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Selected and edited by  
Archer Butler Hulbert
Associate Professor of American History, Marietta College;  
Author of "Historic Highways of America," etc.

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Series IV.

The American Transcontinental Trails

Edited by

Archer Butler Hulbert
Professor of History, Colorado College; author of
The Making of the American Republic; Historic Highways of America, etc.

Volume 2.
North and South Platte Routes.
The North and South Platte Routes
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Key: Oregon Trail, North Platte,
    Neb. to Idaho line, --- No. 7
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Preface to Vol. 2

Volume 2 of Series IV continues the Oregon Trail from the junction of the North and South Platte, at North Platte, Nebr., across western Nebraska and Wyoming to the eastern line of Idaho.

We also give, on smaller scale, the line of the Overland Stage Road from Julesburg, Colo., to Fort Bridger, Wyo. and Salt Lake City. This route, with the Denver Cut-offs, became the common line of stage, freight and emigrant travel from the government's abandonment of the older roads in 1862.

The lines of these routes are indebted in good part (in Wyoming) to the checks afforded by irrigation surveys.

Colorado Springs, May 2, 1925

[Signature]
Bibliography

(A list of the easily accessible works of travel cited in the following pages, in abbreviated form. General and local histories will be found of great additional value.)

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The bibliographies heretofore mentioned present detailed lists. Our purpose here is to name a few of the easily accessible works to be cited later, which describe the routes herein mapped, in the various periods of their history (1820 to 1865). Each Western Traveler will be cited as E.W.T. The date of the edition used is added to J.W.T. state checking.
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*Parentheses to indices of early Western Trav. R. B. Traverser ed., still always from useful.*
Part 1.
North Platte - South Pass Route
(from junction of North and South Platte to Idaho line)

Key: Map No. 7.
Every mile of these trails from the junction of the two Platte (Neb. Hist. Soc., 2 Sae V. 176; Fremont Explor. Exp. 25; Parker, Journal 56; Dodge, Journal, 14; Delano, life 59) until the main trail is firmly planted on the North Platte map No. 13 is romantic ground. The Mormon Trail steadily took northern Clark bank (Clayton 143-149) famous O'Fallon's Bluffs (Stark 54-55) was one of the most difficult stretches on the trail (Long Exped. I 168).
The fords of the South Platte varied with the seasons (G.H. Coger, Bent Trappers, 49; Hayth, Correspond. 222; Stansbury, Exploration, 32-33; Leonard, Expedition, 63; Burton, City, 53-61). Later stations on the stage road, as Alkali Lake and Sand Hill, are inserted conjecturally. Local investigation ought to fix these authoritatively.
At Requaens Ranch ("South Platte Station" on the later stage line) was the first important ford of the South Platte on the Oregon Trail. Kelly, 103-5; Burton, 62-63; Bryant 94-95; Cross Report, 148-153; Palmer, E.W.T. XXX, 52-53. In the days of the '49ers the name "Lower California Crossing" became common. This ford led to Ash Hollow on the North Platte. For Mormon Trail Clayton, 149-163.
The trail by the "lower" ford reaches the North Platte at Ash Hollow in Garden Co.

