

The Willie Handcart Company

Their Day-by-Day Experiences, Including Trail Maps and Driving Directions

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BYU Studies
Provo, Utah

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Dedication

The handcart Saints were willing to give up anything in this world for the gospel and their families, while most people were willing to give up the gospel and their families for anything in this world.

This book is dedicated to the handcart Saints, to my wonderful wife and family, and to everyone else who understands this principle.

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Introduction

On October 19, 1856, near the Sixth Crossing of the Sweetwater River in the Nebraska Territory (now Wyoming) a group of less than 400 Saints pulling handcarts ran headlong into a very early winter storm. Their misfortune had been building for months. They started too late from England and Denmark and took weeks longer than anticipated to cross the Atlantic Ocean by ship. They arrived in Iowa City only to find that they had neither tents nor handcarts, which delayed their departure several weeks. They struggled against persecution as they walked across Iowa in extremely hot and humid conditions. They left Florence and ran into hostile Native Americans, who were murdering isolated groups of travelers. They endured the loss of 30 of their best oxen. They arrived at Fort Laramie only to find the hoped-for food resupply was not awaiting them, so they proceeded with reduced food rations. They went through ever-cooler daily temperatures as they climbed in altitude across the high plains. Finally, they were hit by a very early winter snowstorm on the same day they exhausted their food supply. If any one of these events had not happened, then the story could have been far different.

This is the story of the Willie Handcart Company as told by them through their records. The primary record was the *James G. Willie Emigrating Company Journal* (hereafter the “company journal”). Its first entry was May 1, 1856, in Liverpool, England.¹ The last entry was November 9, 1856, in Salt Lake City, Utah Territory, which was often called

“Great Salt Lake City” or “the Valley.” Many entries were brief. Four or five short sentences occasionally recorded the essential facts.

There were ten handcart companies spread over a five-year period between 1856 and 1860. Three companies traveled to Utah Territory before the Willie Company and six traveled afterward. They experienced many of the things that the Willie Company experienced. However, what they actually went through can, in many cases, only be assumed because complete, substantive, contemporary, daily records were kept by only one company: the Willie Company.

This book focuses on the Willie Company’s trek to the Utah Territory. The company journal provides the superstructure for this volume and is printed in its entirety, day by day, in this book. Three other daily records combine with many later written and oral reports to complete this work. The three major daily records, other than the company journal, that were kept were the following:

Journal of Peder Madsen: April 23 through September 8, 1856;²

Levi Savage’s Diary: June 15 through October 25, 1856;³ and

History of William Woodward: July 5 through October 2, 1856.⁴

Some of the handcart pioneers wrote subsequent accounts of what they recalled. Some passed on oral histories to their descendants. This

book unites the subsequent records with the four primary records. Most other books or stories about the Willie Company rely heavily on the narrative of John Chislett, which was published and probably written about 15 years after the trek. He wrote it after he had left The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was written for publication in T. B. H. Stenhouse's Mormon exposé, *The Rocky Mountain Saints*.⁵ It is cited in *The Willie Handcart Company*, along with the other subsequent records.

The goal of this book is to allow the reader to understand and to experience the Willie Company's day-by-day trek to the Salt Lake Valley. To understand what the company members were experiencing, the book provides background facts, explaining what they were doing and seeing. Some of the journal entries used archaic words or phrases or referred to other people or to events that were well known in 1856, but are not commonly known today. These words, phrases, names, and events are explained following the text. Where possible, maps are provided. Maps allow a bird's-eye view of the area and the obstacles that stood in their way.

This book is not intended to be an academic work, although it is fully researched and documented. It is not meant to be a tour guide, although it gives directions to and provides maps for the various places the Saints visited. It is not a book on all of the handcart companies or even the two that suffered the most. It is focused on only the Willie Company. And it is written for all ages. Those who face challenges in life will find that by following the Willie Company's search for a better life in Zion, their own search will be enhanced. By following the driving directions while reading the firsthand accounts, a modern traveler can be near to where the handcart pioneers were, see or imagine what they might have seen, and feel what they surely felt. Understanding and being there make all the difference.

Notes on the Materials in the Book

Primary and Secondary Sources

All entries from the four primary journal sources are presented as they appear in the currently available typescript copies. No effort has been made to correct any spelling, punctuation, spacing, or other errors in their printed records. The Willie Company Journal entries are always indented, in a serified typeface, without quotation marks, and in most places the journal entry is the first entry for that date. Other than the date heading, which has been standardized for easy reference, the format of the Willie Company Journal, as presented in the typescript copy, is presented without modifications. The Peder Madsen, Levi Savage, and William Woodward entries are identified without endnotes because they are referenced on the date of each entry. The remaining stories presented in the book are supported by reliable records that are cited, and they give the reader a full picture of the challenges the Saints encountered. The commentary appears after the company journal entry and is set in a sans serif typeface.

Travel Instructions

The travel instructions appear in the margins so that readers do not have to take time to read the instructions, while travelers can easily find the driving instructions. There are numerous gravel roads that are identified in this book as the paths to follow in order to get near to where the Willie Company went. All of them can be driven with a two-wheel-drive passenger car. The author and his wife have driven them, with only one flat tire. However, four-wheel-drive vehicles are still recommended. Many of the gravel roads are isolated, poorly maintained, and not well traveled. Cellular phone coverage is spotty at best in these remote areas. It is strongly recommended that if a gravel road is wet, *travelers should avoid it!*

Trail and Camp Maps

Probable trail and camp locations are presented on United States Geological Survey maps that are old and not always up-to-date. However, they do accurately reflect the topography. Remember that government officials are constantly changing names and locations of roads. From Iowa City to Great Salt Lake City, this book identifies the trail and the camping areas that the Willie Company likely used based upon the journal entries and the other sources cited. These, in some cases, are only educated guesses of the author. Remember hundreds of thousands of people crossed the plains to Oregon, Utah, and California. Consequently, identifying a particular trail or campsite as a location that the Willie Company used is not a simple matter. The trails and campsites are well researched, but surely there are serious questions that may never be answered. Even the professionals cannot agree on some locations. In certain cases, specific directions are given to the locations the Saints visited. In a few instances, where it appears helpful, the site's Global Positioning System Coordinates are also presented. (Note: These coordinates are given in degrees and decimal minutes from the WGS 84 reference system.)

Notes

1. James G. Willie Emigrating Company Journal, May 1, 1856, to November 9, 1856, typescript copy, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Note: this journal is published in its entirety, courtesy of Church Archives.
2. Peder Madsen, Journal (Danish), Church Archives, translated by Tove Holden Jorgensen Johnson, copy in L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections).
3. Levi Savage, Diary, typescript copy, Church Archives.
4. History of William Woodward, 1833–1908, typescript copy, Church Archives.
5. John Chislett, “Mr. Chislett’s Narrative,” in *The Rocky Mountain Saints*, T. B. H. Stenhouse (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1873), 312–32.

Chapter 1

Liverpool, England, to New York City, New York

“I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.”

Jeremiah 3:14

Thursday, May 1, 1856

Passengers embarked on the Ship “Thornton”, took possession of their berths as allotted to them; by the evening, order and tranquility prevailed throughout the whole ship. Jennet McNeil from Haddington near Edinburgh was safely delivered of a fine boy at 5 p.m. The number of passengers are as follows: 560 adults, 172 children, 29 infants.

Birth: Charles Thornton McNeil to Jennet and Thomas McNeil

The James G. Willie Emigrating Company Journal began on May 1, 1856. It took a little over six weeks to sail from Liverpool, England, to New York City, New York. The ship *Thornton* did not leave the port until May 4. The first three days were spent by the passengers settling into their shipboard accommodations. President Franklin D. Richards, the Mormon Apostle who had responsibility for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter “the Church”) in England, came and installed leadership for these traveling Saints. James G. Willie, a missionary returning to Utah, was appointed to lead the company. He was appointed president. Counselors and other leaders were also appointed. As is the custom in the Church, these actions were presented to the Saints for a sustaining vote, a vote that was unanimous in support of the appointments.

Peder Madsen was appointed secretary to the Danish Saints at the time they left for England, about a week earlier. He stated that there were 164 Scandinavian Saints and

608 English Saints that boarded “a large three decker” ship. Obviously the total number of travelers in these two records is not the same.

The *Thornton* was built in 1854 in New York City, New York. She weighed 1,422 tons and was 191 feet long and 40 feet wide at her widest point. The three-masted *Thornton* also had three decks.¹ The ship was commanded by Captain Charles Collins. The McNeils’ son was given the name “Charles Thornton” in honor of the captain and the ship.²

Friday, May 2

Moved out of the Bramby Moor Docks at 9 a.m. and anchored in the River. Visited by many of the Elders from Liverpool. All the Saints were in good spirits, the berths were well cleaned and everything arraigned for the Government Inspector.

The passengers were all on board and ready to sail. Prior to a final government inspection, the *Thornton* was towed from the docks to an anchoring point in the Mersey River. Once the inspection was passed, the ship could sail to America.

Saturday, May 3

Government Inspector and Doctor arrived at 11:30 a.m. President F. D. Richards also came with them. The Saints passed the Doctor and the inspection was soon completed. President F. D. Richards addressed the Saints for a few moments, counselled them to carry out the instructions of Captain Collins & appointed Elder J. G. Willie President over the Saints, and Elders Millen Atwood, Clough, & Ahmason as his counsellors, which appointment was unanimously sustained by the Saints on board. He then assured them that inasmuch as they would abide the instructions given, they should have a prosperous voyage, and blessed them in the authority of the Holy Priesthood in the name of Jesus Christ. He then, in company with Elders Wheelock, Willie and many others returned to Liverpool. Late in the evening, Elder J. G. Willie returned to the ship with final instructions, and immediately commenced to organize by appointing Elder M. Atwood to preside over the main deck, Elder Ahmason over the Danish Saints of the lower deck, and Elder Clough over the English Saints of the same deck; for the convenience of holding meetings, cooking, &c., the first deck was divided into four wards, with four presidents, and the lower deck into three wards

with presidents. Elder John Chislett was appointed Captain of the guard with instructions to permit none of the crew below without permission of the Captain or his first officer. Elder Edward Griffiths was appointed steward to have general oversight over the provisions. John Patterson and Henry Bodenham were appointed cooks.

“President F. D. Richards” was Franklin D. Richards, a 35-year-old member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Elder J. G. Willie” was James G. Willie, a 41-year-old-missionary traveling to Utah. His counselors were “Elder Millen Atwood” who was a 38-year-old missionary returning to Utah; “Elder Clough” who was Moses Cluff, a 28-year-old missionary returning to Utah; and “Elder Ahmason” who was Johan Ahmanson, a 29-year-old former missionary that was born in Sweden but emigrated to Denmark when he was 22 years old. (Once in America he chose to go by John Ahmanson.) He traveled part of the way with his wife and year-old son. They had enough money to purchase a wagon, so his spouse and child joined the Hodgetts Wagon Company instead of traveling with the Willie Company. They traveled with Lars Madsen, age 62. Ahmanson was the Danish Saints’ translator.³ “Elder John Chislett” was a 24-year-old missionary traveling to Utah. The 750-plus Saints were divided into seven wards, each with its own president.

According to Peder Madsen, George May, a 23-year-old English emigrant, was made the clerk of their company. No other source identifies the Willie Company clerk. Madsen also indicated that provisions were issued for the next seven days. They received rations of “bread, meat, pork, tea, and sugar, oats, wheat flour, rice, etc.” He reported that water rations were given out daily.

Sunday, May 4

Tugged out of the river at 3 a.m. the steamboat returned about 8:30 a.m. Permission to hold a meeting on deck was asked of the Captain, which he willingly granted, and it being a beautiful day, the opportunity was availed of. The meeting was opened at 11 a.m. with singing, and prayer offered by Prest. J.G. Willie. Prest. J.G. Willie and M. Atwood addressed the meeting upon the necessity of the Saints being cleanly, and maintaining good order and carrying out the instructions given from time to time, which was cheerfully responded to, unanimity of feeling prevailing amongst the whole. Wind N. E.

Allen M. Findlay, late of the Bombay Mission and Jessie Ireland of Dundee, Scotland, were joined together in the bonds of matrimony by Elder M. Atwood in the Captain's cabin, in the presence of Captain Collins, Prest. J. G. Willie, and Sisters Minnie A. Cook and Emily Hill.

Marriage: Allen M. Findlay to Jessie Ireland

While crossing the ocean the company journal concluded many of its daily entries with abbreviated commentaries on the weather and the ship's location. For example, "Wind N. E." meant the wind was coming from the Northeast. Peder Madsen confirmed the beautiful weather. He reported that this Sunday meeting was followed by singing and dancing on deck.

Monday, May 5

Sea sickness soon began to be experienced, with the exception of a few all felt its effects, and many were unable to rise from their beds during the day. The Captain, Doctor and Officers were very kind, and did all in their power to promote our comfort. Wind light. E.S.E. Bar. 30.40 Lat. N. 50,49.

The company journal entry read, "Wind light. E.S.E. Bar. 30.40 Lat. N. 50,49." It indicated that there was a light wind coming from an east, southeast direction. "Bar." followed by a number beginning with a "30" or a "29" referred to the barometric pressure. Numbers in the 30s generally indicated high pressure, good weather, and often cloudless skies. Numbers in the 29s generally indicated low pressure and worse weather, including often cloudy, potentially rainy weather. "Lat." and "Long." demonstrated the ship's latitude and longitude, which readings enabled the captain to know where the ship was on the ocean.

Peder Madsen described some of the day's activities. The Danish Saints were invited onto the deck and they sang songs to national melodies. There was also music and dancing. He reported that prayers were held twice daily, morning and evening. He stated that at sundown the wind increased and caused some seasickness.

Tuesday, May 6

This morning at 3 a.m. Sarah Moulton from the Irchester Branch, Bedfordshire Conference was safely delivered of a son. Passengers still suffering from sea sickness, the majority came on deck to enjoy the fresh air, those that were able cleaned the decks and waited upon the sick. Prests. Willie and Atwood visited among the sick, administering the comforts and luxuries which President F. D. Richards kindly provided them with for the benefit of the sick. The Captain and Doctor were unremitting in their attentions to the sick, and manifested much solicitude in their welfare, for which kindness we pray the Almighty to bless them. Good breezes. S.S.E. Bar. 30.25. No observation.

Birth: Charles Alma Moulton to Sarah and Thomas Moulton

Once again a boy was born on ship and was given the captain's first name. It could be a coincidence that both boys were named Charles, but again it was likely done to honor the captain of their ship.

Wednesday, May 7

Passengers still suffering from sea sickness. The greatest order prevailed on board, everyone seemed to respect the rights of each other, and to obey those placed to preside over them. Sister Rachel Curtis, aged 75 years died of old age, being declining before she left Liverpool, at 7:30 p.m. from Norton, Gloucestershire. In the different wards prayers were offered up in the mornings and evenings, & to be continued during the voyage. Light airs, cloudy weather. S.W. Bar. 30.1. No observation.

Death: Rachel Curtis, age 75

As stated in the company journal, Sister Curtis had been declining before she left Liverpool. Her death was not a consequence of the journey.

Additional food was distributed to the Saints. Peder Madsen wrote that they received potatoes, rice, mustard, and vinegar. The mustard referred to would have been mustard seed or ground dry mustard. The mustard was mixed with the vinegar to make a liquid like modern-day "prepared mustard." It was a condiment used on the food to make it taste better. He also confirmed that seasickness continued for many of the travelers.

Thursday, May 8

This morning sea sickness remained, though gradually recovering. At 10 a.m. the bell tolled as a signal that the hour had arrived when we were to consign the remains of our beloved Sister Curtis to the sea to await the resurrection of the just. Great solemnity prevailed among all present. Prest. J. G. Willie offered up a prayer to the Almighty. She was buried in the mighty deep. The Captain manifested much kindness on the occasion. At 4 p.m. Sister Rasmine Rasmussen, born in Jutland, Denmark, died from inflammation of the brain, having been afflicted with it for three months previous, and in consequence of mortification ensuing, it was deemed prudent by Captain Collins, and sanctioned by Prest. Willie that she be consigned as soon as possible to her final resting place. At 5 p.m. the tolling of the bell, Captain Officers and Crew with many of the passengers assembled to witness the consignment of her remains to the great deep. Elder Ahmason offered up a prayer in the Danish language, and after a few remarks by the Captain she was buried in the sea.

Light winds. Pleasant weather. N.E. Bar. 29.80. No observations.

Death: Rasemine Mortensen (Rasmussen), age 10

Peder Madsen wrote that "Rasemine Mortensen, the ten-year-old daughter of Morten Rasmussen" died. The company journal called her Rasmine Rasmussen. Apparently, Peder Madsen had not yet adopted the American way of determining family names. Earlier in his journal he had commented on her health. On April 23, he stated that she had been sick for two months and on April 30, that she was "somewhat worse and almost out of her mind."

Peder Madsen also described the shipboard funerals. The body was placed in canvas and then covered by an American flag. It was ceremoniously carried onto the deck. President Willie gave the funeral sermon for the English sister, while John Ahmanson gave the sermon for the Danish child. Captain Collins read from the Bible and then the bodies were consigned to the sea. The food rations for the day included potatoes, rice, oats, mustard, and vinegar.

Friday, May 9

Nearly all recovered from sickness and a good feeling prevailing & meetings well attended mornings & evenings.

Light airs, foggy weather. S.S.W. Bar. 29.60 No Observation.

Peder Madsen also reported that the sick were better. He then related that 22 young men were chosen to act as “night watchmen by all of the stairways to ensure that no disruptions would take place under both decks.” The passengers were split into five different groups, so every night a different group had the responsibility for guard duty. Consequently, the Danish Saints had guard duty only every fifth night.

Saturday, May 10

Nearly all recovered from sickness and cheerfulness seemed to be depicted on their countenances. Still continued to receive kind attentions from the Captain, and he does all in his power to make the passengers comfortable.

Light airs & foggy wind from the West. Lat. 52.22. Bar. 29.60.

For the second day in a row the company journal reported the general end of seasickness, meaning the passengers could function again. Peder Madsen said the same. However, he recorded that the ocean was still very rough.

Sunday, May 11

This morning with permission of the Captain the Saints assembled on deck and we held a meeting at 11:30 a.m. Singing by the choir and prayer by Elder Allen M. Findlay, after which Elder Atwood addressed the Saints upon their present duties and position they were in, and enjoyed much liberty while speaking. Prest. Willie also addressed them a short time, not feeling well in health his remarks were not lengthy, but few cases of sickness on board.

Light winds from W. by S. light rain. Lat. 54.18, Bar. 29.90. Tacked to the north.

Peder Madsen wrote that John Ahmanson spoke to the Danish Saints on order and cleanliness. Four brethren were appointed to supervise order and cleanliness.

“Tacked to the north” and other references to “tacking” referred to the direction the ship was sailing. Since leaving England the latitude readings had been increasing slightly, which indicated that the ship was sailing somewhat to the north.

Monday, May 12

Nothing of importance transpired, the Saints feel well and are united, and under the circumstances they are placed in, they feel contented. No difficulties have arisen since we came on board, neither profane language, but all appeared united.

Light breeze from N.N.W. Cloudy. Lat. N. 52.30. Bar. 30.50.

For the first time the latitude reading decreased. That decrease indicated the ship had turned to the south. Peder Madsen also noted the turn of the ship to the southwest.

Tuesday, May 13

Advantage was taken of a beautiful fine day, and the sea calm. All the Saints were called on deck and unanimously agreed to partake of the Sacrament and to spend it in devotional exercises, the Captain not only evinced his desire to accommodate us by providing temporary seats on deck but presented us with some wheaten bread for the use of the Sacrament for which kindness we pray the Almighty to bless him. Singing by the choir, and meeting opened with prayer by Prest. Willie. They were addressed by Prest. Willie & Elders Atwood, Chislett & Clough. Solemnity rested upon all while we partook of the Sacrament; all felt to rejoice before the Lord. After the English Saints had partaken, the Danish Saints came on deck and partook of the Sacrament under the hands of Prest. Ahmason and his counselors. A good spirit present. Prest. Willie addressed them which was interpreted by Elder Ahmason and gave satisfaction.

Light baffling air. Wind N.E. Lat. N. 51.13. Long. W. 29.16. Bar. 30.60.

“Light baffling air” indicated a light wind that frequently shifted from one point to another. The daily observations recorded the first longitude reading, which indicated how far the ship had sailed since leaving Liverpool.

Peder Madsen designated this as a “fast day,” indicating that the Saints fasted before coming on deck to partake of the sacrament. President Willie talked about the creation and subsequent events of the world’s history, concluding with a blessing on the Danish Saints. His comments were translated by John Ahmanson, who along with Johan Svenson and Johannes Larsen, his counselors, also spoke to the congregation.

Wednesday, May 14

A meeting held in the Young Men's ward. A great many bore testimony to the work and expressed their joy in being on their way to the land of Zion. Elder M. Atwood appointed a testimony meeting in each ward once a week which resulted in good, and gave general satisfaction. But few cases of sickness on board, the Captain and Doctor were unremitting in their attentions in administering to the sick, all things moving satisfactorily. Light baffling air. Wind W. by N.W. tacked to the north. Lat. 50.0, Long. 30.20. Bar. 29.81.

Now that seasickness had generally ended, the Saints busied themselves with Church meetings. They had held meetings on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. In dividing the Saints into seven wards, it appears that a "Young Men's Ward" was created. The people appear to have been divided in part by their marital status. Peder Madsen's only comment, other than the weather report and the ship's course, was that "potatoes and pork" were provided.

Thursday, May 15

Saints came on deck. Wind cold and piercing. But few sick. General satisfaction and good health prevailed. Wind W.N.W. tacked to the south. Smelt icebergs from the north. Lat 50.33. Long 32.5.

As summer approached the glaciers were breaking up and icebergs, which the passengers could reportedly smell, were flowing south into the sea lanes. These icebergs were very hazardous to wooden sailing vessels.

Friday, May 16

This day baffling winds from the west which continued all day, past five ships bound east. Bar. 29.70. Lat. 47.30. Long. 33.32. Made 195 miles.

The *Thornton* was sailing in an established sea lane, so seeing other ships would have been normal. However, the monotony of a month-long sea voyage appeared to have been broken by seeing five other ships in a day.

Saturday, May 17

Strong gales throughout from the west, very heavy head sea. 4 p.m. tacked north. But few troubled with sea sickness. Lat. 48.21. Long. 34.40. Bar. 29.70. Distance 71 miles.

The company journal occasionally recorded the daily sailing distances. These distances could have been determined by dead reckoning, which would have involved frequent recordings of the ship's heading and speed, or by reviewing latitude and longitude records. The strong head winds from the west were slowing the ship's progress. Peder Madsen reported that the following provisions were given out: "bread, salt, potatoes, tea, sugar, flour, grain, peas, rice, mustard, and vinegar."

Sunday, May 18

Strong breezes from the W.N.W. ends with strong gales from the N.W. 10 p.m. tacked south. Meeting held on deck at 3 p.m. addressed by Prest. Willie and Elder M. Atwood. On account of contrary winds, it was deemed advisable that a lesser quantity of water be served out and a vote was taken which was unanimous that 2 quarts instead of 3 qts. be the quantity for each adult until we get into warm weather. On account of the numbers on board it was deemed advisable that they cook but twice a day, and the passengers agreed to come on deck from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. It was voted that Tuesday next be set apart for fasting and prayer before the Lord.

Bar. 29.76. Lat. 47.49. Long. 38.0. Distance 138 miles.

Because of their slower progression, it was necessary for the Saints to conserve their drinking water. Drinking water was a precious commodity in the middle of the ocean. It could not reasonably be replenished at sea except by rainfall, which was a poor way to replenish their supply.

Monday, May 19

Strong gales from the N.W. throughout the day, ends with heavy squalls. The Saints generally healthy, most part on deck. Bar. 29.87. Lat. 47.49. Long 37.56.

There are numerous mentions of cleanliness and order in Peder Madsen's journal. He recorded that John Ahmanson "spoke with reprimand to some families that were not orderly and clean." The four men, previously charged with enforcing cleanliness, were also further instructed to keep "strict supervision so that uncleanness would not spread." It was difficult to keep germs and disease from spreading, so some of the Saints had to be treated for lice a few days later.

Tuesday, May 20

Strong gales in the morning from N.N.W., latter part of the day light winds. This morning all the Saints came on deck and as the sea became calm we held a meeting, it being the day appointed for fasting and prayer. The meeting was addressed by Prest. Willie, Elders Atwood and Clough, and the privilege was given to the Saints to bear their testimony, and we enjoyed a good time. This day the decks were well cleansed and fumigated with tar and chloride of lime. Meeting closed in peace. This day an island was visible with an iceberg aground, truly a beautiful sight, supposed to be Jacgets island. At 11 p.m. fire was discovered in the passengers galley, but was promptly subdued by the Captain and crew assisted by many of the brethren. Great order prevailed among the Saints, the Captain was much pleased. We feel thankful to the Almighty for our preservation. Bar. 29.91. Lat. 45.47. Long. 40.52.

Just as water was a precious commodity in the middle of the ocean, fire was a real threat to their wooden sailing vessel. The passengers cooked in the galley where the fire broke out.

The company journal reported the sighting of an island with an "iceberg aground." The ship's latitude and longitude indicated that the ship was in a very deep part of the Atlantic Ocean. There were no islands in that area. Peder Madsen reported passing an iceberg and a damaged boat that was not worth saving.

Wednesday, May 21

Wind light and clear weather. At 11 a.m. spoke to the Ship W.M. Chamberlain from New York bound for Liverpool, close of the day thick clouds, wind south. At 4 p.m. Hannah Bayliss of Lye near Cheltenham was delivered of a still born female infant. Mother doing well. Child buried at 10 p.m. Bar. 29.90. Lat. 47.17.

Birth: a stillborn daughter to Hannah Bayliss

It is not known how Captain Collins “spoke to the ship W. M. Chamberlain,” which was bound for Liverpool. Peder Madsen simply reported that a communication from an American ship was received and answered. He also reported the discovery of a stowaway. He was an unnamed English boy. The captain wanted to punish him, but it was discovered that he was a Church member, and a free-will offering of two pounds was made for his fare. He was not punished.

Thursday, May 22

All the Saints came on deck, general good health prevailed. Saints amused themselves with singing the songs of Zion with which the Captain and Officers seemed much pleased and from whom we continued to receive kind attention. The Captain addressed the Saints respecting their coming on deck and keeping the decks sweet and clean, so that the ship fever break not out among us which was received, and then cheers was given to the Captain. A meeting was called between decks by Prest. Willie to take into consideration the necessity of more strictly guarding the interest of those committed to our care and among other things the necessity of the young men removing to the forepart of the ship, and all young men were to be at their berths by 10 p.m. Prest. Willie and Elder Atwood spoke and a number of the brethren were appointed Sargeants of the guard. We had a real good meeting, the Spirit of the Lord was with us.

8 p.m. tacked south wind N.N.W. no observation. Bar. 29.87.

In a ship with open berths like the *Thornton*, privacy could be a problem. Additional guards were appointed to enforce the young people’s morality. Peder Madsen recorded an evening council meeting on May 21, wherein the “unauthorized association” of young people was discussed. He described it as a problem among the English and not the Danish passengers. He wrote, “unclean spirits were found that needed to be extinguished.”

Peder Madsen reported that heavy fog moved in during the evening. As a precaution to warn other ships of their location and avoid a collision, a gong was struck and a bell was rung every minute.

Friday, May 23

Foggy weather. at 2 p.m. a gale came on suddenly from the W.N.W. furled all but the fore and main top sails, cloud reefed, ends strong gales, no observations. Saints kept below. Bar.29.10.

When they furled most of the sails, it meant that they rolled up the sails, so that they did not get damaged in the wind and so that the masts did not break. Peder Madsen wrote that the captain distributed "fried potatoes." The captain and the crew usually had a separate galley from the passengers. It could well be that this was a treat that the captain gave to the passengers from the captain's galley.

Saturday, May 24

Strong gales from the W.N.W. Ship labours very hard, and rolls much in a heavy sea. Hatches shut down and the Saints below, and most of them in their beds. It was impossible for them to keep on their legs. The heaviest weather we have encountered since we left Liverpool. We desire to record the hand of Providence in our welfare, for the Captain informed Prest. Willie that this gale blew us free from the ice to which we were close on Thursday last. Bar. 29.10. No observations.

This storm lasted all day and night. It also blew them out of iceberg danger. Peder Madsen reported waves going over the ship and the deck windows being broken, which allowed water to run into the rooms below deck.

Sunday, May 25

Morning strong gales from W.N.W. with heavy sea running, afternoon weather more moderate, put on more sail. No meeting on deck in consequence of the state of the weather. The Saints kept below and mostly in bed. We desire to record the attention the passengers received from the Captain and Officers during the continuance of the late gale, which was more than we had any reason to expect and for which we pray the Almighty to bless him and family and reward him an hundred fold.

Bar. 29.40. No observations.

Paul D. Lyman

The storm must have been very severe because Peder Madsen wrote that they passed a ship in the morning that had lost its main mast. Their evening worship service, held below deck, included thanks to the Lord for preserving them from the storm.

Monday, May 26

Strong breezes from the W.N.W. Meeting held on deck at 3 p.m. The Saints were addressed by President Willie & Elders Atwood, Clough and Ahmason. Most of the Saints on deck and very little sickness prevails. Bar. 29.57. No obs.

Peder Madsen again reported that provisions of food were distributed. He did not explain whether they cooked in family groups or in larger groups. He recorded the same provisions as he did on May 17, with the addition of pepper. The ship's cleanliness was again discussed. However, this time the captain of the ship had some of the people treated for lice.

Tuesday, May 27

Wind N.W. Tacked to the south at 4 p.m. foggy weather. Bar.29.28.No observations. Passed steam ship bound east at 9:30 p.m.

The passage of a "steam" ship bound to the east was a noteworthy occasion. The days of nonsteam sailing ships crossing the ocean were numbered. The *Thornton*, being a strictly sailing vessel, already had to rely on steam-powered ships to pull it into and out of port. Steam-powered ships would cut the sailing time drastically.

Wednesday, May 28

Latter part of the day strong gales from W.S.W. with very heavy seas. Thomas Bodenham, aged 1 year, son of Mary Bodenham of Red Marley, Worcestershire, departed this life, and buried at 10 p.m. after a prayer was offered up by Prest. Willie. General health on board and a good spirit prevailing among the whole.

Bar 29.50 Lat. 42.52 Long. 47.12 Course and distance eight day S.W. by W. 350 miles.

Death: Thomas Bodenham, age 1

No cause of death was listed for this one-year-old boy. As with the previous deaths on this voyage, his death may not have had any direct relationship to the fact that he was sailing across the ocean. Both the company journal and Peder Madsen reported the Saints were generally in good health.

Thursday, May 29

Light airs and smooth seas. Passed numerous icebergs and a ship bound east, tacked west at 4 p.m. Samuel Crook of Apperley, Gloucester, and Sarah Haines of Tewkesbury, Gloucester, were joined together in the bonds of matrimony on the quarter deck by President J. G. Willie, the American Flag having been brought forward by the Captain. Prest. Willie made some remarks on the subject of marriage, and the nature of the covenants they were about to enter into, the marriage was then solemnized. Elder Atwood proposed three cheers for the ship Thornton, and Prest. Willie proposed three cheers for the Captain, Officers and Crew; also the Doctor. Three cheers were also given for the Bride and Bridegroom. Captain Collins came forward and returned thanks and proposed three cheers for Prests. Willie and Atwood.

Bar. 30 Lat 42.0 Long. 48. 2 W. Course and dist. West 40 miles.

Marriage: Samuel Crook to Sarah Haines

This marriage was described by Peder Madsen as a “preparatory wedding” that would be repeated in the Salt Lake Valley. He likewise described the festive atmosphere of the wedding. He also wrote that the couple was married “according to the rules given in the Doctrine and Covenants.” The original Doctrine and Covenants contained a marriage ceremony for non-temple marriages.

On a more somber note Peder Madsen recorded that, “Sophie Pedersen’s son, Thomas, seven years old, fell down from the top to the bottom deck.” The company journal did not record Thomas Pedersen’s accident until the next day, which accident would prove to be fatal. The company journal described him as having “very much fractured his skull.”

Friday, May 30

Fine, clear weather, large icebergs in sight. At 4 p.m. Clipper ship passed at mid-night foggy, a number of icebergs around, weather very cold. tacked south for safety. Passengers enjoying good health and spirits. With regret we have to relate that an accident occurred at 4 p.m. A Danish child, Thomas Peterson, fell through one of the hatchways to the second between deck, a distance of about 20 feet, and very much fractured his skull. Bar. 29.70 No. obs. Lat by D. K. 42. 36 N. Long. 50. 55 W. Wind throughout from south to west.

The sighting of "large" icebergs was very dangerous, but the danger was compounded by night-time fog. The captain turned the ship to the south for safety.

Saturday, May 31

Throughout dense fog, wind W.S.W. Bar. 29.90 no. obs.

This is the shortest entry in the company journal. Peder Madsen also pointed out that they had to ring a bell every minute all day long as a warning to other ships that might be in the area. He also recorded their food rations, which this time included one egg. Some ships carried livestock to supplement their salted meat rations. Since an egg was included in their food rations, there must have been chickens on board the ship.

Sunday, June 1

Throughout fine, pleasant weather, wind W.S.W. The Saints assembled on deck and a meeting held at 1 p.m. Prest. Willie addressed them on Spiritualism. Good health continues, and a willingness on the part of the Saints to obey counsel. Four children were brought forward and blessed by Prest.s Willie and Atwood, their names as follows:

Margaret Ann Stewart, daughter of John and Ann Stewart from Edinburgh, Scotland.

Charles Alma Moulton, son of Thomas and Sarah Moulton from Irchester, Bedford England.

Charles Thornton McNeil, son of Thomas & Jennet McNeil, from Haddington near Scotland.

Elizabeth Ann Farmer, daughter of Edward & Morgan Farmer from Spittlegate, Lincolnshire.

Bar. 30.30 Lat. 42.5. Long. 51, 32.

Four babies were blessed by President Willie and Millen Atwood. The ship's manifest listed Margaret Ann Stewart as two months old and Elizabeth Ann Farmer as one month old. Charles Thornton McNeil had been born on May 1 and Charles Alma Moulton on May 6, both on board ship. Parents brought their children to the Church's elders for blessing in accordance with Doctrine and Covenants 20:70.

Monday, June 2

Wind N.W. quarter W. With all the attention and care bestowed upon the young sufferer, Thos. Peterson, aged 8 years of Saland, Denmark, who fell through the hatchway on the 30th Ult., yet he expired this morning. At 3 p.m. his body was brought forward to receive its burial, prayer having been offered up to God by Prest. Willie, it was given to the great deep. Most of the passengers being on deck, the Captain addressed them, having being pleased with the manner they had conducted themselves, he felt to acquaint them of the favourable manner they were proceeding on the passage, and that he was willing they should receive their full quantity of water again. Bar. 30.20. Lat. 45.17 Long. 53.34. Course and distance N.W. quarter W. 120 miles

Death: Thomas Pederson, age 7 or 8

(Note: The company journal and Peder Madsen's account disagree on his age.)

This was, of course, the same boy who fell from the top to the bottom deck and fractured his skull on May 29. According to Peder Madsen, after the funeral Captain Collins addressed the company and announced that they should be in New York by Saturday if the winds held up. The captain said that they were 770 English miles from New York City. Sadly, the winds were not going to last, and they would not end up getting into New York until a whole week later than anticipated. The captain allowed full water rations to be given, so the daily water allowance was increased to three quarts.

Paul D. Lyman

In passing, Peder Madsen mentioned that the company was ordered on deck in the beautiful weather. He went on to record that they were sewing the tents they would use on their trip.

Tuesday, June 3

Fine and pleasant wind from the W.S.W. Night calm and all round the compass. Good health prevailing with few exceptions, on board. Bar. 29.60. Lat. 44.22 N. Long. 55.40. distance 119 miles.

The weather was "fine and pleasant," but the barometer had dropped from 30.20 to 29.60. That drop indicated an adverse change in the weather, which became foggy and windy.

Wednesday, June 4

First and middle parts thick fog, wind S.W. to west. Strong breeze. 3 a.m. tacked south ends clear weather. Winds very light from the east. Bar. 29.71. Lat. 44.12 N. Long. 56.18 W. Distance Wed. 28 miles.

As recorded the ship turned south in the afternoon in an apparent attempt to avoid the approaching storm. They were somewhat successful, but only sailed 28 miles all day.

Thursday, June 5

First and middle parts light airs from the east N.E. clear weather. wind with heavy rain. Margaret Kay, daughter of James & Mary Kay, from the Bedlington Branch, Newcastle Con. died of fever at 6:30 a.m., aged 3 years, 5 mon., buried the body at 12 noon. Bar. 30.3 No obs.

Death: Margaret Kay, age 3

Ultimately, the ship was not able to avoid the storm and it rained heavily. Peder Madsen recorded that at the evening prayer the Danish Saints received instruction on speaking English.

Friday, June 6

Comes in with rain, thick weather, wind east 5 p.m. cleared up, ends fine and clear. Bar. 29.95 Lat 42,8 N. Long 62,32 W. Course and distance run W. by S. $\frac{3}{4}$ S. 300 miles in two days.

The east wind came as part of the storm, and it pushed the ship closer to America.

Saturday, June 7

Comes in fine and clear, high airs from the east round to the south, ends strong breeze, thick fog. Mary F. Lark, daughter of William and Mary Lark, died at 3 a.m. of consumption, aged 10 years, buried at 12 noon. Bar. 29.82. no obs.

Death: Mary F. Lark, age 10

Although there was no mention in the company journal, Peder Madsen recalled that John Ahmanson spoke to the Danish Saints; he told them how things would progress once they arrived in America. After being led in by a ship, the passengers would disembark and stay at the place where they landed for two or three days, then continue on by railway. He asked them to share their means with the less fortunate among them. As a result, on the eighth he had a list of the money collected on behalf of the poor.

Sunday, June 8

Throughout thick fog, light airs from the S. & W. 8 p.m. tacked south, spoke a fisherman at anchor saw nine fisherman at anchor. Captain caught a cod fish. Being a disagreeable day we could not hold a meeting on deck, but meetings were held in the respective wards in the evening as usual. Good spirits and health prevailed among the Saints with few exceptions, for which blessings we desire to tender our thanks to the Almighty. Bar. 29.60 no obs.

The Saints were close enough to America to see nine fishing boats at anchor. "Good spirits and health prevailed" due to their proximity to the end of their voyage.

Monday, June 9

Throughout thick fog, baffling winds from the S. & W. In the afternoon a meeting was held on deck. Prest. Willie and Elder Atwood spoke to the Saints upon the duties which in all probability will soon come upon them. Bar. 29.58. Sounding every hour in 58 to 60 fathoms of water.

The crew was "sounding" the ocean bottom, which means that they were lowering a weighted rope into the water to determine how deep the water was. When the weighted line went limp, it had touched the bottom. There were knots or markers on the rope, which would tell them how much line had been let out before it hit the bottom. A "fathom" is six feet. The markers on the sounding line were probably set at six foot intervals, so that the fathoms could easily be determined. They were in "58 to 60 fathoms of water," which means the water was 348 to 360 feet deep.

Tuesday, June 10

First middle and part of the latter part thick fog, very thick, sounded every hour all sail only 120 miles from New York and no pilot in sight. Wind south and baffling. Large fog banks all around the ship, 10 p.m. sharp lightning. Jane James, daughter of William and Jane James of the Pindin Branch, Worcestershire, aged 9 months, died of the thrush in the mouth at 8 a.m. buried at 1 p.m. Bar. 29.60 Lat 42,33. N. Long. 71 W. 8 p.m. pilot came on board which caused much rejoicing. 8 p.m. saw Montauk light, N.E. 4 miles.

Death: Jane James, age 9 months

It is not known exactly how the pilot was acquired. At times small boats would sail at the east end of Long Island with pilots for hire. That may well have been how Captain Collins picked up the pilot. The passengers rejoiced because having a pilot on board indicated that they were close to docking. They were close to the coast and needed a pilot to navigate the large ship into New York City's harbor. A pilot did board the ship, but the fog would stall the pilot's progress for the next three days.

The Montauk Point Lighthouse still stands at the Easternmost tip of Long Island, New York. It was erected in 1796 to guide ships safely around Long Island and into New York harbor.⁴

Wednesday, June 11

Throughout the day calm and foggy, and made but little progress on account of the fog. Health of the Saints generally good. The passengers came on deck when Prest. Willie called them to order and then introduced the subject of presenting a testimonial to Captain Collins, returning him our thanks for the kindness we have received from him on our voyage across the sea which was cheerfully responded to by the Saints. Prest. Willie in a few remarks presented Captain Collins with the testimonial which was kindly received in a short address, and in return he presented Prest. Willie and Saints generally with a testimonial expressive of his feelings towards us as passengers, making a remark that we were the finest lot of emigrants he had ever taken across the sea; an excellent feeling prevailed on all sides, and the united feelings of the Saints are that the Almighty would bless Capt. Collins and family for his kindness towards us which will ever be gratefully remembered. We also presented a testimonial to Doctor Williams for the fatherly care manifested by him to the sick for which we pray the Almighty to bless him. The Saints also felt to express through Prest. Atwood their feelings towards Prest. Willie in a written testimonial expressive of their confidence in him since they had been connected with him on board Ship. Bar. 29.63 Lat. obs 40.17 N.

Not all emigrant passages went well. Captain Collins was obviously very pleased with the Saints' demeanor throughout the voyage. The Saints felt that he and his crew had treated them well. Good treatment would not last once they arrived in the United States.

Thursday, June 12

Calm weather with thick fog, little or no wind. This day at 6 p.m. in the presence of the Captain, Officers and passengers generally with the American Flag on quarter deck all due respect being paid, after a few introductory remarks on the marriage institution proceeded to unite in the holy bonds of wedlock, James Thomas of Hereford to Mary Somerville of Edinburgh. Good feelings prevailed, and everything pertaining to it was done in order. Bar 29.51. No observation.

Marriage: James Thomas to Mary Somerville

As the ship approached New York City, another couple was married. Peder Madsen reported that President Willie performed the marriage. Captain Collins then invited anyone else that wished to be joined in matrimony to come forth, but there were no volunteers.

Friday, June 13

Light airs and calm, thick fog, toward evening cleared off and fire island light house was visible bearing to the East, At 10 p.m. tacked ship course, S.S.E. All appeared anxious to get on shore. General good health. Bar. 29.51 No. obs.

The Fire Island Lighthouse still stands on the south side of Long Island about 50 miles east of the New York harbor. It was erected in 1826. However, in 1858 the original lighthouse was torn down and a much larger one put in its place. It stands at the western end of the Fire Island National Seashore on Long Island.⁵

Saturday, June 14

This morning a clear sky and favorable wind 4 a.m. tacked ship and stood for Sandy Hook. At 8 a.m. steamboat Achilles came along side, Captain Collins engaged her to tow us to New York. General stir among the passengers all getting ready to land; good feeling prevailing. Doctor came on board off Staten Island and gave a certificate of the good health of the passengers. The Custom House also came and passed our luggage without any inspection. At sun down we landed at the Castle Gardens, a large building appropriated for emigrants, where we were visited by Elder Felt who kindly welcomed us.

“Sandy Hook” is the oldest operating lighthouse in the United States, having operated since 1764. It stands directly south of the New York harbor, about 15 miles south of Castle Garden, where the Saints would land. The Sandy Hook Lighthouse is in the Gateway National Recreation Area, Sandy Hook, New Jersey.⁶ Near Sandy Hook they were picked up and towed by a steamboat into the harbor. Peder Madsen wrote that they were taken ashore on a barge towed by a steamboat that came to the *Thornton* while anchored in the river.

Saturday, June 14

Nothing remains of the Castle Garden Emigrant Receiving Station. A remnant of an original fort built between 1808 and 1811 is all that still stands in the Castle Garden area. It is called Castle Clinton. Located in Battery Park at the southwest tip of Manhattan Island in New York City, this remnant is known today as the Castle Clinton National Monument. Castle Clinton is a stone “castle” building that existed prior to the construction of the Castle Garden Emigrant Receiving Station. It houses the visitor information center for New York’s National Parks and Monuments and is where tickets are sold for trips to the Ellis Island buildings and the Statue of Liberty. There is a small, one-room museum in the building.

In 1855 the Castle Garden immigration processing center had opened. At long last the Saints were in the United States. After a doctor had inspected their general health and a custom's official had inspected their luggage, they were allowed to land. Castle Garden was set up to accommodate immigrants for a day or two, while their passage out of New York City was arranged.⁷

The ocean crossing portion of the journey to the Salt Lake Valley came to a close. Because they did not have accurate measuring devices, it is impossible to know how far they actually sailed. However, if they sailed in a straight line, they covered more than 3,300 miles.

The voyage had been similar to hundreds of other ocean crossings. Counting the still-born baby, eight people had died between Liverpool, England, and New York City, New York. Except for the 75-year-old woman, Rachel Curtis, all of the deaths were of children not yet 11 years old. Only one death was through an accident. All of the other deaths were from causes not necessarily related to their travels.

Notes

1. Conway B. Sonne, *Ships, Saints, and Mariners: A Maritime Encyclopedia of Mormon Migration, 1830–1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 186.

2. Mae Spencer, "Margaret McNeil Ballard Wife of Henry Ballard," written by the family, 1919, p. 2, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library, Salt Lake City.

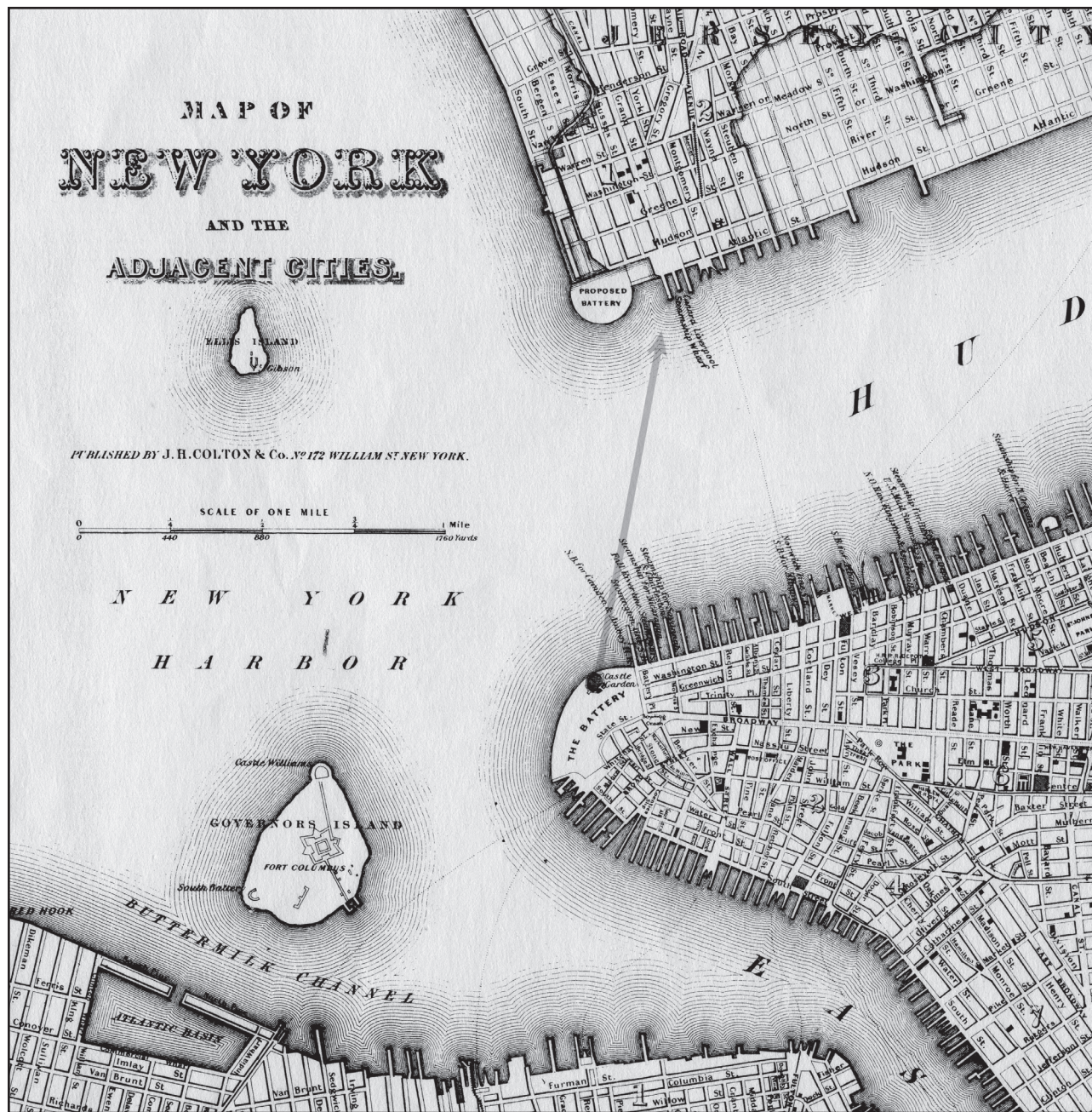
3. Charles W. Martin, "John Ahmanson vs. Brigham Young," *Nebraska State Historical Society* 64, no. 1 (1983): 1–4.

4. "Lighthouse Facts," Montauk Historical Society, <http://www.montauklighthouse.com/facts.htm> (accessed March 17, 2006).

5. "History of the Fire Island Lighthouse," Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, <http://www.fireislandlighthouse.com/lighthousehistory.html> (accessed March 17, 2006).

6. "Sandy Hook Lighthouse," Monmouth County Department of Economic Development and Tourism, <http://www.shore.co.monmouth.nj.us/lighthouses/sandyhook.htm> (accessed March 17, 2006).

7. Don H. Smith, "Castle Garden, the Emigrant Receiving Station in New York Harbor," *Nauvoo Journal* 10 (Spring 1998): 41–51.



New York City's harbor, 1855, showing Castle Garden and the New Jersey shoreline.

Chapter 2

New York City, New York, to Iowa City, Iowa

“I have been a stranger in a strange land.”

Exodus 2:22

Sunday, June 15

The day was spent in arranging our things, and many of the Saints attended the meeting in the City. We were visited by many of our brethren and sisters and much good feeling was manifested towards us.

New York City was the largest city in the United States, and the Saints landed late in the day on a Saturday. Many of them did not speak the language, and only some of the returning missionaries had ever been to the city. After two days of rest and processing, they would travel on to the west. First, they would take a train to cross New York. Then, they would travel by steamboat across Lake Erie. Finally, they would finish their trip to Iowa City, Iowa, by riding on three different railroads.

The immigration officials appear not to have processed immigrants on Sundays. The Saints had arrived at sundown on a Saturday and were thus fortunate to have a free Sunday, which allowed them to attend the local church meeting and to get things somewhat settled before their processing. At the church service the Saints could have met Levi Savage, age 36. He was returning from a mission to Siam, now known as Thailand. He wrote that “most of the congregation were the Saints that arrived last night on the ship Thornton.”

Monday, June 16

President John Taylor visited us and gave us much good instruction and counsel in relation to our future proceedings. Prest. Willie engaged in making preparations for leaving for the Camp while the Saints were engaged in seeing to their luggage.

Several gentlemen and editors of papers visited us, and generally manifested friendly feelings. Several paragraphs were put in the papers commendatory of the passengers of their general cleanly appearance. Sister Annie Atkins a P.E.F. passenger remained at New York with the approval of Prest. John Taylor.

John Taylor was the member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who had responsibility for the Church in New York City. He helped to get the Mormon immigrants through the city, and he was in charge of public relations for the Church. As mentioned, the newspapers had reporters out and about trying to come up with news about the immigrants. Those comments were favorable, just as the comments of the captain had been favorable.

It is not known exactly how many of the approximately 761 original emigrants continued on toward Iowa City, Iowa. There were usually three types of Church emigrants on ships like the *Thornton*. They have been called “through passengers,” “Perpetual Emigrating Fund passengers (P.E.F.),” and “ordinary passengers.” “Through passengers” had sufficient means to pay their own way through to the Salt Lake Valley. “P.E.F. passengers” were loaned the means to come to the valley by the Church’s Perpetual Emigrating Fund. “Ordinary passengers” had only enough means to get to the United States and were usually planning to earn some money before traveling to the valley.¹ Levi Savage reported on June 18 that he was in the company of “about 500 Saints.” When they left Iowa City, it is believed that there were still around 500 people with the Willie Company.²

Tuesday, June 17

This morning the Saints very busy going on board the barge with their luggage. About 10 a.m. the steamboat took us to the New York and Erie R.R. depot where we remained till 7 p.m., each passengers luggage was weighed, 50 lbs. being the weight for each adult. The steam boat took us to pier Mount where we arrived at 11 p.m. when we took the Rail for Dunkirk, a distance of 460 miles. Prest. Willie and Atwood returned to New York to attend to unsettled business, Elder Savage taking charge of the Saints.

The company journal described two movements during the day, but Peder Madsen’s record gave more details. The Saints initially took a barge across the Hudson River sailing to the New York and Erie Railroad depot. Their luggage was then weighed and transferred to a steamboat. Nine hours later they sailed up the Hudson River to “pier Mount.”

Tuesday, June 17

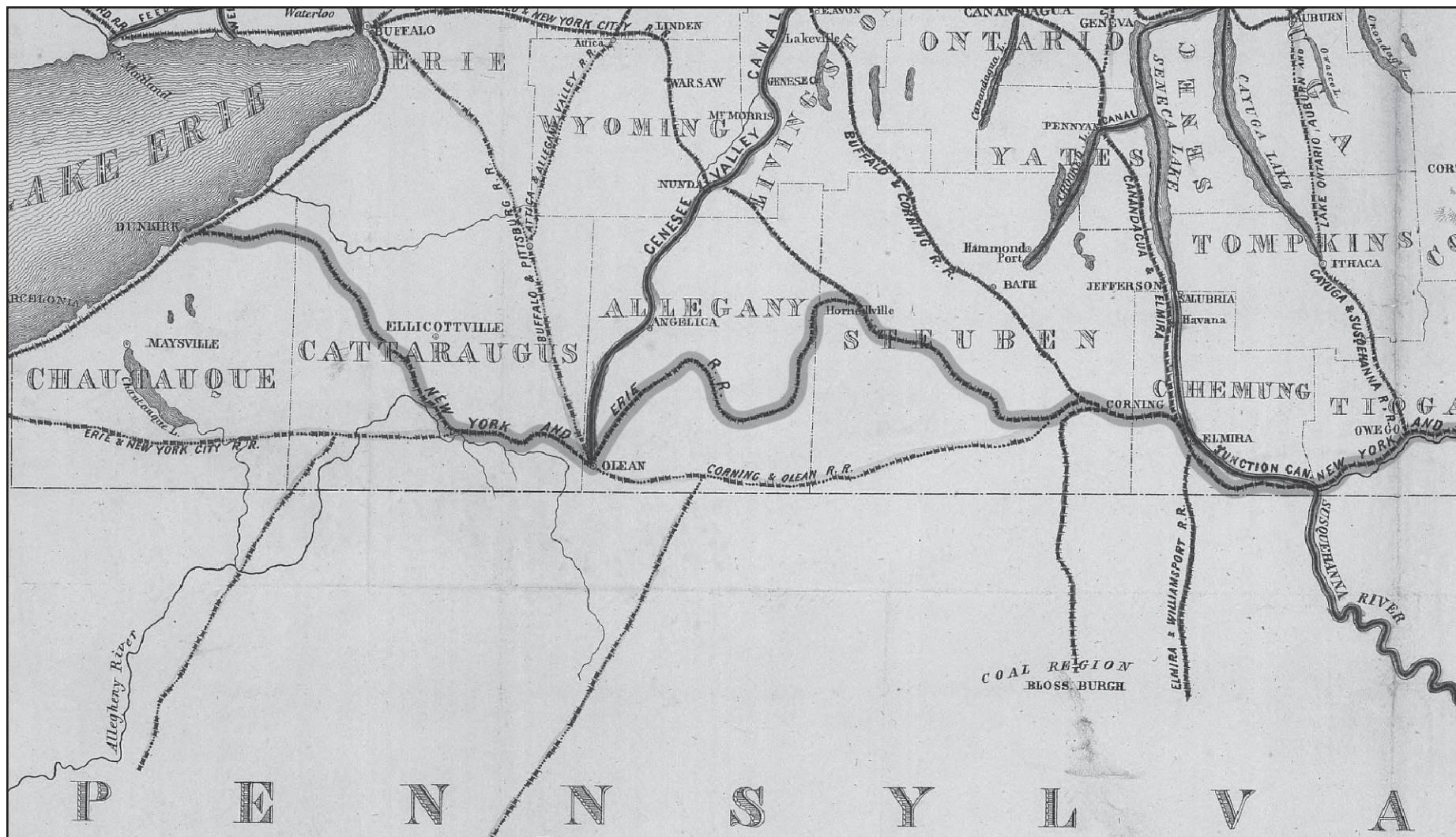
Nothing remains of the original New York and Erie Railroad terminal across the Hudson River from where the Castle Garden Emigrant Receiving Station used to be. It was probably located in what is now Liberty State Park, Jersey City, New Jersey. A Central Railroad of New Jersey (CRRNJ) historic railroad terminal has been preserved where the Saints may well have landed. To visit this terminal, drive to Liberty State Park in Jersey

An 1855 railroad map indicated that the New York and Erie Railroad had terminals at both Jersey City, New Jersey, and Piermont, New York.³ The Jersey City terminal was directly across the Hudson River from Castle Garden, but it was not the rail line's main terminal. The main terminal was the Piermont terminal, which was about 25 miles up the Hudson River, just barely inside the state of New York. Apparently, they could not catch the train at Jersey City, so they traveled by steamboat to Piermont. Piermont got its name from a mile-long earthen pier that jutted out into the Hudson River near some hills, which to New Yorkers looked like mountains.

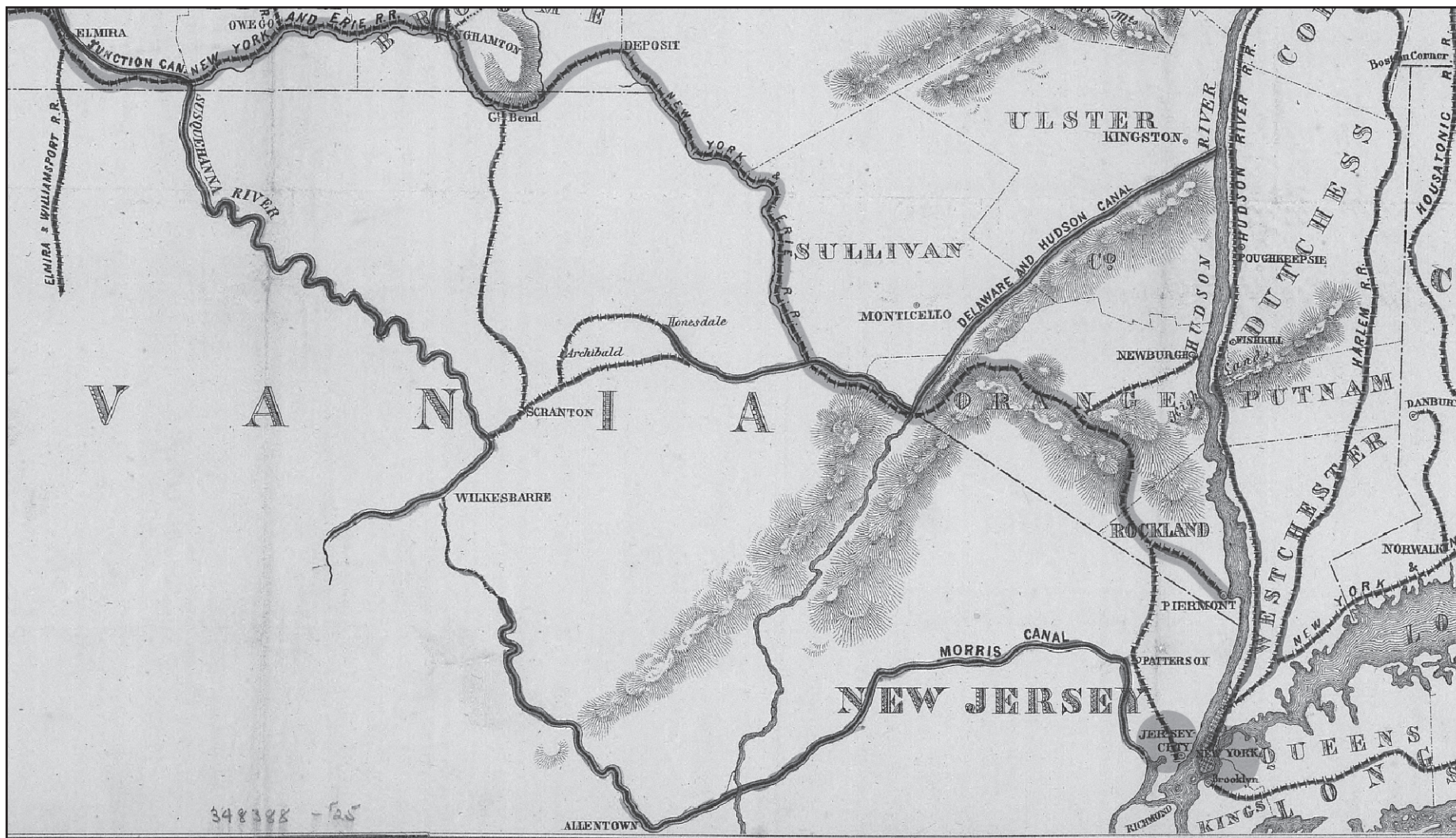
The "Elder Savage" who took charge was Levi Savage. President Willie asked him to take charge of the company, which he did. He stayed with the group until Sandusky, Ohio. He then visited relatives as he worked his way to Iowa City, Iowa, where he rejoined the handcart pioneers on July 10. He kept an almost-daily journal throughout this period of time.

City and follow the "Historic Railroad Terminal" signs to the shore. The building is currently used to sell tickets to the Ellis Island buildings and to the Statue of Liberty.

There are remnants of the earthen pier at Piermont, New York. There are no remnants of the 1850 railroad tracks or terminal because they were removed when the army took over the pier and constructed its own facilities. There are some remnants of the army's dock works just offshore. To visit the pier, drive north on Palisades Parkway from the George Washington Bridge area. From Palisades Parkway take Exit 4 and travel north on US Highway 9W through Palisades to the sign for the Tallman Mountain State Park. Turn right at the sign for the Tallman Mountain State Park and proceed north past the entrance to the State Park and continue down a winding road to a stop sign. Turn right at the stop sign and travel northeast on Ferdon Avenue to a traffic light at the intersection with Paradise Avenue. Turn right onto Paradise Avenue and travel east on it until the sign stating "To Pier." Then turn right onto Ferry Road and travel for only about a tenth of a mile to the parking area. Vehicles are not permitted on the pier road without a special permit from the police. However, it is a very easy, pleasant, mile-long walk on the asphalt roadway to the end of the pier. The GPS end point of the pier is N 41 02.585' W 073 53.786'. (Note: There are some condominiums constructed on the west end of the pier. Walk past them to get to the remainder of the old pier.)



Map of New York water and railroad lines, 1855.



Map of New York water and railroad lines, 1855.

Wednesday, June 18

Saints travelled all day and night and though much crowded together felt well in spirit as well as in body. The country through which we passed dotted with towns and new settlements, and which was pleasing from the contrast with the monotony of the sea. Had to procure provisions as we could get it by the way.

Peder Madsen described the railroad cars quite favorably in his June 17 entry. They were better constructed than the English and the Danish cars that he had seen in Europe. There were bench seats for two people in rows on each side of the car with a two-foot aisle down the middle of the car. Each car could accommodate 86 people. There was a stove in the middle of the car and a toilet at the end. There was no food service on the train, so meals or food had to be bought at the train's stops along the way.

Although the company journal mentioned their passing through towns and settlements, there was no mention in any journal of anyone noting the significance of the area through which they were traveling. The Saints followed the Delaware River as it formed the New York and Pennsylvania border. Shortly thereafter, they crossed the Susquehanna River near Harmony, Pennsylvania, which is the area where Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church, was baptized, received the priesthood, and translated most of the Book of Mormon.

Wednesday, June 18

To approximate the course of the railroad across New York, from Piermont return to US Highway 9W and travel north to I-87 and I-287. (Note: About a quarter of a mile past the traffic light in Piermont is the turn that leads to the winding road that passes the Tallman State Park entrance. If this turn is missed, US Highway 9W is very hard to find going north.) Travel west on I-87 and I-287, until they split at Exit 15. (Note: Do not take State Road 17 at Exit 15A.) Stay on I-87 traveling north on the New York State Thruway, a toll road, to Exit 16. Take Exit 16 and travel west on State Road 17. (Note: State Road 17 will turn into I-86.) Stay on State Road 17 to Exit 121W. Take Exit 121W and travel west on I-84 to Exit 1 at the New York state line. Take Exit 1 and go west on US Highway 6 into Port Jervis. Follow US Highway 6 as it winds around until State Road 97 breaks off, which is at a traffic light. Travel State Road 97 as it follows the winding course of the Delaware River to Hancock, New York. After traveling through Hancock, State Road 97 joins State Road 17. Take State Road 17 west to Exit 79. The railroad tracks generally followed the Susquehanna River as it went south. In order to follow that route and also see the Church's Aaronic Priesthood Restoration site monument near Oakland, Pennsylvania, take Exit 79 and drive south on State Road 79 into Pennsylvania, where the road changes to State Road 92 leading to Oakland, Pennsylvania. (Note: In order to avoid this por-

Thursday, June 19

This day we arrived at Dunkirk at 12 noon feeling generally well though tired with the irksome journey by Rail. At 2 p.m. Prests. Willie & Atwood arrived by express train having left New York at 5 p.m. the preceding evening. The Saints generally were glad to welcome them. Procured all the provisions we could get in the town. At 6 p.m.

tion of the trail simply remain on State Road 17 and drive west to Binghamton.) State Road 92 changes to State Road 171 near Oakland. Stay on the north side of the Susquehanna River; the Priesthood Restoration monument is 1.7 miles west of the bridge that spans the river and leads to Oakland. The GPS point of the Priesthood Restoration monument is N 41 57.068' W 075 38.323'. Continue traveling west on State Road 171 to I-81. Drive north on I-81 back into New York until it intersects State Road 17. Follow State Road 17 west through Binghamton, Elmira, Corning, and on to Salamanca. At Salamanca take Exit 20 and travel north on State Road 353 through Little Valley, Cattaraugus, Wesley, and on to Dayton. (Note: A portion of the railroad line still exists between Cattaraugus and Dayton.) In Dayton turn right onto US Highway 62 and travel north to Gowanda. In Gowanda turn left onto State Road 39 and travel west toward Forestville and Dunkirk. About five miles past Forestville, State Road 39 ends. Turn left onto US Highway 20 and drive southwest for about two miles until the highway intersects State Road 60. Turn right and travel north on State Road 60 into Dunkirk, New York.

Thursday, June 19

In Dunkirk, New York, there are no remnants of the 1856 dock or railway terminal. There was, however, a monument that had been erected at the end of the old New York and Erie rail line. The monument was located just south of the

we embarked on board the *Jersey City*, a screw steam boat, bound for Toledo, distant 280 miles, and though much crowded good spirit and feeling prevailed. The sea was quite calm as we were on lake Erie. We were enabled to form some contrast with the Lakes and the Mighty Ocean. Nothing of any importance occurred.

The Saints traveled 460 miles in about 36 hours from Piermont to the shores of Lake Erie. Their luggage was transferred to the docks, as they proceeded west.

Friday, June 20

This morning though very much crowded the Saints felt well, the steerage was devoted for the sisters, and brethren accommodated themselves the best way possible on deck. The sea still outward calm and beautiful though the weather was warm. Touched at Cleveland and while there procured provisions for the passengers. Also put in for Sandusky in the evening where Elder Savage left us, after remaining a few hours, we proceeding on our passage to Toledo. The night was calm and all that could be desired, no motion being discernable.

