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Article Title: Coxville, Nebraska, to Fay, Oklahoma by Wagon (1899): The Journal of Anna Gillespie

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Article Summary: The Josiah B Gillespie family of six moved by wagon train and horseback from their home at Coxville, near Chadron, Nebraska, to west-central Oklahoma in 1899. Gillespie, 49, a horse fancier and celebrity of sorts as winner of the Chadron-Chicago horse race of 1893, also drove a herd of over 50 horses to Oklahoma. Anna Eliza Cook Gillespie, the 48-year old wife of Josiah, cared for the domestic family needs while on the road, shared deriving duties, and kept a journal during the 50-day, 700-mile overland trip across three states. This is her journal.

Cataloging Information:

Names In the journal:

Josiah B "Joe" Gillespie, Anna Eliza Cook Gillespie, Mrs Skeets, Will Phillips, Jerry Leanning, Jules Sandoz, Bartlett Richards, Billy Schafer, Harry Gillespie, Lewis C "Mose" Gillespie, Raymond C "Jake" Gillespie, Violet Gillespie (later Mrs Alfred Comer), Joseph V "Duff" Gillespie; Mrs And, Troy Hale, Tom Ryan, Jim Tarlow, Grace Gillespie, Mim family, Jim Gillespie, Herman Smith, Abraham L Cook, Kenneth Cook, Jim Wilson, Amos Harris, Mr Utsler, Mr Harbaugh, Beri Vance (Minnie Cook)

Names of those making the trip were:

- Parents, Josiah Gillespie (1850-1933), Anna Gillespie (1851-1933); children, Lewis C. (1876-1958), Raymond C. (1873-1945), Violet (later Mrs. Alfred Comer) (1890-1954), Joseph V. (1892-1961).
- Other riders were Josiah's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Gillespie, Ord, who traveled the Ord-Grand Island segment of the trip; Anna's father, Abraham L. Cook, and brother, Kenneth, who rode from about the Superior area to Oklahoma; and others, including a "Billy," who cannot be identified. Wayne Comer, Moscow, Kansas, to Nebraska State Historical Society, July 28, 1984; David L. Gillespie, Placerville, California, to W. A. Woodward, Chadron, Nebraska, May 13, 1982.
- One son, Harry A. (1872-1949), had moved to Wyoming before his parents resettled in Oklahoma.

Place Names: Because this journal covered a 700-mile overland journey, the indexer has decided not to try to cover each place name in the indexing. However, the OCR readable format in which the article is printed should produce reasonable coverage of the place names.

Photographs / Images: Route Map of the Josiah Gillespie Family, 1899, from Coxville, Nebraska, to Fay, Oklahoma; Joe b Gillespie of Coxville, Nebraska and Charles Smith of Hot Springs, South Dakota, both entrants in the 1893 Chadron-Chicago Horse Race, promoted by William F (Buffalo Bill) Cody; Nuckolls County Courthouse, Nelson, built in 1890, is in use today. The Gillespies camped near the courthouse grounds; Amos Harris and wife. The Gillespies visited his cow camp in the Loup Valley. Courtesy of Mrs. Mark Tolen, Ord.

Coxville, Nebraska, to Fay, Oklahoma
by Wagon (1899):
The Journal of Anna Gillespie

INTRODUCTION

The Josiah B. (Joe) Gillespie family of six¹ moved by wagon train and horseback from their home at Coxville, near Chadron, Nebraska, to west-central Oklahoma in 1899. Gillespie, 49, a horse fancier and celebrity of sorts as winner of the Chadron-Chicago horse race of 1893,² also drove a herd of over 50 horses to Oklahoma. The reasons for leaving Nebraska are not entirely clear, though poor business conditions was doubtless the principal factor. At Fay, Oklahoma, he established a livery stable and blacksmith shop.³

Anna Eliza Cook Gillespie, the 48-year old wife of Josiah, cared for the domestic family needs while on the road, as well as shared driving duties. Mrs. Gillespie, an Iowa schoolteacher before her marriage, also kept a journal during the 50-day, 700-mile (estimate) overland trip across three states. The journal is published here substantially without change.⁴—Editor, *Nebraska History*.

THE JOURNAL

August 17, 1899—We are off this morning. Mrs. Skeets, Will Phillips, and Jerry Leanning were over to say goodbye. Had a hot disagreeable trip to Ida P.O.⁵ where we camped for dinner. We started on in the afternoon and camped for the night on the Niobrara [River] at a village called Dunlap⁶ where there is a cheese factory. Had a nice place to camp on the Niobrara River. At night we were treated to an embryo cyclone, and we thought the wagon would blow over. The tent blew down, and it was an amusing sight to see the boys out in all kinds of costumes driving stakes. Traveling in a wagon is no doubt a very pleasant way of passing the time when one does not have to do it; but I believe I prefer home

after all, especially when [we] must travel whether [one] wants to or not.

August 18, 1899—We broke camp rather early this morning, and after loading supplies, left the river. Travel became monotonous as we drove through some uninteresting country. There were a few good houses, but most of the time the scenery was broken only by an occasional sod home in a very dilapidated condition. By evening, however, we had reached Sandaws [Sandoz], and had a very nice place to camp on high ground. Violet gathered some pretty wild flowers along the river. We are getting used to traveling now, and are beginning to enjoy the trip more. Our appetites are excellent.

