## Freighting in the Good Old Days Before the Advent of the Railroad

roud's side of the case wants to river. railroad has developed the country. It of all the world. How the name of "the seldom occurs to him that maybe the Great American Desert" ever came to be railroad developed with the country, and given to any part of that great plateau he forgets that before even the railroad that sweeps up from the valley of the Miswas the country had its commerce, that sours to the foothills of the Rockies is be there was going to and fro of caravans, youd comprehension. Some few miles of and that wares and commodities were it, in extreme western Nebraska and Kantransported from one end of the world to sas and eastern Colorado may, perhaps, the other, and business of all sorts was have looked bleak after a hot summer thrifty. Not as it is now, maybe, but still had burned off the vegetation of early with such activity as kept money in cir- spring, but it never resembled a desert. On culation, gave many men employment and enabled some to amass competencies that, while not much to break of as compared with the billionaire's bank roll, were sufficient to satisfy the more modest wants of their owners. Even yet some old boy of their owners. Even yet some old boy will tell you now and then of the good times before the railroad came. Then ridge and grouse, song birds and beasts some of those more venturesome spirits of prey were numerous, and such nulsances who pressed forward ahead of the iron as rattle snakes and skunks abounded to horse until there was little or no territory the discomfiture of the imwary. Every left unsullied by his boot, lament the time snile of the slow progress of the great and places into which the locomotive was caravans was fraught with interest, if not not driven. It was a golden age for ad- danger. On all sides nature showed herventure and for life in its nakedness. Close self in her most alluring form, and it is to the earth, and devoid of the frills and not to be wondered at that the Indian refurbelows of medern existence, but en- sented the intrusion of his while brother dowed with a charm that can never be into the last of his hunting grounds. It understood by those who have been hedged was this opposition to progress that led to about forever by the conventions of so- much of the excitement of the journey.

Men Who Stood Up Straight.

individual conduct.

action beyond the conception of the man marked, united in opposition to the would give a maximum load of about fourof today, in those times men had to stand white, and forgot for the moment their feen tens. The "grub" wagon was an exup quite straight. Certain primitive no- hereditary enmity to make common cause tra, the cooking outfit and provisions being tions of right and wrong prevailed, and in the effort to exterminate the pale face. Carried in a wagon usually attached to the these were generally founded on substan- Many a ghastly tale of the trail is pre- rear end of the lightest load in the outfit. tial principles of equity and right. Justice served in commemoration of the zeal with Several of these output together made up done, and in a spirit that took away its dictive hatred of the whites. "Sandy" For- it was, winding slowly across the prairie, roughness to a large degree. The victim sythe's stand at Beecher Island against the making ten or twelve or maybe fifteen the reason that he had taken his case be- the west, but it has been repeated many even less on a day of bad roads. Crossfore a Higher Bar, and was through with times by the embattled freighters under ing the streams took time, and interference things mundane. Notions of "meum et the direction of some wagon boss. The from the Indians often delayed them still had a show for his own in those days. It the temerity to travel so few in numbers ginia City, Mont., and even longer to Caliwas early borne in upon the man who en- as to make it available for massacre. To fornia was the rule. gaged in the life that his physical wellbeing depended solely on himself; that he was added the instability of the great rivers peed not be imposed on but he was not to of the plains, and no wagon master was need not be imposed on, but he was not to impose upon anyone else. This was the he had gotten his last wagon safely over. looked down upon the "bullwhacker." From simple basis of most of the proceedings The life was far from monotonous, even in his lofty perch on the near wheeler he between man and man, and along the great the most piping time of peace. Is it any routes of travel and in the mining camps wonder that the great trails of the west and river towns, where the roads terminated the conditions were generally understood and respected. So well established was the rule that in one section of the country, where settlement was extensive Freight trains were divided into two before the coming of the railroad, locks classes, "bull" outfits and "mule" outfits. and petty thieving were equally unknown. Horses were catalogued with the latter, It is recalled that on the occasion of the In the early days of the trails the "bull" the towns, the general cry went up, "Well, of the ever-present marauding Indian.