The *Jersey City* was not a paddle-powered steamboat, instead it was powered by a “screw,” or propeller. The conditions described in the company journal are typical of 1850s steamboat travel. The boats were packed as full as possible with people, luggage, and freight. The female passengers were generally accommodated in the enclosed portions of the vessel, referred to here as the “steerage,” which indicated that it was the lowest class of passage in the enclosed portion of the ship. Meanwhile, the male passengers stayed day and night on the deck, regardless of the weather. The men in the Willie Company were probably comfortable because the weather was warm and the lake was calm. Peder Madsen recorded that provisions of “bread and butter” were issued. They stopped in Cleveland, Ohio, and then in Sandusky, Ohio, as the boat skirted around the edge of Lake Erie.

present-day CSX railway underpass, at the intersection of Main Street, which is State Road 60, Third Street and Cliffstar Court (Note: Cliffstar Court was formerly called Railway Avenue and then Franklin Street.) Where these three roads come together, just south of the underpass, is a triangular piece of grass where the original rail line terminated. It can be found at GPS point N 42 29.115' W 075 19.700'. The original rail line came into town where Railway Avenue was located.

Friday, June 20

There is no remnant of the 1856 Cleveland docks. In Cleveland, passenger traffic appears to have been handled near the end of East 9th Street. Likewise, in Sandusky there is no remnant of the 1856 docks. However, from an 1854 Sandusky City map it appears that passenger traffic was handled near the foot of Jackson Street, which was next to Columbus Street, the main street in the city. Freight was handled several blocks west and east, away from the passenger dock.¹ The end of the main Cleveland dock is currently found at GPS N 41 30.661' W 081 41.794'. The end of the present Jackson Street pier in Sandusky is at GPS N 41 27.548' W 082 42.884'.

Saturday, June 21

This morning about 9 a.m. we arrived at Toledo and disembarked at the Railroad station, where we remained till the evening, taking the rail again for Chicago. The Railroad authorities at Toledo manifested a very unkind spirit towards us, putting us to all the inconvenience in their power. Procured all the provisions we could get at Toledo. The Saints feel well.

The first mention of poor treatment in the United States came when the Saints were transferring to the Northern Indiana Railroad at Toledo, Ohio, and the authorities treated them unkindly. Peder Madsen reported that they departed riding on rail cars similar to those in New York.

Sunday, June 22

At 5 p.m. we arrived at Chicago where we were very roughly treated by the Railroad conductor, he insisting on our landing in the street, which we were obliged to do, and after much trouble in finding the Railroad Superintendent we prevailed with him to allow us the use of an empty warehouse for the night, the weather to all appearance indicating a thunderstorm. For the above we feel to recognize the hand of the Almighty in softening the hearts of men in our behalf, and we feel to tender the gratitude of our hearts.

In Chicago, Illinois, they were again poorly treated by a railroad official. Peder Madsen wrote that "The people in this city are not good. They tried to disturb us." Persecution was not new to most of these converts to the Church. For many, the goal of gathering to Zion in the western United States served two purposes: first, it allowed them to obey a commandment of God's prophet, and second, it allowed them to escape religious-based persecution.

Saturday, June 21

Once again there are no remnants of the 1856 docks or rail terminal in Toledo. However, it is clear from an 1857 Toledo City map that shipboard passengers arrived at the combined railroad terminal and dock. It was located at the north end of an area called the Middle Ground, so named because it was between the Maumee River and Swan Creek.² The Middle Ground is currently occupied by the Owens-Corning Fiberglass headquarters in downtown Toledo. To walk to the site where the Saints landed, find the intersection of North Summit and Monroe Street. Walk east across the bridge over Swan Creek. Find the outdoor gazebo area by the buildings. Walk north through the gazebo and follow the gravel pathway to the end of the peninsula. The GPS location is N 41 38.860' W 083 32.030'.

Sunday, June 22

The railroad line between Toledo, Ohio, and Chicago, Illinois, basically proceeded along the following course out of Toledo and into the LaSalle Street Station in downtown Chicago. From the corner of North Summit and Monroe in downtown Toledo, drive southwest on North Summit for less than a mile until it becomes State Road 2 at the intersection of Clayton and North Summit. Continue west on State Road 2 until it intersects the Ohio Turnpike, which is a toll road, at the Toledo Airport. Travel west on the Ohio Turnpike, which is the combined I-80 and I-90, until Exit 25.

The railroad terminals in Chicago and further west were not what people envision today. The depots were wooden structures, built for utility and not for beauty. The station of the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad in Chicago was said to be the nicest in its system. The station first constructed by the company in the autumn of 1853 was “an old whitewashed barn.” It was upgraded in 1855 and was described in 1900 as follows: “The first Chicago depot built by the company in 1855, was near the site of its present station. It was constructed of unplanned boards, had a frontage of about 200 feet, and was whitewashed yearly. It was burned two or three years after completion.”⁴

Take Exit 25 and travel generally south on State Road 66 to Archbold, Ohio. In Archbold, begin following State Road 2 as it meanders generally west and south to Bryan. Drive south out of Bryan on State Road 2 until it intersects US Highway 6. Turn right and travel west onto US Highway 6 and follow it into Indiana. In Indiana, keep driving west for over 40 miles on US Highway 6. In Ligonier, US Highway 6 joins US Highway 33. About six miles past Ligonier, US Highways 6 and 33 separate. Turn right and travel north on US Highway 33 through Goshen and toward Elkhart. Just into Elkhart US Highway 33 ends and US Highway 20 begins. Take US Highway 20 and travel west and north until it intersects the Indiana Toll Road, which combines I-80 and I-90. Travel west on the toll road until Exit 21, which is where I-80 and I-90 split. Stay on I-90, which remains a toll road, and drive west into Illinois. I-90 curves north just before it enters Illinois. Follow I-90 as it joins I-94. Take the combined I-90 and I-94 north until they intersect I-290 near downtown Chicago. Take I-290 at Exit 51H east onto Congress Parkway to Dearborn Street. From Congress Parkway turn left and drive north on Dearborn Street one block to Van Buren Street. Turn left onto Van Buren Street and drive west to LaSalle Street. The terminal was on the left, in the block just west of LaSalle Street and south of Van Buren Street. There are still trains running from the LaSalle Street station. The GPS location is N 41 52.625' W 087 37.930'.

Monday, June 23

In consequence of not a sufficient number of cars being on hand our company was obliged to be divided, and most of the English Saints left at 3 p.m. by express train for Rock Island: the remainder leaving at 11 p.m. On our arrival at Pond Creek we ascertained that the Railroad bridge had broken down a few hours previous, many carriages smashed, no lives lost but many injured, in which train some brethren from the Valley including President Lorenzo Snow, all of whom escaped injury, and they kindly welcomed all the Saints who saw them. The night was spent at Pond Creek sleeping in the cars.

After spending about 24 hours in a Chicago warehouse, the Saints split into two groups to travel to Rock Island, Illinois, on the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad. Their route went southwest from Chicago to Joliet, Illinois; then along the Illinois River to its junction with the Bureau River; and finally on to the west to Rock Island, Illinois. Both of the trains stopped for the night at Pond Creek, which was only a few miles west of the Bureau River junction. This allowed the two groups to reunite.

Today nothing exists of the Pond Creek stop. It was south of Wyanet, Illinois, on Pond Creek. There was not much of a station at Pond Creek. It was just a food and water stop on the Illinois prairie where trains stopped and waited before going on to Rock Island. On June 24, Peder Madsen reported the conditions as follows: "There was a shop and a place where cakes and bread were baked and food prepared. Milk was obtained from the farmers nearby."

The cause of their stop appears to be attributed to the railroad bridge across the Mississippi River being "broken down." The facts stated in this entry appear to be more rumor than fact. The *Moline Workman*, a local Moline, Illinois, newspaper, reported on May 7 and May 14 some of the facts regarding the trouble with the Mississippi Bridge. This was the first railroad bridge across the Mississippi River. It ran from Rock Island, Illinois, across the river to Davenport, Iowa. It was 1,582 feet long and made from iron and wood. Shortly after the bridge was completed, the *Effie Afton*, a side wheel riverboat, had passed through the draw portion of the bridge and reportedly the wind and river current swept her back into the pier on the eastern side of the draw. The boat caught fire, causing the bridge's pier to catch fire. Both burned and the span fell into the water. The boat was a total loss, but no one was hurt on the boat or the bridge.⁵ As a minor footnote in

Monday, June 23

To follow the general path of their train from Chicago to Pond Creek, return to Congress Parkway. Turn right and travel west on Congress Parkway for a short distance until it intersects I-90 and I-94. Take I-90 and I-94 south, in the direction of Indiana, until I-90 and I-94 intersect I-55. Take I-55 and travel southwest until it intersects I-80 at Exit 250. Take Exit 250 and travel west on I-80 until Exit 56. Take Exit 56 and drive south on State Road 26 until it intersects US Highway 34, in Princeton, Illinois. Follow "West" US Highway 34 through Princeton and then drive west on US Highway 34 through Wyanet. Ignore the railroad tracks in the middle of Wyanet; they belong to a different rail line. On Wyanet's western edge take County Road 8 south toward Bradford. Drive south for only 0.9 mile, driving over a railroad overpass and an old railroad bridge. Just barely past the railroad bridge, turn sharply to the left at the end of the guardrail and onto a small gravel road that parallels the asphalt road. Drive north on the small gravel road to the bottom of the hill, almost under the old railroad bridge, and cross the railroad tracks. The Pond Creek depot was immediately east of where the gravel road crosses the railroad tracks. The depot was on the north side of the tracks. The creek was on the south side of the tracks. The major canal that currently dominates this site did not exist in 1856.³ The GPS location of the depot was N 41 21.199' W 089 35.223'. (Note: Wyanet was in competition with Pond Creek for importance in the 1800s.



Illinois railroad map, 1855.

history, Abraham Lincoln was later hired to defend the railroad from a lawsuit brought by the steamboat's owner. Lincoln won the case.⁶

Contrary to the rumors, unless there was some later unreported bridge disaster, this noteworthy wreck on the Mississippi River had occurred about six weeks before they got to Pond Creek. In addition, no rail cars were damaged.

Finally, the journal stated there were "many injured" and that "brethren from the valley including President Lorenzo Snow" were on the train that was involved in the incident. There is, however, no evidence that Lorenzo Snow, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was in Illinois or Iowa at the time. However, his younger brother and fellow Quorum member, Erastus Snow, was in Iowa City from June 18 through June 23 on his way to St. Louis, Missouri.

Tuesday, June 24

This morning the remainder of the Company joined us, and remained there till 5 p.m. doing the best we could though unable to procure provisions. Left for Rock Island and arrived at 11 p.m. and slept in the cars all night. While at Pond Creek the child of _____ died of general debility and was buried the same day in the presence of Prests. Willie and Ahmanson.

Death: Stine Rasmussen, age 22 months

The company journal left a blank space where the names of the child who died and its parents would normally appear. Peder Madsen told us the child's name, Stine Rasmussen, and her age, 22 months. Only her father's name was given, Hans Rasmussen. She was probably Danish because John Ahmanson, the leader of the Danish Saints, was present at the burial.

Wyanet was the stop for the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad. Wyanet won out, and the community of Pond Creek gradually faded out of existence.)

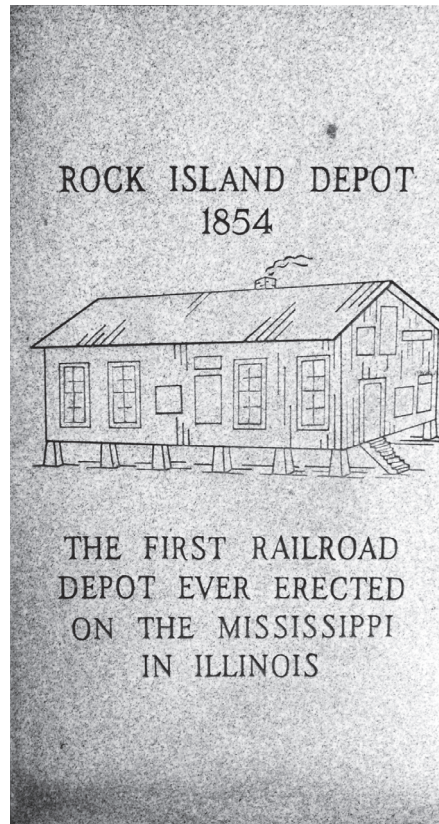
Tuesday, June 24

To travel along the general path that the Saints traveled to get to the Rock Island Depot, return to US Highway 34 and travel west to State Road 40. Turn right onto State Road 40 north to I-80. Take I-80 and travel west toward Rock Island. At about milepost 10 the Interstate divides: leave I-80 and travel west on I-74 and I-280. At about milepost 5 the Interstate divides again. Follow I-74 north into Moline, when it divides from I-280. Take Exit 2, called "7th Avenue." At the bottom of the off ramp turn right and follow the street as it winds around to River Drive. River Drive is the street one block north of Fourth Avenue. Turn left onto River Drive and travel west into Rock Island until there is a sharp left-hand curve followed immediately by railroad tracks. Cross the tracks and turn right immediately onto Fifth Avenue. Follow Fifth Avenue west until it intersects 31st Street. On the right, or the north side of the street, is a restored

Wednesday, June 25

This morning through the kindness of the Superintendent, he procured us a large warehouse to remain in while there and in consequence of the Railroad bridge being destroyed, we had to cross the Mississippi in a steam ferry boat, which engrossed our time in shifting our luggage throughout the day. Quite a rowdy spirit was manifested by many, desiring access to the building, and in the evening, we had to keep a strong guard, as we received a report through some friends that a mob intended to attack us in the night and gain access to our young women. The Lord overruled all for our good, for which we feel to be grateful and to express our thankfulness to Him. Obtained all the provisions we could get.

This was the third stop where there was trouble accompanying the Saints. Peder Madsen confirmed the company journal's report of trouble. He reported that the police came and dispersed the mob. Persecution on the frontier was beginning to find them every time they stopped.

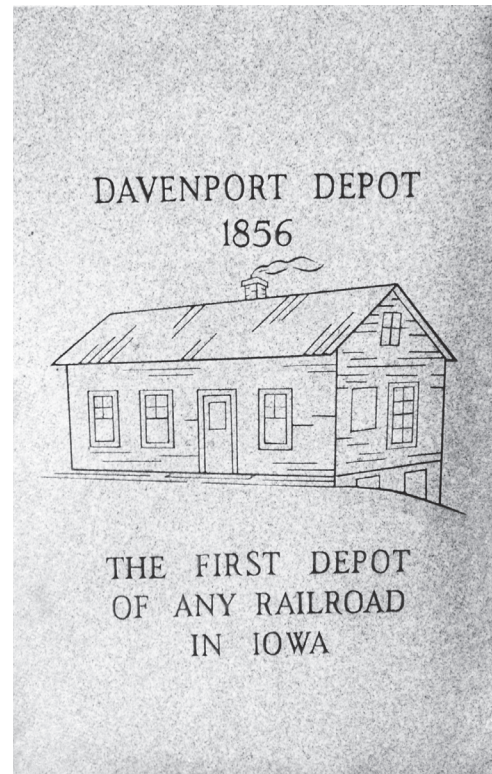


Depiction of the Rock Island, Illinois, train depot.

brick train station currently housing a restaurant called "Abbey Station." In front of the station is a large stone monument picturing the depots that used to be at that location and across the river in Davenport. They are both depicted as wooden, plank built buildings. The monument is located at GPS N 41 30.476' W 090 33.335'.

Wednesday, June 25

The original railroad bridge is long gone. The location of the docks where they would have met the steam ferryboat is not known. The existing bridge across the Mississippi River is known as the "Government Bridge" and is hundreds of feet down river from the original bridge's location. All that is left of the original bridge are two monuments. The monuments are in Rock Island, Illinois, and Davenport, Iowa, near where the bridge originally was located. To see the two bridge-pier monuments and to cross the river on the Government Bridge, return to Fifth Avenue and travel east. Turn left on Seventh Avenue and take State Road 92 east to the traffic signal at 44th Street. Then turn left, drive two blocks north, and cross the railroad tracks. The road curves sharply to the right and becomes River Drive again. Travel east on River Drive until there is a sign for the "Rock Island Arsenal" just after 15th Street. Drive into the arsenal. It is a United States Army post and personal identification is needed to get on the post. (Note: The purpose of the visit is to see the bridge-pier monument.) Follow Rodman Avenue almost all



Depiction of the Davenport, Iowa, train depot.

Thursday, June 26

This morning at 7 a.m. we left and crossed the Mississippi by the steam ferry boat, and at 9 a.m. we left by rail for Iowa City, arrived at 1:30 p.m. and camped on the green, but in consequence of a thunderstorm approaching, we obtained possession of a large Engine shed and remained there during the night, it raining in torrents all night. Many of the brethren from the Camp visited and cordially welcomed us, and on their return took a large number of the sisters to the Camp with them.

The 1860 address of the train depot in Davenport, Iowa, was "East side of LeClaire, opposite Fifth."⁷ The monument across the river in Rock Island has a depiction of a wooden plank building, which could show how the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad's depot in Davenport looked in 1856. This area is currently a gravel pit.

The 1856 train depot in Iowa City was located on the southern edge of the city.⁸ It was in the area of the present switching yards and an old, no-longer used train depot.

the way across the island to Davenport Drive. (Do not turn at the Davenport House sign.) Turn right onto Davenport Drive. The monument is about 0.3 mile up the riverbank on the right. It is at GPS N 41 31.225' W 090 33.536'. The other monument is directly across the river. To reach it, return to Rodman Avenue and turn right. Travel west to the bridge and drive north across the bridge to Davenport. In Iowa turn right onto Third Street, which soon becomes River Drive and is also US Highway 67. Travel east on River Drive for one block to where Fourth Street intersects River Drive. The monument is on the north side of River Drive. It is at GPS N 41 31.425' W 090 33.817'.

Thursday, June 26

To drive to the Davenport Depot's former location at Fifth and LeClaire Streets, drive west on Fourth Street to Iowa Street. Turn right onto Iowa Street and drive north to Federal Street. Turn right onto Federal Street and drive one block east to the intersection with LeClaire Street. Fifth Street and LeClaire Street would have intersected in the gravel pit just south of this location. The intersection of Federal Street and LeClaire Street is at GPS N 41 31.515' W 090 34.090'. To follow the general path of the railroad to Iowa City requires a drive through some of the older areas in Davenport. Return to Iowa Street, turn left onto Iowa Street, and drive south for one block to Fifth Street. Turn right and drive west onto Fifth Street and follow the railroad tracks west

With their arrival in Iowa City, the immigrants had traveled about 460 miles crossing New York, roughly 280 miles crossing Lake Erie, and about 465 miles crossing Ohio, Illinois, and a part of Iowa. All totaled they had traveled approximately 1,200 miles in less than two weeks. They had suffered the loss of only one child. General good health prevailed and the easy part of their trek was finished.

Notes

1. Smith, "Castle Garden," 49.
2. Andrew Jenson, "Church Emigration," *Contributor* 14 (1892): 135.
3. "Map of the State of New York Showing Its Water and Rail Road Lines," January 1855, Library of Congress Railroad Maps, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/rrhtml/rrhome.html> (accessed May 1, 2006).
4. *The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway System and Representative Employees* (Chicago: Biographical Pub. Co., 1900), 81–83.
5. "Great Conflagration, Mississippi Bridge Burned!! Steamboat Sunk!!!" and "Further Particulars of the Burning of the Mississippi Bridge," *Moline Workman*, May 7, 1856, and May 14, 1856.
6. Jay Shultz, "Hurd v. Rock Island Railroad Company, a Turning Point in Abraham Lincoln's Legal Career," *Illinois History* 36 (February 1998): 36, <http://www.lib.niu.edu/ipo/1998/ihy980236.html>.
7. *E. Coy & Co.'s Twin Cities Directory and Business Mirror, for the Year 1860* (Davenport, Iowa: Luse, Lane, and Co. 1859), 23.
8. Gerald Mansheim, "Iowa City and Its Environs, by J. H. Millar, 1854," in *Iowa City An Illustrated History* (Norfolk, VA: Donning Co., 1989), 65.

to Taylor Street. Turn right and then drive north on Taylor Street, which becomes Clay Street and then Washington Street, and weave through the city to Lombard Street, which runs east and west. Turn left and drive west on Lombard Street until it becomes Hickory Grove Road. Drive northwest until Hickory Grove Road becomes US Highway 6. Travel west on US Highway 6 until it intersects I-280. Cross the interstate and continue driving west on County Road F 58. Just west of Wilton, County Road F 58 intersects US Highway 6 again. Turn left and go south about two miles. Then turn right and drive west, continuing on US Highway 6 into Iowa City, Iowa.

To reach the area of the Iowa City depot, follow US Highway 6 west until it intersects Gilbert Street. Turn right onto Gilbert Street and drive north to Prentiss Street, which is opposite Bowery Street. Turn left onto Prentiss Street and drive west to Dubuque Street. Turn left onto Dubuque Street and drive south to Wright Street. Turn right onto Wright Street. On the south side of the street between Dubuque Street and Clinton Street is an old, no-longer used train station. The depot in 1856 would have been south and east of this station, i.e., in the current switching yards, which extend to Oak Grove Park, five blocks east and three blocks south at the corner of Dodge Street and Page Street. The present, unused station is at GPS N 41 39.199' W 091 32.031', while Oak Grove Park is at GPS N 41 39.128' W 091 31.668'.

Notes

1. "Sandusky, Ohio, 1864," city map, Follett House Museum, Sandusky, Ohio.
2. "City of Toledo, County of Lucas, Ohio, 1857," map, Toledo Public Library, Toledo, Ohio.
3. Maxine Trotter (Curator and Vice President, Wyandot Historical Society), interview and tour with the author, July 20, 2005.

Chapter 3

Iowa City, Iowa, to Florence, Nebraska Territory

“If ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye.”

1 Peter 3:14

The night of their arrival in Iowa City, the Saints found shelter from the torrential rain in an engine shed. They would not stay in Iowa City, where the rail line ended, for long. The Willie Handcart Company was outfitted three miles to the west in present-day Coralville, Iowa, which was then known as Clark’s Mill. At about noon the next day, when the roads had dried enough to proceed, they walked roughly three miles to their campground. Throughout Iowa they had to suffer with the weather and the settlers. The rain, heat, and humidity were unrelenting. They also found that they were a spectacle and would draw people out to gawk and in some cases to mock as the handcart-pulling Mormons went along.

Friday, June 27

This morning it still continued to rain, about noon it cleared up, and the roads drying very fast, so much so that before night all the passengers were removed to the Camp, with most of their luggage, Prest. Willie remained there till all had left and at 9 p.m. arrived at the Camp and received a cordial welcome from Prest. Spencer and brethren generally.

When the Willie Company arrived at Clark’s Mill, Peder Madsen wrote that there were 900 people at the camp. President Daniel Spencer, age 62, was in charge of outfitting the arriving handcart companies. He and his crew had already successfully sent off two handcart companies; the third would leave just a day after the Willie Company’s arrival. These first three companies were the Edmund Ellsworth Company with 274 people that had left

Friday, June 27

There is a Mormon Handcart Park in Coralville, Iowa, which is in the area where the Saints had their campground and worked to outfit themselves for their 1856 trek. To reach the park from the train station, return to US Highway 6 and drive west into Coralville, Iowa. At the intersection of First Avenue and Second Street (US Highway 6), turn left onto First Avenue and drive south for about a mile until First Avenue intersects Hawkeye Park Road. Turn right onto

the staging area on June 9, 1856; the Daniel D. McArthur Company with 297 people that had left two days later on June 11, 1856; and the Edward Bunker Company of 320 Welsh Saints that would leave on June 28, 1856.

President Spencer was not ready to outfit the approximately 500 people in the Willie Company. The Saints immediately began preparing for their journey. However, the most immediately pressing need for them was not handcarts, but tents. These new arrivals needed a tent for every 20 people, which meant that they needed 25 tents. Peder Madsen's entry on June 2 makes it clear that they had worked on the tents while crossing the ocean. In addition, for 500 people they needed to build 100 handcarts.

Peder Madsen described their daily ration of food. In the other records, the rations they received over the next few days varied little from his account on June 27, except that on other days salt was included and soda and soap were excluded. Each person was allowed the following:

- 1 pound wheat flour,
- 2½ ounces pork,
- 2 ounces sugar,
- 2 ounces dried apples,
- ¼ pound coffee,
- ½ ounce tea,
- soda, and
- soap.

Saturday, June 28

The Saints all cheerful and happy and under the circumstances doing the best they can without tents. Prest. Willie received instructions from Prest. D. Spencer to continue in charge of the Company for the time being. The Sisters busy engaged in making tents under the direction of Elders William Ledingham. Elder Atwood with many of the brethren went to Iowa City accompanied with many teams to get up the luggage before night, quite a considerable quantity of it was brought to the Camp. General good feeling prevailing amongst the Saints and all appear to desire to hearken to the counsel of those over them. Everybody in the Camp appeared to be busy making hand carts, yokes, &c., for the trip across the plains. This evening

Hawkeye Park Road. Then turn right at the first opportunity and drive north into the park. There are several things to read and an asphalt walking trail in the park. It is at GPS N 41 39.994' W 091 34.480'.

commenced to rain very heavy, the Saints bore it with fortitude, perfectly resigned to the will of Heaven. Union and love seem to prevail with all.

Without tents for shelter, the Saints were at the mercy of the Iowa weather. There were no sheds or warehouses to borrow. Consequently, without tents, they simply got wet when it rained. The Saints made circular tents, which sheltered 20 people. The hand-sewn tents were made of canvas with a single pole in the middle. The occupants would sleep with their feet toward the middle pole. Peder Madsen reported the sewing. He also stated that some tents were set up, but apparently there were not very many finished tents. Finally, he recorded the arrival of John Van Cott, the 42-year-old returning president of the Church's Scandinavian mission. He arrived with about 400 cattle for the various handcart companies.



Replica of Single Pole Tent at Mormon Handcart Visitors' Center, Martin's Cove, Wyoming.

Sunday, June 29

This morning is a lovely morning and most of the Saints rejoicing although they got wet through in their beds. We attended meeting in the Camp in the morning. Prests. Willie & Elder John A. Hunt addressed the meeting and in the afternoon Elder Dan Jones preached. There were a good many strangers present, a good spirit prevailing.

Although the Saints were soaked in the night, this did not dampen their desire to hear the word of God preached to them. Peder Madsen wrote that there were morning and afternoon gatherings.

Monday, June 30

A fine day but extremely warm. Saints very busy making tents. Prest. Willie was engaged settling up his accounts and endeavoring to get the Saints under cover. This day Jens C. Jensen, native of Denmark died in the camp, aged two years.

Death: Jens Christian Jensen, age 2

Peder Madsen wrote that they learned they could take only 17 pounds of goods per person on the handcarts. On the earlier portions of this journey, they had been allowed to bring 50 pounds of luggage. He listed several alternatives to dispose of the extra items. First, the items could be shipped to the Salt Lake Valley. Next, some people sold their extra goods in the city. Finally, he said that he had given his extra goods to the Saints in St. Louis, who were unable to come to the valley that season. Not surprisingly, some of the people were grumbling and complaining, and he reported that three of their leaders talked to them about obedience to God's laws and God's servants.

Tuesday, July 1

This morning the Company of the Thornton Ship signed receipts of passage from New York to Iowa City. A child died today.

We are getting ready for the plains and are getting 17 lbs. of luggage ready to cross the plains with as it is not possible to take more. We still continue busy making tents and all doing what they can to further our movement.

Death: an unnamed child

Unfortunately, the company journal and Peder Madsen's journal provide no other information about the death of the unnamed child.

The "receipts of passage" that the Saints signed would have related to their status as PEF emigrants. They were obligated to repay the Church for the cost of their passage. The unfinished tents continued to get more attention in the journals than the unfinished hand-carts. It would be another week before the tents would all be finished.

Wednesday, July 2

This morning it is pouring with rain accompanied by thunder and lightning. Sister Mary Lewis, wife of Joseph Lewis was delivered of a son at 3 a.m. of the Bristol

Branch in the midst of thunder and lightning. The tents not being done we had a good soaking. It is very hot today.

Birth: a son to Mary and Joseph Lewis

There does not appear to be any couple named Mary and Joseph Lewis listed as traveling with the Willie Company or with any of the other groups that left later in 1856. Consequently, this son's name is not known.

Thursday, July 3

We had plenty of rain again last night with thunder & lightning. The tents are not done although Prest. Willie is unceasing in his exertions to keep the sisters to their work. Nothing of importance, but all have plenty to do guarding, making tents, etc.

Peder Madsen wrote that "our beloved Brother VanCott" left to go get more cattle. He hoped to see the Saints again in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Friday, July 4

This day being the day of Celebration for the Independence of the United States we suspended generally from work and held a meeting with the American Flag flying when many of the Brethren spoke and Elder Ferguson delivered an oration. Many strangers were present and appeared much pleased, and all passed off well.

Peder Madsen noted the abundance of resources and freedom that Americans had, along with the day's celebration, which involved "shooting practice and assemblies." He described the weather as beautiful.

Saturday, July 5

This morning Lars Julius Larsen was born, the son of Peter and Ann K. Larsen. Also died this morning. Sarah Ann, daughter of Sister Ann Cooper in the Camp late of the Cambridgeshire Conference, England. It is very warm today.

Birth: Lars Julius Larsen to Ann K. and Peter Larsen

Death: Sarah Ann Cooper, age 2

Apparently, the people were having trouble disposing of their surplus property at fair prices. Peder Madsen wrote that some of the brethren went to the city with handcarts carrying bedding and other items that did not sell well. He wrote that earlier in the trip he had paid eight dollars to cover the cost of 105 pounds of overweight goods and that he had trouble getting reimbursed for the money that he had earlier expended. He also referred to Sister Larsen, the mother of the newborn child, as "Sister Hageman."

Although not mentioned in the Willie Company record, another returning missionary, William Woodward, age 23, was assigned by Elder James Ferguson on July 5 to work with the Willie Company and to be under President Willie's charge. He had arrived with an earlier group from England. He had been assisting traveling Saints at Iowa City since June 2. A consistent journal keeper, his personal journal would help record the company's history through October 1, when he would begin keeping the official company journal.

Sunday, July 6

It is very hot, the tents are not yet finished. We attended meeting this day, held two meetings in the Camp today & many strangers were present. A good feeling prevails among the Saints, and very little discontent manifest.

Some of the Danish Saints did not intend to travel to the Salt Lake Valley by handcart. Peder Madsen recorded that Hannah Anderson asked John Ahmanson to ask both Lars Madsen and Hans Rasmussen to loan her enough money to continue on with the handcarts. The two men did loan her the money. These men, along with their families, traveled with the Hodgetts Wagon Company.

Monday, July 7

This morning, Mary Ledingham died, daughter of William & Catherine Ledingham, late of Leith, Scotland, aged 22 months.

Death: Mary Ledingham, age 22 months

Some of the men continued to be preoccupied with their surplus goods. Peder Madsen related that they had loaded three handcarts with bedding and clothing, which they had sold in the city for \$71. Some of the men got together and purchased a yoke of oxen

for \$115, to go with a wagon that they had not yet purchased, so that they could haul their surplus things.

Tuesday, July 8

The tents are now finished, and all are pretty comfortably provided for. Most of the company are now engaged washing clothes, while others are making the hand-carts, fitting up wagons, &c.

Throughout the records of Peder Madsen and the company journal there are conflicts as to the specific dates of various events. For example, Peder Madsen recorded that a group of 800 arrived on July 8, while the company journal recorded their arrival on July 9. The other two major journals were not helpful in resolving this conflict because William Woodward had no entry for either day and Levi Savage arrived on July 10 to find about "1,500 Saints."

Wednesday, July 9

A company of Saints arrived that came in the Horizon from Liverpool numbering some 800 souls came up this evening in the midst of a terrible storm, and we as well as the other Companies accommodated them the best in our power. A sister of the Company died this morning.

Death: an unnamed woman

The 800 Saints who would make up the Martin Handcart Company arrived "in the midst of a terrible storm." The two groups crowded into the newly available tents, trying to keep dry. Peder Madsen wrote that the Willie Company members were ordered to pack up so they could get going. He was glad to get going on their journey, which he described as the way to gain the experiences they would need for eternity. Without any explanation in the records, one unnamed woman died that morning.

Thursday, July 10

Selecting the cattle this morning for our Camp; also mules, waggon, &c. All are pretty well with plenty to do preparing to move. Weather very warm.

Each tent of 20 people would be allotted four handcarts. Peder Madsen explained that one would be “covered,” if needed to carry little children. The covered handcarts looked like miniature covered wagons.

Friday, July 11

Saints generally busy and feel well about their departure, and are making all exertion possible to get ready. Nothing of importance occurred this day, the health and spirits of the company good.

Peder Madsen described the handcarts as follows: “The handcarts that were delivered to us are well constructed and light. They have very strong wooden wheels, four feet high. The rim around them is made up of two steam bent fellies fastened with iron tires. They have wooden axles that hold two beams eight feet long with five matching cross beams. The carts are four feet wide and weigh 60 pounds. They provide about sixteen square feet for five people’s belongings that weigh about 85 pounds.”

A felly is the name of the rim on a wagon wheel. From Peder Madsen’s description, it is clear they used steam to curve the wood for the wheel and then they placed an iron rim around the fellies and spokes. Wagon wheels made of wood worked well, if the weather stayed moist. As the weather became drier, the wood contracted and the wheels became loose inside of the iron rims.

Saturday, July 12

Sister Bailey who was out of her mind was baptized by President Willie. All are busy getting their 17 lbs. weighed up this morning. A brother fell down in a fit but after being administered to soon recovered. We have about finished weighing up this luggage this day. Quite a number complaining of diarrhea. There was a meeting held this evening when President Willie was appointed to preside over the 4th Division of the P.E.F. Hand-Cart Company. Elders Atwood, Savage, Woodward & Chislett were appointed to preside over hundreds of the said Company. And much good counsel was given by President Spencer.

John Ahmanson was not mentioned in the company journal, but William Woodward listed him as captain of the “5th Hundred.” The term “5th Hundred” referred to the

Danish Saints. The five captains were all former missionaries, heading to Zion. John Chislett and John Ahmanson were former missionaries who had not yet been to the Salt Lake Valley. Levi Savage had arrived at the camp only two days earlier on July 10. He had spent the time from June 20, when he left the company at Sandusky, Ohio, until July 10 visiting his relatives as he worked his way west.

The company journal reported the baptism of Sister Bailey on July 12 and Sister Ingra on July 13. It is not clear if these were convert baptisms or rebaptisms for health purposes. More than likely they were for health reasons because Sister Bailey was described as being “out of her mind.” The early Saints would in some cases, as a sign of their faith, be rebaptized to cure spiritual or physical sickness.¹

Sunday, July 13

A child died last night between 8 & 9 p.m., the daughter of Hannah Louiza Richins on the camping ground. Sister Ingra was baptized this morning. We had two meetings in the Camp today where some good doctrine was preached. Elder Willie also called a meeting of the Captains of Hundreds & proposed that Elders Ledingham and Griffiths be appointed Captain of the Guard & Commissary. The vote was carried unanimously & after some good instruction from President Willie we were dismissed.

Death: Hannah Louiza Richins, age 1

Although the company journal stated that Hannah Louiza Richins’ daughter died, that was incorrect. The child that died was named Hannah Louiza Richins. Charlotte Richins was Hannah’s mother and she would give birth to a son, Franklin Richins, just two days later on July 15.

Both Levi Savage and Peder Madsen recorded that the Saints partook of the sacrament at their Sunday services. Levi Savage went on to state that a good spirit prevailed, with only one “drunken man” making a little disturbance.

Monday, July 14

The Captains of Hundreds and all hands are busy carrying out the instructions of Prest. Willie given last night, namely of weighing all luggage to be paid for the valley

& takeing an Inventory of all surplus property with valuation of same—All are in first rate spirits and more for the hand carts than the waggons.

One faithful Danish couple was Peder Mortensen, age 48, and his wife, Lena Mortensen, age 46, who were converted to the gospel in 1855. Due to a desire to gather to Zion and rejection by their community, they sold everything they owned in anticipation of their journey. They had land and animals. Together with their 8 children, ages 5 through 27, they traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark, to stay at the mission home until they could emigrate to Utah. The Mortensens' oldest son, Morten, was asked by the mission president to stay in Denmark and serve as a missionary. Morten, along with the rest of the Mortensen family, was concerned, but agreed. The mission president promised the Mortensens that every one of them would reach Zion in safety because of Morten's willingness to stay and serve, along with the family's willingness to do without his much-needed help. Peder was physically disabled. He and his wife had planned to buy a wagon so that he could ride in it to the Salt Lake Valley. However, after hearing the counsel of their Church leaders, they shared their money with other members of the company so that sufficient handcarts and supplies could be bought in Iowa City. Peder's disability kept him from walking. He rode in a supply wagon until about September 6, when the loads were adjusted due to a buffalo stampede. He had to be carried in a handcart from that point, until the company was rescued. Morten came to Utah after his three-year mission in 1858, two years after the rest of his family had all safely arrived in Zion.²

Tuesday, July 15

We finished weighing the luggage today. Sister Eliza Hurren was delivered of a daughter about 6 a.m. yesterday; also Franklin Richins was born this day to John and Charlotte Richins of the Cheltenham Conference, & Richard Godfrey of Worcester Conference was joined in matrimony to Ann Herbert of the same Branch by Bishop Tyler.

We started out a short distance this day and encamped for the night, all in first rate spirits.

Births: Selena Hurren to Eliza R. and James Hurren
Franklin Richins to Charlotte and John Richins

Marriage: Richard Godfrey to Ann Herbert

Andrew Jenson, in his article on “The Belated Emigration of 1856,” wrote that the emigrants who left Liverpool on May 4 had been reduced to “about five hundred souls, five mules, twelve yoke of cattle, one hundred and twenty hand carts, twenty five tents and five wagons,” when they left the Iowa City area.³ William Woodward recorded that “with each Hundred persons were 5 tents, 5 covered Handcarts & 15 Hand-carts not covered.” In his journal he also recorded the names and ages of each of the 97 people assigned to his hundred. He further provided a breakdown of which tent each of his hundred was assigned for the trek.

Peder Madsen likewise recorded the breakdown of the Danish division. There were 93 people in 5 tents; there were 17 people in the first tent with no families. There were 12 women and 1 child, to go along with only 4 men, in that first tent group and 19 people, including 4 families each, in the other 4 tents. Overall there were not very many Danish men. The 5 Danish tents had 4, 5, 5, 6, and 4 men respectively, meaning that to pull the 20 Danish handcarts there were only 4 that would be pulled by more than one man. Although the numbers for the other handcart divisions are not all available, the William Woodward division had only a slightly better ratio of men to handcarts than the Danish division.

Wednesday, July 16

This morning all seemed in first rate health & spirits. We moved out 3 miles this day. The oxen did not arrive for 2 or 3 hours after the hand carts so that Prest. Willie with 9 or 10 men & 2 yoke of oxen went back and helped them up.

Peder Madsen clarified that each of the five wagons was pulled by four oxen. The purposes of the wagons were to transport food, tents, and sick people. Levi Savage reported that they did not get started until 4 p.m. Emma Jane James, age 16, stated, “It was great fun pulling empty carts and imitating the teamsters with a merry gee and haw. The carts soon pulled away from the heavy wagons and then there was a wait. We had plenty of time to see the country and run here and there for this and that which caught our eye in this strange country.”⁴

Wednesday, July 16

The first half of the trail across Iowa generally follows the path of US Highway 6 from Coralville, Iowa, to Adel, Iowa, with a few exceptions, such as in the Des Moines area. This first half of the trail allowed the Saints to travel on existing state roads that kept them mainly on ridge-tops, yet near rivers and creeks on the rolling hills of Iowa.

Thursday, July 17

This morning is a lovely morning. President Spencer and Elder Ferguson came up this morning & took back with them a list of the names &c. President Willie called a meeting & gave the Saints some good counsel and encouragement. Elders Atwood and Savage also addressed us & gave us some good advice & and a good spirit prevailed in our midst, after which we were dismissed by prayer.

Peder Madsen wrote that three Native Americans visited their camp and demonstrated their skill in shooting with a bow. He further reported that the Saints had 23 tents and 92 handcarts. On July 16 he reported that 19 to 20 people slept in each tent. Consequently, there would have been between 437 and 460 people with the Willie Company. However, without further explanation on July 18 he wrote that there were 500 people with the company.



Handcart Statue at the Mormon Trail Center in Florence (Omaha), Nebraska.

Friday, July 18

4:35 a.m.–7:25 p.m.

All are well and in first rate spirits. The bugle blew about 4 a.m. for us to get up & we got breakfast, luggage, &c., ready for starting by 11 o'clock. We proceeded on to Clear Creek, a distance of 6 miles where we arrived at 5 p.m. over broken bridges bad road unbroken oxen, &c. When we arrived we were covered with dust, all in first rate spirits. There is plenty of wood & water here.

Starting on July 18 and continuing on July 19, 21, and 22, the 4 a.m. wake-up bugle was mentioned. Without electricity, flashlights, or even oil lamps, there was little reason to be up much before sunrise or after sunset. For modern-day people, living in a world where getting up before 6 a.m. is considered early, the 4 a.m. wake-up time seems

unimaginable. However, for these Saints it was the middle of the summer with plenty of light. The sky begins to be light about 30 minutes before sunrise and remains somewhat light for 30 minutes after sunset. There were no official time zones or even official times along the trail the Willie Company traveled throughout Iowa and on to the Salt Lake Valley. Train schedules would eventually be the catalyst for setting up uniform local times. Daylight savings time had not yet been devised. From this point on in this narrative, sunrise and sunset will be given for each day of their journey, with noon serving as the dividing point for that day's total daylight.⁵

Peder Madsen wrote that the provisions for the day were issued at 8 o'clock. The provisions were "flour for one day, sugar, pork, rice, soap, salt, and dried apples." Five of the accompanying wagons held the provisions and the tents. Although on July 16 he had recorded that each wagon was pulled by four oxen, he now wrote that each wagon was pulled by six oxen. There was also a wagon used to carry the sick, which was pulled by four mules.

The road was described in the company journal as a "bad road." It did not appear that there was a real road. Trails in the 1850s were usually just a single track. Peder Madsen stated, "One drives where best he can." Levi Savage stated, "Our teams were very awkward and the teamsters more awkward than the oxen."

Saturday, July 19

4:36 a.m.–7:24 p.m.

This morning it is very cold. The bugle blew about 4 a.m. & after getting our breakfast we started at 9:30 a.m. for Brushrow Creek 12 miles where we arrived at 7 p.m. much fatigued. We stopped about 3 miles from here to water the cattle. It is a beautiful road & good traveling.

Getting a group of this size going was difficult and the Saints had a late start. They had a long day, stopping only about one half hour before sunset. After Clear Creek they traveled on to Brushrow Creek. The names of some of the creeks may not have been too well established. For example, there does not appear to have been a Brushrow Creek, but there was a Buffalo Creek, which they had already passed.

Life on the trail was not without its unnecessary discouragements. On July 20 Levi Savage reported that on the prior evening, July 19, a man had threatened President Willie,

telling him that he would be bringing up to 50 men to tear down their tents. Persecution by the locals had started again.

Sunday, July 20

4:37 a.m.–7:23 p.m.

We did not move out this day but rested ourselves and had two meetings. Prest. Willie, Elders Chislett & Savage addressed us. Yesterday Sister Adelaide A. Baker left us & this morning came and took her luggage & two of her children away with her. She came from the Portsmouth Branch, Southampton Conference; also Ann & Sabina Bird of the Eaton Bray Branch of the Bedfordshire Conference & Harriet Smith of the Bristol Branch, South Conference left us this day. All seemed in good spirits & when the evening meeting was over we were dismissed by prayer & went to our tents.

Levi Savage stated that they held one meeting during their day of rest. He wrote that many of the local people came and visited. They were told of the Saints' faith, belief, and determination, which was the pattern they would follow across Iowa.

Although they had been underway for less than a week, some members of the company chose to leave. On July 19 and 20, a mother with her two children, along with three other women, left the handcart company. It should not be assumed that people who left the company or decided to stay in Iowa all apostatized. In 1856 the emigrant McKay and Evans families from Scotland and Wales both stayed in Iowa rather than travel on to the Salt Lake Valley. David O. McKay, the ninth President of the Church, was a direct descendant of these two families.⁶ Although not mentioned in the official records, two days out of Iowa City, 16-year-old Joseph Lorenzo Oakey disappeared along the trail. His family later learned that he had stopped at a farmhouse and obtained work.⁷

Monday, July 21

4:38 a.m.–7:22 p.m.

This morning the bugle blew at 4 a.m. for the Saints to get up which they did & then got breakfast, greased our carts, took up our tents, packed out luggage & were ready to start at 7:30 a.m., with only one sick person in the waggon, all cheerful & in good spirits and proceeded to Hutton Creek 7 miles where we arrived at 12 noon. The Saints on arriving were surprized to find they had come so far and a good spirit prevailed throughout. There are a few sick in our midst. This night we were a little

disturbed by some persons cursing & swearing about the Mormons, but plenty of guards & firearms were called out & after an hour or two swearing they left us.

The handcart axles needed grease to run smoothly. The Saints had very little grease. In some instances, they used their bacon fat for grease.

“Hutton Creek” does not exist today. However, Hilton Creek does exist and it is safe to assume that they camped on Hilton Creek.

The harassment and the threats of the local residents came often. Peder Madsen reported that President Willie “called upon the brethren to arm themselves for battle.”

Tuesday, July 22

4:39 a.m.–7:21 p.m.

This morning is a beautiful morning. The bugle blew at 4 a.m., and after getting our breakfast, &c., we had prayer & were ready for the journey at 7:50 a.m. We proceeded on our journey about 4 miles where we halted & refreshed ourselves & proceeded on to Bear Creek 10 miles. Our journey was very hilly & the heat very great & nearly all were beat out when they arrived at 2 p.m. There is plenty of wood & water here. Prest. Willie was busy attending upon the sick, the remaining part of the day. We were then dismissed by prayer by Elder Willie & went to our beds.

The overall plan called for the company to travel about 15 miles every day. The Saints struggled with the heat and the intense physical labor of pulling handcarts. The country they were passing through was hilly. It also had plenty of wood, water, and grass.

Wednesday, July 23

4:40 a.m.–7:21 p.m.

Charles Peat and family with Martha & four children from Worcester, England, left us this morning. This morning it is very hot indeed without a breath of air & after prayer by Prest. Willie we were ready to start again at 7:30 a.m. we proceeded on our journey about 5 miles when we halted & those who had provisions refreshed themselves. We then went on about 5 miles further & halted two hours. The sun was excessively hot. We then continued our journey as far as Brush Creek, 13 miles, where we arrived at 7 p.m. with a great many sick & tired out. Prest. Willie & Elder Griffiths were engaged till quite dark administering to the sick. Sister Mary Williams from the Worcester Branch of the Worcestershire Conference died on the

way, supposed from eating green plums, together with the excessive heat. There is plenty of wood & water here.

Death: Mary Williams, age 50

William Woodward reported Sister Williams's death by stating, "A woman was sun-struck about noon, & died towards evening." Probably out of caution for the Saints' condition in the hot, humid, Iowa summer weather, the company only went two miles on the next day.

The Willie Company had run headlong into the heat-related dangers of Iowa. Because the human body uses sweat as a means to cool down, too much humidity in the air seriously impairs the body's ability to cool down on hot days. As the temperature approaches 90°F with as little as 70 percent humidity, the atmosphere can simulate 105° temperatures, which makes it difficult for the human body to cool down. Sunstroke and heatstroke become real factors to address because the humidity in Iowa often approaches 90 percent. Mary Williams may well have eaten some green plums, but William Woodward's diagnosis of her cause of death was probably right.

Thursday, July 24

4:40 a.m.–7:20 p.m.

This morning after prayers we left at 7:30 a.m. and proceeded on our journey 2 miles & encamped on Big Bear Creek, where we remained during the day. This afternoon we buried Sister Williams in the town burying ground and procured timber & made her a decent coffin. Prest. Willie & several of the brethren attended the funeral. In the evening we held a meeting & after prayer Prest. Willie with Elders Atwood & Woodward addressed the meeting and gave such counsel as was needed pressing upon the Saints the necessity of being one in all things.

Every journal mentioned either the meeting or the problems that were occurring. Levi Savage complained about reduced rations. He wrote that they received 10 ounces of flour per day and 10 ounces of pork for 28 days. They also received unspecified rations of tea, coffee, sugar, rice, and dried apples. He said, "It is not enough." Peder Madsen reported wickedness among the English, including milking strangers' cows and killing their pigs. William Woodward noted that the meeting was held and that a family had left to live with the Gentiles. President Willie's job was not easy. The "town burying ground" was probably in Brooklyn, Iowa.

Friday, July 25

4:41 a.m.–7:19 p.m.

This morning at 7 a.m. we left the Camp and traveled as far as Muddy Creek, 13 miles. We stopped twice by the way to rest. The weather being very warm just before we encamped we were overtaken by the Sheriff with a warrant to search the waggon, &c. under the idea that women were detained contrary to their wish with ropes. After showing their authority, they had permission to examine any part of the Company & were fully satisfied that the report was without foundation & left us. We were disturbed last night by about 30 men with supposed bad pretensions & called over their names but finding us on guard left without committing any depredations.

The heat from the sun was now accompanied by hassles from the locals. During the day, the Poweshiek County sheriff stopped the company with a search warrant. William Woodward reported that the sheriff claimed, "We had some persons tied down in our wagons." Levi Savage reported that a man in Brooklyn, Iowa, had been their accuser. The sheriff searched, realized his folly, and left.

Saturday, July 26

4:42 a.m.–7:17 p.m.

There is a nice air this morning. We had prayers & were in readiness for our journey at 8 a.m. when it commenced raining very fast & made the carts run very heavy. It continued to rain till about 10 a.m. when it ceased and the roads soon began to dry up. We arrived at Sugar Creek 11 miles at 1 o'clock and encamped for the night. Wood & water being pretty handy.

As the Saints prepared to start they were met by a two-hour rainstorm, which soaked them and then bogged down their handcarts. It seemed like every day brought a new set of challenges.

Sunday, July 27

4:43 a.m.–7:16 p.m.

This morning we had prayers, packed our tents, luggage, &c., and were on our journey by 7:50 a.m. We traveled as far as Skunk Creek, 6 miles, where we encamped for the day being Sunday to attend to washing, prayers, preaching, &c. The Camp is getting strong & the sick are mending very fast. There is a good supply of wood & water

here. We had a meeting this afternoon, Elder Savage presided & he & Elder Woodward addressed us. The weather is quite pleasant & very congenial to our feelings.

It was Sunday, so the Saints traveled only half of the day. Levi Savage mentioned that he preached in the afternoon, but his comment on the continued persecution dominated his entry. He wrote as follows: "A goodly number of the citizens came to view our camp and hear preaching. A few ruffians also came. One of them picked up a hatchet and put it in his pocket. This caused some angry words. During the day and evening they made great threats of disturbing us, but they did not put their threats into execution. We were prepared to defend ourselves."

Monday, July 28

4:44 a.m.–7:16 p.m.

This morning the air was very pleasant. After we had packed our luggage, had prayers &c., we were on our journey. we proceeded on for 9 or 10 miles when we halted for an hour or two & pursued our journey to Cherry Creek, 14 miles. Here we encamped for the night. On our way we passed through Newton, where it was rumored we should meet with some difficulty, but we got our Company together & passed through very quietly. The Saints were all pretty tired & arrived at Cherry Creek about 6 o'clock. Wood & water pretty handy, all going along well although their journey throughout was very rough & hilly and tired them all out.

Seleam Haren, daughter of James & Eliza Haren, aged 14 days died about 11 a.m. this day with the rash in the mouth. Sister Haren's child was buried this day with Elder Savage & others in attendance.

Death: Selena Hurren, age 14 days

They passed through Newton, Iowa, expecting more trouble, but it did not materialize. The people just came out to gawk. They tried to camp outside of towns, so as to avoid the local people's harassment. Sadly, James and Eliza Hurren's two-week-old baby girl died.

Tuesday, July 29

4:45 a.m.–7:15 p.m.

This morning we were up, had prayers, breakfast, &c., and were on our journey by 7:15 a.m. This morning there is a small breath of air & beautiful traveling. We

Monday, July 28

In Newton, US Highway 6 runs through town and combines with I-80. Follow US Highway 6 and then drive west on the combined US Highway 6 and I-80 to the Mitchellville exit, which is Exit 149.

Tuesday, July 29

Take the Mitchellville exit, Exit 149, and drive south along the western edge of town to the

proceeded as far as Castle Green 8 miles where we halted two hours, then pursued our journey as far as Skunk Creek where we arrived at 4 p.m. We had some very heavy hills to ascend & made 12 miles this day. There is plenty of wood & water here. On our journey Brother Henry Boden of the Worcester Branch of the Worcestershire Conference left us.

William Woodward identified the deserter as Henry Newman, who left the company “to live with the Gentiles.” On a more positive note, Peder Madsen wrote that the Danish division was ordered to take the lead. He described the bridges as being dilapidated and in need of repair. As usual he then went on to describe how well things were, despite the day’s hardships.

stop sign by the Women’s Correctional Facility. Turn left at the stop sign and drive east to Central Avenue. Turn right at Central Avenue and drive south out of town. When the road divides, take the roadway that continues straight south toward Runnells, Iowa, for about three and a quarter miles to University Avenue. Turn right onto University Avenue and drive west toward Des Moines. In Des Moines turn left and drive south on Hubbell Avenue, which is just past 22nd Street. Hubbell Avenue soon joins Grand Avenue. Drive west on Grand Avenue.

Wednesday, July 30

4:47 a.m.–7:14 p.m.

We arose had breakfast, prayers, &c., and were on our journey by 7 o’clock, the air beautiful. We proceeded on our journey about 8 or 10 miles when we halted for about 2 hours, and were on our journey again at 2 o’clock intending to go about 4 miles to the next creek, but the Danes having the lead went some distance by the Camping ground through some misunderstanding, & after consulting a while, it was thought better to proceed to the next creek, rather than turn back. And being misinformed about the distance we pursued our journey as far as Fort Des Moines without coming to a convenient camping ground. We arrived about 7:30 p.m. all very tired. Wood & water is plentiful here. We stopped just outside the Town and had many visitors from the Town to see us & kept themselves very quiet. We traveled 21 miles this day.

Language was clearly a barrier. On the rotation, the Danish Saints continued in the lead and did not stop where the English leaders had planned. It did, however, lead to one of the biggest travel days in Iowa. Unfortunately, it also made them arrive at their campground just after sunset. There was almost no moonlight because it was the night before the night of the new moon. Consequently, they would have been setting up their tents and starting fires after dark.

In 1856, Des Moines, Iowa, did not exist as a city. It was created by combining Fort Des Moines with East Fort Des Moines, in January 1857. The handcart company stopped

just outside of East Fort Des Moines, a little west of the present State Capitol Building, on the eastern edge of town.⁸

Thursday, July 31

4:48 a.m.–7:13 p.m.

This morning we were all up, had prayers, breakfast, &c., and were on our journey by 6:30 a.m. We crossed on the Flat-Boat-Bridge & passed about a mile through the Town where we stopped till 2 o'clock to give the cattle water & grass. We pursued our journey again about 4 miles where we encamped for the night. Wood & water pretty plentiful here. (Walnut Creek). Mr. Charles Good, a respectable gentleman from the City who seemed very favorable to the Gospel from no impure motive brought a present of 15 pairs of children's boots & being given with a free spirit we received them. The Saints all seem in pretty good spirits this day although they were very much fatigued last night by the long day's journey.

One of the truly Christian acts of kindness in Iowa was Charles Good's gift of shoes. His unselfish act of charity was offset by William Woodward's report that "some noisy men from Fort Des Moines came to interrupt our camp, but were foiled by the Guard." Levi Savage further reported that "a large number of ruffians came determined to disturb our camp."

The company journal stated that the Saints crossed the Des Moines River on a "Flat-Boat-Bridge." William Woodward called it a "floating bridge." In 1855 a pontoon bridge that was used for only two years was built where the Grand Avenue Bridge is today. It enabled the Willie Company to cross in 1856 without any trouble.⁹

Friday, August 1

4:49 a.m.–7:12 p.m.

This morning the air is very refreshing. We travelled about 10 miles & halted for about 2 hours for refreshment & pursued our journey again as far as Timber Point where we encamped for the night. The weather was very hot indeed the latter part of the journey which made it very bad travelling. The Saints all seem pretty well, the inhabitants round were very civil & obliging. Wood & water are plentiful here. We came 14 miles this day.

Thursday, July 31

To approximate the path that the Willie Company would have followed through Des Moines, continue driving west on Grand Avenue across the Des Moines River. This was where the pontoon bridge would have been located. Turn right immediately after the Grand Avenue Bridge onto Second Avenue. Drive north on Second Avenue to I-235. Turn left onto I-235 and travel west to Exit 123, where I-235 intersects I-35 and I-80. Take Exit 123B and travel north on I-35 and I-80 to Exit 125. Take Exit 125 onto US Highway 6 and travel west again on US Highway 6 toward Adel, Iowa.

William Woodward and Levi Savage both reported that part of the company went past the planned campground. Instead of the whole group catching up to them, as they did on July 30, a mule team was sent after them.

Saturday, August 2

4:50 a.m.–7:11 p.m.

This morning there is a beautiful air. We started about 7:50 a.m., after the general duties had been attended to. We passed through O Del. Before entering the town we had to ford a river about knee deep. A great many of the towns people came to see us & got trying to get the sisters away, but they took no notice of them & we passed through very quietly. We also forded another river & mud hole this day on our journey, & arrived at Middle Coone Creek about 5 or 6 o'clock. Wood & water plentiful here, & a good spirit prevails in our midst. We travelled 17 miles this day.

They crossed the North Raccoon Creek according to William Woodward and traveled through Adel, Iowa, which is misspelled as "O Del." The company stopped at Middle Raccoon Creek for the night, which is where Wiscotta, Iowa, is today. Raccoon is called "Coone" in the journal.

Along the way some of the local citizens tried to persuade Emily Hill, age 20, and her sister, Julia Hill, age 23, to abandon the trek. They were handed anonymous letters and warnings from sympathizing outsiders that set forth the hardships of their journey and offered inducements to stay behind. The sisters resisted. (Note: Emily Hill later wrote the words to the Mormon hymn, "As Sisters in Zion.")¹⁰

Sunday, August 3

4:49 a.m.–7:10 p.m.

This morning is a beautiful morning & we were on our journey by 6:45 a.m., & arrived at the South Coone Creek at 10:15 a.m. where we encamped for the day being Sunday to attend to washing, &c. Wood & water are pretty plentiful here. We travelled 10 miles this morning & rested ourselves the remainder of the day.

The last few days the company had traveled at least 15 miles per day. It was Sunday, and to give them some rest they only walked until midday. The people had settled into the routine and were handling things fairly well.

Saturday, August 2

In Adel, Iowa, US Highway 6 turns south and joins I-80. The Willie Company would have traveled west out of Adel toward Wiscotta, Iowa. From Adel, follow County Road F 60, which in Adel is Green Street, driving west toward Redfield. Redfield is about a mile north of Wiscotta.

Sunday, August 3

From this point there are two routes that can be followed. The first route goes directly to Anita, Iowa, while the second route goes to Anita by way of Dalmanutha. The second route more closely approximates the Willie Company's route. To take the first route, from Redfield simply drive south to I-80. Then drive west on I-80 for 30 miles to Exit 70. Take Exit 70 and drive

south to Anita on State Road 148. The second route to Anita is a little more complicated, but it is not hard. (Note: Almost all of the roads used in the second route are asphalt. The gravel portions will be indicated. The gravel roads are well maintained and can be traveled in wet weather.) To take the second route, while approaching Redfield from the east turn right at the Y intersection and drive into Redfield. This street runs west and then north, eventually becoming First Street. At the stop sign in town turn left onto Thomas Street and drive west. Thomas Street becomes Bridge Street and then County Road F 59 as it heads west out of town. Follow County Road F 59 west as it winds to County Road P 28. At County Road P 28 turn right and travel north toward Panora, Iowa. Follow County Road P 28 as it winds north and west to County Road F 51. At County Road F 51 turn left and travel west toward Monteith, Iowa. Continue driving west through Monteith to State Road 25. At State Road 25 turn left and travel south for about 4.6 miles to County Road F 63. At County Road F 63 turn right and drive west for three miles to Koala Avenue. At Koala Avenue turn right and drive north on the gravel road for about 1.7 miles to Lost (or Lock) Trail. Turn left and drive about a quarter of a mile west to the Dalmanutha Cemetery, which is at the top of the hill and very easy to see. It is located at GPS N 41 35.205' W 094 33.354'. From this point return to County Road F 63. Turn right onto County Road F 63 and drive west until it intersects Frontier Road, which is

also County Road N 54. Turn left and drive south on County Road N 54 to the stop sign outside of Adair, Iowa. Turn right at the stop sign onto White Pole Road and drive into Adair, Iowa. Drive south through Adair to I-80 and take I-80 traveling west to Exit 70. Take Exit 70 and then drive south on State Road 148 to Anita.

Monday, August 4

4:52 a.m.–7:08 p.m.

We started out about 7 o'clock, a beautiful morning and a nice air. We halted as usual 2 hours for refreshment & then continued our journey to Bear Grove Creek 17 miles where we arrived about 2 p.m. We stopped at a spring being no houses on our journey for refreshments. Wood is very scarce here. The Saints generally in pretty good spirits.

The trail led them to Bear Grove Creek. It was described by Peder Madsen as being "very hilly and only sparsely settled." Little has changed in 150 years. The Saints were following the "Newton" stagecoach trail. They stopped within about a mile of the newly planned town of Dalmanutha, Iowa. On August 5 they would pass Dalmanutha and travel about 3 miles west to the spine of Iowa, which is the point in Iowa where the rivers no longer flow east toward the Mississippi River; they begin to flow west toward the Missouri River. (Note: There appears to be some confusion about the company's path through Guthrie County, Iowa. This confusion comes from the fact that there was a Bear Grove Creek Station and a Bear Grove Creek Post



Dalmanutha, Iowa, cemetery.

Office. The station was near Dalmanutha, while the post office was about six miles northwest of Dalmanutha.)¹¹

Tuesday, August 5

4:54 a.m.–7:07 p.m.

We started about 6:30 a.m. & travelled 8-½ miles to a spring where we rested for an hour & then went on to Turkey Creek 18½ miles & arrived about 3 p.m. Wood rather scarce here but a beautiful spring of water. In the evening Elders Willie & Atwood reproved the Saints for being so dilatory & told them if they did not repent they would not have the blessings of the Lord & would not get through this season.

On the topic of being dilatory, Elizabeth Xavier Tait, age 24, told a story that may well have happened in this area. She reported that she was tired one day when the company stopped for dinner. (Note: Dinner was the midday meal. Supper was the evening meal.) She and another lady companion went a little distance from the group and fell asleep. When it was time to go, they could not be found. The young women awoke later and to their horror could not find the company. They anxiously followed the tracks. When it became dark, their fear kept them going. They finally came to a stream of water and their shouts led to their rescue by the company that was camped nearby.¹²

William Woodward reported that they camped at “Morrison’s” on Turkey Creek. “Morrison’s” or “Morrison’s Grove” was the forerunner to the town of Anita, Iowa.

Wednesday, August 6

4:55 a.m.–7:06 p.m.

This morning the rain came down in torrents till about 7 a.m. & we started about 9 a.m. after the tents had dried. We halted for two hours at a creek and then pursued our journey to Jordan Creek 14 miles where we halted for the night very much fatigued, the journey being very hilly—water pretty plentiful but no wood within a mile and a half. We arrived in Camp about 6 p.m.

Birth: a child to Ane K. and Peter Jacobsen

Peder Madsen recorded that “Sister Jacobsen gave birth.” No mention of a birth is found in the other records. There was a married “Sister Jacobsen” in the company. She was Ane K. Jacobsen, age 32, who was married to Peter Jacobsen, age 24 or 29. They

Wednesday, August 6

Near Anita, State Road 148 intersects State Road 83. Drive southwest toward Atlantic, Iowa, on State Road 83. Three miles before Atlantic, State Road 83 joins US Highway 6. Follow US Highway 6 west and then south out of Atlantic toward Lewis, Iowa. After about 6.5 miles there is a sign for Lewis. Follow the sign by turning left and driving south into Lewis.

had a child, Jens Peter Jacobsen, age 3.¹³ This birth was most likely a stillbirth. The Jacobsens were apparently troubled because on August 12 they were rebaptized for “health reasons.”

Peder Madsen also reported that for several nights it had been cold and had rained during the night, which made the roads slick. As a consequence of the weather, he had counted 12 other Saints that had colds and two additional children that were very sick.

The reference to “Jordan Creek” is certainly an error. Jordan Creek is actually 10 miles west of Indian Town, which town they did not reach until the seventh. The river they camped at was seven miles from Indian Town according to both Levi Savage and William Woodward.

Thursday, August 7

4:56 a.m.–7:05 p.m.

We started out about 6:30 a.m. A beautiful morning & splendid roads. We passed through Indian Town on our way, about 11:30 & halted for refreshments 2 hours and pursued our journey again as far as Walnut Creek 16 miles where we arrived at 4 o'clock & wood & water very plentiful here. We had splendid roads this day & travelled some part of the journey at the rate of nearly 4 miles an hour. The Saints all in good spirits. Bro. Smith of the Wiltshire Conference went into a store to purchase some things & left his purse in the shop with 6 sovereigns in it.

Indian Town, on Indian Creek, was a small settlement about one mile west of Lewis, Iowa. From Lewis until Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Florence, Nebraska Territory, the Willie Company followed the 1846 Mormon Trail as it wound across Iowa from Nauvoo. Lewis was a major junction of the trails that crossed Iowa in 1856.

The most noteworthy event in Indian Town was the misplacement and then theft of Isaac Smith's money purse. Not only was it mentioned in the company journal, but Levi Savage and William Woodward also referred to it. William Woodward was one of four people who were sent back to get a search warrant in an effort to try to recover the money. The sovereign is a British gold coin, designated as a British pound. Peder Madsen wrote on May 21 that the ocean passage cost two pounds. In his June 19 entry, he reported that a pound was worth slightly less than five American dollars. No money was ever recovered.

Thursday, August 7

Note: There are two markers in the Lewis area that are related to the Mormon trail in general. The first marker is in the Lewis Town Park. This marker was formerly in Indian Town, but was later moved to the park in Lewis. The Lewis Town Park is on Main Street between Market Street and Webster Street. To find the marker drive south in Lewis until the road intersects Main Street. Turn right on Main Street and drive west to the park. The second marker is on Minnesota Street, which is two blocks north of Main Street. To find the marker, drive north and turn left onto Minnesota Street, which is the road out of town. Drive west until the road changes to gravel. The marker is in the small park on the north side of the road, about one quarter of a mile west of where the road becomes a gravel road. Indian Town was still further west on the gravel road.

From the Lewis area, the trail goes west across the rolling hills into Council Bluffs, following the path the Mormons took in 1846 as they left Nauvoo and went to Council Bluffs. To follow its general path, drive west from Lewis on the gravel road to State Road 48, which is also 550th Street. Turn left and drive south on State Road 48 to Griswold. In Griswold turn right and drive west on State Road 92 to Council Bluffs. An alternative route to Council Bluffs follows the Willie Company's trail more closely. This route includes a 13-mile stretch of gravel road. To take this route, follow State Road 92 west, as just described. As it nears Carson look for US Highway 59. US Highway 59 intersects State Road 92 just east of Carson. At the sign for US Highway 59 turn right and follow the short exit road north and west. At the intersection with US Highway 59 turn left and travel south about three miles to County Road G 66. Turn right on County Road G 66 and travel west through Macedonia. Continue west about four miles to a stop sign. Turn left at the stop sign and travel south for one-half mile to again find County Road G 66. Turn right and follow County Road G 66, a well-maintained gravel road, as it winds its way west toward Council Bluffs.

Friday, August 8

4:56 a.m.–7:04 p.m.