August 19, 1899—We crossed [forded] the river at Grayson P.O. [to the south bank of the Niobrara] last night and camped. We were again treated by a cyclone. The wind blew a gale, and the rain came down in torrents. We were treated as usual to a negligee spectacle. This time it was Joe who furnished the entertainment, darting about in the rain, picking up the things he insisted on leaving out because he "knew" it wouldn't rain. Mr. Sandaws [Jules Sandoz] at Grayson P.O.⁷ has quite a curiosity, an orchard in a sand bank. He has plums, prunes, cherries, and all kinds of small fruit growing (and asparagus) in sand. We began to strike some fine looking country this morning, a little too broken to suit everyone, but the hills are smooth and well grassed over. We passed fine-looking corn fields, and the tumble-down sod houses are giving way to good frame buildings, mostly painted white with red roofs.

August 20, 1899—I have been fired from the commissary and politely informed that my services are no longer needed in the cook tent, so for the last two days I have been acting as star boarder and playing the role of fine lady. That part is new to me, but I find myself able to catch on quite readily. However, I drive one team. We are beginning to pass herds of fine cattle. We are camped in Bartlett Richards'⁸ pasture by some of his big red tanks and windmills. We shall stay over Sunday and let the horses rest.

Billy [Billy Schafer, the riding horse], was sick this morning; had a spell of cramps, the result of serruptious [surreptitious]

visit to a corn field and a too free indulgence in green corn. The boys are unpacking the wagons haphazardly, with the result that the things most needed are at the bottom of the wagons. Well, I feel as if I had said goodbye to old Dawes County with the debts and discouragements, its hot winds, drouths, and hard times generally, and I intend to begin a new life.⁹ If only I had Harry with me. Poor Harry [a son in Wyoming]; will I ever see him again?

[The page with entries of August 21-22 is missing.]

August 23, 1899—We passed Mud lake¹⁰ this morning. The lake is not as large as when I saw it last, but it is still a pretty lake. We camped at noon right in a man's dooryard. Joe [her husband] is fast adopting the manners of the average mover. I foresee that he will have to be sat down on, and I shall do the matter pretty effectually the next time he camps in a man's dooryard.

Thursday, August 24, 1899—We have been on the road just one week to a day. The little sick colt died last night. It was a very cold night. Cold enough to frost, but no, I didn't get up until long after the sun came up, so I do not know if it frosted or not. We passed the Falls [of the Loup River] this morning.¹¹ It looked so familiar that I turned, half expecting to see the Figure 4 Ranch house,¹² and the group of girls from Lincoln; but the work of man changes and decays. The works of nature only endure. We camped at noon on the Loup, and will remain in camp the rest of the day to let the horses feed.

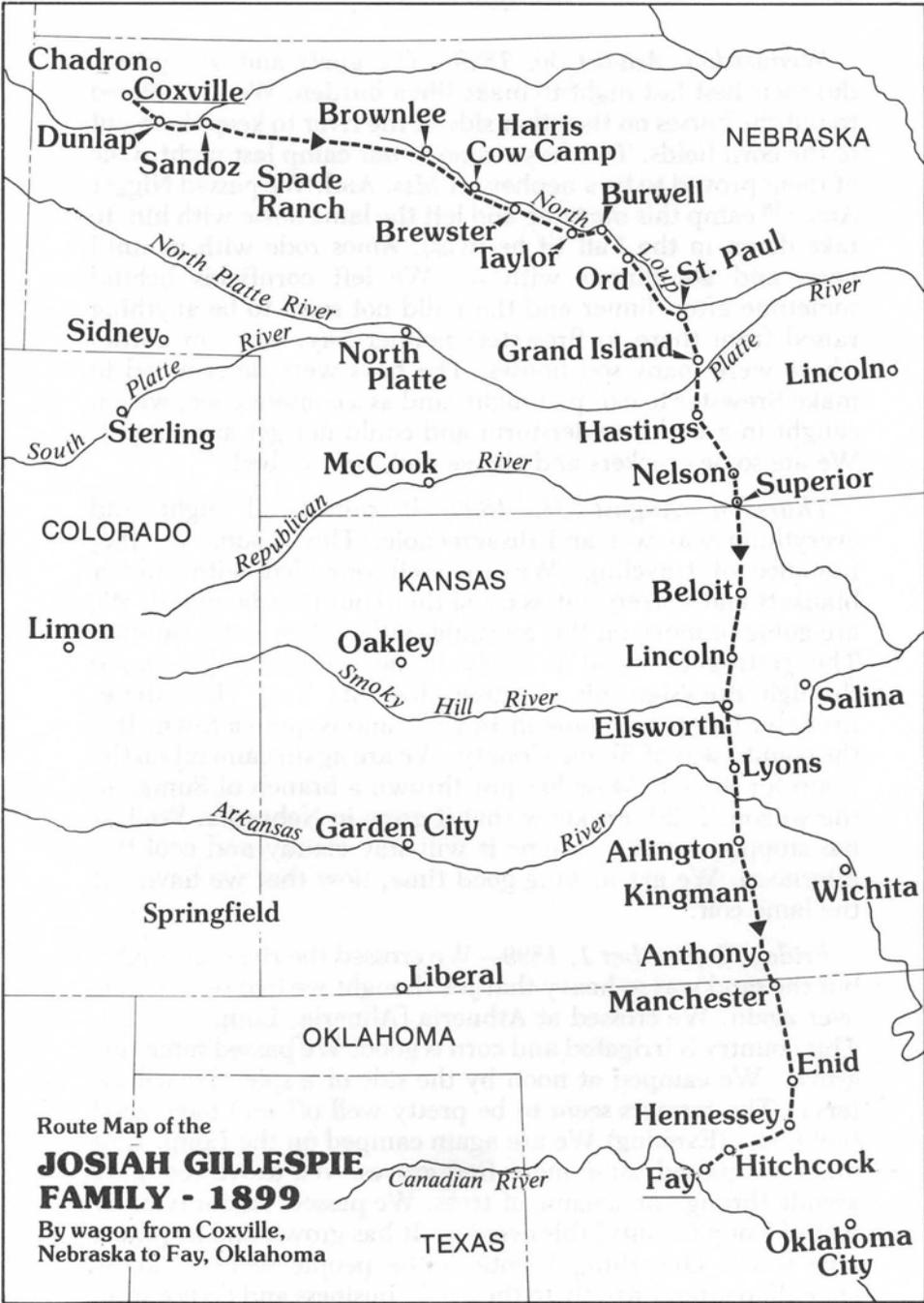
August 25, 1899—We came over some of the roughest roads I ever saw this morning. In fact, there was little or no road at all—nothing but cow paths. We crossed the Loup twice. Joe had one of his grumbling spells. It must do man good to grumble at what he cannot help. At least I know they avail themselves of [it] every opportunity. I shall ride in the spring wagon until the atmosphere clears a little. (Evening) We have camped for night on the Loup and are close to the bridge. I am afraid to tell how many grouse we had tonight. All is serene again. We have a fire ready for breakfast. Jake's gun is a great help in the way of providing meat to eat. We are all pretty tired of fish. The lame horse is improving. We crossed the Loup five times today.¹³

