



*"Observation of Sun with Sextant, Camp Floyd, Utah Terr," late 1858 or early 1859. In this photograph, Lieut. J. L. Kirby Smith (seated at right) demonstrates how he sights a sextant to calculate the angle between the sun and the horizon for determining their latitude. Meanwhile, William Lee (at left) is recording the exact time of the measurement using a chronometer. The expedition's taxidermist, Charles McCarthy, is standing at center observing this important mapping operation. By Samuel C. Mills and Edward Jagiello.*

# "SHADOWY FIGURES ABOUT WHOM LITTLE IS KNOWN"

*Artists of the Simpson Expedition, 1858-59*

BY EPHRIAM D. DICKSON III

In 1858-59, Captain James H. Simpson of the U.S. Army's Corps of Topographical Engineers surveyed several new roads in Utah Territory, including a wagon route across the Great Basin desert from Camp Floyd to central California. This new shortcut was soon utilized by the Overland mail and stage line, the Pony Express, the transcontinental telegraph, as well as by many westbound emigrant wagon trains. Less well known are Simpson's pioneering efforts to experiment with the new emerging technology of photography as a tool for documenting the landscapes across which he traveled.<sup>1</sup>

In the preface to his official exploration report, Simpson acknowledged the officers and civilians who had served on his expedition, including three artists. He especially thanked Mr. H. V. A. Von Beckh "for the original sketches of scenery" and noted that "a couple of gentlemen accompanied me as photographers."<sup>2</sup> Several years later in writing about the

1 Barbara Beeton, "James Hervey Simpson in the Great Basin," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 28, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 28-43; W. Turrentine Jackson, *Wagon Roads West: A Study of Federal Road Surveys and Construction in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1846-1869* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 146-57. For a modern retracing of Simpson's 1859 route, see Jesse G. Petersen, *A Route for the Overland Stage: James H. Simpson's 1859 Trail Across the Great Basin* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2008).

2 James H. Simpson, *Report of Explorations across the Great Basin of the Territory of Utah for a Direct Wagon Route from Camp Floyd to Genoa, in Carson Valley, in 1859*





Figures 1–2. Samuel C. Mills (left) and Edward Jagiello (right) were the two civilian photographers hired to accompany the Simpson Expedition to Utah in 1858. These self-portraits were probably taken at Camp Floyd in their temporary studio in early 1859.

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preferred railroad route across the continent, Simpson again made reference to his original survey team, this time listing his photographers by name: C. C. Mills and his assistant Edward Jagiello.<sup>3</sup> But since then, scholars have struggled to identify exactly who these three artists were. Art historians noted that Von Beckh may have been a soldier from Camp Floyd.<sup>4</sup> Photographic historians Peter Palmquist and Thomas Kailbourn searched for years to uncover

biographical details about Mills or Jagiello, finally describing the two men as simply “shadowy figures about whom little is known.”<sup>5</sup>

The author’s discovery of previously unknown records from the Simpson Expedition helps finally solve the mystery of the artists’ identities. Simpson’s original field journals, letter books, and survey notebooks were found buried within the records of the Corps of Engineers at the National Archives, while the Department of Treasury files provided his receipts and pay accounts. Simpson sent dispatches to his hometown newspaper, and additional research located brief accounts and additional photographs by both his photographer and assistant

(Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876). His original handwritten final manuscript of this report survives at the Library of Congress.

- 3 J. H. Simpson, *The Shortest Route to California* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1869), 32. This document contained a typographical error regarding Mill’s initials, one that subsequently led historians astray.
- 4 Robert S. Olpin, Ann W. Orton and Thomas F. Rugh, *Painters of the Wasatch Mountains* (Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2005), 22; Barbara Lekisch, *Embracing Scenes About Lakes Tahoe and Donner: Painters, Illustrators & Sketch Artists, 1855–1915* (Layfayette, CA: Great West Books, 2003), 172–73.

- 5 Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary, 1840–1865* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 323, 402–4. Mills and Jagiello’s photographs were first published in William P. MacKinnon, “125 Years of Conspiracy Theories: Origins of the Utah Expedition,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 52 (Summer 1984): 212–30.



photographer, including their self portraits (figs. 1–2). Finally, the unpublished diary and a set of drawings belonging to a Seventh Infantry officer who socialized with Simpson at Camp Floyd were found, providing additional details about the sketch artist. Using this wealth of new primary sources, this article will introduce readers to Simpson's three artists and help place their body of work within the larger historical context, as the army's scientific corps experimented with the innovation of photography.<sup>6</sup>

During the two decades prior to the Civil War, most federal funds for western exploration were allocated to the U.S. Army, in particular to the Corps of Topographical Engineers. Under the energetic direction of Colonel John J. Abert, army engineers mapped the unexplored western lands and laid out routes for new roads. Many of these early army expeditions included a team of civilian specialists in botany, zoology, and geology who described the natural history and collected samples for the fledgling Smithsonian Institution. Most army expeditions also hired an artist to create sketches from which engravings were later made to illustrate their final reports. Once published, their artwork played an important role in shaping the public's perception of the American West.<sup>7</sup>

Located at the center of overland traffic, Utah Territory soon became an area of focus for early army exploration. The noted explorer Captain John C. Frémont passed through this region three times between 1843 and 1853. Captain Howard Stansbury and his assistant, First Lieu-

tenant John W. Gunnison, mapped the Great Salt Lake in 1849–50, their published report illustrated with lithographs based on sketches by artists Franklin R. Grist and John Hudson.<sup>8</sup> Gunnison returned as a captain in 1853 to search for a route through the Wasatch Mountains for the transcontinental railroad, but, tragically, both he and his artist, Richard H. Kern, were killed in an early morning Indian attack near Sevier Lake.<sup>9</sup>

In 1857, newly elected president James Buchanan ordered a large military force to Utah Territory to reestablish federal authority in a region viewed by many to be on the verge of rebellion. About fifteen hundred troops marched from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, with the mission to establish several military posts and to support the newly appointed territorial governor and other federal officials. But the columns departed late in the season. The Mormon militia burned three of the contractor's wagon trains filled with army supplies, and the arrival of the season's first snows stalled the troops before they could reach Salt Lake City. Federal troops spent a long cold winter encamped in tents at Fort Bridger. Meanwhile back in Washington, D.C., the secretary of war determined that additional troops were needed to reinforce the original expedition.<sup>10</sup>

6 Captain Simpson's field journals, letter books, chronometer logs, sextant time books, astronomical observations, and an Indian vocabulary are located in Field Survey Records, Entry 161, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, RG 77, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). See also Simpson Survey file, U.D. 334, Survey 15, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, 1775–1978, RG 217, NARA; Settled Accounts of Army Paymasters, 1815–1863, Entry 516, RG 217; and Reports of Persons and Articles Hired, Entry 238, Records of the Quartermaster General, RG 92, NARA. The diaries of Captain Henry Little are located in Fielding Tyler's private collection.

7 William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803–1863* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959); Frank N. Schubert, *Vanguard of Expansion: Army Engineers in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1819–1879* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980).

8 Brigham D. Madsen, *Exploring the Great Salt Lake: The Stansbury Expedition of 1859–50* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989).

9 Robert Kent Fielding, *The Unsolicited Chronicler: An Account of the Gunnison Massacre Its Causes and Consequences* (Brookline, MA: Paradigm Publications, 1993); Robert V. Hine, "The Kern Brothers and the Image of the West," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 28 (October 1960): 350–61. Kern worked for Capt. Simpson on his 1849 expedition. While in Utah in 1858–59, Simpson attempted to recover a ring worn by Kern to return to his family. Capt. J. H. Simpson to Kern brothers, February 16, 1859, Simpson letter books, vol. 1, 150–51, Field Survey Records, RG 77. The two enclosures sent with this letter—Simpson to Brigham Young, December 30, 1858, and Young to Simpson, February 7, 1859—are preserved in the Kern Papers at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

10 Recent studies of the Utah War include David L. Bigler and Will Bagley, *The Mormon Rebellion: America's First Civil War, 1857–1858* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011) and William P. MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point: A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858* (Norman: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 2008). The photographs of David A. Burr, taken at the Army's encampments near Fort Bridger during the winter of 1857–58, deserve further study. Palmquist and Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers*, 139–40.