This morning there is a nice air, we started out at 7:30 a.m., travelled 8 or 9 miles & crossed the East Nishna Botany River and took dinner on its banks & pursued our journey as far as West Nishna Botany Creek 15 miles where we halted for the night,

wood & water pretty plentiful. Bro. Woodward went back with witnesses and got a search warrant for Bro. Smith's purse, but did not succeed in finding it. We arrived in camp about 3 oc.

The August 6 "Jordan Creek" error was carried forward through the river crossings of the eighth. The "East Nishna Botany River" that they crossed would certainly have been Jordan Creek. The nearly treeless, rolling hills of western Iowa apparently all looked the same. On August 6 the company journal reported that there was no wood within a mile and a half of their camp. It is a wonder that there were not more errors regarding names of rivers and creeks.

Saturday, August 9

4:58 a.m.-7:01 p.m.

This morning we arose, had prayers, &c., and were on our journey at 6:30 a.m. & travelled to Silver Creek where we halted for refreshments about 2 hours & pursued our journey to Keg Creek 16 miles where we arrived about 3 oc. wood & water pretty plentiful here. In the evening Elders Willie & Atwood addressed the meeting & we had a first rate time of it with much of the Spirit of the Lord in our midst. On our way to this creek Bro. Gurnly of the Wiltshire Conference left us with his daughter.

The company journal reported that "Bro. Gurnly" and his daughter abandoned the journey, but Levi Savage's record reported a more complete account of the incident. He wrote that, "Here Brother Garner, his daughter and son left us. His wife remained and traveled with us." Levi Savage further recorded that on August 10 Brother Garner and his two children returned. Brother Garner "desired to go on with us," and "he was sorry and would ask forgiveness for he had been wrong and would do better for the future." It can easily be assumed that Sister Garner's choice to remain with the company had an impact on his decision to return and repent. Levi Savage, who appeared to be the captain over the Garner's hundred, consented to take him along.

Sunday, August 10

5:01 a.m.-7:00 p.m.

The Saints are all busy washing this morning. We left Keg Creek about 4 p.m. this day & travelled to Mosquito Creek 9 miles where we arrived at 7:20 p.m., a good spirit generally prevailing in our midst. Wood & water plentiful.

Sunday, August 10

In the Council Bluffs, Iowa, area the alternative route needs to reach State Road 92. From County Road G 66, continue driving west. A

On Sundays they occasionally did their wash and eased away from their normal travel schedule. They waited until 4 p.m. to start walking nine miles to Mosquito Creek, which was just outside of Council Bluffs, Iowa. The company actually stopped 20 minutes after sunset, but the phase of the moon was such that they would have had at least some moonlight while they set up camp. None of the other records gives a reason for this late, Sunday afternoon trek.

Levi Savage struggled throughout his record with the correct spellings and names of physical features they encountered. As one typical example, he called Keg Creek, "Cass Creek," and he called Mosquito Creek, "Musket Creek." However, he was by no means the only diarist that misnamed or misspelled landmarks. The names of these two creeks today remain Keg and Mosquito.

stop sign marks the intersection with County Road L 35. Turn right onto County Road L 35 and drive northwest toward Council Bluffs. When County Road L 35 intersects State Road 92, turn left onto State Road 92 and travel west to I-29. Take I-29 and travel north. To follow the Saints' path through Council Bluffs, take the exit to State Road 192 and drive north on State Road 192 as it winds through Council Bluffs and rejoins I-29. To avoid Council Bluffs, simply stay on I-29. Either way, continue driving north on I-29 until it intersects I-680 a few miles north of Council Bluffs. Drive west on I-680 across the Missouri River toward Omaha, Nebraska, and take Exit 13. At Exit 13 turn left and travel south on 30th Street. (Note: The area around Council Bluffs has plenty of Mormon Trail related markers and monuments. None of them directly relate to the Willie Company or to the other handcart companies until Florence. However, they are nonetheless interesting.)

Monday, August 11

5:01 a.m.–6:59 p.m.

This day we started at 7:15 a.m. with a beautiful air & good roads in our favor. We passed through Bluffs City & 2 or 3 small towns on our way and proceeded to a Creek 10 miles where we intended to halt but finding no water we proceeded on to the Missouri River 16 miles where we took the ferry & crossed over to the Camp of Florence arriving about 4 oc & encamped for the night, all very tired. Bro. McGaw came & assisted us in crossing the river & Bro. Kimball welcomed us on our arrival.

Levi Savage gave a much more interesting account of the trip through "Bluffs City," or Council Bluffs, and of Brother McGaw's assistance. As had happened throughout Iowa, some of the local residents came out to gawk and to "make sport" of the handcart Saints.

James McGaw, age 32, the Church's agent and presiding authority in Florence, Nebraska Territory, apparently did not appreciate this verbal abuse. He defended the handcart system and the Saints against these "gentiles and apostates." Levi Savage recorded that McGaw, "consequently, got into a fist fight with them. He whipped one or two of them, but received no material injury to himself except getting his hair well pulled."

Peder Madsen recorded that there were 520 cows and heifers, along with 123 calves grazing near the river. They had been purchased by John Van Cott for the Saints to take west.

Five children were born in Iowa. This included two that were born on July 15, which was the day before they left with the handcarts to start walking across Iowa. The only baby to be born as they walked was the unnamed Jacobsen baby, who was born on August 6, and who may have been stillborn.

The Saints had trekked about 300 miles and had come to the edge of the wilderness. Six deaths were recorded while they were enduring the weather in the Iowa City area, in some instances without tents, while only two deaths were recorded as they walked. One of these two deaths was the baby born on July 14 (recorded on July 15), the day before they began walking.

Notes

1. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 430–31.
2. "Mortensen Family History," typescript copy, 1–8, Church Archives.
3. Jenson, "Church Emigration," 135.
4. Loleta Dixon, "Biography of William James," 5, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
5. "Complete Sun and Moon Data for One Day," U.S. Naval Observatory, Astronomical Applications Department, http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/RS_OneDay.html (accessed June 20, 2006).
6. Leonard Arrington, Susan Arrington Madsen, and Emily Madsen Jones, *Mothers of the Prophets*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2001), 147–48.
7. "The Handcart Pioneers," in *Treasures of Pioneer History*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1952–57), 5:257.
8. Ilda M. Hammer, *The Book of Des Moines* (Des Moines, IA: Board of Education, 1947), 62–63.
9. Hammer, *Book of Des Moines*, 73.

10. Augusta Joyce Crocheron, "Emily H. Woodmansee," in *Representative Women of Deseret* (Salt Lake City: J. C. Graham, 1884), 86; "As Sisters in Zion," in *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 309.

11. Steven F. Faux, "The Significance and Location of the Iowa Mormon Handcart Trail: Faint Footsteps of 1856–57 Retraced" (paper presented to University of Iowa–Iowa City commemoration, Mormon Handcart Trek Sesquicentennial, June 9, 2006).

12. Faleen Truman, "Sketch of the Life of Elizabeth Xavier Tait," 3–4, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.

13. Riverton Wyoming Stake, comp., *Remember: The Willie and Martin Handcart Companies and Their Rescuers—Past and Present* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1997), E-4. Throughout this volume, the ages and family relationships that are not supplied through one of the four primary sources or through another referenced source all come from *Remember*.

Chapter 4

Florence, Nebraska Territory, to Fort Laramie, Nebraska Territory

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death . . .”

Psalms 23:4

Tuesday, August 12

5:02 a.m.–6:59 p.m.

This morning the brethren are busy getting the Saints to sign bonds finding out who intend stopping, what hand-carts want repairing, with many other things which are requisite before proceeding on our journey across the plains. In the evening Bro. McGaw and Bro. Willie addressed the Saints and gave them some needful instructions & advice before proceeding on the remainder of the journey.

August 12 and 13 were spent by the Saints repairing handcars and settling up accounts. They were also days of decision. Shortly after the Saints left Florence, civilization would end. Unlike the previous month crossing Iowa, they would not be passing through a series of small villages. They had approximately 1,000 miles of uncivilized territory to cover before they would arrive in the Salt Lake Valley. It was the last real chance to stop.

William Woodward completed his entry with the statement, “Many of our company agreed to leave the company.” Levi Savage reported that “Many are going to stop.” He then went on to express his feelings on the matter as follows: “Others are faltering and I myself am not in favor of, but much opposed to, taking women and children through when they are destitute of clothing, when we all know that we are bound to be caught in the snow and severe cold weather long before we reach the valley.”

Peder Madsen did not discuss stopping. It was almost as if the Danish Saints were unaware of the people that were choosing to quit the trek, or perhaps with their language barrier they simply chose to go on to the valley. Instead, he recorded the spiritual activities

Tuesday, August 12

The Mormon Trail Center in Omaha, Nebraska, is worth a stop. It has information on Florence from the time that it was known as Winter Quarters into the later handcart era. There is a statue depicting handcart travelers just outside the main entrance. From I-680 take Exit 13 and drive south on 30th Street. At the intersection of 30th Street and State Street turn right and travel three blocks west to the top of the hill. The Mormon Trail Center is at GPS N 41 20.117' W 095 57.918'. There is a pioneer cemetery across the street to the west. The cemetery is north of the Winter Quarters Temple.

of the Danish Saints. For example, he told of the rebaptisms of five Danish Saints, including his own daughter, Petrea Madsen, age 36, along with Peter and Ane Jacobsen, the parents of the child born on August 6. These baptisms were specifically done for the person's health. Over the next two days he reported two more baptisms to renew covenants.

Wednesday, August 13

5:03 a.m.–6:58 p.m.

The Brethren are busy settling up accounts, finding out those who are going to stop, &c. In the evening Prest. Willie with Elders Atwood & Savage addressed us and bore their testimonies & gave their opinions of the journey before us & after prayers we were dismissed & went to our tents.

Although the company journal entry was brief, this meeting would prove to be a pivotal point in their journey. President Willie exhorted them to go forward regardless of the sacrifice. Presenting a contrary opinion, Levi Savage warned them of how great the sacrifice would be and of the dangers he anticipated if they continued to cross the plains. He wrote in his journal on August 13 the following: "August 13, 1856, Wednesday, Florence, Nebraska Territory. Today we continued preparations for starting. Evening we held meeting in camp. Brother Willey exhorted the Saints to go forward regardless of suffering even to death. After he had spoken, he gave me the opportunity of speaking. I said to him that if I spoke I must speak my mind, let it cut where it would. He said certainly to do so. I then related to the Saints the hardships that we should have to endure. I said that we were liable to have to wade in snow up to our knees and shovel at night, lay ourselves in a thin blanket and lie on the frozen ground without a bed. I said that it was not like having a wagon that we could go into and wrap ourselves in as much as we like and lay down. 'No,' said I, 'we are without wagons, destitute of clothing and could not carry it if we had it. We must go as we are. The handcart system I do not condemn. I think it preferable to unbroken oxen and inexperienced teamsters.' The lateness of the season was my only objection to leaving this point for the mountains at this time. I spoke warmly upon the subject, but spoke truth, and the people, judging from appearance and expressions, felt the force of it. (However, the most of them determined to go forward, if the authorities say go.) Elder Willey then spoke again in reply to what I had said, evidently dissatisfied. He said that the God that he served was a God that was able to save to the uttermost. He said that was the God that he served, and he wanted no Job's comforters with him. I then

said that what I had said was the truth, and if Elder Willey did not want me to act in the place where I am, he is at full liberty to place another man in my stead. I would not think hard of him for it. But, I did not care what he said about Job's comforters, I had spoken nothing but the truth and he knew it. Elder Atwood then spoke mildly and to the purpose. He said that he had been listening to what had been said. He exhorted the Saints to pray to God and get a revelation and know for themselves whether they should go or stay, for it was their privilege to know for themselves. The meeting was dismissed, all manifesting a good feeling and spirit."

John Chislett, like Levi Savage, was a captain of a hundred. Years later he indicated the full character of Levi Savage as a true supporter of the cause. Even though the Saints voted against the advice of Levi Savage, he promised to give his all to help them. It was no wonder that President Willie left Levi Savage as a captain over a hundred. John Chislett wrote the following: "Savage was accordingly defeated, as the majority were against him. He then added: 'Brethren and sisters, what I have said I know to be true; but, seeing you are to go forward, I will go with you, will help you all I can, will work with you, will rest with you, will suffer with you, and, if necessary, I will die with you. May God in his mercy bless and preserve us. Amen.'"¹

Millen Atwood had instructed the Saints to seek their own answers from the Spirit. After Levi Savage's speech, Emma James, age 16, recorded that there was a long silence, as the people contemplated the choice before them. She was frightened. Her father looked pale, while her mother looked determined. Emma felt they really did not have a choice, because there was no work for them and no way to live in Florence through the winter. Her mother said, "We must put our trust in the Lord, as we have alway [*sic*] done."² They chose to walk on to the west. Her father, William James, who "looked pale," would eventually have his worst fears realized as he passed away crossing Rocky Ridge in October.

Thursday, August 14

5:04 a.m.–6:56 p.m.

It is splendid weather & the Saints are getting up their strength while the Brethren are busy loading up flour, taking the names of those going through, preparing the hand-carts, &c., together with many other things necessary before proceeding on our journey.

In Peder Madsen's record he commented that some of the English were staying behind. However, only one Danish couple chose to stay in Council Bluffs. He reported that they were staying with apostates. The enticement for the Danish couple, Niels and Anne C. Hansen, was apparently the lure of high wages.

Friday, August 15

5:05 a.m.–6:54 p.m.

This morning the sun is out beautiful, all the Brethren who can work at the carpentering & iron work were up early and all went at the hand-carts in good earnest under the Presidency of Elder Willie in order to forward our starting as much as possible. Last night Sister Mary Ann Hansen.

Death: Maren Hansen, age 52

The company journal did not finish the Mary Ann Hansen statement. She was a Danish Saint and Peder Madsen wrote, "Maren Hansen, 52 years old, died." She was not the only one who was sick. On August 13, William Woodward had been sent across the Missouri River to get some hoop iron for the handcarts. He returned on August 14. On August 15, he wrote that he was taken very sick with a fever. He received a priesthood blessing and partially recovered. However, as late as August 22, he still was reporting in his daily journal that he felt sick.

The format and coverage of the official company journal changed from August 15 to August 16. It is hard to determine who the official company journal writer or writers were from May 1 through October 1. However, one clue might be that, on May 3, Peder Madsen listed George May as the company clerk. George was a single, 24-year-old British convert. Although he sailed with the *Thornton*, he ultimately was listed as coming to the Salt Lake Valley with the Hunt Wagon Company. He could have easily kept the journal until he was assigned to stay and help the wagon trains at either Florence or Fort Laramie. All that is known for certain is that William Woodward took over clerk duties after October 1. Nowhere does it state who wrote the company journal prior to that date.

Saturday, August 16

5:06 a.m.–6:53 p.m.

Part of the 4th Company of Hand-carts 85 in number under the presidency of Elder James G. Willie started from Florence in company with 11 waggons (P.E.Fund &

Saturday, August 16

The first camp was in the area of what is now State Road 133 and Military Road, where the

Independent) about one o'clock p.m. and journey to Little Pappesa where they camped for the night with Col. Babbitt and 4 waggons of his. The Handcart Company had been organized into hundreds by President Daniel Spencer at Iowa City and subsequently sanctioned by President James McGaw. Millen Atwood, Capt. of 1st Hundred, Levi Savage Capt. of 2nd Hundred, William Woodward Capt. of 3rd Hundred, John Chislett Capt. of 4th Hundred, J.A. Ahamason, Capt. of 5th Hundred. Brother Jost borrowed a yoke of oxen from Bro. Cantwell in consequence of his own being unmanageable. Promised to return said yoke tomorrow—6 miles from Florence.

President James McGaw, the presiding Church authority at Florence, confirmed the leadership arrangement set down by President Daniel Spencer in Iowa City. The Saints had been in Florence less than a week and at least part of the company was on its way again.

As part of the company moved out, the Saints were accompanied by "Colonel" Almon W. Babbitt. His role in their next few weeks of traveling turned out to be tragic for him. He was the Secretary of the Utah Territory. At this time he was returning to the territory after having conducted business back in "the states." He had four wagons in his traveling group. Within just a matter of days his wagons would be attacked and destroyed, and he would subsequently be killed by hostile Indians.

As they left Florence, there were just over 400 people remaining in the handcart company. An actual census was not taken until September 12 by President Franklin D. Richards. He reported that as of September 12 there were "404 persons, 6 wagons, 87 handcarts, 6 yoke of oxen, 32 cows, and 5 mules."³

President Richards's census most likely did not include the "Independent Waggons." The "Independent Waggons" were a group of Saints traveling by wagon to the Salt Lake Valley. It was unsafe to travel in too small of a group through Indian Territory, so four wagons were added to the Willie Handcart Company in Florence. There were already some wagons traveling with the handcarts to carry tents, provisions, and the sick. Each group of 100 Saints had a wagon to assist them. It was thought that the addition of a few independent wagons would not slow down the handcarts too much. The company record included a list of people attached to the "Independent Waggons." There were 26 people, led by Andrew L. Siler, age 31, who was officially installed as their captain on August 18 by President McGaw.

Little Papillion Creek intersects Military Road. To reach the area, return to I-680 and travel west to Exit 6. Take Exit 6 and travel southeast on State Road 133 until it intersects 90th Street. Take the 90th Street Exit and drive south to Military Road. The creek and the camp were less than one quarter of a mile east.

Peder Madsen noted two interesting facts at this point in his record. First, shoes were already a problem. He wrote, "Measurements of the feet of those who needed shoes were taken, and those who had shoes that were too small were given to the ones who could fit them. The others will instead get new shoes." Second, the Danish Saints had obviously not left the company in the same numbers as the English. He reported that the English sections were considerably reduced in number when they left Florence, which explained the reduction in total number of travelers from about 500 to about 400.

The company journal referred to their stopping point as the Little "Pappea." Levi Savage called it the Little "Papaw." It is in fact known today as the Little Papillion Creek.

The trail the Willie Company traveled between Florence and New Fort Kearney is fairly well documented. In 1856, Captain John H. Dickerson of the United States Army was ordered to locate and construct a territorial road in the Nebraska Territory between a point opposite Council Bluffs, Iowa, and New Fort Kearney. He started out following the "Winter Quarters Trail" and continued pursuing "very nearly the route over which the Mormon and California emigrants have been passing for several years."⁴ "Old" Fort Kearney was established in 1847 in Nebraska City, Nebraska Territory. Dickerson referred to "New" Fort Kearney, which was the name attached to the Fort Kearney that existed near present-day Kearney. "New" Fort Kearney provided protection for users of the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails.

On Captain Dickerson's survey trip to Fort Kearney, he passed a Mormon wagon train at the Loup Fork River crossing, just south of present-day Columbus, Nebraska, on July 8. On his return trip he followed the Platte River in the hope of finding a route that would avoid following the Loup Fork River. He noted that two handcart trains had passed by, while he had been on the alternative path. On August 5 near the Shell Creek crossing, west of present-day Rogers, Nebraska, he met a "Mormon hand cart train." In his record he expressed a very derogatory view of the people in that handcart company, commenting especially on their apparent weariness. He completed his survey on August 14, just missing the Willie Company.⁵ The handcart train he encountered was the third handcart company, led by Edward Bunker.

Sunday, August 17

5:08 a.m.–6:52 p.m.

Staid in camp all day. Bros. Jost and Geary returned to Florence with Bro. Cantwell's oxen. Remainder of handcarts and waggons arrived in Camp from Florence with

President Willie. This evening Capt. Atwood gave the Saints some good instruction relative to their present and future duties which he plainly told them must and should be performed and referring to his satisfaction at some grumblers having deserted from the ranks told the balance that those of them who might still feel double-minded had better do the same as this was about their last chance. Capt. Atwood was addressing the Saints when President Willie arrived. A smart shower or two to-day.

The Willie Company was traveling with 37 beef and milk cows, in addition to their draft animals. Levi Savage reported they were still short a wagon. Each wagon was loaded “with thirty-five and forty hundred of provisions.” The Saints still had a little over a ton more in provisions, i.e., “twenty-five hundred” pounds, but no wagon. Fortunately, William Woodward wrote that another wagon was added on August 18 that covered the shortfall. Even with this addition John Chislett later wrote that each handcart was required to carry one extra sack of flour. Each sack of flour weighed 98 pounds. The flour carried in the handcarts was used first, in order to lighten the burden of those pulling the handcarts.⁶

By the end of the day on August 17, both parts of the company had gone the six miles from the outfitting grounds in Florence to the Little Papillion Creek campground. Certainly the feelings of some of these Saints were expressed by Peder Madsen when he wrote that they were now in the wilderness.

Monday, August 18

5:09 a.m.–6:51 p.m.

Left camp about 3 p.m. and camped for the night at Great Pappea. President James McGaw and Elder Wm. H. Kimball with one or two other brethren visited the Camp. President McGaw placed the Independent Waggon Company in the same organization as the Handcart Company and appointed Andrew L. Siler, Capt. of such Company. 9 miles from Florence.

The group traveled only three miles to the “Great Pappea” or “Big Papaw” Creek as it is variously referred to, but which is today called Big Papillion Creek.

Monday, August 18

To drive to the area of the second campground, follow Military Road west to 108th Street. Turn right and drive north on 108th Street for about one quarter of a mile, until it again intersects Military Road. Turn left and drive west as Military Road winds west through the subdivisions for a little less than three miles, to where it crosses Big Papillion Creek, which is where it intersects with 126th Street. Military Road appears to have been given its name because it generally follows the road surveyed by Captain Dickerson of the United States Army.

Tuesday, August 19

5:10 a.m.–6:50 p.m.

Rolled out about 6 a.m. and ferried the Elk Horn River in the middle part of the day, the cattle swimming the stream. Prest. Willie appointed Bro. Niel, Lars Christiansen, interpreter and Counsellor to the Danish Saints and obtained a unanimous vote from the Camp to support every other appointment which had been made. Camped for the night on a creek about 3 miles from the River. 27 miles from Florence.

Once again the company was asked to formally sustain the leaders of their group. The only change appears to be that “Niel, Lars Christiansen,” age 27, (who was also known as Niels L. Christensen and Niel Larsen Christensen) was appointed to be over the Danish hundred. He was a missionary returning to the Salt Lake Valley. No explanation was given regarding John Ahmanson’s replacement. On September 4 and 5, Christiansen was referred to as Captain Christiansen. The vote was unanimous in support of the appointed leaders.

The handcarts were ferried across the Elkhorn River, while the livestock swam. They used the established ferry crossing. After their crossing they camped on an unnamed creek, just three miles past the ferry. William Woodward’s record identified this unnamed creek as Raw Hide Creek, which they followed in a northwesterly direction.

Wednesday, August 20

5:11 a.m.–6:48 p.m.

Stopped in camp till one p.m. to wash, prepare weapons, &c. Started at one o’clock & arrived at the Platte River about dusk. 39 miles from Florence.

William Woodward wrote that they were delayed in leaving because “Bro. Savage” had to go back to the “Pappea” to get a cow. Levi Savage recorded that on August 19 a cow had lost her calf. They left the cow behind to see if she could find her calf. On August 20 he was sent back to retrieve the cow and, if possible, the calf. However, no calf had been found and he brought back only the cow.

They took advantage of the delay and spent the morning cleaning themselves and their clothes and preparing the wagons for departure. For the first few weeks the company journal recorded the distance from Florence. Based on that record, they traveled 12 miles. Twelve miles of traveling would have taken them a few miles past present-day Fremont, Nebraska.

Tuesday, August 19

The location of the Elkhorn River crossing has been identified with a very small marker that is not at the river. To continue along the trail and travel to the marker, continue west and northwest on Military Road until it joins Bennington Road. Turn left and follow Bennington Road west for 100 yards until it intersects State Road 31, which is also 204th Street. Turn right onto State Road 31 and travel north until it intersects State Road 36. Turn left onto State Road 36 and travel west until it intersects 240th Street. Stop at that T intersection. The marker for the Elkhorn River ferry is 30 feet south of the asphalt edge of State Road 36, at a point that is directly south of the midline of 240th Street. It is at GPS N 41 22.725’ W 096 17.542’.

Wednesday, August 20

To follow their trail, continue driving west on State Road 36 until it intersects US Highway 275. Travel northwest on US Highway 275 toward Fremont. At Fremont, travel through the city by taking US Highway 30 (Business) from the east to the west side of the city. To avoid the city, take the belt route. Travel north and then west and south on US Highway 30 (West) and follow it around the city. Either way, end up traveling on US Highway 30 toward Columbus, Nebraska, which path roughly parallels the trail of the Saints to Columbus. There are at least five pioneer trail markers in the Fremont area, although

none of them directly relate to the Willie Handcart Company.

Thursday, August 21

5:12 a.m.–6:47 p.m.

Last night rather stormy. Journey resumed at 6:30 a.m. Reached Platte River where it joins the road about 2 p.m. The sun being very hot and cattle much exhausted train ordered to stop here till 5 p.m. when the journey resumed. Travelled about 6 miles further and camped on the open prairie without wood or water the cattle having been watered just previous to starting. Ordered to move off in the morning before breakfast. About 55 miles from Florence.

The trail in this area ran within a mile of the Platte River. The humidity and heat apparently were taking a toll on the people and the cattle again, as they appeared to be trying to avoid travel in the middle of the day. They traveled about 16 miles, camping some miles west of present-day North Bend, Nebraska.

All four of the journals mentioned the lunch break. However, they disagreed on its starting and stopping times and on its length. The company journal stated it was from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. for three hours. Levi Savage stated it was from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m. for five hours. Peder Madsen stated it was for two hours starting at 12 noon. William Woodward did not give a starting time or an overall length of time, but he did record that they started up after the break at 5 p.m.

Friday, August 22

5:13 a.m.–6:46 p.m.

Order to move before breakfast, obeyed. Weather very hazy and grass very wet but about 9 it became fine. Stayed 2 hours at Shell Creek to breakfast, &c. Resumed journey and travelled about 12 miles further camping at sunset near Platte River by the side of a long lake. During the afternoon Sister Sophia Geary had her left foot run over by Bro. Wilford's waggon. She was administered to in the evening by Bros. Siler, Cantwell and Geary, Capt. Siler officiating. He sealed the blessing of health and strength upon her and promised that inasmuch as she would exercise faith she should walk tomorrow. 75 miles from Florence.

Twenty miles of traveling in the hot, humid weather was a long day. The Saints started before breakfast, again to avoid the heat of the day. Although not mentioned in the company journal, it appeared that there may well have been a bridge over Shell Creek.⁷ Levi Savage mentioned buying things from Isaac Albertson's trading post by the Shell Creek crossing. They crossed it a few miles east of present-day Schuyler, Nebraska. They then continued on in a fairly straight line, probably staying to the north of Lost Creek. In this area, the Platte River was up to three miles wide and constantly changing its course. Those changes left large and small lakes, including probably the long lake on which the Saints camped. Captain Dickerson mentioned camping on a "long pond" in the former river bed on July 7, when he and his crew came through the Shell Creek area on their survey.⁸

Sister Sophia Geary's left foot was run over by William Wilford's wagon. The wagon wheels were rimmed with iron and the wagons themselves probably weighed close to two tons. This action should have crushed her foot. Three of the men in the company gave her a blessing, wherein she was promised that through the exercise of her faith she would walk the next day. She walked the next day.

Saturday August 23

5:15 a.m.–6:45 p.m.

Rolled out about 6:30 a.m. ferried the Loup Fork River, the cattle fording it. While at the Loup Fork Prest. Willie had a cow and calf killed for the Handcart Company. Camped for the night on the other side. Plenty of wood and water and abundance of rich feed for cattle in the shape of pea-vines. Sis. Geary walked a considerable distance pursuant to Bro. Siler's promise. About 86 miles from Florence.

The company journal, Levi Savage, and William Woodward all reported ferrying across the Loup Fork River on August 23 and camping at the crossing south of present-day Columbus, Nebraska. The record of Levi Savage referred to it as the "Soap Fork" and not the Loup Fork River. In 1847 the primary route west required the wagon trains to cross the Loup Fork River at a point upstream from the 1856 ferry. Typically, those earlier wagon trains might have crossed at a point near Genoa, just as Brigham Young did in 1847. His company then went south to the Platte River. In contrast, the Willie Company took what had become the primary route when they crossed at the ferry. After the Willie Company crossed the Loup Fork River, they then followed its south side the next few days for about 57 miles, before they turned south across the open prairie and headed for the Platte River.

Saturday, August 23

From Columbus, Nebraska, there are two routes that can be taken. To take the first route, travel southwest on US Highway 30 through Grand Island and then follow I-80 west toward North Platte, Nebraska. To take the second route, in Columbus, when US Highway 30 intersects US Highway 81 at 33rd Avenue, take US Highway 81 and drive west and north out of Columbus. About four miles north of Columbus, US Highway 81 intersects State Road 22. Turn onto State Road 22 and travel west through Monroe and Genoa, and on toward Fullerton. Just north of Fullerton, State Road 22 intersects State Road 14. Turn south onto State Road 14 and travel through Fullerton. At this point either continue to drive south to Central City and then on to

Peder Madsen reported that each person was allocated one pound of meat from the cow and calf that had been butchered.

Grand Island, or, for a closer look at the country the handcart pulled through, note the mileage at the south side of the bridge over the Loup Fork River just south of Fullerton. Travel south for 5.6 miles and turn right onto an unmarked gravel road, which is X Road. The GPS point at the turn is N 41 15.828' W 097 59.000'. (Note: about 0.7 mile after the bridge over the Loup Fork River there is a "Mormon Pioneer Campsite" marker that mentions the handcart pioneers.) Travel west on X Road for four miles. At the stop sign turn left and travel south on the gravel road, which is 13th Road, for one mile to the asphalt road, which is W Road. Turn right and travel west for 10 miles on W Road to the stop sign. (Note: after driving about seven of the 10 miles look north about a mile. Somewhere in that area is where the company would have camped on August 26.) Turn left onto 3rd Road and travel south for four miles. 3rd Road goes through present-day Palmer. At the stop sign turn right and travel west on State Road 92 for four miles. Turn left at Brady Road and travel south on the gravel road for eight miles. Turn right onto 3rd Avenue and travel west for two miles across a set of railroad tracks and through a stop sign to US Highway 281. (Note: About 1.5 miles short of US Highway 281 is the area where they would have camped on August 27.) Turn left and travel south on U. S Highway 281 toward Grand Island. Follow US Highway 281 around to the west side of Grand Island to where it intersects US Highway 30. Take US Highway 30 toward Kearney,

Nebraska, and travel west. As an alternative, continue traveling south until US Highway 281 intersects I-80 and then travel west. Both US Highway 30 and I-80 run parallel to the trail the Saints followed through the present-day city of North Platte. The trail actually runs right where US Highway 30 is, near present-day Gibbon, Nebraska. (Note: About a mile east of Gibbon is where they camped on August 30.) To get to I-80 after traveling through Gibbon, travel about five miles on US Highway 30 until it intersects State Road 10. Turn left and travel south on State Road 10 until it intersects I-80. Turn onto I-80 and travel west toward North Platte, Nebraska.

Sunday, August 24

5:16 a.m.–6:43 p.m.

Left Camp at 6:30 a.m. Journeyed about 6 miles and stayed for dinner and to water cattle for nearly an hour at a bend of the Loup Fork. Travelled a considerable distance further and stayed again sufficiently long to water, then journeyed about 12 miles further turned off the road and camped on the bank of the Loup Fork with plenty of grass wood and water. A good hard road nearly the whole day's march. Say 100 miles from Florence.

It is not really clear how many miles they traveled. Without an odometer, they merely guessed how far they traveled each day. The company journal stated that they traveled 6 miles before dinner, their midday meal, and then traveled on 12 more miles for a total of 18 miles. It stated further that they were 86 miles from Florence as of August 23 and "Say 100 miles from Florence" as of August 24, for a total of 14 miles. Levi Savage's journal reported traveling 15 miles, camping by the river, and catching some fish. William Woodward's record stated that they traveled 14 miles. Peder Madsen wrote that they traveled 23 miles.

The road was described as “a good hard road” nearly all day. While traveling in the Platte River valley, they had to pull their handcarts through many sandy areas. It was much easier to pull a handcart on a firm road instead of a sandy road.

Monday, August 25

5:18 a.m.–6:42 p.m.

Rolled out about 7 a.m. leaving Bro. Griffiths on a mule to hunt for 3 cows which had been lost. He got into Camp in the evening about dusk with one cow only which he reported as having found on terms of close intimacy with 2 wolves. Travelled about 8 miles opposite the Pioneers’ Ford of the Loup Fork (1½ mile to right of Camp) and stayed there for water and dinner. Had to double teams up a steep sandhill between 2 bluffs at the top of which Camp dined. Journeyed about 12 miles further and camped for the night on the right hand side of a lake of water. No wood nearer than half a mile on the other side of the lake which was crossed at its head. About the time of arrival the Camp was favored with a drenching shower of rain. Good feed. About 120 miles from Florence.

About eight miles into the day’s traveling the company journal noted that they were one and a half miles south of the “Pioneers’ Ford of the Loup Fork,” which was near Genoa. Instead of turning south as the Mormons did in 1847, they continued to follow the south side of the Loup Fork River. Again the actual distance they traveled is uncertain. The company journal and William Woodward recorded 20 miles, while Levi Savage recorded 15 miles and Peder Madsen recorded 18 miles.

At times it was certainly difficult to keep over 400 people moving together. People were occasionally asked to stay behind or to go search for something while the rest of the handcarts went forward. The company journal reported leaving Brother Edward Griffiths, age 25, to hunt for three lost cows. After having a close encounter with two wolves, he returned with only one cow. As another example, Joseph Wall, age 18, was traveling with his sister Emily, age 15. A few days after leaving Florence, he became ill. The company leadership decided to leave him to be picked up or buried by the Martin Company, when they came along. Emily refused to leave him because she had been promised that they would safely arrive in the Salt Lake Valley. Emily insisted that he stay with them and she promised to pull him in her handcart. With the aid of a small girl she did pull him until he was well again, three days later.⁹

Elizabeth Smith, age 13, told of the power of President Willie's prayers. She related an experience, which may well have been on August 25, when storms arose with thunder and lightning. President Willie stood in the middle of the road and stopped the handcarts. He had the Saints join him in prayer. He talked to God as one man talks to another. Many felt the Lord was near. The storms parted on the right and on the left. Finally, when they got into camp and the tents were set up, the storm burst in all its fury.¹⁰ The company journal recorded that "a drenching shower of rain" greeted them on their arrival at their campsite.

Tuesday, August 26

5:19 a.m.–6:41 p.m.

Started about 7 a.m. and after journeying about 10 miles stayed on the open prairie to rest for half an hour and then travelled about 5 miles further camping for the night near the Loup Fork with good feed and water but little wood. A fine cool day for travelling. The king-bolt of Bro. Chislett's waggon broke soon after starting this morning. This detained his and another waggon's company for some time but they all arrived in Camp early in the evening. About 135 miles from Florence.

The king bolt that broke on John Chislett's wagon connected the animals to the wagon and was essential. They were on a road but miles away from any help. The company could not wait, so another wagon, which Levi Savage stated was his, stayed to help repair the broken wagon. William Woodward reported that they replaced it with a wooden king bolt and by the end of the day they were reunited with the company.

Levi Savage reported catching "a fine mess of catfish." Peder Madsen wrote that they had found tracks and that there were buffalo in the wilderness. He looked forward to getting buffalo steak soon.

Wednesday, August 27

5:21 a.m.–6:39 p.m.

Left Camp about 7 a.m. Travelled over heavy sandy roads more or less all day stopping for an hour or 2 in the middle of the day to eat and to water cattle at a well about 8 miles on the way. A large quantity of lizards on the road. Camped for the night on the open prairie having found a slough of water on the left hand side of the road. 150 miles from Florence.

Levi Savage recorded that “this morning we left the Soap Fork at twelve o’clock.” The company journal reported sandy roads and a large quantity of lizards as they left the relative comfort of the Loup Fork River, with its fresh water, good feed, and abundant wood. They were crossing the open prairie. They camped next to a slough for water. Captain Dickerson’s surveyed route went south and west. They were following his route, which was, at that time, the main trail.¹¹

Thursday, August 28

5:22 a.m.–6:38 p.m.

Rolled forth about 7 a.m. Staid to water cattle and to dine at Prairie Creek which Camp subsequently crossed arriving at Wood River after dark. Camped there with plenty of wood & water but rather indifferent feed. Roads were sandy throughout the morning. Four buffaloes seen during the afternoon. They were fruitlessly pursued by Bros. Siler & Savage for several miles. They saw a large herd in the distance. Bro. Haley (an old man) was missed on the arrival of the Camp this evening. Several went out in search with a lantern but without success. 165 miles from Florence.

Although the journals stated that they were at the Wood River, they were not. The river they had arrived at was Silver Creek. They had arrived at their campsite after dark. It was often hard to determine where locations were on the open prairie in the daylight. After sunset it would have been justifiably difficult to know which stream of water they had encountered. Fortunately, Captain Dickerson had identified the locations of both the Indian encampment and the attack on Colonel Babbitt’s wagons. That information, along with his survey, allows their trail to be fairly well identified through this region.¹² The company journal stated that the Willie Company camped on August 29 about one-half mile from the Indian encampment. Ultimately, from their camp on Silver Creek they followed Prairie Creek to the west until their travel on August 30 finally took them to their actual Wood River crossing.

For the first time in these Europeans’ lives, they saw buffalo. Initially, they had seen only four animals. Fresh buffalo meat would have been a welcome change in their diet.

Friday, August 29

5:23 a.m.–6:36 p.m.

A tremendous storm arose early this morning and lasted for several hours. A large number of scouts started after breakfast in search of Bro. Haley. The lost sheep was

found 30 yards from the road after about 2 hours' search thoroughly drenched with water. His voice was scarcely audible. He said that the Bro. with the lantern passed nearly close to him last night but that he (Haley) could not make himself heard. Left camp at one o'clock p.m. and after journeying about 3 miles met a number of mounted Omaha Indians one of whom (the Interpreter) produced a letter from Capt. Stewart of the U.S. Army dated recently at Fort Kearney and addressed to Col. Babbitt stating that on last Monday (25 August) his waggons were attacked by the Cheyenne Indians who killed 2 of his men and a little child shot a 3rd man through the thigh and carried a woman captive, the wounded man with another who escaped unhurt being, at date of letter, at Fort Kearney. President Willie and Captains Atwood, Savage and Siler visited a large encampment of Omaha Indians about half a mile from our Camp. These Indians were very numerous and had a great quantity of horses. They seemed friendly disposed and bartered Buffalo meat for different articles. Our Camp stopped early in the afternoon about half a mile from the Indian Camp. 175 miles from Florence.

August 29 was a memorable date. Between the search for William Haley and the rain, the company did not get started until 1 p.m. An hour or so later, they met 800 Native Americans as recorded by Levi Savage. Although the Indians were friendly, their report of Colonel Babbitt's wagons being attacked by unfriendly Cheyenne on August 25 sent a shock wave through the Saints. This was the same Colonel Babbitt who had traveled with them on August 16 as they were leaving the Florence area. This was the first major contact for these European immigrants with buffalo and Indians, two of the greatest symbols of the American West.

Margaret Caldwell, age 40, traveling with her four children, reported that she traded small articles or trinkets for buffalo meat.¹³ George Cunningham, age 16, traveling with his family, reported that they were invited to camp one night with a large group of Omaha at Wood River, which they did.¹⁴

Two young people told of the amazement that the Indians had with the handcars. The Indians wanted to push the handcars. Four-year-old Sarah Ann Oakey was afraid, so her mother took her out of the handcart. However, upon being reassured that the Indians were friendly, she was placed back in the handcart and rode to the camp.¹⁵ Mary Anne James, age 11, wrote that one of the Indians was so fascinated that he leaped from his horse and pushed a cart so hard that it nearly ran over the woman and her daughter that were pulling it. After pushing for a while, he returned to his horse and rode off.¹⁶

Saturday, August 30

5:25 a.m.–6:35 p.m.

Left camp about 7 a.m. Immediately met some Californians with a large herd of horses for the States. They confirmed the Indians' report of the murder of Col. Babbitt's men and stated that they met several Mormon trains at different points on the route and that good health prevailed generally. After travelling some distance we came up to the graves of the 2 men and the child. President Willie and Capt. Atwood assisted by the brethren piled large quantities of earth on the graves to protect them from the wolves and to smother the effluvia which was beginning to arise.

Journeyed on till we arrived at the "Lone Tree" where we crossed creek and staid to water cattle and dine. While dining some of the brethren noticed on the hills about 2 miles off some animals which looked like oxen. Capt. Savage and Bro. Joseph Elder started in pursuit the one on a mule the other on horseback and after a long chase succeeded in bringing into Camp a yoke of oxen which were added to Bro. Jost's team. Travelled on after about 2 hours' delay crossed Wood River and camped for the night on its bank about 4 miles above the crossing with plenty of grass wood and water. Shortly after camping Col. Babbitt, with a man, & a Scotch sister named Stewart arrived in Camp with 5 mules and a carriage. They camped with us for the night and the Col. arranged for Sis. Stewart going through to the Valley in Bro. Cantwell's wagon. This evening Bro. Robert Culwell's collar bone got broken by a cow which he was attempting to milk. About 200 miles from Florence.

Peder Madsen also reported that the Indians had come early in the morning to trade with them. It appeared that the major items of trade were buffalo meat and shoes, which were traded for handkerchiefs and clothing. He secured a pair of shoes for some handkerchiefs.

The fresh graves of the two men and the child that had been killed five days earlier were discovered by the company. For the two years prior to 1856, there had been Indian troubles on the trail. Certainly the members of the handcart company knew about them or soon learned about them after finding these graves. Even Peder Madsen wrote in his record about the military overtaking and shooting 16 Indians. The two major incidents were the Grattan Massacre of 1854, when a number of soldiers had been killed by Indians near Fort Laramie, and the Harney Massacre of 1855, when an even larger number of

Indians had been killed by soldiers near Ash Hollow. These Saints had come to see first-hand that the threat of Indian trouble was real.

The company journal recorded that they arrived at the “Lone Tree.” The tree was a landmark and, in 1856, there were so few trees in some areas that finding even one was sufficient to merit a journal entry. However, there was more than one “Lone Tree” on the trail. Frequent prairie fires kept the number of trees low, except on islands in the Platte River. Today trees near the Platte River appear to be everywhere.

Colonel Almon W. Babbitt had arranged to have Nancy Stewart travel with Andrew Siler’s independent wagons. She was described by Levi Savage on August 31 as an “elderly sister from Florence” whom Colonel Babbitt intended to take to the Salt Lake Valley. This change proved to be lifesaving for her since Babbitt was killed by Indians only a few days further up the trail. She ultimately ended up traveling with the Hodgetts wagon train after another change in arrangements at Fort Laramie.

“Bro. Robert Culwell” was very likely Thomas Caldwell. Thomas, age 14, had a brother named Robert. His mother, Margaret Ann McFall Caldwell, age 40, related that they had bought some “old Texas cows” to milk. Thomas offered to help some girls that were struggling to milk one of those cows. When he roped a cow so that the girl could milk it, the cow bolted. His foot was caught in the rope and he was thrown to the ground breaking his collarbone and causing him constant pain. As reported on August 31, President Willie personally administered to him and things improved, but he continued to struggle to get over the injury because of gangrene.¹⁷

Although the Saints reported crossing the Wood River on August 28, they most likely crossed the Wood River on August 30 just west of present-day Shelton and then traveled four miles further west. Their trail between Shelton and Gibbon, Nebraska, followed US Highway 30.

Sunday, August 31

5:26 a.m.–6:36 p.m.

Started out of Camp about 7 a.m. leaving Col. Babbitt behind. He however overtook us at the point where the road leaves Wood River and where we took in water. He went ahead of us to Fort Kearney. Travelled on for about 16 miles further to the place where the road nearly strikes Platte River. On our way met 4 Californians who gave good reports of our trains and stated that crops in the Valley were first-rate when they

passed through on 2nd August. I omitted to state yesterday that Bro. Culwell whose collar bone was broken was promptly administered to by President Willie and his shoulder and arm bandaged. He is doing well today. About 218 miles from Florence.

Their road left the Wood River and went closer to the Platte River. In contrast to the discouragement and harassment the Saints had experienced in Iowa, the four Californians they met gave a favorable report about "the Valley" and reported that the crops in the Salt Lake Valley were "first-rate."

In a rare example of near agreement, three records reported traveling 18 miles. Peder Madsen recorded traveling 20 miles. They were now on the main Mormon-California Trail, which they followed on and off several times. They camped in the vicinity of present-day Kearney, Nebraska. Fort Kearney was on the opposite side of the Platte River. No one was allowed to camp within the ten-mile square military reservation that surrounded the fort. The city of Kearney developed just outside of that boundary some years later. Levi Savage referred to Fort Kearney as "Fort Carney." His spelling was clearly phonetic because that is how it is still pronounced by its residents today.

Monday, September 1

5:28 a.m.–6:33 p.m.

Left Camp about 7:30 a.m. and crossed 2 dry creeks besides Elm Creek where we watered cattle and dined. Journeyed to Buffalo Creek on a bend of which we camped for the night with plenty of grass and wood and rather indifferent water it being very low and consequently stagnant. Capt. Siler and Bros. Jost and Elder by permission went ahead of the Camp in pursuit of Buffalo and succeeded in killing one which was not brought into Camp till about 11 p.m. A cow was killed today previous to the Buffalo by direction of Prest. Willie. About 238 miles from Florence.

Fresh meat was intended to balance the company's diet. After the successful buffalo hunt, William Woodward recorded that the meat was brought in by several men using handcarts. This was the second time they saw buffalo and their first successful hunt.

Levi Savage's record related having "disagreeable words concerning Brother Siler's driving his teams after the handcarts and in front of the handcart teams." He and President Willie had disagreed as to the order of the procession. Levi Savage argued that the handcart support wagons were to be used as an aid for sick handcart trekkers and should

follow the handcarts directly. President Willie prevailed. From his entry it is clear that the handcarts went first in the line. They were followed by the “independent” wagons. Last in the line were the handcart support wagons.

Tuesday, September 2

5:29 a.m.–6:31 p.m.

Cutting up weighing and delivering meat occupied some little time this morning. Left Camp about 9 a.m. and after crossing a dry creek journeyed to crossing of Buffalo Creek where we dined. After crossing journeyed to the point where that Creek leaves the road. Camped there for the night with plenty of grass wood and water. We camped here in consequence of its being probable that water could not be reached in less than 10 miles. About 250 miles from Florence.

The distribution of fresh meat caused a delay in starting. Peder Madsen wrote that “ $\frac{3}{4}$ pound cow and $1\frac{1}{2}$ pound buffalo” were distributed per person. In addition, he recorded their regular food rations: “sugar, coffee, tea, salt, soap, rice etc. for 6 days and 1 pound fine flour per person per day.”

On September 1 the Saints camped on a bend of Buffalo Creek. On September 2 they crossed a dry creek and then went to a crossing of Buffalo Creek. The Saints crossed the creek, went an unknown distance further, and camped where the trail left the creek. This trail took them on a path that would have left them about six miles from the Platte River, with miles of open, waterless prairie to cross. The main Mormon–California Trail stayed much closer to the Platte River.

Wednesday, September 3

5:31 a.m.–6:30 p.m.

Elizabeth Ingra of the Cambridgeshire Conference in England died about daybreak this morning and was buried in a grave 5 feet deep before starting of Camp which moved off about 8 a.m. President Willie and other Brethren staid behind for an hour to complete the interment and to cut and erect a tombstone. After travelling about 6 miles passed 2 bands of a creek of water on our left and stopped after about 12 miles journey to dine on the open prairie without wood or water at which point the Brethren killed 2 buffaloes which came within shot of the handcarts. Good hard road this morning except at intervals where it was studded with patches of sand. The country

rolling. Pursued our journey till we arrived at a pit or small lake of water on our left where we camped for the night without wood but with good feed. 265 miles from Florence.

Death: Elizabeth Ingra, age 75

Not since August 15, about three weeks earlier, had anyone died in the company. Elizabeth Ingra, age 75, who Levi Savage reported had been carried in a handcart since Iowa City, died. In contrast with how things would be in just six short weeks, a five-foot-deep grave was dug and a tombstone erected.

Buffalo were now plentiful. This was ideal buffalo country. The Platte River Valley, near present-day Cozad and Lexington, Nebraska, is more than 12 miles wide. There were seemingly endless low rolling hills covered with grass. Levi Savage stated that buffalo could be seen in all directions and that having no wood they were cooking with buffalo chips. The animals were coming close enough to the handcarts to be shot by the hunters. Peder Madsen stated that they saw thousands of them and that Ole Madsen, age 41, a Dane, shot a large buffalo, and so did an unnamed Englishman. There was so much meat that two pounds per person were distributed.

Thursday, September 4

5:32 a.m.–6:29 p.m.

It being ascertained this morning that 30 head of cattle had strayed away (most probably in a stampede) during the night, President Willie despatched all the able-bodied men to search for them and after several hours' search the Brethren returned with reports of failures. A council was then called by Prest. Willie and afterwards different brethren under the command of Capt. Savage, Siler and Christianson started in different directions. Capt. Siler with his company returned about 5 and Captains Savage and Christianson with theirs about 8 p.m. (Capt. Savage's was a mule company, and Captains Siler and Christianson's were on foot), after a fruitless search. This morning Col. Babbitt overtook us and reported that it was uncertain whether Mrs. Wilson (the woman who was stated in this journal of 29ult. to have been "taken captive") was dead or alive, but that she had not yet been found—that the statement made to him by his 2 men (the one "Parish" by name and the other called "John" and wounded through the thigh) whom he had found at Fort Kearney was that one of them (Parish) being

on guard and noticing some Indians coming upon their camp alarmed the other men who were sleeping under the waggon, as also Mrs. Wilson—that the Indians immediately began to fire & he (the guard) shot at them with a revolver several times from behind a waggon during which time he saw the waggon-master shot dead, and that finding the numbers too great he and “John” made their escape to Fort Kearney. Col. Babbitt also reported that the Cheyenne Indians attacked a small waggon-train from California last Sunday and killed a woman- that the U. S. Dragoons had killed 13 Cheyennes and taken a number of horses. The Col. also stated that according to report this tribe was concentrating all its strength in the neighborhood of Ash Hollow where the troops were expecting a fight. The Col. very kindly lent me a letter which he found amongst Mrs. Wilson’s papers, and which he said was written by herself containing a short history of occurrences between Florence and the Loup Fork from whence it was dated on 21st ult. It commenced with the words “Dear Cousin” and was left unfinished, the later half being written in pencil. It was manifest from the tenor of the letter that the writer was very uneasy and had more or less during the whole journey entertained apprehensions of danger from some source or other. It would seem that she wrote the letter while some of the men had gone in search of their cattle which they found 18 miles from their Camp. Col. B. reported that Prest. Smoot’s train would probably be opposite to us on the other side of the Platte this evening which turned out to be the case.

The single biggest setback the company would suffer happened during the night between the third and the fourth. The Willie Company was in the area near present-day Cozad, Nebraska. They camped by a small lake, called by Levi Savage Chutah or Chutak Lake. It was described in the company journal on September 3 as “a pit or a small lake.” Identifying the trail through Dawson County and where the company’s cattle were lost is very difficult. The journals provided very little precise location information. One of the earliest histories of Nebraska and Dawson County described the physical situation. “On the north the tributaries of (the Platte River) are Buffalo Creek and several very small creeks, most of them containing running water only a portion of the year.” The history also explained the potential source of Levi Savage’s Chutah Lake. “The beds of the streams are dotted with deep holes, that always contain water furnished by springs at the bottom.”¹⁸

While surrounded by buffalo, 30 of their “best working cattle” strayed or stampeded away. Their search was fruitless. They never found any of the 30 animals.

The company journal and Levi Savage’s record treated the oxen becoming lost almost matter of fact. George Cunningham, age 16, wrote that the stampede was followed by a terrible prairie storm. Along with thunder and lightening, the storm included wind so harsh that the tents had to be held down to avoid being blown away. In the morning the cattle were discovered missing and their tracks were obliterated by the heavy rain.¹⁹ Levi Savage agreed. He recorded that, “We had an awful storm last night.” Peder Madsen commented, “During the night a storm raged with strong hurricane like winds that threw some of the tents down and brought much disturbance.”

On September 4 the Saints were also distracted by Colonel Babbitt meeting them again. He had learned more details of the Indian attack that his wagons had suffered a few days earlier. He also reported that a battle was expected between the Cheyenne and the United States Army in the Ash Hollow area. They would be to Ash Hollow in a matter of days. Not realizing how disastrous the loss of their animals was, they focused much of their concern on the anticipated Indian attack.

Note: “Ult.” as used in the company journal means ultimo or preceding; “29ult.” refers to the previous month, August 29.

Friday, September 5

5:33 a.m.–6:27 p.m.

This morning Prest. Willie sent out together Capt. Savage in command of a mule company and Captain Christianson in command of a foot company in search of the missing cattle, but the 2 parties returned at dark together this evening and reported a complete failure. Capt. Siler and other Brethren visited President Smoot’s Company this morning which they overtook 12 miles from our Camp. President Smoot and Capt. O. P. Rockwell returned with our brethren and met with our Officers in Council this evening. They camped with us for the night.

Abraham O. Smoot and Orin Porter Rockwell were both leading wagon trains toward Salt Lake City traveling on the south side of the Platte River along the Oregon Trail. Colonel Babbitt had reported on September 4 that Smoot’s train was on the south side of the Platte River. In President Franklin D. Richards and Daniel Spencer’s official report of their travels to Salt Lake City from Florence, it was reported that there were 88 people and

42 wagons in Smoot's train, but that they were struggling with only 33 men fit to drive the wagons. Porter Rockwell's train was much smaller with only five wagons.²⁰

The leaders met in a council that evening to discuss their plight. The meeting was mentioned in the company journal, in William Woodward's history, and in Peder Madsen's journal. Peder Madsen was the only one to relate the plan they formulated. The company was to be divided into two divisions. The first group would use their animals to move forward and then send back the animals to help bring the second group forward.

Saturday, September 6

5:35 a.m.–6:26 p.m.

This morning President Smoot at the request of our President made some cheering remarks to the Saints and showed us the necessity of strict and ready obedience at the conclusion of which President Willie told the Brethren to yoke up their remaining cattle and the cows and be ready for an immediate move. The first and second hundred and part of the third hundred accompanied by the P.E.F. waggons to start first which was done accordingly. At the same time Bros. Joseph Elder and Andrew Smith were sent back to search for the lost cattle with instructions to go on till they met Franklin D. Richards. After a few hours' absence the teams which had moved off the first half of our Company returned and took away the remaining half the whole Company about 4 or 5 miles nearer the Valley in the bend of a fine creek near the Platte. This evening at Prayers Capt. Siler made some remarks to that portion of the Camp entrusted to his charge on the principle of obedience & more particularly as it bore on the Saints' present position here and which remarks had a tendency to prepare their minds for some coming trial of their confidence in God and his Servants. President Smoot and Capt. Rockwell left us this afternoon for their Camp.

Due to the loss of oxen to pull the heavily laden wagons, the company was now in serious trouble and they knew it. Peder Madsen gave specific details of what they did. In the morning the first three hundreds, along with seven wagons, moved four miles up the trail. The animals were allowed to rest and then taken back to the fourth and fifth hundreds and the remaining five wagons. The animals were then hitched up to the five wagons and used to haul the wagons up the trail to where the first set of wagons were waiting. It quickly became obvious that this approach was simply not workable.

At the end of the day, Andrew Siler, the captain of the “independent” wagons, urged his group to be obedient. He seemed to feel the gravity of the situation and remarked that this experience was preparing the people’s minds for some coming trial of their faith.

Sunday, September 7

5:36 a.m.–6:25 p.m.

This morning a council was held and soon afterwards the whole Camp was called together by the well known sound of the horn. President Willie called on Capt. Atwood to preside over the meeting. After singing, “How firm a foundation ye Saints of the Lord” &c., Prest. Atwood called on Captains Chislett, Woodward, Savage and Siler (in the order of their names) to address the Saints which these Brethren did showing very clearly the difficulties of our present position and urging on the people the absolute necessity for doing away with the spirit of grumbling, strife, pilfering and disregard of counsel which was now on the increase in the Camp and substituting in its place the spirit of contentment, peace, union and strict obedience. President Atwood then addressed the Saints stating his cordial approbation of the Brethren’s remarks which he believed would be heeded and thus reduced into practice by the people. He adverted (as also did Capt. Siler in his observations) to the “Independent Waggon Company” and said his feelings was for the owners to consecrate wagons and teams and everything belonging to them to the Lord through his Servant President Willie to be used in the present emergency as the Holy Ghost should dictate through him. Prest. Atwood urged the pilferers to come forward and openly confess their faults before their Brethren who would then extend to them the friendly hand of forgiveness. He told the Saints plainly they must one and all from this time as far as they knew how, literally obey the counsel of each particular officer placed immediately over them without repining or grumbling openly or secretly. President Willie then summed up the whole matter examining minutely the ground occupied by the preceding speakers and expressing his approbation of their remarks. He said (as also did President Atwood in his preceding speech) that the whole strength of the Camp, that of men, women, children and beasts—must be applied under the direction of the Officers of the Camp for the one object in view, the early resumption and speedy & final completion of the journey which he (with President Atwood) considered might, even now, be continued at the rate of from 10 to 15 miles per day according

to circumstances. He urged on the Brethren and Sisters attached to the "Independent" Waggon and who had no particular occupation except to walk alongside those vehicles or to ride inside them to walk altogether or as much as practicable and besides to confer honor on themselves by assisting to pull handcarts or doing anything else which their Superior Officer might direct or which they might see required to be done even though it should be to leave their luggage on the Plains. Prest. Willie said he would not enter into full particulars of the plan of operations which he contemplated further than by saying that if the Brethren or Sisters drawing handcarts should be required by their Captain to draw 4 or 5 hundred of flour they must do it cheerfully and the Waggon Company must act on the same principle by carrying anything and everything which might be required of them by like authority. He entirely concurred in the remarks of President Atwood and the other Brethren and would like to see all the grumblers, pilferers, liars and so forth if any were still so in their hearts immediately stand by themselves aside from the rest so that the Brethren might better know them. He concluded by suggesting that President Atwood test the feelings of the Camp by obtaining their vote to sustain the various Officers in their respective positions to the very uttermost in carrying out such measures as the Holy Ghost might devise through them for most safely and speedily gathering this Company to Zion, expressing his strong desire that none would raise their hands toward Heaven in support of such a vote unless they meant it from their hearts and would literally and willingly carry out its spirit when the Officers came to execute their duty. President Atwood then put the question in the affirmative terms mentioned by President Willie at the same time wishing the people not to lower their hands till he told them to do so. The motion was carried unanimously and on its being put in the negative not a single hand was held up. The Meeting was then dismissed and the Brethren immediately went to work to execute the will of President Willie which was cheerfully responded to. Afterwards President Willie and Captains Atwood and Siler with other Brethren yoked up many of the cows which was an arduous task. Early this morning some animals were observed at a considerable distance from our Camp and supposing they might be our missing cattle President Willie, Captain Savage and others went out to reconnoitre but found the animals were a small herd of horses belonging to some men from California who afterwards came to our Camp to purchase flour,

a mission in which they completely failed as none were willing to sell in our present emergency. They said they gave 20 cents a pound for flour at Fort Laramie which they left 12 days ago leaving a poor lean horse on the road 25 miles above this point. They reported having met a handcart company on the Sweetwater and 2 other Companies behind them “all right” and that grass was scarce for 3 days’ journey from this point though afterwards we should find it very plentiful. One of these men who gave his name as “James M. Hurn” stated that he lived in Salt Lake City in 1854. The only thing in the shape of provisions which this party wanted for was breadstuffs.

This was the longest entry in the company journal. It reflected the serious nature of the company’s plight. They stayed put and spent the day trying to yoke up the wild cows. The “spirit of grumbling, strife, pilfering and disregard of counsel” was to be replaced by a positive spirit. It is apparent that conflicts surrounding the “Independent Waggon Company” had come to a head. The suggestion was made that the owners of these independent wagons should consecrate their wagons, their teams, and everything belonging to them to the Lord to be used in this emergency. The owners of these wagons were not willing to do so. It was also a source of trouble to have Saints struggling with handcarts, while others walked carefree along the trail. The carefree walkers were asked to join the sacrificing by helping to pull the handcarts. There is no evidence that they were willing to do even that much to help.

President Willie had an alternative plan, which would require great sacrifice among his company. With the loss of the 30 animals, the teams could not pull the weight of the wagons. The flour carried in the Perpetual Emigration Fund wagons was essential. The plan was to have each handcart carry some of the flour. He said that if the handcarts were asked “to draw 4 or 5 hundred of flour they must do it cheerfully.” The thought of pulling 400 or 500 pounds of additional flour by handcart would have been daunting. Peder Madsen confirmed that the five P. E. F. wagons would be pulled by 12 oxen and the best cows, while sacks of flour and tents would be loaded onto the handcarts.

Robert Reeder, age 19, wrote that the best oxen were lost in the stampede. Some flour was taken from the wagons and put on the handcarts depending on the strength of those pulling the carts. His brother-in-law, James Hurren, age 29, was considered the strongest man in the company. He put five of the 100-pound sacks of flour on his handcart, along with two small girls who were not able to walk, and his family’s baggage.²¹

James Hurren was also very willing to do more than his share of general camp duties, including additional nighttime guard duty. President Willie promised James “that if only one man reached the valley, it would be him.” He did reach the Salt Lake Valley.²²

Monday, September 8

5:37 a.m.–6:24 p.m.

This morning a man who gave his name as “Henry Bauichter” came into our camp on horseback. He stated that he was a discharged Soldier from Fort Laramie which he left on 29th ult, and that after travelling about 30 miles he overtook a waggon with 2 mules and 2 horses, the one an Indian horse with a white face, the mules alone drawing the waggon, accompanied by 2 men, one of whom gave his name as “Thomas Margetts” and the other as “James Cowdy”—that the former appeared to have a wife and the latter a wife and child, the whole of whom, as the 2 men stated, were on their way from Great Salt Lake City to the States—that about 70 miles ahead of us on what is supposed to be the North Bluff Creek he and Thomas Margetts went out on horseback in search of buffalo—that this was between 1 and 2 p.m. on 6th inst.—that he (Bauichter) soon killed a buffalo upon which Margetts returned to the Waggon to fetch some things for carrying away part of the animal which Bauichter staid behind to dress—that on Margetts’ return from the waggon he filled one utensil, principally with tallow, and started again for the waggon while Bauichter remained behind to fill up another utensil which Margetts had brought—that the buffalo was over the bluff about a mile and a half from the waggon—that he (Bauchter) was occupied half an hour or so, after Margetts’ last departure, in cutting up meat and filling the other utensil immediately whereupon he also returned in the direction of the waggon noticing before his arrival there that the wagon-cover had been stripped off and that neither mules nor horses were to be seen—that on his (B’s) arrival he discovered on the ground the bodies of Margetts, Cowdy, his wife and child, all dead, except the child that was crying and bloody—that he (B) saw no wounds on any of the bodies and an arrow was sticking in Cowdy’s thigh (whether the right or left one he could not say) and Mrs. C. was sitting in an upright posture leaning against some raised ground, with her breasts and private parts exposed and her head leaning backwards and seemed to have been brutally treated by her murderers—that the waggon, the hinder part of which was on fire, had been completely ransacked and all that was of any immediate use taken away—that he

(B) looked around for Mrs. Margetts whom he could not find—that the feathers from a bed had been strewn on the ground by the side of the waggon but he could not see the bed-tick—that he saw at some considerable distance 12 men or so on horseback apparently riding fast and, as far as he could discover, Indians—that none of the bodies were scalped—that he heard no report of fire-arms during his absence from the waggon and that not feeling himself safe in the neighborhood of the murders he escaped with his horse, and with the loss of his discharge and other papers, about \$300, a gold watch and other things which he had deposited in the waggon and made the best of his way to this point intending to reach Fort Kearney and report the facts there as quickly as possible. Bauichter said he did not meet any one on his journey from Fort Laramie to our Camp where he arrived stating that he had not eaten for 50 hours. His wants in this respect were supplied and he was furnished with food and ammunition to Fort Kearney for which place he started about 11 a.m. He stated that the 2 horses were ridden at intervals during the journey by Mr. and Mrs. Margetts. The fixing up of our remodelled teams and the changing of freight from one waggon to another occupied the entire morning. We started about noon and after travelling along the Platte Bottom for about 10 or 12 miles, part of the road being very swampy and sandy, we camped for the night close to the River with good feed. Fetched wood from an Island in the River.

This was Henry Bauichter's report of another Indian attack that happened two days earlier near North Bluff Creek. Levi Savage recorded that Margetts and Cowdy were from Salt Lake City and were well known by the Saints. Almost as an afterthought, the day's report of progress was made. It is hard to imagine the fear and helplessness that the Saints endured as they found themselves 300 miles from civilization with reports of Indian attacks about 70 miles ahead and with the loss of their best pulling animals.

Levi Savage reported that forty 100-pound sacks of flour were transferred from the wagons to the handcarts. The company's milk cows had to be yoked up to pull the wagons. Placing a yoke on a milk cow that has never been yoked is a rodeo-worthy event. These untrained animals did not understand how to pull together. He reported that the experience went "extraordinarily well." He concluded his entry by writing, "Surely the hand of the Lord is with us yet."

Sadly, Peder Madsen's journal ended without any explanation on September 8. He eventually died just outside of Salt Lake City, in Echo Canyon, on November 5.

Note: "Inst." as used in the company journal means instant or present; "6th inst." refers to the present month, September 6.

Tuesday, September 9

5:38 a.m.–6:22 p.m.

Rolled out of Camp at 8:30 a.m. our teams still being very troublesome to fix up. Journeyed about 6 miles and then stopped to water cattle and to dine over a sand bluff to cross which we had to double teams. Continued our journey from the river upon the banks of which we camped for the night close to the point where Skunk Creek empties itself into the River. Very heavy sandy roads throughout the day. About 285 miles from Florence.

Pawnee Creek empties into the Platte River near present-day Brady, Nebraska. Skunk Creek must have been the name of present-day Pawnee Creek. The trail had to hug the bluffs to avoid the Pawnee swamp. The various journals mentioned the sandy roads and sandy bluffs. The Saints were entering the "sandhills" of Nebraska. This area of Nebraska was primarily a series of low hills that were really sand dunes stabilized by grass. When a wagon or a handcart rode over the grass, it left unstabilized sand. As the Saints already knew, sandy roads were much harder to pull a wagon or a handcart across. At one point they had to double the teams to pull up the wagons.

Wednesday, September 10

5:40 a.m.–6:21 p.m.

Left Camp a little before 9 a.m. & journeyed on to crossing of Skunk Creek, President Willie, Capt. Atwood and other brethren carrying the Sisters over the stream. Camped for the night at a good spring of clear cold water on the south side of the road with good feed but no wood. Roads worse than yesterday. 295 miles from Florence.

President Willie and "other brethren" carried the sisters over Skunk Creek because of the long skirts they wore throughout the trek. In the California gold rush period, some women who crossed the plains had begun to wear "bloomers," which were very baggy pantaloons. Unlike the long skirts of the day, the bloomers were not as likely to get filthy and shredded as they walked. However, most women would have no part of bloomers.

Their long skirts provided them privacy as they took care of important personal matters out on the open prairie. However, when a woman's skirt got wet, it held plenty of water. The added weight made it difficult to walk. Consequently, some of the men carried the women across this creek.

Thursday, September 11

5:41 a.m.–6:19 p.m.

Left Camp about 8 a.m. crossed Carrion Creek, nooned on banks of Platte River and camped for the night on the banks of the same. Buffalo killed this evening after arrival of Camp. Some of the Brethren thought they saw horsemen and carriages coming along this evening at dusk but it unfortunately turned out to be a “bag of moonshine”. Good feed and lots of “chips” as usual. We have most delightful weather and are being prospered beyond our utmost expectations. Better roads today; the health of the Camp which has been indifferent for some time past is improving and all is well with us. About 300 miles from Florence. Our camping place for the night was on the north fork of the Platte about 9 miles above the junction.

