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Ham, Eggs, and Corn Cake: A Nebraska Territory Diary

Erastus F. Beadle
Ronald C. Naugle ed.

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The lure of the West is an indelible part of American history, legend, and folklore. The cast of characters and human drama associated with the development of the United States and its expansion westward to fill the continent have shaped American character and values. They have defined what America is; sadly, for others they have illustrated what America is not. The myth and the reality at times appear inseparable. What is truth? What is fiction?

The diary of Erastus Flavel Beadle is the diary of a man lured by the myth of the West as a place of adventure, a new start, a chance to get rich. It is also the diary of a man who faced realities that drew him back to the East, from which he had come. The diary is one man’s brief account of life in Nebraska Territory in 1857, and it provides snapshots of a human drama as it plays out in business, culture, and politics. Beadle's diary furnishes a picture of the reality of one small piece of the nineteenth-century American West and a glimpse into the dreams and hopes of a group of men for the creation and future of Saratoga, a western city to rival all others (see map 1).

Erastus F. Beadle was born in Pierstown, New York, (immediately north of Cooperstown) on 11 September 1821, the son of Flavel and Polly Fuller Beadle.1 There is little recorded information about his early life. Biographical dictionaries and encyclopedias contain brief and sometimes conflicting information, but there is general agreement that during Beadle’s early years his parents moved several times, once as far
west as Kalamazoo County, Michigan, in hope of finding success in farming.

In 1835, during a brief stay near Fredonia, New York, where his parents did odd jobs for farmers, young Erastus obtained employment as a farm hand. He remained there after his parents moved back to the Cooperstown area; consequently, at age fourteen he was on his own. During his approximately six months in Fredonia, Beadle became acquainted with the local printer and soon learned the basics of the printing trade, a path that would eventually lead to his fame and fortune.²

After his lone stay in Fredonia, Beadle moved to Cooperstown, where he became an apprentice at the printing house of H. and E. Phinney. He stayed many years with this firm, following it to new offices in Buffalo, New York, after the Cooperstown printing house burned in 1847. Just the year before he had married Mary Ann Pennington.³

Beadle's printing and publishing career flourished with the move to Buffalo. Within a short time he took a new position as a stereotyper for the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, and three years later, in 1850, he went into business with his brother, Irwin, establishing a stereotype foundry. During this time he also decided to try his hand at publishing and, in 1852, launched his first magazine, The Youth's Casket: An Illustrated Magazine for the Young.

With the success of The Youth's Casket, Erastus and Irwin sold the foundry and established their own publishing company. By 1856 they were publishing a second magazine, The Home: A Fireside Companion and Guide for the Wife, the Mother, the Sister and the Daughter. The name was later changed to Beadles Home Monthly. In 1856 Robert Adams became a partner in the firm; this is the Robert to whom Beadle frequently refers in his journal.⁴

By late summer 1856 Erastus Beadle was thirty-four years of age, had been married for ten years, and had three children: Irwin Flavel, age nine; Sophia, age seven; and Walter Hamilton, age six.⁵ The fondness with which Beadle refers to his wife in his journal as “Mate” and his frequent expressions of missing her and the children, whom he hopes will join him soon, suggest it was a happy marriage.

Over the course of the preceding twenty years he had established both
a family and himself, first as a printer and subsequently as a publisher. In partnership with his brother and Adams, he controlled a publishing house that was producing two popular magazines.

The publishing career of Erastus Beadle thereafter is well-documented. So too is the House of Beadle and Adams, which developed from the partnership with Robert Adams. The Buffalo firm relocated to New York City in 1858 and by 1860 was publishing a series of adventure novels, which sold for ten cents each. The dime novels were such a success and in such high demand that they revolutionized the publishing industry and reshaped the reading habits of millions of Americans.

While Beadle could not have known his future and how prominently he would figure in the publishing industry, he must certainly have viewed his prospects in August of 1856 with some optimism. Yet it was at this very point in his life that a fascination with the West lured him to visit Omaha, Nebraska Territory, and led to his decisions to leave the publishing house in the hands of his brother and partner, return to Omaha the following spring—with the intent of making his fortune in real estate—and eventually resettle there with his family.

In August 1856 Omaha City, Nebraska Territory, was a place of great promise. So too were more than a dozen other burgeoning communities along the eastern edge of the territory, where promoters and investors had placed their faith. Indeed the First Territorial Legislature in 1855 incorporated fourteen town sites that used the word “city” in their names and which their developers promoted as a new Chicago, New York, or Philadelphia.

The territory was just two years old when Beadle made his first trip out; its population was booming. From 30 May 1854, when President Franklin Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, officially opening the region to settlement, the territory had expanded from a few squatters living in cabins along the western side of the Missouri River to a population of 2,732 just six months later. The population nearly doubled the following year to 4,494 and more than redoubled by 1856 to 10,716. In 1857 the territory’s population was estimated at nearly twenty thousand.

Land prices in 1857 also reflected optimism. Riverfront lots in some
tours sold for as much as ten thousand dollars; those three or four blocks back brought two thousand dollars; even those as much as half a mile away brought twelve hundred dollars. In most cases the sellers had acquired these properties either by preemption or for just a few dollars only two to three years earlier.

The real estate frenzy up and down the Missouri River was fueled by the hope of each group of promoters that their city would become the gateway city of the transcontinental railroad; indeed, the very legislation that created the Nebraska territory was driven by the desire to make possible the Platte River Valley route for the great railroad to the west, a route that over the preceding twelve years had proven itself by overland immigrant travel to Utah, California, and Oregon.

A vast area once perceived as the Great American Desert, worthless to white people for agricultural development, and which just twenty years earlier Congress had designated permanent Indian country, was now valuable. For promoters from Iowa, Chicago, and points further east, who had interests tied to the Platte Valley route, the concept of a permanent Indian frontier had to give way to territorial organization and settlement.

Few of the towns would live up to their promoters’ hopes, and Omaha would soon maneuver itself into political and commercial dominance, but in 1856 the mood everywhere was one of great optimism. Governor Mark W. Izard, in addressing the Territorial Legislature in January 1857, praised the continuing optimism in Nebraska’s future and pointed to the churches, schools, and commercial buildings under construction as evidence of the prosperity in Nebraska’s towns and cities.

Beadle’s diary is the record of his journey to Omaha in 1857 and covers the time from 9 March to 1 October 1857. He does not explain why he had decided to visit Omaha the preceding August; he makes only slight references to his having been there the previous fall. On 19 August 1857, he notes in his diary the anniversary of his having left Buffalo for Omaha. No indication of how long he stayed nor the precise business arrangement he negotiated is included. Apparently, he returned home from the first visit to put his affairs in order and make preparations for
returning to Omaha in the spring to establish himself and prepare a home for his family to join him later.

The venture that drew Beadle back to Omaha in 1857 was the development of a town that was to be called Saratoga, located between Omaha and Florence. Saratoga's unique feature was a sulphur springs near the Missouri River, around which its developers planned to build a grand hotel called the Trinity House.\textsuperscript{11} They also hoped to attract other entrepreneurs who would establish businesses that would make the town commercially viable as well as attractive to tourists.