Among the new reinforcements assigned was a small party of Topographical Engineers under the command of Captain James H. Simpson. Intelligent and devoutly religious, the forty-five year old officer brought considerable energy and experience to his new assignment. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Simpson had been initially assigned to the artillery. But after serving as aide-de-camp to General Abram Eustis during the Seminole War in Florida, he landed a coveted spot with the newly created Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1838. His next ten years were a whirl of engineering activities, including harbor improvements on Lake Erie, road surveying in Florida, and overseeing the construction of a light house in Michigan. Then in 1849, Simpson was selected as the topographical engineer for an overland expedition from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, his first experience in the West. Keeping detailed notes, he crafted a lengthy report of the region's geography with details about its flora, fauna, and Indian tribes that garnered considerable attention upon its publication. Simpson's next assignment took him to St. Paul, Minnesota, for four years to supervise road construction. Then in 1856, having caught the attention of the prominent civilian scientist Alexander D. Bache, he was detailed for special duty with the U.S. Coastal Survey.<sup>11</sup>

During his military career, Simpson had apparently built considerable political support, as evidenced by how he was selected for the assignment to Utah Territory. When General-in-Chief Winfield Scott called for two topographical engineers to accompany the reinforcements to Utah, Abert originally selected his son, Captain James W. Abert, as well as First Lieutenant Francis T. Bryan who had previous experience in the region surveying a new road across Nebraska to Fort Bridger through Bridger's Pass. But two weeks after these orders had been issued, and while these officers were closing out their previous activities in preparation for the expedition, the secretary of war

suddenly altered the selection without explanation. Instead, Simpson would now lead the party to Utah Territory.<sup>12</sup>

In early March 1858, Simpson arrived in Washington, D.C. to complete preparations for his new assignment. After discussing his options with Abert and other topographical engineers at the war department, Simpson proposed that his first task would be to remap the main emigrant trail on his way to Utah. Over the years, this road had evolved as new shortcuts were pioneered and other sections abandoned.<sup>13</sup> By 1858, many of the earlier maps and emigrant guide books had become outdated and were inaccurate. "The reconnaissances of Captain Frémont and Capt. Stansbury are good," fellow engineer Lieutenant Gouverneur K. Warren advised Simpson, "but they probably do not coincide with the roads now used."<sup>14</sup> Simpson proposed creating a new updated map with a detailed trail itinerary, one that would be of great value to the army as well as to the large number of civilian freighters and emigrants who used the road.

But this would not be just any guide book. Simpson had recently become enamored with the field photographs of the Crimean War taken by British photographers Roger Fenton and James Robertson, and he believed that he could similarly utilize this new technology on his expedition to Utah. Warren encouraged the idea, suggesting that "a photograph view of Court-house Rock, Chimney Rock and especially of Scotts bluffs would be exceedingly interest-

11 George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1891), 1: 514-16; Frank McNitt, ed., *Navaho Expedition: Journal of a Military Reconnaissance from Santa Fe, New Mexico to the Navaho Country Made in 1849 by Lieutenant James H. Simpson* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964).

12 Circular, Army Headquarters, January 11, 1858, Letters Received, Adjutant General's Office, RG 94 (Microcopy 567, roll 574, index 6-9), NARA; Col. J. J. Abert to Col. S. Cooper, January 13, 1858, Letters Received, Headquarters of the Army, RG 108 (M1635, roll 41, index 13-14), NARA; Special Orders No. 10, January 27, 1858, and Special Orders No. 22, February 12, 1858, Headquarters of the Army, 180:438, 443-44, Entry 41, RG 108; Maj. Irvin McDowell to Col. J. J. Abert, February 15, 1858, Letters Received, Topographical Engineers, RG 77 (M506, roll 2, index 465-466).

13 For more information on the evolving overland route, see Gregory M. Franzwa, *Maps of the California Trail* (Tucson, AZ: Patrice Press, 1999); Will Bagley, *With Golden Visions Bright before them: Trails to the Mining West, 1849-1852* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012).

14 Memoranda, enclosed in Lt. G. K. Warren to Capt. J. H. Simpson, April 10, 1858, box 9, fd. 16, Warren Papers, New York State Library, Albany, New York.



ing.”<sup>15</sup> Simpson’s new guidebook would not only include details about camping localities and the availability of wood, water, and grazing along the trail, but it would also “illustrate some of the more notable features of the route by photographic impressions.”<sup>16</sup> If successful, his would be the first emigrant guidebook illustrated through the lens of a camera.

Other army officers who had previously experimented with the use of field photography met with little success. Frémont, for example, had purchased a daguerreotype camera for both his 1842 and 1843 expeditions but struggled because of his inexperience with the equipment and the delicate developing process.<sup>17</sup> By the mid-1850s, however, the original daguerreotype had given way to the new collodion or wet-plate process that proved more economical and less temperamental to surrounding conditions. In addition, the invention of light sensitive photographic paper now allowed for images to be captured on glass plate negatives from which multiple paper prints could be made, the beginnings of mass production that would forever change the art. These technological advancements offered new hope for the camera’s use in the rugged conditions of the western territories.

Within days of his arrival in Washington, D.C., Simpson submitted his list of needed equipment. In addition to the typical survey instruments such as prismatic compasses, artificial horizons and an astronomical transit, Simpson also requested a “Photographic Apparatus” at an estimated cost between \$200 and \$400.<sup>18</sup> For this, he turned to Captain Israel C. Woodruff for

assistance. Responsible for the inventory and purchase of all equipment used by the Topographical Engineers, Woodruff himself had previously taken a camera on his expedition from Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, in 1850 and had recently arranged for a camera and photographic supplies to accompany First Lieutenant Joseph C. Ives on his Colorado River explorations. Woodruff soon purchased the needed camera, packing it with the other survey instruments for shipment to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, from where all the troops for Utah were to depart. Simpson himself made a quick trip to New York City where he visited E. Anthony’s photographic shop on Broadway to obtain the needed photographic chemicals and probably some technical advice as well.<sup>19</sup>

If Frémont’s failed experiment offered any lesson to Simpson, it was that field photography depended upon more than simply possessing the camera and the developing equipment—he also needed the services of a professional photographer, someone who had both the eye of an artist and the practical skills of a chemist. While in New York City, Simpson wrote to Charles Ehrmann, one of the pioneers in American photography then living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. This German born pharmacist-turned-artist had initially worked in the Philadelphia studio of noted photographer James McClees and had been involved in the early refinement of the wet-plate process. But by 1858, Ehrmann appears to have been unemployed after McClees moved his studio to Washington, D.C. Simpson offered him the dual position of photographer and collector of natural history specimens. “Mindful of dangers and privations that such an expedition undoubtedly will bring upon its followers,” the thirty-six-year-old photographer replied to Simpson’s offer: “I am not so young any more as to look merely upon the romantic and adventurous parts of such an expedition.” Ehrmann’s request for a permanent position as photogra-

19 In May, Woodruff requested permission to travel to New York City and Boston to purchase instruments for the Corps, including “1 Photographic Apparatus (furnished Capt. Simpson). \$497.20.” Capt. I. C. Woodruff to Col. J. J. Abert, May 24, 1858, Letters Received, Topographical Engineers, RG 77 (M506, roll 83, index 388–391); Simpson, *Report of Explorations*, 8. Ives’ equipment was destroyed at the mouth of the Colorado River in December 1857, though given his limited correspondence with Washington, it is probable that Simpson did not learn of this until much later.

15 Ibid.

16 Capt. J. H. Simpson to Col. J. J. Abert, October 14, 1858, Letters Received, Topographical Engineers, RG 77 (M506, roll 67, index 1076–1082); also in Simpson letter books, 1:42–47, Field Survey Records, RG 77.

17 Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence, eds., *The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont. Vol. 1, Travels from 1838 to 1844* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 379; Charles Preuss, *Exploring with Frémont: The Private Diaries of Charles Preuss, Cartographer for John C. Frémont on His First, Second, and Fourth Expeditions to the Far West*, edited by Erwin G. and Elisabeth K. Gudde (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 32, 35, 38.

18 Capt. J. H. Simpson to Col. J. J. Abert, March 11, 1858, Letters Received, Topographical Engineers, RG 77 (M506, roll 67, index 800–805).



pher in the War Department was declined by the secretary of war.<sup>20</sup>

With Ehrmann's unwillingness to take the position and his time for preparations quickly drawing to a close, Simpson submitted a request to hire a photographer at \$40 per month and an assistant photographer at \$25 per month, inclusive of their traveling expenses.<sup>21</sup> He then turned to the local photographic community in Washington, D.C. to identify a possible candidate. Just down the street from the War Department offices, Blanchard P. Paige had been operating a successful photographic gallery on Pennsylvania Avenue for the past fifteen years. Among his employees was a twenty-five-year-old artist named Samuel C. Mills, the son of a shoemaker in the city. Mills had become interested in the photographic arts and joined Paige's gallery two years earlier, probably initially as an apprentice. Mills soon developed his skills as a portrait photographer, mastering the art of composition and chemistry. How Simpson initially met young Mills is lost to history, but one can imagine the officer simply walking into the studio and probing the gallery manager for advice on how to find the type of individual he was looking for. He soon invited Samuel Mills to join his adventure to Utah.<sup>22</sup>

Simpson found his assistant photographer through the military social network in the capital city. Army officers were frequent guests at the Alexandria home of Major Gaspar Tochman, a Polish dissident and now prominent D.C. lawyer who was a close friend of the former secretary of war and now influential senator Jef-

erson Davis. Tochman's beautiful wife, Apollonia, was something of a celebrity in D.C. for her role in the Polish uprising and later the Hungarian revolution, having swapped her skirts for a uniform to fight alongside soldiers. By 1858, her younger brother, twenty-seven-year-old Edward Jagiello, also a native of Poland, had joined her in the U.S. and was then living at the Tochman home. While there is no evidence that Edward had any photographic training, his family connections probably earned him a spot on the expedition roster.<sup>23</sup>

In April 1858, Mills and Jagiello joined Simpson in Buffalo, New York, as the officer visited his wife and daughter in advance of yet another extended absence. Leaving Buffalo on April 13, the three men first traveled to Cincinnati, where they were joined by two additional members of the party. Charles S. McCarthy had agreed to serve as the expedition's taxidermist, upon the recommendation of Major William H. Emory for whom he had worked two years earlier on the Mexican border survey. William Lee, the seventeen-year-old son of a clerk in the secretary of war's office, was hired as Simpson's secretary. Lee also kept a personal diary of his experiences.<sup>24</sup>

Newspapers that spring had continuously reported on the evolving situation in Utah Territory. Under fire from Congress over his unilateral decision to send the Utah Expedition and for encumbering its staggering costs during the worst economic decline in twenty years, President Buchanan felt political pressure to find a diplomatic solution. He decided to send two peace commissioners, former Kentucky governor Lazarus W. Powell and Texas U.S. marshal Ben McCulloch, to deliver an ultimatum. Mormon leaders could either agree to abide by U.S. law and accept a pardon for past

20 Capt. J. H. Simpson to Col. J. J. Abert, March 26, 1858, with enclosure Ehrmann to Simpson, March 20, 1858, Letters Received, Topographical Engineers, RG 77 (M506, roll 67, index 815-818); *American Journal of Photography*, vol. 15, no. 180 (Dec. 1894), 554-55; *The Photographic Times*, vol. 25, no. 685 (Nov. 1894), 281-83. Simpson probably learned of Ehrmann from Anthony while in New York City.