Traffic Was General Even Then.

river metropoli reaching out for closer perilous. ing for the Golden Fleece, across the prai- many as fifteen "span" in his team. This whom devolved the safety of all, was gers equal to those encountered by Odysseus tra trouble in driving for by the added load and his fellows during their wanderings. was not compensated for by the added load hese names. Parkman tells the story, many writers have given us accounts = he adventures, hardships and pleasures the trails, but no one has yet recorded of traffic between the older east and newer west during those two momentous decades of the country's history. In some future day it will attract the pen of a Prescott. a Mottley or a Fiske, and will be blazoned as it deserves to be on the annals of the east, and they debated for many years the the east and the west. It was for busireaching out; at no time did the developoccur to the pioneer railroad builders. Most of the states' surface was hopelessly condemned as being a part of the Great

Omaha was an important point on the Overland trail and the Oregon trail, too. Jefferson City was the first head of the Santa Fe trail, and then Westport, now forgotten and swallowed up in Kansas City's greatness. The Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad switched the business to St. Joseph, and the Chicago & Northwestern brought it again to Omaha. This was the last head of from the busy street, and your mind traffic on the Overland and Oregon trails, drifts away from contracts and discounts although the Pony Express ran from St. Joseph almost to the time the railroads drifts down a woodland stream. You kear ended it forever. Omaha's prestige as dimly the droning voice of the man at a an outfitting point was established early nearby desk, dictating a letter to John Doe in the history of the town, and from -"In reply to your favor of even dete"the late 50's through the 60's it was and then the dingy walls have faded into headquarters for big freight outfits and the sheen of a greenward and the blue for many smaller ventures. Express of a summer sky. You are back at the companies did business here, and a con- fair with the homesolks, and the burden stant stream of gold dust flowed through of the years has slipped away from your the town from the Rocky mountains and tired shoulders. far-off placer beds of California. Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and the Black see if the things that go to make up the Hills of South Dakota, contributed. It state fair are really so different from what brough this city during the freighting made over. There exhibits coult from the days, but this will never be accurately fig. farm. This corn and wheat, these yellow in the ordinary course of business. Many watermelon, the big, round fellow in the of the older residents of the city engaged corner! Don't you remember the bend in where gold and aliver were being dug from in the early morning to bring back one of here during the '60s can tell you stories all of joy you lugged through the stubble of night long about the days when Omaha the wheat field and laid tenderly in the

American Desert.

clinch the argument, he sets forth - The way of the trails lay along the great with more or less of eloquent water courses of the west, and the counassertion the statement that the try traversed is among the most beautiful ciety based on the presence of the steam- At no time was the trail absolutely safe road and its accompanying limitations on from interference on the part of the warlike tribes of the plains. Pawnee, Chevenne, Oglalla and Brule Stoux, Blackfoot, Uta and Comanche, each with his share

While there was a freedom of personal of dominion over the plain well de and in the trailer from 1,500 to 2000. This was sometimes crude, but it was impartially which these aborigines pursued their vin- a "train," and a most imposing spectsole was seldom heard to complain, usually for Cheyennes under Roman Nose is classic of miles on a good day and two or three or were most pronounced, and prop- Indians never let up, and never omitted to more. Sixty to seventy-five days to Denerty rights were sacred. Even an Indian cut off the venturesome outfit that had ver six months to Salt Lake City or Virever sure of his passage of the ford until called irrestibly to the young and vigorous manhood of the country?

