-602.

20. Plum Creek enters the Platte River from the south. Its mouth is near today's Gosper-Phelps county line, Nebraska.

21. An 1848 treaty with the Pawnee Indians ceded to the United States an area encompassing Grand Island and a strip of land adjacent on either side of the Platte River. This could be the neutral ground to which Kendall refers. Kappler, 2, 571-572.

22. This express rider is probably a "Mr. Polk" who reached Fort Leavenworth on September 20, 1851, and reported seeing Kendall at Fort Kearny. *Missouri Republican*, September 25, 1851.

23. Of the party, Kendall, with Dillon, Newsom, Robertson, and Yeatman, began their return to the settlements. Clissold, Fitzwilliam, and King went on to Fort Laramie.

24. Peter Sarpy's trading post at Bellevue was the centerpiece of a thriving little Missouri River settlement. Also, located at Bellevue was the Council Bluffs Indian Agency for the Omaha, Pawnee, Oto, and Missouri tribes. Rudolph Kurz on May 14, 1851, listed the Indian agent's residence, a school for Pawnee children, "six log houses with adjoining plantations, where half-breeds lived," and the meager remnants of Fontanelle's abandoned trading post. About one mile south was the Protestant mission for the Oto and Omaha Indians. Rudolph Frederick Kurz, "Journal," *Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 115*, J. N. B. Hewitt, editor (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1937), 60.

25. The wagon train did not reach Fort Kearny until September 5 or 6. *Frontier Guardian* (Kanesville, Iowa), September 19, 1851. Contrary to what Kendall determined, many of the officials at the treaty council reached St. Louis well before the 1st of November [October 21]. *Missouri Republican*, October 22, 1851.

26. Fitzwilliam succeeded in reaching Fort Laramie in early October. Duke Paul Wilhelm von Wurttemberg, "An Account of Adventures in the Great American Desert," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 17 (1942), 210. The Englishman Foster [or Forster] arrived at Independence, Missouri, on October 30, 1851, after a trip from Fort Laramie by stage. *Missouri Republican*, November 2, 1851.

27. Wharton's report of October 4, 1851, documents his investigation of the Pawnee thefts. Letters Sent, Fort Kearny, *Records of the US Army Continental Commands*, Record Group 393, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC.

28. Fort Pierre was a post of the American Fur Company located on the Missouri River near present-day Pierre, South Dakota. It was named in 1832 for St. Louis businessman Pierre Chouteau, Jr., certainly not considered a saint by his competitors. Robert G. Athearn, *Forts of the Upper Missouri* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentiss-Hall, Inc., 1967), and John E. Sunder, *The Fur Trade on the Upper Missouri, 1840-1865* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965).

29. The Grand Village of the Pawnees is known today as the Linwood archeological site, designated 25BU1. It is located southwest of the town of Linwood, Butler County, Nebraska, and bounded on the north and west sides by Skull Creek, a southern tributary of the Platte River. High bluffs to the south and east served as burial areas. Gayle F. Carlson and Richard E. Jensen, "Archeological Salvage and Survey in Nebraska," *Publications in Anthropology*, No. 5 (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1973), 57. Missionaries Oehler and Smith visited the village in May, 1851, and it was noted that "a sharp lookout is constantly kept." Gottlieb F. Oehler and David Z. Smith, "Description of a Journey and Visit to the Pawnee Indians," Reprinted from the *Moravian Church Miscellany of 1851-1852* (New York: 1914), 25.

30. Oehler and Smith estimated a population of 3500 for the Grand Pawnee Village. Oehler and Smith, 27. The Indian agent for the Pawnees guessed a total tribal population of 4500 in 1849. "Report of John E. Barrow, Council Bluffs Sub-Agency, October 1, 1849," *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1849* (Washington: Gideon & Co., 1850), 140.

31. Although the Pawnee tribe was composed of four bands, the Loup, or Skidi, band was traditionally a separate entity from the other three. Indeed the history of the tribe is marked by hostilities, or, at least, extreme indifference, between the two groups. George E. Hyde, *The Pawnee Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974).

32. Ma-laigne is listed as the head chief of all the Pawnees at the time of their 1848 treaty with the United States. Kappler, 2, 572.

33. Sharitarish is listed by George Hyde as the fourth Pawnee chief to be so named. George Hyde, 190. The man Kendall met signed treaties with the United States in 1848 and 1857. Kappler, 2, 572, 767. La-sha-pit-ko also signed the 1848 treaty. In 1851 Oehler and Smith were met at the Grand Village by "chief Lalogehanesarn (or Fatty, as he is called by the whites, from his corpulence, something very unusual among wild Indians)." Oehler and Smith, 21.