The company was named the Sulphur Springs Land Company, and to attract residents who would build homes in this new city, the company offered, in Beadle's words, "256 lots to churches, schools and individuals who will build before July first [1857]."\textsuperscript{12} Beadle's duties with the company were to supervise the drawing of lots for the shareholders (who were entitled to fifteen lots each), promote the town, and give away the free lots to people who would build on them. Beadle was to receive a free lot and an undisclosed amount of money as compensation for his services to the company.

Several of Beadle's new business associates had a New York connection, which might in part explain his interest in the Sulphur Springs and Saratoga venture. Taylor G. Goodwill, chairman of the executive committee of the Sulphur Springs Land Company, and upon whose death Beadle succeeded in that capacity, was from upstate New York.\textsuperscript{13} Goodwill owned the actual sulphur springs and probably named the town Saratoga after a popular mineral springs resort at Saratoga, New York.

LeRoy Tuttle, treasurer of the company, was also from New York. Tuttle had at one time been a banker in Cooperstown but later had moved to Ilion, New York. In 1855 he came to Omaha to be cashier of the Western Exchange Fire and Marine Insurance Company, which was also licensed to do general banking.\textsuperscript{14}

Two days after his arrival in Omaha Beadle called on John H. Kellum, having made an acquaintance with him the previous fall. Although not directly connected with the Saratoga project, Kellum was from Washington County, New York, and had come to Omaha in 1856 to
open a bank with backing from Frank D. Gridley, a Buffalo banker with whom Beadle had done business and whom he considered a friend. Gridley arrived in Saratoga on 21 May to visit Kellum and inspect the bank.

On 9 March 1857, Beadle began his journey, which would take him twenty-one days. While his second trip out to Nebraska was less direct than his return to Buffalo had been the previous August, and was made up to nine days longer by stops to visit friends, relatives, and business acquaintances on the way, his diary provides a fascinating, detailed account of the difficulties of travel in the mid-nineteenth century. The connections that had to be made between such various conveyances as ferries, steamers, rail cars, and coaches and the hazards associated with each suggest a seriousness of purpose that must have accompanied the decision to travel any great distance. Beadle faced most of the mishaps of his trip with resolve, including the breakdown of his coach, which forced him to walk the last six miles of his journey.

Beadle’s interest was in the development of the town of Saratoga, not Omaha, but he had to live in Omaha and, for a period of time, use Omaha as his base of operation. During the first few days, he reconnected with businessmen he had met the previous fall, principally a Mr. Cook and a Mr. Warner. While the living accommodations in Omaha in Beadle’s view were rather primitive, Mr. Warner arranged for Beadle to board where he did, in the household of Experience Estabrook, U.S. attorney for the territory. As a result Beadle’s Omaha accommodations were far better than most.

There were few laws governing the development of towns when Nebraska became a territory in 1854. The Pre-Emption Law of 1841 allowed individual citizens to preempt 160 acres of public-domain land and file a claim to it after marking the corners and living on it for five days and nights. The federal townsites Act of 1844 allowed towns, or an organized company of town developers, the same preemption rights on 320 acres. Legal title to land, however, could not be obtained until the land was surveyed. Groups of enterprising individuals, such as those with whom Beadle had associated, could organize a company, elect officers, claim 320 acres, and also, as individuals, claim 160 acres each, all adjacent to each other.
Taylor Goodwill had purchased a claim of 160 acres that included the sulphur springs from a William Clancy in 1854. Goodwill wanted to build the resort hotel at the springs and develop the town to rival all others in the territory. One hundred and sixty acres was not enough for such a grand venture, so Goodwill and a group of other like-minded promoters incorporated the Sulphur Springs Land Company in October 1856 to claim 320 acres in the name of Saratoga and begin the acquisition of individual quarter sections to acquire land for the city. They eventually acquired a total of twenty-three hundred acres.17

*The Nebraskan*, a territorial newspaper established to promote Omaha, announced on 22 October 1856 the incorporation of the Sulphur Springs Land Company, whose purpose was to develop a town called Saratoga. The officers and board of directors were duly noted. The president was Thomas Hart Benton Jr., son of Missouri’s expansionist senator, who had strongly supported the formation of Nebraska Territory. Other officers were LeRoy Tuttle, treasurer, and William Young Brown, secretary. Members of the executive committee were Taylor Goodwill, A. F. Salisbury, and Edwin Patton; the remaining board members were Addison Cochran, James C. Mitchell, C. B. Smith, and Samuel M. Owens.18 The location of Saratoga today would lie between Fort Street on the north and Locust Street on the south, and between 36th Street on the west and Carter Lake on the east (see map 2).19

To protect presurvey claims, such as those only cornerstaked by the Sulphur Springs Land Company, it was common practice to organize a claim club. These were groups of claimants who organized to establish a set of laws for governing themselves and protecting their claims, by force if necessary, against claim jumpers. Claim clubs initially operated outside the law or in the absence of law, but the first session of the Nebraska Territorial Legislature gave them a measure of credibility by recognizing and defining their activities through law. For purposes of protecting the group’s claims, claim clubs could appoint a subcommittee of enforcers and a leader, who was often referred to as the sheriff. A would-be claimant who ignored the system and tried to stake land already claimed by one of the club’s members would be visited by the sheriff and enforcers and threatened or tortured until he relinquished or denounced his rights to his claim.20
Beadle witnessed the effectiveness of this form of justice when the Saratoga Claim Club dealt with a claim jumper who was particularly stubborn about withdrawing his filing. In this case the captain and the regulators, as the sheriff and enforcers were designated, tied a rope around the perpetrator and threw him into the Missouri River three times before he saw the error of his ways.

In his diary Beadle is enthusiastic about the prospects for Saratoga. He comments frequently about the superiority of the site over that of Omaha. He is encouraged by the steady stream of people arriving throughout the late spring and early summer and provides a daily accounting of the steamers arriving at Omaha. When the first steamer, *Florence*, lands at Saratoga on 19 April he is convinced it is the beginning of commercial business for Saratoga. Shortly thereafter he decides to build a warehouse and start his own business.

Beadle's activities in promoting the town probably account for his election as chair of the executive committee on 21 May to replace Taylor Goodwill, who had died of typhoid. Not clear is whether he purchased shares in the company or whether the company's indebtedness to him made him a member of the board. Later diary entries suggest the latter.

Boarding in the home of U.S. Attorney Estabrook put Beadle in a position to meet many prominent persons in Omaha and the territory, such as Governor Izard and Brig. Gen. John M. Thayer, and to witness first hand discussion of territorial political issues he may otherwise have missed. On 10 July he returns home to find Judge Fenner Ferguson and his wife from Bellevue visiting Estabrook. Ferguson was a Democratic candidate for territorial delegate to Congress in the upcoming congressional election, scheduled for 1 August. The discussion centers around a letter Estabrook had received from Nebraska City indicating that Otoe County had pledged its support for Benjamin P. Rankin, also a Democrat, for the same office.

Party affiliation played less of a role in early Nebraska territorial politics than it would later; the Republican Party would not be officially organized for another two years. The Whigs, who would become part of the Republican Party, were declining in number. Most men of ambition in the new territory were Democrats because Franklin Pierce was
president when Nebraska Territory was established and had appointed early territorial officers from his own party.