Makenp of the Outfits.

first alugging by a footpad, which came outfits had it all to themselves. Light some weeks after the railroad had begun travelers had horses, but they did not dare running its trains regularly into one of wander far from the main body on account we'll have to commence locking our doors Their days were spent in hunting and fishnow, since the railroad has reached us." ing and exploration of the country within a limited range on either side of the main traveled route. As the population of the Lewis and Clarke went up the Missouri west increased the demand for better trafriver, and Zebulon Pike followed the Ar- fic accommodations brought the "mule" kansas for the purpose of establishing outfits into service, and these with the trade routes. The water courses had fived stage coach reduced the time consumed in for many years with the batteaux of the the journey. The government did its share

ne of the Mexican war. Then came each of from ten to fourteen "yoke," while the Californian excitement, and the Over- a "mule" outfit woulds have the same land trail came into existence. "Pike's number of teams of from six to ten "span" ries as true a sea and fraught with dan- number was unwieldy, though, for the exONE OF THE LATER-DAY BULL OUTFITS GOING INTO CAMP.



MULE OUTFIT ON ITS WAY ACROSS THE PLAINS.

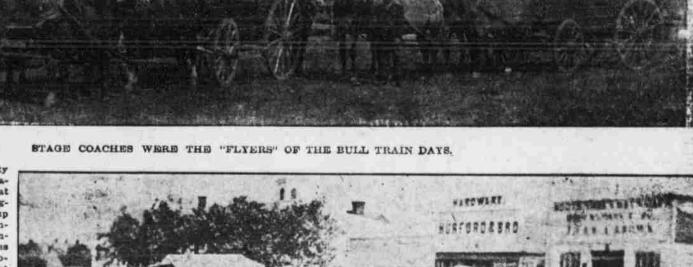
Spirit of Caste Strong.

It would be hard to exaggerate the lordly gazed with a pitying commiseration on the patient plodder who trudged alongside the slow moving ox team guiding it with word of mouth, commands issued in stentorian tones and backed up by stinging reminders from the most portentious of whips. For horn, born in the wild and come up the "mule skinner" was a jerk line pilot. through a series of experiences from in-That is to say, he controlled the move- fancy to exheed that developed any inments of his team by a single line, running herent vicjousness and general cussedness through rings on the hames from the near thatsmight have lurked in his nature. Prowheeler to the near leader, and along fessor Shaler of Harvard once wrote that which he communicated his desires by the horse and the ox were inexcusably means of jerks, cryptic enough to the stupid, or they would never have allowed uninitiate, but wonderfully expressive to themselves to become domesticated and rethe properly trained leaf mule, who would duced to the condition of burden bearers, unerringly interpret the signal and "gee" for man. This is true of the ox who made or "haw" as suited the surpose of the up the bull team. He was stupid, but at driver. This lordly aristocrat of the trail times the suspicion that some gleam of never forgot his own Importance, either on fealization of his situation must have penethe road or off, and maintained his caste trated his dull brain was justified, for he with jealous care. But he suffered in showed a perverseness that was all but turn, for the princely cow puncher enter- inspired, and was surely inspiring, at least fur traders, but a livelier commerce was by establishing posts for the army at tempt the latter had for the bullwhacker. result of inspiration. Probably the most to spring up. Closely following Pike were convenient distances along the trails and in fact, the cow puncher had for these picturesque forms of sulphurous devised. tained for the mule skinner all the con- as far as profanity may be deemed the the freight trains of the old Santa Fe furnishing armed escorts for wagon trains and the farmer, whom he included under known to the tongue were those devised, trail, merchants of St. Louis and other and stage coaches at times especially a most expressive designation, a feeling of frequently impromptu, for the purpose of gised disdain that not infrequently dealing with a bull team in a moment of professed to understand neither, while the gambler swindled each with utmost in-Peak or Bust" was the cry that cerried of mules. It is recalled that now and then might be added, with unerring certainty. difference as to his social condition, and, it

> placed literally at the bottom of the heap. Skill of the Bull-Whacker.

The ox he drove was seldom of the variety that has been poetically described as patient and plodding, wide-eyed and all that sort of thing, He was generally a long-

Ingenuity of the Driver.