Saturday, August 26, 1899—Five of the horses got away yesterday. We did not miss them until this morning, a little after we started. Mose [nickname of son Lewis C., age 23] and Jake [nickname of son Raymond C., age 21] went back after them. After waiting awhile, we went into camp and after dinner the boys started out again. We drove on, Violet [daughter, age 9] and Duff [nickname of son Joseph, age 7] driving the horses. The boys found the lost horses before we had gone far, and we drove to the river at Brownlee¹⁴ and camped.

Sunday, August 27, 1899—I did not like this camping place. It is an old camp ground and the dirty shirts, old tin cans and other trash, was not conducive to improve our appetites. Mosquitoes and flies were bad. Violet and her father went to Sunday School at ten o'clock. Brownlee is quite a nice little town. There is a little church with a bell and an organ. There are also a store, livery stable, blacksmith shop, hotel, and about a dozen dwelling houses. This is a hay country and as far as the eye can reach are big hay flats. They say here that a quarter section of good hay land is worth \$1,000.00. Joe found some old friends at Brownlee.

Monday, August 28, 1899—We left Brownlee this morning and continued on our way down the river. It was very hot all forenoon, but it clouded over at night. We had a very pretty camping place on the [North Loup] river and excellent feed for the horses. We passed several corn fields, and I think we are getting to a farming country at last. I am getting tired of canned tomatoes and hungry for potatoes and corn. The children waded in the river at noon for the first time. The river is quite wide here. We concluded to camp here all afternoon, as two of the little colts are sick and the lame horse gave out. The boys have gone swimming.

Tuesday, August 29, 1899—The mosquitoes and gnats nearly devoured us last night and the flies are very bad this morning. We are camped on the river near the bridge for dinner. The children have found some pretty wild flowers. We are beginning to pass cornfields again. We passed some fine fields of corn and some nice groves. We stopped at a little store and got some butter. We are again camped on the Loup.



Route Map of the
**JOSIAH GILLESPIE
 FAMILY - 1899**

By wagon from Coxville,
 Nebraska to Fay, Oklahoma

Wednesday, August 30, 1899—The gnats and mosquitoes did their best last night to make life a burden. We are obliged to put the horses on the other side of the river to keep them out of the corn fields. Two boys came to our camp last night. One of them proved to be a nephew of Mrs. And. We passed Nigger Amos'¹⁵ camp this morning and left the lame horse with him to take down in the Fall (if he lives). Amos rode with us until noon and ate dinner with us. We left cornfields behind sometime after dinner and there did not seem to be anything raised from there to Brewster: neither hay, corn, or cattle. There were many sod houses. The boys were determined to make Brewster to camp at night, and as a consequence, we got caught in a bad thunderstorm and could not get any supper. We ate some crackers and cheese and went to bed.

Thursday, August 31, 1899—It rained all night and everything was wet and disagreeable. This is some of [the] romance of traveling. We are well provided with rubber blankets and shakers but as usual they could not be found. We are going to move on this morning, although it is still raining. The getting of wood is likely to be problem. We passed through Brewster this morning. Joe met Troy Hale there. Brewster has grown some in 14 years and is quite a town. It is the county seat of Blaine County. We are again camped on the Loup for dinner. Mose has just thrown a branch of Sumac in the wagon. I did not know that it grew in Nebraska. Well, it has stopped raining. I hope it will stay cloudy and cool this afternoon. We are making good time, now that we have left the lame colt.

Friday, September 1, 1899—We crossed the river last night, but the sand was so heavy that Joe thought we had better cross over again. We crossed at Athneria [Almeria, Loup County]. This country is irrigated and corn is good. We passed some fine groves. We camped at noon by the side of a splendid willow fence. The farmers seem to be pretty well off and have good buildings. (Evening) We are again camped on the Loup. Last night we passed some more fine groves. We drove for quite awhile through an avenue of trees. We passed Taylor [county seat of Loup County] this evening. It has grown and is quite a nice town. One thing I notice—the people seem to know enough to attend strictly to their own business and do not stare

and surround the wagons as if we were some wild animals on exhibition. I like the appearance of the country, especially the fine groves. The farmers seem prosperous and have some very fine farm houses and barns.

