

Oscar John Snyder

(September 23, 1828 –1862)

Review of A Family Story:

Oscar John Snyder, father of Oscar Augustus Snyder, and husband of Caroline Whitney worked for the Pony Express



Oscar's great grandsons, Thad Allen Snyder and Glen Snyder, the latter in his autobiography entitled Status and Stigma or Luke's Legacy and granddaughter, Helen Snyder (Baker) retold this story many times. More recently, the great grandson of Oscar by his daughter Beulah Snyder (Cossey), added additional information on Oscar John Snyder's connection to express mail and services in the Missouri-Kansas area on the back of a photo of Caroline Louise Whitney (Snyder) as a young woman taken in Rochester, Minnesotaⁱ as follows: "for Carolyn Cossey Fleming BSC [method of Beulah Snyder (Cossey) signing her name] 12-29-71 Carolina Whitney dau of David Whitney New York State Martha's mother given name Married Oscar Augustus Snyder from Independence MO He was a representative of Wells Fargo arranged for wagon trains expeditions from back east."

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While it is unlikely that there is absolute documentary proof of John Oscar Snyder's employment during his life time other than as a "farmer" as listed in the 1860 US Federal Census, a probability of the accuracy of the story can be determined by answering the following questions:

- Were Oscar John Snyder and his family living in close proximity to Independence, Missouri or other communities associated with Wells Fargo, Pony Express or companies linked to wagon train expeditions and overland mail service from back East to the West?
- Were the “Pony Express” and “Wells Fargo” unrelated entities or did they represent the same company or interest or type of services during Oscar John Snyder’s time?
- What were the economic circumstances of Oscar John Snyder that would cause him to work in this line of business rather than another profession such as farming?

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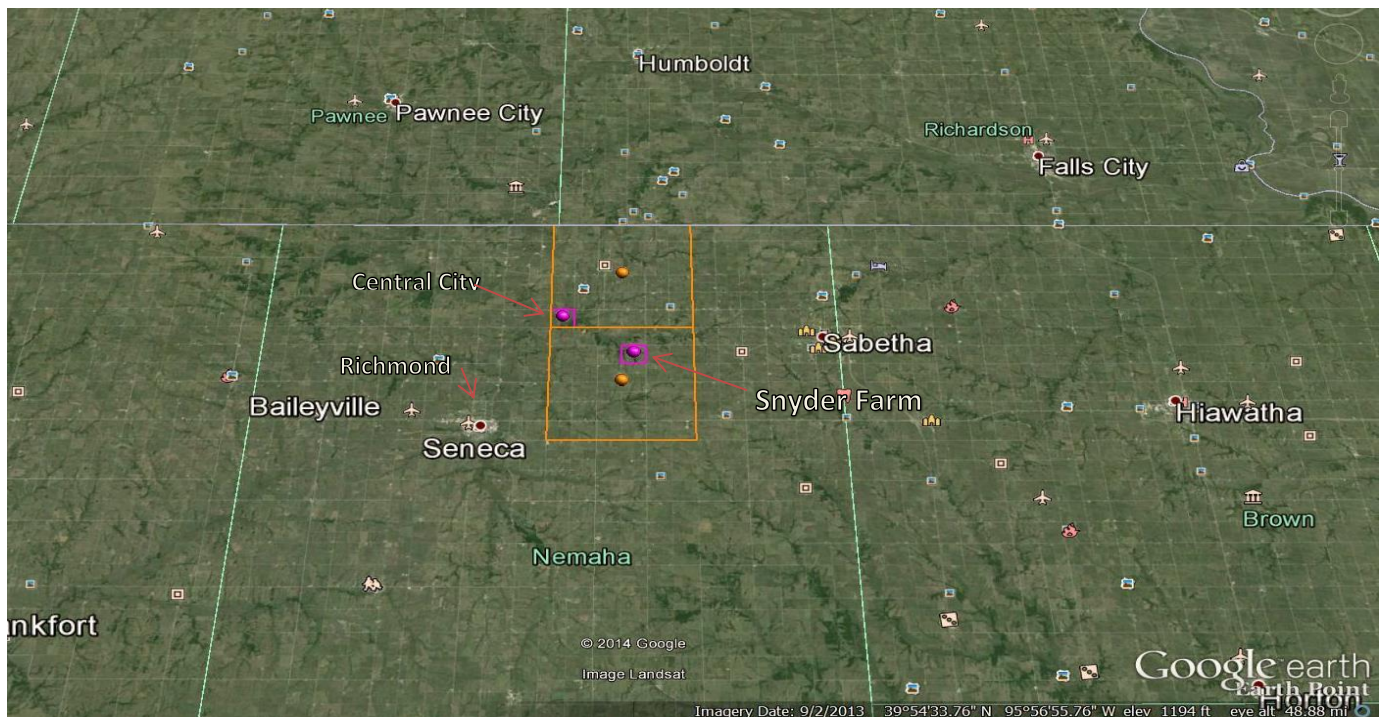
There is documentation that Oscar John Snyder and his family lived in close proximity to the communities associated with Wells Fargo, Pony Express or companies linked to wagon train expeditions, freighting and overland mail service from back East to the West. These documents include Kansas and US Federal Census and marriage, voting, land and tax records.

On July 1, 1859, Oscar is listed as a voter and head of household on the Kansas State Census Collection from 1855-1925 with an addition adult (Caroline) and one child (John Charles). His date of settlement or arrival in Kansas is stated as April 1857. Oscar and Caroline married in Rochester, Minnesota on December 16, 1856. Oscar purchased an assignment of a military warrant [No. 55-160-82927] originally issued to Rafel Bustos, a Private, with Captain Antonio Lucas’s Company New Mexico Volunteersⁱⁱ, associated with the Navajo Disturbanceⁱⁱⁱ. Oscar used the warrant to obtain ownership of the 160 acre in NW/4 of Section 10, Township 2S, Range 13E in Gilman Township (Kansas Snyder Farm). On September 15, 1860, a US Land Patent was issued “Oscar J. Snyder” and recorded in the Kickapoo Land Office.

The legal authority by which the warrant was issued was the March 3, 1855 Act, Script Warrant Act of 1855 (10 Stat. 701). Based upon the type of assignment and date, Rafil Bustos received script for enlisting and fighting in the Mexican War which could be used toward the acquisition of 160 acres of public land. The abstracts of military land warrant entries of the Department of the Interior, General Land Office Department show that most soldiers did not locate on the land but sold

their rights or warrants to land brokers.^{iv} The warrants were quoted daily in the New York Tribune and other newspapers and Thompson Bank Note Reporter and available at every land office town. While some warrants were acquired for 50 cents to 70 cents, they were most commonly acquired for 70 cents to \$1.10, depending on the acreage of the individual warrants, with the 40 acre parcels always the best price and the 160 acre, the lowest price per acre^v. During 1856, a 160-acre parcel would be purchased for \$1.13 and sold for \$1.16. By February 1860, the prices had dropped to \$1.00 buy, \$1.10 sold for 40 acres and \$.68 to \$.75 for 160 acres. For Oscar the potential existed to resell the property from \$1.25 to \$20 per acre^{vi}.