The emigrant ascended the Platte to the "Upper California crossing," he forded the river on the later side of Fort McPherson and the first Julesburg (Heb. Hist. 2 Ser. T 267, 275; Inman 346; Sage, 49; Minto, 155; Palmer, 52; Lowe 257 Melvin 34-36).
The detail of Ash Hollow shows the many pathways (still visible to the eye) by which the travelers of long ago undertook to accomplish the perilous drop of from 400-500 ft to the banks of the North Platte. Cross 153-4; Lowe 27; Hewitt, 144; Palmer, 54-55; Townsend, 58; Kelly 105-8; Sage, 49-50; Bryan 98.
Spectacular Court House Rock ("McFarland's Castle", Sage, Wild Scenes, 55) was a prominent landmark near which all the scattered ganglia of the Trails focused again on the North Platte; Kelly, Across, 108; Bryant, R. Mountains, 100; Sage, Life, 83; Hawitt, Across, 149; Palmer, journal, 55. For Mormon Trail see Clayton, 166-176.
The monotony of the plains travel was broken by Courthouse and Chimney rocks, as well as the fantastic formations at Scott's Bluffs, further west. For Chimney Rock, in various years, see Mayth, 155; Eells, 72; De Smet, Life, I, 209; Bryant, 102; Cross, 55; Leonard, 64; Lowe, 318-319; Herditt, 151.
The last of the wandering prairie trails from the South Platte reaches the North Platte at Horse Creek, a tributary mentioned by practically every diarist. Scott's Bluffs is described with some care by Kelly, 112; Eells, 72; Sage, 61-63; Bryant, 104-5; Parrench diary, Ore Rec. Trans 1888, 98; Hewitt, 157.
The Mormon pioneers of 1847 found their trail become a well-worn wagon road as Fort Laramie was neared, Clayton, 204-6. The region about Fort Bernard was a re-outfitting point for emigrants, fresh stock being supplied from Mexico, Kearn, Report, 213; Crawford, Report, 3; Bryant, 106, 112.
The many forts which lay on the Platte at or near the forks of the trapper La Ramée, Fort William, Fort John, Fort Lupton, Fort Platte and Fort Laramie, are described by all travellers of the various years. Here, at Fort Laramie, the Mormon Trail joined the Oregon Trail: Clayton, 206-216. For the trail here, note especially Fremont, 67; Capt. Bonneville, (1831) 51; Kearny, 212; Eells, 73; Sman, 98; Greeley, 181-2.
Faring westward from Fort Laramie, the early traveller entered the foothills of Laramie Mountains, now known quite commonly as "the Black Hills" or Black Mts. (Humphreys & Warren, Examination, H. R. Ex. Docs 33 Cong. 1 Sess. Pt. 1. Doc. 129, 30). Horse Creek was a noted camp in this section: Soda, 110; Leonard, 71; Lowe, 2567; Palmer, 52; Cross, 159; Clayton, 214-222.
Drainage detail here explains the devious courses of all the old trails, many branches. Clayton spoke of these foothills as the roughest ground the Mormons had yet encountered (Journal, p. 224). Students of this section will have an interesting time attempting to place such travelers as Sage (Wild Leaves, 114), Townsend (Near 65), Cross and Palmer hereabouts.
The original trail crossed Wagon Hound, Red Tick la Prele and Box Elder at the points indicated or at a farther distance from the Platte than the later trail near Fort Fetterman and the present Fetterman shown as a dotted line. Cass Report, 161; Clayton, 225-230; Meline, 32; Lowe, 322.
From the standpoint of fuel and forage, Deer Creek offered a bonanza to the emigrant seldom paralleled on the entire 2000-mile trail. Clayton, 229–230; Sage, Journeys, 114–115; Palmer, Journal, 65. Corss Report (170) stated that the cholera scourge of 1849 did not extend northward of Muddy Creek.
The famous old yord and ferry near Casper (later marked by Platte River Bridge and Fort Casper) cf. Sted, 74; Palmer, 66; Kelly, 126; Cross, 164; Sage, 115; Sprague, 120; Clayton 239. 241, 242 + Emigrant Gap: Clayton, 143; Bryant, 123. Red Butte: Townsend, 67; De Smet, 115; Cross, 146; R.S. Ellison in Casper Herald Dec 15, 1924, Parker, 38; E.W.T. 511, 163
For the famous old ford and ferry near Casper (later marked by Platte River Bridge and Fort Casper) cf. Eells, 74; Palmer, 66; Kelly, 126; Cross, 164; Sage, 714; Scopes, 120; Clayton 234-242; Emigrant Gap: Clayton, 143; Bryant, 135; Red Buttes: Towne, 67; De Smet, 34; I, 215; Cross, 166; R.S. Ellison in Casper Herald Dec 15, 1924; Parker, 38; F.W.T. 661, 168
The first emigrant trail from the Platte across to the Sweetwater (Map 19.54) was broken by the cold spring which made Willow Creek famous. Although being the first arrivals, Delano, a '49'er, June 21 (p 96) describes it thus as arising near the spring in the space of fifteen minutes. Cf. Palmer, 67; Cross, Report, 167.
Noted Independence Rock became the "Register of the Desert" at a very early date as Fremont, in 1842, found a name inscribed on it "everywhere within six or eight feet of the ground." (Expl. Exped. 82). G. Kelly, 133-4; Clayton, 253-254; Palmer, 67; Shumway, 236-241; Bryant, 125; Croix, 168-170.