They were still in the heart of buffalo country and a buffalo was killed for meat. The Indians that inhabited the Nebraska Territory in 1856 were Plains Indians. The Plains Indians' culture was built around the buffalo and required that every part of the buffalo be used. This included their droppings, which were called buffalo chips. The journal reported that there were lots of chips as usual. When dried, most buffalo manure breaks roughly into quarter-inch slices, referred to as “chips.” When wood was not available, the pioneers used buffalo chips to build their fires.

Present-day Whitehorse Creek must have been Carrion Creek. Their camp “9 miles above the junction” on the North Platte River would have put them a few miles past present-day North Platte, Nebraska.

Friday, September 12

5:42 a.m.–6:18 p.m.

Pursuant to a previous threat or promise Capt. Atwood pulled down a tent or two this morning (about an hour and a half after the horn had blown) exposing the serene features of its sleeping inmates much to their chagrin and the amusement of bystanders. Some of the sleepers wanted to draw the tent back over them as a covering but it was

“no go”—they stood confessed to the “vulgar gaze.” Buffalo meat served out this morning first thing—Left Camp about 8:30 a.m., crossed a fine creek nooned on the banks of the Platte and afterwards crossed the North Bluff Fork. Pretty good feed. This evening President Franklin D. Richards and suite (with Bros. Elder and Smith who went in search of the missing cattle) arrived just before dusk in 3 carriages and 2 waggon. They were loudly greeted by the hearty hurrahs of the Saints whom they met after supper when Prest. Willie in a few appropriate remarks introduced Prest. Richards into whose hands he gave the Meeting to be led by him as the Holy Ghost might dictate. Bro. Richards then called on Bro. Dunbar for a song. He accordingly sang one of the Songs of Zion. Prest. Richards then addressed the Saints expressing his satisfaction at their having journeyed thus far & more especially with handcarts and congratulating them on the loss of their cattle which he knew had proved and would prove their salvation if they would hearken to and diligently obey counsel to the letter in which event he promised in the name of Israel’s God and by the authority of the Holy Priesthood that no obstacle whatever should come in the way of this Camp but what they should be able by their united faith and works to overcome God being their helper and that if a Red Sea should interpose they should by their union of heart & hand walk through it like Israel of old dryshod. On the same conditions he promised that though they might have some trials to endure as a proof to God and their Brethren that they had the true “grit” still the Lamanites heat nor cold nor any other thing should have power to seriously harm any in the Camp but that we should arrive in the Valleys of the Mountains with strong and healthy bodies and that this should be the case with the aged the sick and the infirm. He said that next to the Pioneers the Handcart Companies would meet with the most hearty and gracious reception from Prest. Young the Authorities under him and all the Saints in Utah of any Companies that ever entered the Valley. Prest. Richards said although it was a scheme at which many had already scoffed and which they were yet deriding it was nevertheless the Lord’s plan, a plan which would first puzzle and astonish the nations and then strike terror into their hearts. He encouraged the Saints to live the principles of their religion not only openly before the world but privately in their families and in their intercourse with each other and to scorn all the trials and difficulties which might come in their way, assuring them as the result of such a course that they should

find favor with God, and have the confidence of the Brethren things which were to him at all events far above all the gold, silver and precious stones in the Universe. His words had the tendency to build up, strengthen and encourage the people and seemed to electrify his hearers as it were. The Holy Ghost was felt in its almighty and renovating power during the whole time we were together and the people seconded his sentiments by a hearty “Amen” from time to time. Counsellors Daniel Spencer and Cyrus H. Wheelock addressed the Saints in a few stirring remarks bearing testimony to the truth of the words spoken by Prest. Richards. These Brethren exhorted the Saints to obedience, union and brotherly love as they valued their salvation across these Plains. The meeting was then dismissed with prayer by Capt. Atwood after which an account was taken of the number of cows, oxen, waggons, fire-arms, &c., for representation by President Richards to the First Presidency. Bro. Dunbar sang several songs of Zion during the meeting. Camped for the night on the North Bluff Fork of the Platte—320 miles from Florence.

The Saints were leaving later each day. One cause of their lateness appears to have been some people sleeping in at least an hour and a half after the horn had blown to wake them. Millen Atwood had threatened to pull down the tents of these “sleeping inmates” and he did. He refused to let them set the tents back up, so they were forced to suffer this humiliation.

Juxtaposed against that low point was the arrival of President Franklin D. Richards and his traveling group of missionaries in the evening. President Richards’s group was literally racing to get to Salt Lake City, but stopped for the night to encourage the Saints. He gave a rousing speech which invited the Holy Ghost. Brother Dunbar, who was asked to sing twice on September 12 and once on September 13, was William C. Dunbar, age 36, a missionary returning to Utah. He was the same William C. Dunbar who was on board the steamboat *Saluda* on April 9, 1852, when she blew up near Lexington, Missouri. He lost his wife and two children in the explosion on his initial trip to the Salt Lake Valley.²³

North Bluff Fork or North Bluff Creek is now called Birdwood Creek. This was the area where the Margetts and the Cowdys had been killed by Indians just days earlier. This Indian attack may have been a factor in the direction of President Richards to have the handcarts cross the North Platte River on September 13, rather than to proceed on toward Fort Laramie, where the Mormon Trail normally crossed the North Platte River.

Saturday, September 13

5:44 a.m.–6:17 p.m.

This morning we were summoned together about 7 o'clock. Prest. Richards opened the Meeting by calling on Counsellor C.H. Wheelock to engage in prayer. Bro. Dunbar then sang an appropriate song at the conclusion of which Prest. R. gave the Saints some good and wholesome instruction especially impressing on their minds the absolute necessity of literal and prompt obedience and reminding them that Prest. Willie was invested with absolute authority to direct the affairs of this Camp. President R's remarks were well received by the Saints and there was a perfect unanimity of feeling manifested. He then dismissed the meeting with prayer at the conclusion of which our President moved that we give 3 cheers for Prest.R. and Suite which was quickly responded to by the waving of hats, handkerchiefs and bonnets and 3 united hearty and uproarious hip—hip—hip -hurrahs. He then said that as he had found a good place for crossing the Platte nearly opposite our present camping ground our Company had better cross at once. He and his Suite crossed and Prest. Willie immediately gave instructions for all of us to follow. The crossing occupied till pretty late in the afternoon and the teams being wearied he decided on camping on the south side of the Platte. A calf was killed this morning from our herd for Prest.R. Father William Haley of the Warwickshire Conference in England died this afternoon from general decay of constitution aged 66 years.

Death: William Haley, age 66

Levi Savage reported that the company got up at 4 a.m. and was ready to go by 7 a.m. This was in contrast to the previous 8:30–9:00 a.m. starts. Instead of leaving at 7 a.m., President Richards called a special meeting. The company journal described its purpose as to emphasize "the absolute necessity of literal and prompt obedience" to President Willie. The Saints were united in support of President Richards's admonishment. On the other hand, Levi Savage's journal described it as a meeting to chastise him for his comments in Florence and his "disagreeable words" concerning Captain Siler's independent wagon teams on September 1. William Woodward confirmed Levi Savage's conclusion, by stating in his history that Levi Savage was given "a severe reprimand." Levi Savage humbly asked for forgiveness.

Saturday, September 13

To follow the company's trail at North Platte, Nebraska, there are two options. To take the easier route, which generally follows the Oregon Trail stay on I-80 and travel west to Exit 126. At Exit 126 take US Highway 26 and travel north and west through Ash Hollow. To follow a route that approximates the Willie Handcart Company route but requires some travel on gravel roads, take Exit 177 and travel north into the city of North Platte on US Highway 83. Three and one-half miles north of the off ramp is a road called North River Road. It is past the North Platte River Bridge on the north side of the North Platte River. The GPS point at the turn is N 41 09.747' W 100 45.448'. Turn left onto the North River Road and travel generally west and north for about three miles as it winds along to a sharp, left-hand curve. Curve to the left and follow the asphalt road, which is still the North River Road, and travel west again. The road eventually changes to gravel. Continue traveling west one more mile to where the road turns south. Travel south for one-half mile and, where the road turns west again, travel west along the river to a stop sign. Turn south at the stop sign onto Prairie Trace, an asphalt road, and travel south, across the bridge, for 2.2 miles. Turn right onto Snake Road, a gravel road, and travel west as it snakes around to the west for about 1.5 miles. Snake Road turns south and goes up a hill to a stop sign. Turn right at the stop sign and drive west on Snake Road, an asphalt road, for 3.5 more miles to another

President Richards instructed the company to cross the North Platte River at that point, which they did. The river was a mile wide and took the whole day to cross. This does not appear to have been a normal crossing point, but there was a trail on the south side of the North Platte River which they could follow. William Haley, age 66, the same man who had been lost on the night of August 28, died.

stop sign. Turn right and travel west for four miles to the end of the asphalt. When the asphalt ends, continue traveling west on what Keith County calls East 120 for five more miles to a T intersection. At the intersection turn left and travel south one-half mile on the asphalt road and then turn right. Travel west again on East 120, a gravel road, for about nine miles as it makes various right and left curves until it intersects East 110. At the intersection with East 110, which is nearly at the top of the hill, turn right onto East 110 and travel west for two miles to an intersection with East J. Turn right onto East J and travel one mile north until it intersects East 120. Turn left and drive west for seven miles on East 120 through a stop sign and to an asphalt road, State Road 61. Turn left on State Road 61 and travel west for about two miles to its junction with US Highway 26. Proceed straight through onto US Highway 26 and travel west through Ash Hollow.

Sunday, September 14

5:45 a.m.–6:16 p.m.

William Haley was buried this morning on our yesterday's camping ground, a grave-board being inscribed with his name, age, and date of death. Left Camp about 8:30 a.m. nooned at a bend of the Platte and camped for the night about 7 miles further up on the same river. Bro. Joseph Elder killed 2 buffaloes just before arriving in Camp this evening.

Following the Mormon Trail would have kept the company on the north side of the North Platte River. There was, however, a less-used trail on the south side of the North Platte River. It was the path they chose to follow. On the other hand, the Oregon Trail went even farther south and followed the South Platte River to one of three crossings: the Lower Crossing, near Sutherland; the Middle Crossing, near Ogallala; or the Upper

Crossing, past Brule, the primary trail crossing. The south side of the North Platte River trail could be accessed by either the Lower or Middle Crossings.²⁴

Monday, September 15

5:46 a.m. 6:14 p.m.

Left Camp about 8:30 a.m. soon after which Father Richard F. Turner of the Worcestershire Conference in England died. He was buried at a bend of the Platte River where we nooned. Journeyed some distance when 3 mounted Indians armed with bows & arrows met us. They represented themselves as of the Tribe called “the Arraphoes” and wished us to camp with their party on the Platte tonight which was not acceded to we being too far from the river. By signs as far as the Brethren could understand them these 3 men represented that some Emigrant Train was attacked by the Sioux Indians 5 days ago, and they thought our train would be attacked also. The Brethren by signs said we had plenty of rifles, powder, lead and caps. The 3 Indians shook their heads. Camped for the night on the open prairie close to a small muddy pool of water scarcely sufficient for cooking purposes. Poor feed. Cattle chained to the waggon for the night. They have had a long & tedious day’s journey and seem quite exhausted though the roads on the whole have been tolerably good. Prest. Willie notified the Saints that the horn would blow in the morning at rise at 3 so as to start at 4.

Death: Richard F. Turner, age 66

When traveling on the south side of the North Platte River, there were two spots where the river passed so closely to the bluffs that the bluffs had to be ascended. The bluffs were skirted by cliffs, 10 to 20 feet high, but even that little of a cliff made it impossible for the wagons and handcarts to cross them. The first spot was near the present-day Kingsley Dam, which created Lake McConaughy. The second spot was one-half mile or so downstream from the mouth of Ash Hollow. On the approach to the first spot, about 10 miles west of present-day Sarben, Nebraska, there was an area where the bluffs could be ascended. The company took that path. At the top of the bluff, they met three Arapahoe who told of a Sioux attack within the last week. That night the company camped very cautiously on the open prairie without feed or good water. Levi Savage’s and William Woodward’s records also noted that their animals were chained up so there was no chance of the animals being separated from the company.

Tuesday, September 16

5:47 a.m.–6:13 p.m.

Rolled out about 4 a.m. accordingly and after travelling through a deep winding ravine over a very heavy sandy road we nooned on the banks of the Platte with splendid feed. Since noon yesterday we have been travelling over a long range of bluffs which have opened at noon today on the Platte Bottom. The guard saw several Indians round our Camp about 2 this morning on the bluffs but on going up to the spot they could not be found though they with their dogs were heard in the distance. Journeyed over some heavy sandy bluffs this afternoon and camped for the night in the valley by the side of the Platte.

There was no water on the bluffs, so the company had to return to the North Platte River. An 1898 topographical map reportedly showed two roads from the top of the bluffs to the river bottom. They were one-half mile and two miles west of the Kingsley Dam. Both locations would have been difficult descents to the river. Lake McConaughy now covers the trail from this point until west of Eagle Canyon, which is seven miles east of Ash Hollow.²⁵

Although Levi Savage reported that the Saints were fatigued by the sandy roads, not everyone was so worn out. Agnes Caldwell, age 9, and her friend, Mary Hurren, age 7, remembered traveling through an area inhabited by rattlesnakes. They would hold hands and jump over the snakes. Agnes said, "It seemed to me we were jumping for more than a mile. Due to the protecting hand of the Lord, we were not harmed."²⁶

Wednesday, September 17

5:49 a.m.–6:12 p.m.

We were delayed this morning (as we had been on previous occasions in consequence of some handcarts which had been broken requiring repair. Left Camp about 9:30 a.m., nooned on the banks of the Platte and camped for the night on the banks of the same River. Very bad sandy roads throughout the day which, combined with a very high wind rendered it the most arduous day's trip up to this point.

A cold front appears to have passed over the company as they were getting under-way. Levi Savage reported "a cold and strong wind arose from the northwest," so they traveled only about 10 miles. William Woodward recorded, "The wind blew terrific thro' the day." They stayed on the banks of the North Platte River and fought the sand and wind all day.

Thursday, September 18

5:50 a.m.–6:10 p.m.

Last night and this morning we had a very sharp frost. Rolled forward about 9 a.m. and after travelling some distance over our usually (of late) sandy roads nooned at the foot of some high bluffs near the River from which we took a 7 mile supply of water. I omitted to state in my journal for yesterday that Bro. J.S. Cantwell's daughter Ellen (aged 7 years) was bitten by a large rattlesnake as she was playing in the sand. Capt. Siler killed the snake and applied the best known remedy at hand (a mixture of powder and lard externally and some whisky internally) after which she slept soundly for some time. After dinner today we made a start up the side of the bluffs which occupied a considerable time—journeyed over hill and dale for several miles till after passing through Ash Hollow we again entered the Platte Bottom where we camped for the night. Fine cedar found on the bluffs. Sister Stewart was found to be missing on the arrival of the Camp and as her footsteps were traced in advance of us Bros. Oliver and Smith were sent ahead in search and returned reporting that they had failed in their mission thus far. 380- $\frac{3}{4}$ miles from Florence.

For the first time that year, it froze during the night. The company continued along the North Platte River until noon, when they had to detour and turn up into the bluffs for a final ascent and then descent into Ash Hollow. The detour from the river bottom to Ash Hollow began about one-half mile from the main trail through Ash Hollow. They had to endure this lengthy detour due to two factors. First, the river ran so close to the bluffs that the ground on the direct path, alongside the river, was an impassable marsh. Second, the trail ascended more than two miles up the bluffs and then back down another two or three miles into the Ash Hollow bottoms because there were numerous cliffs that impeded travel. The trail weaved through the hills as it avoided these cliffs. Levi Savage reported that they had to double their teams to get up the steep hill.

Unlike Agnes Caldwell and Mary Hurren, poor Ellen Cantwell, age 7, did not fare so well with the snakes. She was severely bitten on her hand by a rattlesnake. She did not fully recover until the following January and kept a scar for the rest of her life.²⁷ The company journal reported that they applied a remedy of "powder and lard," with a little whiskey.

Thursday, September 18

To see where the company's detour began, follow the main road through Ash Hollow and turn right onto Road 44. Road 44 is a gravel road at the mouth of Ash Hollow. The GPS point at the turn is N 41 18.472' W 102 07.498'. Travel east about one-half mile to the first draw. They would have gone south up the draw, weaving between the bluffs.

Nancy Stewart, who had been traveling with the independent wagons, was discovered missing at the noon meal. She had joined the Willie Company on August 31, at the request of Colonel Babbitt, and she had been assigned to James Cantwell's independent wagon. With James's daughter, Ellen, having been bitten by a snake on September 17 and then his passenger, Nancy Stewart, becoming lost, it is safe to assume that things were not going well for the Cantwells. While struggling into Ash Hollow, they had to send out searchers. Ash Hollow, even today, has an abundance of trees and is an area where people could get lost easily. Levi Savage referred to Almon Babbitt as "Brother Babel." He designated Nancy Stewart as "Sister Reade."

Friday, September 19

5:52 a.m.–6:09 p.m.

After breakfast this morning, Prest. Willie sent out many of the brethren to search for Sister Stewart, while Capt. Siler, Bro. Jost with the assistance of some Brethren repaired the axle-trees and other parts of some broken-down handcarts. The Scouts for Sis. Stewart returned without her about dinner-time. Prest. Willie then called a Council after which he with 11 Brethren went out on a 3rd expedition. They had been absent about 4 hours when she came into Camp stating that hearing the lowing of cattle and the sound of the axe she made for the spot and found Captain Woodward and others (who had been sent into Ash Hollow by Prest. Willie for timber to make axles) cutting wood. On arriving in Camp she appeared much exhausted and was scarcely able to speak. A cow having been killed this morning, she partook of some beef soup which revived her and she fell asleep. This evening after supper, Capt. Atwood called the Saints together for Prayer as usual and was afterwards conversing about the best plan to be adopted to bring back Prest. Willie and Company to the Camp (Capts. Woodward & Chislett having volunteered to go in search on horseback) when they all entered the Camp Prest. Willie stating that having discovered and lost Sis. Stewart's back track about dark he had deemed it best to return to the Camp for the night and make a fresh start in the morning if necessary. We were all much rejoiced at being restored to each other again.

While some of the men searched for Nancy Stewart, the rest of the company took a day to repair handcarts. There was plenty of wood in the hollow. Levi Savage reported

that Sister Stewart had walked on ahead of the company on Thursday. When she reached the main road into Ash Hollow, she turned left toward the South Platte River, instead of right toward the North Platte River. William Woodward and some others found her while cutting wood. Naturally, she was exhausted from her 36-hour ordeal.

Saturday, September 20

5:53 a.m.–6:07 p.m.

This morning Sis. Stewart stated that when she descended into Ash Hollow instead of turning to the right towards the River (where our Camp was) she turned to the left because she saw a road in that direction—that she went for a long distance on such road and then not seeing anything of the Camp turned back to the place where we nooned yesterday near which she slept last night on the bluffs of the open prairie and that she was followed by some wolves one of which came within 2 yards of her and seemed inclined to be rather too familiar which unlawful propensity she instantly checked by a steady gaze accompanied by an authoritative shake or waive of her right hand. The repairs of the handcarts commenced early this morning and we were not able to leave Camp till about 2 p.m., after which we wended our way to the next point where the road joins the Platte at which place we camped for the night about 6 p.m. Roads fast improving with better feed.

After only an occasional mention before the first frost, Levi Savage provided almost daily weather reports in his record for the next few days. Cool and an evening mist of rain was the September 20 weather report, which contrasted with the September 19 report of “extremely warm” weather.

Sunday, September 21

5:54 a.m.–6:06 p.m.

2 handcarts having been broken down yesterday afternoon we were delayed a little this morning for their repair and we therefore did not leave Camp till about 9 a.m. Very wet unpleasant weather. Travelled till 1 p.m. when we camped on the Platte for dinner. Started again at 2 and camped for the night on a bend of the same River with indifferent feed. Roads on the whole heavy and sandy throughout the day. W.N. Leason, son of Sister Ruvinia Leason, of Quincy, Illinois, died at 11:30 p.m. of canker in the stomach. He was born on 7 Nov. 1854.

Saturday, September 20

To follow their trail, travel northwest from Ash Hollow on State Road 92 and US Highway 26 toward Gering and Scottsbluff, Nebraska. When the State Road and the US Highway separate, follow State Road 92. State Road 92 combines with US Highway 385 for a short period of time; stay on State Road 92. Their actual trail was on the south side of the North Platte River and may be partially traceable by following gravel roads on the south side of the river. A few miles past Lewellyn is a roadside marker noting the Battle of Blue Water in 1855. That is another name for the Harney Massacre, which was a big part of the Indian troubles that continued to plague the trail in 1856.

Death: William N. Leason, age 22 months

The weather was starting to adversely impact the company. The system was set up so that the sick could ride in the wagons. Levi Savage reported that many were “sick and stopping back to get in the wagons.” The sandy roads were wet, which made them even more difficult to pull through. Two 66-year-old men had died in the previous eight days and now a child had died. Death had begun to stalk the Willie Company.

Monday, September 22

5:56 a.m.–6:05 p.m.

W. N. Leason was buried this morning at 7 o'clock, a suitable inscription in wood being placed on the grave. Rolled out about 7:30 a.m. & nooned and camped for the night on the Platte. A hard and long day's journey, the roads being more or less very heavy and sandy notwithstanding which Prest. Willie considers we have made from 18 to 20 miles since the morning. In about an hour after the starting of the Camp this afternoon Bro. Jesse Emphy of Eaton Bray Branch in the Bedfordshire Conference in England died from scrofula, age 31. Weather turned warm and pleasant about noon but cold set in again before sunset.

Death: Jesse Emphy, age 31

How far they traveled in any day was an estimate. On September 22, President Willie estimated 18 to 20 miles. William Woodward agreed, estimating “about 19 miles.” Levi Savage stated that they traveled “twelve miles.” The weather went quickly from cold to warm to cold. It was typical fall weather on the plains of Nebraska.

Jesse Emphy, age 31, died an hour after starting to travel in the afternoon. Rather than stop and bury him, they kept on going. The Saints carried him until he was buried the next morning. Levi Savage recorded that his hands and arm were covered with sores and that he had been having “ague,” probably malaria. It was hard to determine his cause of death. Glandular swellings are associated with scrofula. Fever is associated with ague. But it is unknown what the sores on his hands and arm had to do with his death. Was the weather hastening the deaths of some of the weakened Saints?

Tuesday, September 23

5:57 a.m.–6:03 p.m.

Bro. Empey was buried this morning before starting of Camp, a suitable wooden inscription being placed on the grave. Rolled out of Camp at 8:30 a.m., nooned a short distance from the road on the Platte and camped for the night on that River about 5:30 p.m. Roads much better though interspersed with heavy sand occasionally.

Both the company journal and William Woodward had brief entries for September 23. Levi Savage's entry was quite telling, as it demonstrated his continued concern about hurrying along. He recorded: "This morning was cold and foggy. The Saints slow in rising and getting breakfast early, notwithstanding Brother Willey's repeated order to arise at the sound of the bugle (daylight). Apparently not realizing the necessity of our making as much distance as possible in order to reach the Valley before too severe cold weather, some complain of hard treatment, because we urge them along. Many hang on to the wagons."

Wednesday, September 24

5:59 a.m.–6:02 p.m.

Left Camp about 7:30 a.m., nooned between the road and River and camped for the night on the banks thereof about 2 miles on the southwest side of "Chimney Rock". A very interesting meeting at which Prest. Willie & Capts. Atwood and Savage earnestly exhorted the Saints to the more diligent performance of their duties. A cow was killed this evening.

No trail went "southwest" of Chimney Rock because Chimney Rock hugged the western mountains. If they were "south" of Chimney Rock, they would have been "east" or "southeast" of it. Levi Savage wrote that he "thought we were nearer last night to it than we are." In the fairly flat North Platte River Valley, it was very hard to judge distance. Since it was so flat, major monuments like Chimney Rock were visible for many miles. Due to the monotony of the landscape they appeared to be closer than they actually were.

Wednesday, September 24

Chimney Rock National Historic Site is east of Chimney Rock, a mile or so off the highway. The marked turn to the visitors center is about 12 miles past Bridgeport, Nebraska.

Thursday, September 25

6:00 a.m.–6:01 p.m.

Rolled out of Camp about 7:30 a.m., nooned at a point where the road and river meet and camped for the night at another similar point a short distance beyond 2 vacant Trading-posts with indifferent feed. Roads pretty good throughout the day.

The trading posts in this area were from trader Joseph Robidoux. In the Scott's Bluff area, there were multiple Robidoux trading posts. The posts were constructed in various places, as the trail around and then through Scott's Bluff changed. Although the company journal and William Woodward's record did not refer to these posts by name, Levi Savage called them "Rubadore's" posts. The posts referred to by the journal were established in the 1850s about three miles west of present-day Melbeta, Nebraska.²⁸ The trading posts were referred to by William Woodward as "old," and by the company journal as "vacant." The Saints were traveling very late in the season. Whether the buildings were old or merely vacant, they had no supplies and were of no help to the company.

Friday, September 26

6:01 a.m.–5:59 p.m.

Left Camp at 7:30 a.m., immediately struck off from the River for "Scotts Bluffs" near which we nooned and nearer to which we camped for the night, close to a very deep ravine or creek the sides of which were studded with fine Cedar which as well as water was hard to procure. The water was obliged to be dammed up in order that the cattle might drink. Feed dried up. Sis. Ann Bryant aged 69 from Bristol in England died this afternoon of general decay of constitution. Roads today "half and half", i.e., partly sandy & partly good.

Death: Ann Bryant, age 69

Levi Savage reported that Ann Bryant, "who had been ill for sometime, but not thought dangerous, was found dead in the wagon in a sitting posture, apparently asleep."

The Oregon Trail splits a few miles past Robidoux's 1850s trading posts. The pre-1850 primary route of the trail was through Robidoux's Pass. From 1851 on, the primary route was through Mitchell's Pass. These passes were not called by their current names until years later. They were simply unnamed passes in the Scott's Bluff area.²⁹

From the journal descriptions, it appears that the Willie Company took the older Robidoux's Pass route, rather than the newer Mitchell's Pass route. This decision might

Friday, September 26

To go to Robidoux's Pass on a gravel road, continue on State Road 92 until it intersects State Road 71 as you approach Gering. (Note: Scotts Bluff National Monument is straight ahead on State Road 92. It is worth a stop.) Take State Road 71 south and drive southwest for about two miles. At the Robidoux Road sign turn right and drive west to a stop sign. Drive straight through the stop sign intersection and onto the gravel road that winds out to Robidoux's Pass. There is a pioneer grave marker about eight miles up the gravel road. About one and one-half miles farther west, the road curves south. The monument for Robidoux's Pass is on the curve. There is no sign pointing to the marker, which is out roughly 200 yards west of the road in the grass. Stop and follow the trail out to see it. The

have been due in part to the weather. People believed that bad weather favored the older route. In the company journal it described problems finding water on September 26 and nooning on a creek 10 miles from Horseshoe Creek to get water on September 27. These were both indicators of their use of the Robidoux's Pass route because the Mitchell's Pass route returned to the Platte River and there was no creek to "noon" at on September 27. On the Robidoux's Pass route, the trail paralleled Owl Creek on September 27, which provided them a creek to noon at as the record stated. Note that William Woodward's record stated the company camped at Scott's Bluffs on September 26, which at first glance was inconsistent with traveling through Robidoux's Pass. However, if they camped at Mitchell's Pass, they could not have traveled the 14 miles that Levi Savage recorded. It makes more sense to conclude that they camped at Robidoux's Pass. Levi Savage's entry confirmed these conclusions. He reported traveling 14 miles without water and camping at "Rubadore's Old Trading Post." It was nearly 14 miles from Robidoux's 1850s trading posts to the old Robidoux's Pass trading post, and the trail was without any water source.

Saturday, September 27

6:02 a.m.–5:57 p.m.

Sis. Bryant was buried before starting of Camp, which took place about 7:30 a.m. nooned on some Creek and about 10 miles further & crossed over Horseshoe Creek where we camped for the night with a little better feed.

Horse Creek joined the Platte River very near the present Nebraska/Wyoming state line. The Mitchell's Pass and the Robidoux's Pass routes reunited at that point. The Saints were again traveling along the south side of the North Platte River. Levi Savage's entry for September 27 was only two sentences long. His second sentence seemed to accurately state the obvious, "The old appear to be failing considerably."

Sunday, September 28

6:04 a.m.–5:56 p.m.

Left Camp about 7:30 a.m., nooned on the road about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the Platte with good feed. Met a company of emigrants returning from Salt Lake City in 11 wagons. Peter Burgess one of the party informed us that Mr. Babbitt and 2 men who accompanied him had been killed by the Cheyennes. We afterwards met a Company of U.S. Dragoons the Officer commanding which confirmed, Burgess's report. The Officer and several of his men took possession of a horse which we found several days back

GPS location for the marker is N 41 48.885' W 103 51.198'. Continue traveling south for one-half mile from the curve to an intersecting gravel road right after a cattle guard. Turn right on the gravel road and travel west on Summit Ranch Road for about five miles to a stop sign. Turn right at the stop sign and travel north on Stegal Road, which is asphalt, to State Road 92. Turn left and travel west and north on State Road 92. It eventually joins US Highway 85 and heads toward Torrington, Wyoming. In order to avoid Robidoux's Pass and the gravel road, simply follow State Road 92 through Gering and travel west toward Torrington, Wyoming.

Sunday, September 28

In the Torrington area there are two options. To take the first, travel through Torrington to US Highway 26 and follow it west to Fort Laramie, Wyoming. To take the second, stay on the south side of the North Platte River and travel through the area that the Willie Company would have

and which he claimed as his property. He refused to see President Willie before taking the horse. Camped for the night on the road near the River with good feed.

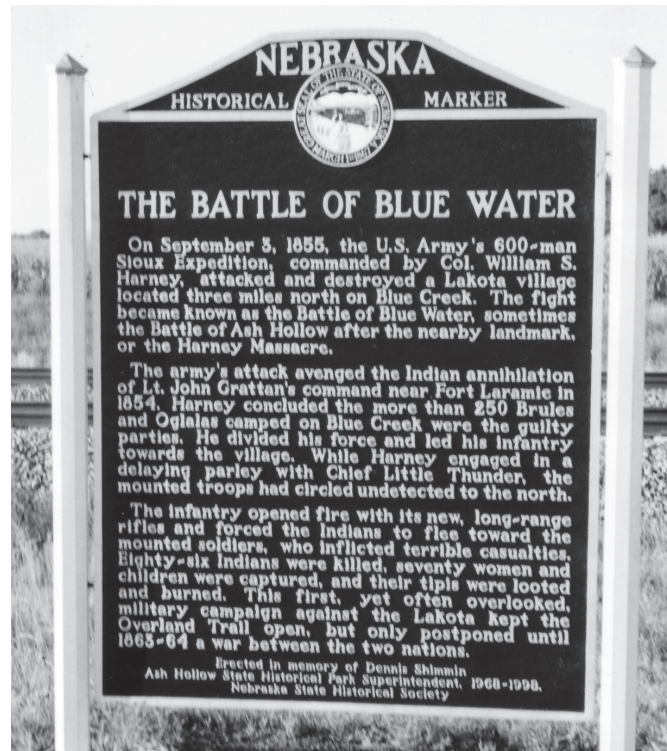
As the handcart company traveled they met two groups. First, they met a company of nearly 100 apostates on their way back to the states as reported by President Willie, Levi Savage, and William Woodward. This meeting did not seem to adversely impact the attitudes of the Saints in this struggling company. Later they met a company of soldiers, who confirmed the apostates' report that Almon Babbitt and two of his men had been killed and who took a stray horse that the company had found on September 25.

During the day the Saints passed the area where, in 1854, the Sioux Indians killed Second Lieutenant Grattan and 29 soldiers in a massacre. Those killings led to the 1855 Harney Massacre of even more Indians north of Ash Hollow. These incidents were the primary sources of the Indian unrest that haunted the Willie Company throughout the Nebraska Territory.

Monday, September 29

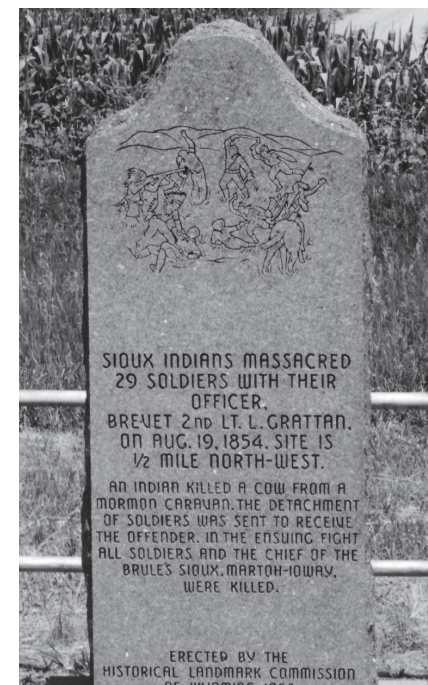
6:06 a.m.–5:55 p.m.

Left Camp about 8 a.m., passed an Indian Agency Station where some Sioux Indians were camped. Nooned at a vacant Trading Post 7 miles from Fort Laramie and



Harney Massacre monument.

traveled. As US Highway 85 approaches Torrington it intersects State Road 156. Turn left onto State Road 156 and travel west and north as it winds around to Lingle, Wyoming. Just south of Lingle, State Road 156 intersects State Road 157. Turn left and travel west and then north on State Road 157 to Barnes, Wyoming. When State Road 157 intersects US Highway 26 near Barnes, turn left and travel west to Fort Laramie. (Note: About three miles west of the start of State Road 157, on the north side of the road, is a marker for the Grattan Massacre.)



Grattan Massacre monument.

camped for the night on the road near an Indian Burying Ground about 4 miles from that Fort with weeds and young cottonwood for the cattle.

Near any semblance of civilization, feed for the animals became harder to find. They camped about four miles from Fort Laramie and fed their cattle weeds and young cottonwood trees, both of which were very poor sources of feed for cattle.

William Woodward recorded that he and Joseph B. Elder went to Fort Laramie “to obtain letters” for the camp. He received a letter from William H. Kimball. However, a more important letter was addressed to President Willie from President Franklin D. Richards. William Woodward did not reveal the contents of the letters. However, Levi Savage wrote, “Brother Richards has no cattle provided for us here and no other provisions made.”

The first frost was on the night of September 17. With the colder weather, death began to haunt the company. Seven Saints had died while crossing the area that would become the state of Nebraska. Four of the deaths were of people over 60. The facts that there were no provisions at Fort Laramie and that the weather had turned cold would hasten the demise of many of these Saints.



“Old Bedlam” at restored Fort Laramie in Wyoming.

Notes

1. Chislett, “Mr. Chislett’s Narrative,” 317.
2. Dixon, “Biography of William James,” 4.

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Chapter 5

Fort Laramie, Nebraska Territory, to Sixth Crossing of the Sweetwater River, Nebraska Territory

“Master, carest thou not that we perish?”

Mark 4:38

Tuesday, September 30

6:07 a.m.–5:54p.m.

A Council Meeting was held this morning after Prayers and then Capt. Siler left the Camp for Fort Laramie to procure provisions and cattle. A cow and calf were killed for the P.E.F. Company. Just before leaving Camp some Packers and Bro. Amy from Salt Lake City in a waggon in company with other Brethren who were going on business to the States passed by our Camp and we afterwards met 2 other waggons and some more packers. Rolled out of Camp about 2 p.m. and camped for the night about 3 miles west of Fort Laramie from whence Capt. Siler arrived late in the evening and reported that cattle were not obtainable but that provisions could be had on the credit of the Church. It was therefore resolved that the Handcart Company should make the best of their way through and that the 4 Independent Waggons should wait until the arrival of the next Waggon Company in the hope that some assistance could be then rendered them. Some soldiers visited the Camp this evening.

Fort Laramie was the only major military or civilian outpost after Florence that the Saints would encounter. In 1834 an outpost was first established in this wide river valley, where the Laramie River joined the North Platte River. Although the fort went through various owners, it was well established in 1856. The Willie Company originally planned to cross the North Platte River near Fort Laramie, as most Mormon and California Trail companies did. They hoped to resupply at Fort Laramie. President Franklin D. Richards

Tuesday, September 30

The Fort Laramie National Historic Site can be reached by traveling west out of Fort Laramie (the town) on State Road 160 for about three miles. The buildings that would have been there in 1856 are Old Fort John, Old Bedlam (now restored), the Stone Magazine (now restored), and the Post Trader's Store (restored to its 1867 appearance). The site is worth a visit.

had promised help and the handcart plan called for resupply. However, to their dismay, no supplies were waiting for them.

The four “Independent Waggon” had struggled along since their oxen were lost on September 4. The teams pulling the “Independent Waggon” were exhausted. The other wagons, carrying the handcart company’s provisions, were reducing their loads every day as food was consumed. Food was running short for the handcart people. Andrew Siler, who led the “Independent Waggon,” had been unable to obtain more cattle to pull the wagons from the traders at Fort Laramie. The leaders hoped that the Hunt and Hodgetts wagon trains might have extra oxen. Those trains were expected to arrive at the fort only about a week after the Willie Company. Consequently, the “Independent Waggon” were directed to wait for the first wagon company to come along. In the official synopsis of the fourth handcart company prepared by William Woodward, he wrote that leaving the Independent Wagons was “pursuant to President Richard’s counsel.”¹ The addition of these extra wagons would later prove to be a blessing for the Martin Handcart Company because it provided more wagons for those exhausted handcart Saints to ride in when they traveled near Martin’s Cove.

Wednesday, October 1

6:08 a.m.–5:52 p.m.

The Handcart Company rolled out of Camp about noon and the 4 waggon then turned back to an elevated spot of ground commanding a full view of the Fort. The first thing this morning it was discovered that several sisters had left the Camp and had taken up their residence at the Fort. Early this morning Bro. David Reeder died, aged 54. He was born at Rumburgh, Suffolk, in England.

Lucinda M. Davenport left camp on the previous night with an apostate Mormon. It was discovered this morning she was with Grant & Kimball’s wagon on the journey.

Christine Brown of the Handcart Company also staid at Fort Laramie.

Capt. Willie with some brethren returned to Fort Laramie with the mule team on business. W. Woodward had charge of the company during the day. Rolled about 7 miles and camped on the banks of the river Platte.

William Read died coming to camp in a wagon—he was born at North Crawley, Buckinghamshire, England, aged 63.

Wednesday, October 1

There are two travel options from the Fort Laramie National Historic Site. Take the first to experience what the four wagons did when they turned around and took one last look at civilization. Return to the site’s entrance. At the stop sign just past the entrance, turn right and drive back on State Road 160 toward Fort Laramie (the town). Travel one mile east to a sharp left hand turn onto Gray Rock Road/Road 92. The GPS point at the turn is N 42 12.603’ W 104 32.843’. Drive west on this gravel road and, at the crest of the first hill, turn back and look over Fort Laramie as the Saints would have done. At 1.6 miles from the start of Gray Rock Road there

Capt. Willie & the Brethren returned to camp. Some missionaries from Salt Lake passed by our camp & informed us that Brother P. P. Pratt & other missionaries were camped about 4 miles from us up the river.

Deaths: David Reeder, age 54
William Read, age 63

The temptation for several of the women to stay at Fort Laramie proved too great. Lucinda M. Davenport and Christine Brown were both found missing. William Woodward reported that Lucinda M. Davenport eloped with Stephen Forsdick, a man who Woodward, in his entry for September 29, described as an apostate Mormon living at the Fort. In contrast, Christina McNeil, age 24, proved to be more loyal. She was traveling with Margaret Caldwell, a widow with four children. Together they went to the Fort to trade some trinkets and silver spoons for flour and meat. An officer tried to persuade and then to scare Christina into abandoning the journey. She told him in "plain language" that she "would take her chance with the others even though it may mean death." The officer apparently admired her loyalty to her faith and gave her a large cured ham and well wishes.²

President Willie and a few other men went to Fort Laramie to purchase what provisions they could. Unfortunately, provisions were sparse. Among the provisions the men procured was a barrel or two of hard bread. This hard bread, which was probablyhardtack, proved to be the last food the Saints ate before they ran out of food on October 20.

The author of the Willie Company Emigrating Journal changed on October 1. William Woodward, in his concluding remarks to the company journal, declared that he was the clerk of the camp from the first until their arrival in Salt Lake City. This new duty led him to quit writing his personal, daily journal after October 2. As was mentioned earlier, it is hard to determine who the journal writer was from May 1 through October 1. However, one hint that the writer or writers were probably British was that the author consistently used the spelling of wagon as "waggon," which was an acceptable British alternative spelling. William Woodward, even though he originally came from England, spelled wagon as it is spelled in the United States.

are some original trail ruts. There is a marker for them on the right side of the road. Continue traveling on the gravel road for an additional 4.5 miles to an asphalt road near some large oil storage tanks, and then continue west to a stop sign. At the stop sign turn right and travel north one mile to the sign for the Register Cliff area, which the handcart pioneers would have passed. Continue west on the asphalt road as it curves left and winds toward Guernsey. (Note: A worthwhile side trip is to see the Oregon Trail or Guernsey ruts. Just before the bridge over the North Platte River, turn left at the sign for the ruts. They are only a short distance up the road.) From Guernsey travel west on US Highway 26 to I-25 and travel north on I-25 toward Casper, Wyoming. In order to avoid the gravel road, take the second route. From the Fort Laramie National Historic Site return to Fort Laramie (the town) and travel west on US Highway 26 to Guernsey. Follow the signs in Guernsey to the Oregon Trail or Guernsey ruts and to Register Cliff.

Thursday, October 2

6:10 a.m.–5:51 p.m.

Morning fine. Several missionaries came into camp this morning, among which was Thomas Bullock—they were in good spirits, several brethren went on to the wagons as they were travelling & Bro. Parley came to camp, preached a discourse suitable to the times, which was well received by the people; he bid the camp good by & went on his way to the States. Bro. Willie accompanied him to Fort Laramie.

The camp rolled on as usual, traveled about 7 miles & camped. A meeting was held in the evening, Bros. Willie, Atwood & Savage addressed it on the necessity of shortening the rations of the camp, that our flour might hold out till supplies should meet us. The people were willing to listen to Capt. Willie's suggestion, & it was unanimously approved of by the people.

Parley P. Pratt, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, was traveling east to serve what would be his last mission. He was murdered some months later while on this mission. Before he traveled on to Fort Laramie, he preached a sermon in the middle of the day to the assembled company. President Willie rode back with Elder Pratt, while the company then went on its way west. Elder Pratt had camped with President Richards on September 24, near Independence Rock.³ President Willie had received a letter from President Richards at Fort Laramie, and he confirmed its disappointing news with Elder Pratt. The necessary resupply had not materialized. When President Willie returned, he held an evening meeting to discuss their food supply shortage and "the necessity of shortening the rations."

Friday, October 3

6:12 a.m.–5:49 p.m.

Road leaves the River, ascended some steep bluffs & rolled on. Noon on a dry creek. Rolled on again, descended the Bluffs & travelled till dark. Camped by the road, travelled about 21 miles. Peter Larsen, aged 43, from Lolland, Denmark, died during the day.

Death: Peter Larsen, age 43

After several easy traveling days, the company went about 21 miles. It was rough country with hills or bluffs to cross. Levi Savage reported that all were fatigued. They did

Thursday, October 2

For a closer-to-the-trail experience that does not involve gravel roads, after Guernsey drive north on I-25 toward Casper and take Exit 100. Turn left and drive north on the Glendo Highway, which becomes State Road 319. After crossing the North Platte River, the highway intersects US Highways 18 and 20; follow them and head for Douglas, Wyoming. A couple of miles up the road these roads rejoin I-25 near Orin, Wyoming, and lead to Casper.

not reach water or feed, but had to stop due to darkness. The hilly country combined with the longest walk they had made for many days clearly caused general exhaustion.

Sarah James, age 18, watched the following event unfold at some unknown point along the trail. The people were so fatigued that a man in the company lay down in the shafts of his handcart and started to cry. The others felt like joining him, when one of the leaders came up and slapped him in the face. That made him so mad he jumped up and started to run with the handcart. She stated, "I remember that I thought it was a mean way to treat the poor man but now I'm sure that it saved his life."⁴

Saturday, October 4

6:13 a.m.–5:48 p.m.

The camp rolled on about 3 miles & the company staid to allow the sisters to wash clothes, &c. Benjamin Culley, aged 61, from Sprowston, Norfolk, England, died; also George Ingra, aged 68, from Bassingbourne, Cambridgeshire, England died; also Daniel Gadd, aged 2, from Orwell, Cambridgeshire, England, died. A cow was killed in the afternoon.

Deaths: Benjamin Culley, age 61
George Ingra, age 68
Daniel Gadd, age 2

After three miles the company came to water and camped for the day. The ostensible purpose was to allow the women to wash clothes. However, with three people dying, the real reason was rest. About a month earlier, on September 3, George Ingra's wife, Elizabeth, had passed away. They left no survivors.

Levi Savage reported that this was the first day of the reduced rations and that some of the people had been stealing provisions. Consequently, the food was all placed into three of the four remaining wagons and a guard was posted. He indicated that the rations had been reduced from a pound of flour per day to 12 ounces.

Levi Savage also reported that "The Pacific Springs is the only place that we are sure of meeting supplies." No record specifically states the source of this statement. However, it appears to have come to the Saints from President Richards as relayed by Elder Parley P. Pratt. Evidence of President Richards's thoughts about resupply comes from two sources.

First, on October 4, President Richards arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. President Brigham Young called an evening meeting of the First Presidency and of the missionaries who had just arrived. Although sketchy, minutes were kept of the meeting. President Richards reported meeting John Smith on September 24 near Independence Rock. Smith was hauling 600 pounds of flour intended to resupply the Saints. In the minutes President Richards optimistically stated, "They will not need flour until they come to the Sandy." Clearly, he believed that the Willie Company had enough flour to get to the Little Sandy River, which was about 60 miles west of the Sixth Crossing of the Sweetwater River, where they actually ran out of food.⁵

Second, President Richards's official report also related his meeting with "Patriarch John Smith" near Independence Rock and that he had instructed him to return toward the valley with the missionaries. On the evening of his meeting with John Smith, they also met and camped with Elder Parley P. Pratt, who was headed east on his mission. President Richards's official report then related that two other men were headed east hauling flour for the Willie Company. On September 27, 15 miles east of Pacific Springs he told William Smith to cache his two wagons full of flour and to go on and meet the Willie Company. The next day, three miles east of the Big Sandy, he had the same experience with a Brother Talcott.⁶ President Richards was confident enough of his overly optimistic conclusion that he instructed the resupply wagons to cache their flour at Pacific Springs.

It is interesting that these resupply wagons and their drivers were never mentioned again in any contemporary record. If they did cache their flour, they did not go on far enough to meet the Willie Company. The Saints were still far from Pacific Springs on September 27. They were at Horse Creek near where the present Wyoming–Nebraska state lines meet. No one knows what happened to these wagons of life-saving flour.

Sunday, October 5

6:15 a.m.–5:46 p.m.

The camp rolled on, roads good, nooned on the Platte; rolled again, crossed some hills, then some splendid road, arrived at the crossing of the Platte—the company forded the river & camped on its banks. Travelled about 15 miles.

Fording the North Platte River was often thought of as a major obstacle, which took substantial time and effort. However, if a person were living on reduced rations, then avoiding hills would be a way to conserve energy, even if it meant getting a little wet. The

company journal stated that, along with traveling 15 miles on October 5, they arrived at the crossing of the Platte and forded the river. Since it was early October, the North Platte River was probably very low, so fording was not too much trouble. Levi Savage did not mention the ford. He did report that they traveled about 16 miles.

Monday, October 6

6:16 a.m.–5:45 p.m.

Roads good, the Handcarts roll fine, the ox-teams are nearly always in the rear; nooned for an hour on the Platte & then rolled a few miles farther. Travelled about 16 miles.

The journal entries became terse as the situation worsened. This entry is telling. Although the roads were “good” and the people were on reduced rations due to a shortage of flour, it was recorded that the “ox-teams are nearly always in the rear.” With the shortage of food, the wagon loads should have been lighter. The oxen were obviously exhausted.

Margaret Caldwell had earlier traded trinkets with the Indians for dried meat. On a cold night, which may have been around October 6, she stewed the meat and thickened the broth with some flour. She gave a half pint of the thickened broth to two men who were serving as guards. They declared that it saved their lives.⁷

Tuesday, October 7

6:17 a.m.–5:43 p.m.

Travelled about 3 miles & forded the Platte River. Roads generally good, some few hills. Nooned on a creek that was nearly dry. Rolled on again & camped on the banks of the Platte. Travelled about 15 miles.

By crossing the North Platte River on October 5 and 7 the company managed to avoid the climbs that were necessary on the customary “Black Hills” and “River” routes. Although seldom mentioned, at least the Edmund Ellsworth, Daniel D. McArthur, and Edward Martin handcart companies, along with the John A. Hunt and the William B. Hodgetts wagon companies, all took this flatter river-bottom route that included two additional crossings of the North Platte River. William Clayton had reported this alternative route in *The Latter-day Saints’ Emigrants’ Guide*, published in 1848. He stated, “There is a road [that] follows the river, instead of crossing the Black Hills, and it is represented as

being as near, and much better traveling if the river is fordable. By following this road you have to cross the river three times extra, but will find plenty of grass, wood, and water. If the river is fordable at Laramie, it is fordable at those three places, and you can go that route safely.”⁸

The company crossed the North Platte River near present-day Orin, Wyoming, and then traveled in the lowlands somewhat parallel to the river, following the trail known as Child’s Cutoff for roughly 19 miles. They then forded the river again near present-day Douglas, Wyoming. Child’s Cutoff headed up Harvey Gulch about three miles north of Douglas. It was logical that the company would try to avoid the climb up Harvey Gulch. By fording the river near Douglas, the company could follow the relatively flat river bottom all the way to Deer Creek, walking in the area where the present-day railroad tracks run.

Wednesday, October 8

6:18 a.m.–5:41 p.m.

This morning one of our best oxen belonging to the P.E. Fund, died—supposed to have eaten a poisonous weed. The camp rolled on, roads splendid, some few hills; crossed a clear running stream & rolled on to the Platte & nooned where the Black Hills road intersects the river road. Rolled on about 5 miles farther & camped on Deer Creek. Four U.S. soldiers from Laramie on their way to a military post camped near us. A cow was killed in the evening for the use of the camp. Travelled about 15 miles during the day.

Neither the people nor the animals in the company knew a poisonous plant from a nontoxic plant. Elizabeth Smith, age 13, who was traveling with her widowed mother and her siblings, told of camping near a marshy meadow spring and finding parsnips, which they cooked. They ate so many that it felt like they had rocks in their stomachs. Later when their company captain found what they were eating, he told them that “it would be one of the providences of the Almighty if [they] were not all dead by morning” because each parsnip had enough poison to kill an ox. The only one who reportedly suffered was a Scandinavian man who died, supposedly because he did not stop eating them.⁹

Levi Savage reported the death of “the best ox” without mentioning the poisonous weed. He surmised that the weak teams were impairing the company’s progress. He also repeated again that the old people were failing fast.

Wednesday, October 8

I-25 runs generally parallel to the company’s trail. For a closer look at the trail, take Exit 160 to Glenrock, Wyoming, and follow US Highways 20 and 26 toward Casper.

Thursday, October 9

6:20 a.m.–5:40 p.m.

Rolled on 9½ miles & nooned on the Platte. Samuel Gadd, from Orwell, Cambridge-shire, England died in the afternoon, aged 42 years. The company rolled on 7 miles farther & camped on the banks of the Platte.

Death: Samuel Gadd, age 42

The Saints left their Deer Creek camp, which would have been in present-day Glenrock, Wyoming, and traveled up the North Platte River. From Deer Creek until the final North Platte River crossing, the trail followed close to the river. The traveling was relatively easy. However, the specter of death was ever present. Samuel Gadd, age 42, who died, was the father of little Daniel Gadd, age 2, who had been the last person to die on October 4.

Friday, October 10

6:21 a.m.–5:38 p.m.

The company rolled on as usual. After travelling a few miles we came up with several U.S. soldiers who had been to get firewood for their fort. We called at a trading post & obtained 37 Buffalo robes for the use of the Handcart Company, which had been engaged by Bro. F. D. Richards. Travelled about 6 miles & nooned. Rolled on again & forded the Platte river and camped on its banks. Travelled about 12 miles thro' the day.

President Franklin D. Richards had promised to provide aid. Although the company had hoped for food, they received 37 buffalo robes at a trading post at the Platte River Bridge. These robes, when spread on the ground, would have made it much warmer for many of the Saints. A typical buffalo robe is generally rectangular and at least 50 square feet in size. A couple of adults or several small children could have slept on each robe.

John Reshaw (or John Richard) constructed a toll bridge over the North Platte River in 1852. It was quite an engineering feat and was known as the Reshaw Bridge, Richards Bridge, or the Platte Bridge. Having just crossed the river twice in the last week, it was obviously low enough to ford, so they headed up river and did not use the bridge.

In 1847, Brigham Young established a ferry near where Old Fort Caspar sits today. Since the company journal stated that they traveled about six miles after picking up the robes at the trading post, which was near the bridge, it is reasonable to assume they crossed the North Platte River near the 1847 crossing. There was also an 1849 Mormon

Friday, October 10

To find the former locations of the Richard or Reshaw Bridge and the two Mormon Ferries, continue on I-25 to Exit 185. Take Exit 185 and turn right at the stop sign onto Curtis Street. (Note: Curtis Street also intersects US Highways 20 and 26 on the west end of Evansville. US Highways 20 and 26 are the road coming from Glenrock.) Travel north on Curtis Street, which changes to Veterans Drive and Cemetery Road. Just before the bridge over the North Platte River, turn left and travel 100 yards to Reshaw Park. There is a replica and a marker in this small park. It is at GPS N 42 52.221' W 106 16.035'.

To reach the 1849 Mormon Ferry, which is not in the area the Willie Company crossed, return to I-25 and travel west to Exit 186. Take Exit 186 and turn right at the stop sign onto Bryan Stock Trail. Drive north on Bryan Stock Trail to K Street and turn left onto K Street.

Ferry crossing, but it was a couple of miles closer to the Platte Bridge. The company journal reported that they forded, not ferried, the river. The ferry business had died when the Platte Bridge was built.

K Street is before the river. Drive west on K Street to the ball fields that are on the north side of the street. There is a large "Mormon Ferry Crossing" sign just east of the grandstands. To find the actual 1849 Mormon Ferry Crossing area, drive on the eastern-most roadway through the park to Field 4. There is a Platte River Parkway Footbridge near where the ferry was in 1849. It is at GPS N 42 51.879' W 106 18.366'.

To reach the 1847 Mormon Ferry, return to Bryan Stock Trail and turn right. Drive south and Bryan Stock Trail becomes Beverly Street. Beverly Street intersects Yellowstone Highway, which is also US Highways 20 and 26. Turn right onto Yellowstone Highway and travel southwest to its intersection with First Street. Turn onto First Street and travel west through the downtown area and on for some distance along the north side of the North Platte River until the road intersects Wyoming Boulevard. Turn left onto Wyoming Boulevard and drive south across the North Platte River. Turn right at the first intersection after the bridge onto 13th Street. Travel west on 13th Street to restored Fort Caspar and its museum. The fort and the museum are worth a stop. The 1847 Mormon Ferry was in the area north of the museum. There is a marker and a replica of the ferry near the river. The location of the ferry was GPS N 42 50.350' W 106 22.312'. (Note: There is one more marker to the 1847 Mormon Ferry at Mills Memorial Park. To see it, return to Wyoming Boulevard and drive north 0.8 mile to the small park on the right-hand side of the road.)

Saturday, October 11

6:22 a.m.–5:37 p.m.

Travelled about 12-¼ miles & camped; the road was hilly. Several of our cows gave out that were hauling wagons; one died on the road or was killed by wolves.

Levi Savage recorded that they camped at “Mineral Springs.” About 12 miles up the main trail from the ferry and through Emigrant Gap, they would have arrived at the Poison Spider Creek drainage. There were some springs in this area. As they left the river bottoms, the trail started to gain in elevation. The stress on the undernourished animals was overwhelming. Levi Savage recorded that “three of our working cows gave out and one died. The remainder of our oxen were nearly overcome.”

The stress on the people was just as great. Susannah Stone, age 25, wrote, “Only once did my courage fail. One cold dreary afternoon, my feet having been frosted, I felt I could go no further, and withdrew from the little company and sat down to wait the end, being somewhat in a stupor. After a time I was aroused by a voice, which seemed as audible as anything could be, and which spoke to my very soul of the promises and blessings I had received, and which should surely be fulfilled and that I had a mission to perform in Zion. I received strength and was filled with the Spirit of the Lord and arose and traveled on with a light heart.”¹⁰

Saturday, October 11

To follow the trail these Saints followed, after crossing the North Platte River return to the intersection of Wyoming Boulevard and First Street, which is also US Highways 20 and 26 (Business). Turn left and drive west on US Highways 20 and 26 (Business) to the first major intersection, which is Poison Spider Road. Poison Spider Road is roughly where the original trail was. Turn left and travel west on Poison Spider Road, which becomes County Road 201. After about seven miles the road becomes a gravel road. The gravel road continues on for about 1.5 miles to Emigrant Gap. There is a Bureau of Land Management interpretive site at Emigrant Gap, which site is west of the road. After passing the BLM interpretive site, travel southwest for about 1.5 miles to a stop sign. Turn right at the stop sign and drive about 50 yards to another stop sign. Turn left at this second stop sign onto the asphalt road, which is County Road 202. Travel southwest for 1.8 miles to the intersection with County Road 319. Turn left and travel south along County Road 319 toward State Road 220 and Independence Rock. It runs near where the original trail was. The turnoff onto County Road 319 at its intersection with County Road 202 is at GPS N 42 49.286' W 106 35.580'. (Warning: This is a 30-mile long gravel road that is fairly good for the first few miles and for the last few miles. The middle miles between Rock Avenue and Willow Springs are clay and very slimy

when they are wet. If it has been or is wet, do not take this road!)

To avoid these gravel roads, when leaving Fort Caspar, turn right at the intersection with Wyoming Boulevard. Drive south on Wyoming Boulevard until it intersects CY Avenue. CY Avenue is also State Road 220. At CY Avenue turn right and travel south on State Road 220 toward Independence Rock.

Sunday, October 12

6:24 a.m.–5:35 p.m.

Alfred Peacock & George Edwick left our company & returned towards Fort Laramie. The company rolled on, passed a mineral lake & spring, passed thro' a "Rock Avenue" & nooned at the Alkali swamps & springs. Rolled on & camped at a clear stream of water, travelled about 13- $\frac{3}{4}$ miles. A cow was killed that was not fit to travel. The night was cold.

Remarkably very few people who left Florence quit the trek. Unfortunately, two teenage young men did quit at this point and headed back to Fort Laramie: Alfred Peacock, age 18, and George Edwick, age 17. They appear to have been traveling without any family. Levi Savage recorded the killing of the cow with the conclusion that, "The people have sharp appetites."

Elizabeth Cunningham, age 12, was traveling with her parents and three of her siblings. Somewhere after Fort Laramie, she got cold enough that she was left for dead along the trail. After leaving her, her mother recalled a promise that their family had received prior to emigrating. They were promised that "if they would live the gospel, all the members of the family would arrive safely in Zion." Her mother then returned to the dying child and warmed her until she revived and was brought back to the camp.¹¹ On October 12 the company journal recorded, "The night was cold."

The trail and road go through Rock Avenue, which is a very rocky area a little more than seven miles south on County Road 319. About a mile beyond Rock Avenue, there was a creek called Poison Spring Creek. From the looks of the area, it was "the Alkali

swamps & springs,” where they nooned. The clear stream of water where they camped was Willow Creek, probably just a couple of miles below Willow Spring and Prospect Hill. Prospect Hill was also known as Ryan Hill.

Monday, October 13

6:25 a.m.–5:35 p.m.

The camp rolled on, passed the “Willow Springs”, ascended “Prospect Hill”, & nooned at a “Bad Slough”. Rolled on to “Greasewood Creek” & camped for the night. Travelled about 13 miles. Paul Jacobsen, from Lolland, Denmark, aged 55 died this evening.

Death: Paul Jacobsen, age 55

From the top of Prospect Hill, or Ryan Hill, which required the company to undergo a strenuous climb, they could see to the Independence Rock and Devil’s Gate areas. From that hilltop the trail was easier, until it ascended Rocky Ridge. They camped where the trail met Greasewood Creek. Levi Savage called it “Greenwood Creek.” It is now known as Horse Creek. This was also the spot where the rescue wagons would finally meet the Martin Company on October 31.

John Oborn, age 12, was traveling with his parents. He told about their rations being reduced. He later wrote, “Our scant rations had reached the point where the assigned amount was consumed in one meal and it had to suffice for the day. From here on it is beyond my power of description. God only can understand and realize the torture, privation, exposure and starvation that we went through.” He went on to write, “We had resorted to eating anything that could be chewed, bark and leaves from trees. We young ate the raw hide from our boots.”¹²

Tuesday, October 14

6:26 a.m.–5:33 p.m.

Weather splendid. Road sandy. Rolled on to the Saleratus Lake & nooned. Travelled on, & the Handcarts with the people crossed the Sweetwater River on a bridge. The teams & wagons forded the stream. Camped about a mile west of “Independence Rock”. Came about 13 miles. The people gathered considerable Saleratus from a lake on the left of the road east of “Independence Rock” of a superior quality.

Despite their extreme hunger, they gathered saleratus, or baking soda, as they trekked onward past Independence Rock. It was recorded that they crossed the Sweetwater River

Monday, October 13

The BLM has an interpretive site at the summit of Prospect/Ryan Hill near Willow Springs. The sign for this site is often vandalized, so look for the turn-off on the west side of the road. There are actual ruts at the site. The site is about ten miles south of Rock Avenue on County Road 319. It is at GPS N 42 39.620’ W 106 48.620’. Greasewood Creek, or Horse Creek, is about nine miles south of Prospect/Ryan Hill. It is at GPS N 42 36.203’ W 106 57.849’. State Road 220 is about three miles farther south past Greasewood/Horse Creek. Follow State Road 220 southwest toward Independence Rock to continue along the company’s path.

Tuesday, October 14

Independence Rock has an interpretive exhibit and rest area facilities. People can climb this massive rock to look at the area. The trail ran east of the rock, while State Road 220 now runs west. Continue following State Road 220 south to the Devil’s Gate area.

on a bridge. They would cross the Sweetwater a total of seven times in the next two weeks.

Independence Rock was used as an informal post office and so it was not unusual to find mail there. John Chislett wrote that at Independence Rock, "Captain Willie received a letter from Elder Richards informing him that we might expect supplies to meet us from the valley by the time we reached South Pass."¹³ Pacific Springs is the first spring west of South Pass.

Wednesday, October 15

6:28 a.m.–5:32 p.m.

Early this morning, Caroline Reeder, from Linstead, Suffolk, England, aged 17 years, died. The camp rolled on, passed "Devils Gate" & nooned after traveling about 6 miles. The camp rolled on & we camped on the banks of the Sweetwater after making about 16 miles travel thro' the day. Many of the company are sick & have to ride in the wagons. One beef heifer & one poor cow were killed this evening for the camp. Last evening a council & a meeting were held to take into consideration our provisions & the time it was considered we should have to make it last before we could depend upon supplies. It was unanimously agreed to reduce the rations of flour one fourth—the men then would get 10½ ozs. per day; women, & large children 9 ozs. per day; children 6 ozs. per day; & infants 3 ozs. per day each.

Death: Caroline Reeder, age 17

On October 3 the Saints had reduced their 16 ounces of daily flour to 12 ounces. On these reduced rations, the company had hoped to make it to Pacific Springs, where they anticipated being resupplied. However, Pacific Springs was still about a week away. At the rate they were consuming their flour, they would run out before they got to their resupply point. Consequently, they reduced their rations even further. The unforeseen consequence of this reduction was that they would go even slower. Teenage children were, for the most part healthy, and not dying. However, Caroline Reeder, age 17, was found dead outside of their camp. She had been gathering sagebrush to make a fire.

The company passed Devil's Gate and Martin's Cove during the day with no idea of the role this area would play in the coming weeks for the Martin Handcart Company. (The cove would provide shelter for the snow-bound, frozen Martin Company Saints.)

Wednesday, October 15

The Church has its Mormon Handcart Visitors' Center near Devil's Gate. It is well marked. It is open seven days a week. On every day of the week but Sunday, people can borrow a handcart and walk along the trails to experience some of what the handcart pioneers experienced. The highway leaves the handcart trail at Devil's Gate and rejoins the trail near Split Rock. To travel to the Split Rock area, drive south on State Road 220 to US Highway 287 at Muddy Gap, Wyoming. Turn right onto US Highway 287 and drive northwest toward Lander, Wyoming.

The Willie Company stopped to noon probably just a mile or two beyond the present-day Mormon Handcart Visitors' Center.

Another miracle occurred around this time. Elizabeth Crook Panting, age 28, was escaping an abusive husband in England to travel to Zion with her two small children, ages 5 and 1. Somewhere in this area, she went to gather buffalo chips to make a fire. As she filled her apron with fuel for her fire, a man approached her. She told him that they were short on food. He offered her help and had her follow him to what seemed like a cave. She saw a large amount of dried meat in the cave, and he helped her load up her apron. She turned to go and when she looked again to thank him, he and the cave were gone.¹⁴

Thursday, October 16

6:28 a.m.–5:32 p.m.

Early this morning sister Ella, wife of Olof Wicklund was delivered of a son. George Curtis, from Norton, Gloucestershire, England, aged 64 years died; Lars Julius Larsen, who was born July 5th, 1856 in camp at Iowa City died. John Roberts from Bristol, Somersetshire, England, aged 42 years died. The camp rolled on, roads hilly & sandy, nooned after travelling about 5 miles; rolled on & camped on the banks of the Sweetwater. Many of our company are failing in health. Feed for the cattle scarce. Came about 11 miles.

Birth: Jacob Wicklund to Ella and Olof Wicklund

Deaths: George Curtis, age 64
Lars Julius Larsen, age 3 months
John Roberts, age 42

Both Ella Wicklund, age 30, and her new baby would miraculously survive the remainder of the trek. However, Lars Julius Larsen, a baby born July 5, 1856, in Iowa City, died. The Saints were following the Sweetwater River, which meant fairly level but sandy traveling. Levi Savage pointed out that the oxen were worn down. Although there was little food left to carry in the wagons, the wagons were still needed to haul the tents, along with the sick and the exhausted. Years later a woman asked William Woodward if he remembered a good pair of rawhide shoes that had come up missing. He did. She reported that she had boiled them to make soup.¹⁵

Thursday, October 16

Split Rock can be seen from the Martin's Cove area. Look to the west for the notch in the mountain range. The BLM has an interpretive site south of Split Rock. By climbing the rocks west of the interpretive site parking lot, Devil's Gate can be seen in the east. Ephraim Hanks found the Martin Handcart Company in this area on November 11. The interpretive site is 8.5 miles northwest of Muddy Gap on US Highway 287.

Friday, October 17

6:31 a.m.–5:29 p.m.

William Philpot, aged 51 years, from Southampton, Hampshire, England died this morning about 2 o'clock. Camp rolled on in the morning, roads good, forded the Sweetwater & nooned, after travelling over 7 miles. Bro. Findlay found an ox able to work. A calf gave out & was killed by wolves. The company rolled on again, forded the Sweetwater twice between the mountains & travelled on a piece & camped; willows plenty for fuel; Travelled about 13 miles thro' the day.

Death: William Philpot, age 51

The company journal described travel through the "Three Crossings" portion of the trail. It required them to cross from the south side to the north side of the Sweetwater River. After about one and one-half miles the trail crossed the river to the south and then, due to the canyon walls, back to the north side.

During the night William Philpot, age 51, died. He was almost matter-of-factly buried, and they moved on. As these tired people walked on, they were being followed by wolves. The wolves killed a calf that had quit before the people could get to the calf and salvage its meat. After eating soup made from the bones of cows that had no fat on them, Sarah James, age 19, suggested to her parents that they make soup out of the tatters of her shoes. Her father smiled at her, while her mother impatiently told Sarah that she would "have to eat the muddy things" herself.¹⁶

Saturday, October 18

6:32 a.m.–5:28 p.m.