21 Capt. J. H. Simpson to Col. J. J. Abert, March 29, 1858, Letters Received, Topographical Engineers, RG 77 (M506, roll 67, index 811-812).

22 Born October 8, 1833, in Washington, D.C., Samuel C. Mills was the son of John and Mary Mills. 1850 Census, Washington, D.C. (M432, roll 56), NARA; *Boyd's Washington and Georgetown Directory* (Broadway, NY: William H. Boyd, 1858), 217; letter from S. C. Mills, October 10, 1896, published in *Records of Columbia Historical Society*, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C., 1900), 90-91.

23 Sarah Hale, *Woman's Record; Or, Sketches of All Distinguished Women* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1874), 704-6; Grace Greenwood, "Reminiscences of Washington Before the War," *The Independent* (New York), vol. 55, no. 2851 (July 1903), 1733-34. The Washington, D.C. *Evening Star* reported the arrival of a man named E. Jagiello at the Brown's Hotel in April 1857.

24 *Buffalo Daily Courier*, April 13, 1858; William Lee Diary, Lee-Palfrey Family Papers, Library of Congress. See also John P. Langellier, "The William Lee Diary Account of the James H. Simpson Expedition, 1858-59," *Annals of Wyoming* 59, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 36-47.



rebellious actions or, the president warned, the army would enforce the law and "let the consequences fall on your heads."<sup>25</sup> On the train from Cincinnati to St. Louis, Simpson and his party unexpectedly encountered these two commissioners as they headed to Utah. Simpson described Governor Powell as "a shrewd, kind-hearted, venerable man" and McCulloch as having "all the air of a sharp, resolute character, yet, under all this there seems to be a deep substratum of caution, that will, no doubt, prevent his doing anything rash."<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, Powell and McCulloch were successful in bringing about a peaceful resolution to the standoff, and General Albert S. Johnston's troops at Fort Bridger advanced through Salt Lake City without incident.

Meanwhile, Simpson and his party arrived in St. Louis on April 15 and found the city in mourning for the late Missouri senator Thomas Hart Benton who had recently passed away in Washington, D.C. Benton had done more than any other congressman to promote westward expansion, and his famous son-in-law, John C. Frémont, had created many of the maps Simpson now carried with him as reference. The captain watched as the long procession passed, including a hearse drawn by four black horses draped in black and escorted by the Seventh Infantry. Simpson was now part of the small cadre of army officers whose explorations were helping make Benton's vision a reality.<sup>27</sup>

While in St. Louis, Simpson met with fellow engineer Lieut. Francis T. Bryan. Since being relieved from the expedition that Simpson now commanded, Bryan had been assigned to the First Column of reinforcements that would soon be departing Fort Leavenworth. His task was to lead the troops along his new route to Fort Bridger via Lodgepole Creek and Bridger's Pass, making the road passable for wagons to more easily supply the army in Utah. Bryan

urged Simpson to add a civilian geologist to his scientific team and recommended Henry Engelmann who had served on his crew the previous year. In addition to his field experience and technical knowledge, the young geologist also brought connections to his older brother, Dr. George Engelmann, a prominent St. Louis physician and a botanist of some renown. If the plant samples were sent to St. Louis, the doctor was willing to identify them and write a brief description for Simpson's final scientific report.<sup>28</sup>

After settling into his camp near Fort Leavenworth, Simpson worked tirelessly to complete the final arrangements for his expedition. He now had two second lieutenants of the Topographical Engineers—Lieutenants J. L. Kirby Smith and Haldimand S. Putnam—as well as five civilian employees. Simpson also hired a cook and several laborers to take care of various camp duties while his free black servant, John, attended to his uniform and other personal needs. Simpson had a special spring wagon constructed for hauling the fragile survey instruments, while the Quartermaster Department provided an army ambulance for his use and assigned several escort wagons with mule teams and civilian drivers to haul their supplies, tents, and baggage.<sup>29</sup>

On April 28, wood crates packed with instruments arrived by a Missouri River steamer. As the men spent the next month familiarizing themselves with the equipment, Mills and Jagiello practiced using their new camera. Simpson noted in his diary that Mills produced three photographic views of Captain William F. Barry's battery of the Second Artillery, "one quite good, the others failures."<sup>30</sup> Among Mills' sur-

25 Buchanan's proclamation, April 6, 1858, published in LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *The Utah Expedition, 1857-1858* (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1982), 336.

26 Capt. J. H. Simpson dispatch, April 26, 1858, published in *Buffalo Courier*, May 4, 1858. Simpson wrote a series of letters to the *Buffalo Courier* providing details about his overland trip to Utah.

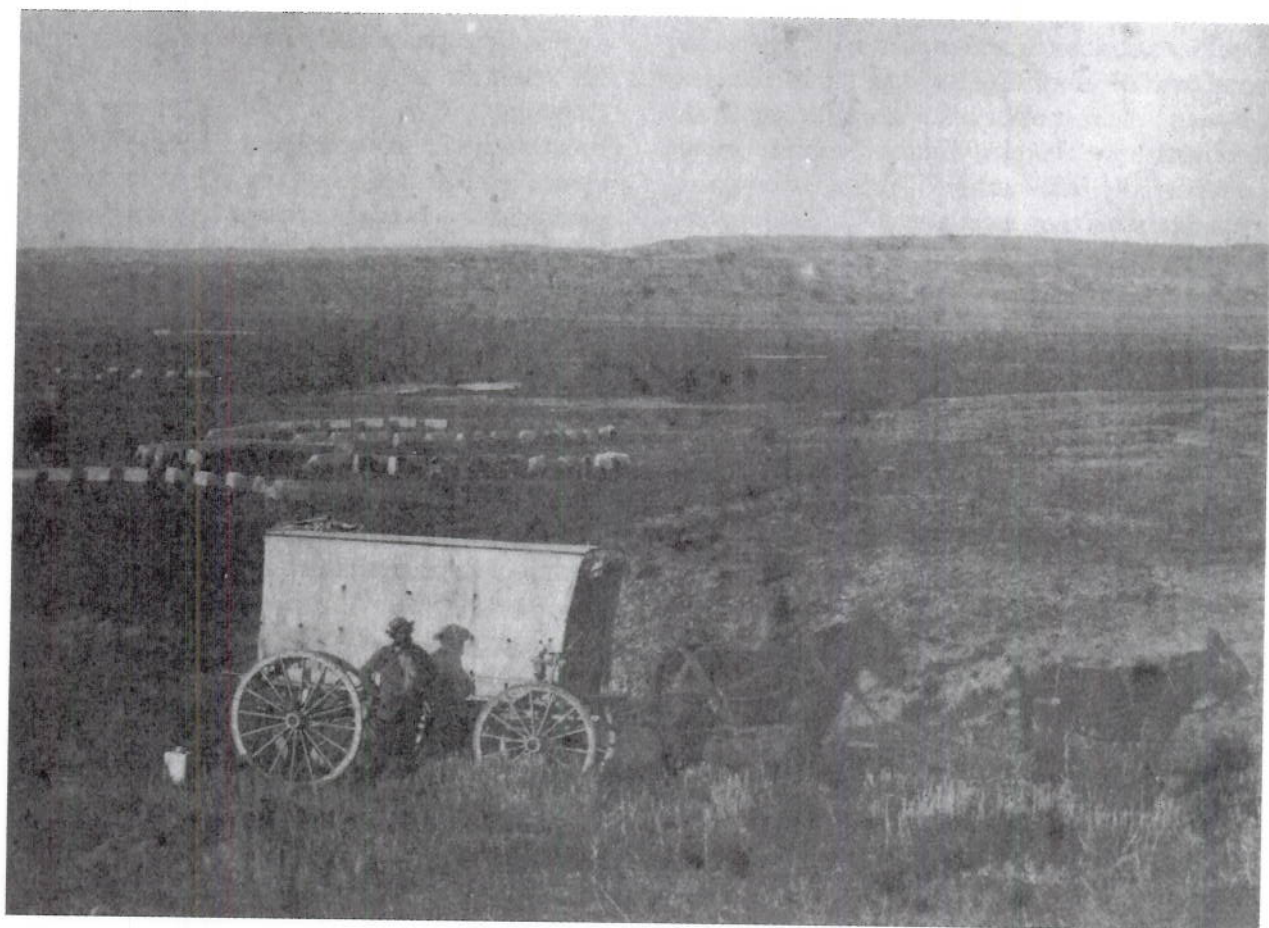
27 Lee diary, April 16, 1858, Lee-Palfrey Family Papers; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 17, 1858.