Saturday, September 2, 1899—One of the little colts is sick this morning, and we are afraid it cannot travel. Last night was very windy, and this morning it is cold. We have much cooler weather since we started south than we had in Dawes county. The little colt died after we started. It is almost impossible to save them after they get sick. We passed through Burwell at noon and camped on the Loup by the bridge for dinner and concluded to remain in camp the rest of the day. I took advantage of the halt to do some washing. There has been a continual stream of visitors today. Many of the old settlers are still here. Crops are very poor in this section this year. We heard today that Tom Ryan had been shot and killed by George Coyle.¹⁶

Sunday, September 3, 1899—It rained last night and still threatens to begin this morning, and contrary to our usual custom, we have concluded to move on, as there is not much grazing ground for the horses. It still looks very much like a rainy day. Well, a rainy day would be a novelty to us denizens of drought-stricken Dawes County. We stopped at a house this morning and got a Dawes County paper. Tom Ryan was killed as we heard. We met quite a number of Dawes County [people] in this [Garfield or Valley] County. We met Jim Tarlow [family friend] at noon. He does not look much older. He seemed glad to see us. We are camped for dinner on the Loup in high grass. We intend to drive below Ord this afternoon and camp for the night.

Monday, September 4, 1899—We camped for the night last night about four miles below Ord in an irrigating ditch. We passed through Ord in the afternoon. I experienced my first home-sick feeling when we passed through the town. I could hardly believe it was Ord at all; such a dilapidated town. No nice yards or shade trees; great holes in the sidewalks. I do not think the population very enterprising. Chadron is an honor to the country, compared with Ord. There are no crops worth mentioning here. Dry weather has ruined everything. We

stopped at the cemetery. Our baby's [Grace] grave and tombstone was alright.¹⁷ I was surprised to see the way the cemetery had filled up in 14 years.

[The Gillespies visited relatives and friends for 10 days in the Ord-Scotia-St. Paul area, where they had lived before moving to Dawes County. On September 14 they continued on their trip southward.]

Thursday, September 14, 1899—Well old journal, I will again take you up. We got to Uncle Will's [a relative of Joe Gillespie] in time for supper. This the night of the 4th, and we have been feasted and feted ever since. We had a dinner at Mim's. Belle and Mim have changed very little. They have a large family of children, 7 I believe. I had no idea that there were so many settlers left in the country, nor that they remembered us so well and would be glad to see us. Everybody flocked in to see us and we held a continual reception. I got three letters from Lena at Scotia. Poor children, I am afraid they are having a hard time in the West. I hope they will follow us. We camped yesterday at the Potts. Nearly all of the St. Paul relation were there. Poor Cora broke down when we came to say goodbye. I had a pleasant visit with Alice and Nannie at Scotia. The girls are well-fixed, have a nice home, good husbands and a pair of cute babies. However, if I commence to write about the babies, I will never get through as there were so many of them and to me, they were all so nice. Uncle Jim [Gillespie] and young Jim came quite a long way with us and Grandpa and Grandma Gillespies, parents of Josiah¹⁸ are going as far as Grand Island. Duff's little colt, Snyder, got cut in a wire fence and he gave it B. . . . pares [illegible]. We drove to St. Libory and camped for the night. We sent Grandpa and Grandma to the hotel to spend the night.

Friday, September 15, 1899—Broke camp this morning early and drove to Grand Island. We visited Aunt Sarah in the afternoon. I like Grand Island. The people seem so plain. We had just started on when a wagon tire [metal outer rim] came off and delayed us a couple of hours. I had a tooth pulled this morning. Camped on the Platte at night. We crossed nine bridges in crossing the Platte.

Saturday, September 16, 1899—Found it raining when we got up this morning. The wind blew a gale all night, but nevertheless we were eaten alive by mosquitoes. The boys say were as large as grasshoppers. The horses were lots of trouble. We stopped at a town called Doniphan on the table [upland] between Grand Island and Hastings and had three more tires set. We have lots of chances to trade horses and once in awhile have a chance to sell, but the prices do not suit. We had a chance to trade the entire bunch for town property at Doniphan. There is some very pretty country between Grand Island and Hastings. We have found the people quite pleasant and friendly in this section of Nebraska—getting us water for our horses out of their wells and letting us camp near them without grumbling. Old Bill [Billy Schafer, the horse] tried to take possession of Hastings and we were obliged to tie him up.

Saturday, September 16, and Sunday, September 17, 1899—Just a month ago this morning since we left Dawes County. I have enjoyed the trip real well, since I have become accustomed to this kind of traveling. Kenneth is quite a camp rustler. He takes hold as if he was used to it. We camped last night at the B and M [Burlington and Missouri Railroad] stock yard. Had plenty of good water but were obliged to buy baled hay for feed. Contrary to our usual custom, we will have to travel today. Last night was very cold, but this morning is pleasant. Joe bought a big watermelon here that I cannot lift more than 6 inches off the ground.

Monday, September 18, 1899—We camped in a lane 1st night. I was sick all night. Crops are very poor in this section. We expect to reach Herman Smith's by noon. The nights are so cold but the days are not very hot. I feel far from well this morning.

Tuesday, September 19, 1899—We camped at Herman Smith's all afternoon yesterday. They were so clever and made us welcome. They are not very well satisfied. Crops are not good here, but they are in a good neighborhood. We left Mose at Smith's. He will go to Grand Island this evening and finish up [classes at the Business and Normal School]. He will then follow us. We have camped on the Blue for dinner. We are camped for the night near the County [courthouse] of Nuckles



Joe B. Gillespie (left) of Coxville, Nebraska, and Charles Smith of Hot Springs, South Dakota, were entrants in the 1893 Chadron-Chicago Horse Race, promoted by William F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody. The picture was taken in Chicago. At left-center is Billy Schafer, one of Gillespie's two mounts in the race. Courtesy of W. A. Woodward, Daves County Historical Society, Chadron.

[Nuckolls] County. It [Nelson] is quite a nice little town; has a fine court house.¹⁹ There is not much grass for our horses. We have traveled over some very hilly country. We have a nice place to camp—a sort of public park and picnic ground.