OX CARTS READY TO START-A STREET SCENE IN OMAHA IN THE SIXTIES. of a man of brutal instinct its effects were of marvellous. often such as would secure the perpetrator It required ingenuity and understanding today an exemplary term in prison. A rip of no mean order to get the twenty or six or more inches long through an ox's But this phase of western life has vantheusands of adventurers, Argonauts look- some unusually ambitious driver had as Singular as it may seem, the soldiers, on the Golden Fleece, across the prai- many as fifteen "span" in his team. This whom devolved the safety of all was to pulling so that a load could be started larger lifted was the common result of a load could be started lar and kept in motion. It required much snap from that terrific lash. It is to the Along the trail where once the bull trains the claim of the railroad that it developed more than ordinary ability to turn a cor- credit of the drivers, though, that that did toiled a snail's pace from civilization to the country will not go unchallenged. The ner with one of those unwieldy teams, and not frequently occur. But the hissing of frontier the modern train de luxe now flits railroad has been an indispensible factor The land to which these men ventured pulled. Three wagons were usually in- If the bull-whacker did not pretend to the middle west, earch of gold gave them absolutely cluded in the load, the "lead," "swing" and social eminence of the cow-puncher or the tinually into play judgment and knowledge was generally enough to awaken the sleep- sengers give seldom a thought to the life but it was the growing traffic of this region ing in the way of clothing or pro- "trailer," sometimes two "swing" wagens mule-skinner, he at least was entitled to of the beasts that almost marked the suc- lest steer that ever tugged in unwelcome that has gone, for the reason that they that first brought the railroad here to ons; all they ate, drank or wore had being used. This was the case in the big some distinction. He had necessarily to cessful buil-whacker as a specialist. Even yoke. Half a dozen of these brawny buil- know nothing of it. Freight trains are compete with the buil-whacker and the be freighted in. From '49 to '69 were teams. The load varied. In the lead develop a certain degree of skill in the the manipulation of his huge whip was an whackers in a tournament of whip-cracking handled on a time schedule that was con- mule-skinner. These served their purpose

relations with the Mexicans. This trade A "bull" outfit might consist of anyled to sudden death. But it was capable of in progress. The accuracy with which the the immense freight wagon have joined the
had reached a very respectable growth at where from one to a dozen teams of oxen,
had reached a very respectable growth at where from one to a dozen teams of oxen,
and the discontinuous and the bull was not been death. But it was another sort of and, properly handled, it was capable of in progress. The accuracy with which the the immense freight wagon have joined the
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and the property handled, it was a little fractions and the property handled, it was capable of in progress. The accuracy with which the the immense freight wagon have joined the aside from the story. The miner, in turn, skill that marked the humble bull-whacker, producing terrible results. In the hands blow might be directed was little short other discards of civilization. In a very

Life that Has Gone.

golden days of the trail. Santa Fe, wagon from 6,000 to 8,000 pounds would be handling of his charges that amounted to a accomplishment that would attract atten- could easily give one who only heard the sidered fast even for express trains twen- and served it well and deserve to be rerland, Oregon! What romance is there put, in the swing wagon from 3,000 to 4,000 title to honor, even if it were denied him. tion. Its dimensions were most formidable, result a notion that a miniature battle was ty-five years ago, and the stage coach and membered for what they did.

few remote regions, seldom resorted to the transportation business is carried on by the picturesque methods of a generation

## the trails, but no one has yet recorded A Day at State Fair is Like a Breath from Country Lanes of those great avenues of A Day at State Fair is Like a Breath from Country Lanes

construction of a railroad that should link work-a-day life, these thidgs come home ness. You never find a melon like that there are so many ghostly memories here. and a horse race. And if you have come up from the farm and find yourself shut Omaha an Important Point on Trail. fresh your soul.

of the typewriter over by the office window merges into the noise that comes up as easily and as idly as a failen leaf