28 Capt. J. H. Simpson to Col. J. J. Abert, April 17, 1858, Letters Received, Topographical Engineers, RG 77 (M506, roll 67, index 830-832); *Transactions of American Institute of Mining Engineers*, vol. 30 (1900), xxx; Michael Long, "George Engelmann and the Love of Frontier Science," *Missouri Historical Review* 89 (April 1995): 251-68.

29 James W. Abert initially joined Simpson at Fort Leavenworth but prevailed upon his father to forward a request to General Scott to be reassigned, since he would not be leading the expedition. Col. J. J. Abert to Gen. W. Scott, March 27, 1858, Letters Received, Headquarters of the Army, RG 77 (M1635, roll 41, index 58-63).

30 Simpson field journals, May 26, 1858, Field Survey





*Figure 3. "Near Fort Laramie," July 1858. This view shows one of the spring wagons used by the Simpson Expedition to carry the camera and other sensitive survey equipment. Note the circling freight wagons in the background. By Samuel C. Mills and Edward Jagiello.*

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living images of Fort Leavenworth are three views of buildings—the oldest known of the post—and a fourth of Simpson's camp overlooking the Missouri River, evidence that the artists were mastering the use of their new "photographic apparatus."

The topographical party finally departed Fort Leavenworth on May 31, 1858. During their first days on the road, Simpson taught the young "tenderfoots" how to adjust to their new camp life, learning to cook over campfires and to properly erect their tents each evening. On one occasion shortly after their departure, William Lee casually put up his tent only to discover during the night that rain was flooding him out. He quickly learned to dig a trench around

his tent each evening to drain away any pooling water. Under Simpson's watchful eye, the men also practiced firing their weapons at targets, and everyone took their turn on the night guard duty. They later laughed over an incident when Edward Jagiello, on guard detail one night, fired his weapon in the air after spotting a figure approaching the expedition's mules. The figure proved to be a drunken soldier who raced back into camp, convinced that the Mormons were attacking. "Am beginning to get used to camp life," Lee noted at one point in his diary.<sup>31</sup>

Assistant photographer Edward Jagiello seemed particularly impressed with Simpson,

<sup>31</sup> Lee diary, April 24, June 2, 3, 1858, Lee-Palfrey Family Papers; Simpson field journal, June 2, 1858 and Lieut. J. L. Kirby Smith notes and observation book, entry for June 3, 1858, Field Survey Records, RG 77.



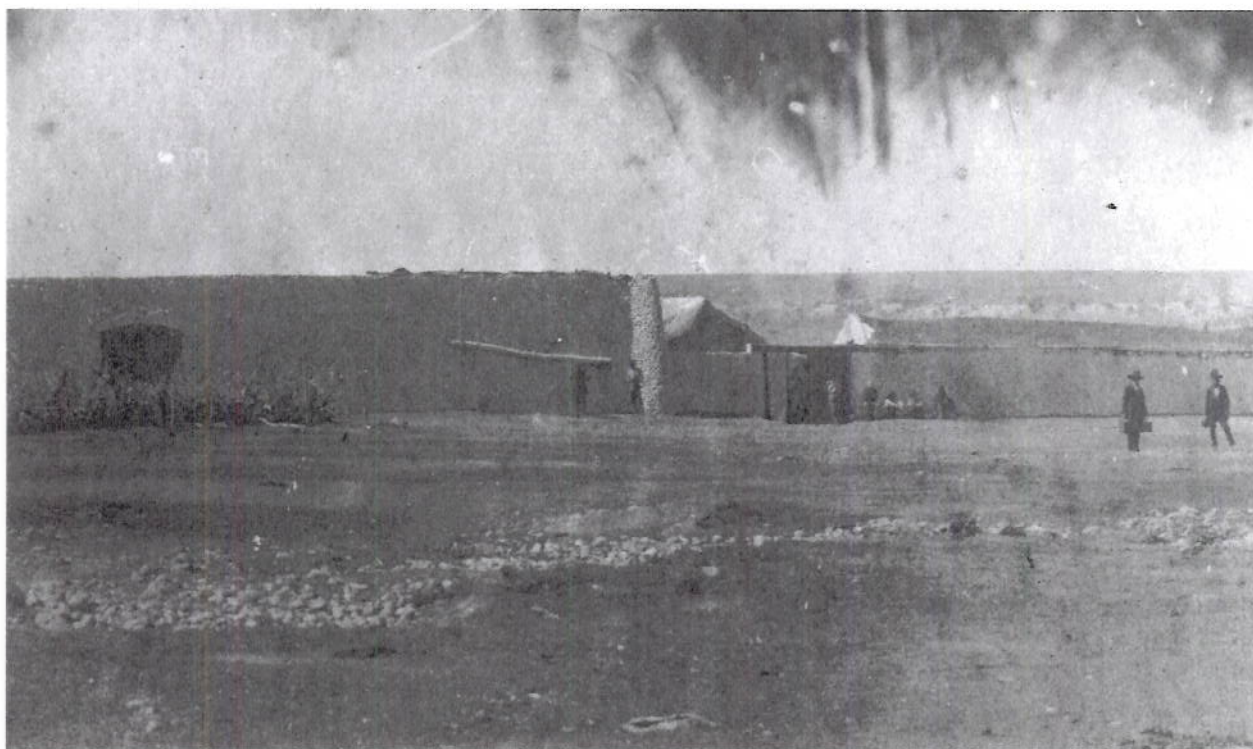


Figure 4. "Fort Bridger, Utah," September 1858. The original Mormon stone fortification has been adapted for storing Army supplies while out of view, new log barracks and officers' quarters were being built. By Samuel C. Mills and Edward Jagiello.

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not only for his field experience but also for the confidence that he exuded and his strong work ethic. "From the day of leaving Fort Leavenworth you might have seen Capt. Simpson all day on horseback with his memorandum book in hand," Jagiello wrote in a letter home. "Every day he went several miles from the road, seeking water, grass, wood, encamping places, comforts of travelers, &c. He was never tired; always the first on horse and the last off." On Sundays, Simpson often brought out his box of Bibles and hymnals, leading a religious service for any who wanted to attend. "It is a fine spectacle to see in a wilderness a party of eighteen men on Sunday praying around their Captain," Jagiello observed. "The captain was dressed in his uniform, the other officers in like manner, and all the men as neat and clean as they could have found themselves in any church in Washington."<sup>32</sup>

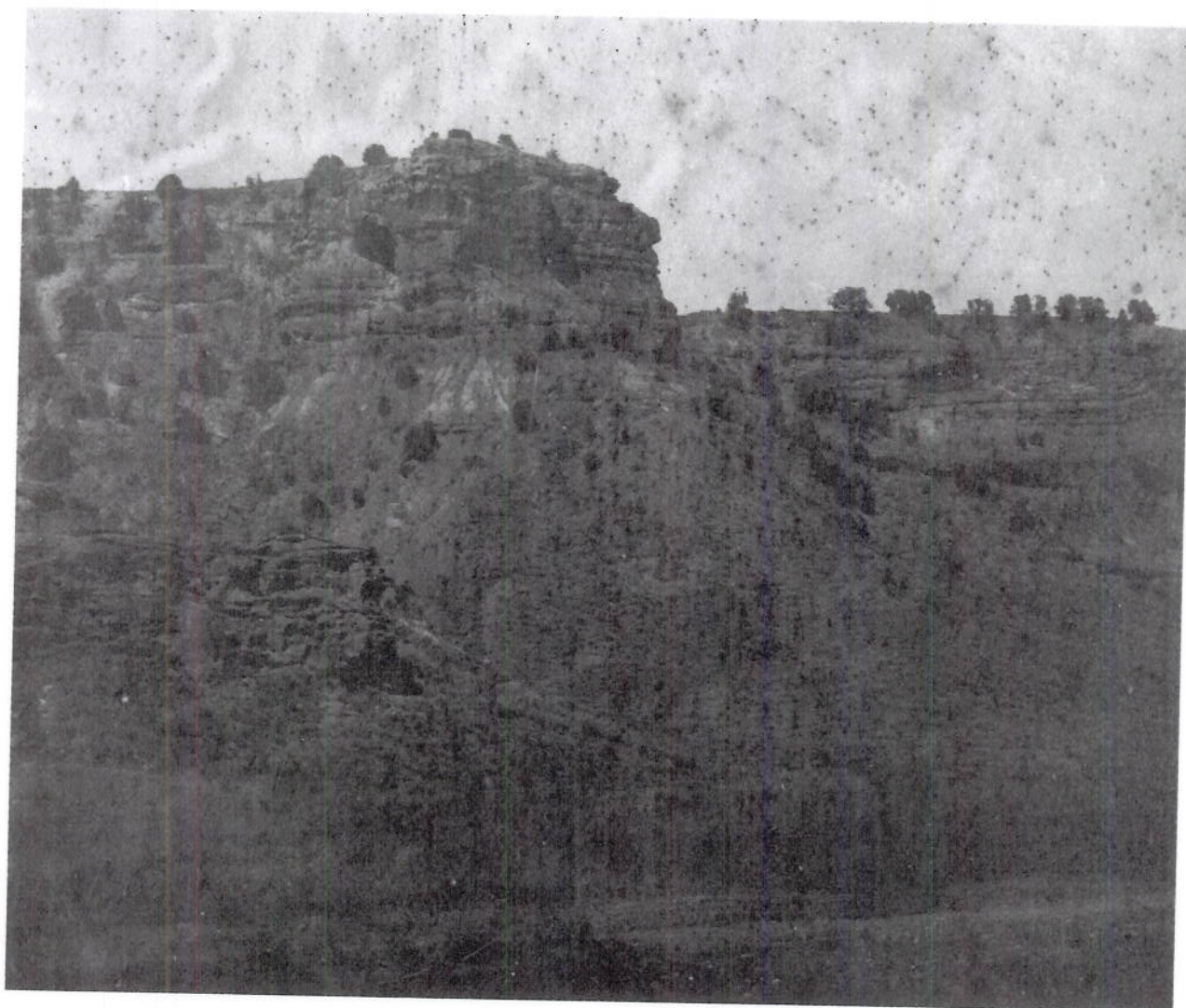
32 Extracts from the letter "of a Polish gentleman attached to the Topographical Corps of the Army in Utah"