The US Federal Census for 1860 lists Oscar John Snyder and Caroline Snyder with their two sons, John (John Charles) and Gustus (Oscar Augustus), living in an area serviced by the Central City Post Office^{vii}. Central City was located in Washington Township in Section 31 Township 1S Range 13E, about two miles southeast of Baker's Ford (Taylor Rapids).^{viii} Seneca is located in Richmond Township in Section 34, Township 3S Range 12E. Richmond City, a ghost town, by 1888, was located near 168th Road and Cemetery Road, north of Seneca^{ix} See the following map with locations:



In the 1860 Federal Census, The Kansas Snyder Farm was valued at \$500 dollars and the personal property, at \$200. On or about August 30, 1860, Oscar is listed as

“Oscar Syder” with a more specific breakdown of the property in the US Agricultural Census. Of the 160 acres, ten had been improved. The livestock was comprised of two horses, two milk cows, seven other cattle and eight swine. There were 200 bushels of Indian corn, 100 bushels of Irish potatoes, 100 pounds of butter; and 10 tons of hay. The tools and implements were valued at \$10. The livestock had been valued at \$150. Slaughtered livestock was valued at \$40. While giving some indication of the industry of the Kansas Snyder Farm, the values may have been the census takers’ opinions. Oscar gave his occupation as farmer in the 1860 US Federal Census. As such, as of July 9, 1860 and August 30, 1860, Oscar appears to have still been living on and working the Farm, or at least claiming ownership.

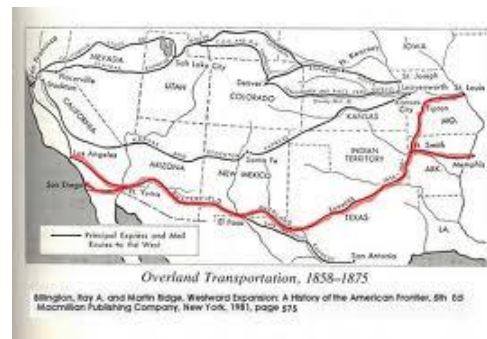
On August 10, 1859, Oscar signed an Indenture which states that it was witnessed by William R. Pye, in Leavenworth County, Kansas and John P. Hudgens, the notary, was an attorney from Missouri, although he originally lived in Kickapoo, Kansas. Kickapoo Township and the Kickapoo Reservation are across the river from Weston, Missouri and upriver from Kansas City and Independence, Missouri. Due to the earlier census information from 1859 and two census dated in July and August 1860, it is more probable that Oscar had not changed residence and more probable that Leavenworth related to his work. The other participant in the transaction was Samuel Lappin who advertised his services in Seneca, Kansas and could have arranged the transaction in Seneca, Kansas; however, the other parties could have required Oscar to travel to Leavenworth for the signing.

During the 1840s to late 1860s, thousands of emigrants had travel through Missouri west along three main trails: the California (Old Santa Fe) established in 1824, and the Oregon and the Salt Lake, established about between 1840-1850. Jointly these Missouri related trails were referred to as the “Emigrants Trails.” There were various branches off these three main routes. The distinction between the routes, other than the ultimate destinations, was that the Santa Fe was a southern route avoiding the consequences of extreme winter weather. However, there were less military protection, water and grazing for the emigrants’ stock, and settlements along this route than the northern route. The northern route was also viewed as being shorter than the southern route, allowing the freight and settlers to reach their respective destinations quicker.

Historians estimate 500,000 emigrants traveled these overland trails from 1843 to 1869. A first hand description by C.M. Clark ^xduring his trip in 1859-60 is as follows:

“The emigration to the gold fields of Kansas and Nebraska last year was large; by actual count at Fort Kearney, for several successive days, an average of two hundred wagons passed daily, with an average of four persons to the wagon, and this was kept up through the months of May and June. One can imagine how the road was traveled, and what a thoroughfare it must have been. The road had an average width of thirty feet of well beaten track, and was as smooth and hard as a brick yard pave, excepting some portions along the Platte Valley. It is undoubtedly the best natural road in the world, some portions of it where it traverses the ridges being as level as a house floor; and often did we imagine that a Flora Temple in harness would just please us; at least, it would have been a great relief to have got behind something that could cancel distance a little better than an ox team, and end the tedious journey.... I have often seen a continuous train of wagons reaching for miles ahead of us, their wagon sheets in the reflected light, looking like sails; and we could almost fancy them a fleet of vessels, especially when seen amid the glimmer of the rising heat, which often deluded us into the belief that we were approaching a stream of water. This ascent of rarified air is peculiarly exhibited on the plains, rising to an altitude of three and four feet from the surface of the prairie, in wavy lines, and seen in the enchantments of distance, its resemblance to water is almost perfect.”

Independence, Weston, Westport, St. Joseph, Missouri, and Leavenworth Kansas were jumping off points for these trails. The date of the first departure of wagon trains from Independence, Missouri to travel the Oregon Trail ranges from 1836 to 1843 depending on the number of travelers, for commercial or settlement purposes and ultimate destination.



The first few parties organized and departed from Elm Grove, Missouri. Later, several feeder trails led across Kansas, and some towns became starting points, including Weston, Leavenworth, Atchison, and Omaha. Under pressure by Congress to shorten the delivery of mail, the Post Master General moved the starting point of the mail routes from Independence to St. Joseph, which had become more ideal due to the railroad line ending at this point. St. Joseph had been connected to the eastern lines by February 13, 1859. By February 1860, the railroad line had been extended to Atchison, Missouri changing the kickoff spot from Leavenworth for trade and the military freight transport to Western military posts and from St. Joseph for the US Mail.

These cities served not only as a rallying point for individuals to join a fellow group of travelers and the commencement point of the long trek across uncivilized plains but a suggested place to acquire goods for the journey. Cities, including Seneca, aggressively advertised for business.^{xi} As set out in the Centralia Sentinel Newspaper of Centralia, Illinois on March 15, 1866, James I. Logan offers advice to those planning to immigrate:

“....Don’t attempt to have a lot of stuff which you don’t absolutely need....If I were to do it all over again, that is the way I would do. Most immigrants do that way now, only bringing just what they are absolutely compelled to have on the way, and no more, then you have some comfort, and a good chance to get along, and to haul horse feed, which you must lay in in Seneca, Kansas, as after you leave there everything gets higher all the time... at Seneca you will find corn, oaks, flour, bacon, butter, eggs, cheese, potatoes and anything that grows in the ground, than less prices than you find in Illinois, for their only market is the emigrants.”