Utah and Oregon, and late Walk over this way a bit and we shall uld be interesting to know just how state fair are really so different from my millions of gold dust were carried the old-time country fair enlarged and It is certain that an enormous sum pumpkins are grown on the black soil of taken out by returning Argonauts and the broad prairie lands. See that fat freighting between the river and the the creek down by the Kivott place, just cky mountain mining camps, going to over the line of the south eighty? Can't ver, Salt Lake, Virginia City, Mont., you feel again the dew from the grass on other of the then far-away places your bare feet when you crossed the road rocks. Almost any man who lived those portly melons? That was an armful was headquarters for the Rocky Mountain newly turned furrow. And then you swung trade, and when never a locomotive had the lines over your shoulder and clucked

settled back into the harness of your back to dig up that banquet of juicy sweet- open and be jestled again by the crowd; to you, and you begin to see, and to sense now-a-days; no, sir, they don't grow any But we can spare a moment to see the

where they have all gone? tinted woods, and a great longing comes far over the curbing of the well to catch over you to go back to nature and re- a glimpse of a sun-tanned face in the cool depths of the water? How the drops glif-

HE best part of the state fair is to Frank and Old John, and the smooth have you tasted drink so sweet or sails- true worth. These are the kings and queens about her neck while you told her the says that the saddest day of his life was the meeting of homefolks and turning black soil, fresh from the plow, fying. Wouldn't you like to fill another of the pasture and the meadow lot. Here troubles of the day. Not that she ever when he realized that he dign't want to go the stirring up of old-time mem- covered over that cool feast and kept it gourd with that pure, cold water, and comes a long string of proud aristograts— said a word, but there was a look of up. In switching the said a word, but there was a look of up.

ness already established that they were the you, and you begin to see and to ment of Nebraska and Kansas to their the fair was something more than a crowd been many long years since you ate the just as they used to tantalize our childish heart from an old yellow core. Wonder eyes and appetites. See that plate of Jonathans and the deep blush that a prying Here is another has-been from some old- summer sun has painted on their ruddy in by brick walls and bounded by stone fashioned garden. An old-time gourd, one cheeks! Don't you remember the tree in walks and granite pavements, you begin of the sort we made into dippers and hung the far corner of the orchard, and how to understand that the fair was like a by the old well-the dug well-rock-walled we climbed to its topmost bough when breath from country lanes and the quiet and furnished with a pair of real moss- the leaves were turning brown and the by-ways of life. You scent the fodder in covered buckets. Did you ever come in haze of Indian summer hung upon the hillthe shock and the leafy green of autumn- from the field, hot and dusty, and lean tops? Heigh-ho! Other days; other days!

The Cattle Show Is On.

Over this way the cattle show is on.

the stirring up of old-time mem- covered over that cool feast and kept it gourd with that pure, cold water, and comes a long string of proud aristocrats— said a word, but there was a look of un- in swimming any more. Time was when ories. Perhaps you did not think safe. You haven't forgotten that! You drink a toast to the days' that are past reds and whites and roans-Durhams, we derstanding in her calm, untroubled eyes he would break out of school on a warm as it deserves to be on the annals of the of this when the crowd was can't forget it, if you have ever been a and gone forever? You can close your called them, when the western range was that was better than a world deserve that was can't forget it, if you have ever been a and gone forever? You can close your called them, when the western range was that was better than a world deserve to be on the annals of the world was can't forget it, if you have ever been a and gone forever? You can close your called them, when the western range was that was a world like a lot of restless cat-boy on the farm! You can still see that eyes and see the years go marching by free and the herder circled far and wide counsel. And patience was writ large the swimming held. free and the herder circled far and wide counsel. And patience was writ large the swimming hole. Used to scatter his slways that there was even then traffic tie, and the crash of brass bands was furrow in the rich loam, and that big in dim and shadowy procession—all the to gather in the strays. There are white- across her broad and kindly face. that assumed proportions such as to attract the attention of the great men of the
you have left the fair behind and have