Political campaigns were often heated affairs, replete with personal attacks. Sectional interests were also more important than party affiliation, with the territory frequently dividing at the Platte River. Omaha’s dominance in the new territory and its claim to the territorial capitol had rankled many would-be competitors, such as Bellevue, Nebraska City, and Brownville. During the Fourth Territorial Legislature, for example, arguments between the South Platters and North Platters became so heated that guns were drawn, and a rump session reconvened at Florence to talk about J. Sterling Morton’s suggestion that the counties south of the Platte seek annexation to Kansas. The issue would emerge with greater seriousness in 1859, when secession conventions were held in Brownsville and Nebraska City and formal petitions were made, only to be rejected by Kansas.

There were often numerous candidates for few offices, and most had political experience. Judge Ferguson was one of three federal judges appointed to the territory in 1854. Rankin had been the first territorial treasurer and since March of 1856 had been U.S. marshal for the territory. He would run again for Congress in 1859 and lose to Estabrook. Bird B. Chapman, who came to Omaha in 1854 to establish The Nebraskan, to promote the interests of Omaha and later Saratoga, was also a candidate for Congress in 1857. So too was Thayer, brigadier general of the militia, who was running as an Independent. In the end, Ferguson carried the election, but only by a plurality.

Beadle also comments frequently about the condition of the Indians and the number that were camped in the vicinity. He is particularly disturbed by the condition of the Pawnee and their apparent filth and starvation. What Beadle was witnessing was the result of white expansion westward and territorial organization that had mandated the cession of Indian lands. Except for a small parcel for the Omahas eighty-some miles up the Missouri River from Omaha City and an even smaller one for the Pawnee about one hundred miles west on the Loup River, the Indians by 1857 had lost all of their land in the eastern two-thirds of present-day Nebraska.
Because of decades of interaction with fur traders along the Missouri River, the Omaha had experienced a greater degree of western acculturation than the Pawnee. The Pawnee whom Beadle saw were the survivors of a once powerful tribe that had dominated central Nebraska. The few who remained near the eastern towns and cities were reduced to total dependency and begging or thievery for survival. It is little wonder that some would resort to stealing an occasional cow from isolated settlers. These incidents regularly set off alarms, accompanied by calls for wiping out the remaining Indians. Fortunately Governor Izard was cautious in responding to these situations to which Beadle refers in his diary.

Beadle's encounter with a Pawnee man named Corax caused him to see the Indian situation in a different light from most of the settlers' views. His host, Estabrook, was obviously a man who possessed a greater degree of sensitivity to the Indians than many whites, and this too influenced Beadle, who later in his diary expressed his disturbance about the wrongs done to the Indians.

While Beadle came to Nebraska to make money, he came with the desire to settle and make a new life for himself and his family. He commented frequently in his diary about missing his family and his expectation that they would soon join him. It was this latter desire that came to the fore toward the end of June when he met a young land speculator, Dick Darling.

Dick Darling, if indeed that was his correct name, was the epitome of a land speculator and gambler. He had staked numerous claims during the previous three years and then sold them when he could make a profit. Because he was still under twenty-one years of age, he could not legally preempt land in his own right. On 26 June Darling took Beadle to see a piece of land some six miles west of Omaha, on which he had staked a claim, and Beadle immediately became excited about the prospects of acquiring it as a place where he and his family could settle.

After seeing Darling's claim Beadle's interests in Saratoga declined. Though chair of the executive committee, his description of his work for Saratoga seems less exciting and more perfunctory. He was offered the job of postmaster for Saratoga and declined. On 20 July, he turned in his bill for services and his resignation.
When Darling finally agreed to trade his claim west of Omaha for Beadle's lots in Saratoga, Beadle immediately made plans to build a shelter on the site and live there the requisite five days in order to file the preemption papers on it. Beadle called his claim Rock Brook Farm, a 240-acre plot just northeast of present-day Rockbrook Shopping Center and west of the juncture of Big Papillion and Rockbrook Creek (Beadle's Nin-na-bah), north of West Center Road (see map 3).

After five days at Rock Brook Farm Beadle returned to Omaha, filed his claim with the Land Office, and began making preparations to return to New York. Why Beadle lost interest in the Saratoga project is not clear. Detectable is that his relationship to LeRoy Tuttle had, from the beginning, appeared strained. Diary entries indicate a frustration that Tuttle was not in Omaha when Beadle arrived. On 5 June Beadle comments, “he [Tuttle] talks large for me, and if one half he tells me turns out right I shall be satisfyed [sic],” suggesting that Tuttle exaggerated more than a little.

Perhaps as chairman of the executive committee of the Sulphur Springs Land Company, Beadle had become uneasy with the company's finances. His diary entries reflect his concern over lack of capital and frustration over not knowing whether he would ever be paid for his services to the company.

There were also hints of the coming depression. Diary entries refer to disturbing news from home. Gridley brings him “surprising” news about the closing of a Buffalo business. Other rumblings of economic collapse continue throughout the late summer. When he reaches Chicago on 31 August he hears that the Reciprocity Bank of Buffalo has failed—the bank that had issued all the money he had to travel home.

Within the month Nebraska felt the full brunt of the panic, which resulted in the collapse of most of the territorial financial institutions. The panic was made worse in eastern Nebraska because of the lack of hard money and the desire to promote prosperity.

To increase the amount of money in circulation, the First Territorial Legislature had created banks of issue, allowing them to print money on the name of the bank, often with very little real or sound capital to back up the paper. Known as “wildcat” banks because of the unsoundness of this practice, the banks’ money also became known as “wildcat”
currency, worth nothing outside the territory and nothing at all if the bank collapsed.

The first Territorial Legislature, under pressure from Omaha promoters, many of whom were also members of the legislature, chartered two such banks, one of which was the Western Exchange Fire and Marine Insurance Company, to do business as the Western Exchange Bank. The bank's primary investors were the same as those of the Sulphur Springs Land Company.

The Second Territorial Legislature chartered five more banks, among them Fontenelle Bank, owned by Thomas Hart Benton Jr., and the Bank of Florence, owned by James C. Mitchell, both of whom were directors of the Sulphur Springs Land Company. During the third Territorial Legislature's session, six more bank bills were passed, but Governor Izard vetoed all six. Two bills, however, were passed over his veto, creating the Bank of DeSoto and Bank of Tekamah, both owned by William Young Brown, secretary of the Sulphur Springs Land Company.

The same legislature repealed a law that had been passed by the second legislature making it a crime to open a bank without legislative charter. This opened a floodgate of banking activity and made it easier for Beadle's friend and Buffalo banker Frank Gridley to open a branch of his bank in Saratoga and at the same time become a major investor in the Western Exchange.

The collusion of interest, lack of real capital, and few assets created a situation ripe for disaster. The bust came on September 23, 1857, when the Western Exchange collapsed, leaving individuals with more than one hundred fifty thousand dollars in losses. The collapse of the Bank of Tekamah followed, leaving personal losses of ninety thousand dollars.