34. F. Jeffrey Deroine (Derroway, Doraway) was long an interpreter for the Ioway Indians and also translated the Pawnee language for the US Army. He served as the interpreter for the 1848 Pawnee treaty. Kappler, 2, 572.

35. A letter in the *Frontier Guardian* by Orson L. Hyde, an elder in the Mormon church and editor of the newspaper, dated July 22, 1851, details the July 11 robbery by the Pawnee. Another story in the same issue mentions the Broccchus party receiving similar treatment in a separate incident. *Frontier Guardian*, October 3, 1851.

36. "A few days ago, a party of eighty Cheyenne warriors came to Fort Kearny, saying to Col. Wharton, who is in command, that they had come to bury their hostilities with the Pawnees. The Col. gave them some flour and other articles, and before they left they killed four of the Pawnees, who were out hunting Buffalo. Col. W. pursued them and took back his presents, but was not in force enough to punish them for the murders." Letter of August 11, 1851, *Missouri Republican*, August 26, 1851.

37. The Loup Pawnee Village is considered to be the McClean and Leshara archeological sites, 25SA2 and 25SA8, two sites within five miles of one another and considered to be a continuation of the same village. Its location is in present-day northeast Saunders County, near the town of Leshara. It too was visited by Oehler and Smith in May, 1851. Waldo Rudolph Wedel, "Introduction to Pawnee Archaeology," *Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 112* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1936), 28.

38. The Loup chief Iskatappe was a signer of the 1848 Pawnee treaty. Kappler, 2, 572.

39. The sidewheeler *Duroc* left Kaneshville on September 8. *Missouri Republican*, September 27, 1851.

40. The Mexican Boundary Commission was a government project to run and mark the boundary line between Mexico and the United States. William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, Inc., 1959), 153-208. The party of gentlemen consisted of five: Lieutenant Charles Radzimirski, principal assistant surveyor, Theodore F. Moss, geologist, Alexander A. Camp, Fred D. Keller, and Robert Murphy. *Missouri Republican*, October 1, 1851. The remainder of Kendall's letter contains news from the Southwest, primarily of Indian depredations in New Mexico and the actions of the Boundary Commission.

41. Other overlanders read with amusement similar recommendations, commonly called "begging papers." John D. Unruh Jr., *The Plains Across* (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 170.

42. Oehler and Smith's crossing of the Platte near the Loup Village met with similar difficulties. "Our baggage was placed upon the backs of Pawnees, who immediately started off with their load. The mules having been unharnessed, and the harness placed in the wagon, a long rope was tied from the end of the tongue of the wagon to each single-tree. The Pawnees then took hold of the rope, while some pushed behind at the wagon, and thus proceeded into the river. . . . A full-half hour was consumed in crossing, and passing over two islands on our route." Oehler and Smith, 15-16.

43. This route was traversed and mapped by John C. Fremont in 1842. John Charles Fremont, *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-'44* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1845).

44. The site, 25SY14, is known as the Kurz Omaha Village. Rudolph Kurz visited it on May 20, 1851, and placed it six miles from Bellevue. This Sarpy County archeological site is east of the town of Papillion on the south fork of Papillion Creek before its juncture with the Big Papillion. Kurz described the village as consisting of both "skin tents (tipis) and clay huts, in the midst of which were scaffolds used for the curing of meat and high enclosures in which they confined their horses for safety." Rudolph Kurz, 62.

45. Strouding is a coarse, heavy woolen cloth often traded in the form of blankets.

46. Samuel Allis had been the government teacher to the Pawnee at the agency but left its employ in 1851. "School report of Samuel Allis," *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1851* (Washington: Gideon & Co., 1851), 97-99.

47. The agent since 1849, John E. Barrow also had to deal with the Pawnee thefts of 1851. With the assistance of eight or nine men from Iowa, he recovered ten head of cattle and six horses. Letter of J. E. Barrow to D. D. Mitchell, October 1, 1851, Letters Received, Council Bluffs Agency, *Office of Indian Affairs*, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC.

48. Kanesville, the Mormon staging area for westward emigrants, had a population which fluctuated widely during the emigration season. Abandoned in 1853, it became the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Merrill J. Mattes, 123-126.

49. Harlow C. Kingsbury, 38-year-old farmer, is listed on the 1860 Iowa census as residing in Scott Township, Fremont County. This township borders the Missouri River. US Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Population*.

50. Kendall reached St. Louis on September 30, 1851. His party arrived in excellent health. *Missouri Republican*, October 1, 1851. The remainder of his correspondence is a plea to the Missouri authorities to erect roadside guideboards for travelers.