For Devil's Gate: Kelly, 134; E.W.T. XXVII, 241; Clayton 254-255. See also T.R. Hestand, Marking the Oregon Trail, 32-33.
The trail ascending the barren of the Sweetwater and by the soda lakes, dreaded by the emigrant (Clayton, 257; Cross, Report, 172) became now a test of endurance for the ill-equipped traveller. For Cooper Cr., called Sage Cr. by the Mormons, see Clayton, 158; for Cottonwood of Hewitt, 199. For quantities abandoned along the trail here in 49, see Cross. 174.
The dangerous "Three Crossings" of the Sweetwater was never forgotten by those who took that branch of the trail: Palmer, 68; Delano, 105; Blau, C. J.; Ammon, 179 and Freyling, 186. The phenomena of digging ice in midsummer from Ice Slough was commented on by most travellers: Kelly, 140; Clayton, 161; Delano, 107; Cross, 174; although, in 1862, Harvey found none and repeated the story; 202-203.
From the Slough onward to South Pass the older Oregon Trail lay to the Southward of the river while the later stage, pony express and telegraph lines followed trails lying for the most part north of the river. Clayon, 1842-4; Groes, Report, 174; Hewitt, 1916, Palmer, 69.
Old Burnt Ranch, marking the spot where the Oregon Trail leaves the Pawnee to ascend South Pass, became "Gilbert's Station and Pacific Springs Station" in stage coach days. Crawford, Report 4. Here the Lander Road, or Lander Cut Off, left the Oregon Trail, to meet it in Bear River Valley. Hewitt, 212-213. For this section see Clayton, 765-6;
The crossing of the Continental Divide proved commonplace to the eager emigrants to Oregon and California. It is described by one of them as passing from one rounded knoll to another similar in design and height. The ascent is compared by Fremont to the climb to the U.S. Capitol from Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C. Fremont, 88; Kelly, 189; Clayton, 269; Cross, 176; Bryant, 132; De Smet, 192; De Smert, Life, 1218; Reed, Personal Experiences, 74-76; Palmer, 71.
The main Oregon Trail and the parallel line of the later stage road can be located in the valleys of Pacific and Sandy Creeks. There is much more to be done to fix the lines of the various cut-offs across to Bear River, Landers', Sublette's, Greenwells, Headpath's or their aphetis etc. Cf. Bryant, 135; Cross, 176; Palmer, 72; Kelly, 142; Wayne, 273; Be Incit. E.W.T. XXVII, 242.
While the original Oregon trail swung up the Green to the crossing places in T. 23 N. (Map No. 32) most travellers who left journals followed the "Lombard ferry" route, or the "old stage road" to Black's fork and Fort Bridge. For the Mormons at "Lombard ferry." Clayton, 743; also Col. Kelly, 145 and Boycott, 138. See Townsend, 72; Palmer, 73.
Later Mormon trains followed the Sublett route (Map No. 30) and established a "Mormon Ferry" at Anderson's Island. Cross, Report, 177. The crossing of Fontenelle Co. near Names Hill is mentioned by Moss, 178; also Emigrant Springs, 179. Of special value here as in all Wyoming, is J.R. Heberle, Marking the Oregon Trail (Pub. by Mens. O. A. R.)
For the Church Buttes - Fort Bridger section of the old trail all diaries are usually minute: Kelly (p. 146-7), Bryant, 140-3; Clayton 283-6; Palmer 74. For importance of Fort Bridger on this line of communications see Wyoming State Collected., I, 68 ff. Cf. Hibben, Marking the Oregon Trail, 14-15.
The fifty-four desert miles on the Sublette Cut-off R. 103 W. (Map No 30) to R 112 W. gave that line a hard name, despite the distance saved; Delano, 1784-1785. "From the time we left the Big Sandy [Caldwell Cross in '49] until we arrived on Green River, we met with no water having marched through the day and night, a distance of fifty miles without it." — Report, 177.
The line of the trail up Little Muddy to the divide
leading to Bear River is well described by Fremont (Explo
Exped. 166-168), Minto (Reminiscences, 210) and
Palmer (Journal, 74-76). Fort Bridger came into added
prominence with the opening of Mormon migration (Clayton 186-7)
and establishment of the Overland Stage Line (see Maps Nos. 40-50).
All trains, whether traveling the old Oregon Trail, or one of the newer cut-offs (cf. map No. 37), met finally united here on Bear River in the neighborhood of Smith's fort, except the tender route care for oxen. Cf. Ok. Terr. Docs. 17 37 long 3 seas; Palmer, 76; Carmo, 180; Ella, 81.
See Cross, Report, 180 H. also Wagner Map
H.R. Ex. Docs. 35 Cong. 2 sess., 1849
also gives good description of this Cutoff in 1849:
pp 128-180. See Heibert, Marking the Oregon Trail, 13.
Part 2
South Platte-Elk Mountain Route
(Overland Stage Company line Julesburg
to Salt Lake City)