Saratoga was bust; so too were the dreams of many for the city's future. There had been talk of the great resort and grand hotel around the sulphur springs; others had formed a board to begin plans for creating a University of Nebraska at Saratoga, undoubtedly to enhance the desire to invest in the community. Instead, by October 1857 Saratoga was deserted. Omaha had lost three quarters of its population.

Beadle left Omaha with virtually nothing, but he was luckier than most. He still had his claim to Rock Brook Farm, which he would later sell. He was reunited with his family, which had moved back to
Cooperstown, and he reentered the publishing venture with his brother, Irwin, and Robert Adams.

While Beadle's publishing career has been carefully documented by Albert Johannsen in his two-volume work, *The House of Beadle and Adams*, little is known about Beadle's personal life after his Nebraska experience. He continued to keep a diary throughout the remainder of his life, but his daughter, Sophie, destroyed the volumes upon his death.30

Beadle published 5,258 novels in 718 series, 313 handbooks and guides, and 718 periodical issues.31 *The Youth's Casket* ceased publication in 1857. In 1858 the three partners moved the publishing house to New York City. From 1858 to 1860 Irwin established his own business, a bookstore and publishing house, and published a variety of ten-cent handbooks and songbooks, while Beadle and Adams continued publication of *The Home*. In 1859 they began publishing a series of handbooks and guides for families and youth. They also published a series of songbooks and a series entitled *Speakers*, which ran until 1886. Yet another series called *Dialogues* ran until 1894.

In May 1860 Irwin rejoined his brother and Adams, and the following month the firm launched the Dime Novel series with the publication on 9 June of *Malaeska, The Indian Wife of the White Hunter* by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens. The Dime Novel series, which focused on the adventures, hardships, and struggles of American pioneers carving a civilization out of the wilderness, was actually Irwin's idea, but it was enthusiastically embraced by Beadle, in part perhaps because of his Nebraska Territory experience.

The Dime Novel format was only one of more than fifty different publication formats produced by the publishing house of Beadle and Adams, but it is the one for which Beadle is best remembered. It comprised 321 novels, including *Seth Jones; or, The Captives of the Frontier* (1860); *Bill Biddon, Trapper; or, Life in the North-west* (1860); *The Land Claim. A Tale of the Upper Missouri* (1862); *Myrtle, the Child of the Prairie* (1863); *Quindaro; or, The Heroine of Ft. Laramie. A Tale of the Far West* (1865); *Dusky Dick; or, Old Toby Castor's Great Campaign. A Story of the Last Sioux Outbreak* (1872); and *Dick Darling, the Pony Expressman. A Tale of the Old Salt Lake Trail* (1874). The latter title may well have been
inspired by Beadle’s association with the Dick Darling of his Omaha days. Other formats also continued the western pioneer and adventure themes. Beginning in 1874 the Dime Novel series was succeeded by the New Dime Novel series, most of which were reprints from the first series.

The western motif had attracted a loyal readership by the 1870s. In 1877 the Half-Dime Library was introduced with series including the character Deadwood Dick, whose adventures ran through thirty-three novels until his unfortunate death. Readers’ demands forced the quick appearance of Deadwood Dick Jr., whose adventures ran through another sixty-three issues. Other popular characters included Dick Doom, Dandy Rock, and Buffalo Bill, the latter featured in a series of one hundred novels in the Dime and Half-Dime Library formats.

Whether his wife’s death in 1889 influenced Beadle’s decision to retire is unclear, but that year he decided to return permanently to Cooperstown, where he had spent each summer for many years. His youngest son, Walter, had died sometime earlier. Beadle was sixty-eight years of age in 1889 and a millionaire. During the next five years he stayed at his estate east of Cooperstown, which he had purchased in 1880 and named Glimmerview. He died there on 18 December 1894.\textsuperscript{32}

Notes


6. The best history of the publishing career of Beadle is Albert Johannsen,
11. Beadle last mentions the Trinity House Hotel on 23 April. In his diary entry of 31 May and thereafter he refers to it as the Central House.
12. Diary entry for Friday, 3 April.
16. In his diary entry for 6 April Beadle mistakenly refers to Experience Estabrook as attorney general, a title and role with which he was probably familiar in New York state. As a territory Nebraska did not have an office of attorney general. Estabrook was appointed in 1854 by President Franklin Pierce as U.S. attorney for Nebraska Territory.
of the Missouri River known as Saratoga Bend in 1857. It was a part of the Missouri until the river cut a new channel following a flood in 1877, leaving the bend separated from the river and creating the lake.

32. A Beadle family biography can be found in the Beadle Family Papers at the New York Public Library Rare Books and Manuscripts Division.
Map 2. The area of present-day Omaha that once was Saratoga.

Map 3. The approximate location of Erastus F. Beadle's claim, Rock Brook Farm, on a present-day map of Omaha.
March 9th 1857 — Left home with the intention of being absent longer than any previous trip I had ever taken from my own fireside. Still I had none of those feelings which usually possess me at parting with my nearest and dearest of friends and relatives. I had no realizing sense of any protracted absence more than I would feel on going to my daily business. Days previous to my departure however were days of deep thought and reflection. The simplest acts of my children were unusually interesting to me and remarks that at any other time I would barely notice would make my heart swell and tears start unbidden in my eyes. But when the day for my departure arrived I was suffering with bodily ills of a more serious nature than I was willing to own and my mind was wholly occupied with those ills which were at the time painfull in the extreme. With as little ceremony as possible I bid goodbye to my family and rode down to the depot chatting by the way with Irwin who “wanted to ride down with father.” He was so taken up with his ride he was not inclined to get out of the sleigh and when I had bought my ticket and looked around to bid him good-by he was not to be found. He had remained in the sleigh where I found him bundled up playing the owner of the sleigh, as large as any one. I asked him if he was not going to bid me good-by? “Oh yes!” he says and the words he would have uttered in addition choked in his throat. He kissed me and when I had got a few feet from the sleigh he said Good-bye Pa! with a force to it I could but notice as coming from a full heart.

Only a short time was occupied in reaching and crossing the ferry at
Black Rock and getting under way on the Canada Side. The excitement of changing at Black Rock from cars to boat and boat to cars, had the effect to exhaust me considerable. For me at least, We were fortunate, in having but few passengers. I monopolized two whole seats near the stove and slept some before we reached Paris. At Paris we made the connection with the Great Western Cars. By the time we had reached London I began to regret my having left home in the condition I did. Continued to get sicker until about four o’clock p.m. when my feelings changed as if by Magic and I felt like a new being, ate a hearty supper on the boat crossing from Windsor to Detroit, and except from weakness and lassitude felt as well as I ever did in my life.

At Detroit called on Mr. Frazer who gave me a pass to Michigan City. Got a seat in the cars near the stove. Left at 9.20 and slept some of the way to Marshal.