The “*Freedom's Champion*” of Atchison provided editorials lauded the best road West and details of the freighting companies, their owners and specifics of shipments. Shippers included John M. Hockaday & Company, who had the US mail contract and Cal. & S. L. Stat's-Geo. Chorpoening, California, both entities eventually being purchased by the predecessor to Wells Fargo Express. There was a profitable trade in manufactured goods freighted from these cities along the trails as well as the end cities of Salt Lake, Denver and other interior cities. While San Francisco was served by the shipping trades, Los Angeles and the California interior also relied upon the overland freight.

As such, Oscar was living in close proximity to heart of freighting, wagon expedition outfitting and rally points, and mail routes used by the local and national companies.

Are the “Pony Express” and “Wells Fargo” unrelated entities or did they represent the same company or interest or type of services during Oscar John Snyder’s time?

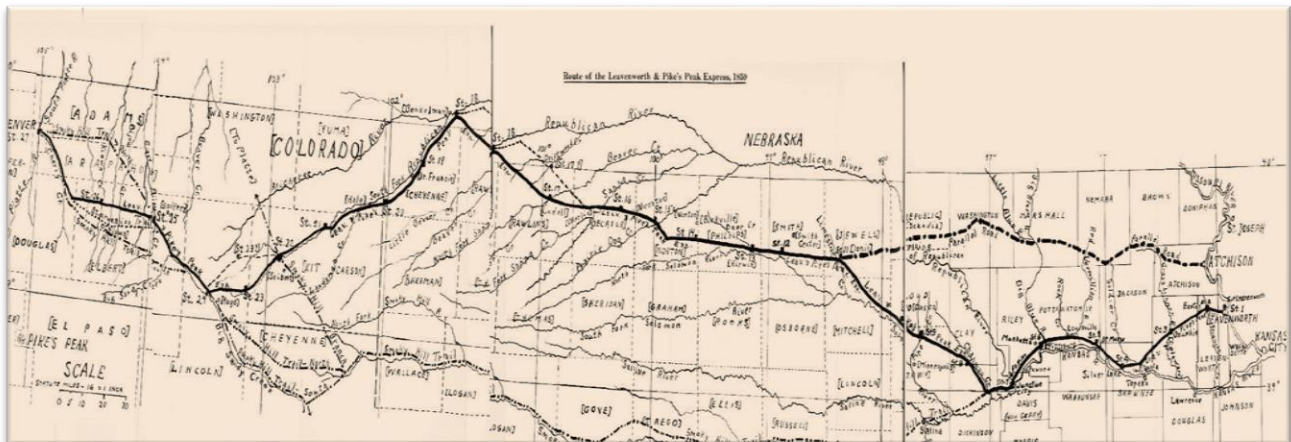
By the end of 1859, there were six different mail delivery routes, overseas and overland to the West. Companies following the established overland routes provided for the delivery of mail and supplies, which increased correspondingly with the growing populations in Salt Lake City, Denver and California locations. Pacific Mail Steamship Company, a steamship line, delivered US Mail by overseas

shortened by an overland route across the Panama Isthmus. There were multiple freighting companies serving local communities and remote cities such as Salt Lake City, Denver, Los Angeles and other cities not serviced by waterways. History records the majority of the larger firms involved with freight and mail services on the overland routes were not financially successful ventures, despite the valuable US Mail subsidies and contracts. Anecdotal stories of individual freighters suggest that there were high profits to be made if one survived the trip. Profits were only derived through sharp financing deals relating to the routes for other purposes. The ultimate owner of freight and stage express routes was Wells Fargo.

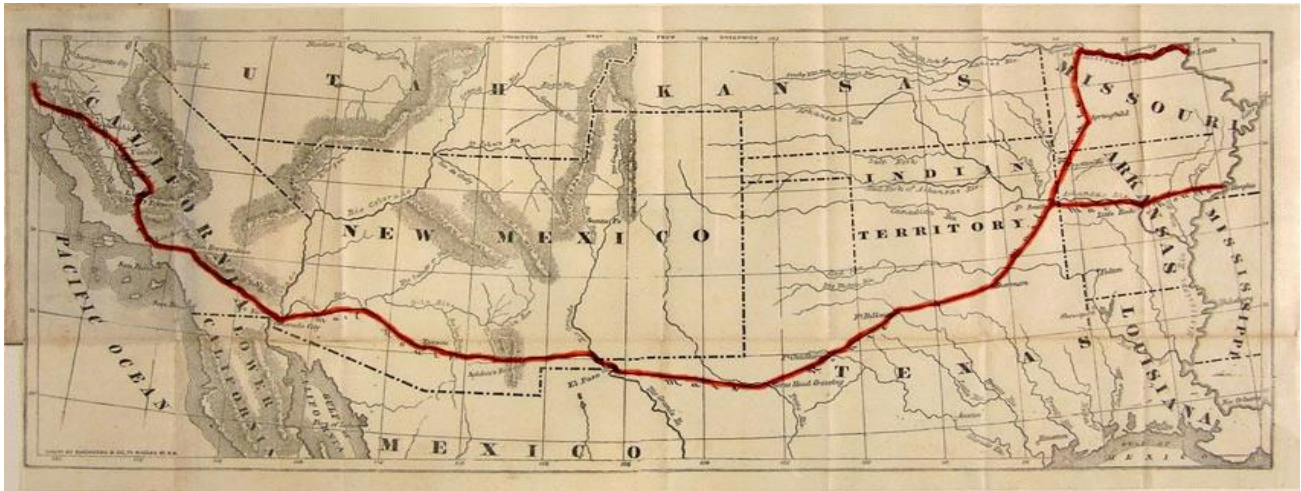
The companies and individuals associated with freight and mail service firms which were ultimately purchased by Wells Fargo were as follows:

Russell, Majors & Waddell was a major freighting firm originally located in Lexington, Missouri, which got its start by supplying military posts in the West and Southwest in 1854. In addition to military freight they transported civil freight on a large scale. The owners were William Hepburn Russell, Alexander Majors, and William Bradford Waddell.