sast and they debated for many years the once knew the heather of Scotch highlands. Worth a king's ransom are these herds. Take note of the level backs, the spreading ribs, the great heart girth, for has looked longer and with more care these are the beef breeds. You admire since he lost an eye-hooked out by a their fine lines and beautiful coats, but brindle heifer. His says he has no use for none of these can ever take the place in pedigreed stock at fancy prices. He wants our hearts held sacred to the memory of good, plain cattle that wilt grow into beef Longlegs and Old Tut. They boasted no and give plenty of milk. Cows are like illustrious lineage nor pedigree in ponder- women, avers the sage and one-eyed Hi, changed hands for a paltry thirty pieces until their usefulness is spoiled. of silver, but, oh, the sweet, rich milk Hi always comes up to the fair and takes responsibility, they led the herd to pas- and perhaps you heard what he said about About the time these ideas begin to tered and splashed on the rocks as you Look at the sleek, well-kept kine descended ture in the morning and home again at going in swimming. Well, it came about take hold upon your lener self, the click pulled up the brimming bucket. Adam's from famous families, and bearing their night. And it was worth while to meet in this way. Hi admits that he is getting ale, we called it then, and never since honors with the modesty that comes of Old Tut at the bars and put your arm old, but he doesn't brag about it. He

Hi Splivins Hunts Up Cronies.

has studied them at first hand and looked carefully into their ways and habits. He ous herd book, and they might have in that they can be petted and fixed up

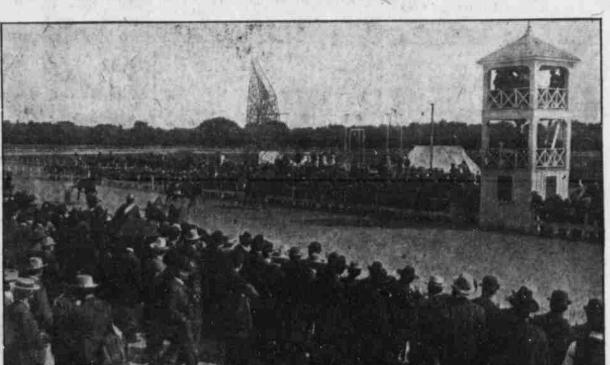
they gave and what pets we made of those a keen delight in hunting up a company of old, homely cows! After they had acquired cronies as old and as quaint as himself. the dignity that comes with age and large. He likes to hark back to the old days,

wardrobe all the way from the school house to the creek, but that didn't count if you Old Hi Splivins knows about cows. He extensive in those days, anyway, and a hit the water first. Wardrobes were not few pieces, more or less, didn't matter. You recall those old swimming holes along the creek and the keen delight of a plunge into their clear depths. They are the only real fountains of youth, the kind that Ponce de Leon sought in vain, and that every country boy has found. Hi believes in going back to nature. Says that a bath tub is too cramped for him and that the money now being spent on tha Panama canal would dig a million swimming holes and fill them full of clear water and happy boys. HI looks at a good many things on the bias, having only one side light, so to speak, but you will have to admit the justice of his swim-

ming hole contention. When you have looked over the sheep in their winter conts of pure wool and have paused to see the biggest hog in his harvest of fat, the claims your attention. You cannot everlook the horse show at the fair; he gets right into the spot light and he is decorated with ribbons that vie for color with Joseph's coat. But if you have any definite idea of utility you will pass on down the line to where the mule is on parade. You find him here in force and you will do . well to stand afar off, out of range of that long hind leg that owns the hitting power of a Jeffries and the force of a piledriver. He is man's most patient and long-suffering friend, first in peace and indispensable in war. Sometimes he makes a kick, but who shall arise and say that it is without just cause or lacking in effect? Of all our domestic animals he is the only one without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity, and yet this long-eared orphan always claims our warmest sympathy. He is so truly a beast of burden, a patient plodder of the fields, willing ever, and as strong as the leathern thongs that bind him to his thankless task and hold him in an endless bondage. Ever and again he droups his long ears and relieves he pent-up feetings in a hoarse bray that is unlike any other sound in all the scheme of nature. And you hesitate to say whether it is a. wailing protest against the unkind decrees of fate or only a long-drawn, jenring



THE HOG IN HIS HARVEST OF FAT.



THE BEATING OF THE HORSES HOOFS UPON THE TRACK.

(Continued on Page Five.)