Wednesday, September 20, 1899—There was a heavy frost last night. The horses found plenty of grass after all in the timber. What clever people we do run across. Some boys came to our camp last night and told us where to find water, and a man took the trouble to find a camping place for us. I think the boys will change their minds about the people in settled countries. We have only met one disobliging man and he was from Box Butte County. We all miss Mose. I kept looking around for him at supper time. We ought to pass the state line tonight, if we travel at all. This creek is called Elk Creek. We passed Superior this forenoon. There was a circus in town and the town was full of people.²⁰ We are camped on the Republican River near the state line for dinner. This river like the Platte, has very little water in it. It is pretty wide. Corn in Southern Nebraska is very good. I like the looks of the country north of Superior, although it is rather hilly. There are some [nice] residences and well-kept lawns in the town. We traveled in Kansas all afternoon and only made Weber [Webber] by sundown. Could not find water and were obliged to drive three miles west to a spring. Could not water our horses, but got water to cook with at a farm house. The boys dug out the spring; but there was not water enough for the horses so they had to do without. This is the first dry camp we have made.

Thursday, September 21, 1899—The windmills run all night so the farmers kindly allow us to water our horses in their tanks. We had bad luck all forenoon. Jake [son Raymond] and Billy [unidentified] missed us in the timber. They took one road and we another, and while we were waiting in a lane for them to come up, they went ahead via another road. They got an hour's start on us, and we kept chasing each other; they going back and we going ahead until the whole forenoon was wasted. We are at last all together but Billy. He is still hunting for us. This [is the] most hilly country we have found [doubtless she excluded the Sandhills], and the roads are bad. The people are very clever. Billy got in, in time for dinner. I did not see much of the country, as I was sick all afternoon.

Friday, September 22, 1899—We camped all night in a lane where there was a tank and pump. There was plenty of water for our horses although the boys were obliged to pump by hand. I have still felt pretty weak all forenoon and did not notice much of the country. We passed through the town of Formoso, where Joe bought some supplies and some medicine. That little town has a number of stone houses and stone fences, and also [I notice] that stone posts are in use.²¹ A man came along after we had camped for the night and made Joe pay him a dollar for camping on mowed ground and watering the horses at his tank.

Saturday, September 23, 1899—A heavy mist was rising from low land when we got up this morning. I feel some better and think I will be able to sit in front awhile this morning. We get nothing but salty water to drink. Grandpa [Abraham L. Cook, Anna Gillespie's father] drank so much that it made him sick. We are getting an early start this morning. We passed a great many stone houses and stone fences and sidewalks, and at one place we saw a well-curb cut out of stone. The stone houses and stone fences like the old man's trading horse, "don't handsome much".²² We have crossed the Solomon River at Beloit, and the boys are going to a circus, the same circus which was at Superior.

Sunday, September 24, 1899—We are again obliged to travel on Sunday to find a place to hold our horses. I was very sick again last night. The water does not agree with me at all. There seems to be a good deal of timber on the Solomon. The people are still very kind to us.

Monday, September 25, 1899—I dreamed last night of all the home folks and in my weakened condition, it made me feel homesick for the first time. I do wish I could feel able to write to Mose. He will imagine all sorts of evil has befallen us. A man came to our camp last night and offered to let us camp in his pasture as that would do away with night herding. They concluded to move [to his pasture]. The man put his little boy in the front wagon to show us the way. We drove pretty late to get into the pasture, but the boys got one good nights rest. Kansas has a good corn crop so far, but there is not much fruit. The thick groves and hedges make it look like a timber country

when seen from high ground. That man who owns pasture sent me some herbs for medicine. I shall always stand up for Kansas people after this. They are the kindest people in the world.

Tuesday, September 26, 1899—I wrote a long letter to Mose today. My pens are giving out. I will have to wait until I get to some town. We passed some fine farms this morning, and there are good grazing grounds. At noon we are finding more open ground. They traded horses twice today.

Wednesday, September 27, 1899—We passed Ellsworth²³ last night at sunset and camped in a pasture. This morning a cranky old chap came along and accused us of trespassing and made us pay him a dollar and a half. There was some fine open country this side [probably north side of Smoky Hill River] and plenty of water, but it was too late to travel so far, so we camped in the pasture. This seems to be a stock country. Ellsworth is where Jim Wilson's folks used to live.

Thursday, September 28, 1899—The wind blew terribly all afternoon, and last night it became almost a tornado. We camped in a lane and a cranky farmer assured us that if our horses did any damage, he would shut them up. However, we still meet clever people who let us water at their tanks. A man passed us going north from Oklahoma. He said it was very unhealthy there. That rather discouraged the boys. We passed through Lyons this afternoon. I did not see much of the town, but what I saw was nice and clean. There was a fine large livery barn. We stopped before it about an hour while Kenneth [Cook, Mrs. Gillespie's brother] went up town to write a letter. We made a long drive and are camped on the Arkansas River for the night.

Friday, September 29, 1899—My what a cold morning. The further south one gets, the colder the weather gets. I was disappointed in the Arkansas River. It is not nearly as wide as I expected. We passed through some country this morning that reminded me of Dawes County. This does not seem such a good farm country. We are to have fresh fish for dinner. Billy went fishing this morning.

Saturday, September 30, 1899—We camped on a creek near Arlington. I did a little washing. The wind has been blowing a



Nuckolls County Courthouse, Nelson, built in 1890, is in use today. The Gillespies camped near the courthouse grounds.



Amos Harris and wife. The Gillespies visited his cow camp in the Loup Valley. Courtesy of Mrs. Mark Tolen, Ord.

gale all morning, so I could not see much of the country. The soil is a red color and there does not seem to be much farming done. We passed some large pastures full of fine cattle. The buildings do not seem to indicate much prosperity. There is a country store and P.O. near where we camped. We are near the [Reno-Kingman] County line. We passed through Kingman at sunset and camped for Sunday. We hired pasture \$1.50 to use until Monday morning. Kingman is a nice big town on the [Ninnescah] River. We are camped in a little ravine south of town.