Russell joined with John S. Jones of Missouri in establishing the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Company buying the needed mules and fifteen Concord coaches on 90-day personal notes. The partnership started service on May 17, 1858 from Leavenworth to Denver. Within less than a month, this firm purchased the US Mail contract of Hockaday and Liggett for \$50,000, thereby expanding the route covered by this firm to Salt Lake and Sacramento, under a contract that paid \$100,000 annually. However, the main impetus for this route lessened as the gold rush centered in Denver subsided. By the summer of 1859 Russell, Majors and Waddell took over the struggling firm as Russell and Jones were unable to pay on



their personal notes.



The firm also acquired Butterfield Stage Company, when that company became financially distressed in 1859. This route covered the southern route. The owners of Butterfield Overland Stage Coach Company or Butterfield Overland Mail Company were Russell Butterfield, William B. Dinsmore, D.N. Barney, William G. Fargo, and Hamilton Spencer.

In February 1860 the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company (C.C.O. and PP Express) received a charter from Missouri. In May 1860, it succeeded to the US mail contract of George Chorpenning which ran from Utah to California. On April 3, 1860, Russell's sponsored Pony Express started its first run.



The business changed locations several times: from Lexington, Missouri to Leavenworth, Kansas (March 27, 1855) to Nebraska City, Nebraska (1858.) Its location in West Bottoms of Kansas City, Missouri was used to outfit travelers on the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails following the Kansas River. In Leavenworth, Kansas, the company invested \$400,000 in warehouses, offices, blacksmith and wagon shop, and a store for employees. In 1859, the firm purchased the former Quartermaster, Major James G. Martin, three-story wood-frame building which was built in 1858 Nebraska City, Nebraska. The building is now the Old Freighter's Museum. They also purchased 138 lots in the Prairie City Addition of Nebraska City for the freighting company.

Their partnership suffered some significant financial losses in 1857 associated with military contracts, weather and Indian attacks. The Pony Express also failed due to the high costs of maintenance, inability to get a US mail contract and completion of the telegraph lines and railroad routes. The firm was disgraced by the arrest of Russell on December 24, 1860 and subsequent indictment on January 29, 1861 for cheating, defrauding and impoverishing the United States arising from borrowing bonds from the Indian Trust Fund worth \$870,000 dollars and using them to get loans, even though he escapes prosecution because of the Civil War.

Some relief arrived on March 2, 1861 when Congress and President Buchanan agree to spend \$800,000 dollars to keep the Pony Express going despite the woes of Russell, Majors and Waddell. However, the government ordered the firm to hand over the western half of the route to the Overland Mail Company who operated the Butterfield Line in the south. On March 11, 1861



Russell was released from jail on a “technicality of the law” over the bond scandal. None of the bonds were recovered. The government reimbursed the Indian Trust Fund to the tune of \$759,525.56. On April 15, 1861, Russell ordered the San Francisco and Sacramento Offices of the COC & PP Express Company to be turned over to Wells Fargo & Company. Wells Fargo became the temporary agent for the western route until the Overland Mail Company took over on July 1, 1861. On October 24, 1861, both the east and west coast were finally linked up by the trans-continental telegraph line and Pony Express discontinued.

In May or June 1861 or possibly earlier, Russell, Majors and Waddell had borrowed monies from Benjamin Holladay to secure better equipment for its routes. According to Becky Bartholomew of the *History Blazer*, January 1996: Holladay “...was famous as the colorful owner of the largest stagecoach line in the world. He had six homes, a stylish wife of American Revolution lineage who helped him collect art and books, daughters married to European counts, and an international playboy son. The other son helped manage his steamship fleet and Nevada silver mines.” Although Ms. Bartholomew reported that he was well liked, others found him rude, ruthless, boastful, and unethical. He was a gambler and eventually lost it all. His successes were due to his organizational skills and early successes, tied to the Mormons, whom he respected, and the Mormons, him. But he took no risk when it came to Russell, Majors and Waddell’s request for monies, Holladay required a mortgage secured by the entire line and its equipment. On

November 21, 1861, the firm executed a deed of trust for payment of \$400,000 and in December published the following notice:

“T.F. Warner and Robert L. Pease advertise to sell, under deed of trust on the 31st day of this month, all the horses, mules, cattle, coaches, and other property belong (sic) to the Central Overland California and Pike’s Peak company.”

There were delays and a temporary recovery for the firm but eventually the sale of the business was re-advertised in February 1862 at Atchison, Kansas and the action held on March 21, 1862. Holladay paid \$100,000. Russell, Majors and Waddell owed him \$280,000. Russell, Majors and Waddell went out of business by 1862. Individually they all attempted to recover their financial footing, with Majors being assisted by William Frederick Cody, traveling with the Wild West Show and writing a book about his life. Russell and Waddell ended their lives in “reduced circumstances.”



However CCO and PP Express continued to operate under its Missouri charter with new management and main shareholder, Benjamin Holladay until February 5, 1866. The new management were General Bela M. Hughes, attorney; John E. Russell, a NY Financier, as secretary; George K. Otis, special agent in Washington, DC. Otis was in the service until October 1861 as financial agent, auditor, general superintendent, and purchaser of supplies. Holladay established the Overland State Line, doing business as COC & PP Express and a subcontractor Pioneer State Line. The owners of the Pioneer State Line were Louis McLane, who eventually became President of Wells Fargo Express, and Charles McLane.

In 1866, Holladay acquired the Butterfield Overland Despatch, which covered the Smoky Hill route to Topeka and Leavenworth across Kansas to Denver and it was consolidated with the Holladay Company. In 1866, Holladay secured a new charter from the Colorado territory legislation, which allowed the incorporation of the stage company under the name of Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company. David Street, Bela M. Hughes, John E. Russell, and S.L.M. Barlow were named associates. The company operated under the Missouri and Colorado charters until Holladay retired in 1866. On November 1, 1866, he sold his interests to Wells Fargo Express for \$1,500,000 in cash and \$300,000 in express company

stock. Another \$600,000 was paid for the grain, hay and other provisions along the line. Wells Fargo now controlled the stage express and freighting business in the West.

As such, Oscar John Snyder would have worked for a predecessor in interest to Wells Fargo, that being California Overland Company and Pike Peak's Express Company or Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Company as Wells Fargo did not assume ownership until 1866. During this time, working for the Pony Express may not have held any significant distinction for those who were not riders. For example, Smith Hotel in Seneca served the stage coaches, freight haulers, emigrants and express riders. From 1859 to 1867, the Smith Hotel serviced the Hockaday Stage Coach, the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Company, and Pony Express as well as other local freighting, wagon outfitters and settlers.^{xii} Laborers who tended the stock, equipment or stagecoaches may have served many masters yet due to the glamour of the Pony Express elected to emphasize that association. Thus there were plenty of opportunities for Oscar John Snyder to be associated with either the larger or local enterprises working to expedite wagon trains from back East. After 1860, a midpoint location for Oscar John Snyder would have been Atchison, Kansas. Closer to home, there was Seneca and Gilman, which both served as stations for the Pony Express.