Among his many duties, Simpson demonstrated a particular interest in his photographic experiment, personally directing many of the images that were to be taken. For example, on June 9, while stopped on the Big Blue River, a tributary of the Kansas River, near the large encampment of the Third Column of reinforcements for Utah, Simpson rode with several officers to scout for a good vantage point from which to produce an image of the extensive gathering of tents and wagons. "Found some fine points of view & Mr. Mills and Jagiello got everything ready to take the views," Simpson recorded in his diary, "but a rain coming up which continued all day, nothing could be done." Several days later, Simpson directed his photographers to produce an image of their own camp on the Little Blue. "Succeeded very well," Simpson noted.<sup>33</sup>

(no doubt Edward Jagiello), published in *National Intelligencer*, May 17, 1859.

33 Simpson field journals, June 9, 10 and 15, 1858, Field





*Figure 5. "Butte," September 1858. This view shows one of the prominent red rock formations later known as the Devil's Post Office located near the head of Echo Canyon. This was later the site of a stage station and Pony Express stop. By Samuel C. Mills and Edward Jagiello.*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

After arriving at Fort Kearny in mid-June, Simpson turned over the supervision of his topographical party to his most senior subordinate, J. L. Kirby Smith, while he traveled in advance as a member of General Harney's staff. Simpson had now spent the past two months training his young lieutenants how to use their survey instruments and had preached about camp safety and protocol. He believed they were now ready to continue on their own. Among the instructions that Simpson left for Smith was

Survey Records, RG 77.

specific guidance for the expedition's artists. "Photographic pictures of as many prominent scenes as possible will also be taken," Simpson wrote, "including Fort Kearney [sic], Court House & Chimney Rocks, Fort Laramie & every other proper object or scene."<sup>34</sup> Later on the trail, Simpson instructed Smith to get a good view of Ash Hollow, noting that such "would make a fine illustration for the report." He again

<sup>34</sup> Capt. J. H. Simpson to Lt. J. L. K. Smith, June 26, 1858, Simpson letter book, 1:9-10, Field Survey Records, RG 77.



emphasized the importance of securing "as many views taken of remarkable topographical and geological features of the region traversed as possible . . . even if the party is delayed by it."<sup>35</sup>

Under Smith's leadership, the small party dutifully complied. "Stopped at Court House Rock on our road today," William Lee noted in his diary on July 25, "and Mills (the photographer) took a picture."<sup>36</sup> Extant images confirm that the photographers produced negatives of a number of important landmarks along the trail, including Scotts Bluff, Fort Laramie, Devil's Gate, Fort Bridger, and the head of Echo Canyon (figs. 3–5). These photographs by Mills and Jagiello are the earliest surviving views from along the Oregon-California Trail. Upon their arrival in Salt Lake City, Smith's party fell in with the 7th Infantry as they marched through the city streets to the stirring music of the regimental band. "There is attached to this corps two experienced photographers, Mills and Yagiello, with apparatus complete for taking views of the scenery, etc., along the route," wrote one resident who watched the military parade. "They have, I understand, secured some very fine pictures on the road between here and the frontier of Missouri."<sup>37</sup>

After three and a half long months on the road, the topographical party finally arrived at Camp Floyd on September 15, but there was no time for rest. Simpson immediately sent Smith and his party back to the field to help establish a new road between Camp Floyd and Fort Bridger through Timpanogos (or Provo) Canyon, and they spent several months surveying the boundaries for the new military reservations at Fort Bridger, Camp Floyd, and Rush Valley. Returning to Camp Floyd, Simpson and his crew then drafted a lengthy report describing the roads of Utah Territory, complete with a detailed map.<sup>38</sup>

35 Capt. J. H. Simpson to Lt. J. L. K. Smith, n.d. (probably July 21, 1858), Simpson letter book, 1:17–18, Field Survey Records, RG 77.

36 Lee diary, July 25, 1858, Lee-Palfrey Family Papers.

37 Dispatch dated Salt Lake City, September 20, 1858, in *Sacramento Daily Union*, October 9, 1858.

38 U.S. Congress, Senate, *Report of the Secretary of War, communicating, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate, Captain Simpson's report and map of wagon road routes in Utah Territory, 1859*, 35th Congress, 2d session, 1859, S. Doc. 40, serial 984. For additional information

As the survey team finally settled in at Camp Floyd for the winter, Mills and Jagiello were provided with a room for use as a photographic studio in one of the numerous adobe and wood structures just built at the post. Up to this point, the photographers had only produced "negative impressions on glass." Now inside their jury-rigged darkroom, they began creating paper prints from the negatives, though Simpson was determined to maintain strict control of their distribution. He declined the request of an officer from Fort Laramie who had written to ask for a print of the image taken of that post, and he gave strict instructions to Mills to turn over to him all paper copies that he produced, even those that had not turned out well. "You will take particular care that no more photographs are taken than are above authorized," Simpson cautioned, "and that none go out of your hands, into the hands of others." He ordered that six sets of prints be made up from each of the negatives, after which all the glass plates were to be carefully packed up for shipment back to Washington, D.C.<sup>39</sup>

Simpson did recognize the political value of presenting a few photographs to senior officers, though. As his young subordinate Lieut. Putnam created a detailed map of Camp Floyd, Simpson helped Mills select locations from which he wanted views taken of the sprawling military encampment, at that time the largest military garrison in North America. He then had two sets of booklets made, each containing sixteen prints, to present to Johnston and his quartermaster, Lt. Col. George H. Crosman, "to give a good idea of the style and magnitude of the post."<sup>40</sup> He also sent a single photograph of

about Simpson's new road through Provo Canyon, see John D. and Nila J. Eldredge, *Historic Sites Along Captain James H. Simpson's Wagon Road, Camp Floyd to Fort Bridger* (Riverton, UT: privately printed, 2009).

39 Capt. J. H. Simpson to Lt. G. W. Hazzard, November 29, 1858; Capt. J. H. Simpson to Lt. H. S. Putnam, December 24, 1858; and Capt. J. H. Simpson to S. C. Mills, January 11, 1859; all in Simpson letter books, 1:59, 124, 135–36, Field Survey Records, RG 77. The photographic studio was also used on Sundays as a chapel, with services led by Captain Simpson, until they outgrew the facility and moved into the Fifth Infantry's theater. *National Intelligencer*, May 17, 1859.

40 Capt. J. H. Simpson to Maj. F. J. Porter, February 10, 1859, Camp Floyd file, Consolidated Correspondence, Entry 225, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, RG 92; also in Simpson letter book, 1:144–46,





Figure 6. "View of Middle Portion of Camp Floyd from 10th Infantry Target, looking north of east," January 1859. This photograph was one of a number of views taken of Camp Floyd for a booklet presented to Gen. A. S. Johnston. By Samuel C. Mills and Edward Jagiello.

#### NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Camp Floyd to secretary of war John B. Floyd for whom the post had been named.<sup>41</sup> His selective distribution of photographic prints reveals that the officer considered his camera to be not only an engineering instrument but also a useful public relations tool for promoting the success of his Utah expedition (fig. 6).

By early 1859, Simpson was increasingly concerned about his rapidly dwindling supply of photographic chemicals. Unable to find replacements in Utah, he asked for assistance from the department paymaster, Major Henry Prince, who had been ordered to travel to California to secure the next payroll for the troops in Utah. Simpson provided a list of required

chemicals—silver nitrate, hyposulphate of soda, and pryoxylene among them—but worried whether Major Prince and his escort would return before the Topographical party was required to depart on the next leg of their explorations.<sup>42</sup>

Simpson was also concerned about the dependability of his photographer. The previous summer, a traveler had encountered the survey team on their way to Utah and described Mills in his diary as "a gentleman," but "fond of his whisky."<sup>43</sup> At Fort Laramie, one of the officers provided Mills with several bottles of Longworth's Sparkling Catawba "and the whole party spent the evening in his tent and had

Field Survey Records, RG 77. A booklet of photographs is located in box 38, Records of the Office of the Corps of Engineers, Series 77-F, Still Pictures Branch, National Archives College Park, Maryland.