Tuesday 10th  Walked from the Depot up to the Marshal House and went to bed a three o’clock A. M. Slept but little, at seven breakfasted and soon after got a buggy from the livery to take me up four Miles on the plank. Had a pleasant but cold ride, found cousin’s family all well. Cousin Joel Mack has a fine farm of 160 acres a good large frame house and is very comfortably situated, has a family of six children the two oldest boys who are married and living away by themselves the two next daughters one 20 and the other 16 years of age, a boy 13 and the baby a girl of five years completes his list of children. His daughter of 16 is the largest of the children is a perfect picture of My Sister Sybil when I last saw her and the baby is just another such a person as was Sister Emily at her age. The more I saw them the more I saw a resemblance both in looks and actions, but I do not believe Abigail the one resembling Sybil will live long she has a hard cough which I believe will prove fatal. My stay at Cousin Joels was a pleasant one. Cousin is a great speller and gramarian is a boy with his children and joins in their studies. His Wife is just such a farmers wife as others I have seen.

The Most interesting member of the family however was Aunt Abigail. In most respects she bears her eighty-five winters remarkably well, in walking she uses a cain and stands in a stooping position exactly as does Mrs. Hodge. She will weigh about 175 lbs. her weight in health
was 200. She some resembles Uncle Chauncy in feature, but she has the eyes and nose of My father. I spent the day wholly with her most agreeably and instructive. She would ask me many questions about my Uncles and Aunts, and in a few hours ask much the same questions. Then she would remember she had asked before and received the same answer. When I informed her that all her Mothers and first step mothers children were dead she would remark with tears and a trembling voice “Yes they are all gone not one of my old acquaintance is living all are in their graves and why am I left? Yes and I have buried two husbands and eight of my ten children.” She could not speak of the past without tears, not even of the days when she was a little girl and went to the village school of Colchester Con. which was about a half mile from her fathers house and Shop. When she spoke of the death of her first stepmother she wept like a child. She was the only Mother she ever knew and was one of the best of Mothers to her. “A few days before she died” says Aunt “She nursed Flavel then but ten Months old, kissed him and handed him to me and said she should never nurse him again, gave him to me as my child and said I must have him sleep with me and be kind and good to him for he never would know what it was to have a Mother to care for him and I always felt he was my child.” When Aunt told this she would manifest as much grief as she could have done the day her Mother died. Her grief was monitory as that of a child.

Her bodily health and apetite is as good as it ever was and she can eat as wholesome food, she is but very little care, occupies her own corner with her own chair and table she used when young eats by herself and lives within herself, reads but little except her bible that is her all. She read over the old family Record of uncle James a number of times and expressed no little surprise she should have remembered her own age. She was pleased to have me ask her for her degareotype but said she had no money to get it taken with but would go up and sit for it had never had one taken.

Wednesday 11  Slept comfortably last night and for the first time in years between woollen sheets in the regular oldfashioned style. After a late breakfast Cousin harnessed to a cutter we helped Aunt in and started for Marshal. Cousin was the first setler where he now lives, his team made
the first waggon track where now the planck road runs. The vicinity is thickly settled with wealthy farmers and fine farm buildings. Aunt bore her ride well walked up and down stairs without assistance. The artist who took her picture does not understand his business and made a picture I did not fancy. If Mr. Evans had had such a subject he would have done it justice but a poor operator a poor subject poor tools poor stock altogether what more could be expected.

When all was ready to start, Aunt comfortably seated in the sleigh, she took hold of me to bid me good bye and thank me for having her picture taken. She said “When you write to your mother and your wife and children remember me with love to them, remember me to my brothers and sisters living and Erastus remember your Creator!” Aunt has been a very intelligent woman for her time or for the times in which she has lived. I wish I could be where she was a month.

Leaving the daguerrean room I went to the depot learned that the cars had run off the track and were three hours behind time did not get away until Six P. M. and reached Michigan City at a little past eleven the same night, but 20 Minutes too late for the Cars the next train was to leave the next day at ten A. M. I accordingly went to the Jewell house and to bed.

On leaving Marshall a Novelty presented itself, in the form of a little boy about Irwin’s age and hight but more chubby he followed the business of making speeches on the cars and then passing around his hat. He understood the business to perfection. When he first commenced his hat off and his hair brussled up I thought him crazy but soon discovered my mistake. He had a powerful voice and could controll it like an orritor every one could here him in the car and the speed was 30 miles an hour. A new way to raise the wind.

Thursday 12 A clear and stinging cold morning. Time hanging heavily I walked out to see the town as soon as the sun was up sufficiently to warm the atmosphere. Michigan City is in Indiana on the shoar of Lake Michigan is the Junction of the new Albany and Salem R. R. is a fine place for a town but can never amount to much, as a city. It is somewhat protected from the winds of the lake by very high bluffs rising near two or three hundred feet. These bluffs have some shrubbery and scattering
oaks, and covered with sand from the lake which is thrown up in drifts by the high and almost constant blowing wind. The present covering of the bluffs is composed of about equal parts of snow and sand, and this morning was froze as hard as ice still I succeeded in reaching the top of the highest bluff by pulling myself up by the shrubs and crawling on my hands and knees in real Mount blanc style. From the top of the bluff I could see for one hundred miles in all directions and could easily imagine myself one of the daring adventurers of Mt. Blanc itself on a small scale.

The time passed as easily as I could expect and at 10.10 A.M. I left on the cars in a direct South course. For the first ninety miles the country was mostly prairie and wet at that, and the most untractible country I ever saw it is a “Hoosier” state in earnest. The buildings were nothing but the poorest kind of logg huts, and unless you saw some human animals you would not think they were inhabited, all they raise is corn and pork. This also constitutes their sole diet spiced with the “shakes” without which they think they could not live they make as much calculations about having the shakes fall and spring as they to to have the seasons themselves come and go in fact they could not live if they did not have the shakes half the time. Whole fields of corn were only cut up and stood out all winter, on account of the shakes taking them too soon in many places they were drawing in their corn.

Near many of the logg huts, some of which were deserted I noticed small enclosures formed by driving short stakes in the ground a few inches apart and but two or three feet high. These varied in size from ten to one hundred feet square. Internally they presented no different appearance from the immediate vicinity which convinced me they were not gardens. On inquiry I was told they were graveyards. Many of which contained whole familys. These yards were usually in a few rods of the house and in many locations were the only show of improvement or civilization.

Every hours progress we made we could see we was fast leaving the vicinity of snow, and when we reached Lafayette at 3.30 P.M. there was but very little snow to be seen. About 2 o'clock we saw black birds and Meadow larks and soon after leaving Lafayette large flocks of prairie hens.
At 7 P. M. we reached Indianapolis where we were obliged to wait until Eleven P. M. before starting for Cincinnati. This evening was a delightful one not cold enough to require winter over coats and seemed like an April night at home.

Friday 13  Reached Cincinnati five o’clock this Morning and put up at the “Burett House” had an early breakfast made a schedule of my business for the day and at nine o’clock had all my business that called me to Cincinnati done. Got My boots by Express from Buffalo found them too large by two or three sizes so I am almost bootless.

Nine o’clock commenced searching for James Pennington searched all day but without success. A marked change in the atmosphere between this place and where I was yesterday morning. There was good sleighing and the thermometer near Zero here they were wattering broadway to keep down dust.

Cincinnati at this season of the year is remarkably brisk the principal exports I saw was whisky pork and ready made buildings which is a great business here. The levee is litteraly crowded with boxes, barrels, carts drays &c and every steamer crowding on freight altogether it is the busyst place I ever saw.