As for the Pony Express, A.E. Lewis Division of the Pony Express Route from St. Joseph to Kearny passed through Seneca and had a stop at Gilman. Seneca was the first home station being approximately 77 miles outside of St. Joseph. In 1858, the Seneca station was overseen by Captain Levi Hensley. He was a blacksmith who cared for the horses and mules for the Pony Express and stage lines from Kennekuk, Kansas to Big Sandy, Nebraska. The US 1860 Census evidences the effect on the city's population and confirms that the Pony Express' headquarters was James E. Smith's hotel. There is listed "mail agent", "stage drivers" and "express riders" as well as "laborer" who might have served as wranglers and repairmen.^{xiii} They are listed under the dwelling of John E. Smith, whose hotel had on July 1, 1860 become the Seneca Station for the Pony Express, as well as a hotel. John E. Smith and his wife Agnes managed the station operations at the hotel, located on the corner of present-day Fourth and Main Streets as well as Mr. Smith acting as the mail agent. Smith entered the hotel business in 1858, and his two-story white hotel also served as a restaurant, school, and residence.^{xiv}

What were the economic circumstances of Oscar John Snyder that would support him working in this line of business rather than another profession such as farming?

There is evidence that John Oscar Snyder was experiencing financial difficulty after he and Caroline Whitney Snyder moved to Nemaha, Kansas Territory in about 1857. There are several recorded documents with the county land register relating to the Kansas Snyder Farm (1859): Indenture, Notice of judgment and instructions to the sheriff to appraise the Kansas Snyder Farm and results of that sale (1866-1871) and another document relating to tax delinquencies (1862-1866). The Indenture, dated August 10, 1859, evidences that the Kansas Snyder Farm served as security for payment of a note in the amount of \$258. Oscar John Snyder transferred his interest in the Kansas Snyder Farm to Samuel Lapin of Seneca, Nemaha, Kansas Territory, as Trustee, and Henry S. Barricklow of (Cadiz), Harrison County, Ohio. The witness, William R. Pye, signed in Leavenworth, Kansas. The notary, John P. Hudgrens, who attested that he personally knew Oscar Snyder (common language in such attestation), was an attorney who lived in Saint Louis, Missouri, originally from Kickapoo, Kansas Territory. Following this Indenture, the US Federal Government issued a Patent to Oscar J. Snyder on September 15, 1860 [Warrant No. 82927].

On October 17, 1866, Henry S. Barricklow obtained a judgment in the District Court of Nemaha County, Kansas for \$1186.80 and \$25.85 in costs against "Oscar J. Snyder." The interest rate on the note was 20%. On October 29, 1866, an Order of Sale on the Judgment was entered and charged against the Kansas Snyder Farm. The Sheriff was instructed to obtain an appraisal of the property and notice the property for sale. He was further order to pay the cost of suit, judgment amount plus interest from the date of judgment and any remaining sum to Oscar Snyder. The Sheriff was to report back to the court in 60 days. He was also to advertise for 30 days in the Nemaha Courier.

On December 22, 1866, the Sheriff held an auction at the Court House and sold the Kansas Snyder Farm to Henry Barricklow for \$535, which sum represented 2/3 of the appraised value. In October 1868, the Sheriff returned to the court and obtained an order to deed the Kansas Snyder Farm to Barricklow. On March 16, 1871, the Sheriff transferred to Barricklow and the transaction was filed with the Registry of Deeds on April 17, 1871.

There are several newspaper publications in 1860s by Barricklow for service of court actions against other individuals having the same arrangement with him as he

did with Snyder. Barricklow may have been delayed in some foreclosures as he did lost several warrants in the Ohio River. He sought relief in Congress in 1859 (36th Session) and ultimately was granted the ability to obtain duplicate deeds about four years later when Congress (40th Session) enacted a law allowing him to do so.^{xv} He may also have had trouble foreclosing on the Kansas Snyder Farm due to the Kansas homestead exemption laws. The State Legislators did pass a constitution which included a homestead exemption in 1858. The law exempted 160 acres of real estate from sale on execution or attachment, without regard to value. It also required that the wife sign the document. The owner needed to assert the homestead in any action by a creditor. If the owner was not dwelling on the property, the homestead exemption was not applicable. This supports that the Kansas Snyder Farm had been vacated by 1866 or that the Snyder's did not assert the homestead exemption.

By bidding less than the appraised value and amount owing, it is possible that Barricklow maintained a judgment against Oscar Snyder for the remained of the judgment plus interest which he could have pursued against other assets. If pursued by creditors, this may explain Caroline's later use of different name for Oscar to avoid creditors. They did not have to move too far, but just over the county line or state lines. The following report from A.D. Richardson illustrating the limited arm of the law at pp. 17-18, as reported in the Kansas Historical Quarterly:

“As we were passing through the village of Kennekuk (so called from a famous old Kickapoo chief, bearing the name of ‘Ke-an-nekuk’), an interesting race attracted a good deal of attention. An emigrant from Atchison, who had left some of his creditors in the lurch, was pursued by two deputy sheriffs, and did not discover them until they were just upon him. He put spurs to his horse, which was decidedly a fast animal, and dashed off at the top of his speed. They followed in hot pursuit, and for nearly half a mile it was neck and neck. He dropped his overcoat on the way, but was in quite too much of a hurry to stop for it, and finally he crossed the county line a few yards ahead of them. Here their jurisdiction ceased, and while their indignation was unutterable, he begged them with the utmost suavity, to return his kind regards to any inquiring friends in Atchison. They finally returned, taking back his overcoat as a trophy, and he went his ay rejoicing.”

Another uncertainty pertains to the document registered showing that the 1860 taxes on the Kansas Snyder Farm and other properties had not been paid. It

appears that a public sale was attempted on January 1, 1862 with no bidders and Samuel Lappin took a Bill of Sale for \$37.33. The Bill of Sale was purchased by Henry Barricklow for \$435.96. There was a waiting period of three years for individuals to redeem their properties and after that time, the total taxes, penalties and costs were years 1860-1865 was \$681.10. The properties were transferred to Barricklow.

