



**Daniel Jenks crossing the Cache la Poudre in 1859. Jenks abandoned his original plan to mine at Pikes Peak choosing instead to go to Yreka, California.**

## **CACHE LA POUFRE RIVER**

**Captain Evans and his 1849 wagon company followed the South Platte River downstream to its confluence with the Cache la Poudre east of present Greeley. John Rankin Pyeatt: we made a ferry boat at St vrains ft out of plank that we found thear...and took it down the platt...17 miles...to the [Cache la Poudre]...down to the crossing...this boat [could] cary the largest of our wagons without unloading...” It took three days to cross all. On July 2, John Pyeatt Kellam wrote: “...finished crossing the river traveled 10 m. and cpt. on Cachealaputtire...great many prickly pares had fine grass and wood plenty, but was annoid with musketoe....”**

**The four 1850 trains traveled to the Cache la Poudre by going nearly straight north from present Denver. Being the first wagon train on that route meant that the many large and small creeks had to be crossed. Arriving on the Cache la Poudre June 15, diarist James Mitchell wrote of their efforts to cross this river swollen by spring runoff. “...Long before night we were Stoped by another large creek.... 16th Sunday Sent men and went up and down the river to find the best place to cross I went up the river Crum and Robinson drawed guns at each other it took all to make our raft... our raft was entirly unmanageble and it landed below. we then made a smaler lighter one....” Their searches for fording places were futile. This river was just too wild and unpredictable. With Ben Simon and others, James Mitchell went upriver to find a crossing. During their eight mile ride, they came to Poudre Canyon and its wonders. “...the gide myself, crum and pedegrw was Sent up the Stream to discover pass up the**

creek in the mountains on the South Side or a ford above that we could cross we went about 8 miles up the creek among the mountains up hill nearly all the time and with some difficulty got to the highest peak of this range So that we could see perhaps 100 miles before us in the Laramie plains, a waggon can not be taken to this peak by teams and it is even difficult and dangerous to lead a horse up in places...the river had perpendicular cliffs in places Several hundred feet high and looked frightful to look down.” “...18th Tuesday we commenced crossing with our light raft it answered a better purpose than I expected the [river] had fell on the account of weather being more cool ...19 Wednesday we finished crossing and Started...”

Diarist, artist, packer William Quesenbury “Cush” arrived June 22 at the “we suppose Cache de la Poudre...Worked hard making a raft. Got it completed and our things on it...” Cush’s Pony named Pony “...wouldn’t swim. He after three lunges threw me off, and I swam to bank. I never was in as cold water before....” The raft “...was near swamping when it struck land...” After removing the load, they “...untied our ropes from the raft...” and let the logs go downstream.

Cherokee diarist John Lowery Brown wrote “...Cashla poodra...” on June 26, 1850. Brown’s group had searched for (and found) gold on a creek they named Ralston’s. Together the Cherokee and one oxtrain company “...finished a Raft....”

In June 1853 Hanks Neville Hill, on his way to Oregon, reached “...the Cashlapoodie River - the warm rains had melted the snow in the mountains and it was booming full so we couldn’t ford it. We built a raft and flew a kite with a string attached to a cable. The kite fell on the far side and caught fast among the trees. After three days of hard work we were all over...” On July 5, , Joseph Williams with his extended family and their sheep arrived at “Cash Lapuda River”. Crossing, their only loss was three drowned sheep. Christopher Columbus Seay, drover with the Carter/Shores cattle herd: “...came to a very cold swift stream, called the Cash la Tudy and had to make a raft to cross it...We had hard work getting our cattle across the river, and had to crowd some of them into the water...[to] get them started...Four steers broke away and ran off and we never could get them back into the river. We heard of several trains [behind us] trying later to make them cross but they failed...” Seay also noted his disappointment with a Baptist preacher behind them. “...they had no cable rope so the boss wanted to borrow ours promising to bring it on after getting his train across the river.... When he got across he just sold the rope to another train for \$25.00 and pocketed the money. Then he rode around hunting cattle we had lost...” Dillis B. Ward described their method for crossing. A man rowed across on a “...lashed small raft...” with a string tied to him. The string was tied to a rope. The man tied the rope to something on the north side of the river. The company lashed two wagon boxes together and in less than 24 hours all were crossed. Their cattle and horses swam.

1854- Calvin Hall Holmes, his wagons and cattle, went north to “...Cash la pooder where we made a raft but the River fell before we left so [we could] ford it...” Fellow Arkansan William Engels arrived ten days later. “...we came to Cash Laboody...the swiftest stream

that I ever saw....There is a temporary blacksmith shop here. Swapped some cattle....” William Engels noted “...numerous names cut on trees. A. Engels [William’s brother-1852] among names.”

1859 Horace Greeley took this route. At the Cache la Poudre there had been a ferry but it “...went down stream...two nights before....” Greeley’s conductor sent word for help “...to an old French mountaineer friend from Utah, who has pitched his tent here....At length our French friend appeared, mounted on a powerful horse, with an Indian attendance on another such....the Frenchman on his strong horse took one of our lead-mules by the halter and the Indian took the other, and we went in, barely escaping an upset from going down the steep bank....”Joshua Manwaring, 1859, coming south from Fort Laramie, stopped to mine nearby the Cache la Poudre. Lavinia Honeyman Porter’s description written many years later was almost the same as Greeley’s, even though in 1860 things had changed on the Cache la Poudre.

Hal Sayre-1860 “we stopped at a settlement on the Cache la Poudre River which was composed of French and half breed Indians [including Antoine Janis] who had given the place the name of Colona....the Cherokee Trail, which passed up and down the Poudre, was a popular thoroughfare with them.”

Days of difficult crossings came to an end in July 1860 when Arkansan Philander Powell “...crossed a stream called Cushly Poody on a bridge at 50 c per wagon. There was a little town.”