Rolled on in the morning & nooned on the Sweetwater. Forded the Sweetwater after dinner & camped on its banks. Travelled about miles. A cow & calf was butchered for the company. James Henderson from Nixwood, Lanarkshire, Scotland died in the evening, aged 27 years.

Death: James Henderson, age 27

The company journal did not record the miles traveled on October 18. Levi Savage reported that they traveled only eight miles, as they were preparing to travel the next day for 16 miles without water. He stated that "The air is cool, but fair." There was little hint of the drastic weather change that would occur within a few brief hours.

Sunday, October 19

6:33 a.m.–5:26 p.m.

Rolled on in the morning, weather very cold. Ann Rowley died this morning, aged 2 yrs. Some of the children were crying with cold. Passed “Ice Springs”; just after we were passed the “springs” a snow storm came on, which lasted for about half an hour. The company rolled on again, & were soon met by Cyrus H. Wheelock & Joseph A. Young & two other brethren from the Valley, bringing us the information that supplies were near at hand, the camp halted, a meeting was called. Bro. Wheelock informed us of the liberality of the Saints in the Valley, of Bro. Brigham Young’s kindheartedness in speaking in behalf of the Handcart companies now on the Plains, & of himself fitting up ten teams & wagons & supplying them with flour, &c., & others in proportion. During the day Eliza Smith, from Eldersfield, Worcestershire, England, aged 40 years died; also John Kockles, from Norwich, Norfolk, England, died; also, Daniel Osborn, from Norwich, Norfolk, England died; also, Rasmus Hansen, from Falster, Denmark, died. Travelled thro’ the day about 16 miles; camped at dark on the banks of the Sweetwater. The teams mistook the road & did not get into camp till about 10 p.m.

Deaths: Ann Rowley, age 2
 Eliza Smith, age 40
 John Kockles, age 66
 Daniel Osborn, age 7
 Rasmus Hansen, age 40

Never before had five people died in one day. The 16-mile forced trek without a water break, in horrible weather, had exacted a terrible toll. All hope may have been lost, were it not for the advance party of rescuers finding them after the snowstorm.

Without the Willie Company knowing all of the details, President Franklin D. Richards and his companions had raced to the Salt Lake Valley almost a month before. They arrived on October 4. Richards went immediately to President Brigham Young and reported the dire circumstances of the two handcart companies that were still on the plains. The two companies had no hope of making it to the valley without additional supplies. Brigham Young went into action. The next day was the first day of the Church’s fall general conference. Brigham Young called for wagons, teams, teamsters, food, and clothing to be driven

Sunday, October 19

The storm struck the company near Ice Springs or Ice Slough. The trail crosses US Highway 287 in the vicinity of where the storm hit them, between Jeffrey City, Wyoming, and the Sweetwater Station. There is a marker on the right side of the road at Ice Springs, which is about 10 miles west of Jeffrey City.

to the east to provide essential aid to the unfortunate Saints. The response was immediate, and on October 7 the first fully supplied rescue wagons left Salt Lake City.

After the advance team left, the Willie Company moved on in the snow, stopping for the night at the Sixth Crossing of the Sweetwater River. The condition of the company was desperate. Levi Savage's entry was fairly detailed in describing their situation. He reported that the last flour had been given out and that they had "only six small beefs and 400 pounds of biscuits to provision over 400 people." He went on to report, "The children, the aged, and infirm fell back to the wagons until they were so full that all in them were extremely uncomfortable." Some of the people were so desperate that they hitched a handcart to the back of one of the wagons to haul more people. They walked until dark, crossing the Sweetwater River to make their camp. One of the wagons fell behind and took the wrong trail, which delayed its arrival into camp until 10 or 11 p.m.

Joseph A. Young knew Emily Hill, age 20, from his time in England. When he saw her pitiful condition, she reported that he burst into tears. He told her that it was because she looked "starved." He then quietly gave her a small onion from his pocket and told her to eat it. Instead, she saved it. She saw a man lying on the ground near death by a fire. She felt so badly for him that she gave him the onion. He later credited her act of kindness with saving his life.¹⁷

The company was in serious trouble. Nineteen Saints had died since Fort Laramie. Shortly after leaving Fort Laramie, they had covered about 21 miles in one day, October 4, and three people died. On October 19 they had walked 16 miles without water enduring a brief snowstorm and five people had died. Now it was snowing and they were out of food. They had only the promise of rescue to give them hope.

Notes

1. William Woodward, "Synopsis of the 4th Handcart Company's Trip from Liverpool, England to Great Salt Lake City in the Spring, Summer and Autumn of 1856," in *Journal History of the Church*, November 9, 1856.
2. Osborn, "Biography of Agnes Caldwell Southworth," 3–4.
3. Richards and Spencer, "Report," October 4, 1856.
4. Dixon, "Biography of William James," 7.

5. "Minutes of a meeting at the Historian's Office Oct. 4, 1856," in *Journal History of the Church*, October 4, 1856.
6. Richards and Spencer, "Report," October 4, 1856.
7. Osborn, "Biography of Agnes Caldwell Southworth," 3.
8. William Clayton, *The Latter-day Saints' Emigrants' Guide from Council Bluffs to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake* (St. Louis: Mo. Republican Steam Power Press, 1848; repr., Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1974), 23.
9. Goodwin, "Tired Mother," 778–79.
10. Susanna Stone Lloyd, "The Sketch of Susanna Stone Lloyd," typescript copy, 2, Church Archives.
11. "Elizabeth Nicholson Nicol Cunningham," in *Pioneer Women of Faith and Fortitude*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers), 1:726.
12. Flora Oborn Smart, "Brief History of the Life of John Oborn, Pioneer of 1856," 1–2, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
13. Chislett, "Mr. Chislett's Narrative," 320.
14. Elizabeth Crook, "Elizabeth Crook from Her Diary," 2, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
15. William Woodward, "History of William Woodward," Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library, 11.
16. Dixon, "Biography of William James," 7.
17. Mary F. Kelly, "Emily Hill Woodmansee, Poetess," *Young Women's Journal* 18 (February 1907): 52.

Chapter 6

Sixth Crossing of the Sweetwater River, Nebraska Territory, to Great Salt Lake City, Utah Territory

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

Psalms 46:10

Monday, October 20

6:35 a.m.–5:25 p.m.

This morning there was about 4 inches of snow on the ground. Anna F. Tait from Glasgow, Scotland, aged 31 years died; Capt. Willie & Joseph Elder left camp to meet the “Relief Train” that had been sent from the Valley. Our provisions were all issued last night & that was hard bread.

Death: Anna F. Tait, age 31

The Saints woke up to four inches of snow. It continued to snow all day. The company journal reported that the last of the food had been issued the night before, while Levi Savage reported that it was issued in the morning. It was the hard bread (or crackers) that President Willie had acquired at Fort Laramie. Due to the lack of food and the snowstorm, no effort was made to move from their camp at the Sixth Crossing of the Sweetwater River. They were out of food and had to hope and pray for the anticipated supplies.

During the morning President Willie decided to go on ahead and find the rescue wagons. He was joined by Joseph Elder. They took two mules and no bedding or other provisions. They intended to find the relief wagons, regardless of what time or effort it took. They did not know that, when faced with the same October 19 snowstorm, the rescuers had sought protection below the mouth of Willow Creek on the Sweetwater River, off the main trail. A rescuer, Harvey H. Cluff, had felt inspired to walk three miles north to the main trail and place a signboard on the trail pointing in the direction of the camp. He thought it would guide Cyrus H. Wheelock, Joseph A. Young, and the two others when

Monday, October 20

The Church has a small visitors’ center about three miles northeast of the actual Sixth Crossing campground. The visitors’ center is on the south side of the road just after US Highway 287 crosses over the Sweetwater River. The visitors’ center will have road condition information regarding Rocky Ridge and Rock Creek Hollow.

they returned. Shortly after Cluff arrived back at the rescue company's camp, near night-fall, President Willie and Joseph Elder rode into the rescuers' camp. Had they not been guided by Harvey Cluff's sign, they would have missed the camp and possibly perished, along with even more of their starving company.¹

As the Saints huddled together in a storm enduring their forced fast, they may have been encouraged by memories of other miracles. Ann Jewell Rowley's family recalled that, on an earlier night, her 10 family members had nothing to eat but "two hard sea rolls." She needed God's help to feed the 10 people. She placed the sea rolls in a Dutch oven, covered them with water, and prayed. Later, when she took the lid off, the Dutch oven was "filled with food."²

Tuesday, October 21

6:36 a.m.–5:23 p.m.

John Linford from Graveley, Cambridgeshire, England, aged 49 years died; also, Richard Hardwick, from Moorhen's Cross, Herefordshire, England, aged 63 years; also Mary Ann Perkins, from Norwich, Norfolk, England, aged 62 years died; also Sophia Larsen from Lolland, Denmark, aged 11 years. Many children were crying for bread and the camp generally were destitute of food. A beef heifer was killed for the camp. Capt. Willie, Capt. Grant, W. H. Kimball & others with 14 wagons with horse & mule teams arrived in camp with flour, onions & some clothing for the camp, this made the Saints feel well.

Deaths: John Linford, age 49
Richard Hardwick, age 63
Mary Ann Perkins, age 62
Sophia Larsen, age 11

The relief wagons left very early in the morning to travel the roughly 25 miles that separated them from the Willie Company. They brought with them 14 wagons containing flour, onions, and some clothing. Onions were the first fresh vegetables that the Saints had to eat since Florence.

The arrival of people from the Salt Lake Valley to provide aid was foreseen by one young man. George Cunningham, age 16, wrote that he had a dream. In the dream "a number of wagons loaded with provisions were soon to meet us." His mother confirmed

that he had been promised this visionary gift in a blessing. He was in the lead when the wagons came over the hill.³

Lucy Ward, age 23, traveled with a handcart of young women. She had a fur hat, which she habitually tied on with a green scarf. James Barnett Cole, age 28, one of the young rescuers, had a dream in which he saw his future wife. She was beautiful and had a fur cap held on by a green veil. He shared his dream with William H. Kimball. As the rescuers rode into camp, William H. Kimball spotted a beautiful woman with a fur cap held on by a green veil. He told his friend, "There is your dream girl." Lucy and James were married by November 2, within two weeks of meeting each other, and stayed that winter together at Fort Supply in the Fort Bridger area while Lucy regained her health.⁴

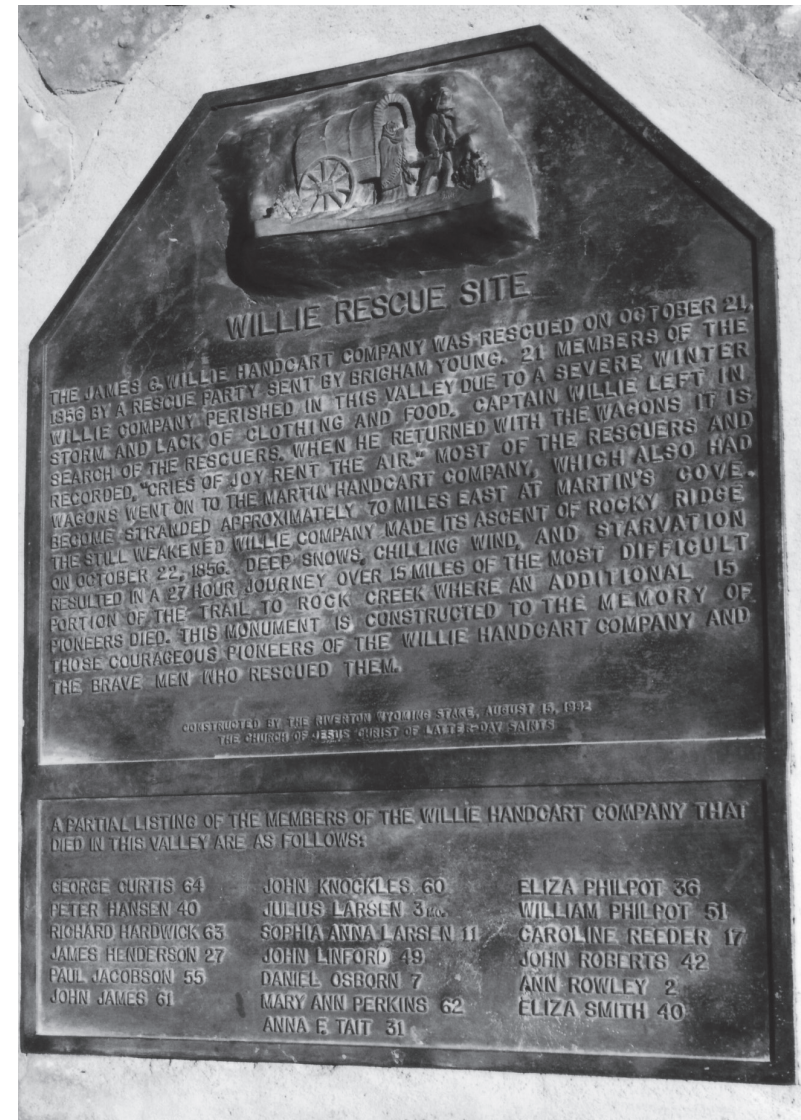
Wednesday, October 22

6:37 a.m.–5:22 p.m.

Camp rolled out. W. H. Kimball & others with 6 wagons went on to the Valley with us. G.D. Grant & others went on towards "Independence Rock" to meet Martin's Handcart Company. Travelled 11 miles & camped on the Sweetwater. Roads good considering the snow on the ground. Eliza Philpot from Southampton, Hampshire, England, died, aged 36; also John James from Whitbourne, Herefordshire, England, aged 61.

Deaths: Eliza Philpot, age 36
John James, age 61

Although the ground was still snow-covered, the company moved on to the base of Rocky Ridge. They had some supplies, but they needed to keep moving if they hoped to get safely into the Salt Lake Valley. Eight of the 14 rescue wagons had gone east to find the other struggling handcart company. Six of the rescue wagons remained with the Willie Company. William H. Kimball helped take charge of the effort. This was the same William H. Kimball who, as a returning missionary, had helped with preparations in Iowa City. He had traveled with President Franklin D.



Lower Monument on Rocky Ridge.

Richards to Salt Lake City, then immediately left to help with the rescue of the Willie Company. After he saw to it that these Saints were safely in the valley on November 9, he left again to provide aid to the Martin Handcart Company. He was with them when they arrived on November 30.

The company stayed fairly close to the Sweetwater River on relatively level ground, but two people still died. William Philpot had died five days earlier. Now his wife, Eliza Philpot, died at the foot of Rocky Ridge. They left two young girls, Julia, age 13, and Martha Eliza, age 11, as orphans on the high plains of central Wyoming.

With snow on the ground, the Saints encountered a new problem. When they went to sleep, it was on frozen, snowy, or wet ground. They each slept, wrapped only in a blanket or a quilt laid directly on the ground. Levi Savage recorded, "The Saints were obliged to spread their light bedding on the snow, and in this cold state endeavored to obtain a little rest." Caroline Newman, age 7, recalled her mother heating rocks to keep the children warm at night.⁵ In this state of near exhaustion from lack of restful sleep and lack of food, they still had to face the single biggest remaining obstacle in their path, Rocky Ridge.

Thursday, October 23

6:39 a.m.–5:21 p.m.

Ascended a steep hill, travelled about 16 miles & camped on the Sweetwater. Crossed several creeks on the road, several men were near frozen thro the day; two teams loaded with sick did not get to camp till very late. James Gibbs from Leith, East Lothian, Scotland, aged 67 died; also Chesterton J. Gilman from Yarmouth, Suffolk, England, aged 66 years died.

Deaths: James Gibbs, age 67
Chesterton J. Gilman, age 66

The company journal tersely reported that they ascended a steep hill, traveled 16 miles, and camped. It recorded the cold and that two wagons with the sick did not get in until "very late." They camped not on the main Sweetwater River, but on its primary tributary, now known as Rock Creek. Rock Creek was then called "branch of the Sweetwater"⁶ or "North Fork of the Sweetwater."⁷ From the descriptions of Levi Savage and John Chislett of the creek and the incident where the "late" wagons stalled, the greater weight of the

Thursday, October 23

There is a monument to the Willie Company one mile up Rocky Ridge hill. It is called Lower Monument. Another monument at the top of Rocky Ridge is called Upper Monument. The actual trail can be walked from the Lower Monument to Rock Creek Hollow. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on Rocky Ridge because of its terrain and the damage they do to the steep trail.

The trail over Rocky Ridge and on to Rock Creek Hollow can be accessed from the Lower Monument. To get to the Lower Monument, travel on US Highway 287 just over five miles from the Sweetwater River Bridge, near the Church's Sixth Crossing Visitors' Center, to Hudson Atlantic City

evidence is that the Willie Company camped at Rock Creek. This day turned out to be the most tragic day of their entire journey.

Levi Savage's record drew a more detailed picture. It was a "severe" day. The climb up "the Rocky Ridge" was long. The wind was blowing snow in their faces. It was steep and snow-covered. People became exhausted from the strain of the hike and the weather. Two of the wagons, full of the sick and children, were so loaded down that they did not arrive until dawn on October 24. At 10 or 11 p.m., the teams pulling these two wagons refused to cross a stream, Strawberry Creek, due to the ice and cold. Levi Savage was with those wagons when the animals balked, and as a result he walked four miles to the camp at Rock Creek for help. At the campsite, he found the exhausted Saints with few tents pitched. The people were spent and were huddling around small fires. Many hours later



Upper Monument on Rocky Ridge.

Road. Turn left onto Hudson Atlantic City Road and travel west on this gravel road for about 11 miles to a small sign identifying Sage Camp. (Note: This road is often in need of maintenance. If it is in poor shape at the start, it does not get better. Water and restrooms can be found at Sage Camp.) Turn left onto the Sage Camp two-track road and travel two miles to the Lower Monument. It is at GPS N 42 28.257' W 108 24.578'. Hike up the trail for two miles to see the Upper Monument. It is at GPS N 42 27.760' W 108 26.225'. Strawberry Creek crosses the trail about four miles from Rock Creek Hollow. It is at GPS N 42 26.014' W 108 32.597'. The road from the Strawberry Creek crossing to Rock Creek Hollow is a county-maintained, graded road.

To get to Rock Creek Hollow from Sage Camp, return to Hudson Atlantic City Road, turn left, and travel west. After nine miles there is a sign for Rock Creek. This road is a substantial shortcut to Rock Creek Hollow, but its conditions can be questionable. The shortcut is a two-mile-long, two-track road. It begins with about one hundred yards of potentially muddy road near the Strawberry Creek Bridge. Once the bridge is crossed, the road is no worse than the two-track road to Lower Monument. To take an alternative route to Rock Creek Hollow, follow Hudson Atlantic City Road for eight more miles to a T intersection. Turn left at the T and drive west for about 2.5 miles to Atlantic City, Wyoming. In Atlantic City, follow the signs to Rock Creek Hollow.

the two wagons carrying the sick and the children pulled into camp. These latecomers came to camp in the dark, since moonrise was at 2:25 a.m., with only a quarter of the moon visible.

The trail from the Sweetwater River to the top of Rocky Ridge is just over three miles long and has a rise in elevation of more than 750 feet for roughly a 5 percent grade. However, it is not a consistently rising grade. Instead, it has several steep portions and one portion where it actually drops in elevation for some distance before turning uphill again. It is hard to find a day that the wind does not blow on Rocky Ridge. The wind was blowing snow down the hill and into their faces as the Saints trudged up toward the ridge top and then onward for miles. Wind chill was a real factor fighting against them. The actual temperature on October 23 is not known, but it was certainly less than 32°F. One clue as to how cold it was on October 23 comes from the record of the Abraham O. Smoot wagon train, which arrived at Fort Bridger on October 23. It reads in part, "it snowed hard on 19th, 20th, all day & it was very cold, thermometer down to zero part of the time, left our camp at 11 a.m. on Thursday 23rd & reached Fort Bridger."⁸

If the temperature during the trek were 30°, with a 30-mile-per-hour wind, then it would have felt like 15°. However, if the temperature were 10°, with a 30-mile-per-hour wind, then it would have felt like -12°. At this lower temperature and wind speed, frostbite could occur in a little more than 30 minutes. Many of the people were on the trail for hours, with a few coming in well after dark. It is easy to imagine that the temperature was less than 10° by the time everyone arrived at camp.

One of the greatest personal sacrifices that day came from James Kirkwood, age 11. James's mother and older brother had to pull their handcart carrying James's disabled brother over Rocky Ridge. James was left in charge of his younger brother, Joseph, age 4. The two young boys faced the long climb up and over Rocky Ridge and on into the Rock Creek camp together. Their shoes were worn and they were definitely cold. Although no one will ever know with certainty what happened, James likely carried his brother for many of the miles. When James arrived in camp, James set his brother down and died of exhaustion.⁹

To avoid Hudson Atlantic City Road, from the Sweetwater River Bridge travel on US Highway 287 toward Lander until it intersects State Road 28 about nine miles outside of Lander. Turn left onto State Road 28 and travel south for about 22 miles toward Farson, Wyoming. Turn left at the sign for Rock Creek Hollow and follow the signs to Rock Creek Hollow. There is a well-maintained gravel road to Rock Creek Hollow.

Friday, October 24

6:40 a.m.–5:19 p.m.

Reddin N. Allred & others with 6 wagons came to camp this morning to assist the Handcart Company on our journey to the Valley. It was concluded to stay in camp today & bury the dead as there were 13 persons to inter. William James, from Pershore, Worcestershire, England, aged 46 died; Elizabeth Bailey, from Leigh, Worcestershire, England, aged 52 died; James Kirkwood from Glasgow, Scotland, aged 11 died; Samuel Gadd, from Orwell, Cambridgeshire, England, aged 10 died; Lars Wendin, form Copenhagen, Denmark, aged 60 died; Anne Olsen, from Seeland, Denmark, aged 46 died; Ella Nilson, from Jutland, Denmark, aged 22 years, died; Jens Nilson, from Lolland, Denmark, aged 6 years died; Bodil Mortinsen from Lolland, Denmark, aged 9 years, died; Nils Anderson from Seeland, Denmark, aged 41 years died; Ole Madsen from Seeland, Denmark, aged 41 years died; Many of the Saints have their feet & hands frozen from the severity of the weather.

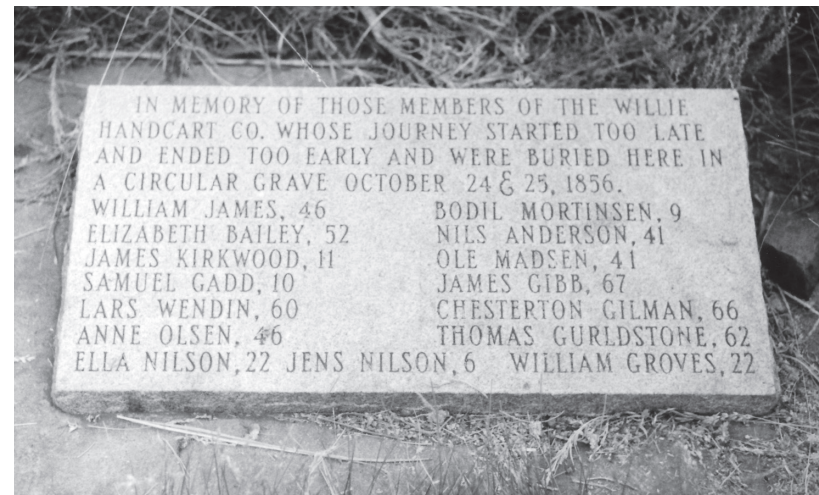
Deaths: William James, age 46
 Elizabeth Bailey, age 52
 James Kirkwood, age 11
 Samuel Gadd, age 10
 Lars Wendin, age 60
 Anne Olsen, age 46
 Ella Nilson, age 22
 Jens Nilson, age 6
 Bodil Mortensen, age 9
 Nils Anderson, age 41
 Ole Madsen, age 41

The weather remained severe. Levi Savage described “the severe wind which blew enough to pierce us through.” Eleven more people had died since the base of Rocky Ridge. The day was spent resting and burying the 13 who had died on October 23 and 24 in a mass grave.

Sadly, the two youngest Saints were part of the Nielson (or Nilson) family. Jens Nielson, age 35, who was believed to be a large man, and his wife, Elsie Rasmussen Nielson, age 26 and under five feet in height, had

Friday, October 24

The Rock Creek Hollow mass gravesite is at GPS N 42 26.324' W 108 37.397', which is inside of the fenced-in area. (Restrooms and water are available at this site.)



Headstone at Rock Creek Hollow.

earlier given up their considerable means to allow others to travel by handcart. As Jens and Elsie crossed Rocky Ridge, his feet became so frozen they were useless. He could not walk any more and his feet would never completely heal. When Elsie was faced with the choice of staying with him or leaving him to die, she chose to load him in their handcart and pull him to camp. He survived Rocky Ridge. Their son, Jens, age 6, and the young girl they had traveling with them, Bodil Mortensen, age 9, could not take the horrible strain and did not survive. Elsie hauled her husband in their handcart until there was room for him in a wagon at Fort Bridger.¹⁰

One close call with death involved John Stewart Sr., age 31. He was placed with the frozen corpses for burial in the mass grave. While he was there his grief-stricken wife, Ann Stewart, age 29, noticed that he was still breathing. Fortunately, the error was discovered and he was carried to a fire and revived, thus avoiding a premature death.¹¹

Saturday, October 25

6:41 a.m.–5:18 p.m.

Rolled from camp in the morning. Thomas Gurdlestone from Great Melton, Norwich, aged 62 years died. William Groves, from Cranmoor, Somersetshire, England, aged 22 years died; Crossed the Sweetwater for the last time. Travelled about 15 miles & camped on the Sweetwater. Some brethren were stationed at this post on the river with supplies of flour & onions. John Walters from Bristol, Somerset, England, aged died; William Smith from Eldersfield, Worcestershire, England, aged 48 years died.

Deaths: Thomas Gurdlestone, age 62
 William Groves, age 22
 John Walters, age 64
 William Smith, age 48

After the rest day, the company moved on its way. But before they left the Rock Creek crossing area two more men died. Thomas Gurdlestone and William Groves were buried near where the 13 had been buried.

In the midst of death and tragedy, people did what they had to do to stay alive. At some point along the trek, as people were passing away due to exhaustion, Mettie Kerstena Mortensen, age 11, took a crust of bread from a dead woman's pocket. Although

it was surely a justifiable act of survival, she reported that she felt bad about her theft for the rest of her life.¹²

Levi Savage quit writing daily journal entries at this point. In summary he wrote, “nothing of much note transpired, except the people died daily.” He then left the sole source of a daily report to William Woodward and his entries in the company journal. It appears that many of the Saints were in a dazed relief. They knew they had been rescued, but were too worn out to function well.

Sunday, October 26

6:42 a.m.–5:17 p.m.

Morning fine & pleasant. Samuel Witt from Bristol, Somerset, England, aged years died; Mary Roberts from Eldersfield, Worcestershire, England, aged 44 years died. The camp rolled on, crossed the “South Pass” & Pacific Creek; travelled down Pacific creek & camped after travelling about 14 miles. Good place to camp for sagewood.

Deaths: Samuel Witt, age 65
 Mary Roberts, age 44

Crossing South Pass was a gradual affair. They went up a slight incline and then, almost imperceptibly, they started a decline. Pacific Creek was really only a spring that flowed a short distance to the west and then dried up. The Saints camped on the creek before the spot where it dried up.

Monday, October 27

6:44 a.m.–5:16 p.m.

Rolled out of camp, roads good, crossed Dry Sandy Creek, passed the Oregon Road, crossed Little Sandy & camped on its banks. Travelled about 18 miles. The health of the camp improves slowly.

Sunday, October 26

To continue following the company’s trail, return to State Road 28, turn left, and go south toward Farson. South Pass and Pacific Springs are visible from State Road 28. There is a BLM interpretive site about 5.5 miles from the Sweetwater River Rest Area on State Road 28. It has markers that identify where South Pass and Pacific Springs are. The trail from Pacific Springs to the Green River crossing is fairly flat and generally parallels State Road 28. The United States Geological Survey maps that show the handcart company trail do not show that State Road 28 continues southwest after Farson. The road was put in after the last update of the USGS map. State Road 28 intersects State Road 372 twenty-eight miles beyond Farson. Turn left and drive south on State Road 372 at the intersection with State Road 28. Drive to the intersection with I-80. Drive west on I-80 to the Lyman and Fort Bridger areas.

Finally, the company had a day without deaths. Eliza Chapman Gadd, age 40, had gone snow blind on October 23 in the blizzard over Rocky Ridge. Her daughter, Mary Ann, age 7, was her trusted guide until her sight returned. At last Eliza could see again. She and her husband, along with their eight living children, had started for Zion together. On October 4, their 2-year-old twin son, Daniel, had died. Five days later, on October 9, her husband, Samuel, age 42, died. Finally, her 10-year-old son, Samuel, died and was buried at Rock Creek with the dozen others. Amazingly, she was not even a member of the Church. However, these experiences stirred her soul so much that after arriving in Salt Lake City and before the end of the year, she was baptized.¹³

Tuesday, October 28

6:45 a.m.–5:15 p.m.

Travelled about 8 miles, crossed Big Sandy creek, travelled down its banks about 3 miles & camped. Weather fine. Saints improving in health.

Within one week of the relief wagons finding the Willie Company, things had drastically improved. No one died for two days. The company journal entry was very brief. It reflected the positive attitude that surely prevailed.

Wednesday, October 29

6:46 a.m.–5:14 p.m.

Anders Jensen, from Copenhagen, Denmark, aged 49 years died this morning. Rolled from camp & travelled about 15 miles. Camped on Big Sandy after crossing it. Kersten Knutesen, from Seeland, Denmark, aged years died in the evening.

Deaths: Anders Jensen, age 49
 Kersten Knutesen, age 60

As is the usual course in late October several days of good weather were followed by several days of bad weather. There was no mention of the weather on October 29 and 30, but deaths revisited the company. The weather had probably gone bad. There were only about 10½ hours of sunlight each day, which made the travel day quite short.

Thursday, October 30

6:46 a.m.–5:13 p.m.

Rolled from Big Sandy to Green River, 11 miles, forded the river and camped on its banks. Many persons were sick & it was late before they were in camp. Bros. Atwood,

Woodward & Christiansen staid behind the main body of the camp to urge on the sick & see that none were left behind. Mary Gurdlestone, from Great Melton, Norfolk, England, aged 59 years died in the morning. Joseph Oborn from Bath, Somersetshire, England, aged 43 years died in the evening. A large fire was kindled in the evening, a meeting was held & several of the Brethren addressed the audience.

Deaths: Mary Gurdlestone, age 59
Joseph Oborn, age 43

The Green River was a challenge to cross at any time of the year. There was no ferry operating this late in the season, so they had to ford the river. They appear to have forded the river near where the Robinson Ferry was. That was about six miles south of the Lombard and Mormon Ferries. The sick obviously had a difficult time crossing, but the rescuers saw to it that no one was left behind. Mary Gurdlestone, age 59, died, just days after her husband was buried at Rock Creek. They left behind a 21-year-old daughter, Emma.

Robert Smith had left his mother and five siblings in Scotland and traveled to Salt Lake in 1854. He settled in Lehi. When he learned that his family was traveling to Utah in one of the troubled handcart companies, he joined in the rescue. Elizabeth Smith, his 13-year-old sister, was encouraging their 6-year-old brother, Alexander, to keep walking as they neared the Green River. Elizabeth related that Alexander had expressed his strong wish to see their brother, Robert, as they approached a creek bank. Just then Robert appeared in his ox-driven wagon. Robert rejoiced to see them and asked where their mother and sister were. His mother, Marjorie McEwan Bain Smith, age 51, and his younger sister, Mary, age 15, had sat down exhausted. It was just at that low point that Robert came running to them. He loaded them in his wagon and brought them with the rest of the company to the Salt Lake Valley. Once there he took them to his home in Lehi.¹⁴

Friday, October 31

6:48 a.m.–5:12 p.m.

Left Green River, met with wagons from Fort Supply, & the Valley to assist us on our journey; 7 wagons were from the former place & 3 from the latter. Crossed Hams Fork & camped on its banks; travelled 18 miles. Bro. Savage with the ox & cow teams did not get to camp this evening.

With every additional wagon that joined them, more Saints were able to ride. John Chislett reported that everyone in his company rode in a wagon from Fort Bridger.¹⁵ However, some of the Saints pulled handcarts all the way into the Salt Lake Valley. With 10 additional wagons meeting them during the day, the Saints' spirits must have been improving.

Saturday, November 1

6:49 a.m.–5:11 p.m.

Rolled out of camp, met several teams to assist our company on to the Valley. Drove 15 miles and camped. Daniel Osborn, from Norwich, Norfolk, England, aged 35 years died in the evening. A snow storm came on after we camped but did not last long.

Death: Daniel Osborn, age 35

The trail passed Church Buttes and then followed the Blacks Fork River into Fort Bridger. The weather continued to remind them of the urgency to arrive in the Salt Lake Valley. Susannah Stone, age 25, had had a suitor in the company, but he had died along the way. She had sold her mirror to the Indians for buffalo meat, so she had been unable to see her weather-beaten condition. As they neared Salt Lake City, she borrowed a mirror and got a look at herself. She reported that she looked so bad that her friends did not know her. However, a friend, Thomas Lloyd, who had immigrated a year earlier, looked at her and married her soon after she arrived in Salt Lake City.¹⁶

Sunday, November 2

6:49 a.m.–5:10 p.m.

Camp rolled out. Ephraim Hanks passed our camp this morning, bringing news from the Valley of many teams being on the road, & that he was going on to the rear companies to meet them. Bros. Willie, Woodward, & Christiansen staid behind to bring up the sick. This morning we had not teams enough to haul the feeble that were left behind. After a short time several teams came on from the Valley & picked up the sick. The brethren that staid behind were late into camp. The company camped about half a mile west of Fort Bridger, traveled about 15 miles. James Cole of Fort Supply married Lucy Ward of the 4th Handcart Company at Fort Bridger in the evening. Bro. Willie's feet were in such a bad condition from frost that he was unable to walk to the Camp;

Sunday, November 2

Fort Bridger has been restored by the state of Wyoming. The restoration covers the mountain man, Mormon, and military periods. Leave I-80 at any of the Lyman, Wyoming, exits and follow the signs to get to Fort Bridger. It is well marked and worth a visit. The actual site of the original fort is behind the museum. To see the archeological dig site, go behind the museum.

a wagon was sent for him. Peter Madsen, from Jutland, Denmark, aged 49 years died in the evening.

Marriage: James Barnett Cole to Lucy Ward

Death: Peter Madsen, age 49

This entry noted that President Willie and two other men stayed behind to help the sick. There appears to have been trouble getting everyone into a wagon. Through all they had experienced, President Willie kept leading and helping his company, although frostbite was taking its toll on him and he was having a difficult time walking. Some of the Saints were not as blessed as Lucy Ward Cole. The Peter Madsen who died was different from the Peder Madsen who so faithfully kept a daily journal until September 8.

Ephraim Hanks, age 29, passed the Willie Company as they neared Fort Bridger. Hanks eventually reached the Martin Handcart Company on November 11. His miraculous finding of buffalo for meat and his healing powers are both great stories in the Martin Handcart Company history.

As mentioned on October 21, James Barnett Cole married the girl he saw in a dream, Lucy Ward, and they remained for the winter in the Fort Bridger area. James Cole appeared to have connections to Fort Supply, which was about 12 miles south of Fort Bridger. It was established by the Mormons in 1853, two years before the Mormons signed a deed to purchase Fort Bridger from Jim Bridger and his partner, Louis Vasquez. Lucy Ward Cole was able to regain her health and together the couple came to the Salt Lake Valley in spring 1857. These forts were burned by the Mormons later in 1857, in an effort to slow the progress of the United States Army as it headed to the Utah Territory to quell the rumored, but nonexistent, Mormon rebellion.

Monday, November 3

6:50 a.m.–5:09 p.m.

Several wagons came into our camp from the Valley to assist us on our journey this morning. We rolled out of camp about 11 a.m., passed Gilbert & Gerrish's merchant train going on slowly to the Valley. Crossed the "Basin Rim", forded Muddy Creek & camped on its banks. Some 10 (ten) ox teams with wagons were camped alongside us & were on their way to meet the rear companies. A meeting was held in the evening, the brethren from the Valley attended. It was considered advisable to send on

Monday, November 3

To see the Muddy Creek campground, which is well marked but on private property, return to I-80. Take Exit 24 off of I-80 and travel south, east, and then south on County Road 173, which is a gravel road that runs toward the ghost town of Piedmont. After about 1.5 miles there is a four-way intersection; drive straight through it. The

an express to the Valley & report the condition of things in the mountains in regard to the companies on the plains. W.H. Kimball said he would go as the express & he appointed Bro. Gould captain of the horse-teams & Bro. Wm. Hyde, captains of the ox-teams; traveled about 12 miles. Night cold.

“Gilbert & Gerrish” was the name of a prominent non-Mormon merchant company in Salt Lake City. The Saints passed the business’s wagon train before either group got to the basin rim. The basin rim was the name they used for a steep, gravel downgrade about 10 miles west of Fort Bridger. After the steep hill, it was a straight shot to the Muddy Creek campground and up Aspen Mountain.

At this point the relief effort was in full swing. However, word needed to be sent to Salt Lake City of the successful rescue of the Willie Company, so Brigham Young and the Church leaders could prepare for the nearly 350 surviving Saints who would arrive in less than a week. Many had frozen limbs. They had few clothes and little food. Their condition was desperate, but improving.

campground was about another 1.5 miles south in the trees on the west side of the road. There is a marker near the road, just past the trees. The main trail out of Muddy Creek runs southwest directly toward Aspen Mountain. This portion of the trail was not easy because it rises from the valley floor almost to the top of Aspen Mountain. County Road 173 is a well-graveled, improved road that follows an old railroad grade through Piedmont. It intersects State Road 150 just after Sulphur Creek Reservoir. At the intersection with State Road 150, turn right and travel north toward Evanston, Wyoming, and I-80. About two miles north of this intersection is a bridge over the Bear River. Near this bridge was the Bear River crossing and the Saints’ camp on November 4. The next section of the trail cannot be followed. Drive north on State Road 150 to Evanston and rejoin I-80 traveling toward Salt Lake City, Utah, down Echo Canyon.

To avoid this road past Muddy Creek, stay on I-80 and drive toward Evanston and down Echo Canyon.

Tuesday, November 4

6:52 a.m.–5:08 p.m.

W. H. Kimball & Bro. Thomas went on to the Valley this morning. Camp rolled on to Bear River, forded the stream and camped on its banks. Bro. Blair with 3 ox wagons was camped on the opposite bank of the river. Met several teams during the day going to relieve the rear companies. Potatoes, onions & clothing was distributed among the different Hundreds in the evening. Franklin B. Woolley came on from A. O. Smoot’s train informing the company that President B. Young had sent word that some freight still lying at “Fort Bridger” was to be brought in this season & that some teams and

men of our company were needed to go on to “Bridger”. Several teams & men were selected for the trip.

The rescue wagons continued to come from the Salt Lake Valley. Potatoes were mentioned for the first time in the rescue portion of the journal. Clothing was distributed. The Abraham O. Smoot wagon train that had been on the opposite side of the Platte River on September 5 was near them again. The Willie Company had followed this slow-moving train since the center of Nebraska.

Wednesday, November 5

6:52 a.m.–5:07 p.m.

Rolled on in the morning & crossed Yellow Creek, ascended a steep hill & then go down Echo Canyon & camped; travelled about 23 miles & camped. Peter Madsen, from Copenhagen, Denmark, aged 66 years died during the day; Susannah Osborn from Norwich, Norfolk, England, aged 33 years died this day. A snow storm came on this evening. The people are much exposed to cold from lying on the cold ground.

Deaths: Peder Madsen, age 66
Susannah Osborn, age 33

When the company reached Echo Canyon, travel was downhill. The anticipation of the journey’s end must have been building. However, it was snowing again and the people still had to sleep on the cold, wet ground with only a blanket or a quilt wrapped around them. Depredation from the cold again took its toll.

For two families, their sacrifice was not quite complete. Peder Madsen, the Danish journal keeper, died. He had traveled with his adult daughter, Petrea. The family of Susannah Osborn, age 33, who also died, had already suffered two devastating deaths. On the day of the snowstorm, October 19, her son Daniel, age 7, had died. A week and a half later, on November 1, her husband, Daniel Sr., age 35, also died. Her death tragically left their three daughters, Susannah, age 11; Sarah Ann, age 4; and Martha Ann, age 2, as orphans. These three girls had no shoes and were unable even to walk across a room without difficulty due to their frostbite. When they reached Salt Lake City, they were taken in and raised by Bishop Silas Richards.¹⁷

Thursday, November 6

6:53 a.m.–5:06 p.m.

Archibald McPhiel, from Greenock, Argyleshire, Scotland, died about 2 a.m. aged 40 years. Much snow on the ground this morning & still more falling. Go down Echo Canyon, roads very bad at the crossing of streams; forded Weber River & camped on its banks. It snowed most of the day. The camping ground presented a most dismal appearance, as we rolled on to it there being much snow on the ground & it being late at night.

Rasmus P. Hansen, from Lan Denmark, aged 16 years, died this evening.

Deaths: Archibald McPhail, age 40
 Rasmus P. Hansen, age 16

“Cold” was noted on November 3 and 5. After mentioning a snowstorm coming on the evening of November 5, the record for November 6 reported that “it snowed most of the day,” which caused people to start dying again.

Archibald McPhail, like many unsung heroes, died simply doing his duty. He had been responsible for the 20 people assigned to his tent. On the evening of November 5 he noticed that one of two women who often lagged behind was missing. He went back along the trail and found her. She was on the opposite side of a creek. She refused to cross, saying she was going to die anyway and saw no need to cross only to die. He crossed over the creek on the frozen ice, picked her up, and started back across the ice. The additional weight of the woman caused the ice to break through and he was soaked up to his waist. He guided her into camp with his clothes frozen to his waist and legs. As the snowstorm raged, he went to bed on the snowy, cold ground wearing his frozen clothes. His wife used a handcart for a tent that night. Due to the wind, their handcart tent blew over three times. He died, with his wife holding him, never having gotten warm after rescuing his unnamed charge.¹⁸ Archibald McPhail left a wife and children ages 3, 4, and 15. With the death of Rasmus P. Hansen, Anna Hansen, age 40, his mother, was now alone. She had lost her husband on October 19.

Echo Creek meandered back and forth across the canyon floor in 1856. The main trail crossed Echo Creek over a dozen times. In the heavy snow, the river crossings would have been even more difficult than usual. The journal confirmed that the road was particularly bad at the river crossings. The journal writer commented even more harshly on the campground. It was on the west side of the Weber River in the river bottom. It was late at night

Thursday, November 6

The trail down Echo Canyon runs parallel to I-80 and then at Echo, it follows I-84 toward Ogden, Utah.

when they stopped and it had snowed all day. The snow-covered grass must have been particularly difficult to sleep on with their thin bedding.

Friday, November 7

6:54 a.m.–5:05 p.m.

The camp rolled on, crossed a steep hill & came into East Canyon; crossed East Canyon Creek several times & camped in a cottonwood grove; good place to camp for wood. Maria S. Jorgen from Lango, Denmark, aged 8 years died; Theophilus Cox, from Bristol, Somersetshire, England, aged 25 years died; William Empey from Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire, England, aged 9 years died. During the day we passed some teams going to relieve the rear companies.

Deaths: Maria S. Jorgen, age 8
Theophilus Cox, age 25
William Empey, age 9

The river crossing and the camp were just outside of present-day Henefer, Utah. At that point the trail turned uphill. They climbed a little more than five miles and reached the Hogsback Summit. Then they started downhill into Dixie Hollow. From the Hogsback Summit, they could see the mountains that they still had to cross to get to Salt Lake City. It was certainly disheartening to reach that summit and see endless, high mountains in all directions. They traveled on down Dixie Hollow, which included another steep, but short, uphill climb, just before entering East Canyon. Finally, they headed up East Canyon Creek to an often-used campground in a cottonwood grove, just past the south end of the present-day East Canyon Reservoir.

The cold weather continued to reap its harvest of death. The snow and the cold were unrelenting. For the first time since the Rock Creek crossing, two children under age 10 died. Surely these small children would have been riding in wagons, somewhat protected from the weather. Even though they were almost to the Salt Lake Valley, the Saints continued to pay a harsh price.

Saturday, November 8

6:55 a.m.–5:04 p.m.

Travelled up the Canyon about 3 miles, & then ascended the Big Mountain, which was difficult for teams to gain the top; go down the mountain & camp about a mile from

Friday, November 7

To follow the Saints' path, take Exit 115 off of I-84 and into Henefer, Utah. In Henefer, travel south on State Road 65 past East Canyon Reservoir and on toward Mountain Dell.

Saturday, November 8

The trail up Big Mountain can be hiked. There is roughly a 1,400-foot rise in elevation to the

the Little Mountain. Bro. Blair left us early this morning for the Valley. We travelled about 13 miles during the day. W. H. Kimball came to camp this evening; also, a load of provisions for the camp. W. H. Kimball & W. Woodward took an account of persons who had made engagements where they were going to stay in the mountains.

The trail up East Canyon Creek crossed the creek more than a dozen times. The Saints then turned west and with great difficulty made it over Big Mountain. The descent down the mountain into Mountain Dell Canyon was extremely steep. It would have been even harder in the snow. William H. Kimball, who had gone on ahead to Salt Lake City on November 4 to make arrangements to care for the Saints, returned. He and William Woodward checked the "engagements" that were made. They were guaranteeing that every one would have a place to go once they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley.

Sunday, November 9

6:56 a.m.–5:03 p.m.

Early this morning. The people were busy preparing to enter the Valley. Rhoda R. Oakey from Eldersfield, Worcestershire, England, aged 11 years died this morning. The teams after some difficulty ascended the Little Mountain & rolled down Emigration Canyon. Several of the wagons passed Captain Smoot's Church train in the Canyon. The wagons formed in order on the bench at the mouth of the Canyon & rolled on to the City. Captain Smoot's train went ahead, F.D. Richards, S. W. Richards & many others came to meet us on the Bench & went ahead of us into the City. As soon as the company arrived in the city of Great Salt Lake, the Bishops of the different wards took every person that was not provided for a home & put them into comfortable quarters. Hundreds of persons were round the wagons on our way thro' the city welcoming the company safely home.

Death: Rhoda R. Oakey, age 11

Sadly, Rhoda R. Oakey, age 11, died as everyone prepared to go into Salt Lake City. Her mother, Ann Collett Oakey, age 43, had stayed up all night nursing her father, Thomas Oakey, age 42. When Ann called the children she discovered Rhoda's lifeless body. Rhoda had walked the entire distance, only to die one hill away from their destination.¹⁹ Rhoda's death was the 40th since October 20. She was the final Willie Handcart Company death.

summit of Big Mountain. Over the roughly 4.5 mile trail, there is about a 6 percent grade. To reach the trailhead from State Road 65, turn left onto a gravel road at the sign for Big Mountain about one mile from the south end of East Canyon Reservoir. Follow the gravel road for a little more than three miles to the start of the trail. The trailhead is well marked. State Road 65 travels over Big Mountain and down into the bottom of Mountain Dell Canyon, which is at the base of Little Mountain.

Sunday, November 9

The road into Emigration Canyon is well marked and turns off to the right at Mountain Dell Reservoir. Follow it over the mountain and down into Emigration Canyon, which road comes out between Hogle Zoo and This Is The Place Heritage Park. There is a monument to the handcart pioneers in the park near its visitors' center.

The bishops in the Salt Lake Valley were ready to receive the Saints. Hundreds of people came out to welcome the company. Margaret Dalglish, age 29, saw to it that she had a fresh start in Salt Lake City. With the valley in sight, she took out what was left of her 17 pounds of provisions and pushed her handcart off the road and down the canyon ravine. All that she owned in the world was in her arms as she entered the valley.²⁰

William Woodward, who wrote the Emigrating Company Journal entries from October 1 until November 9, included the following "Appendix."

Appendix

After the loss of many of our oxen, west of Fort Kearney, we hunted for them some four days & then sent two young men back on the road towards Missouri River to see if they could find them. As our oxen were gone & we still had some cows, we yoked many of them up, lighted the loads that were in the wagons by putting some 6000 lbs. of flour on our handcarts & rolled on towards the Valley. Bro. F. D. Richards & company, & the two young men we sent to hunt our cattle overtook us at North Bluff Fork of the Platte, but brought us no information of our cattle.

After we left Fort Laramie we reduced the rations of the camp with regard to flour. Instead of men & women & children over 6 years of age receiving one pound of flour daily, in a public meeting, the camp agreed to submit to what the officers of the company considered for their preservation as our supplies were running out, & Capt. Willie had the assurance from Bro. F.D. Richards that supplies should be on hand at



Statue depicting handcart pioneers praying, This Is The Place Heritage Park.

“Pacific Springs”; Our object in reducing the rations was to make them hold out till we should arrive at the point mentioned. Captain Willie drew up a scale, flour was issued accordingly—men were to have 14 ozs. per day, women 12 ozs. per day, children 9 ozs. per day, & infants 4 ozs. per day. This took place some few miles west of Laramie. The emigrants having to cross the North Fork of the Platte 3 times after we left Laramie, thro’ cold water & having again to reduce our rations of flour at Independence Rock, men to receive 10½ ozs., women 9 ozs., children 6 ozs., & infants 3 ozs. of flour daily, & having to cross the Sweetwater River several times, also to sleep on the cold ground with very little bedding, as only 17 lbs. of luggage was allowed to each individual, many of the people failed in strength & many of the aged died exhausted. The diarrhea took hold of many which greatly weakened our camp, our wagons were crowded with sick which broke down our teams & we had to refuse many who were worthy to ride.

C. H. Wheelock & Joseph A. Young with two other brethren met us a short distance west of “Ice Springs” & brought us the cheering intelligence that assistance was near at hand; that several wagons loaded with flour, onions, & clothing, including bedding was within a day’s drive of us. That same night we issued all provisions to the camp, which was hard bread that was bought at Laramie (the last of our flour being issued the night before) left us about destitute of provisions for the camp. In the morning we found the ground covered with snow some 4 or 5 inches deep. Bro. Willie & Joseph Elder started in search of the “Relief Train” as we could not move our camp & they did not arrive back again till the following evening, when the “Relief Train” under the charge of George D. Grant came to our camp. Flour & onions were issued that same evening, clothing, bedding, &c. were given to the camp the next morning. Nine persons were buried at that camping ground. Snow was on the ground & looked dismal. W.H.Kimball and others with 6 wagons went with us to the Valley. G. D. Grant & others went on their way to meet the rear handcart companies. Crossing the Rocky ridge was a severe & disastrous day to health. The weather was cold & it snowed & blowed some of the time making it bad for the sick who rode in the wagons & for those who pulled the handcarts. The next day we buried 13 souls near Willow Creek on the banks of the Sweetwater. From that time till we entered the Valley many died. They were the old, the infirm, & the debilitated. Oftentimes the snow had to be cleared from the ground that the tents might be set & the people have a place to sleep.

The provisions were given out every night & often it was from 10 to 12 p.m. before all the camp could retire to rest. Help, in the shape of wagons & provisions continued to reach us till we arrived in G. S .L. City. The number of persons that died belonging to the handcart Company was 67 souls & one child belonging to a wagon that joined our company above Florence making the total of deaths 68 souls.

William Woodward clerk of the camp from
October 1st till our arrival in
G. S. L. City.

Mary Hurren, age 7, one of the girls who jumped rattlesnakes near the North Platte River, arrived in the Salt Lake Valley with frozen feet. Two doctors told her parents, James M. Hurren and Eliza Reeder Hurren, that she would probably not live, and there was no choice but to amputate her lower legs. They refused. James told them that his little girl did not walk for a thousand miles to have her legs cut off. Her parents had already lost one baby who was born in Iowa City, only to die two weeks later. They had remarkable faith, which they exercised. Remember, James was the man that put 500 pounds of extra flour on his handcart on September 7, after the cattle were lost.

Mary did not have her legs amputated. She did not die. The flesh fell away from her calves. Her mother treated her legs with "sweet oil" and her father, on several occasions, walked from their home in Brigham City to Ogden to get fresh beef to apply on her legs. The round trip walk was 40 miles. Three years later, Mary walked again. Toward the end of her life she wrote: "If I had my life to live over again I would not want to avoid any of the hardships that I have passed through. I would not want it any different."²¹ And her faithful parents, James and Eliza, were known to say, "Yes and with all our trials, our weary traveling, burying our dead ones, piling our clothing and bedding by the wayside and setting fire to them, we have never once felt to murmur or complain or regret the steps we have taken."²²

Notes

1. Harvey H. Cluff, "Journal of Harvey H. Cluff, 1836–68," 26–27, Perry Special Collections.

2. "Ann Jewell Rowley" 7, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
3. "Handcart Pioneers," in *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 255.
4. Lynette Fronk Weller, "Lucy Ward Cole," 2–3, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
5. Judy A. Norton Njord, "Caroline Newman Mitchell," 1, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
6. Clayton, *Emigrants' Guide*, 16; "Journal of the First Rescue Party," in *Journal History of the Church*, November 30, 1856, 225.
7. Joseph Benson Elder, *Journal*, 1856–57, 22, Church Archives.
8. "Untitled Record of the Abraham O. Smoot Church Train," in *Journal History of the Church*, November 9, 1856, 3.
9. James E. Faust, "A Priceless Heritage," *Ensign* 22 (November 1992): 84.
10. Albert R. Lyman, "Bishop Jens Nielson," typescript copy, 7–8, Perry Special Collections.
11. Margaret Williams Torkelson, "History of Ann Waddle Stewart," 5, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
12. Rhoda M. Wood, "Mettie Kerstena Mortensen Rasmussen wife of Christen Rasmussen," 2, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
13. Mable Gadd Kirk, "Biography of Eliza Chapman Gadd," 1–3, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
14. Goodwin, "Tired Mother," 780.
15. Chislett, "Mr. Chislett's Narrative," 330.
16. Lloyd, "Sketch of Susanna Stone Lloyd," 2–3.
17. "Silas Richards—Pioneer 1849," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 15:115.
18. Mary Harper, "History of Henrietta McPhail Eckersell Utah Pioneer 1856," 4, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
19. "Handcart Pioneers," in *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 258.
20. Louise Cowan, "A Sketch of the Life of Margaret Dalglish Cowan Pioneer of 1856," 2, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.
21. "Verlan Willie," information related by Mary Hurren Wight in 1936, typescript copy, 12, Church Archives.
22. Adolph Reeder, "History of James Hurren," 3, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library.

Overview to Maps

Identifying the Willie Handcart Company's specific trail and campsites is not a simple matter, since their trail was not a single set of wagon ruts from Iowa to Utah. On July 18, 1856, Peder Madsen stated, "One drives where best he can." Campsite locations varied by availability of wood, water, and feed. As the season progressed, selection of campsites also had to adapt to changing weather conditions.

Journals seldom agree on the daily mileage traveled. When the mileage records vary, but a particular landmark or physical feature is recorded, then trail and campsite identification is easier. However, even those particular features are not always conclusive because journal keepers were not familiar with the area and their entries contain inaccuracies. Later transcribers may also have made errors in their transcriptions.

In determining the trail and campsite locations for these maps, every effort was made to match the journal entries with the records of known and existing trails. However, some conclusions are simply educated guesses.

As with all scholarship, parts of this trail or the identified campsites will inevitably be challenged, so the following discussion explains the process used to make these determinations. Primary reliance is on the company journal, the journal of Peder Madsen, the journal of Levi Savage, and the history of William Woodward. (All of these sources

are available either in this book or on the Brigham Young University website <http://handcart.byu.edu>.) Secondary reliance is on other sources that address specific locations on the trail or that cover certain sections of the trail.

There are five overview maps that allow readers to quickly identify specific portions of the trail. They divide the trail as follows:

Iowa City to Florence

Florence to North Platte

North Platte to Ft. Laramie

Ft. Laramie to Sixth Crossing

Sixth Crossing to Salt Lake Valley

The maps have the following identifying marks:

—— A solid black line for the Handcart Trail,

- - - A broken black line for uncertain portions of the Handcart Trail,

▲ A solid triangle represents a known campsite or a point of interest,

△ An empty triangle represents an uncertain campsite,

■ A solid gray line shows the primary driving route,

■ A broken gray line shows the alternate driving route.

Section 1: Iowa City, Iowa, to Florence, Nebraska Territory

In 1853 a road was surveyed between Iowa City and Newton, which corresponds more closely with the journals than did the road indicated on the original state township survey maps.¹ This road was followed to Sugar Creek, where the journal entries indicate that the trail began to follow the road on the original state township survey maps. Those township survey maps were generally followed across the rest of Iowa. For the few townships with no roads indicated, there was either another source to establish the road or the topography is such that a line could be drawn along a ridge or some similar physical feature to connect the mapped roads. For the trail in the Des Moines area, the research of Steven F. Faux helped determine the Willie Handcart Company's course through the city.² West from Des Moines the Saints followed an existing stagecoach route. The troublesome portion of the trail started after Dale and continued to Indian Town, near Lewis. As explained in the manuscript, the confusion arose from the fact that there was a Bear Grove Creek Station and a Bear Grove Creek Post Office, which were actually miles apart. Faux's research again led to the conclusion that the Willie Handcart Company went to the station and not the post office. The station led them to travel through Dalmanutha and then to Anita.³ However the location of the trail between Anita and Indian Town is marked as uncertain since this was only an educated guess. At Indian Town their trail joined the well established 1846 trail the Mormons took as they fled Nauvoo and traveled to Winter Quarters or Florence.

Sections 2 and 3: Florence, Nebraska Territory, to Fort Laramie, Nebraska Territory

In 1856, Captain John Dickerson of the U.S. Army surveyed the existing road between Council Bluffs and Fort Kearney. The Willie Handcart Company started at a camp at Little Papillion Creek. Their actual trail to that campsite is uncertain, but the trail between Little Papillion Creek and Fort Kearney was well surveyed.⁴ Although the trail was fairly easy to identify, the campsites were not. The journals often give varying mileage amounts and fail to identify physical features to tie into the campsites. From Fort Kearney to the trail's intersection with Buffalo Creek the Mormon-California trail was followed.⁵ From just past the present-day city of Elm Creek to the present-day city of Cozad the trail and the campsites are only speculation. The journals contain conflicting information, and there were no other established roads—other than the main Mormon-California Trail, which they had clearly left. However, from Cozad to North Bluff Fork, present-day Birdwood Creek, they followed the main Mormon-California Trail. At North Bluff Fork they crossed the North Platte River to the south side and followed a lesser-used, alternative trail to Ash Hollow.⁶ Just outside of Ash Hollow the journals report a detour due to the river running too close to the bluffs. There are at least three alternative routes that they might have taken on their detour, and the records are too sparse to identify the one they actually took, so the trail is marked as uncertain. From Ash Hollow until the present-day Scotts Bluff area they followed the main Oregon Trail.⁷ In the Scotts Bluff area the Willie Handcart Company left what was then the main Oregon Trail and followed a route over Robidoux's Pass, instead of Mitchell's Pass.⁸ After the pass they camped at Horse Creek, they then followed the main Oregon Trail in to Fort Laramie.

Section 4:

Fort Laramie, Nebraska Territory, to the Sixth Crossing of the Sweetwater River, Nebraska Territory

The Oregon, Mormon, and California trails all converge at Fort Laramie. The Willie Handcart Company followed what Gregory M. Franzwa described as the Plateau Route for only a few miles before they dropped down to the River Route and passed Register Cliff, near present-day Guernsey. The main trail then divided into the River Route and the Black Hills Route, and they followed the River Route. However, at Indian Creek, where the main trail turned southwest to avoid crossing the North Platte River, the Willie Handcart Company continued on two miles and crossed the river. They then followed what was known as Childs Cutoff through the present-day Douglas area and crossed the river again to the south side.⁹ They followed the route of the present-day railroad tracks to Deer Creek in present-day Glenrock. From Glenrock to the Sixth Crossing of the Sweetwater River they followed the main Oregon, Mormon, and California Trail over the 1847 Mormon Ferry crossing area of the North Platte River. They used William Clayton's *The Latter-day Saints' Emigrants' Guide* to help determine their location.¹⁰

Section 5:

Sixth Crossing of the Sweetwater River, Nebraska Territory, to Great Salt Lake City, Utah Territory

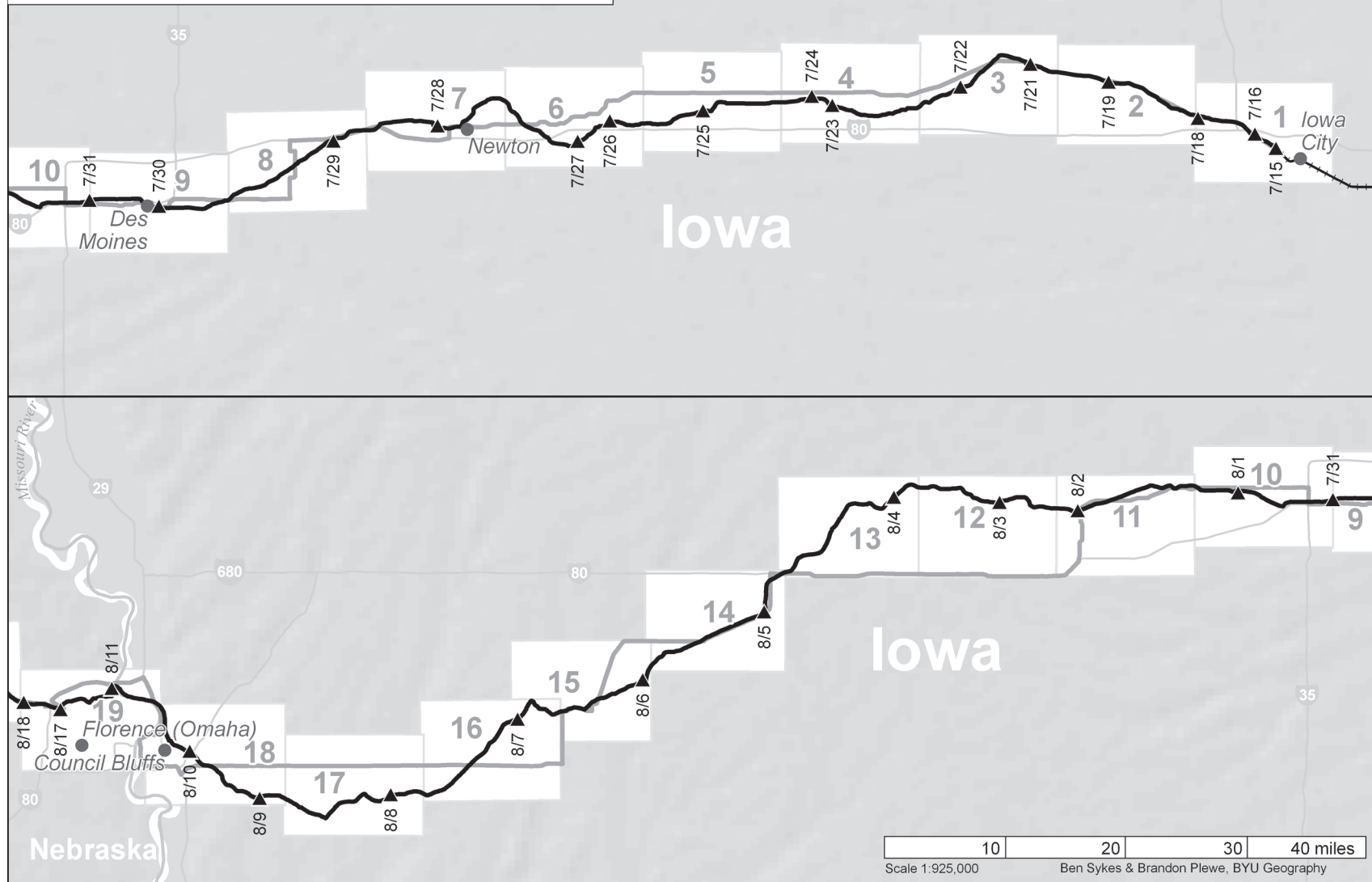
The three main trails generally stay together through Fort Bridger. After that fort, the Mormon Trail runs to the west and southwest into the Salt Lake Valley. The trail is generally well known.¹¹

Notes

1. State Road Record, Des Moines, Iowa, 1847–55, microfilm, vol. 1, roll 1, pp. 361–68.
2. Steven F. Faux, “The Significance and Location of the Iowa Mormon Handcart Trail: Faint Footsteps of 1856–57 Retraced” (paper presented to University of Iowa, Iowa City commemoration, Mormon Handcart Trek Sesquicentennial, June 9, 2006).
3. Their trail was described in “The Guthrie County Centennial, 1851 to 1951, 100 Years of Progress.” The trail was confirmed by William J. Peterson in “The Handcart Expeditions,” *Palimpsest* 47 (September 1966): 375.
4. See Don H. Smith, “U. S. Military Maps and Survey Notes Correct 1856 LDS Emigration Misrepresentations,” *Nauvoo Journal* 11 (Spring 1999): 3–33.
5. Gregory M. Franzwa, *Maps of the California Trail* (Tooele, UT: Patrice Press, 2001). His book closely follows the original state township survey maps.
6. See Karl and Dorothy Baresel, “Trails and Fords above the Junction of the North and South Platte,” *Overland Journal* 6, no. 2 (1988): 13–24.
7. It is marked on the U.S.G.S. maps and in Franzwa, *Maps of the California Trail*.
8. Franzwa, *Maps of the California Trail*; Scottsbluff's vicinity map in Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, rev. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), chap. 13 and 14, indicate the location of their trail.
9. This has not been written about, but trail historian Randy Brown of Douglas confirmed that this route was used by some travelers later in the season, when the river was lower.
10. William Clayton, *Latter-day Saints' Emigrants' Guide* (n.p.: By the author, 1848). Nearly all nineteenth-century Mormon emigrants used this guidebook on their trek to the Salt Lake Valley.
11. Included in Franzwa, *Maps of the California Trail*, and John Eldredge, *Illustrated Emigrants' Guide to the Historic Sites along the Hastings/Mormon Trail: Fort Bridger to the Salt Lake Valley* (Salt Lake City: TrailBuff.com Press, 2005).