Sunday, October 1, 1899—The wind blew a gale all day, and it was very disagreeable remaining in camp. I tried to write, but the wind rocked the wagon so that it was next to impossible. We had all the peaches we wanted. There was a big orchard near camp, and the people told us to help ourselves. I am beginning to want to know what is going on in the outside world. I have seen only one newspaper since we left Grand Island. I hope there will be a bushel of letters waiting for me at Enid [Oklahoma].

Monday, October 2, 1899—We broke camp this morning rather late and drove all forenoon through a country which reminded me of the country near Crawford [town west of Chadron, near Pine Ridge]. This is a stock country, and there is plenty of open country to hold the horses. We are camped for noon on the Chikaskia River south of a little town called Reaga[?] [Rago]. Four covered wagons have just passed us going south.

Tuesday, October 3, 1899—Today will probably see us out of Kansas. We had a good camping place last night, but had to night herd. This morning is cold windy. We are getting an early start. A couple of little boys showed us where to camp and then came and showed us the way to the creek to water the horses. Kansas people are so clever. We had a terrible drive the forenoon. Red dust was an inch thick over everything.²⁴ We camped at noon on a little creek south of Anthony. The water is so salty that we could not use it. The opening of the salt mines had ruined all but [the] well in town. We saw the big salt drying house.²⁵ Billy's horse fell with him and almost broke his leg. We camped at a little rough whiskey town just

across the line [probably Manchester, Oklahoma]. We passed big cornfields all afternoon and some hilly country.

Wednesday, October 4, 1899 (Oklahoma Territory)—Cold and windy again this morning. I wonder if Harry and his folks are sheltered [in their Wyoming home]. This is not a very nice camping place, and I do not think much of Kansas about a half mile away. A man let us water the horses at a pond in his pasture. Thus far, I can see but little difference between Kansas and Oklahoma. We are camped in a lane for dinner. The soil seems to be red sand. We have found some curious plants and some pretty flowers. I will soon be through with this old journal. We will probably get to Enid tomorrow night.

Thursday, October 5th, 1899—Camped last night on a little stream and put the horses out to pasture. The boys like the country we passed through this morning. As for me, I am too tired to like anything. We crossed the dry bed of Salt River. The salt lay in flakes all over the sand. A man gave us some mammoth watermelons. We are 18 miles from Enid and are camped for dinner. There is a man in the camp trying to sell us our claim.²⁶

Friday, October 6, 1899—We got to Mr. Utsler's in time for dinner today. They were glad to see us. They live on a creek, and we had fish for dinner.

Tuesday, October 10, 1899—We left Mr. Utsler's this afternoon and came out to Mr. Harbaugh's, where we camped for the night. They have a fine place. I like this country very well. It reminds me of Jones County, Iowa. Mr. Harbaugh's were very glad to see us. We had some music and spent a very enjoyable evening. They like the country very well.

Wednesday, October 11, 1899—Left Mr. Harbaugh's this morning and had to drive until almost night to find water. We drove through the Black Jacks, which by the way is [oak] timber. Passed several stores and post offices, and one log church where they are holding revival meetings. We camped in the timber, and a woman and a lot of children visited camp. I herded one end of the lane a part of the night.

Thursday, October 12, 1899—Very windy this morning. We crossed the Cimarron River and are now in old Oklahoma.²⁷ We will get to [Beri] Vance's tonight if nothing happens. (End of Journal)

[Mrs. Beri Vance, formerly Minnie Cook, was a sister of Anna Gillespie. After visiting the Vances in Hitchcock the Gillespies moved on to Kingfisher and later to Fay. On open pages at the back of the journal, Anna Gillespie later added the following itemized family expenses.²⁸]

Expenses for March, 1901

Taxes	\$12.00	Garden Seeds	2.22
Blacksmith tools	25.00	Repairs for Harness . . . . .	.75
Song book . . . . .	.25	Horsefeed and Meal . . . . .	.90
Feed . . . . .	.90	Coffee . . . . .	.40
Rope	1.00	Sugar . . . . .	.25
Sunday School collection . . . . .	.87	Overalls . . . . .	.50

*Expenses in 1901
on the Children*

Mose		Duff and Violet	
Watch	\$1.50	Shoes	\$1.20
Shoes	2.50	Stockings . . . . .	.35
Collars . . . . .	.25	Marbles . . . . .	.10
2 Speakers . . . . .	.35	Pencils . . . . .	.04
Underclothes . . . . .	.60	Calico . . . . .	.14
Money	2.45	Tablet . . . . .	.10
Jake		Buttons . . . . .	.05
Buggie Whip	\$.20	Candy . . . . .	.05
Barber Bill . . . . .	.60	Reader . . . . .	.30
Shoes	2.50	Shoes	1.50
Money	2.00	Ribbon . . . . .	.06
Speakers . . . . .	.20	Hat . . . . .	.25

NOTES

(This article was annotated by members of the *Nebraska History* staff.)

1. Making the trip were: parents, Josiah Gillespie (1850-1933), Anna Gillespie (1851-1933); children, Lewis C. (1876-1958), Raymond C. (1873-1945), Violet (later Mrs. Alfred Comer) (1890-1954), Joseph V. (1892-1961).

Other riders were Josiah's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Gillespie, Ord, who traveled the Ord-Grand Island segment of the trip; Anna's father, Abraham L. Cook, and brother, Kenneth, who rode from about the Superior area to Oklahoma; and others, including a "Billy," who cannot be identified. Wayne Comer, Moscow, Kansas, to Nebraska State Historical Society, July 28, 1984; David L. Gillespie, Placerville, California, to W. A. Woodward, Chadron, Nebraska, May 13, 1982.