<sup>41</sup> Capt. J. H. Simpson to J. B. Floyd, March 10, 1859, Simpson letter book, 1:159, Field Survey Records, RG 77.

<sup>42</sup> Capt. J. H. Simpson to Maj. H. Prince, February 9, 1859, Simpson letter book, 1:143, Field Survey Records, RG 77.

<sup>43</sup> Richard Thomas Ackley, "Across the Plains in 1858," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 9 (October 1941): 197.





Figure 7. "A Group of Utah [Ute] Indians, including Arrapene (Sinnearoach), the head chief of the tribe, and Luke the interpreter, taken on the outskirts of Camp Floyd looking north west toward the Oquirrah Mountains," January 1859. The Sibley tent in the background was one of hundreds of this experimental design tested by the Army during the Utah War. By Samuel C. Mills and Edward Jagiello.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

quite a jovial time."<sup>44</sup> A teetotaler, Simpson had grown increasingly impatient with Mills' habits and warned him on several occasions after he had become too incapacitated to perform his official duties. Finally on January 19, 1859, following another incident at Camp Floyd, Simpson terminated Mills' employment with the expedition. "I have no other recourse to protect the Government and my-self from imposition and wrong," he wrote.<sup>45</sup>

Mills panicked. He was two thousand miles from home with limited resources to return on his own and embarrassed that his actions had caused him to lose his position with the government expedition. He pleaded with Simpson for a second chance, promising to abstain from overindulgence. Simpson finally acquiesced

but with a stern warning. "It is proper however for you to understand that the like revocation must not be expected under another dismissal for a similar cause."<sup>46</sup>

The following day on January 20, a small delegation of Utes led by the prominent leader and Mormon convert Arapeen, arrived at Camp Floyd to meet with General Johnston. "The council broke up very harmoniously, the Indians shaking hands, &c.," Simpson noted in his diary. "They then adjourned to the photographic room where I had their likenesses taken in a group." The following day, Mills produced a portrait of Arapeen and at least one view of the delegation standing in front of a Sibley tent, the earliest surviving photograph of any Ute (fig. 7).<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Lee diary, August 3, 1858.

<sup>45</sup> Capt. J. H. Simpson to S. C. Mills, January 19, 1859, Simpson letter book, 1:138, Field Survey Records, RG 77.

<sup>46</sup> Capt. J. H. Simpson to S. C. Mills, January 19, 1859 (2nd letter), Simpson letter book, 1:140, Field Survey Records, RG 77.

<sup>47</sup> Simpson field journals, January 21–22, 1859, Field



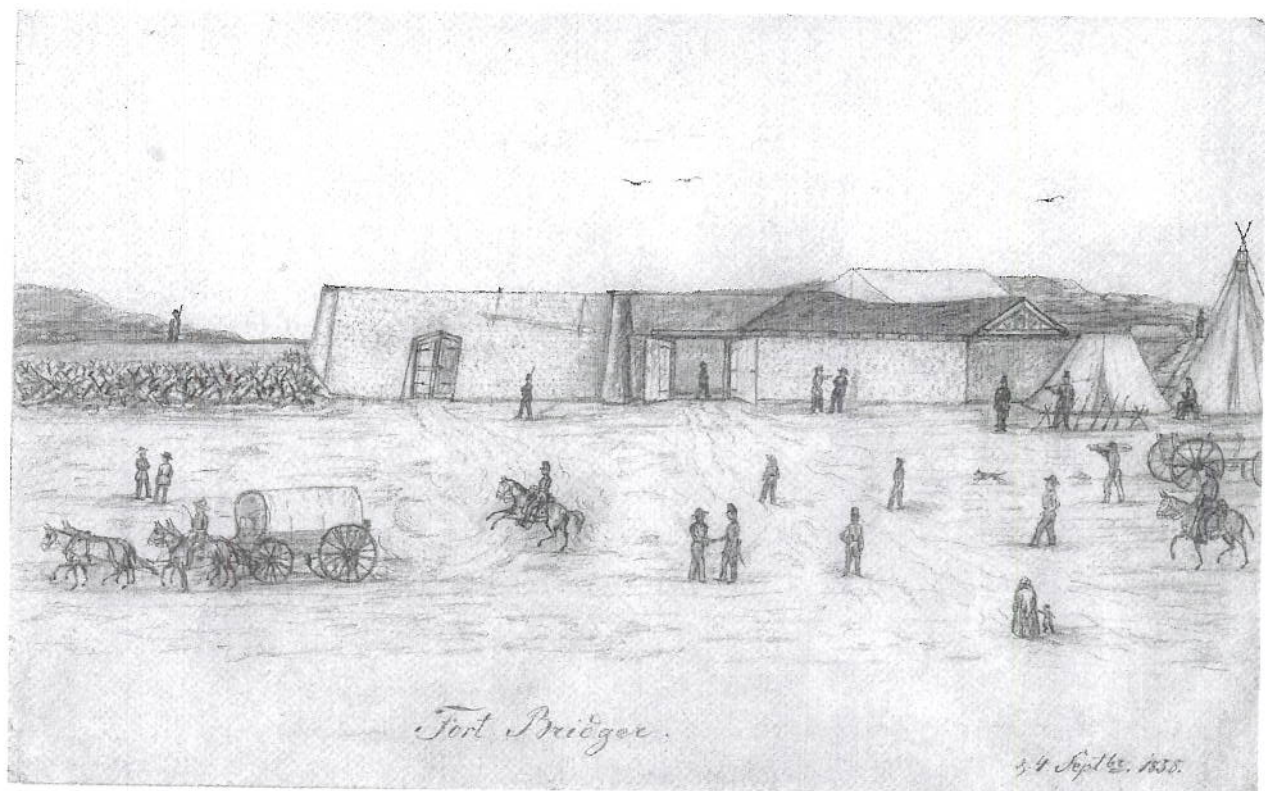


Figure 8. "Fort Bridger," September 4, 1858. Soldier and artist Henry Sommer sketched this view of Fort Bridger as his company of the 7th Infantry marched passed the fort en route to Camp Floyd.

FIELDING TYLER

Looking back on his photographic experiment two years later as he compiled his final report, Simpson characterized the overall experience as a failure. Omitting any mention of his problems with his civilian photographer or the depletion of his chemical stock, the officer attributed the shortcomings to the technology itself, explaining that the camera took too long to set up, that it performed unpredictably in the weather extremes he often encountered, and that it could not sharply capture the large landscapes of the West. "The cause lies in some degree in the difficulty, in the field, at short notice, of having the preparations perfect enough to insure good pictures," Simpson explained, and "chiefly in the fact that the camera is not adapted to distant scenery."<sup>48</sup>

Yet the surviving photographs seem to be anything but failures. Mills' views of Fort Laramie and Scotts Bluff, for example, are well executed and could have easily been used by an artist to create the lithographs needed for his final report. The historian Martha A. Sandweiss speculates that Simpson's judgment was shaped by his expectations that the camera would surpass the detailed illustrations provided by traditional topographical drawings. "There remained the longstanding gap between the technological capacity of the photographic medium and the cultural demands placed upon it," she concluded; "wet-plate photographs still fell short as tools of scientific documentation and instruments of narrative drama."<sup>49</sup>

Survey Records, RG 77.