1. Iowa City to Florence

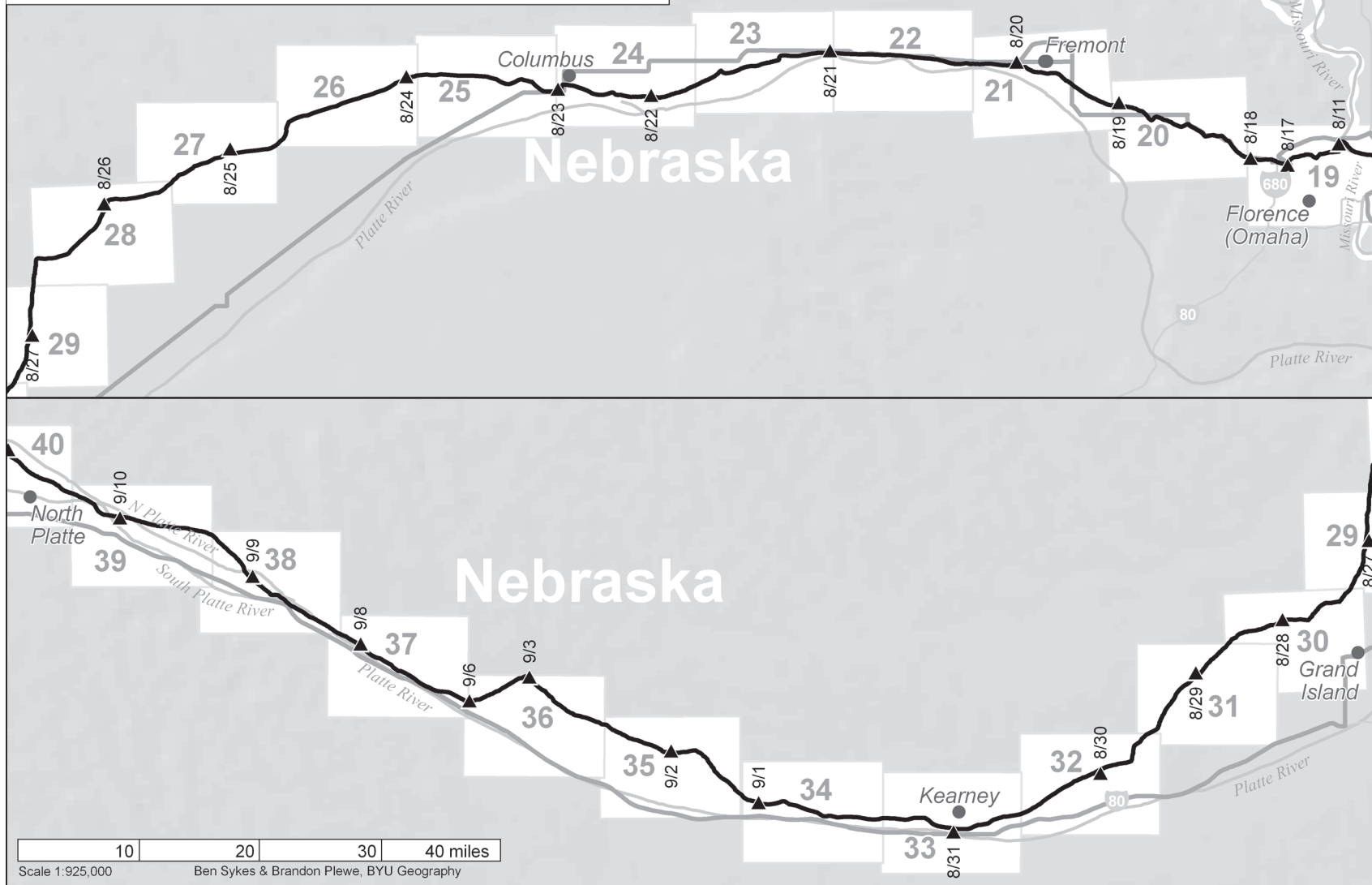
15 July 1856 to 16 August 1856



All maps are available in color at <http://handcart.byu.edu>.

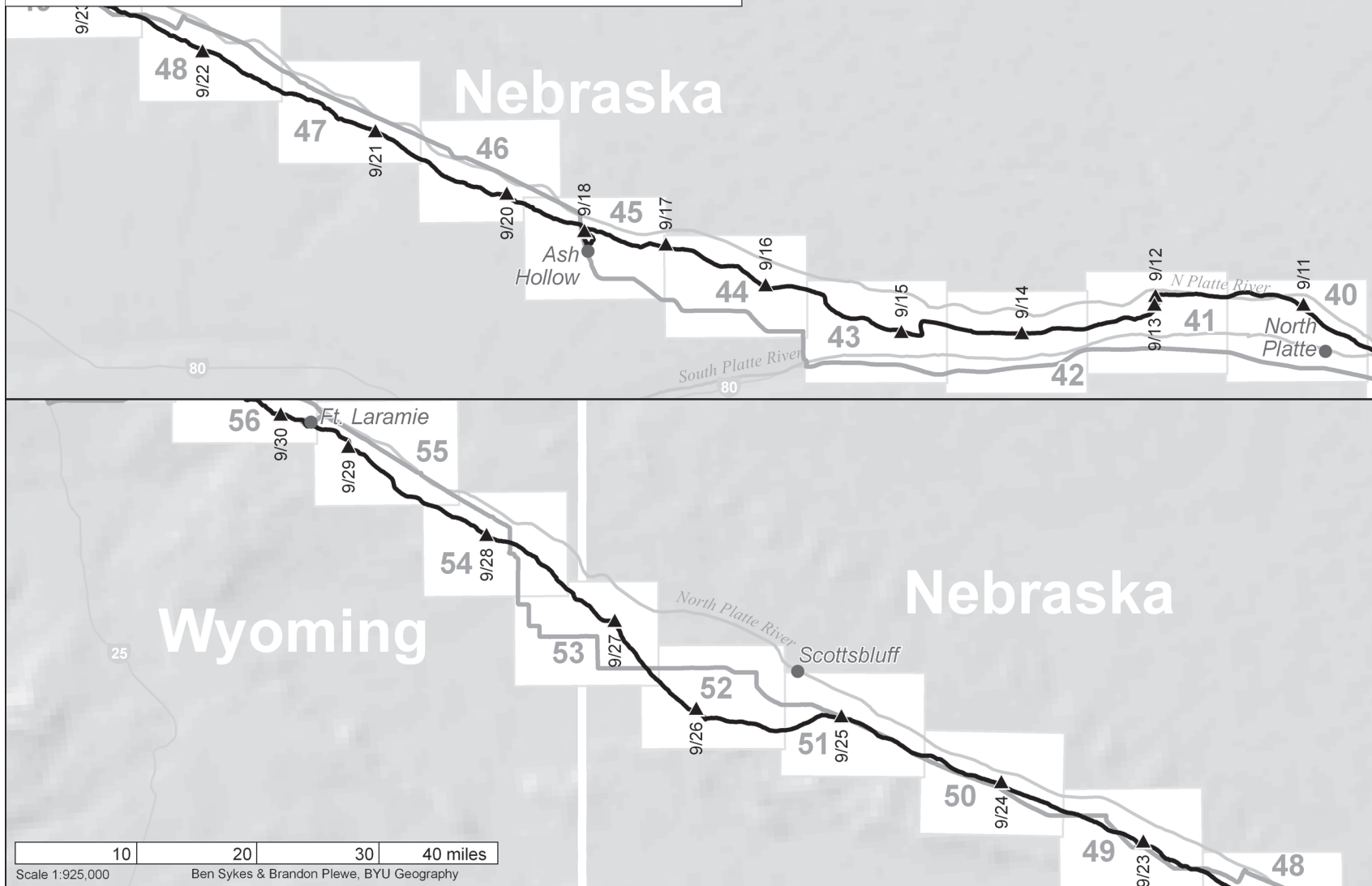
2: Florence to North Platte

17 August 1856 to 11 September 1856

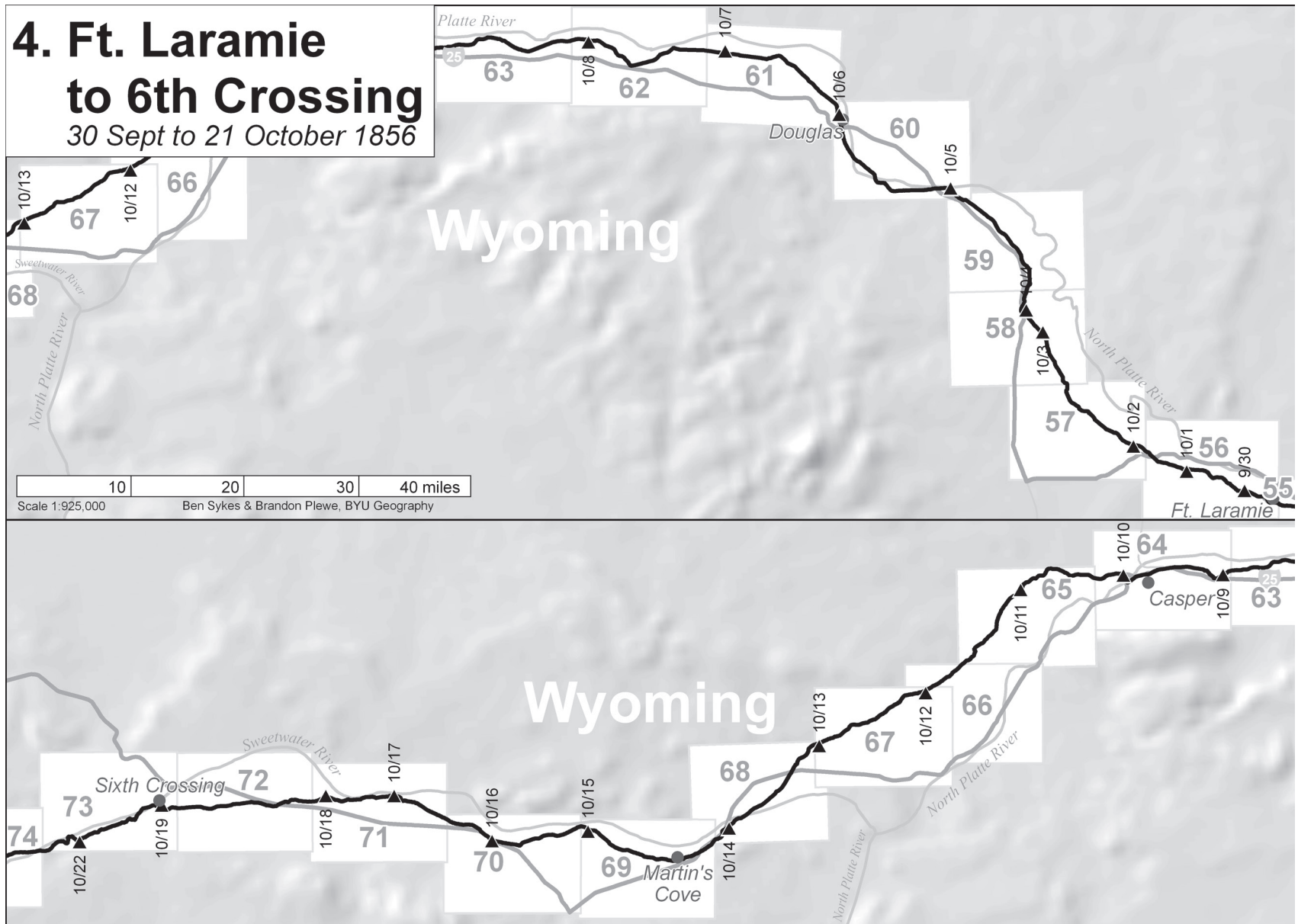


3. North Platte to Ft. Laramie

11 to 30 September 1856

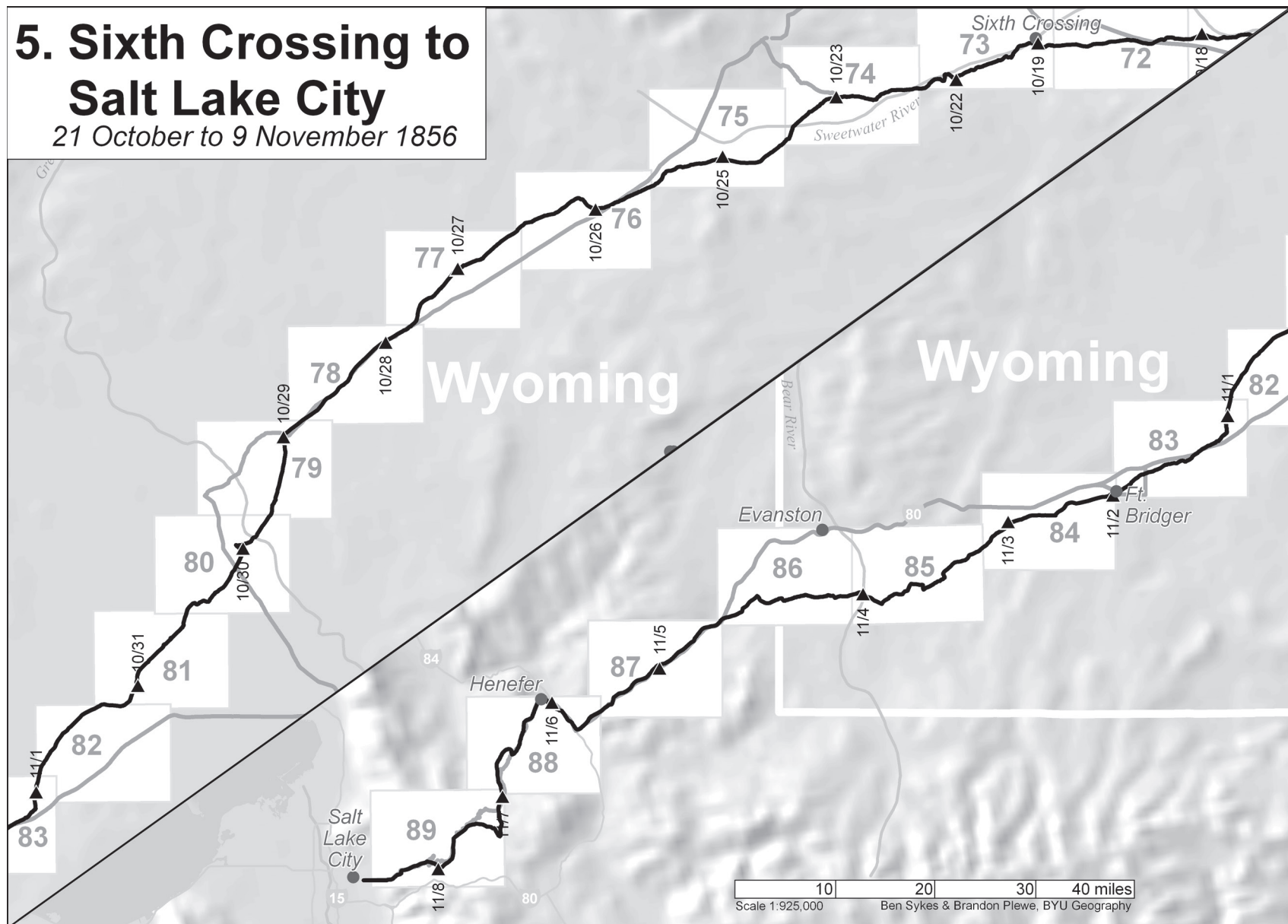


4. Ft. Laramie to 6th Crossing 30 Sept to 21 October 1856



5. Sixth Crossing to Salt Lake City

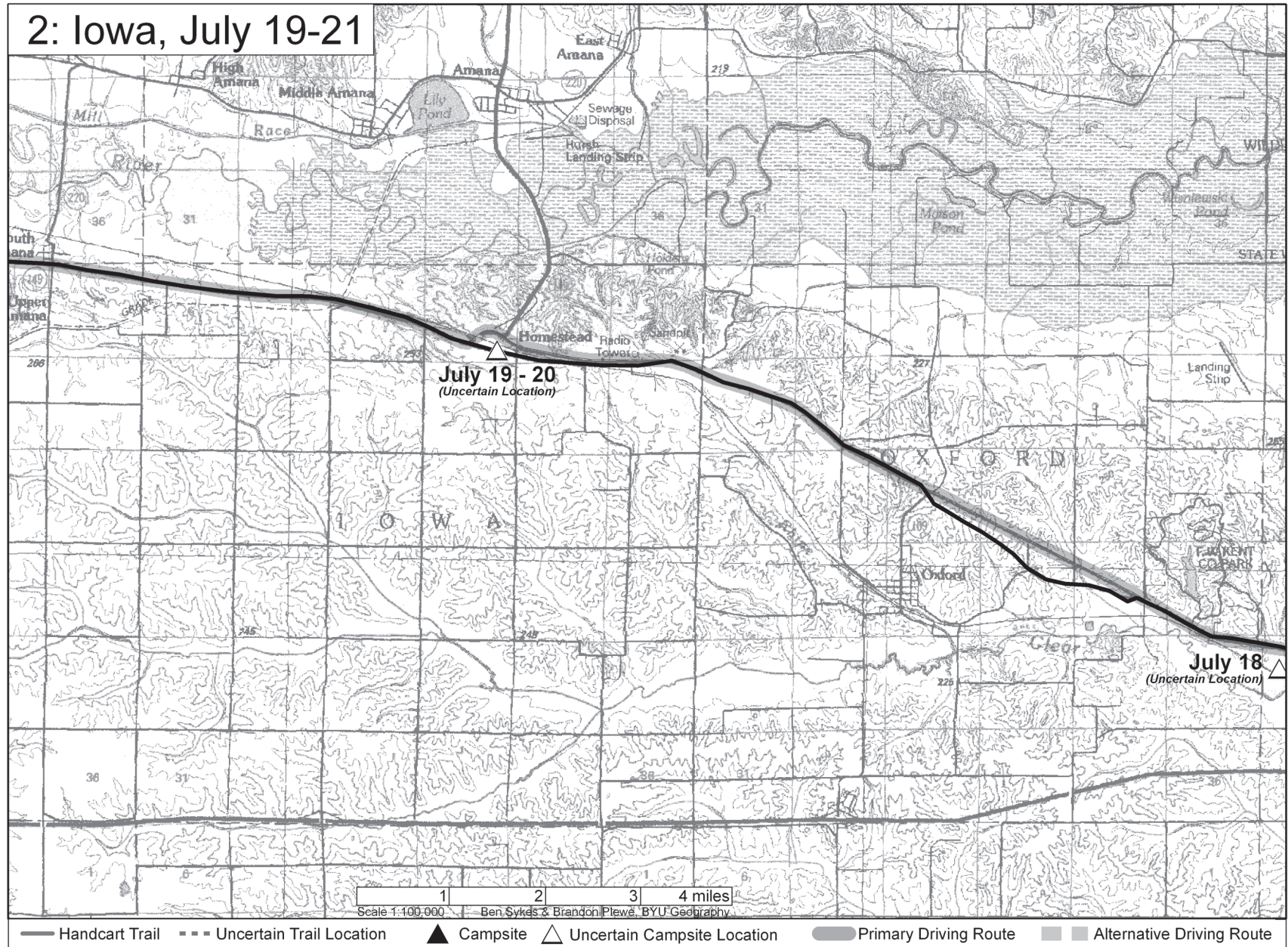
21 October to 9 November 1856



Maps of the Trail

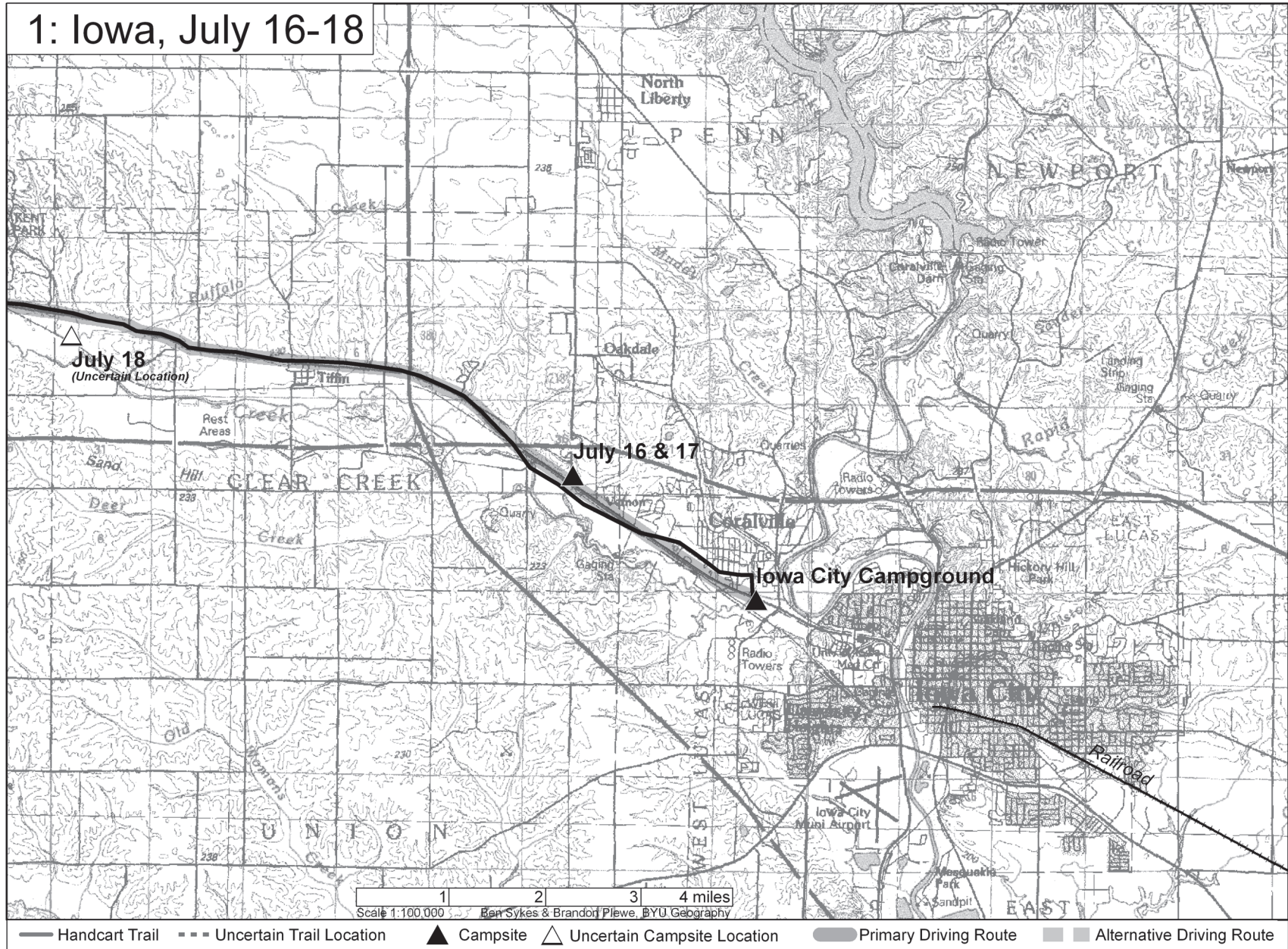
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2: Iowa, July 19-21

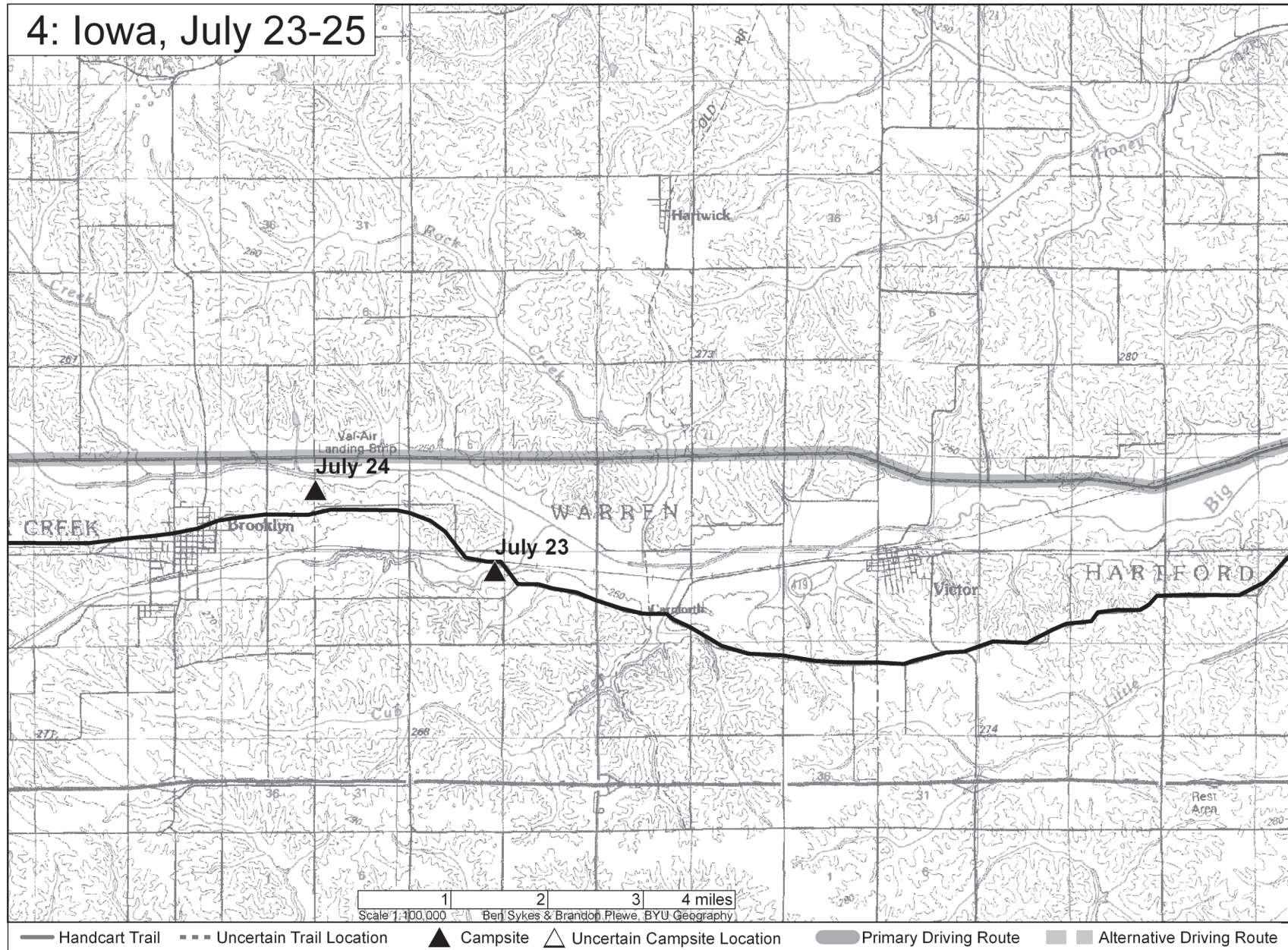


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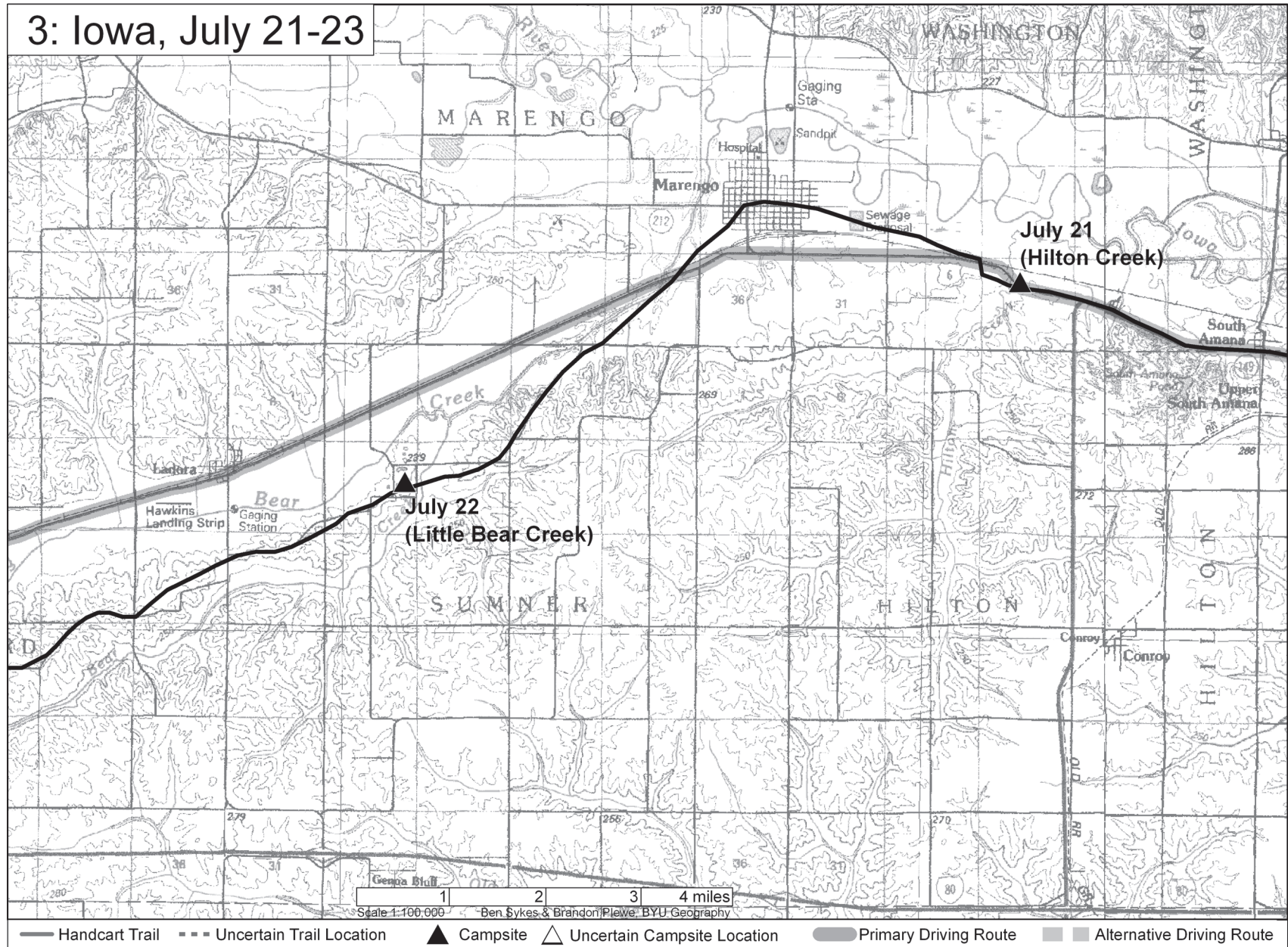
1: Iowa, July 16-18



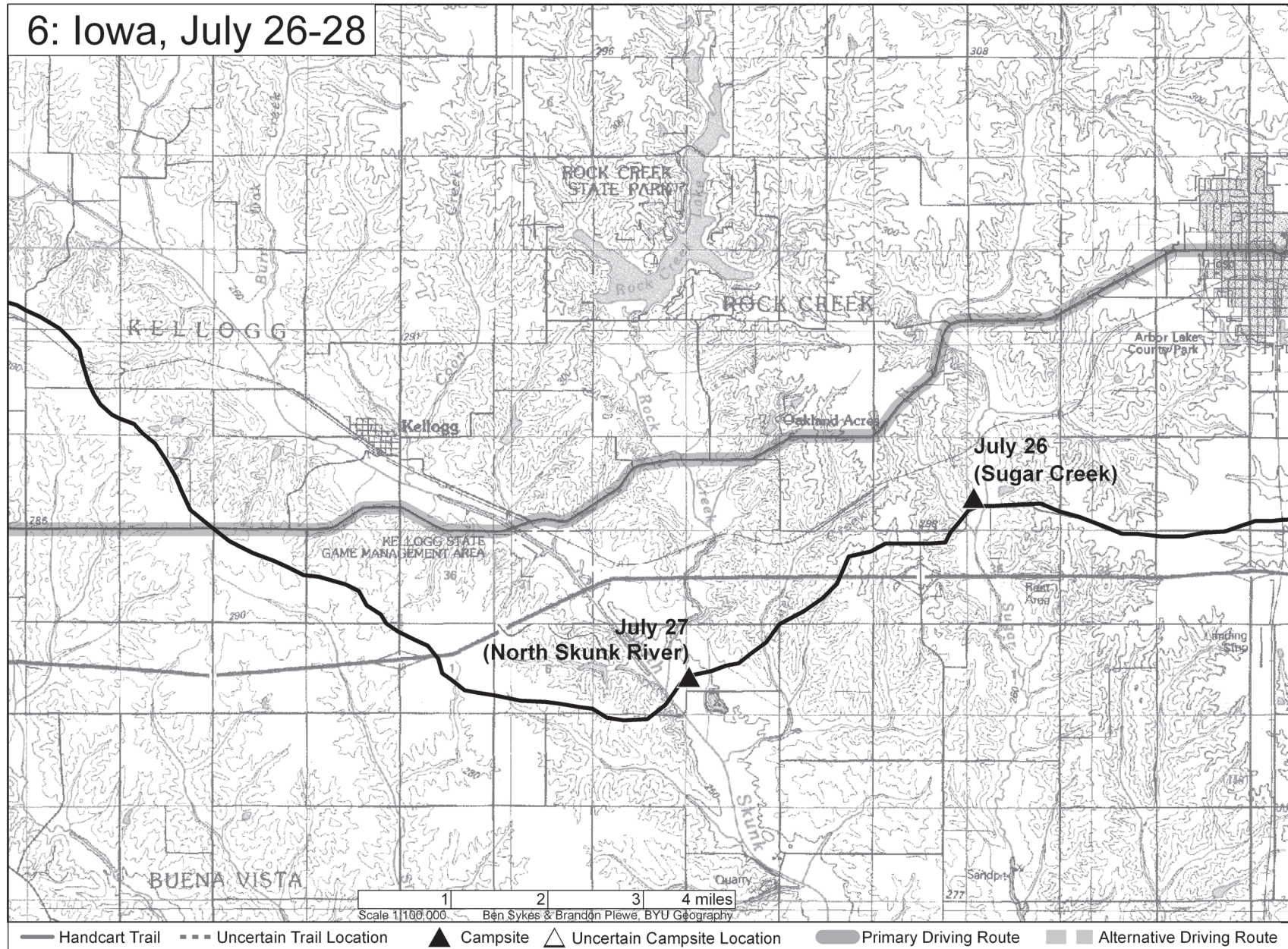
4: Iowa, July 23-25



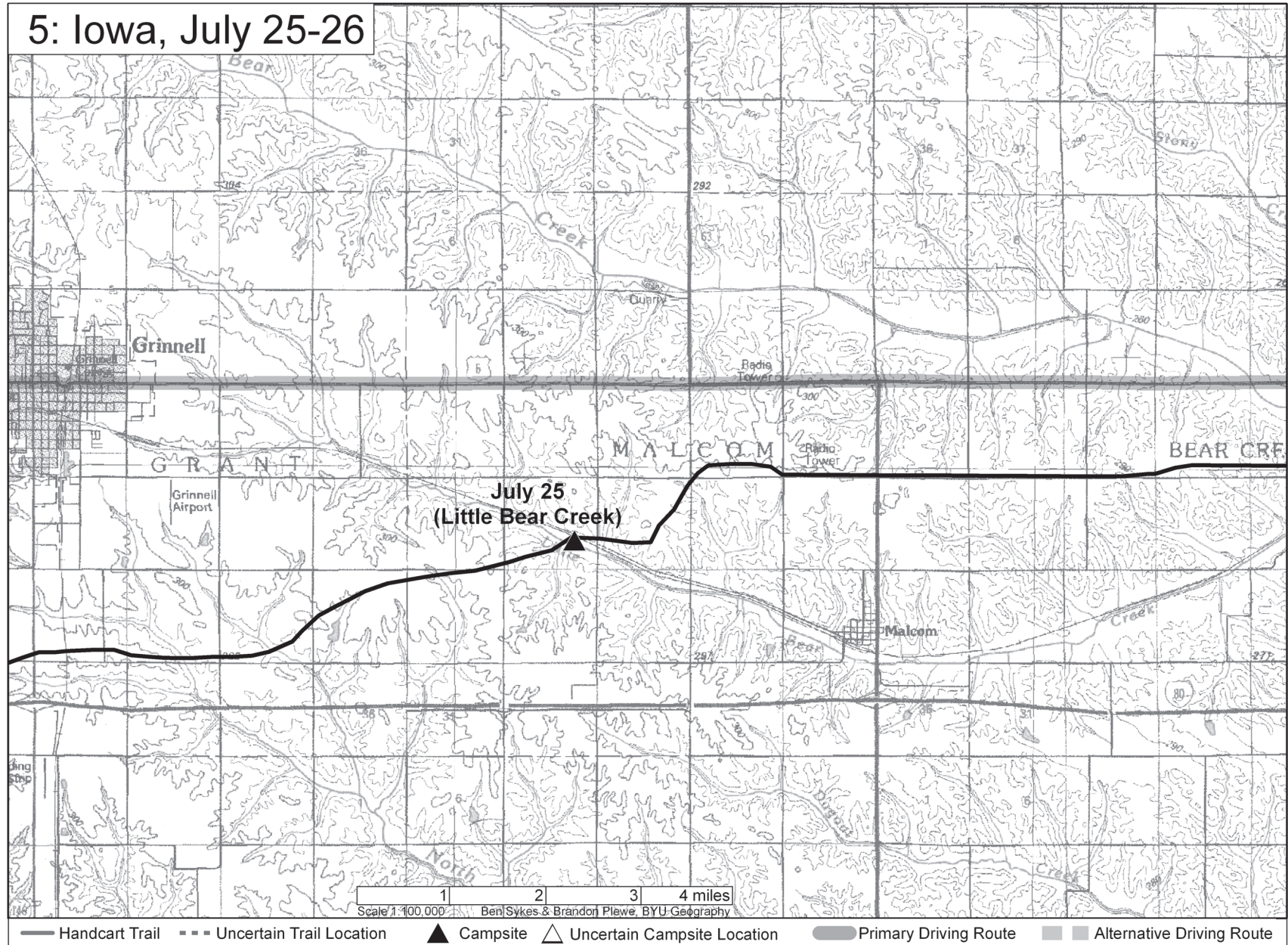
3: Iowa, July 21-23



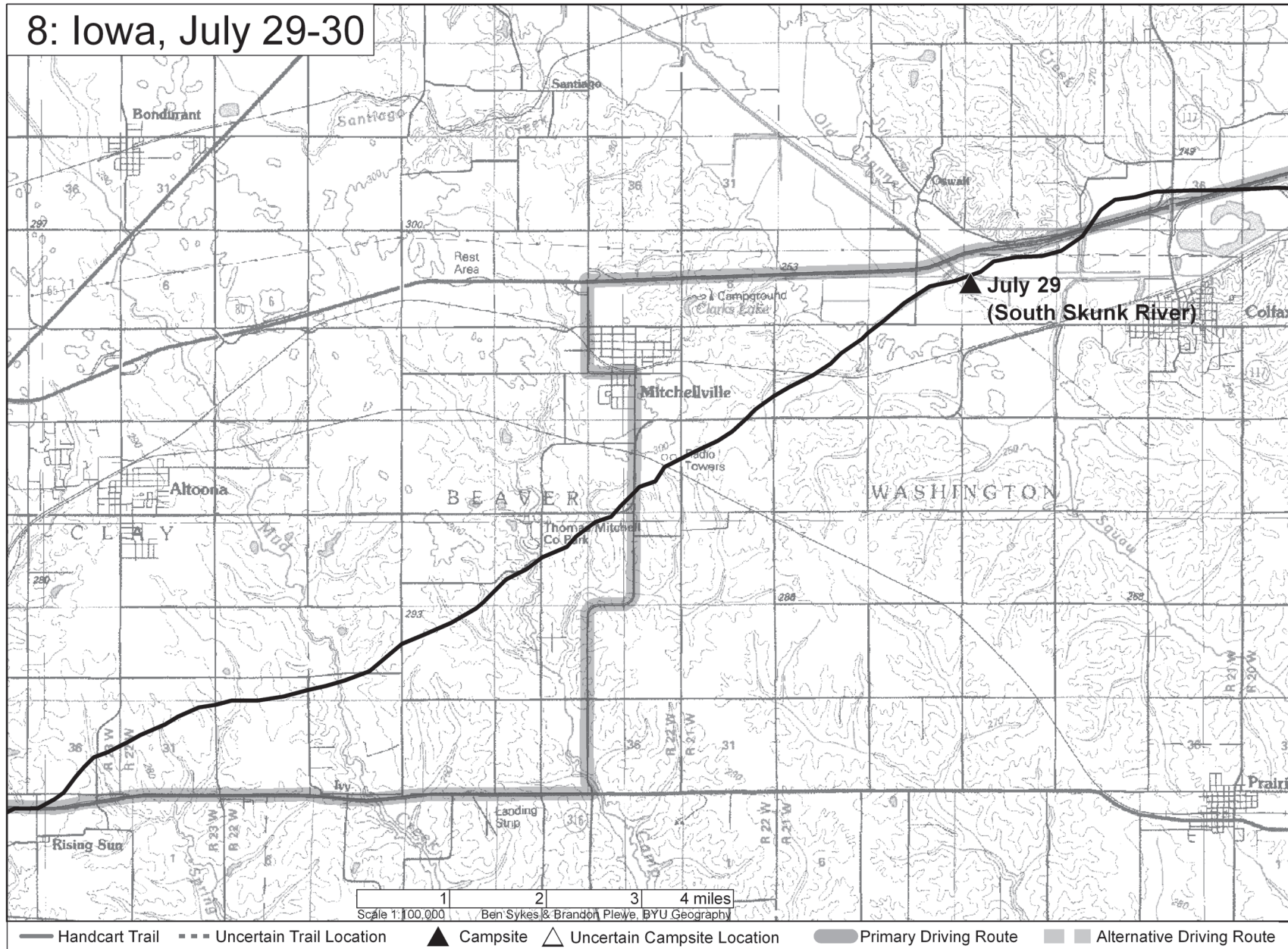
6: Iowa, July 26-28



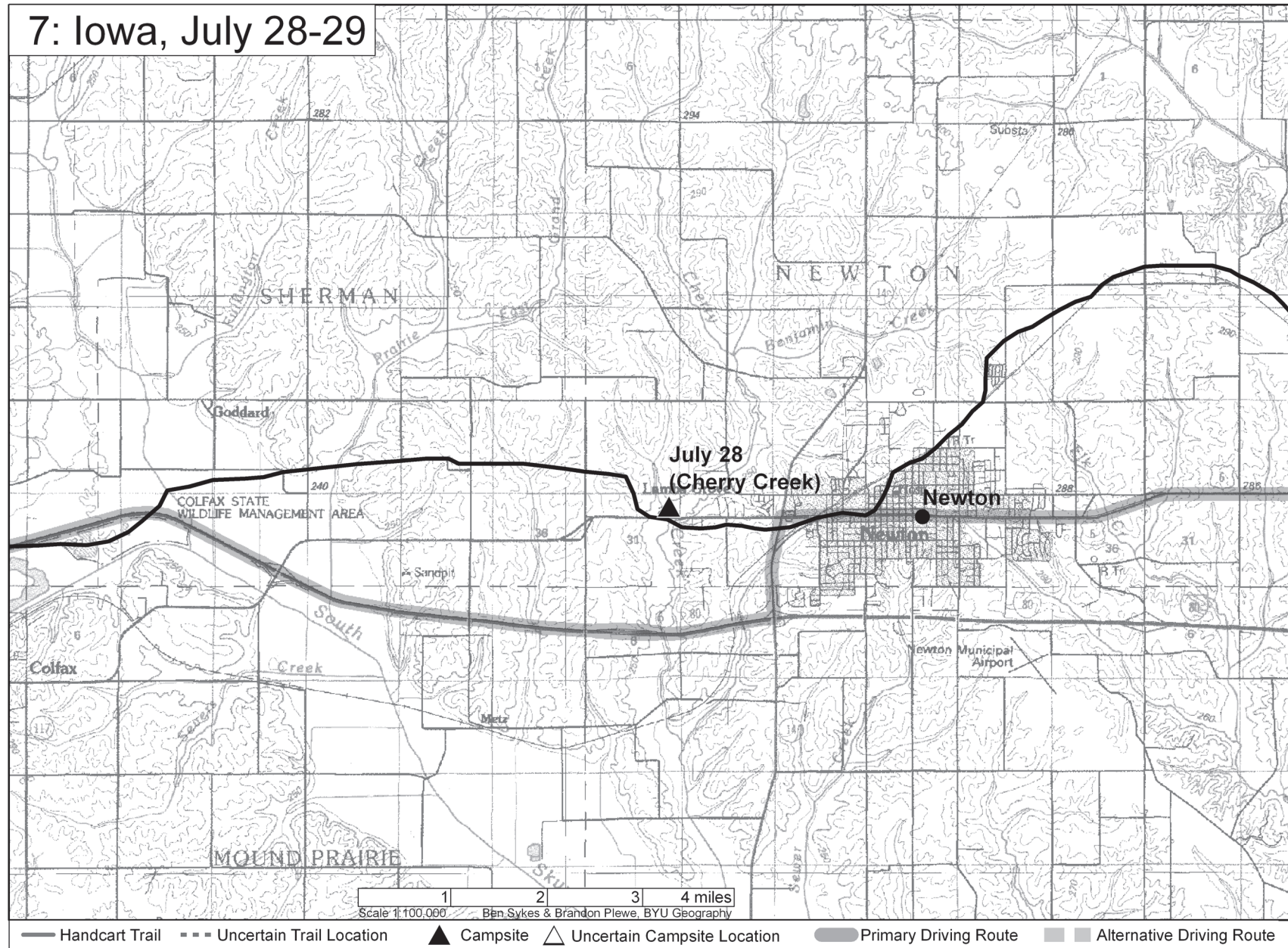
5: Iowa, July 25-26



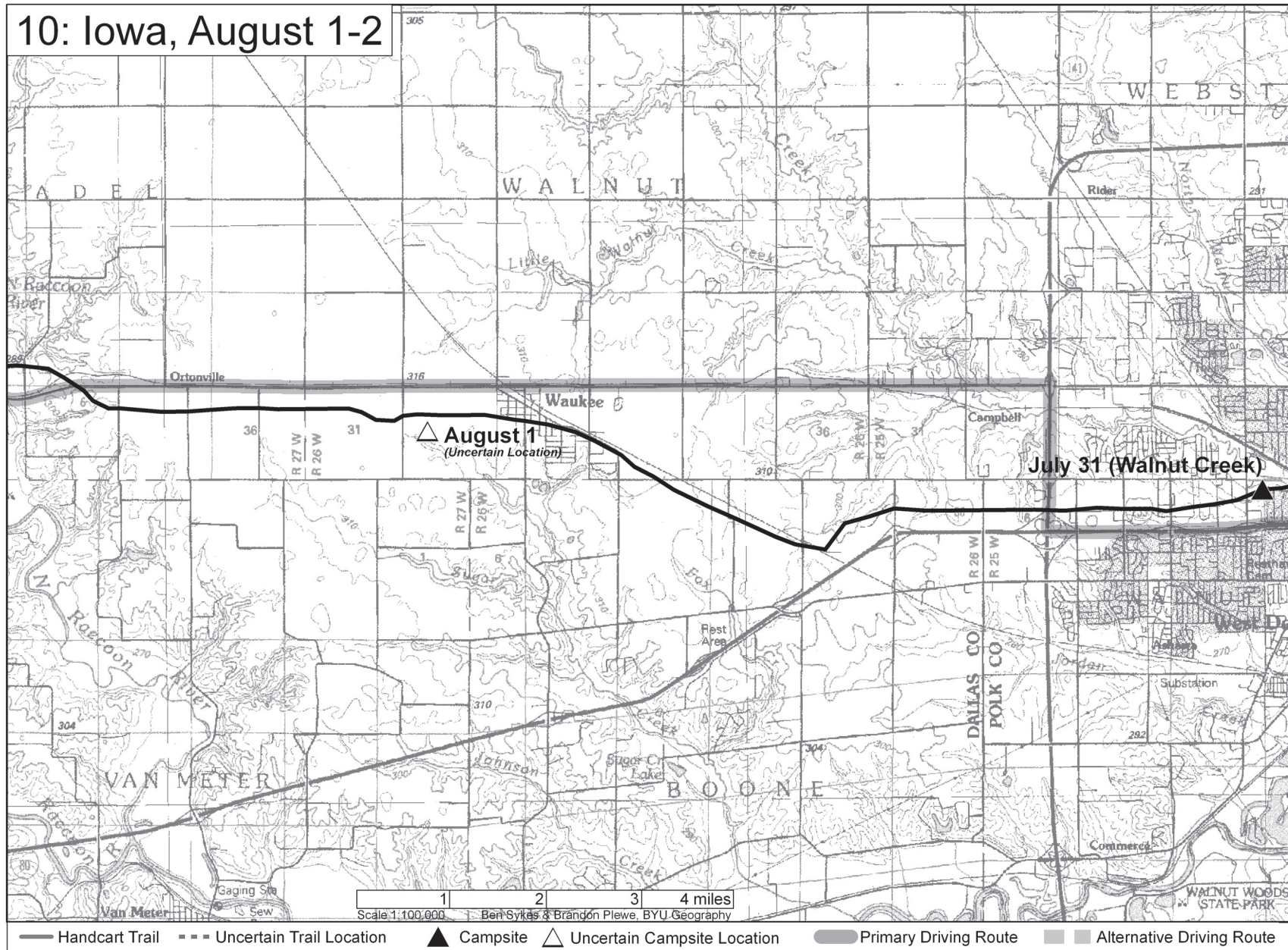
8: Iowa, July 29-30



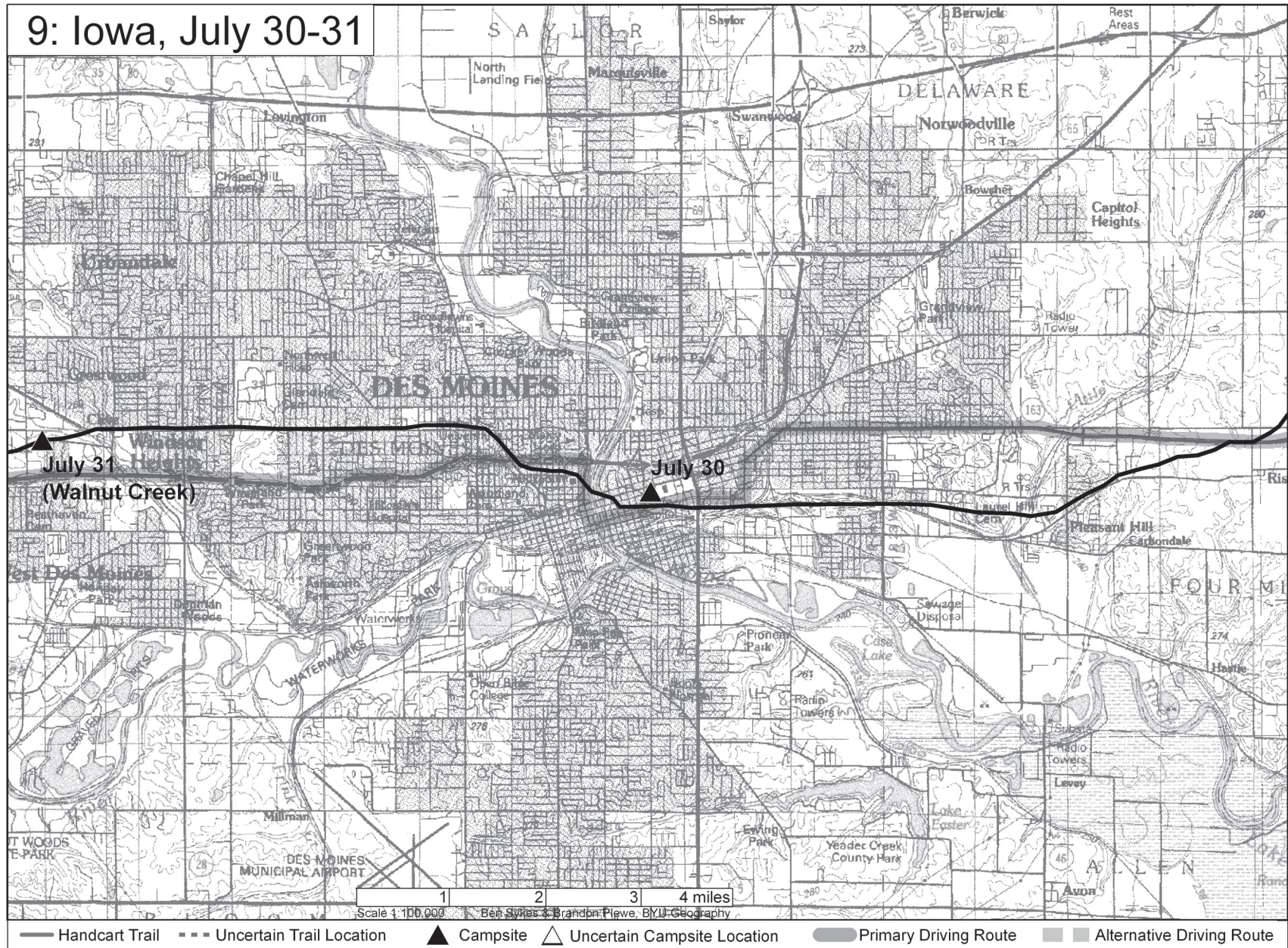
7: Iowa, July 28-29



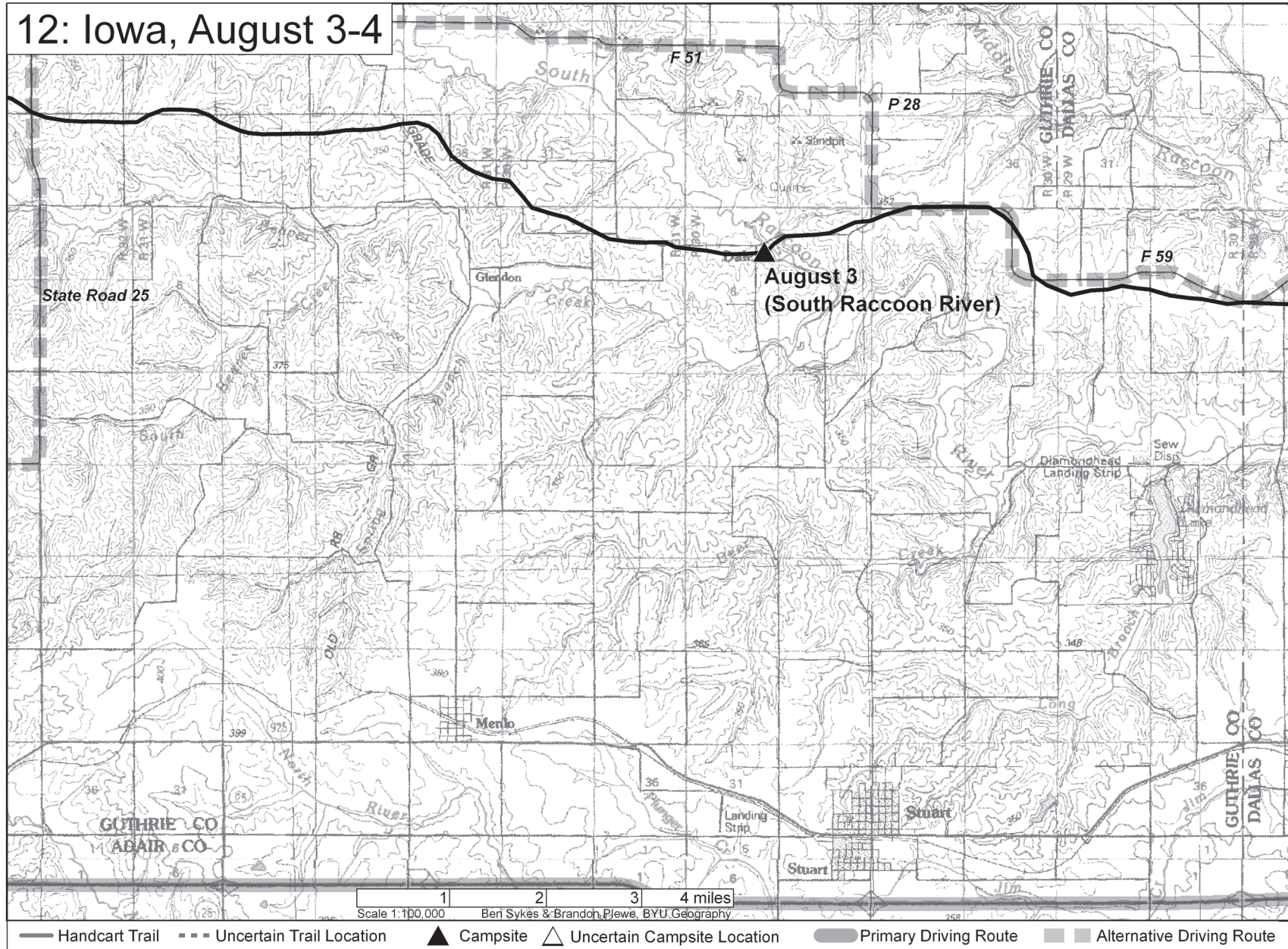
10: Iowa, August 1-2



9: Iowa, July 30-31



12: Iowa, August 3-4



11: Iowa, August 2-3

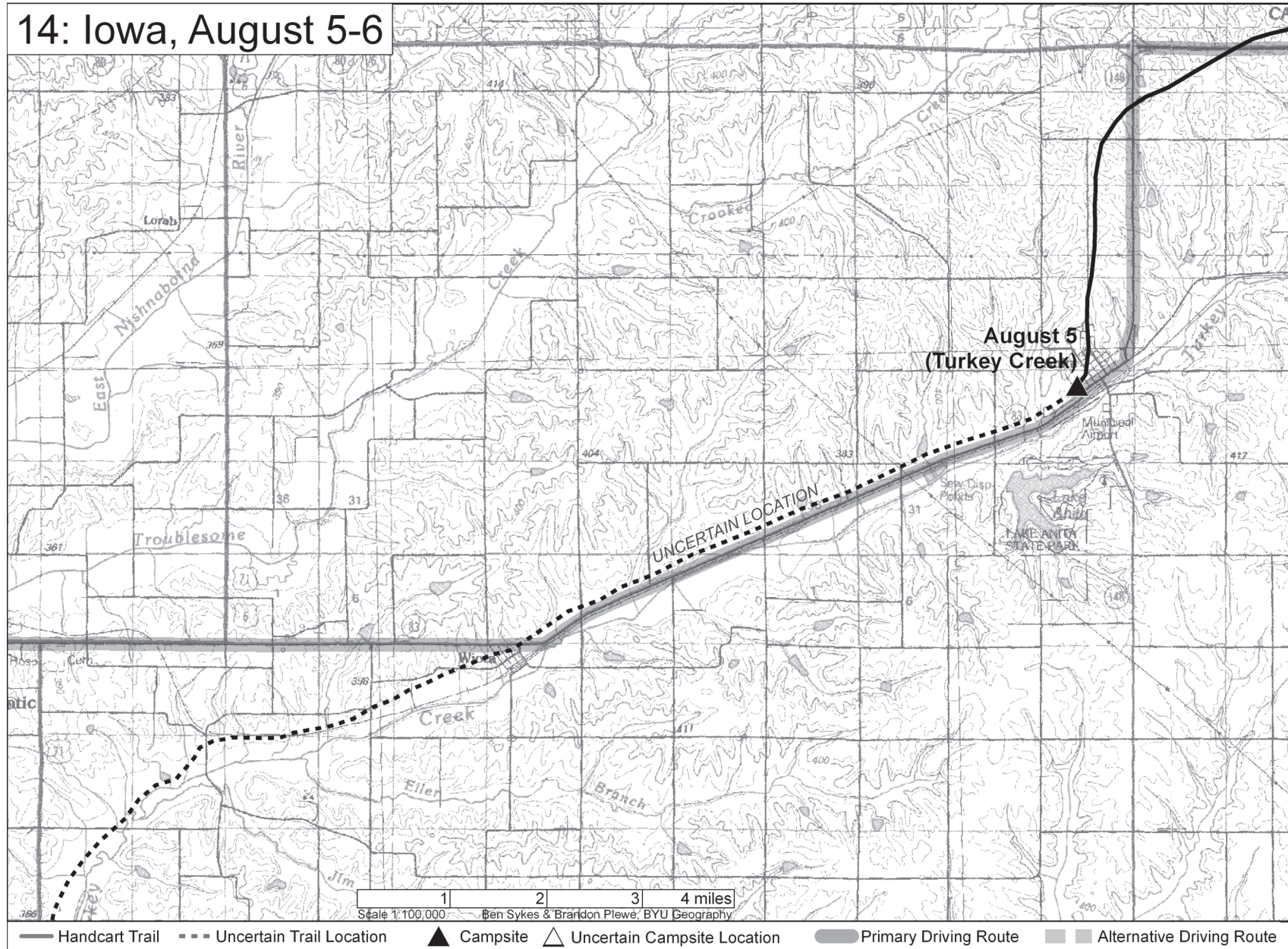
This topographic map shows a handcart trail (solid line) and a campsite (black triangle) in Iowa. The trail starts near the Gas Storage Area, passes through Redfield, and continues south through the Pleasant Valley State Wildlife Management Area. The campsite is located near the South Raccoon River. The map includes contour lines, roads, and various geographical features. A scale bar at the bottom indicates distances up to 4 miles. The map is credited to Ben Sykes & Brandon Plawe, BYU Geography.