One son, Harry A. (1872-1949), had moved to Wyoming before his parents resettled in Oklahoma.

2. The celebrated race from Chadron, Nebraska, to the World's Fair (Chicago, 1893) has been written about many times. Rider John Berry arrived in Chicago first, but in the minds of some officials should have been disqualified because of prior knowledge of the route. Gillespie arrived shortly after Berry. Both men received about equal monetary awards. William E. Deahl Jr., "The Chadron-Chicago 1,000-Mile Cowboy Race," *Nebraska History*, 53 (Summer, 1972), pp. 166-193.

Joe Gillespie took the gray gelding, Billy Schafer, one of his Chadron-Chicago mounts, on the trip to Oklahoma. The famous old horse was buried some years later (about 1906) on the outskirts of Fay. When Oklahoma Highway 33 was graded through Fay in the 1930s, the almost forgotten burial was disturbed and the bones were re-consigned to a new grave now covered by the road fill. Harold Comer, Fay, Oklahoma, to Nebraska State Historical Society, May 23, August 17, 1984; Wayne Comer, Moscow, Kansas, to Nebraska State Historical Society, July 28, 1984.

It will be noticed in the journal that Anna Gillespie speaks of the fractious old gelding with such affection that it is difficult to distinguish him from a family member.

3. Joe Gillespie and daughter Violet were for a year (about 1910) station agents for the Frisco Railroad at Fay. Harold Comer to Nebraska State Historical Society, May 23, 1984.

4. The original Anna Gillespie journal is owned by Wayne Comer, her grandson, of Moscow, Kansas.

Anna Eliza Cook, a Canadian teaching in the Dubuque, Iowa, area, married Josiah Gillespie, also of Dubuque, in 1870. He brought his bride to Howard County, Nebraska, where he had worked. The family moved to Ord in 1881 to operate a livery stable. In 1885 he conducted the U.S. government stage line from Fort Robinson, Nebraska, to the Pine Ridge Agency, South Dakota, while the family lived at Coxville, Nebraska. He later operated a saw mill and farmed in Dawes County. The 1893 Chadron-Chicago horse race, in which Mr. Gillespie competed, made celebrities of the Gillespie family. W. A. Woodward, Chadron, Nebraska, to Nebraska State Historical Society, September 25, 1982.

5. Ida Post Office is about 18 miles south of Chadron in SW $\frac{1}{4}$, S18, T30, R48. W. A. Woodward to Nebraska State Historical Society, September 25, 1982.

6. During the 1880-1890s Vojtech Albert Chladek built a mill, store, and cheese factory at Dunlap, 2 miles east of US Highway 385 and 2 miles north of the Box Butte County line on the Niobrara River. He was postmaster twice, April 20, 1889 to August 1, 1890, and April 20, 1898, to April 24, 1899. The businesses became the property of Bernard Fendrick in 1899. W. E. Woodward to Nebraska State Historical Society, September 25, 1982.

Due to poor economic conditions and drouth, which caused a loss of population, another creamery at Chadron suspended that summer. *Dawes County Journal* (Chadron), July 21, August 11, 18, 1899.

7. Grayson Post Office existed from 1889-1928. Jules Sandoz was its postmaster in 1899. It changed locations as postmasters changed living quarters. It would have been in Minnetonka or East Mirage Township of Sheridan County. Letter W. A. Woodward to Nebraska State Historical Society, September 25, 1982; Elton A. Perkey, *Perkey's Place Names* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1982), p. 178-181.

Sandoz was made famous in the historical fiction of his daughter, Mari Sandoz. A post office named Sandoz operated in the Niobrara Valley about 20 miles southeast of Hay Springs from 1885-1895.

8. Bartlett Richards, then Nebraska's most widely known cattleman, by 1899 had extended the Greater Spade Ranch to include the ruggedest of the Sandhills. Its range extended from Ellsworth on the Burlington Railroad northward toward the Niobrara River, most of it public domain. The Gillespie route cut southeast from the Niobrara across the upper Richards range, the C-Bar and Overton sub-ranches, on the divide between the Niobrara and North Loup. Rude shelter for workers, fences, windmills, tanks, trails, and telephone lines were found throughout the Spade Ranch by 1899. See Ruth Van Ackeren-Bartlett Richards Jr., *Bartlett Richards, Nebraska Sandhills Cattleman* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1980), a comprehensive study of the Sandhill ranges of the 1890-1910 period. The book won the 1981 Western Heritage Award for non-fiction.

9. During the 1890s northwest Nebraska—and the High Plains generally—drouth and depression drove thousands of Nebraskans to the areas of greater moisture to the east. Newspaper publishers, whose boosterism never admitted the worst, often chided the “quitters” who searched for greener pastures. The *Dawes County Journal* (Chadron), August 11, 1899, commented on the “lady who. . . moved. . . in the direction of fruit culture” but wrote back ruing her decision. Another contrite deserter wrote back, “Don't buy fruit farms in Arkansas.” The Gillespies were moving to a section of Oklahoma not much different in its agricultural potential from Dawes County.

10. Mud Lake is not shown on current maps. It must have been one of the small Sandhills lakes on the upland in Cherry County.

11. Big Falls on the North Loup northwest of Mullen is “moving upstream.” The last move was sudden; the old falls crumbled and a stretch of rapids formed upstream. Then the rapids washed out and exposed new falls—all in little more than a week. *Nebraskaland Magazine's Nebraska Rivers* (Lincoln: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, 1983).