Samuel Lappin, Charles Stafford, William R. Pye and Henry S. Barricklow were in the business of loaning money or purchasing the lands of those settlers who were having difficulty and/or ready to move back East.^{xvi} As to the success of such businesses, including land speculation, there are differing opinions on their success and returns to the owners.^{xvii} Samuel Lappin held several public offices, including the Nemaha County Register and Kansas State Treasurer. Lappin and Scrafford eventually became “land poor” and out of their desperation forged school bonds. In 1875, Lappin was indicted for criminal activities for misuse of public funds. Lappin fled to South America and Scrafford was never convicted due to the loss of the court records.^{xviii} In 1880, Lappin was captured in the Washington Territory and on October 23, 1884 returned to Kansas for trial.^{xix} The claims of the state were finally satisfied through the sale of Stafford and Lappin's properties, and on Dec. 24, 1885, the case was dismissed. Mr. Lappin then again took up his residence at Seneca, Nemaha county, but later removed to La Center, Washington, where he died on Aug. 4, 1892. Henry Barricklow of Cadiz, Harrison, Ohio, on the other hand, was noted for being a successful man who had “accumulated sufficient property to take care of him when he ceased business activities”. The properties were located in Ohio, Kansas, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota.^{xx} Likewise, William R. Pye appears to have accumulated and kept properties as evidenced by his probate.

However, this indenture could also represent a practice of some settlers to establish their claim then sell out to land speculators as described by Horace Greeley in An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco (1860), pp. 65, 70.

"I am confident there is not at this hour any kind of a house or other sign of improvement on one-fourth of the quarter-sections throughout Kansas which have been secured by preemption. The squatter who thus establishes a 'claim' sells it out, so soon as practicable, to some speculator, who follows in his wake, getting from \$50 to \$300 for that which the future bona-fide settler will be required to pay \$250 to \$1,500 for To see a man squatted on a quarter-section in a cabin which would make a fair hog-pen, but is unfit for a human habitation, and there living from hand to mouth by a little of this and

a little of that, with hardly an acre of prairie broken (sometimes without a fence up), with no garden, no fruit-trees, 'no nothing'-waiting for some one (sic) to come along and buy out his Claim and let him move on to repeat the operation somewhere else-this is enough to give a cheerful man the horrors"

If the Snyder's plan was to profit from this process as Oscar appears to have in Rochester, Olmsted, Minnesota, they picked the wrong time to do so in Kansas. They were not the only settlers to have suffered such a failure. As described in C.M. Clark, "A Trip to Pike's Peak and Notes" on his trip taken in between 1859 to 1860:

“Many of the ‘settlers’ in Kansas emigrated there during the political (sic) furore, (sic) following in the wake of Jim Lane, and many have been lately introduced there through misrepresentations of the country, and they now would give their land, improvements, and all, to get back to the States again — and many are going back. In conversation with one who was returning, I learned that he had been in the territory nearly two years; had been located near Centralia; had tried to cultivate a farm, but could raise no crops; said he had been induced to go there through false representation; had been told that there was plenty of water and a good climate — all of which was a d — d lie in every particular, and was going back to Iowa.

The drought of last season impoverished the whole country; nothing grew or matured, except on the bottom lands, and that was principally corn. A prominent citizen of Seneca, a lawyer, informed us that the crops in their immediate section of country had failed, and the same was true elsewhere so far as he knew. He also stated that the heat during the summer months had been excessive, the thermometer often marking 119° in the shade.

"Why, gentlemen," said he, "to live and to move required no mean exertion; the air came to our nostrils as from a seven times heated furnace; the water in the streams evaporated, and all vegetation was burnt up. We have had no vegetables to eat this summer, and not much of anything else; and it might stagger belief if I were to tell you that there were men here, educated men from the classic halls of Yale and Harvard, who have been and are now living on dried buffalo meat and crackers. Now I don't pretend to live here, nor do I intend to stay long; I came here about a year since, like many other young men who could not get a living in the States, and commenced pettifogging, but it don't pay. If I do business for a man, he tells me that he has no money, but that he has got a cow or a calf that he will give me, or

something else. There is no society here; the majority of the people are illiterate. One-half the men that I do business for, when called upon to sign an instrument, have to make their mark, being unable to write. We are cut off from all communication with the world, except once a week, when the mail arrives, bringing the New York Tribune, which is the paper."

"Do all the residents here feel as you do?" we asked.

"The majority do, and all who can close up their business, and get away, are going to look for another boarding house."

"What do you think are the prospects for this country?"

"Not very brilliant for the present, but in time I have no doubt but what it will improve, and will be settled up. But I have noticed one thing: all the good and desirable men now go and will continue to go north of the fortieth parallel of latitude — the country is better and the climate is better; the country south of this parallel is less desirable, and is populated by a scurvey (sic) set of Missourians and Hoosiers, who are as ignorant of what is decent in nature as a hog."

Another description of this time is from Volume II of Kansas: a cyclopedia of state history, embracing events, institutions, industries, counties, cities, towns, prominent persons, etc. ... / with a supplementary volume devoted to selected personal history and reminiscence, published by Standard Publishing Company Chicago : 1912, Vols. I-II edited by Frank W. Blackmar, transcribed on July 2002 by Carolyn Ward, as follows:

“The year 1860 was a particularly hard one for the settlers. The county had grown from a population of 99 in 1855 to over 2,000 without experiencing any serious backsets. But the drouth [sic], storms, etc., have caused this period in the history of Nemaha county to be referred to as "the famine of 1860." The main articles of diet were corn bread and sorghum molasses, and the settlers who could even get enough of that were lucky. F. P. Baker of Centralia was on the territorial relief committee and remained at Atchison during the winter of 1860-61 attending to the office of the committee. Through him many of the people of this county were relieved from suffering.”

Also in in the Courier Tribune, Seneca, Kansas, Anniversary Edition, 1938, Vol. LXXV, Section One, the year of 1860 was described as follows:

“Things were tough in Nemaha county in 1860. It was the year of the first great drought. The Centennial history speaks of a deadly wave of heat in late summer, ‘like that of a simoon.’ Today, Nemaha County would call it a ‘hot wind.’ All the vegetation except that protected by timber of the terrain, burned crisp. Kansas raised almost nothing and a relief agency sprang up at Atchison, supported largely by contributions from the east. F. P. Baker of Centralia, worked in the Atchison office and was able to send much in the way of supplies here.”

It also must be considered that Oscar’s problems arose not just from the conditions in Kansas but possibility underfinancing the Snyder’s efforts to establish a farm. A number of articles were written about the failure of settlers to do properly consider the costs of doing so. For a summary of these articles see “Farm-Making Costs and the ‘Safety Valve’: 1850-60” by Clarence H. Danhof in the Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Jun., 1941), pp. 317-359, published by the University of Chicago Press.