48 Simpson, *Report of Explorations*, 8–9.

49 Martha A. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 129–30.



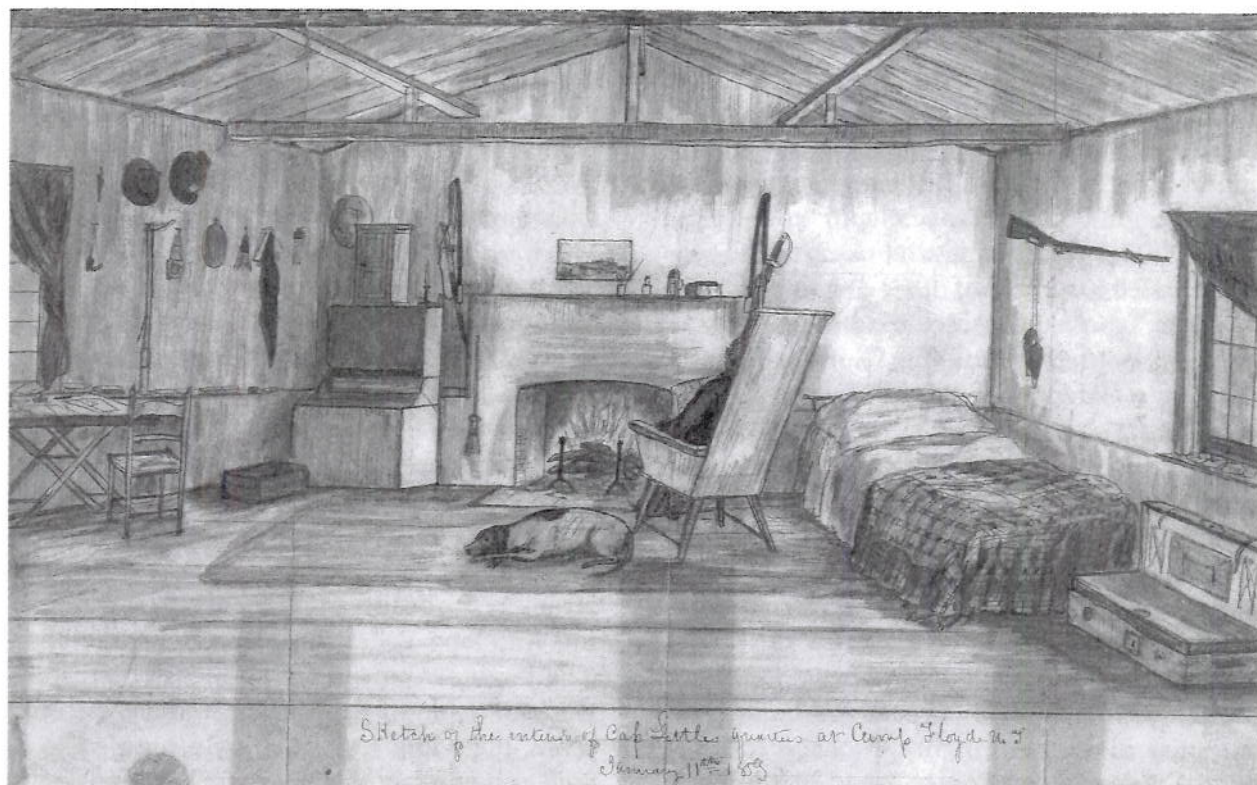


Figure 9. "Sketch of the interior of Cap. Little's quarters at Camp Floyd, U.T.," January 11, 1859. Because of the limited building materials, each officer regardless of rank was only allowed one room in a series of adobe quarters constructed by soldiers at Camp Floyd. By Henry Sommer.

FIELDING TYLER

Concluding that the camera was not well adapted for use in the field, Simpson instead argued that "a good artist, who can sketch readily and accurately, is much to be preferred."<sup>50</sup> But as he prepared for the next phase of his expedition, this time heading west across the Great Basin to central California, the topographical engineer wondered where he was going to find such an artist in the remote regions of Utah Territory.

While stationed at Camp Floyd during the winter of 1858–59, Simpson socialized with several officers at the post, including Captain Henry Little, commander of Company E Seventh Infantry. Both were dedicated to their military careers and shared similar challenges over the extended absence from wives and children. On one occasion during a visit to Capt. Little's one-

room adobe quarters, Simpson noticed a number of pencil sketches pinned to his wall, drawn by Private Henry Sommer, a soldier who served in Little's company. Given his need for a sketch artist to accompany him across the Great Basin, the engineer asked about the possibility of borrowing this soldier. "Walked with Capn. Simpson," Little recorded in his diary one evening in March 1859. "[He] wants Sommer to go with him."<sup>51</sup>

Born in Germany, the twenty-seven year old soldier had enlisted in New York City in December 1857, giving his name as Henry Sommer. He was initially sent to Governors Island for brief training and then in March 1858 transferred to Fort Leavenworth with some two hundred other recruits assigned to fill out the ranks of the Seventh Infantry before its departure to Utah. For

50 Simpson, *Report of Explorations*, 9.

51 Little diary, March 16, 1859.



the next three months, the regiment marched overland. Passing through Fort Bridger in August 1858, Private Sommer created a credible drawing of the Mormon fortification (fig. 8) and in November, Capt. Little sent him to visit the Mormon community of Nephi "to take [a] sketch." Over the next several months, the soldier created a number of other drawings for his company commander, including both an exterior and an interior view (fig. 9) of the officer's quarters at Camp Floyd.<sup>52</sup>

Simpson soon learned that the soldier's real name was Henry V. A. Von Beckh. After graduating from a polytechnic school in Hesse Cassel, Germany, he had immigrated to the United States, hoping to use his skills as a draughtsman or architect to find employment. But the financial panic of 1857 made this difficult for many immigrants and the young man felt compelled to enlist in the U.S. Army, probably changing his name in an effort to blend in. Simpson described him as an educated man: "His tastes are refined & his manners gentlemanly, and I doubt not his present condition [as an enlisted soldier] is one which must be very disagreeable to him & at times very galling."<sup>53</sup>

The request for Private Sommer to accompany the expedition was approved and he was assigned the duty "of sketching the country, in a manner to illustrate its common as well as peculiar characteristics."<sup>54</sup> Because the paymaster had not yet returned with the needed photographic chemicals, Simpson decided to leave his camera behind at Camp Floyd. "It will therefore be unnecessary for you to accompany the expedition," he wrote to his troublesome photographer, "and you are hereby directed to remain at this post, in charge of said property

till the return of the party."<sup>55</sup> Assistant photographer Edward Jagiello would go along to help with instrument observations. Simpson was now dependent upon his sketch artist to produce all the needed illustrations for his westward survey across the Great Basin.

The expedition departed Camp Floyd on May 2, 1859, accompanied by a small escort of infantry and dragoons under the command of Second Lieutenant Alexander Murry. As they headed west across the virtually unexplored Great Basin, Simpson took special interest in directing his artist for the specific views he wanted drawn, just as he had done previously with his photographer. For example, on May 11, he was struck by the beauty of the mountains surrounding Antelope Valley and "ordered a sketch."<sup>56</sup> The engineering officer frequently had illustrations made of the various Indians encountered, including a view of a Goshute camp as well as a portrait of the noted Shoshone leader Shokapee. On at least one occasion, Sommer was instructed to copy a rock art panel that they had discovered. When the party finally reached the westward extent of their explorations, Sommer created a sketch of the party riding into the small community of Genoa, Nevada Territory. "As we came into the town, the American flag was raised and a salute of ten guns fired," William Lee commented in his diary.<sup>57</sup>

During the expedition, Henry Sommer appears to have been treated as a member of Simpson's civilian team of specialists. Rather than being assigned on "detached service," a typical Army practice for soldiers on a special military detail, Sommer was instead given a furlough or leave of absence.<sup>58</sup> This allowed him to wear civilian clothes and to even receive pay as a civilian employee. He appears to have rarely been referred to by his military rank. For example, while most of the expedition rested in Genoa, Simpson made a quick trip over the Sierra

52 U.S. Army Register of Enlistments, 53:223, RG 94 (M233, roll 26) and Returns from Regular Army Infantry Regiments, Seventh Infantry, March 1858, RG 94 (M665, roll 80), NARA; Capt. Little diary, November 25, 1858.

53 Capt. J. H. Simpson to J. B. Floyd, December 28, 1859, Simpson letter book, 1:258-59, Field Survey Records, RG 77.

54 General Orders No. 1, April 29, 1859, Letters Received, Topographical Engineers, RG77 (M66, roll 22, index 35); also in Simpson letter book, 1:175-77, Field Survey Records, RG 77. The original handwritten copy of this order records the soldier's name as Henry V. A. Sommers, while the printed version of this same order lists him as Mr. H. V. A. Von Beckh. Simpson, *Report of Explorations*, 44.

55 Capt. J. H. Simpson to S. C. Mills, April 29 and May 1, 1859, Simpson letter books, 178-79, Field Survey Records, RG 77; Little diary, April 30, 1859.

56 Simpson field journal, May 11, 1859, Field Survey Records, RG 77. In his published transcription of his diary, the directive regarding the sketch was omitted. Simpson, *Report of Explorations*, 55-57.

57 Lee diary, June 12, 1859.

58 Returns from Regular Army Infantry Regiments, Seventh Infantry, May-July 1859, RG 94 (M665 Roll 80).

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Nevada to Sacramento and then on to San Francisco. He provided the editor of the *Sacramento Union* with a list of the members of his survey party, giving the name of his artist as simply "Mr. Beck." The surviving documents suggest that Simpson set aside Sommer's social status as an enlisted soldier for the duration of the expedition.<sup>59</sup>

Returning to Genoa on June 23, Simpson and his party soon began the long trek back across the Great Basin, taking a month and a half to pioneer an alternate route south of their outbound journey. As before, Sommer created several "fine sketches," including a view of Little Canyon named by Simpson in honor of his friend Captain Henry Little.<sup>60</sup>

Simpson's party arrived back at Camp Floyd on August 3 and began preparations for their return east. On their way, however, the topographical party had one final task, to explore the possibility of a wagon road from the Round Prairie near the new settlement of Heber to the Green River through the Uinta Valley. Knowing that he still needed sketches, Simpson brought Henry Sommer along and had him produce drawings of the mouth of Timpanogos Canyon and of Bridal Veil Falls. Writing to Captain Little from the Round Prairie, Simpson apologized for possibly keeping his artist a few days beyond the end of his furlough. "If he should overstay his leave for the purpose, I trust you will throw the responsibility on me and consider the reason sufficient."<sup>61</sup>

Captain Little himself secured seven days leave and traveled up to the Round Prairie to join Simpson's party. They enjoyed several days of hunting and fishing, and they explored the hot springs near present Midway, Utah. "We then rode to Rattlesnake Hill which is a large mound grown up with brush and weeds," Little noted in his diary. "Made war on the rattlesnakes by shoving the sheltering rocks off their den & kill-

ing them."<sup>62</sup> Sommer created a sketch of their experience for his commander. Captain Little soon bade goodbye to his friends and returned to Camp Floyd, with Private Sommer following several days later.