Key: Map No. 39
Root and Connelley. The Overland Stage is reflected in the annals of this latter phase of the Oregon Trail and famous from 1862 to 1869 and later. The stage stations are very difficult to locate. Julesburg lay one mile east of Fort Sedgwick. Neb. Hist. Soc., 2, Ser. 5, 275; Melina places it at a greater distance in 1866: 5,000 Miles, 66. Cf. Root and Connelley, 102, 222, 342; Burton, 61; Ch. Clark, 61.
Early mention of this old South Platte route are made by Long (Exped. I, 438) and Fremont (Exped. Exped. 29.41); also Sage, Field Deere 157. The Denver Cut-off from Fort Morgan was surveyed by Majors, Russell Co.: Clark, A. Tripp, G.S. Beaver and Bixby Creek rail mill: Known old landmarks: Sage 157; Post and Correll, 102; Bixby, Heart, 128. For Ite Wicked see Maline, 43; for Valley Station, R.O. 102. Denver Cut-off, C.E. Young, 67.
for old Latham ("Cherokee City"), on the present O.A.

Gordon place (R 65 T 5 Sec 15), see Post and Crewley, 319-348.

Old #1 St. Vrain: see Fremont Exploer, spring 42-43. Flinthart (R 65 T 2 N Sec 31) Post and Crewley, 225. Junction of cutoffs near Living Spring given in Field Notes of Public Survey (1865) Vol. IV.

For details on locations: Clark, A Trip, 67, 71; Greeley, 66; Haines, 55; Ludlow, 136, 200; Crossing place Cache la Poudre, Fremont, 43.
The old "Cherokee Trail" is graphically described by Fremont in 1843 (Surveys Exps. 150-152) and enthusiastically by Ludow's Heart of the Continent, 207-310.

For La Porte, see Greeley, 168. Old Virginia Dale ("Robbers Roost": see Cat. of Photos U.S. Geol. Survey: Misc. Pub. No. 5, 19) is mentioned by all travelers.

The Denver-La Porte branch of the Overland Line parallels closely the modern road to Fort Collins, crossing "Cannon Ball Terrace" (Long, Exp. X, 500, now Boulder Creek), the Ft. Train, at Burlington or Boone Stage Stations (Longmont), the Little Thompson and Big Thompson near the present Lovelaw.
The history of the old stage line is closely linked with that of the Union Pacific Railway, which was building at from one to fifteen miles to the northward through the years 1867-9. Indian hostilities consequent on railway building at times closed the highway to travel entirely.
Ludlow, 243; Barnes 41-46; Greeley, 187.
The stage stations are inserted on these sections of the old stage line, for the most part, conjecturally. It is a matter of importance to keep this route alone with accuracy by those in the immediate vicinity after full study of the ground and contemporaneous description.

Elk Mountain, that beautiful sentinel of the Medicine Bow Range thrust far out into the plains receives the comment of all travellers by this route. Roed and Connnelly, 311, 587; Sudlow 224 ff for the entire route is very useful. For Fort Halleck and other sites see J. H. Neubauer, Marleghy, Oregon Trail, 417, 30.
Bridge's Pass is well described by Sudlow, 253-5. The route is treated by Humphreys and Tarren, An Examination, 33 Cong. 1 sess. Pt. 1 Dec. 129, 30-31. There, on the edge of Red Desert, Fremont, in 1843, abandoned "any further attempt to struggle through this almost impracticable country" (Exped. Exped. 160) and turns north.
The old stage road swings north out of Red Desert on to Bitter Creek near Black Butte and parallels the modern Lincoln Highway down to stream to Black Spring and Fraser. For the old route go Ludlows, 272-3; Greeley, 197 ff.
Crossing Green River (cf. Ludlow, 274-5)
the Overland Stage Road strikes the Oregon Trail (see
Map No. 33) on Black's Fork. Ludlow gives full description
of the Spectacular Church Buttes, the chief landmark of
stage drivers and freighters coming out of the desert
to the eastward. For Fort Bridger and marker see J.P. Hébert,
"Marking the Oregon Trail" 24-25
The overland line from Fort Bridger followed the Bridger Pass fork of the Oregon Trail to the Big Muddy (see map No. 35) of Greeley, Overland, 199, 200, 202. The Echo Canon road is uniformly well described by all Salt Lake City travelers, as Burton, Clayton, Greeley etc.
All emigrant diarists to Salt Lake City give space to accounts of Echo and Emigration Canyon and Weber River. One of the best of these is the Thomas Flint Diary in Pub. Trent Soc. of Do. California, 1923.