12. The diarist found the area near the Falls resembled that of the Figure 4 Ranch. In *An Early History of Cherry County*, page 21, author C. S. Reese locates the Figure 4 in mid-Sheridan County near the headwaters of the Snake. The Figure 4 Ranch house, an extra good structure for the time, was well known for its Brussels carpets. The owners were easterners. W. A. Woodward, Chadron, to Nebraska State Historical Society, September 25, 1982; Letter, Ruth Van Ackeren, Omaha, to Nebraska State Historical Society, May 5, 1982.

13. The North Loup River, alternately hugging the sides of the narrow valley, made it necessary for the trail to cross the stream repeatedly.

14. Brownlee is know for the Negro settlement which appeared in Cherry County after the Kinkaid Act (1904). When the Gillespies were here in 1899, isolated Negroes were in the area, usually in the employ of ranchers or railroads. Between 1908 and 1912 “more than 79 claims” were filed by blacks beginning “ten miles northwest of Brownlee and extending up the North Loup River for fifteen miles.” C. S. Reese, *An Early History of Cherry County* (Simeon, Nebraska, 1945), pp. 93-94.

15. This was an Amos Harris cattle camp. A familiar figure in North-Central Nebraska, Harris at various times ranged cattle “all the way from Crawford to O'Neill,” usually in the employ of others. *A View of the Valley* (Ord, Nebraska, 1973),

p. 53. Harris was born of slave parents in Texas and came to Nebraska with cattle drives. After his first wife died in surgery, he remarried and moved to a Kinkaid claim in Wheeler County. Editor Haskell in the *Ord Quiz* of March 2, 1911, calls him "the most faithful of the faithful. . .intelligent, genial, kind, and trustworthy." Haskell said, "Nigger Amos, by which he was commonly called, was never spoken in contempt. . .and we believe he never resented [the name]." After several slight paralytic shocks, in late February, 1911, he was stricken in Greeley and never rallied. He was buried at Grand Island. It was thought he was about 60.

16. Sheepman George Coil shot cattleman Tom Ryan in Dawes County on August 21, 1899, during a dispute over unused pasture. The Gillespies must have known the men. The land, which lay between the Coil and Ryan farms, was leased by Coil from absentee owners. Some rough land nearby was still in the public domain. Coil was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 10 years in prison. *Dawes County Journal* (Chadron), August 25, 1899; March 3, April 13, 1900.

17. The grave, now without a tombstone, could not be located by members of the Ord Genealogical Society. Mrs. M. D. Tholen, Ord, Nebraska, to Nebraska State Historical Society, September 29, 1982.

Another Gillespie child, Grace, died when 6 of a heart ailment. She is buried in Dawes County. Donald L. Gillespie, Placerville, California, to W. A. Woodward, Chadron, Nebraska, May 13, 1982.

18. Grandpa and Grandma were Mr. and Mrs. Andrew J. Gillespie Sr., of Ord, parents of Josiah Gillespie. The elder Gillespies settled near Elba in 1871 and grazed cattle along the Loup River. They had 13 children, of whom Josiah was the seventh. In June, 1905, Andrew observed his 100th birthday at Scotia. H. W. Foght, *Trail of the Loup* (Ord, Nebraska, 1906), p. 255-256; Letter, Mrs. M. D. Tholen, Ord, to Nebraska State Historical Society, September 29, 1982. From later entries in the journal, it appears the Andrew Gillespies joined the Oklahoma-bound travelers.

19. The county seat was Nelson. The courthouse of which Mrs. Gillespie speaks was built in 1890 and is still in use.

20. The "Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows" played at Superior September 20. A free morning parade preceded 3-ring afternoon and evening performances. Ringling, a major traveling circus in 1899, claimed "65 railroad cars, 25 elephants, 12 acres of tents, 500 horses, 1,000 employees, 300 performers, \$7,400 daily expense." Admission was 50¢ adults, 25¢ children. Excursion rates on railroad lines into Superior were offered. *Superior Daily Journal*, September 2, 1899.

The Gillespies did not attend the circus in Superior but could not withstand temptation in Beloit, Kansas, when they encountered Ringlings a second time a few days later.

21. Farmer-homesteaders in a 200-mile-long ovate area of Kansas extending southwesterly from near Superior to near Dodge City took advantage of a near-the-surface layer of soft stone to cut fence posts. Exposed to air, the posts hardened. Barbed wire was strung between the massive posts, about 1 x 1 x 6 feet in size.

22. Main streets in this area of Kansas also contained many native-stone buildings. The stone came from the same stratum as the post rock.

23. Ellsworth, a cow town when the Kansas Pacific built west in the 1870s, is about the mid-point between Nebraska and Oklahoma.

24. There are areas of reddish soil extending south from central Kansas into Oklahoma. Much of it has a sandy texture.

25. The Gillespies' route south across Kansas took them through other counties which had salt industries: Ellsworth, Lyons, and Reno.

26. "I do not know of Grandfather [Josiah] Gillespie's taking a "claim" in Oklahoma. He bought property at Fay, Oklahoma, and ran a successful blacksmith shop, and livery stable. He was also Frisco depot agent. Their large home still stands in

Fay and is a current family dwelling. The new owners completely bricked the big old home—and it looks fine.” Wayne Comer, Moscow, Kansas, to Nebraska State Historical Society, July 28, 1984.

His business card (c. 1910) reads: “J. B. Gillespie, registered veterinary. Horse Diseases a specialty. Fay, Oklahoma.” A “commission certificate” signed by Benjamin Frans on March 25, 1908, made Gillespie a “Deputy Sheriff, Dewey County, Oklahoma.” Gillespie Scrapbook, owned by Harold Comer, Fay, Oklahoma.

27. Mrs. Gillespie refers here to the “Unassigned Lands” of central Oklahoma, which until 1899 were not assigned to any Indian tribe.

28. Wayne Comer to Nebraska State Historical Society, August 16, 1984.