After his return to Washington, D.C., Simpson worked on his final report. Presumably the glass negatives arrived safely but he had abandoned his original idea of creating a guidebook for the main emigrant trail through Nebraska Territory, instead focusing on his road survey across the Great Basin.<sup>63</sup> The accompanying scientific reports did include descriptions of natural history specimens from the entire length of the trip. Simpson paid D.C. artist John J. Young to transform Sommer's rough sketches into lithographic plates for his publication. After submitting his manuscript in early 1861, Simpson appealed to Senator Milton S. Latham of California for assistance in securing congressional financial support to publish the expedition report, but the Civil War soon intervened and its printing was delayed for fifteen years.<sup>64</sup>

As for Simpson's three artists, the Civil War also interrupted their lives. Photographer Samuel C. Mills returned to Paige's studio in Washington where he produced portraits of soldiers in the wartime capital until 1864 when he enlisted in the Union Army as a hospital steward. After the war, he bought out the studio of his former mentor and operated it "for a year or two," as Mills later recalled.<sup>65</sup> After studying law and passing the bar in 1872, he was appointed as a police judge in D.C., a position he held for the rest of his legal career. In later years, Mills was

62 Little diary, August 15, 1859.

63 In addition to his concerns about the quality of the photographs, another possible reason for Simpson's losing interest in his emigrant trail project was possible competition. In 1859, Frederick W. Lander was mapping a section of the trail west of South Pass with a crew that included several artists and a photographer. Alan Fraser Houston and Jourdan Moore Houston, "The 1859 Lander Expedition Revisited: 'Worthy Relics' Tell New Tales of a Wind River Wagon Road," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* (Summer 1999): 50-70.

64 Capt. Simpson to Sen. Latham, January 29, 1861, Simpson letter book, 2:15-16, Field Survey Records, RG 77.

65 Letter from S. C. Mills, October 10, 1896, published in *Records of Columbia Historical Society*, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C., 1900), 90-91.

59 *Sacramento Daily Union*, July 2, 1859. While Capt. Simpson was absent, part of his civilian crew traveled to Lake Bigler, today known as Lake Tahoe, where Sommer also created sketches.

60 Little diary, August 5-6, 1859.

61 J. H. Simpson to Capt. H. Little, August 11, 1859, Simpson letter book, 1:206, Field Survey Records, RG 77.



an active member of the Grand Army of the Republic and the Masonic Order. The hard-learned lessons of his youth regarding alcohol may have been one of the reasons he founded a temperance organization known as the Sons of Jonadab. Samuel C. Mills died in 1911 and was buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.<sup>66</sup>

Edward Jagiello, the expedition's photographic assistant, also returned to the East Coast and lived with his sister and her husband for a time. However, as the Civil War began, the family appears to have splintered. Advocating the South's right to succeed, Tochman went to New Orleans to raise two regiments of Polish immigrants for the Confederate Army while Apollonia Tochman remained in Alexandria. Despite her support for the Union, she was arrested in the fall of 1861 for suspected southern sympathies on account of her husband. Their beautiful 150-acre summer home, Summer Hill Farm, was seized and sold at auction in 1864. The meager evidence suggests that the couple irrevocably split. Her brother, Edward, disappears from the historical record at the beginning of the Civil War. It is unclear whether he served with an American regiment or might possibly have returned to Europe.<sup>67</sup>

For Private Henry Sommer, his participation in the Simpson Expedition earned him some recognition. Captain Little persuaded his father-in-law, Lt. Col. Pitcairn Morrison, to offer the soldier a coveted detail as a clerk at the regimental headquarters.<sup>68</sup> Several months later, however, Private Sommer appealed to Simpson in Washington, D.C. for his assistance in securing an early discharge. Simpson wrote to the secre-

tary of war on his behalf and Private Sommer was released in March 1860.<sup>69</sup> But he must have still found it difficult to secure employment because he returned to the Army four months later. During the Civil War, Sommer rose from private to regimental sergeant major in the 2nd U.S. Infantry, and in 1863 he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the same regiment. He was awarded brevets for his "gallant and meritorious service" during the Wilderness Campaign and at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House where he was wounded so seriously that he never again regained full use of his left arm. Promoted to first lieutenant, Sommer resigned from the Regular Army in May 1868 and settled in Philadelphia where he died in 1894.<sup>70</sup>

After being held as a prisoner of war for a month and a half in 1862, Simpson spent the remainder of the Civil War assigned to a variety of railroad surveys and repairs. For two years immediately after the war, Simpson was back in the West, this time as chief engineer for the Department of the Interior overseeing the federal government's interests in the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad. During the last decade of his service, he was responsible for a wide range of engineering activities on projects from Florida to Maryland, Alabama to Ohio. He retired in 1880 as a colonel in the Corps of Engineers and died three years later in St. Paul, Minnesota.<sup>71</sup>

66 1860 U.S. Census, 5th Ward, Washington, D.C., *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860* (M653, roll 103), NARA; Register of Enlistments, RG 94 (M233, roll 30); 1890 Veterans Census, Washington, D.C. Special Schedules of the Eleventh Census (M123, roll 118), NARA; *Washington Post*, October 15, 1905, October 9, 11, 1911.

67 *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), May 11, 1864; Andre M. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861: The American Civil War in the Age of Nationalist Conflict* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 54–56; Bruce S. Allardice, *More Generals in Gray* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 223; *Report on the Committee on Claims, on memorial and accompanying papers of Major Gaspar Tochman* (Richmond: Confederate Congress, House of Representatives, 1864).

68 Little diary, August 9, 15, 1859.

69 Capt. Simpson to J. B. Floyd, December 28, 1859, Simpson letter book, 1:258–59, Field Survey Records, RG 77. Lt. Sommer's consolidated military officer's file S318-CB-1868, Letters Received by the Commission Branch of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94 (M1064, roll 418, index 295–382). Sommer apparently remained at Camp Floyd or Fairfield for at least a month after his discharge. On April 29, Little noted in his diary that "Sommer took my likeness." While he may have been referring to a sketch, it is also possible that Sommer had found temporary employment at the branch photographic gallery of Edward Covington in Camp Floyd. *Salt Lake City Mountaineer*, February 11 to June 23, 1860; Palmquist and Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers*, 186.

70 Regimental Returns, Seventh Infantry, September 1859–February 1860; Registers of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798–1914, RG 94 (M233, roll 28); Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 908; Pension File Application No. 135288, Records of the Veterans Administration, RG 15, NARA.

71 Cullum, *Biographical Register*, vol. 1, 514–16. One of Simpson's uniforms is preserved at the Minnesota



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By the time that Simpson's report and accompanying artwork were finally published in 1876, the transportation network of the American West had fundamentally changed with the completion of the first transcontinental railroad. While Simpson initially promoted his new route across the Great Basin as promising, it was eventually supplanted by other roads and rail lines. Today, U.S. Highway 50, designated as "the loneliest road in America," follows a portion of his original survey across Nevada.<sup>72</sup>

Simpson's pioneering effort to incorporate photography as a survey tool in 1858 deserves special recognition. While he was not the first Army engineer to experiment with the new technology, his images remain the earliest surviving photographs from along the Oregon-California trail and document the sprawling Army post of Camp Floyd in Utah Territory. Despite his prediction that the camera was ill-suited for the field, its expanded use during the Civil War by Mathew Brady and others contributed to its growing popularity. As the country again looked west after the war, artists became an important part of the documentary efforts, from railroad photographers such as Andrew J. Russell, Arundel C. Hull, and Alfred A. Hart to government survey photographers such as Timothy O'Sullivan, John K. Hillers, and William Henry Jackson. The names of Samuel C. Mills and his assistant, Edward Jagiello, ought to be added to the list of important western photographers.

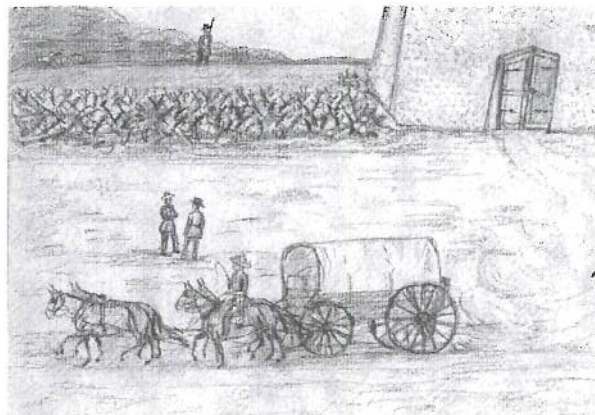
Historical Society.

72 Joseph V. Tingley and Kris Ann Pizarro, *Traveling America's Loneliest Road: A Geologic and Natural History Tour through Nevada along U.S. Highway 50* (Reno: University of Nevada, 2010).

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## WEB SUPPLEMENT



Visit [history.utah.gov/uhqextras](http://history.utah.gov/uhqextras) for color photographs and sketches from the 1858–59 expedition.



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