At five o’clock P. M. Took passage on board the steam Packet Memphis bound for Memphis and Hickman Tenn. The officers of the boat protested against the large amount of freight the proprietors put on, as there was but a little over five feet water on the bars and the boat was loaded down to a draught of near seven feet. In this state we left at ten o’clock at night soon after I had retired.

Saturday 14  Had made good headway during the night but about ten o’clock A. M. when within 20 miles of Louisville we grounded, and remained there until ten at night. Could only get off by getting two flat boats and taking out some one hundred ton to lighten her. These flat boats are kept along the river for this purpose and are called lighters. The bed of the Ohio is hard gravel and a boat can not work off as on the sand bars of the Missouri. We have a variety of passengers some fifty in all mostly Southerners they all take me for a Southerner. We have a “Nigger” trader on board.
Sunday 15 — A delightfull day. More like the Middle of May in Buffalo than the 15th of March. It has been a day of anxious watching for Captain crew and passengers, as the barge from Cincinnati has been hourly expected but has failed to reach us. I have walked over the principal parts of the City in Company with a young man from Philadelphia. Louisville like Cincinnati presents a very dingy appearance owing to burning so much coal. The Streets are wide and well supplied with shade trees which are much needed in the summer which are very warm here. Towards Evening we walked up in the vicinity of the best residence which was quite a treat to Me doors and windows were thrown open, and Ladies were out on the steps and balconies with nothing on their heads, and dressed in late spring dresses. It was in great contrast with the previous Sunday in Buffalo which was like mild winter.

We saw during the day a number of funerals. The hearses in use here are glazed on both sides and ends rendering the coffin wholly visible. The Hearse is painted black and trimed with silver on the sides the top is ornamented with four clusters of Prince of Wales plumes on each side. It is altogether quite a showy vehicle and is used for the poor classes as well as the rich.

Louisville has a large number of coloured people about 3000 of which are slaves. They are probably cared better for than any city in the Union.

Monday 16 — Last evening was very pleasantly spent in the Cabin. We have a large number of passengers mostly Southerners a fair proportion of Ladies all of which could sing and play on the piano. We had a sociable time. Those of us that were married showed the degareotypes of our wives and children. I took the premium. They said they look like Northerners, supposing I was a Southerner. They said they were “right fine” looking and a “heap prettier” than I was. I knew they only wanted to flatter me and took it for what it was worth.

An affray took place in the forward cabin on Saturday Night that came near resulting in the loss of life. The parties were from Mississippi were engage in card playing until a late hour and drinking freely used their revolvers and bowie knives. They think no more of shooting at each other than the people North do of taking a round with the fist.

I got acquainted with a number of gentlemen from the South some
merchants others professional men. They were extremely warm hearted. They consider the use of the revolver as honorable a way of settling a dispute or punishing an insult as any plan that can be adopted. The strong Man has not there the advantage. It is their education and they succeed in making out a quite a case in their favor.

On going to bed last evening we were in hopes to be on our way again before morning as the barge was still expected. Morning came however and we were still at the levee in Louisville. My patience was exhausted. This was the day we was to have been in Memphis, and now the Captain told us it would take three to four days after the barge came to get to Memphis. I went up town after breakfast and found I could take the cars to St. Louis one dollar less than at Cincinnati. I returned to the boat and the Captain refunded all of my passage money except $2.50. So that it cost me only $1.50 extra to go by Louisville. Many of the passengers left the boat as I did while others remained. I should have remained if I could have spared the time as I never was on a steamer where they lived as well as they did on the Memphis. The boat is noted for the table it sets.

At Noon there was no news from the barge. The R. R. omnibuss called at the boat for me took me to the ferry thence to the depot of the New Albany and Salem R. R. and at 1.50 P. M. We left, reached Greencastle behind time but the cars waited five minutes enabling us to get aboard. Changed cars again at Terre Haute and Vincenes.

*Tuesday 17.* — From Vincennes reached Sandoval about Eight o’clock A. M. Found no Cars to Centralia until one in the afternoon. I accordingly checked My baggage to Centralia and started on foot the distance Six Miles. I found it a very pleasant walk indeed. Most of the way was prairie. One grove however of about one mile was a pleasant variety. It was filled with birds which made me halt a number of times to listen to the variety of noises they made. Among the number was a Mocking bird and the Cardinal Grosebeak or Red Bird. Neither of them get as far North as New York. I have seen No robins yet.

I came in Sight of Centralia when about two Miles distant from the town. My imagination located Harriets residence and all of the
particulars. I had it in the south east part of the village on the open prairie without a yard fence or any thing of the Kind. When near enough to distinguish the buildings I selected one, a Story and a half white house with two conspicuous side windows visible one and a half miles off. That is the place I remarked aloud and laughed heartily all to myself. I ploded on into the heart of the town, at the depot I inquired where Hugh Baily lived. Was informed that it was in the ‘Coponys Row’ a little east. Next enquired at a Stoor and was pointed out the very house I had selected on first coming in sight of the town. I shall have to believe in Spiritualism I think after this. Entered Harriets house as familiar as though I belonged there, and without nocking. I believe she jumped some and seemed pleased to see Me. They are living as comfortable as can be considering the house is not finished. Baily soon came in to dinner and was heartily glad to see me. I left with him at two o’clock and rode on his engine down to Cairo got there at 8 P. M. Tried to get passage to Memphis but found the fare $10. I backed out sudden. Supposed it but $8. Got into the mud up to my knees. Went with Mr. Baily to bed.

**Wednesday 18** — Left Cairo on my return with Mr. Baily at 6 A. M. Reached Centralia at Noon. Set by the fire. Visited and played with the baby during the balance of the day.

**Thursday 19** — A warm and pleasant day. Baily drawed fence lumber and had his garden ploughed. I walked about the Town. Wrote and slept some and got well rested. Centralia is more of a town than I expected to find. Has some 1500 population. Harriet has a fine baby as any one has. Its hair is red and I believe always will be. It has a bad cold and I fear threatened with the croop. Mr. Baily and Hat. would not hear to my leaving under a week at least, and seemed dissatisfied when I decided to leave the next day. I fared sumptuously. Had a pressing invitation to have my family come out and stop a month or even three of them before going West.

**Friday 20** — Left Centralia half past twelve at night. Hat. set up and
had a breakfast ready for me and Mr. Baily as he had to go out to Cairo again at two o’clock. Left the baby very poorly.

Harriet Keeps a girl a big dog and hens. I think if any one takes comfort it is them. They are as loving as two kittens.

We reached St. Louis between five and six in the Morning. At The Barnum House I found a letter from Frank and Robert Adams but very much to my surprise not a line from wife or children. After breakfast went down to the boats. No boats were going further up than St. Joseph. Ice reported 30 inches thick at Omaha and teams crossing. This presented a dubious aspect. I had hurried to get away and hurried all the way and here I am two weeks too early. This gave me the blues a little and I Knew not what course to pursue. In this dilemma I went in search of my Cousin. Found two brothers of Cousin Benjamin. They were Alfred and James H. The former has a wife and nine children. James has a wife but has lost all his children. He is two years younger than I am. Took dinner and went up to supper and spent a short time in the evening.