It may be that Oscar’s optimism and planning was based upon the advice in Kansas and Nebraska Handbook (1857) by Nathan H. Parker, who had written a similar book on Iowa and Minnesota, which provided information not only on the expenses one could anticipate but non-farming opportunities to make a fortune. In Chapter __: Cost of Opening Farms: Building materials – Cement Houses, starting page 35- 37:

“Expense will depend much upon location. In a neighborhood where men and teams can be had at a low price, comparatively, it will cost much less than in a more remote and sparsely settled district. We will give the average rates: Breaking costs from \$2.50 to \$4 per acre; rails, from \$2 to \$3 per hundred; sod fence, from 30 to 40 cents per rod; stone fence, 80 cents to 1 per rod; hedge set, 32 cents per rod, growing in five years to an efficient fence; timber sells for from 25 to \$30 per thousand feet, one-half of which cost is in sawing. Oak, black walnut, and cotton-wood are generally used. Brick will be cheap when business is fairly started. Working cattle sell at from 80 to \$100 per yoke; mules from 100 to \$200 per head. Working oxen, cows, horses, etc., can usually be bought in Missouri. Heretofore, large droves have been brought into the Territory from Southern Missouri, and in

one or two instances from Arkansas. As the demand for oxen and cows increase, the supply will increase with it; so, however great the next spring's emigration, there will undoubtedly be stock enough in market to supply the demand. Horses are worth from 75 to \$150 apiece. Hogs, value unknown. Fresh pork has been selling in any quantity, the past fall and fore part of winter, at \$6 per cwt. Sheep are probably worth \$2 apiece. Hens, 25 cents apiece. Seed-corn, potatoes, wheat, etc., can be procured much cheaper than to bring them from Wisconsin or Illinois. Farming implements can be bought at fair prices, and a person on the ground can make better selections than to buy in another market.

“Claims can be purchased around all the inland towns of Kansas. The price depends very much on the circumstances of the settler, the shrewdness of the buyer, and the location of the claim. A log-hut can be built on a claim for from 50 to \$ 100. A tent, costing from 8 to \$15, provided the settler or his family lives in it, — which is no great inconvenience in the summer-time, — is sufficient to entitle him to 160 acres of land....”

“While Kansas is the country for the poor man, it holds out advantages equally for the man of limited fortune. While a man without a dollar can find remunerative work, the small capitalist or storekeeper will increase his fortune more rapidly than in any other Territory of the United States. He can do it by buying trust-lands, town-lots, claims or by loaning money on good security, at a heavy rate of interest. He can do it more rapidly still by establishing workshops or stores ; by building and renting out houses ; by keeping a hotel, or erecting a saw-mill. There are openings enough for all these enterprises, and every variety of, them, in every town and county of Kansas.”

During 1860, the Snyders stopped paying taxes on the Kansas Snyder Farm. The county proceeded with noticing a Sale due to delinquent taxes and eventually sold to Henry Barricklow with multiple other properties after the redemption period expired in 1866.

As such, it is probable that the Snyders had difficulties in supporting themselves on the Kansas Snyder Farm, resulting in their abandonment of the property after 1860 but before 1863. Caroline and her two sons are listed as living with her parents, David and Margaret Whitney in Rochester, Olmsted, Minnesota in 1870, as evidenced by the US Federal Census. Oscar John Snyder is reported to have died

in 1862 from the effects of a very cold winter. The newspapers of the day do report of the cold winter of December 1861.

There were other factors that might have influenced their departure from the Kansas Snyder Farm. The difference between themselves politically and their neighbors may also have made it more difficult. If work was available it local or other communities, it would have been prudent of Oscar to seek such work to “tie them over,” rather than just leave.

It also could be that Oscar had seen “teaming” or trade as an opportunity before heading to Kansas as it was so flaunted by Parker in his Handbook: In Chapter __ Markets and Trade, pp. 20-22, Parker writes:

“Those who do not understand the wants and demands of incoming emigration, seem much concerned lest there be not a good and constant market for the products of this ‘Garden of the ‘West.’ For the information of such, let us say- that the California and Santa Fe routes pass through Kansas, and the mighty trade that flows along them will be mainly sustained by her people. This trade requires 40,000 teams of mules, horses, and oxen; at least one-third of these must be replaced annually. The Government purchases extensive supplies for the western posts, which would naturally be procured in Kansas. The rapid influx of population will take every thing (sic) that remains. The experience of farmers in other Western States which have been settled rapidly, warrants the expectation of a ready home market, at high prices, for every thing (sic) that the Kansas farmer can raise for years to come.

Eastern and Central Kansas will have a regular and full demand for all the products of home industry. When we consider that Kansas is the geographical centre of the United States possessions, it might by some be thought too far from a good, reliable market; but let us remember that the immense and constantly increasing overland Santa Fe trade, California overland outfitting trade, military supply trade for the forts among the wild tribes in the Rocky Mountains and Plains, outfitting Oregon, Washington, Utah, Gadsden Purchase, and New Mexico trade, — all this trade, upon which the towns of Lexington, Independence, Liberty, Westport, "Weston, and Kansas City, Mo., have grown wealthy, — must and will shortly be transferred to a permanent position, at some point in the great basin of Central Kansas.

This trade must and will be transferred from Missouri to Central Kansas ; because it has always been carried on at the most western civilized fertile point on the line from St. Louis to San Francisco, Santa Fe, etc. Formerly all the business of that trade was done at St. Louis. When Lexington was settled west, that became the favorite outfitting mart. In a few years, Westport, Weston, Kansas City, and Leavenworth City, became the extreme western outposts of civilization; and, of course, are now the more favored rivals in this trade, — which, by the way, is larger than many have any idea of. We have not now at hand many statistics showing the amount of the entire trade for any year, but will supply one example. The firm of Majors & Russell, of Westport, Mo., are engaged in the Santa Fe and Military Stores carrying-trade. This firm alone employ over one thousand teamsters and some seven thousand oxen and mules.

Now, when this trade is transferred to Central Kansas, it must remain there permanently. It cannot move further west with the tide of civilization," simply because the great basin, Central Kansas, is the extreme western fertile district this side of the American Desert and Rocky Mountains. Towns and cities will be built up in Central Kansas, and there can no rival town spring up west of this in the great desert. No industrial pursuit in this fertile region will ever have to seek an eastern market. There always has been and ever will be a market, for all that man can produce, at his own door."

Oscar's neighbors were "teaming" to make a living. James L. Newton, farmer, of Seneca, a son of Rev. Thomas Newton, and was born in 1818, in Breckenridge County, Ky., where his father and grandfather settled in 1812. He removed in 1850 to Fayette County, Ill., and in 1859 left with his team for Kansas. When he arrived, his father sold him eighty acres on which he lived about five years. The failure of the crop in 1860, and the distress and privations, incidents thereto, fell heavily upon him and his family. He began teaming to Kearney and other western points, and to Atchison; one trip made that fall occupied eleven days, he unloading his 3,200 pound load eleven times on the way. He was paid \$60 per hundred for hauling supplies for the sufferers from Atchison, and thus made some money.