Legend:

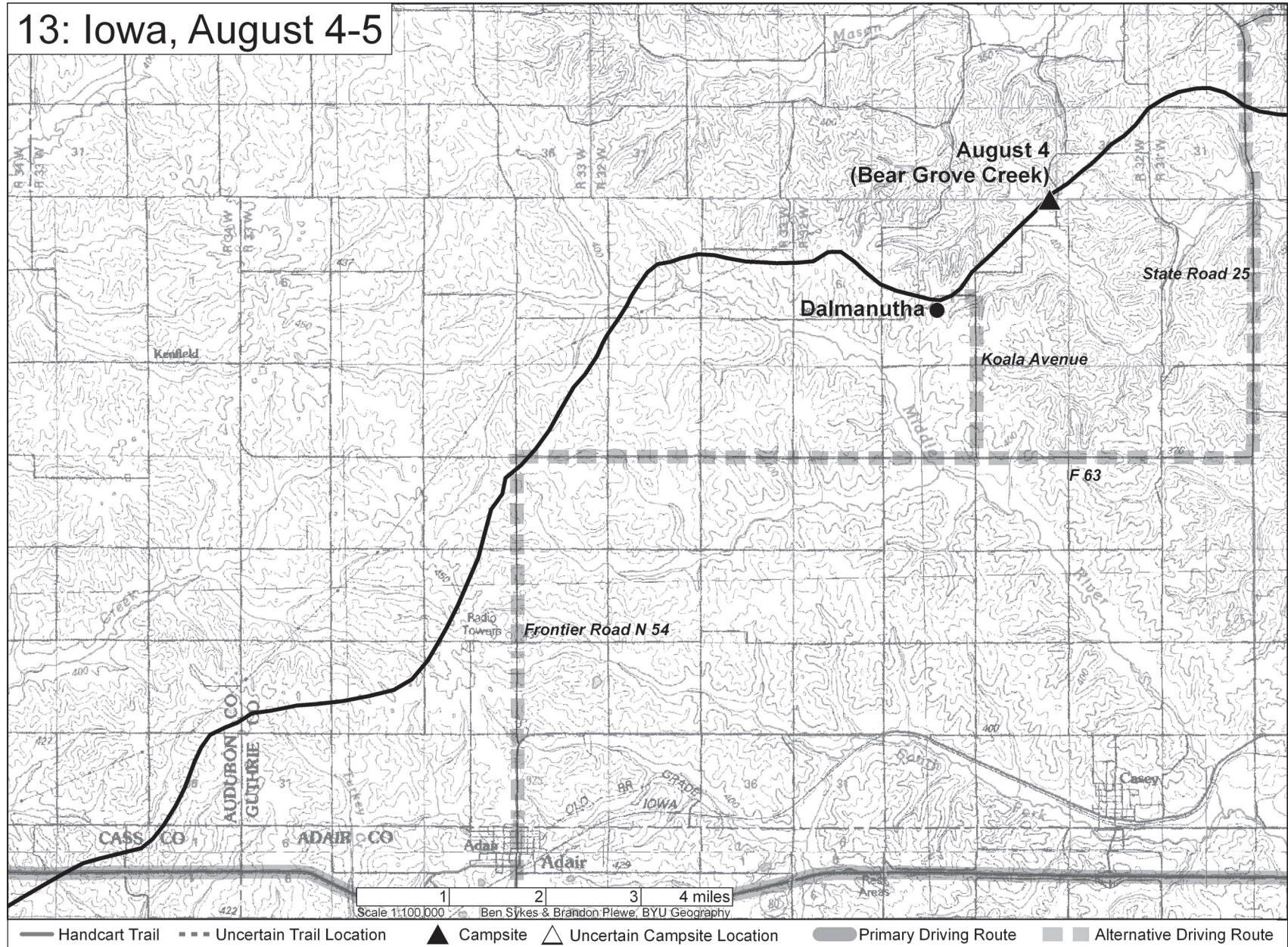
- Handcart Trail (Solid line)
- Uncertain Trail Location (Dashed line)
- Campsite (Black triangle)
- Uncertain Campsite Location (White triangle)
- Primary Driving Route (Thick grey line)
- Alternative Driving Route (Thin grey line)

— Handcart Trail - - - Uncertain Trail Location ▲ Campsite △ Uncertain Campsite Location Primary Driving Route Alternative Driving Route

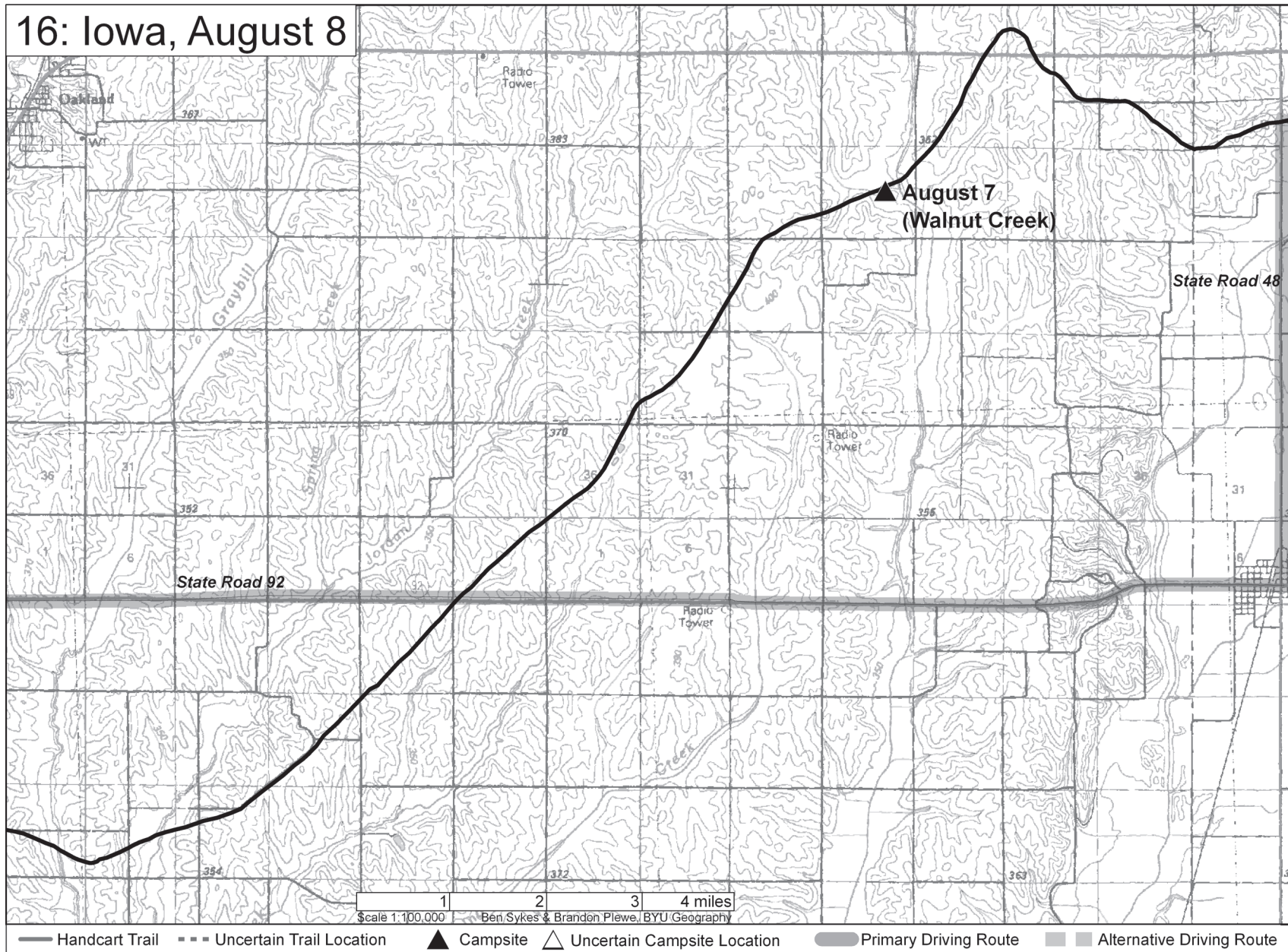
14: Iowa, August 5-6



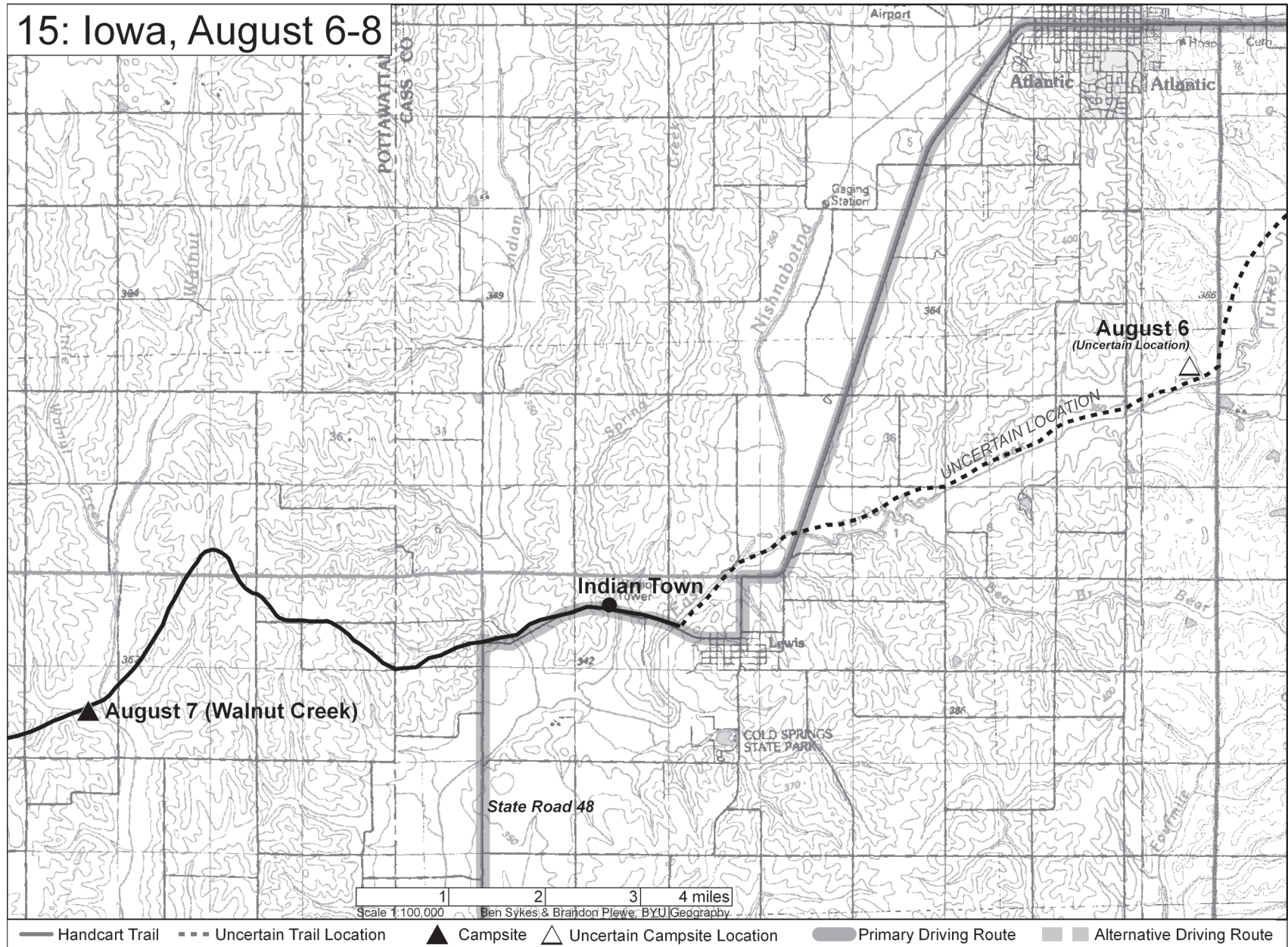
13: Iowa, August 4-5



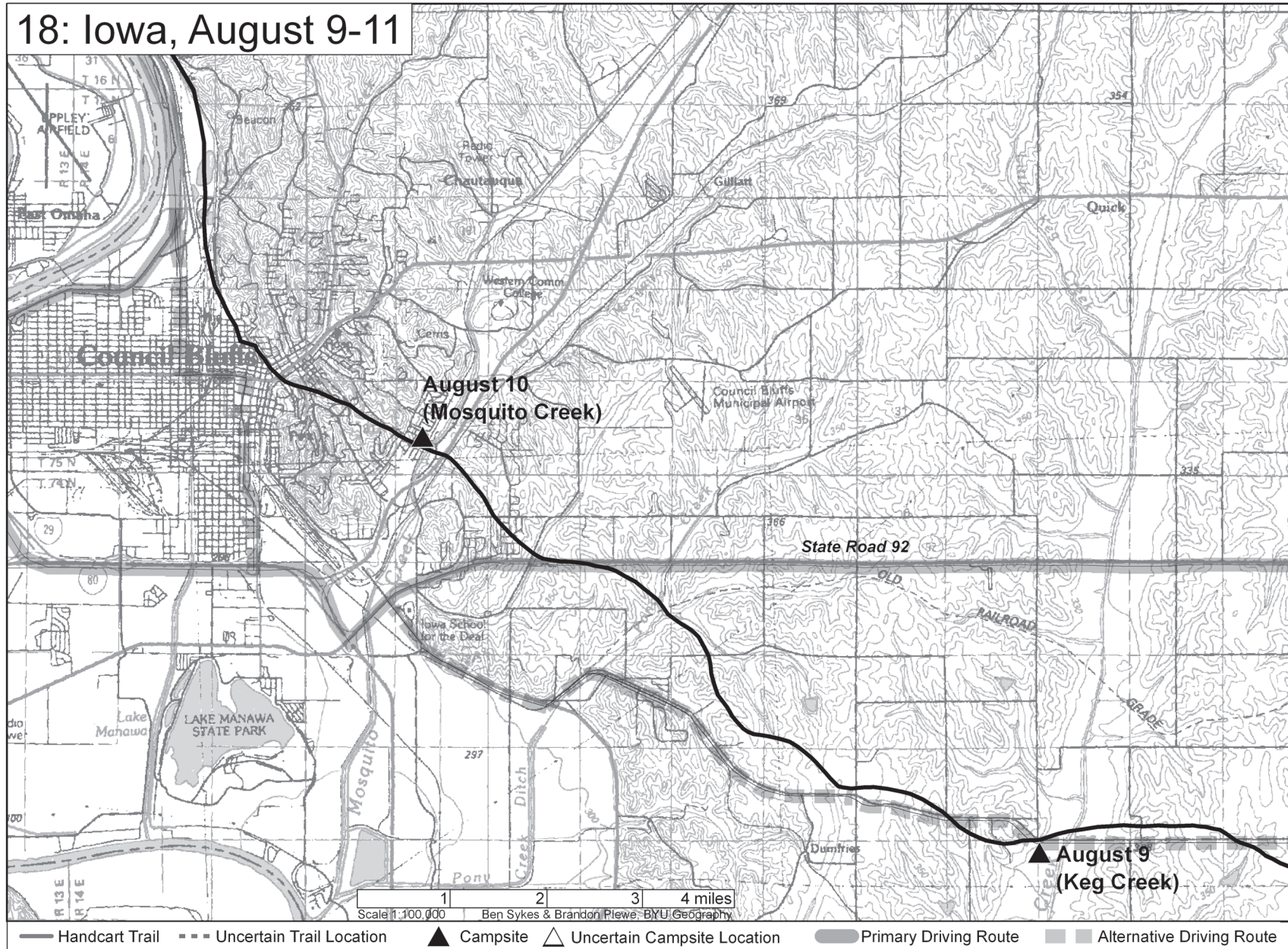
16: Iowa, August 8



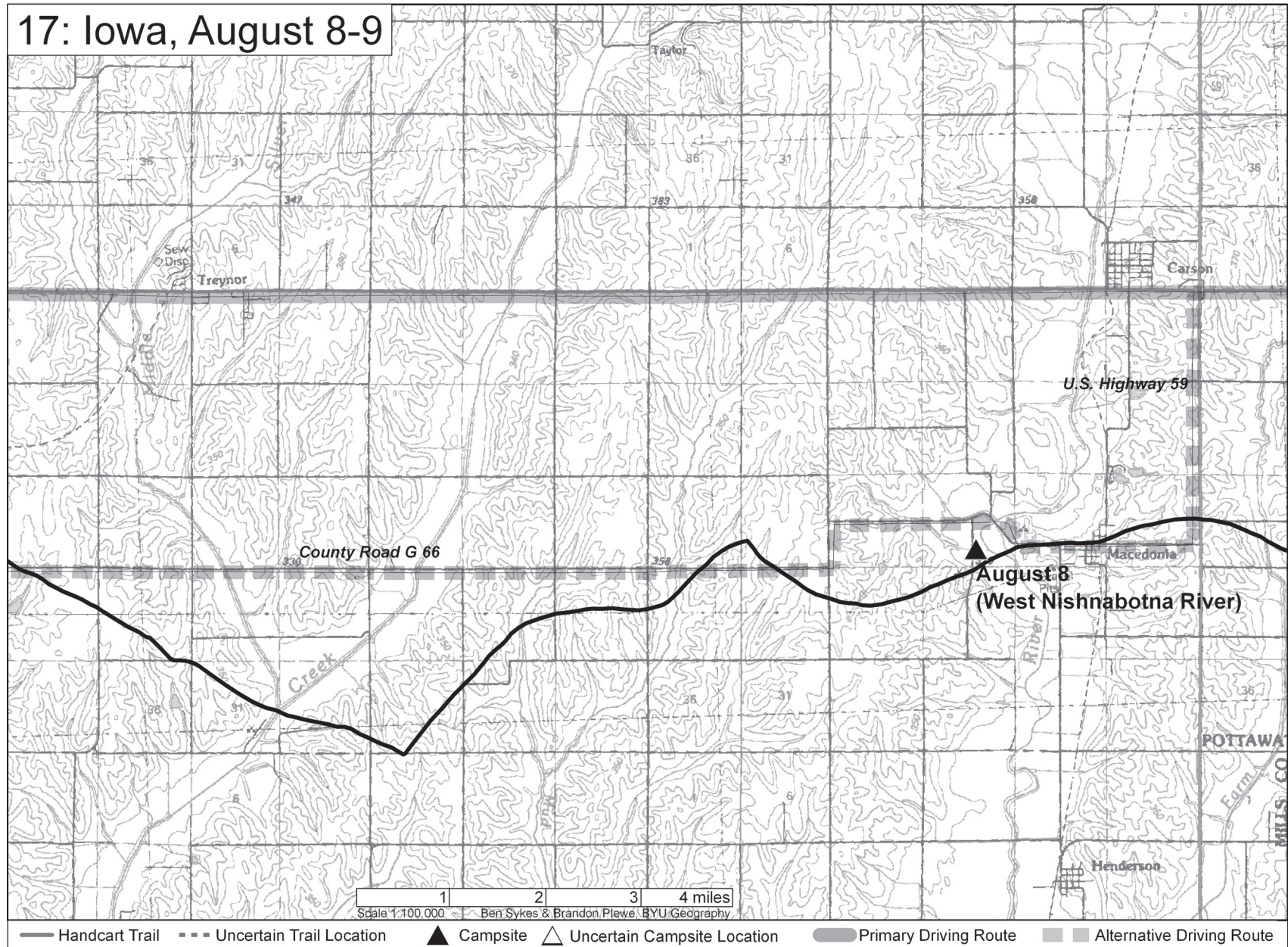
15: Iowa, August 6-8



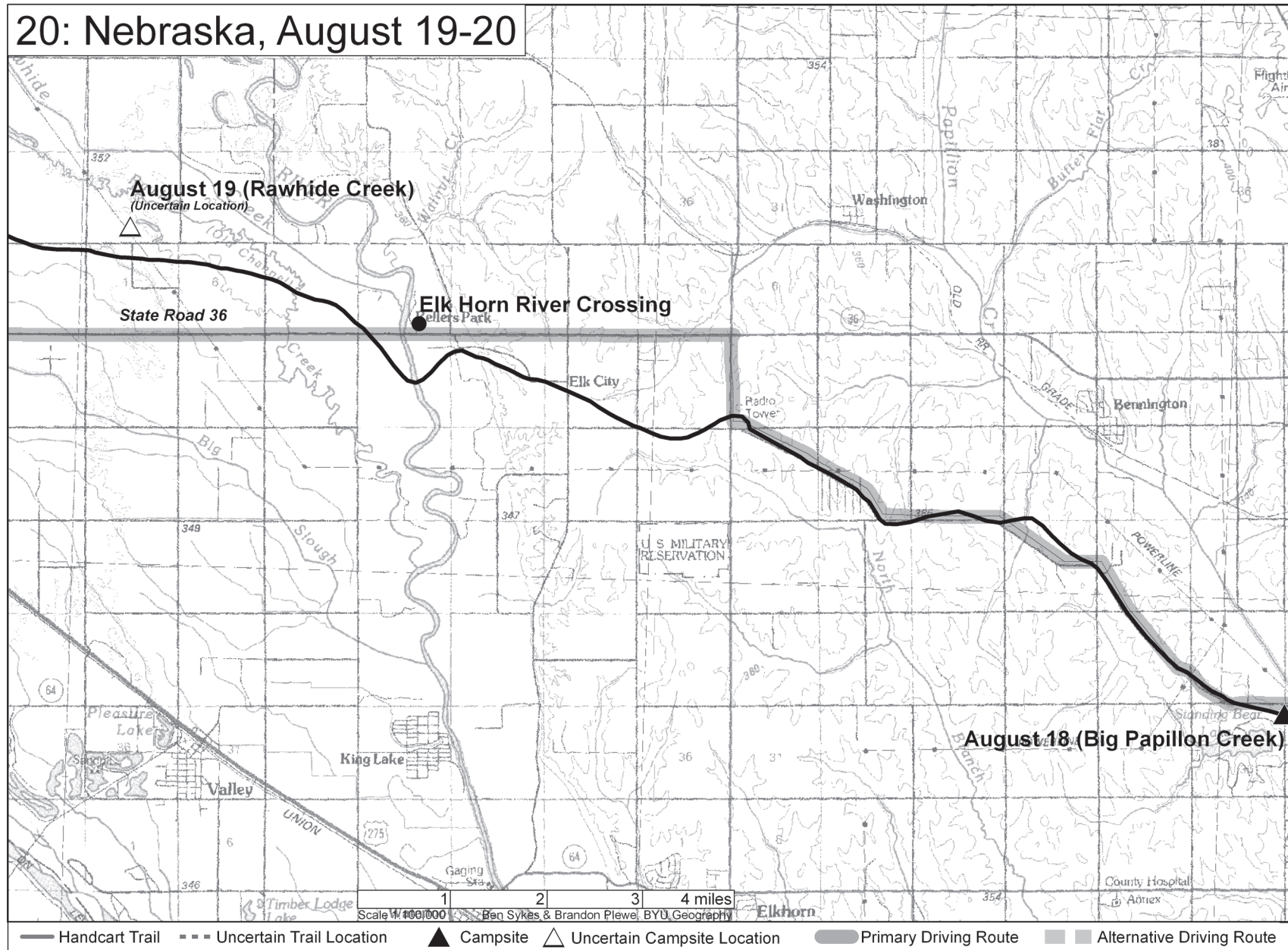
18: Iowa, August 9-11



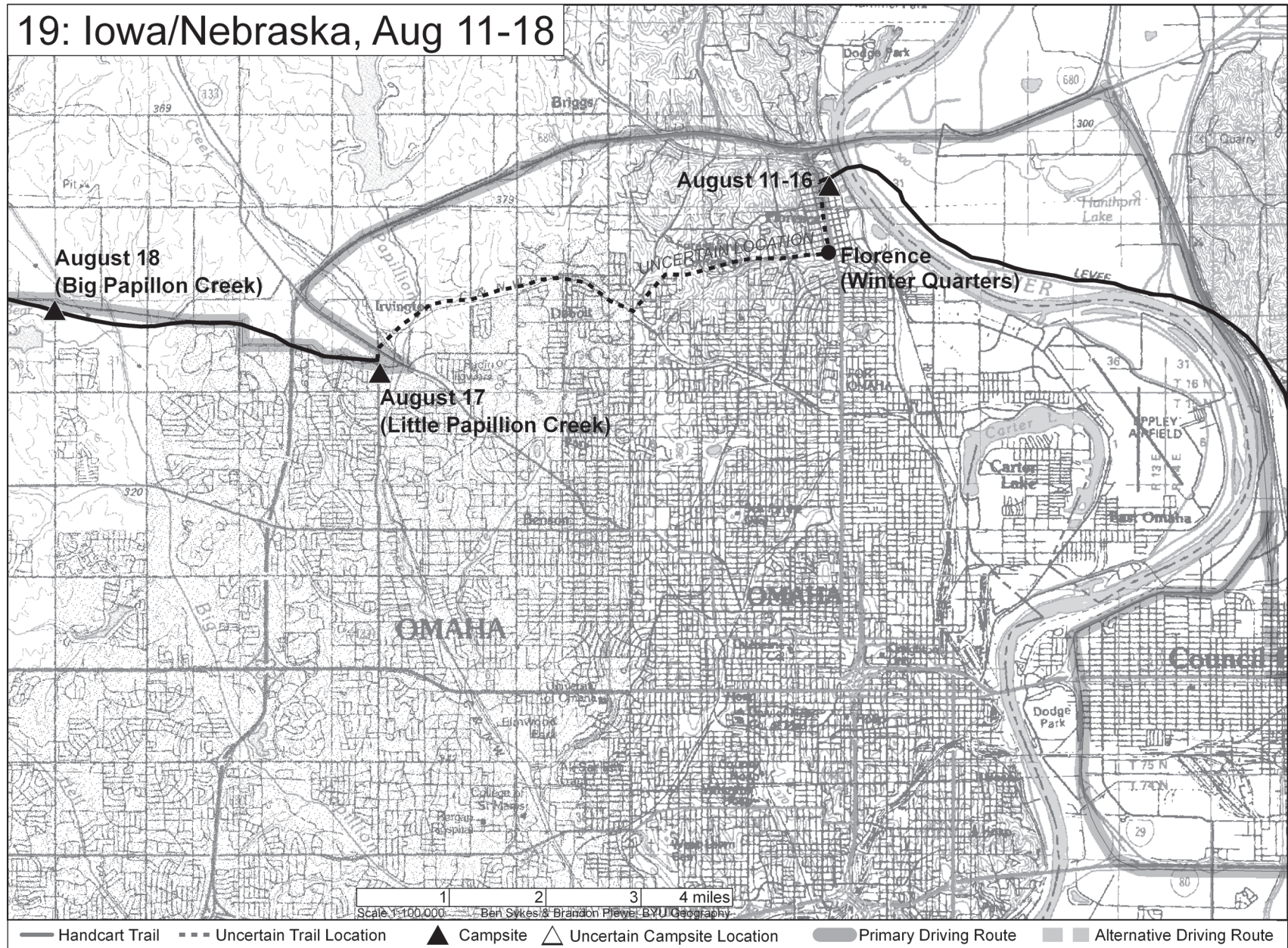
17: Iowa, August 8-9



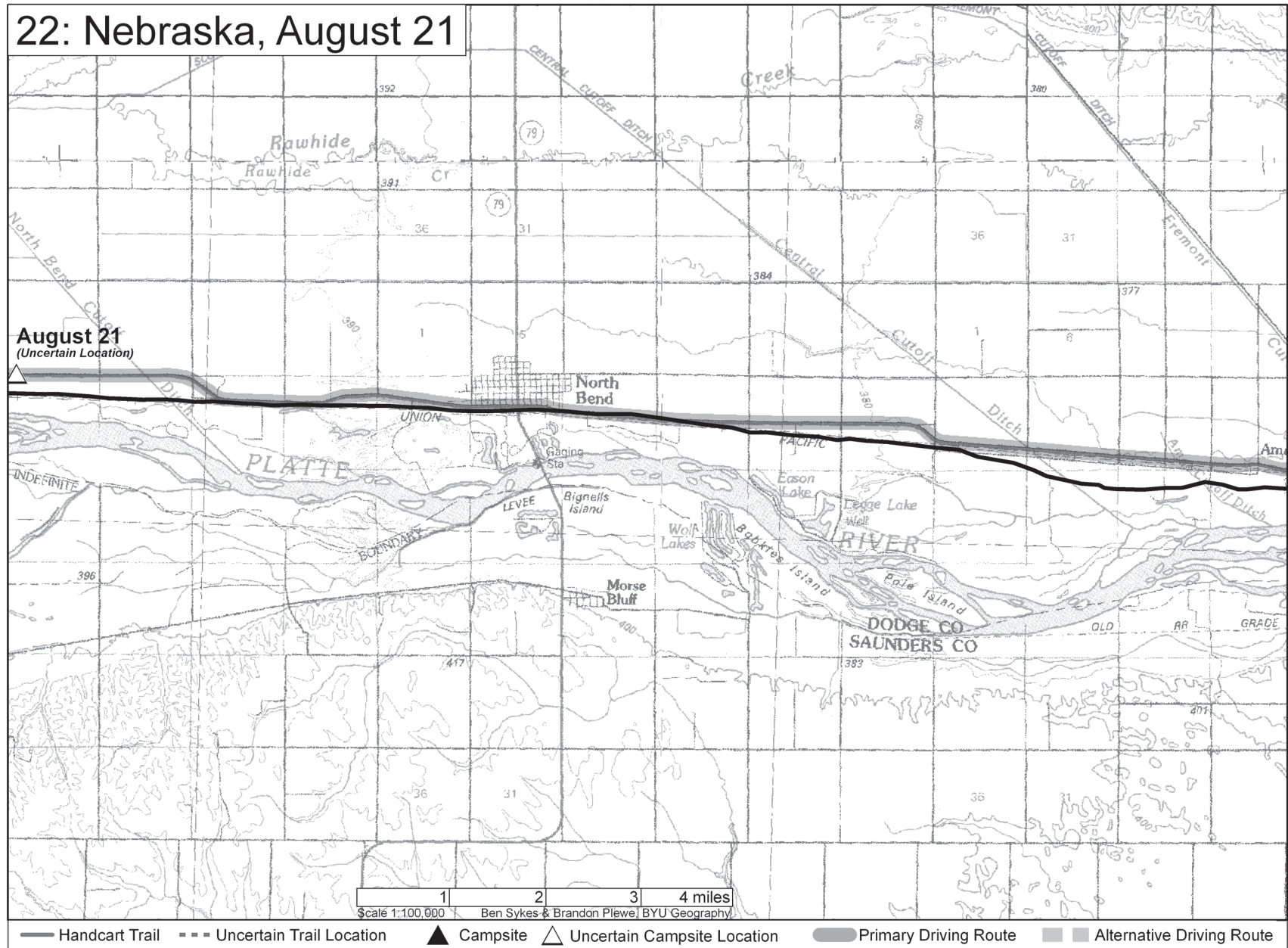
20: Nebraska, August 19-20



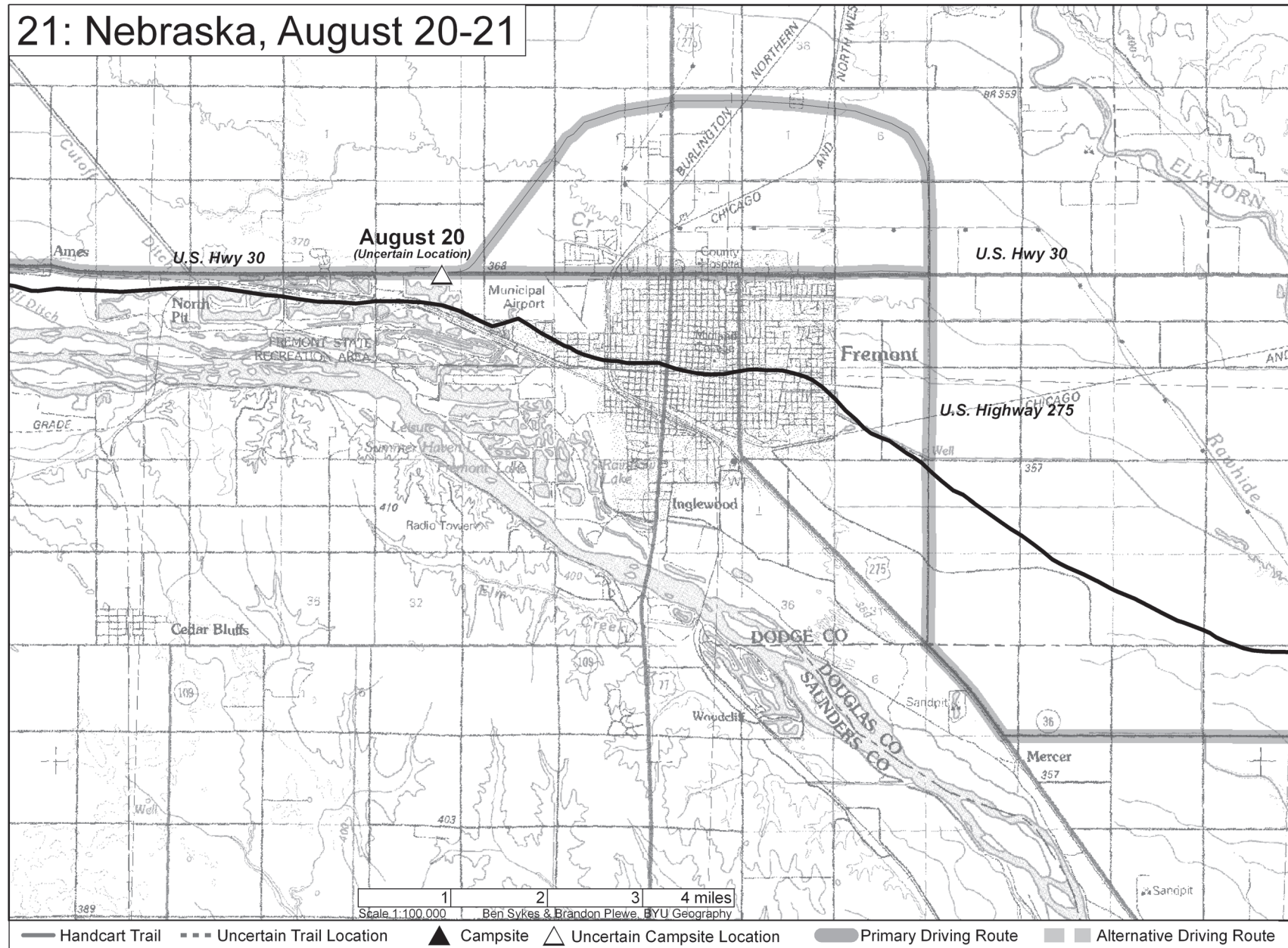
19: Iowa/Nebraska, Aug 11-18



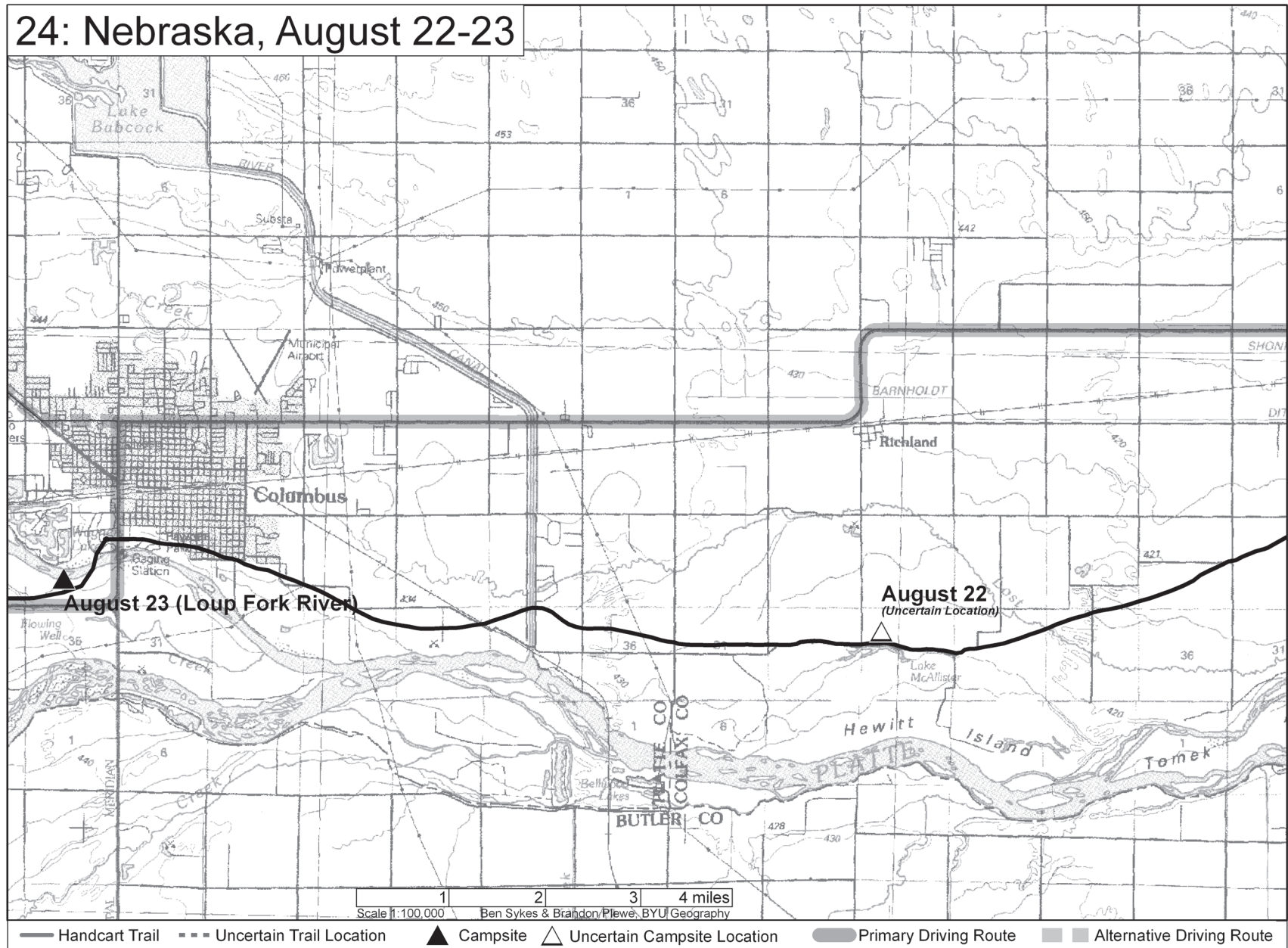
22: Nebraska, August 21



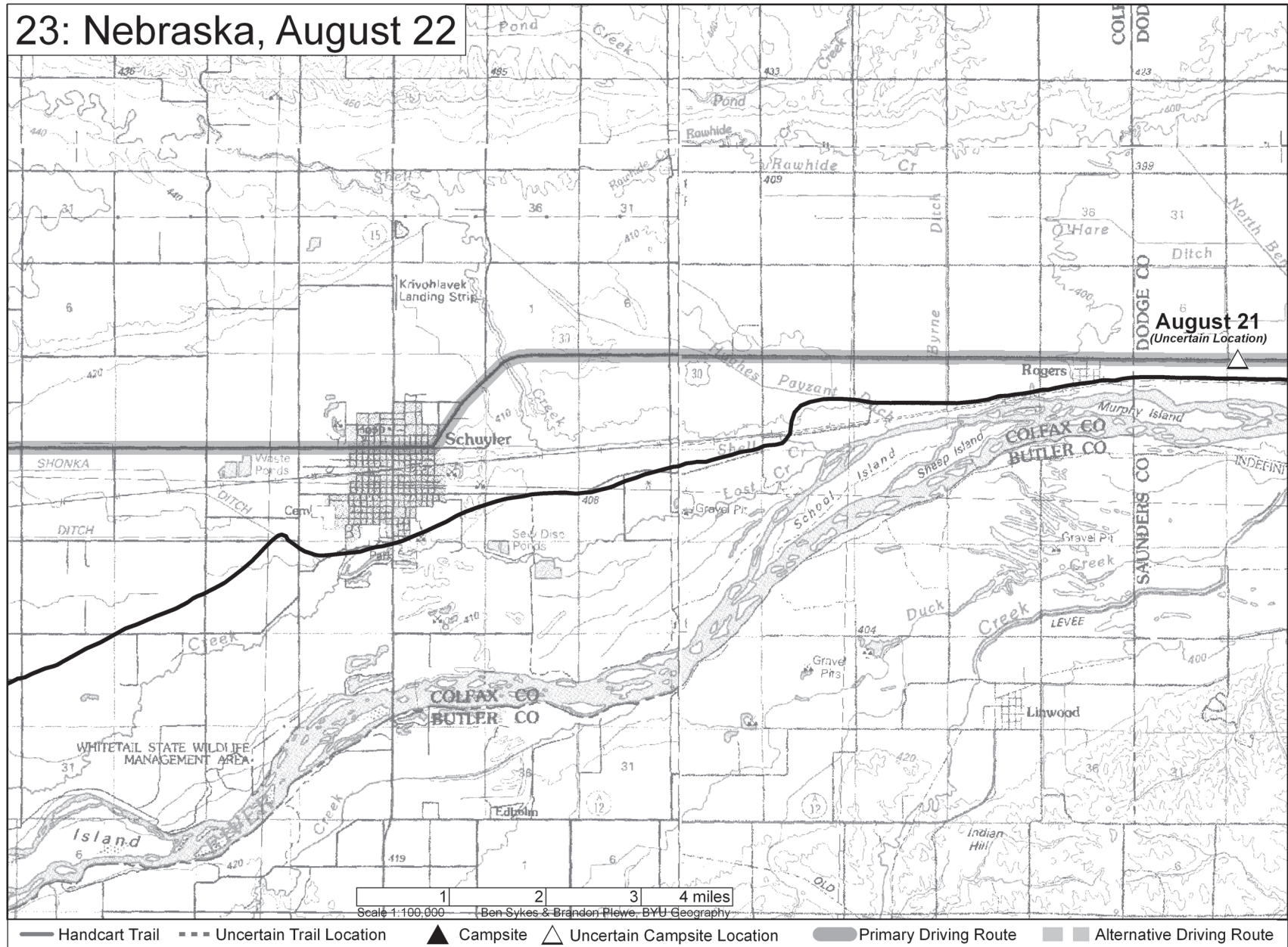
21: Nebraska, August 20-21



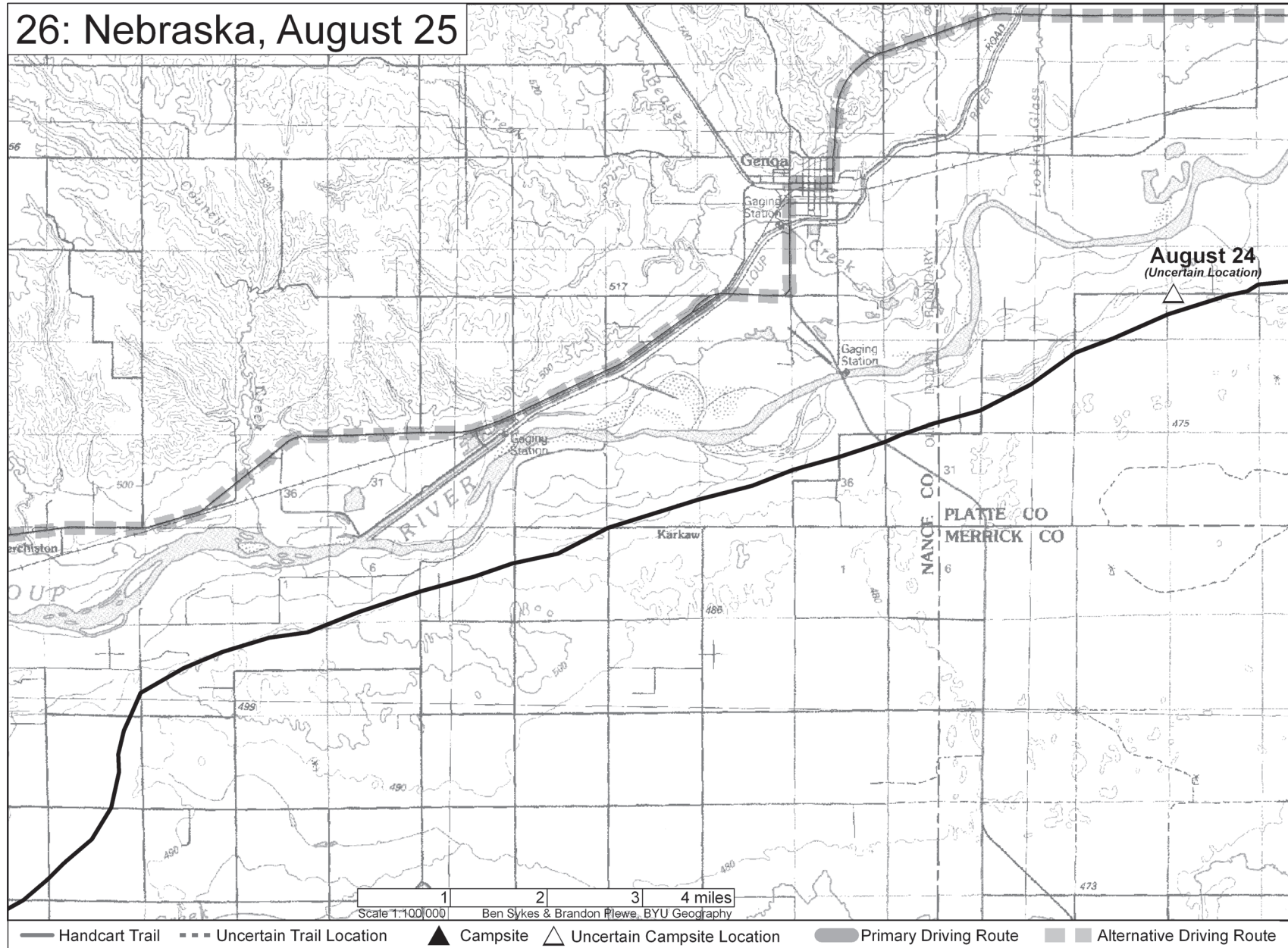
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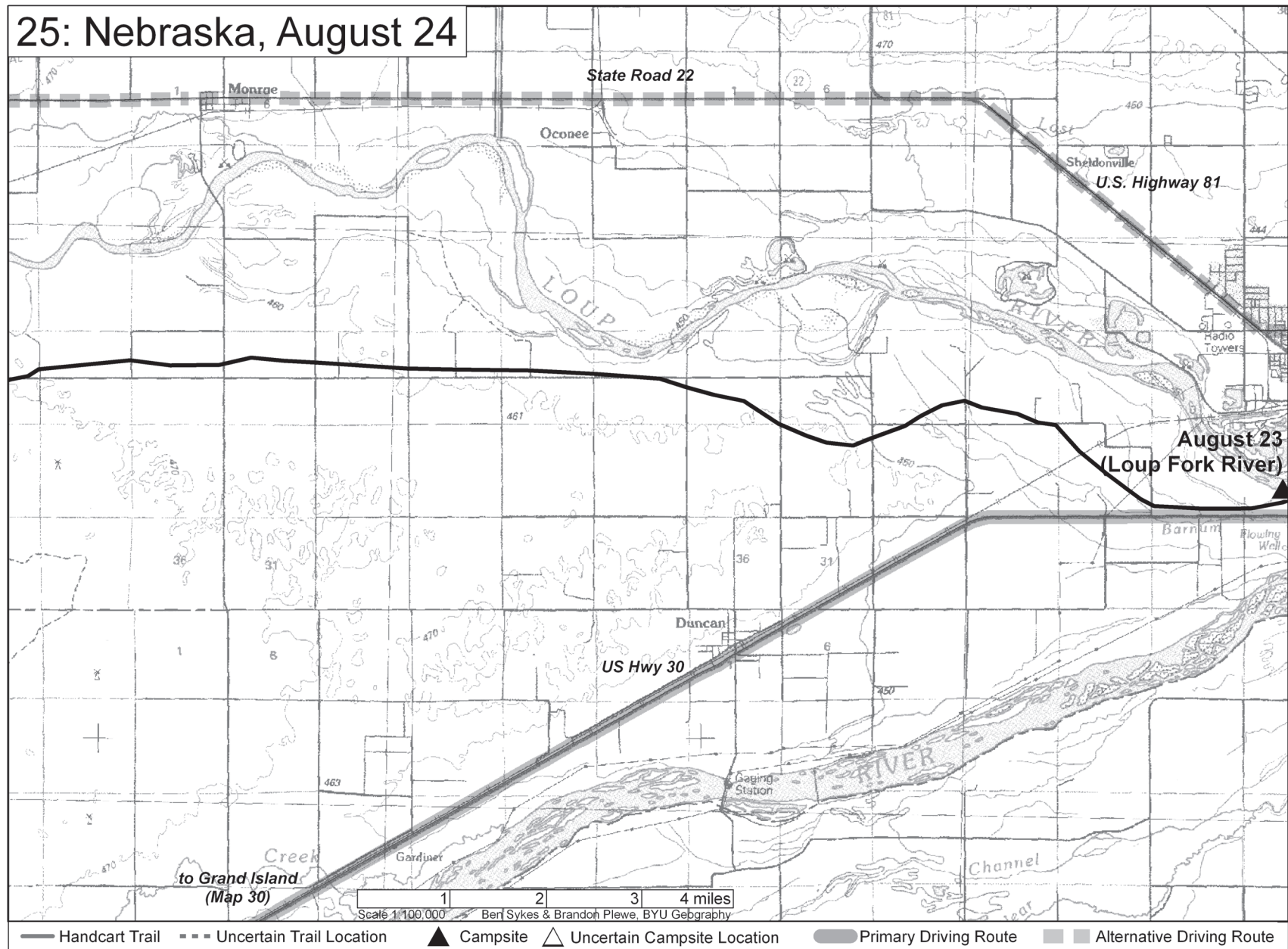
23: Nebraska, August 22



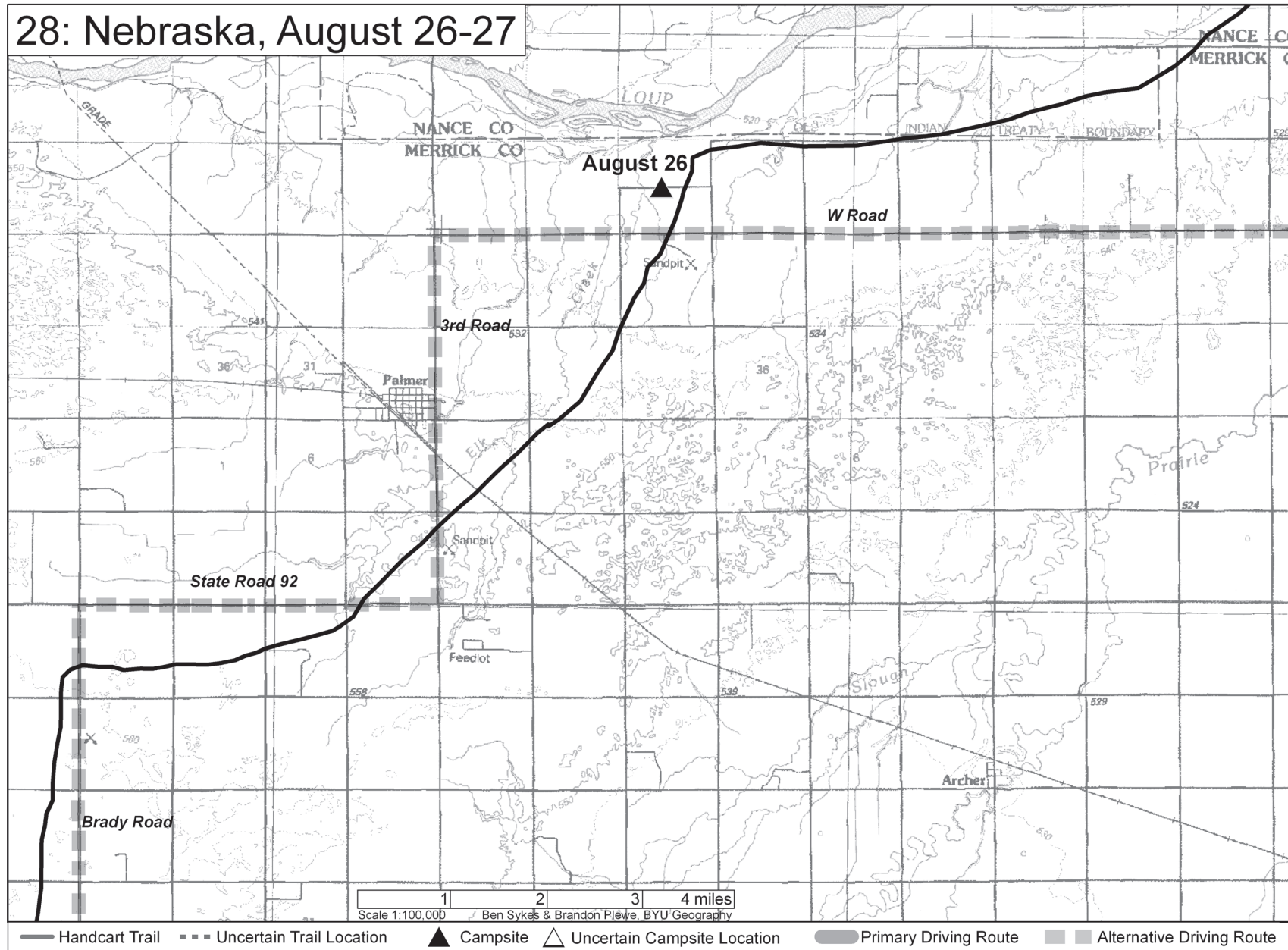
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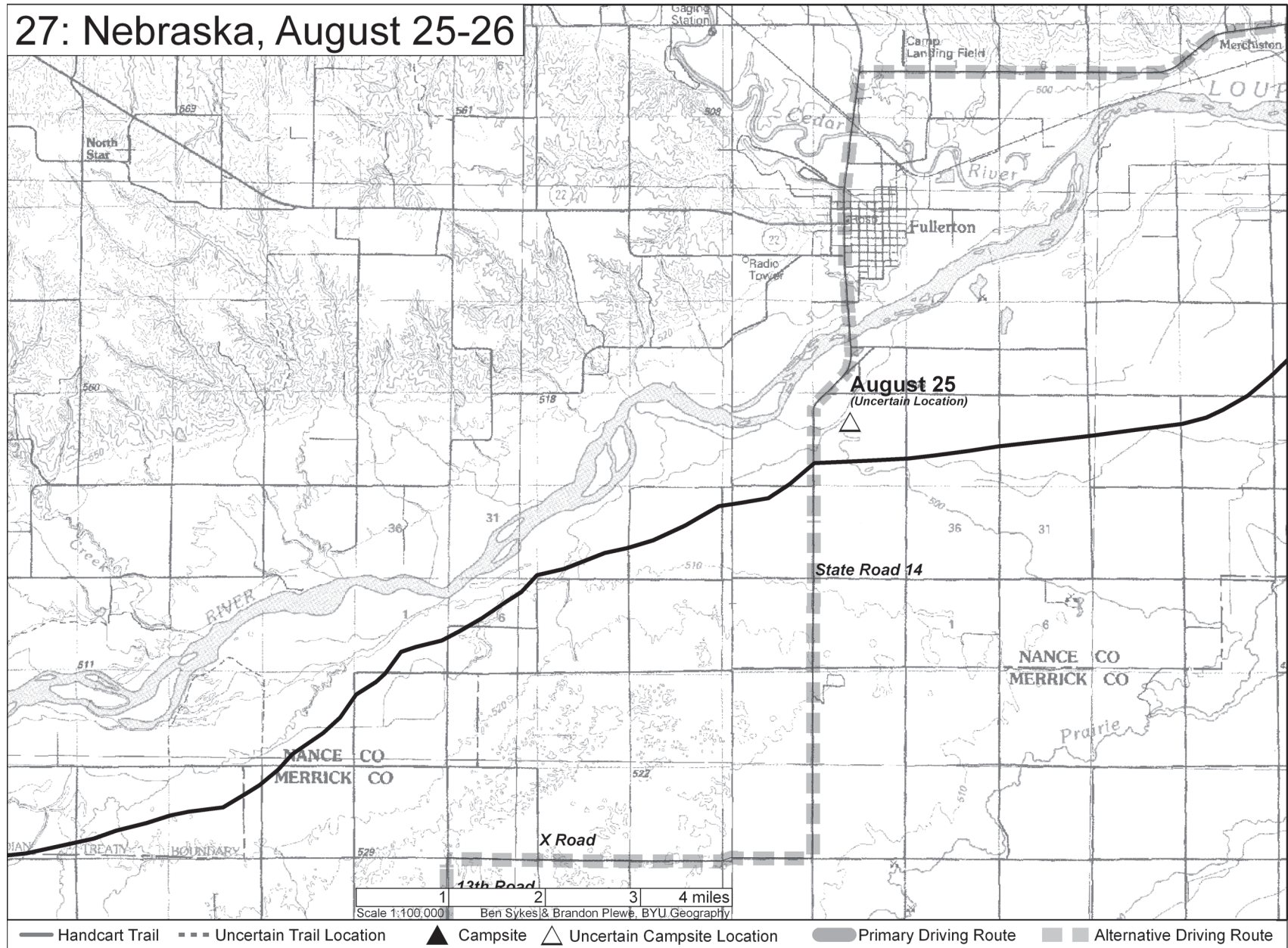
25: Nebraska, August 24



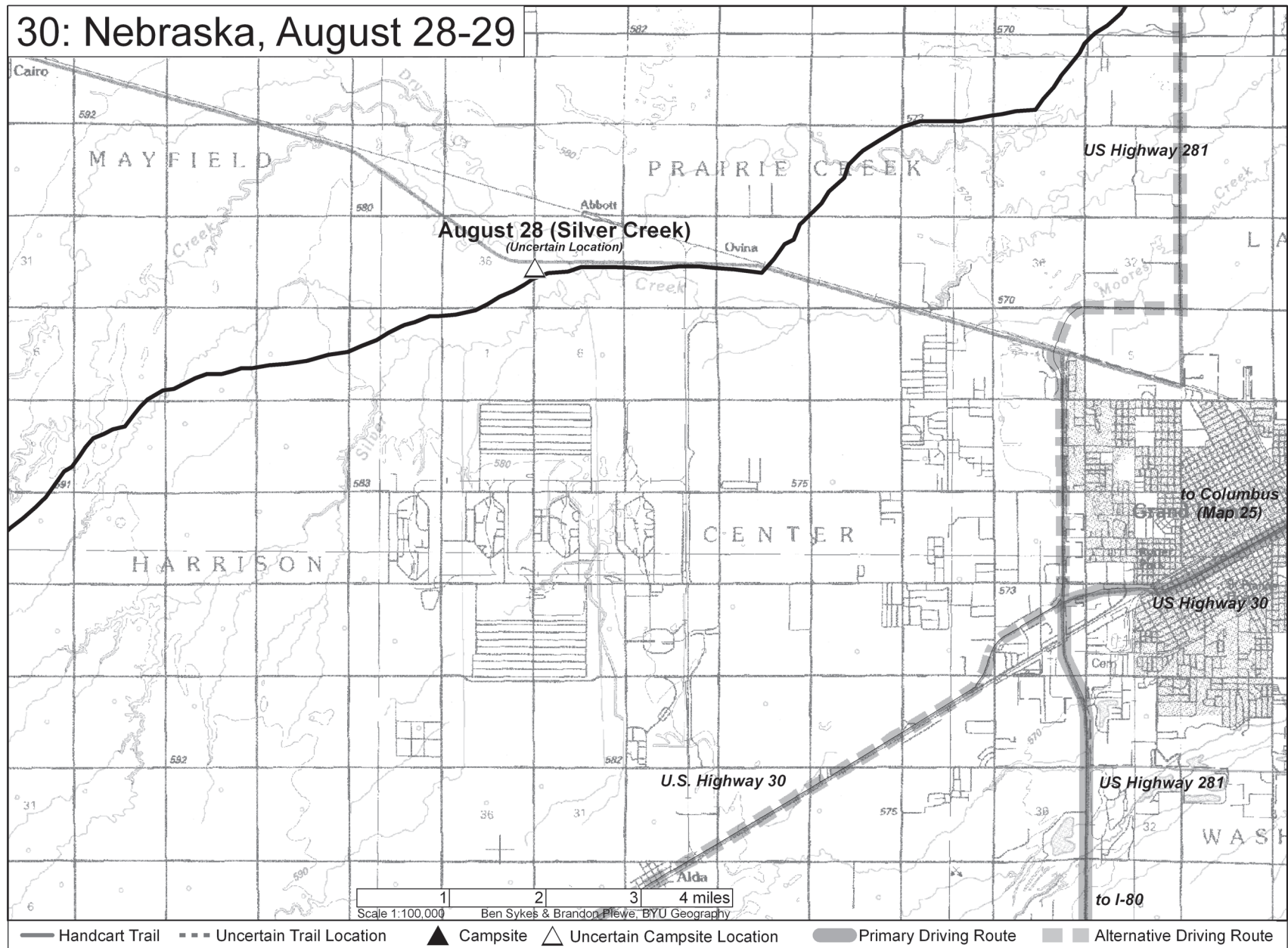
28: Nebraska, August 26-27



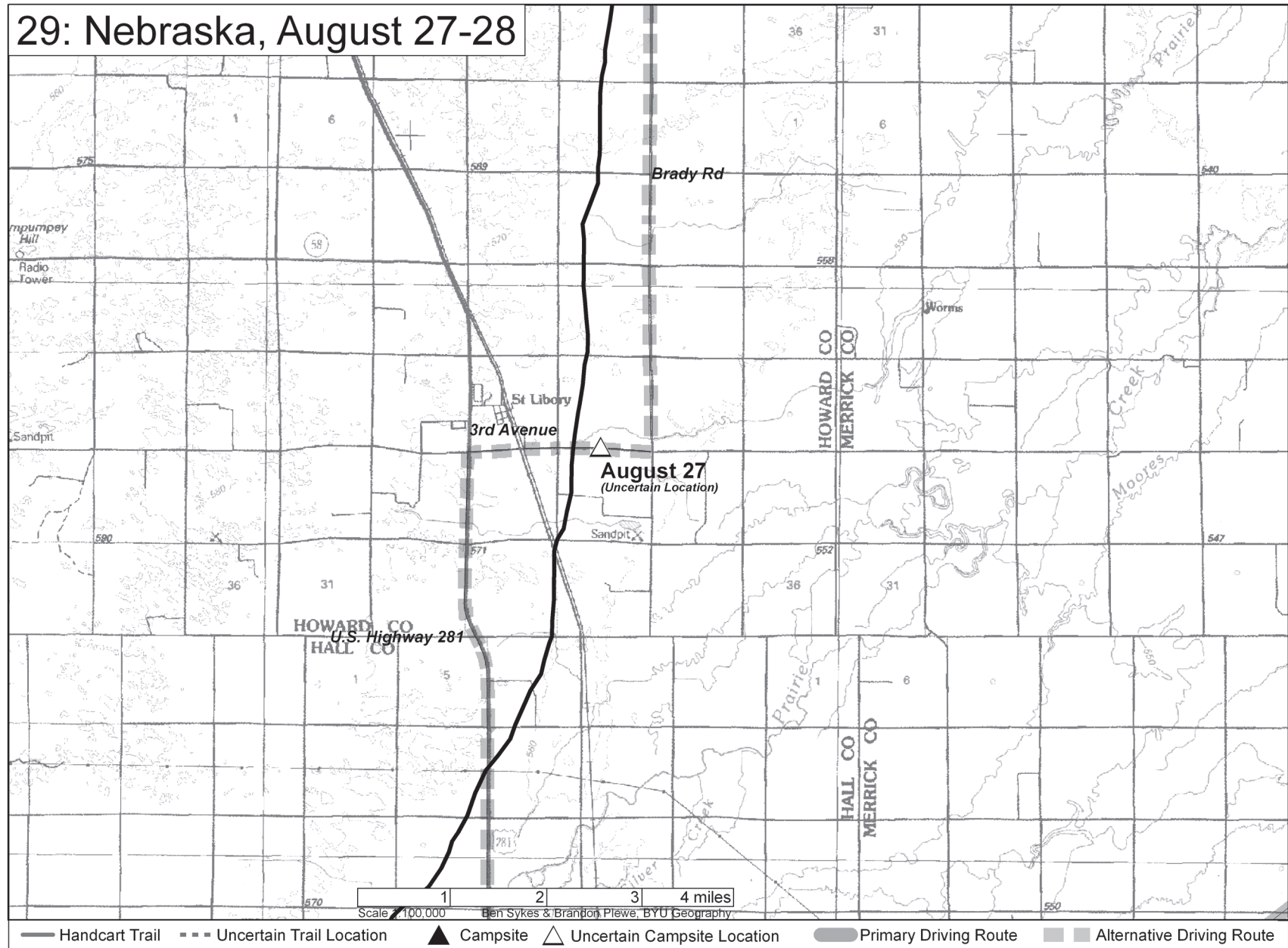
27: Nebraska, August 25-26



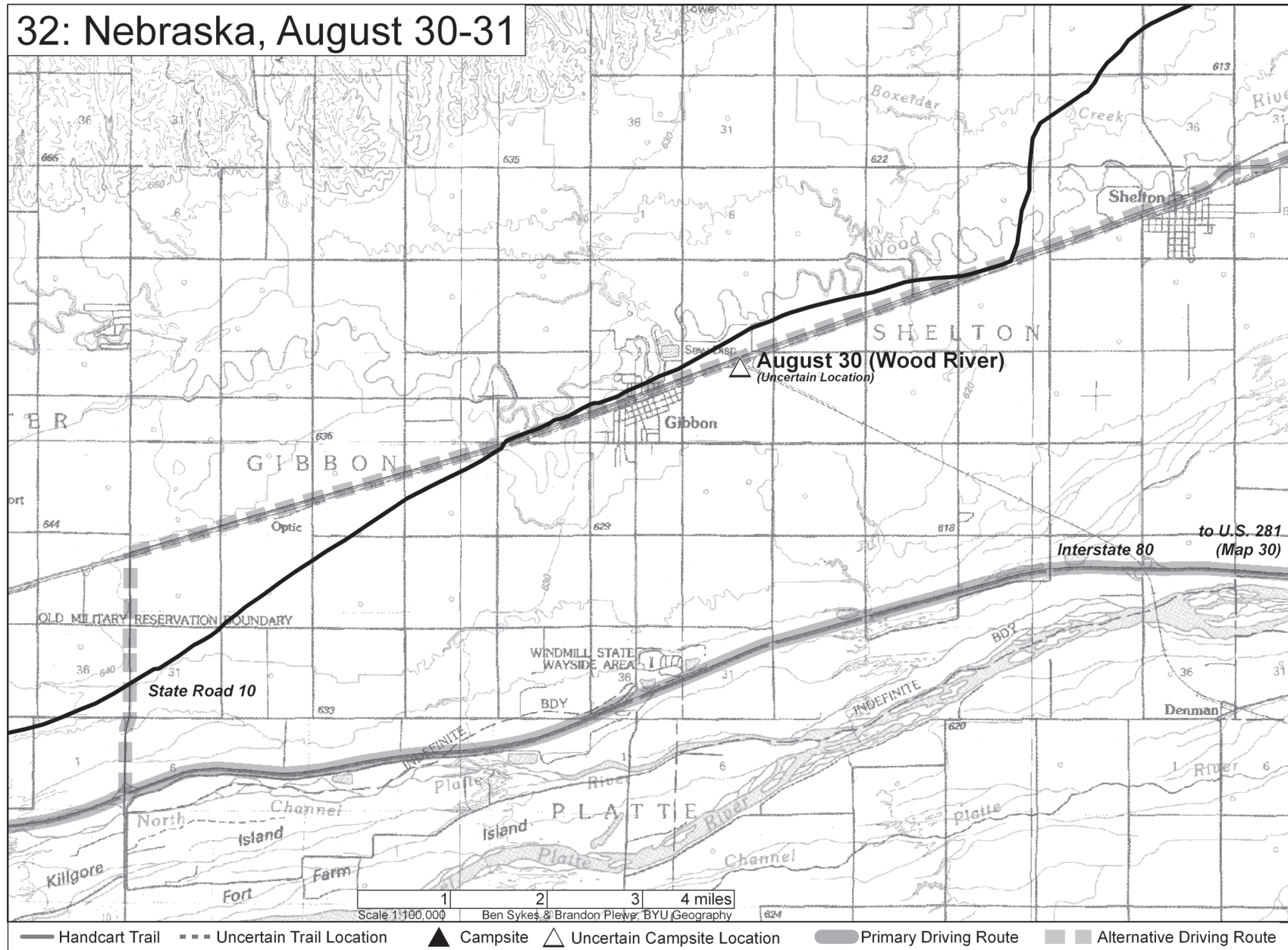
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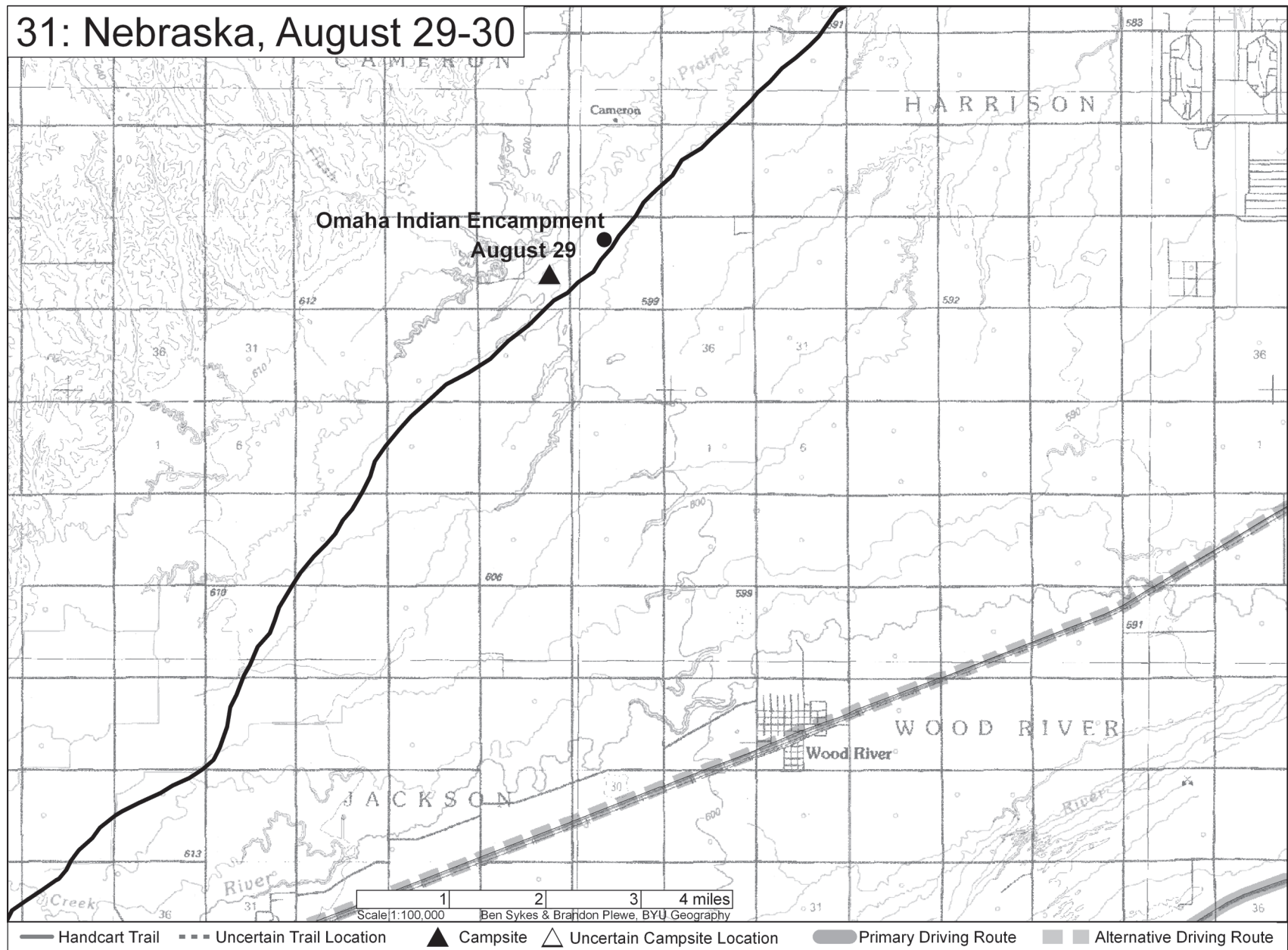
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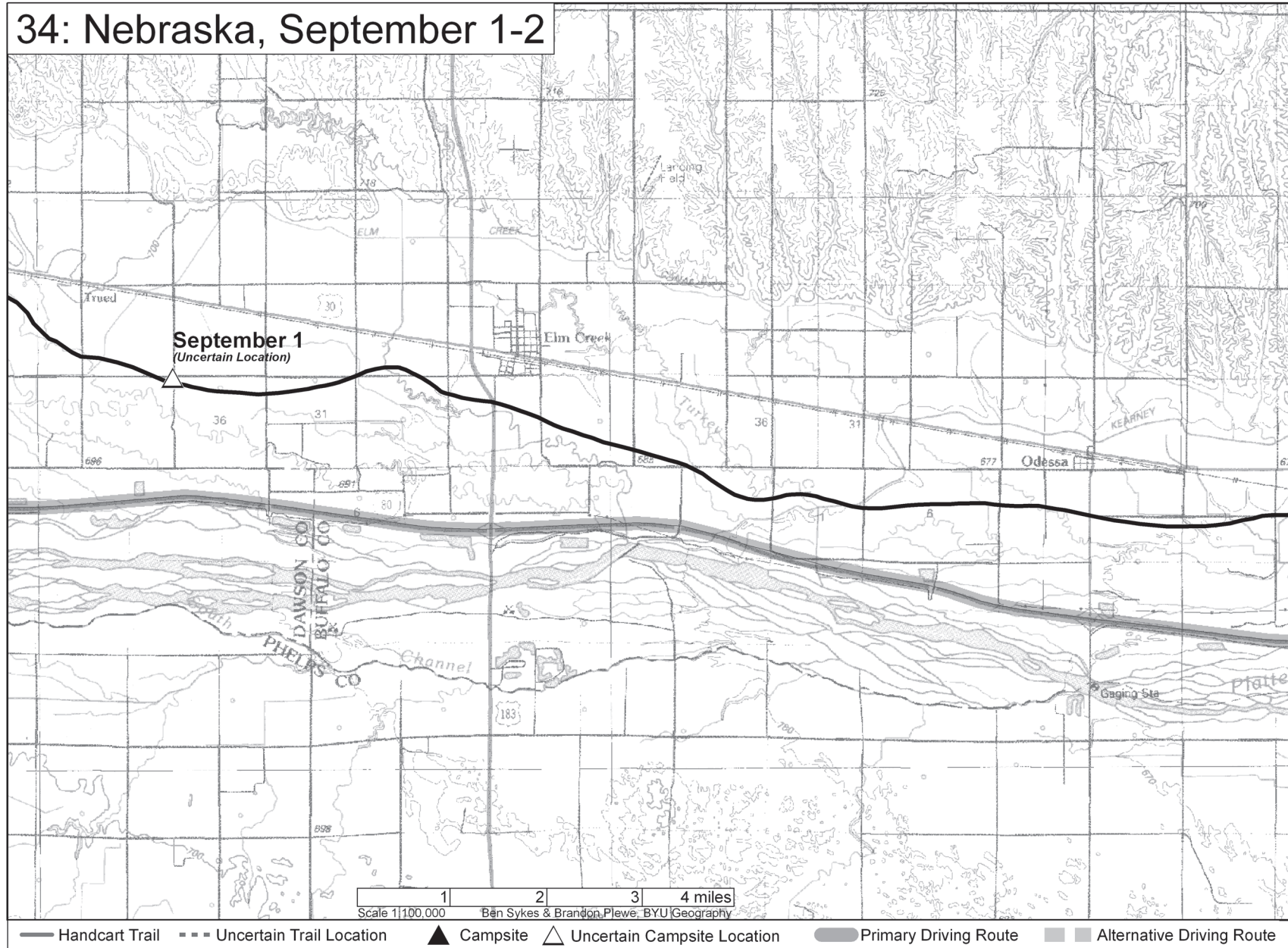
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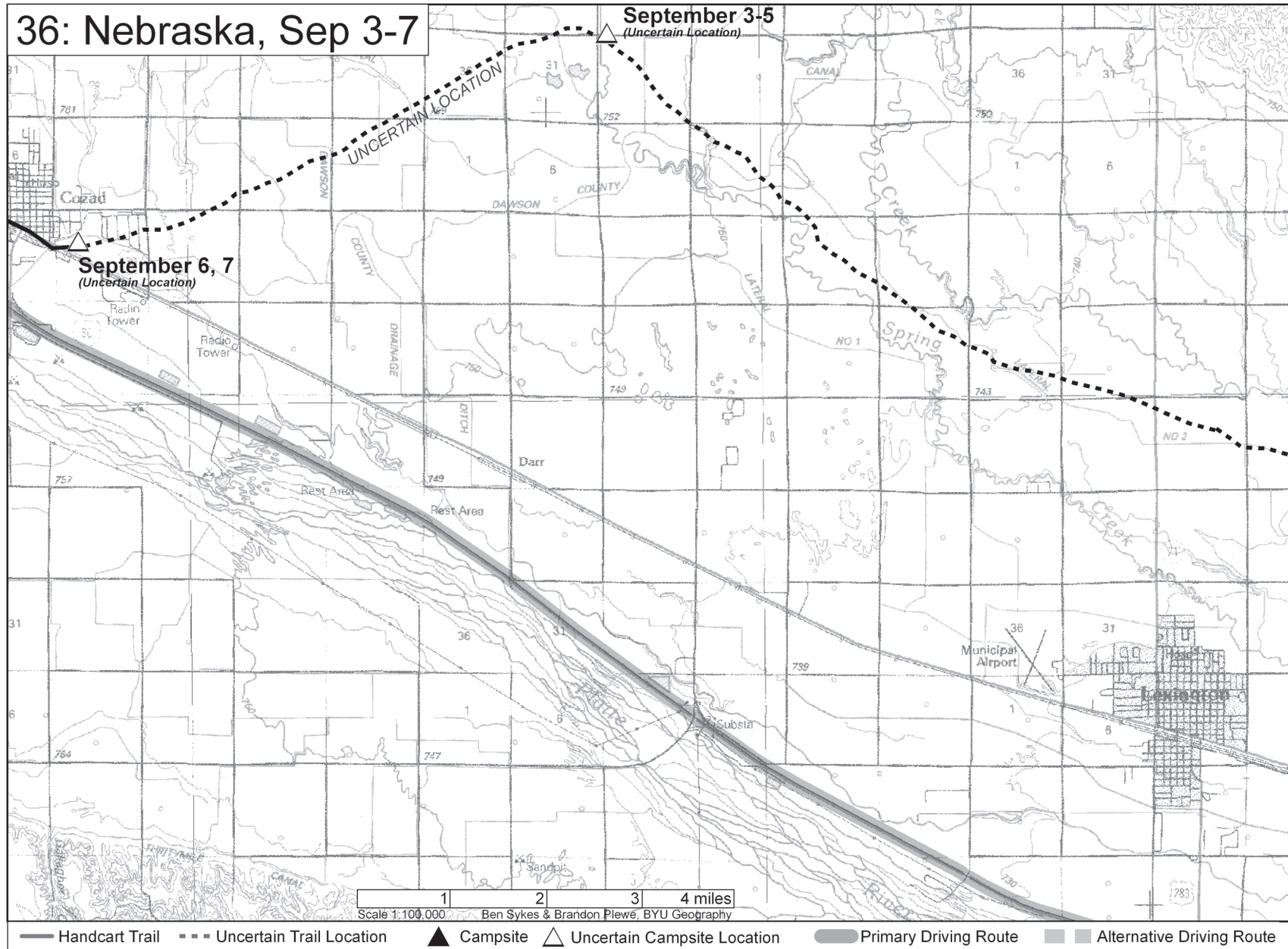
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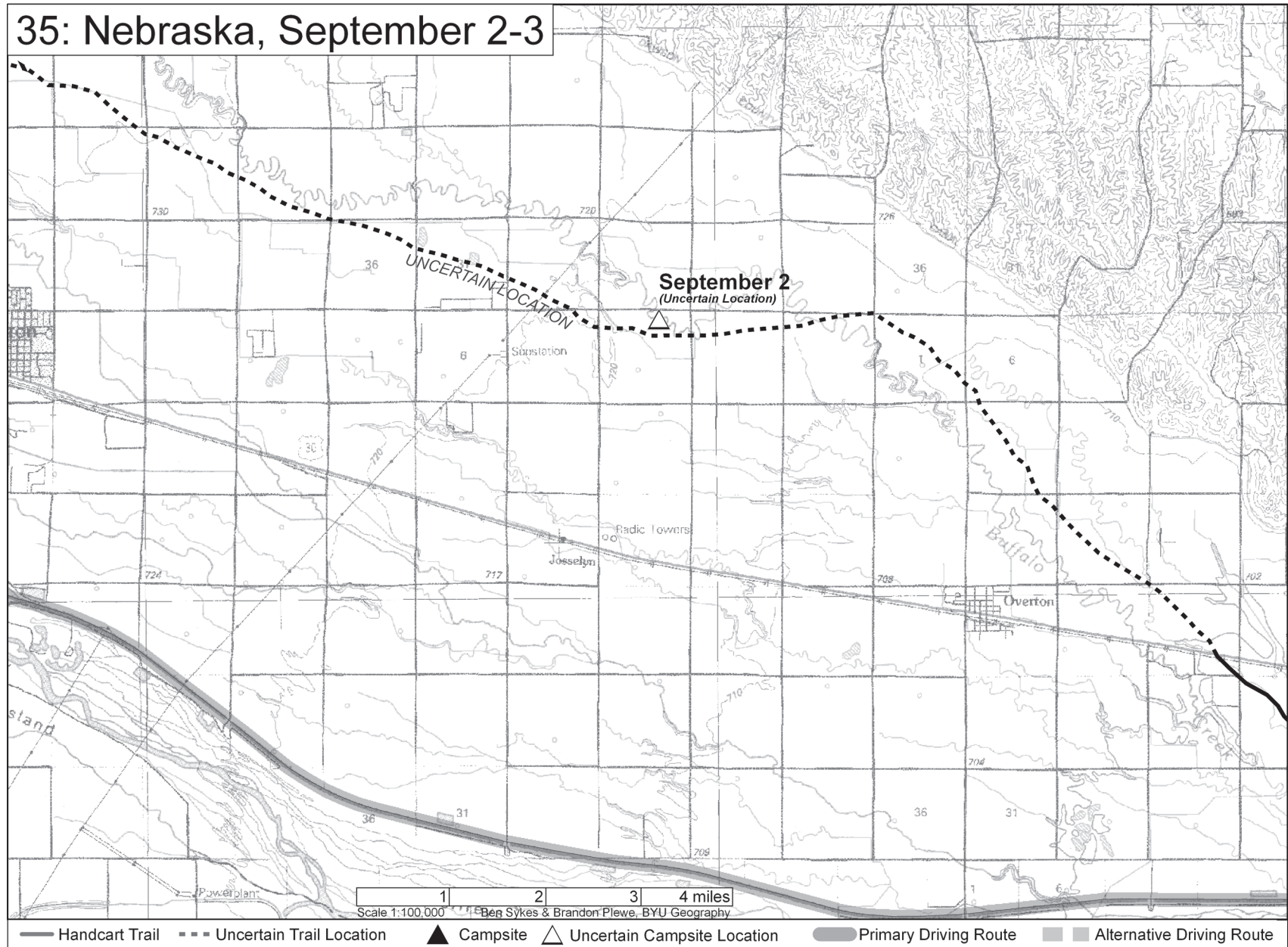
34: Nebraska, September 1-2



