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The Kansas Goldmines: How to get to Pike's Peak and what you will find getting there

New York Times

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THE KANSAS GOLD MINES.

How to Get to Pike's Peak, and What You Will Find on Getting There.

The following narrative of a trip to the gold mines of Western Kansas is sent us by an intelligent gentleman, who went out expressly to satisfy himself about the existence of gold, previous to making any definite business arrangements to move thither. It embodies interesting and valuable information, and is perhaps as reliable as any that has appeared in the journals of the country :

To the Editor of the New-York Times :

Being temporarily engaged in business at Kansas City, in Western Missouri, last Winter, and constantly hearing reports of the most flattering character about the gold discoveries upon Cherry Creek and near Pike's Peak, myself and two old residents of Kansas City decided on visiting the mines and ascertain for ourselves what truth there was in the reports that were constantly appearing, not only in the border papers, but also in the leading papers East, representing these gold fields to be fully as extensive as those found in the Sierra Nevada range. We accordingly furnished ourselves with riding and pack mules, and, without any supply of provisions, we left Kansas City on the morning of the 1st of December, 1858, taking the old Santa Fé road which leads out from the Missouri river over the only divide that stretches over the great plains for a distance of four hundred.

Details of the *make* of this road will be interesting and valuable information to emigrants who have enrolled themselves as gold hunters, and they shall be furnished.

Brevity is not only the soul of wit, but it is the pith of narrative; little will, therefore, be said in this article about our *en route* affairs.

Finding on the road plenty of food for our stock and regular old-timed country inns for ourselves, as far out as Counsel Grove, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles, we at that place supplied ourselves with provisions and forage sufficient to last us to Allison's Rancho, which is distant from Kansas City about two hundred and fifty miles. We here found plenty of corn for our mules, and bacon, flour, sugar, coffee, and other prairie *entrées* for ourselves.

As WILLIS and CLARK say, upon most every page in their narrative of their exploration of the Missouri River, after getting our supplies "we proceeded on." At the ranch, or rather a short distance beyond it, we left the mail road to Santa Fé, and followed up or along the valley of Pawnee Fork, taking in to the old road again at the Big Timbers. We here rested for one day, when "we proceeded on" to Bent's Fort, shaking hand with that old pioneer of the mountains, BULL BENT, in just fifteen days after leaving Kansas City. Stopping over night with the Colonel, and rising in the morning with heads gently throbbing with the Colonel's wine-cellar hospitality, we again "proceeded on," arriving at the waters of Cherry Creek on the eighteenth day out from Kansas City. We were near the head of the Creek, when we found, within a distance of two miles up and down the stream, about fifty miners encamped, among whom were some of our personal acquaintances—Mr. JAS. WINCHESTER, JOHN S. PRICE, of Kansas City, and DAVID KELLGG, of Chicago.

It was the dead of Winter, and of course but little mining, or even prospecting, could be done. However, we went round to the different cabins of the miners, and were shown more or less gold dust at each place. We estimated that we found among the miners upon that portion of the creek, from \$1,500 to \$1,800 worth of "dust." We had then seen enough (all of us having had experience in the mines of California) to satisfy us that the Pike's Peak gold region was no humbug.

The most important object of our mission was accomplished, viz: We had satisfied ourselves that gold existed,—that there was enough of it to justify a large emigration to go and dig for it. We then spent five days among the mountains and in prospecting upon other streams. We found more or less gold everywhere, and what satisfied us more than all else, we found the gold region to be a *fac simile* of the gold country about the Yuba and Feather rivers of California. We found further, forests of pines, sites for mills, with water power, a rich and extensive country for all branches of agriculture, and the whole region abounding with game; in short we had seen enough to *know* that Western Kansas possessed more undeveloped wealth than any *territory* west of the Mississippi. Without further delay "we proceeded" home, arriving in Kansas City on the 9th of January, 1859, having been absent just forty days.

The writer cannot in this connection refrain from speaking somewhat at length about the old Santa Fé road. This is a natural road—the best natural road upon the American continent. And it is not possible for people unacquainted with the geography of the great plains of America to understand what is meant by a *natural road* without further information.

The track of the buffalo as he roams over the plains and through the mountains is a natural road, and somewhere Col. BENTON has said that buffaloes are the best engineers upon the continent. If a horse, an ox, a mule, or any other animal is turned loose upon the plains and wanders any great distance from home, the road they take is a natural road. They avoid crossing streams, they avoid ravines and all other obstructions to their march. If a road across the plains is marked out by *man*, and that road crosses any considerable number of streams, then it will never be the route of mountain men, as they set out with their trains of heavy loaded wagons to travel to the mountains. On these plains *all* the streams flow through an alluvial soil; they make steep and abrupt banks, and always run deep, no matter how small the stream may be. Having no rock or gravel bottoms, the current is constantly washing away the earth and deepening the channel. For this reason, a road over the plains must be upon a divide—that is, along the high ground where the water is flowing either way from the road-bed. Such a road we found this great Santa Fé road to be, and inasmuch as nine-tenths of the wagons owned by the men engaged in the commerce of the interior pass over this road, and inasmuch as it is the road originally made by the buffalo, there can be no doubt but that it is the best road for the gold-hunting emigration.

The road, however, from Nebraska City to the mines is perhaps equally as good as the Santa Fé road, and is undoubtedly the best road of the two for the emigration from Minnesota, Iowa, North Missouri and Wisconsin to take, but all emigrants east of the Mississippi will, without doubt, find the Santa Fé road the most direct and best route to take. Packets and trains of the Pacific Railroad are leaving St. Louis every day for the Upper Missouri, and when once at that point, it will be no difficult matter for the emigration to forward themselves to Independence, Kansas City or Westport, and prepare themselves for a trip across the plains, which, when they arrive at the mines, they will find to be more of a pleasant trip than a tour of hardship and privation.

C. C. SPALDING.