If nothing else, the industry of freighting offered employment opportunities not otherwise available for an unskilled craftsman or farmer.

No doubt in early 1861, Oscar John Snyder was also considering what obligation he had to sign up in response to Abraham Lincoln's call for volunteers on April 15, 1861. Coming from Ohio, it is more probable that Snyder was pro-Union. In Nemaha County, all the volunteers became members of the 2nd, 7th, 8th, 11th, 13th and 15th regiments. Cap. A. W. Williams organized a company of 150 volunteers in August, 1861. Most of them were later sworn in as members of the 8th Kansas. George Graham also organized a company, many of these becoming members of the 9th and 13th Kansas.

As such there were several scenarios under which Oscar could have elected or been forced to work at "teaming" or working with the freighting, stage coach or mailing companies in the area. Helping to outfight wagon trains was also a key industry in this area as settlers were encouraged to wait until they reached the area to outfit for the trip to the West.

Resources:

1. *Ghost Towns of Nemaha County* by Morris W. Werner
2. *Saddles and Spurs: The Pony Express Sage* (1955) by Raymond W. Settles and Mary Lund Settles, University of Nebraska Press
3. *History of Nemaha County* by Randel
4. *Kansas and Nebraska Handbook* (1857) by Nathan H. Parker

END NOTES

Special thanks to the Cossey family for photos and information on Oscar and Caroline.

ⁱ James Hiram Easton was a photographer in Minnesota. He, his wife and child are listed on the 1860 census in St. Charles, Minnesota. He lists his profession as "shoemaker". They opened the gallery in December 1862 on Broadway Street, Rochester, near J.H. Brown store. As such this photo is of Caroline after she became a widow. She continues to wear a ring on her left hand. Easton's wife was an "artist", "Dr.", "spiritual physician", and clairvoyant. Her husband and son were listed as "mulatto" and she, white. While they moved the location of their gallery to the East side of Broadway between 3rd and Zumbro Street in 1873, they continued business continued into the 1880s. There is an "E.H. Easton" who owned land in close proximity to David Whitney and Oscar John

Snyder's property in Rochester. See *Pioneer Photographers from the Mississippi to the Continental Divide*, by Peter E. Palquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn (2005).

ⁱⁱ His date of service was 1849.

ⁱⁱⁱ 1849 to 1861: During the various Indian Wars the US Government recruited local volunteers from the Hispanic populations. After the Mexican American War, several companies were formed, with Captain Antonio Lucas' being one. "Antonio Lucas" is listed as a prisoner of war in the Mexican American War.

^{iv} "Land Policy and Tenancy in Prairie States", by Paul Wallace Gates, "The Journal of Economic History", Vol. 1, No. 1 (May, 1941), pp. 60-82, published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Economic History Association, p. 61, footnote 6.

^v The warrants were not per se equal to cash; however eventually the use of purchase of warrants at discounted prices reduced the cash inflow to the government and lowered the price from \$1.25 per acre. Until 1850, they could not be used for pre-emption or public land sales; and the 1850 warrants could not be assigned until 1852. See "Charts of Public Land Sales and Entries" by Paul W. Gates, "The Journal of Economic History", Vol. 24, No. 1 (March 1964), pp. 22-28, published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Economic History Association.

^{vi} As stated for land near Seneca due to the anticipated arrival of the railroad in the City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains by Richard Francis Burton, published by NY Harper & Brothers Publishers, Franklin Square (1862, pp 21-22.)

^{vii} Established as post office on June 15, 1858 and terminated on August 14, 1863.

^{viii} Township, range location stated in *History of Nemaha County Kansas* by Ralph Tennal, (1916), published by Standard Publishing Company, Lawrence Kansas.

^{ix} Mapquest.com shows Richmond at cited location.

^x See "*A Trip to Pike's Peak and Notes*" by C.M. Clark.

^{xi} The citizens of Seneca were ambitious and competitive with other cities in the area for the business from the wagon trains and the mail service. While the basis of the rivalry with neighboring cities such as Richmond and Central City are justified by the anti-slavery politics of Seneca's leaders, the local story of diverting potential wagon train customers from Richmond by sowing oat seeds in the roadway suggest an aggressive approach to such competition.

^{xii} Saddles and Spurs: Pony Express Saga by Raymond W. Settle and Maud Lund Settle (1955), published by University of Nebraska Press,

^{xiii} The names of the stage drivers and express riders are as follows: C.B. Williams, 17 years, Stage Driver, NY; CN Williams, 12, Stage Driver, NY; A.A. Adams, 27, Stage Driver, N.H; David Atchison, 28, Stage Driver, Canada; James Bentley, 30, Express Rider, Virginia; Asher Bigelow, 40, Express Rider, Canada; Edward Pollinger, 22, Express Rider, Texas; Thomas Sauder, 36, Express Rider, Texas

^{xiv} In 1972 the hotel was razed due to lack of funds to restore. It had been moved from its original site in 1900 to a location several blocks west. A marker designates the site of the original station in downtown Seneca.

^{xv} See Barricklow, Henry, bill (H. R. No. 1063) for the relief of--[By Mr. Holman.] referred, 2441; reported and passed, 2540. In Senate: received from House, 2545; referred, 2548 for history of Barricklow's efforts to recover lost warrants.

^{xvi} *White Cloud Kansas Chief*, advertisement entitled "Torrey and Lappin," June 10, 1858, page 10. Reads as follows: "RU Torrey Samuel Lappin Surveyor and Civil Engineer Torrey & Lappin Land Agents & Surveyors Seneca, Nemaha Co., Kansas Will promptly attend to investing Money, paying taxes, locating and selling Land Warrants, Surveying Town Sites, sub-dividing Sections, etc. Will buy and sell Town Shares and Town Lots, and do a General Agency Business."

^{xvii} See "'Profits' and the Frontier Land Speculator" by Allan G. Bogue and Margaret Beattie Bogue, *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Mar., 1957), pp. 1-24, published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Economic History Association.

^{xviii} *Leavenworth Times*, "The Lower House," March 4, 1885, p. 1

^{xix} *Burlington Republican*, "Sam Lappin's Crime" October 9, 1884, p. 1.

^{xx} *History of Carroll and Harrison Counties*, Ohio, Vol. 2, by Harvey J. Eckley, William Thomas Perry.