Returning to My Hotel I had decided to go back to Harriets and stop a week or ten days until the ice was out of the river and I could get a passage to Omaha. With this determination I went to bed.

Saturday 21 — Arose early, examined the register of arrivals and found the name of G. W. Brown of Laurence. He had come in the afternoon previous from Chicago but was not yet up. I took breakfast and then went to his room. And our meeting was decidedly a joyous to both. He insisted on my going to Laurence With him and make his house my home until I could take passage up the river. His wife would be in from Alton in time to go out with us. I accordingly abandoned going back to Harriets, and set about making preparations to accompany Mr Brown into Kansas. At 2 P. M. we left in the Cars for Jefferson City where we were to meet the R. R. Company’s daily line of steamers for Weston and intermediate points. Our tickets taking us through.

Our party from St. Louis consisted of Mr Brown and his wife, A Mrs. Leavett and her two daughters ten and six years of age. We had a very pleasant time on the cars. Mr. Brown Fathered one of Mrs. L.’s children and I took Mrs Brown under My care. Mrs. Leavett and family were
among the number that were driven out of Leavenworth last summer, and lost all they had. They are now located at Wyandot, where Mr. Leavett now is. Mrs. L. is going out to join him. Mrs. Leavett is one of the fire brands of the freestates party. Her tongue is constantly busy. She has been east making speeches and getting subscribers for Mr. Brown's paper. She has become desperate and if necessity requires it she will take up the musket and revolver before she will be again driven away from her home. She is ready for an argument with any one even on spiritualism. Mrs Brown is a more quiet woman and looks like a person that has been tried as she has been.

We were informed at St Louis that the two boats were usually crowded, so that when the whistle blew at Jefferson City every person had their carpet sack in hand to make a spring for the boat when the cars should stop. And when they did stop down they went in a mass like a flock of sheep tumbling over each other in the dark, (it was eight o'clock at night). But lo and behold not a berth stool or plank was unoccupied. The daily boats due were aground up the river, and the one in, the New Lucy had been damaged and could not leave until the next day in the afternoon when her damages would probably be repaired. No boat had been in for three days that belonged to the line and two trains of cars per day loaded as thick as they could stand, had poured into the city, and as soon as the New Lucy reached her landing she was swarmed and every room taken. Our chances were to hang up on a hook. Finding the Capt. he proved to be no less a person than the Pilot of the Wm. Campbell the boat I came down on last fall. He recognized me at once and fixed out two rooms which were given up to the Ladies and Mr Brown. Next in order Mr. Brown and Myself went up town to get supper. Not having dinner we felt the want of supper. We sat down to a table. That was about all. Got a cup of cold coffee a small biscuit one cracker and that was all. Charges only 50 cents each. Returning to the boat Mr Brown made a miss step and tumbled into a gulph about five feet deep with a Mud bottom, tore his clothes some and hurt him a little, but not sufficient to prevent us from laughing heartily. We scraped mud for some time then he ventured on the boat. I walked in front to screen him from to conspicuous a view. When reaching the ladies cabin we quickened our pace again. Mr Brown met with a casualty. Run his
head against one of the branches of the chandelier. Nocked off the globe smashing it in a thousand pieces. Every eye was turned in the direction. There he stood watching the fragments and covered with mud. A more ludicrous scene I have seldom beheld and if he had killed himself I could not help but laugh. He got into his room and there remained for the night.

About this time the porters comenced turning down the chairs along along the state room doors completely blocking up the entrance or exits through the door. This being done they brough in a lot of Mattresses arranging them along one end on the chair backs to serve as a pillow. I took the hint and made fast to one. Then came a general strife to see who should have a bed. About one half were accommodated. Some had a mattress some a pillow others a blanket. Covering about two thirds of cabin floor, one would laugh another sing and a third curse, those that could get no chance to sleep done all they could to prevent others from sleeping and kickt up a general uproar until they got exhausted and we at last got to sleep. I was sore from laughing at the vanity of disposition, one was for fun another kept up a constant growl. Those however who said least fared best. I have often heard people tell of a crowd, but this beat all.

_Sunday 22_ — This morning another amusing scene was enacted which will probably be repeated three times per day during the trip. There are three hundred passengers on board and only table room for some Seventy five. Who was to be first at table was the all engrossing Subject as soon as preparations were commenced for breakfast. It was with difficulty that the waiters could get around to put the dishes on the tables. I saw at once that those without ladies must of necessity fare slim. I accordingly secured Mrs. Leavett for meal times which was for me very fortunate. The table had to be cleared and set again four times before all the passengers were served. The fare is of the poorest kind I ever saw on a steamboat even at the first tables. Females were in great demand at meal times even little girls that went free were engaged for the trip in order to secure a seat at the first table. We have two large and very amusing men by the name of Martin from Flint Mich who are brothers. They take girls of 11 and 9 years to the table as their ladies. We are all
becoming acquainted and are anticipating a pleasant time. On showing
my daguerreotypes Mr Martin recollected seeing Mate somewhere. It was
at Flint. This is how I became acquainted with him, he knows Lib. and
Cook. He says Mrs. Cook is one of the finest women in Flint and has
the most Friends of any one in the city and that I ought to be proud of
her sister for a wife.

Mr. Brown and myself have had a stroll about the city. The town
does not amount to much except as the Capital of Mo. Our boat was
repaired about noon but we were obliged to wait until the three o’clock
cars came in as one of the pilots had gone down to St. Louis. Our steam
was up ready to start as soon as the pilot should come on board so as
to prevent the rush of passengers from the train. They came however
like an avalanche covering our forecastle as thick as they could stand.
They were ordered off on another boat of the same line going out the
next day. Among the crowd of new comers I saw and spoke with three
Buffalo men, Lawyer Grey Mr. Metz and a young man whom I cannot
call by name. Was once a clerk at Calendars.

During the day I have made the acquaintance of a Mr Smith who
together with his wife is going to Omaha to establish themselves in
business. He is a small man about the size of Mr. Cook and of the same
business. His wife is a very tall woman, reminds me of Mrs. Newman.
She is a graduate of some of our eastern seminaries and has herself been
for a term of years a principal. She hopes to be enabled to establish an
institution of learning at Omaha. I think she would be just the woman
for such an enterprise. I shall use my influence. I should be ready then
to take my family to Omaha.

On the arrival of the cars which brought up our pilot, this Mr.
Smith went up to look after some baggage which came on the train. He
succeeded in getting the baggage nearly to the boat when it put out,
and would not return. You may imagine the feelings of his wife who was
obliged to remain on this boat while her husband must stop over a day
and come on the next boat. There are a number on this boat going to
Omaha some of which will stop with her at Weston until her husband
arrives.

Some seven miles above Jefferson City is the worst sand-bar on the
route and as we expected or feared we got fast on it in company with
other boats some had been there 48 hours, this was not a very pleasant prospect for us. We made the best of it however and concluded to sleep on it. This night I succeeded in getting a state room in company with Mr. Carver of Buffalo. (He is the man with whom Desdimona boarded.) He had a room for himself and his two sons, his two sons slept together giving me a birth to myself which I appreciate. I could not retire until I had seen the sport in the Main cabin of staking or marking out claims and securing a place to straiten out in for the night. This evening we had a fine thunder shower.

Monday 23 — Early this morning one of the Steamers on the barr, the “Star of the West” got off and passed up. Soon after this the “Col. Crossman” which left St. Louis the day before we did, and which we passed on the cars, came up and crossed the barr without difficulty cheering loudly as they passed us. The “Crossman” stoped a Mile up to wood. In the mean time we came up along side of them to wood also. In swinging around we came in collision with the Crossman and smashed in our wheelhouse on the same side the previous injury was sustained. Again we were disable, and when the Crossman left we lashed to the shoar for repairs where we remained in an uneasy state of anxiety until after eight o’clock at night.

The early part of the day was rainy. The afternoon was dry and pleasant. The scenery on the shore grand. Mr. Brown and myself invited some ladies to attempt to gain the top of a rock which we had been admiring all the day. It is by far the loftiest rock I have yet seen. It towed far above the loftiest trees. On the side next the river it was perpendicular over 200 feet high and scalloped out like a chimney and for want of a better name we called it “Chimney rock.” We ascended by climbing up the bank which in the rear of the rock extended to within 50 feet of the top. We then got up one at a time to a secure foothold and pulled the others after us, reaching the top we gave three cheers for free Kansas. Fifty persons could stand upon the top of the rock, our company consisted of some eight or ten. I did not venture to look off at the brink as others did, at first I was too timid to stand erect. We gathered some moss as relics and carved our names in the rock and on the limbs of trees along the side of the path by which we ascended. We
all agreed that our visit to the top of “Chimney rock” had well paid us for the delay we were subjected to by the accident to our boat.

When I took the cars at Sandoval on Friday morning at one o’clock, every seat was occupied. Noticing a gentleman whose countenance pleased me, I asked and received a share of his seat. We conversed most of the way to St Louis. His manner of speaking was exceedingly pleasant and he bore a striking resemblance to Uncle Chauncy except he was not corpulent his height is Six feet six inches, and he is one of the noblest looking men I ever saw. He was an old resident of Missouri. I was exceedingly loth to part with him as I did at the ferry opposite St. Louis, and equally pleased to meet him again at “The Barnum House.” In the afternoon of the same day I again met him on the levvy as he was about to take the cars for Jefferson City en route home. We parted here as old friends neither knowing the others name. On Sunday Morning at Jefferson City we again met. He had been waiting for the boat to be repaired. Was stoping in the city with his daughter, was going up on the same boat, had with him a niece and a little slave he was taking up to a friend and neighbor of his.

I think I have never met with a man that pleased me as well. I also think I have learned much that will be of service to me in the way of business in the West. My friend’s name is Samuel C. Major is one of the wealthy and most prominent men of Missouri.

This evening Mr Major and Myself were called upon by the ladies, who had held a meeting and voted to invite the Captain and Clerk to visit them in the ladies Cabin, with a deposition from said ladies to transmit the vote to the Captain, which we did, feeling flattered by the compliment, and reported favorable. This involved the necessity of an introduction which could only be done in general terms as we were not acquainted with but few of the ladies on board, by Name. The evening passed pleasantly, with another thunder shower to close the day. At nine o’clock a dive was made for the mattress, claims taken, and in the general melee, in which some got kick and and scratches we went to bed. Our friend was obliged to stretch his six feet six on the Cabin floor. Something he was not used to.

Tuesday 24 — But little progress made during the night. My friend
Major pointed out the burial place of Daniel Boon and told me that his niece on the boat was a Great Grand Daughter of Daniel Boon, as yet I had not spoken with her. I asked an introduction, which was given with an apology that it had not been done before. I considered it a great treat to be in conversation with a direct descendent of the “old Hunter of Kentucky.” Miss Boon is a woman of intelligence and education of a high order, born and brought up in Missouri. She seems to inherit a large share of that love for the wildness of nature that characterized her Grandfather. She had learned from her Uncle that I was from the state of New York. She asked me many questions about the scenery of N. Y. particularly that of Niagara, St Lawrence, Lake George the Hudson and the scenery described by Cooper. She had only visited the part of Kentucky where her Great Grandfather lived, and a small portion of Tennessee. She would talk of wild scenery different from any one I ever conversed with. And I regret I did not make her acquaintance earlier. She and her Uncle left the boat this Morning at Eleven. On leaving the boat they bade me a friendly good bye wishing me a pleasant journey and asking to be remembered to my wife and children whose likeness they saw.

The water in the river has been rising slowly to day and our progress is rapid for Missouri traveling. Wild geese are in great Abundance. The shores and sand-bars are covered by the thousands. The air is becoming more chilly.

Wednesday 25 — The water continues to rise in the river. We passed the Col. Crossman about one o’clock this morning and are fast making up for our delay in repairing the boat. About 8 o’clock we came upon a deer that was on a sand-bar. He made quick steps in the direction of the nearest timber land taking to the water part of the way.

After dinner we passed the “Star of the West” that passed us while on the bar Monday Morning. She left St. Louis three days in advance of us. We are the fastest craft on the river and pass everything afloat. About this time the Porter came around ordering those stopping at Kansas City to Select their baggage. This was the first intimation we had of our coming to the vicinity of our separation. We had been jammed into our cabin like stage coach passengers and most of us had become acquainted
and I presume our separation was much as it is on ship board after a long and perilous voyage. Our passengers were from all parts of the Union but mostly from Western New York, among our passengers was an officer of the Steam Ship Baltic who had been on her every trip since she was built. He is so taken up with our Western country he has almost determined to locate her. He had no idea such people went to Kansas. Mr. Brown hired two printers and one young lady to go and work for him at Lawrence. He made me liberal offers. I told him I must first try Omaha. He would pay me my price if I would go with him. He is coining money. Has 7000 subscribers. The greater part of our passengers were bound for Kansas and mostly for Lawrence and vicinity. All of the Kansas Emigrants they charged extra on their baggage weighing every piece. The Nebraska passengers were allowed to go on with all they had a mind to. I must say I think the best persons on the boat were among the Nebraska passengers. We reached Kansas City Mo. about Eleven at night when we parted with some 40 or 50 of our passengers. A few miles further on is Wyandot where Mrs. Leavett family and others got off. By this time the favored ones got rooms for the balance of the night.

A blackleg traveling on the boat was a nuisance. He swindled some two hundred dollars out of different persons that played with him. One young man lost thirty dollars all he had and then offered to pawn his watch. This was told to me. I did not see it feeling more at home in the ladies cabin. I spent most of the time there. During the evening this blackleg insulted a man who was about getting off. He called him to an account and challenged him to shoot with him on the hurrycain deck. Arrangements were being made and I had made up my mind to see the thing done. I could have seen the blackleg shot down with as good grace as I would shoot a chicken if I was hungry. It would have been doing a blessed service for the county. The friends of the rascal settled the difficulty.

I have become acquainted with J. Johnson of the Johnson House N.Y. City. He is going to Omaha with a view of erecting a fine hotel if every thing suits him. He is a fine man. None of your swelling bragadasius but a true gentleman. He will be a worthy and useful acquittance to Omaha should he take up his residence there.