36: Nebraska, Sep 3-7



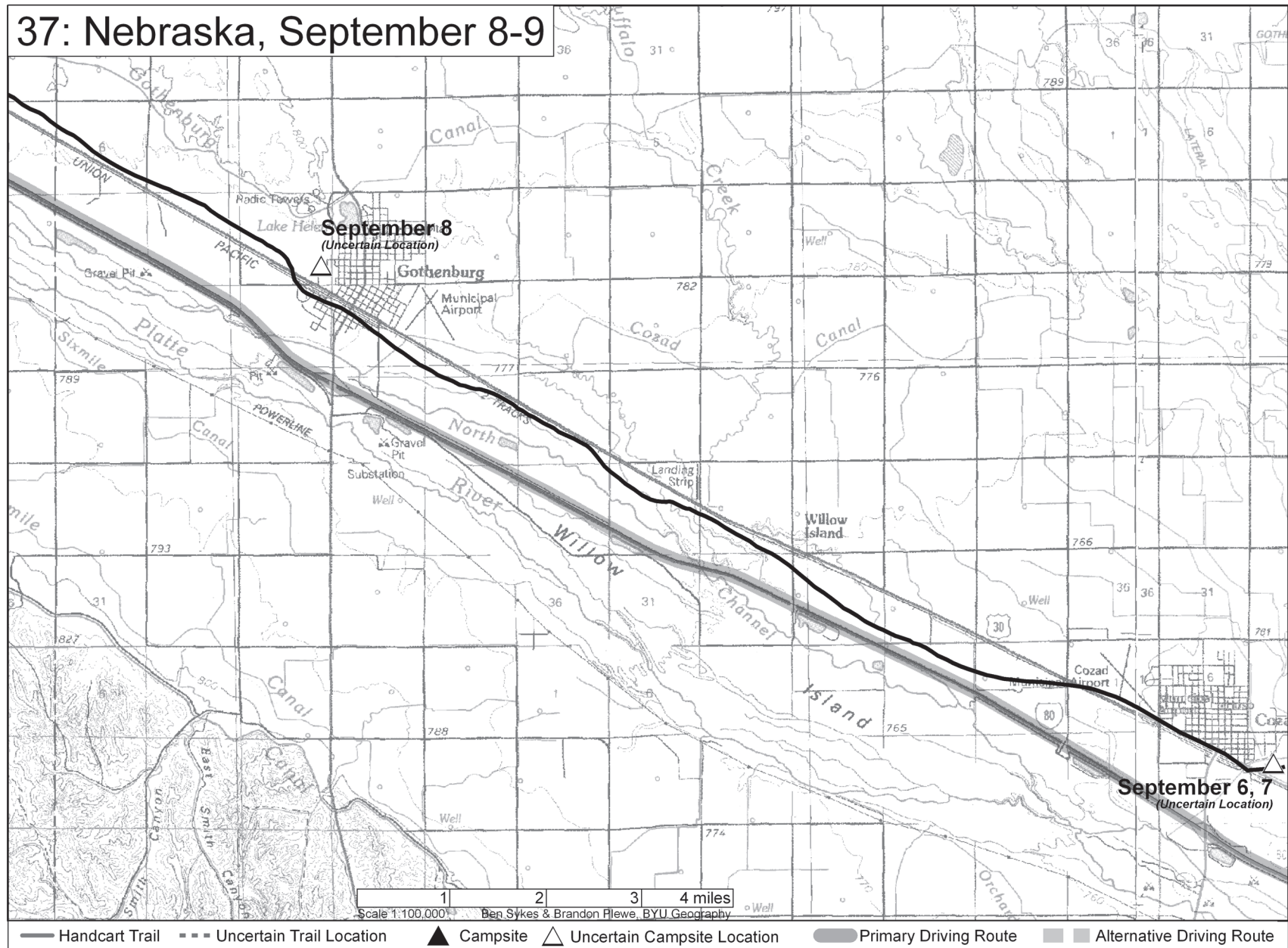
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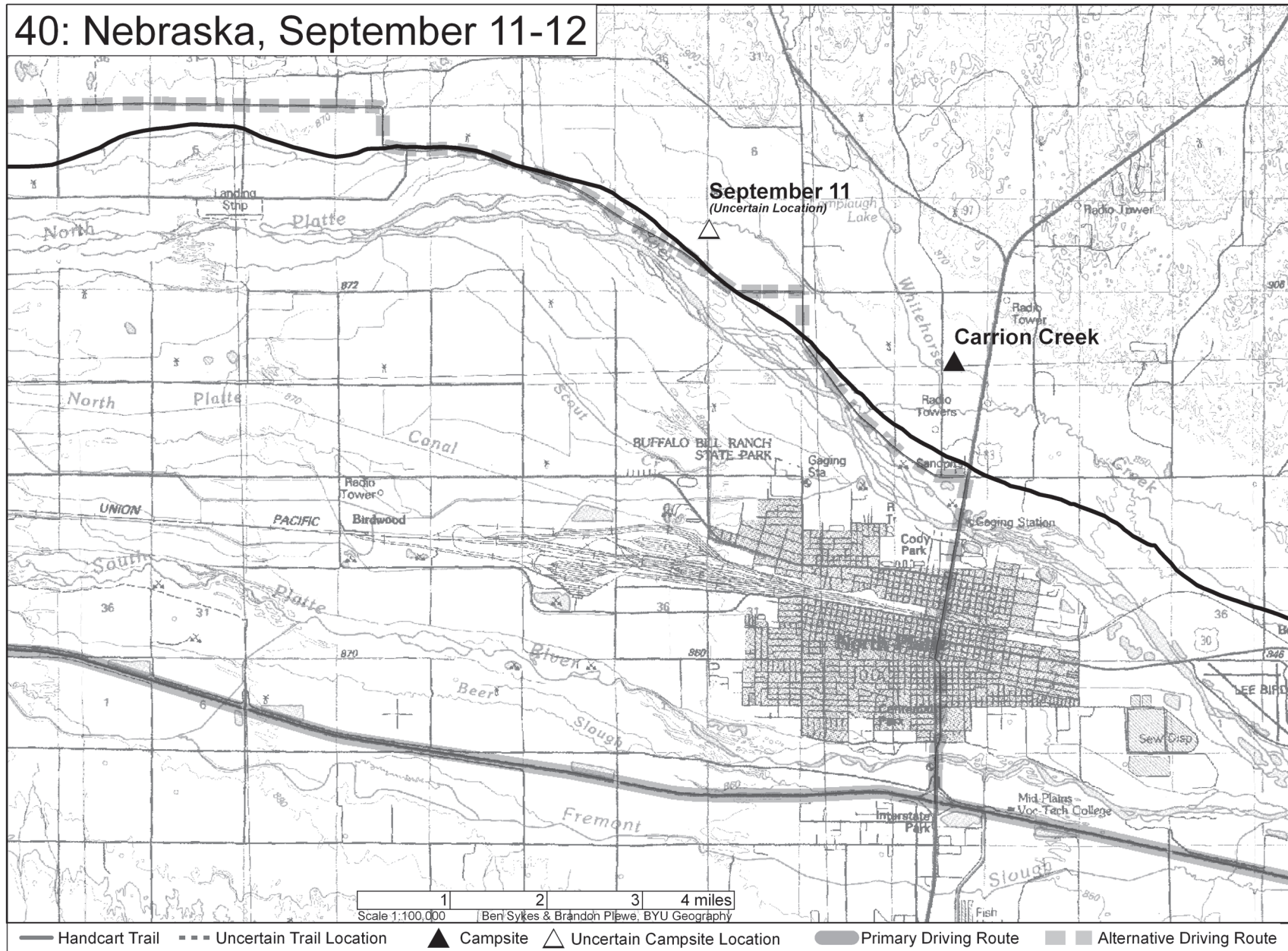
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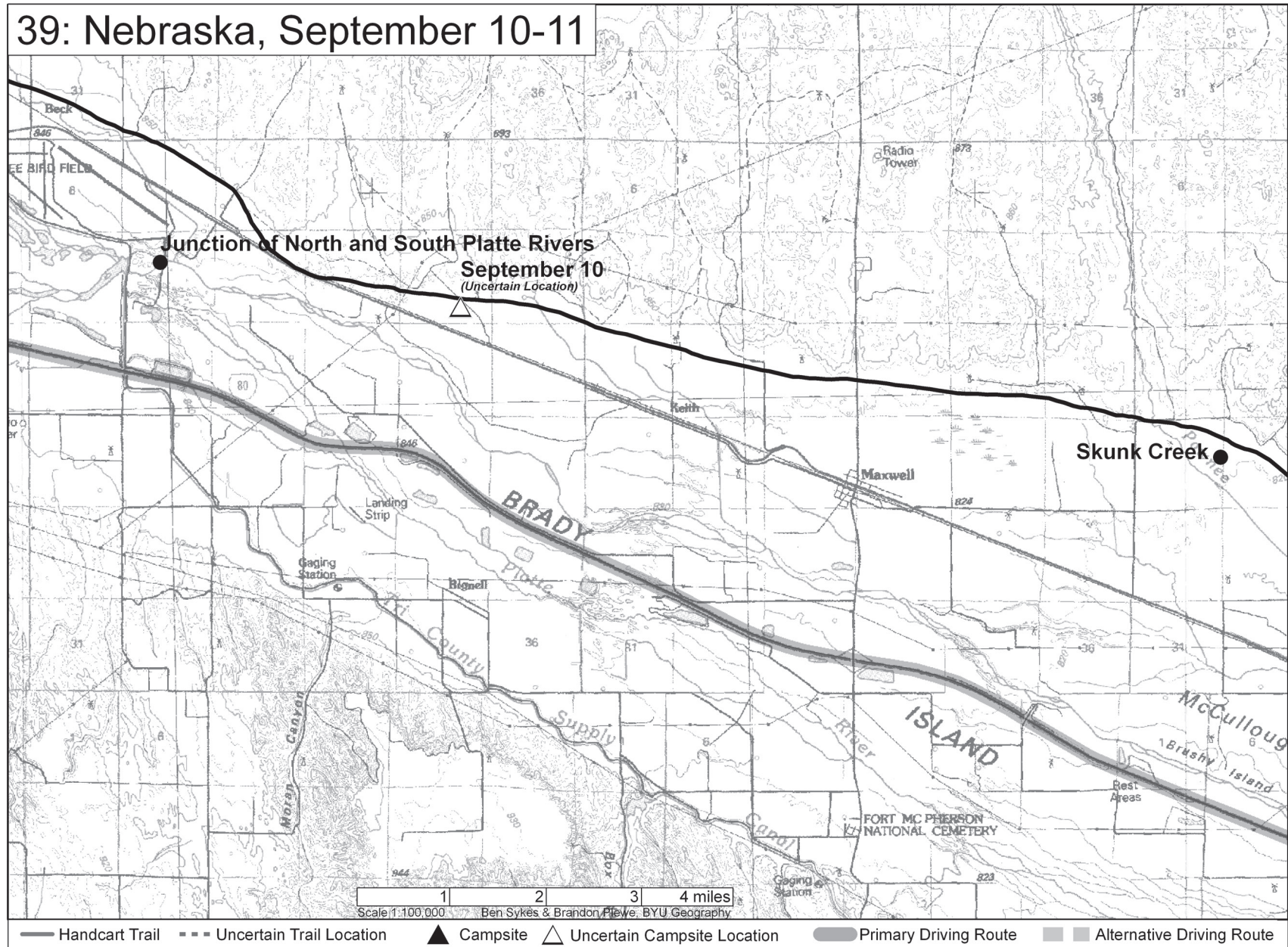
37: Nebraska, September 8-9



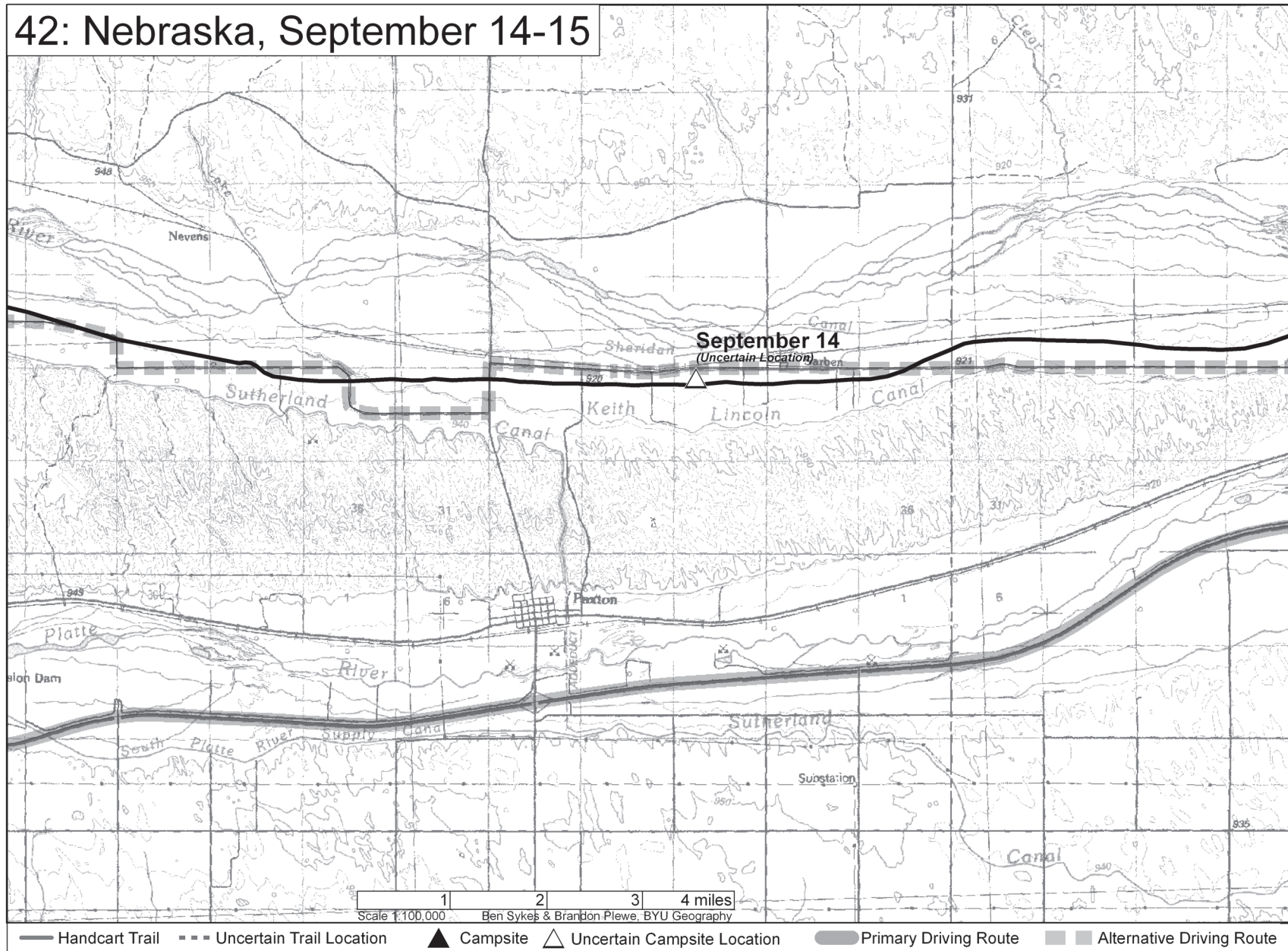
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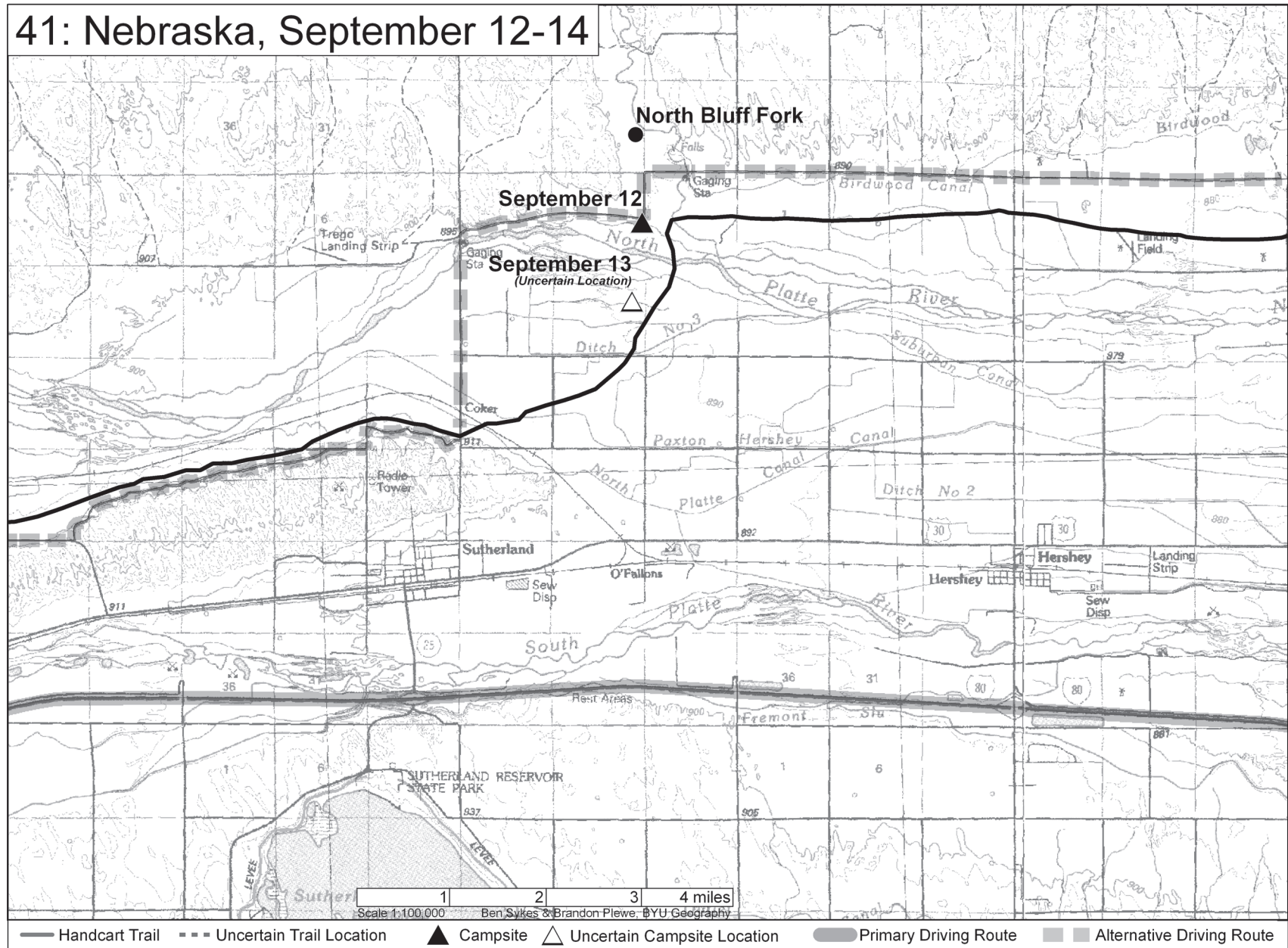
39: Nebraska, September 10-11



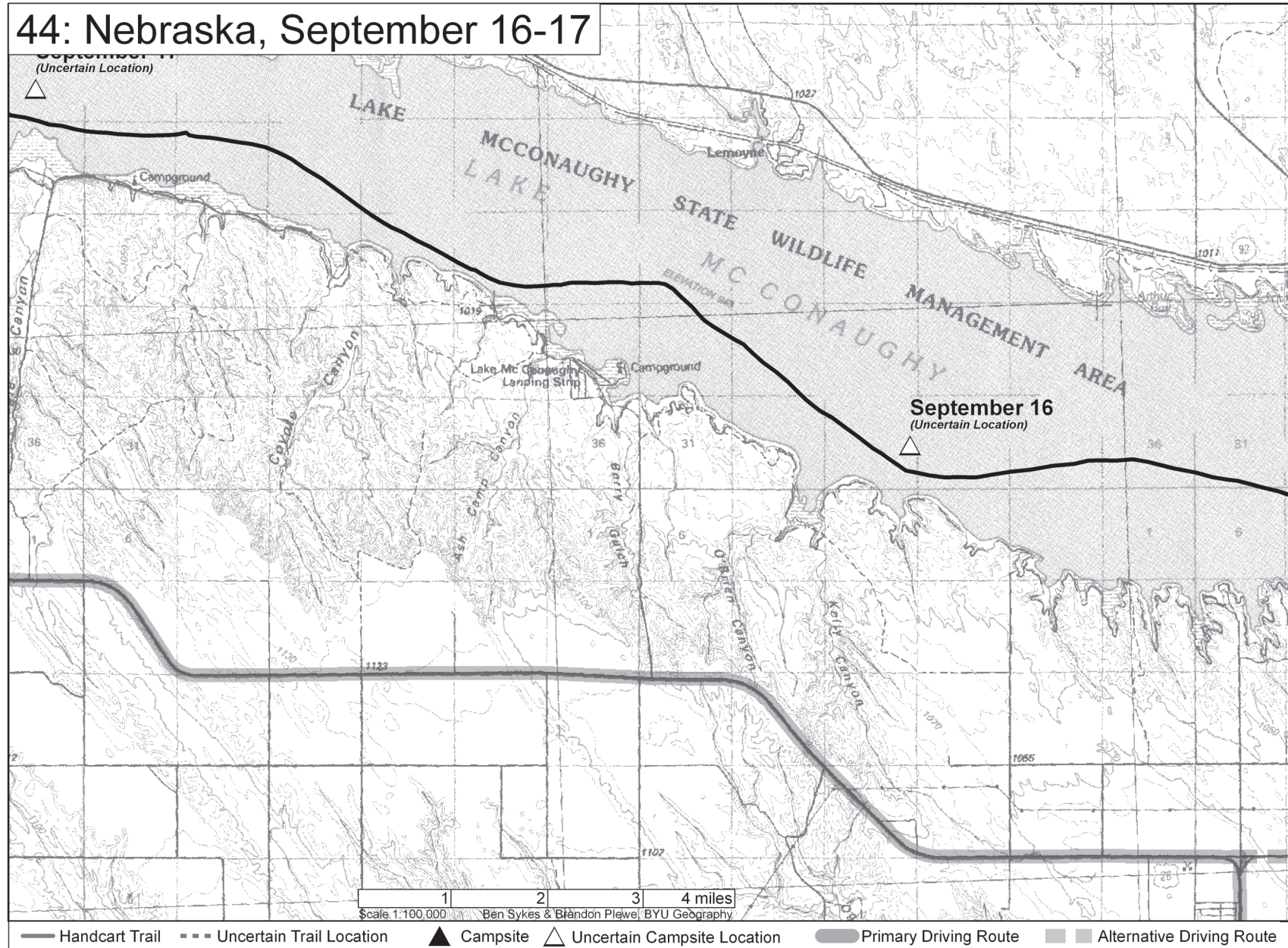
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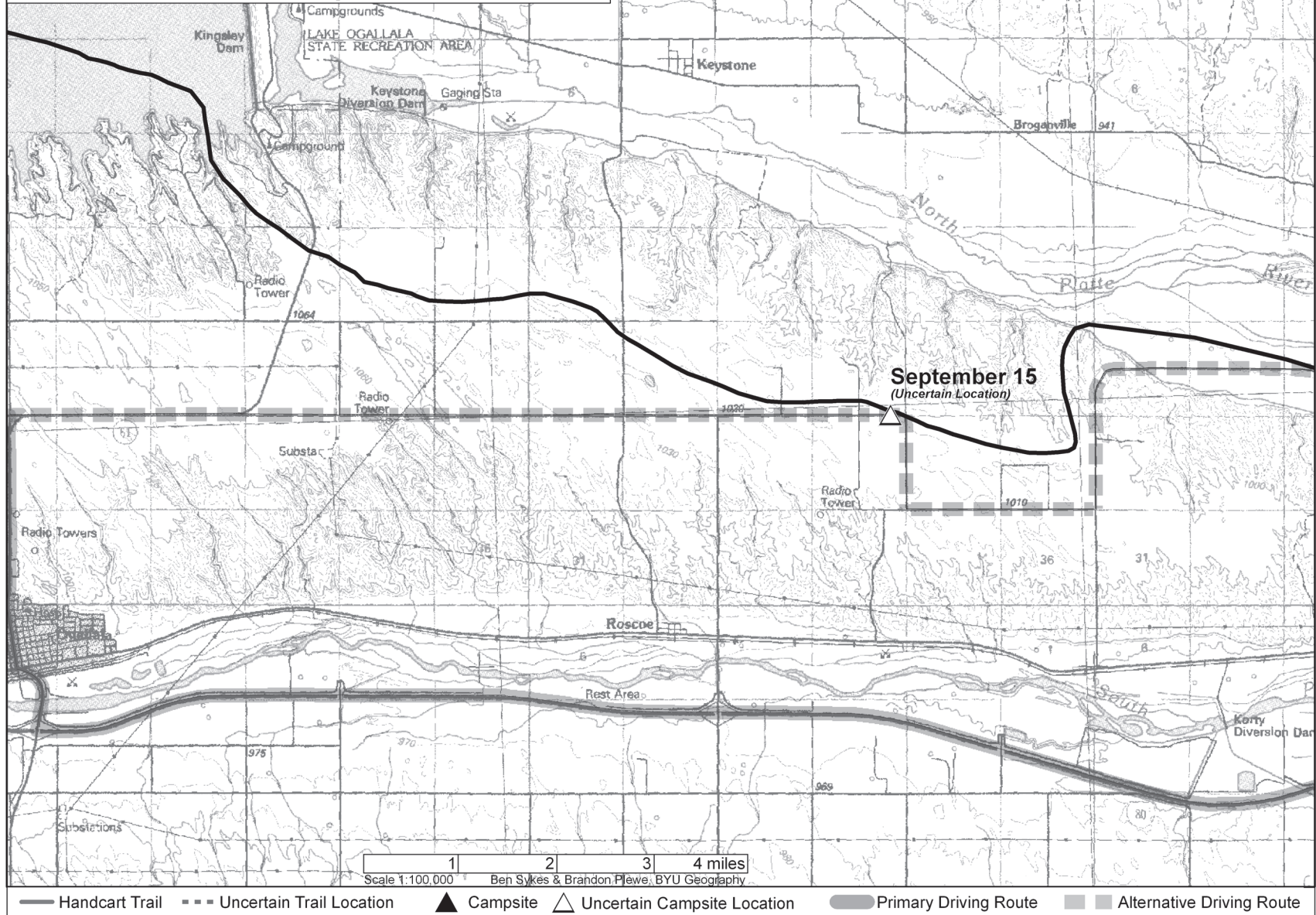
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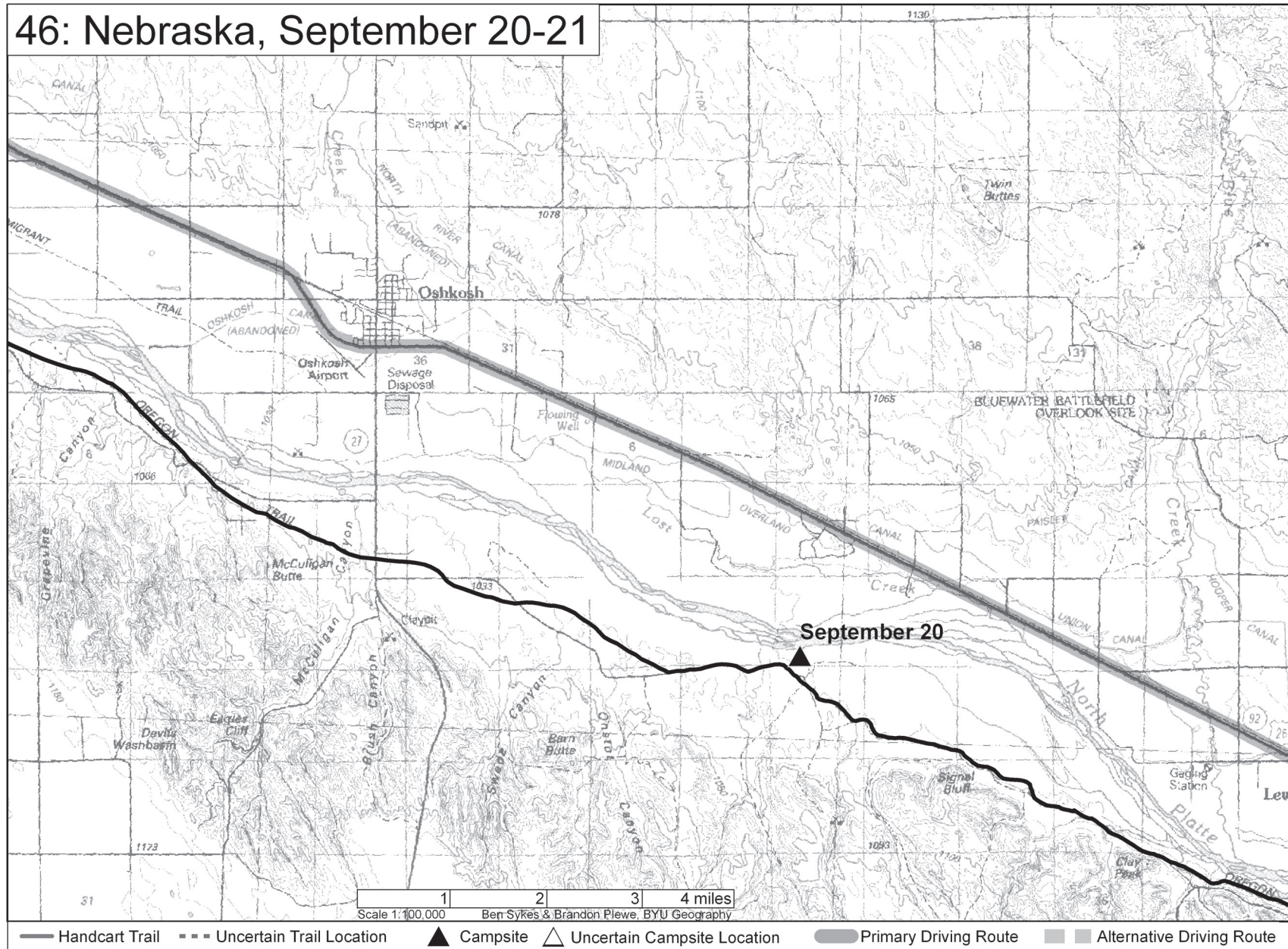
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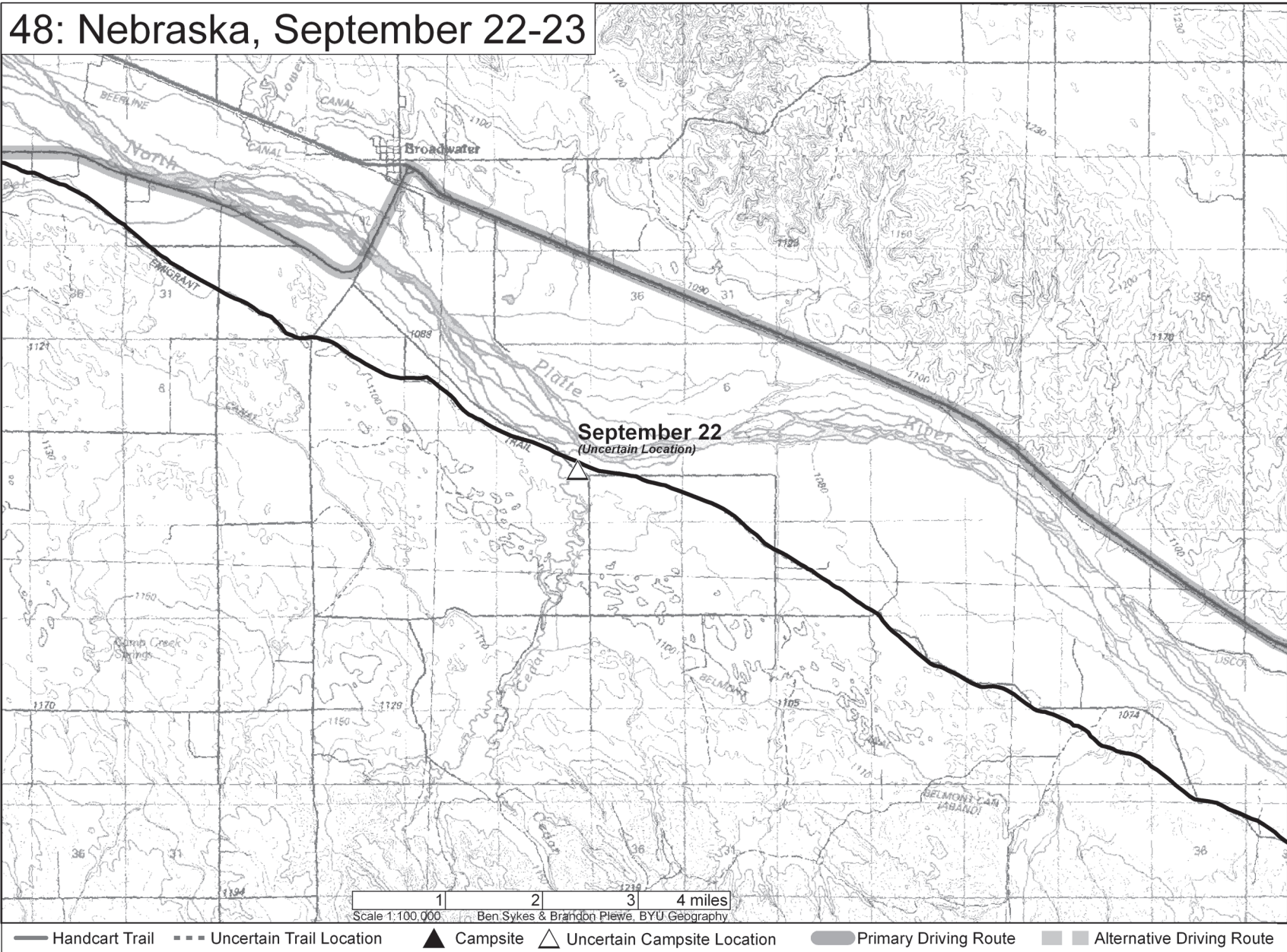
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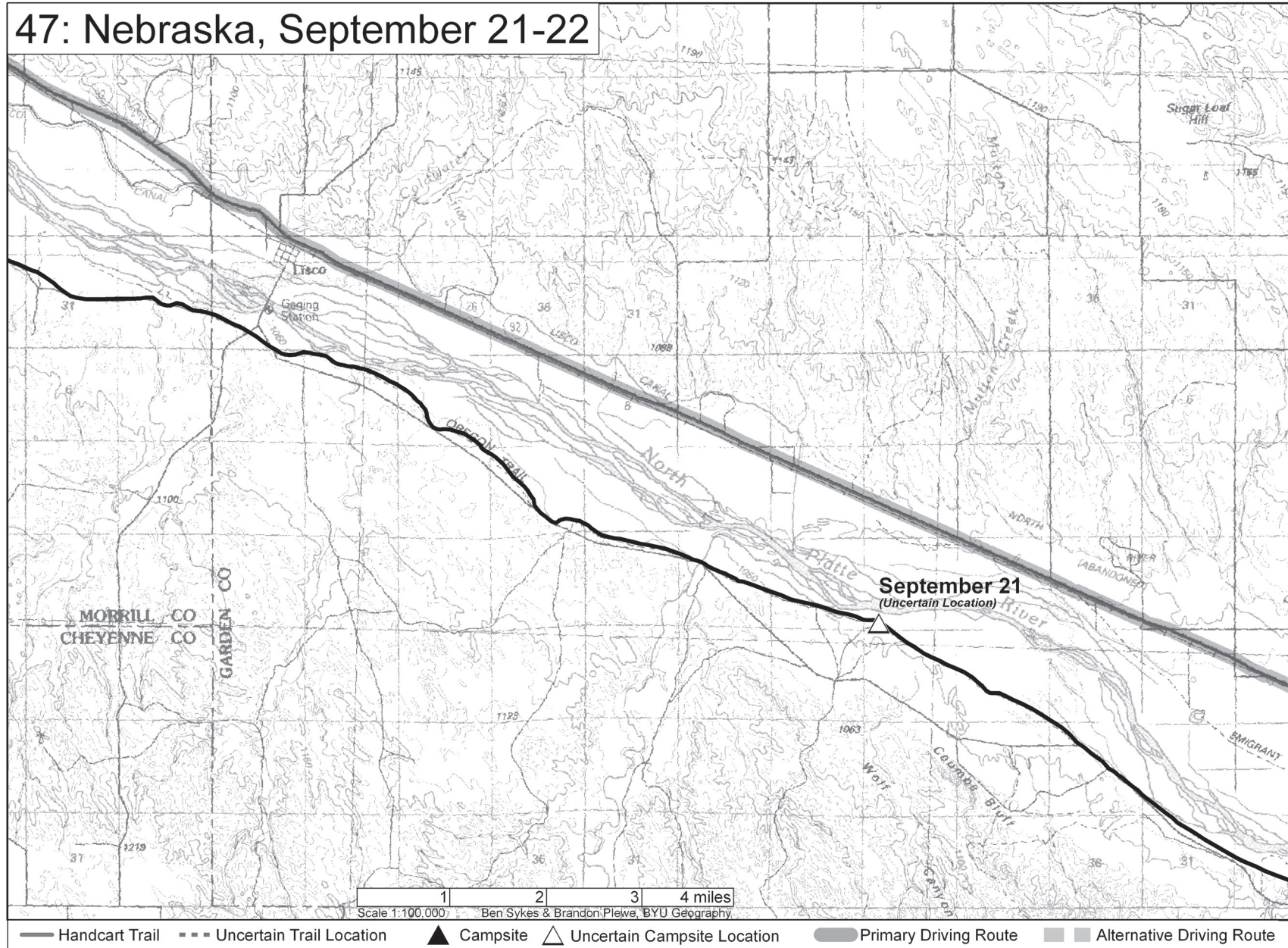
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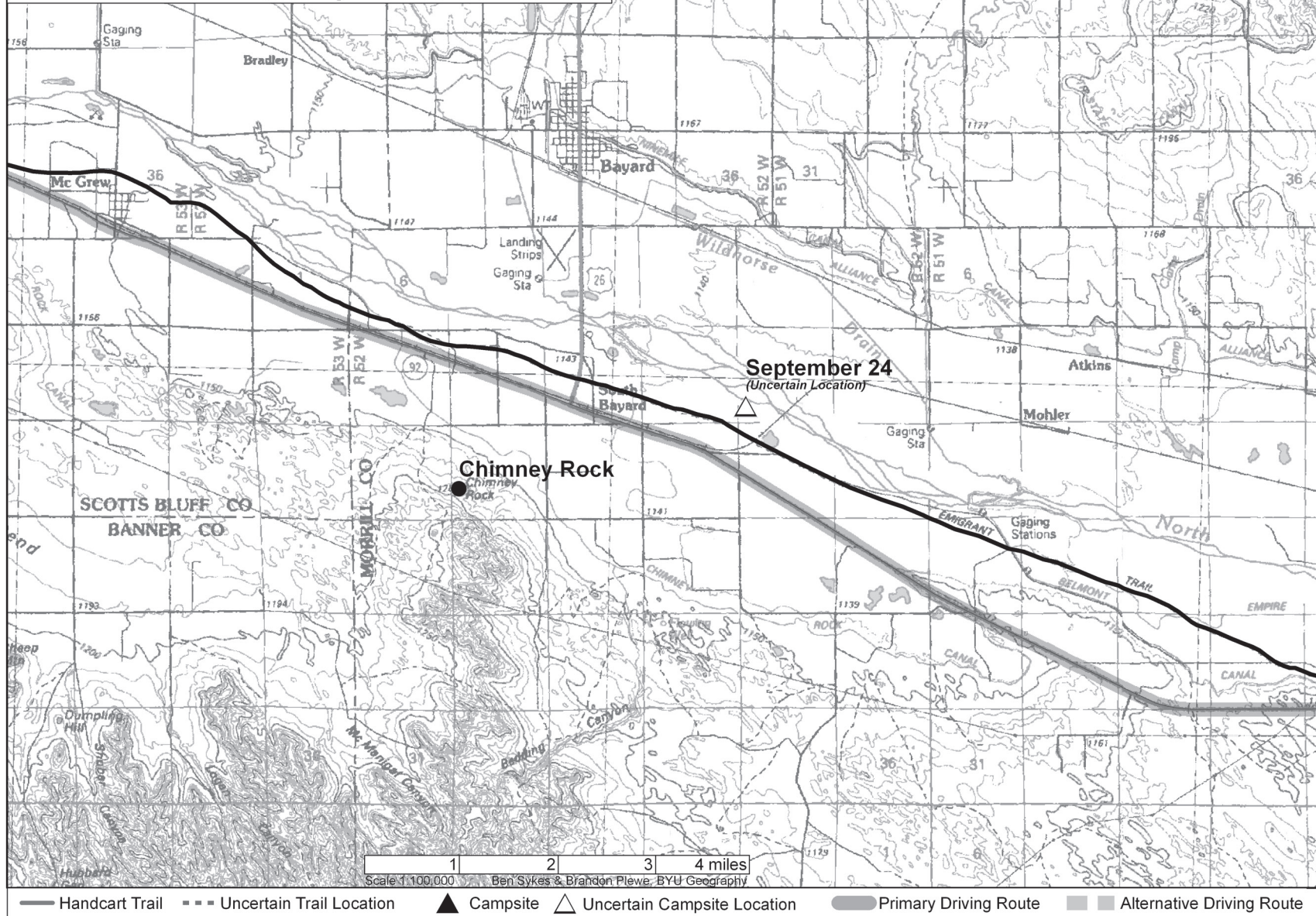
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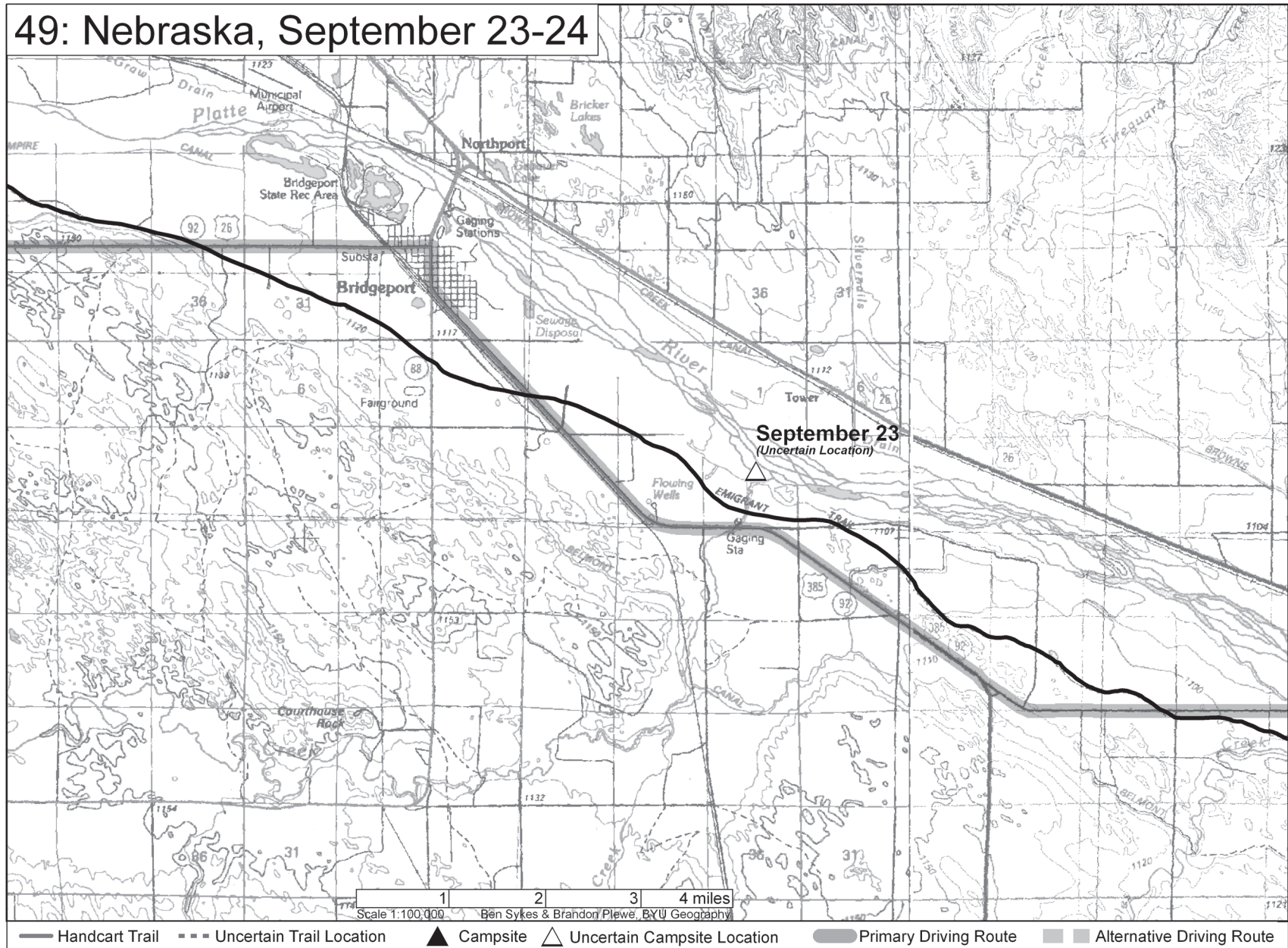
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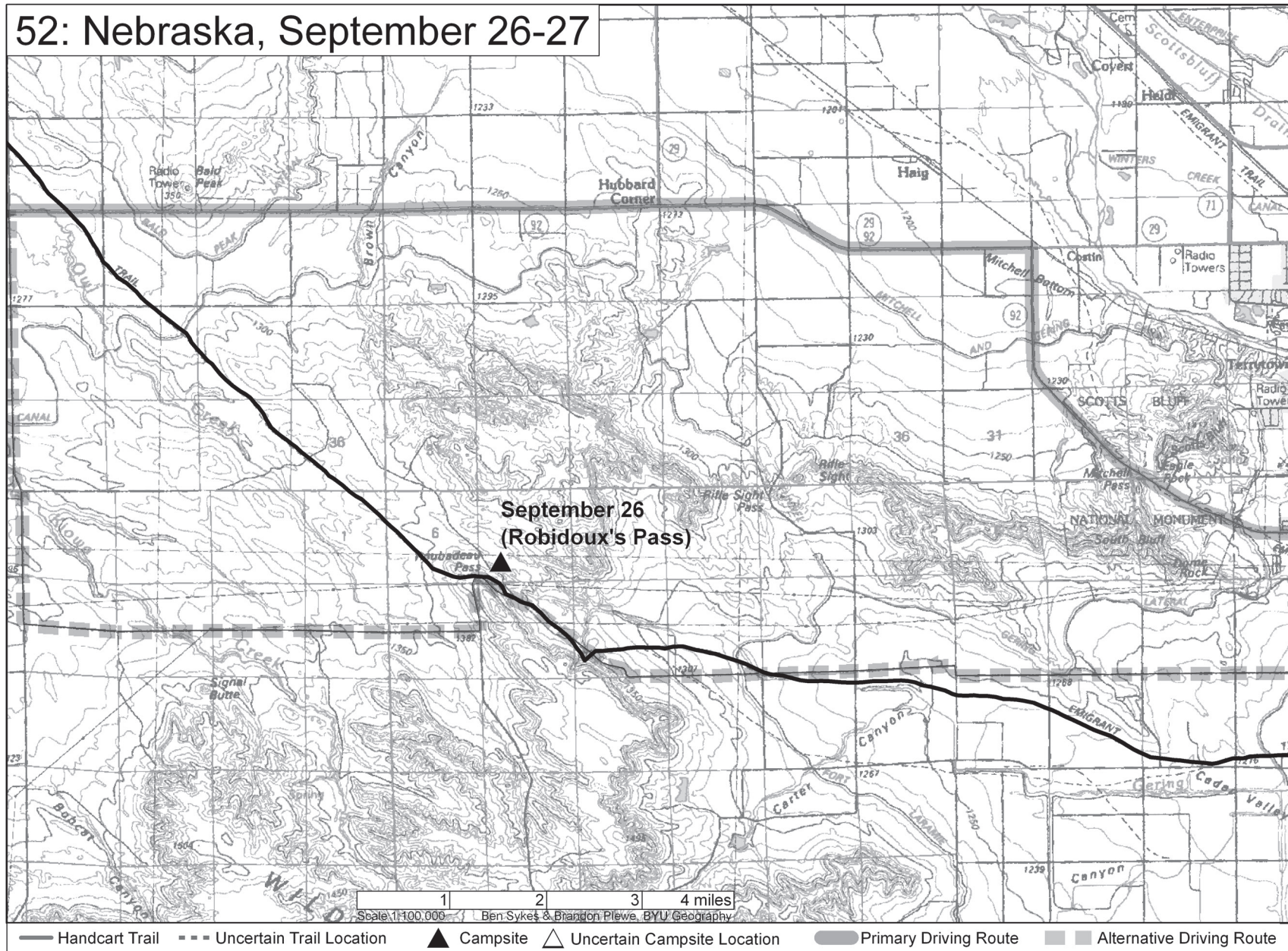
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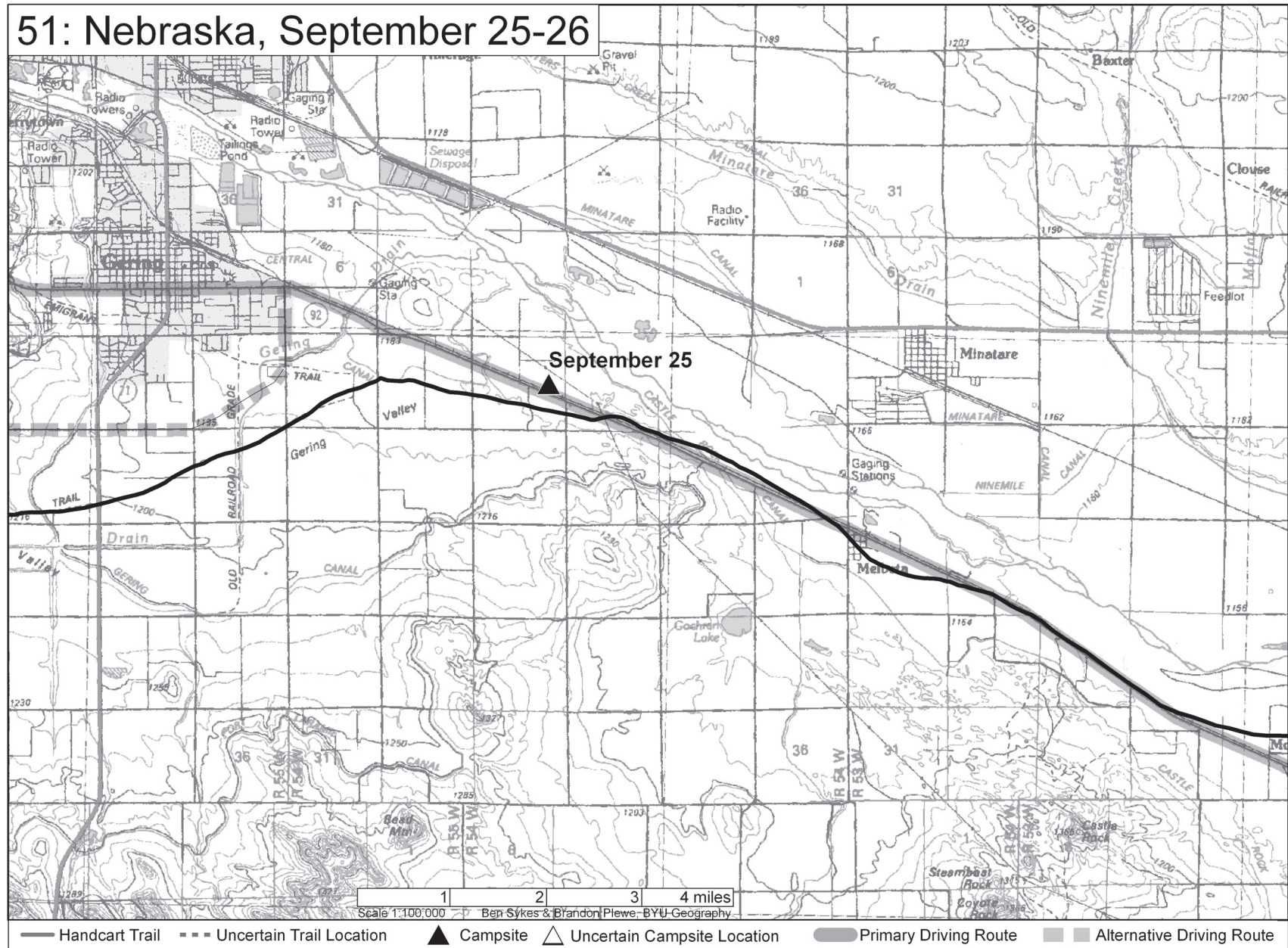
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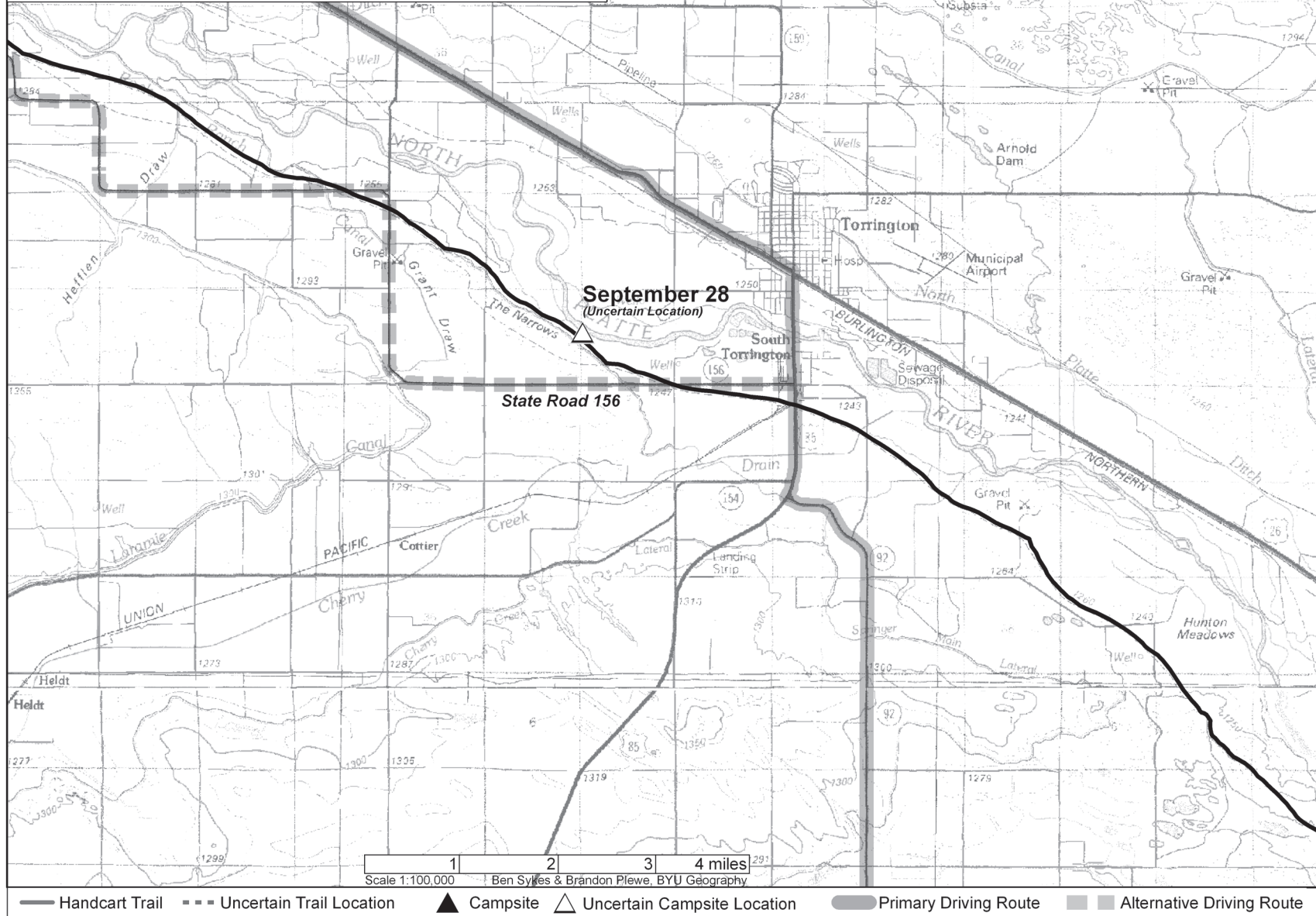
52: Nebraska, September 26-27



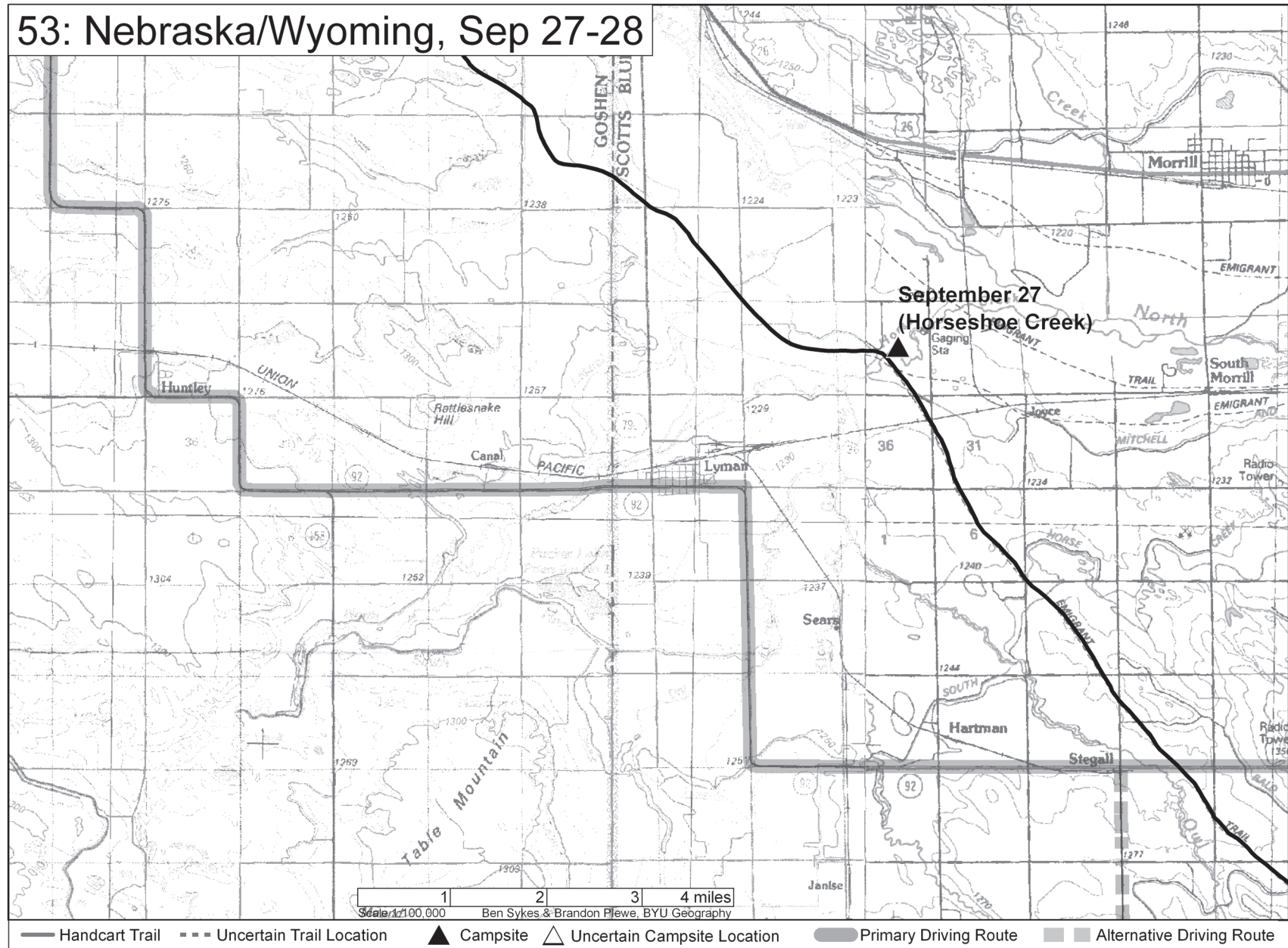
51: Nebraska, September 25-26



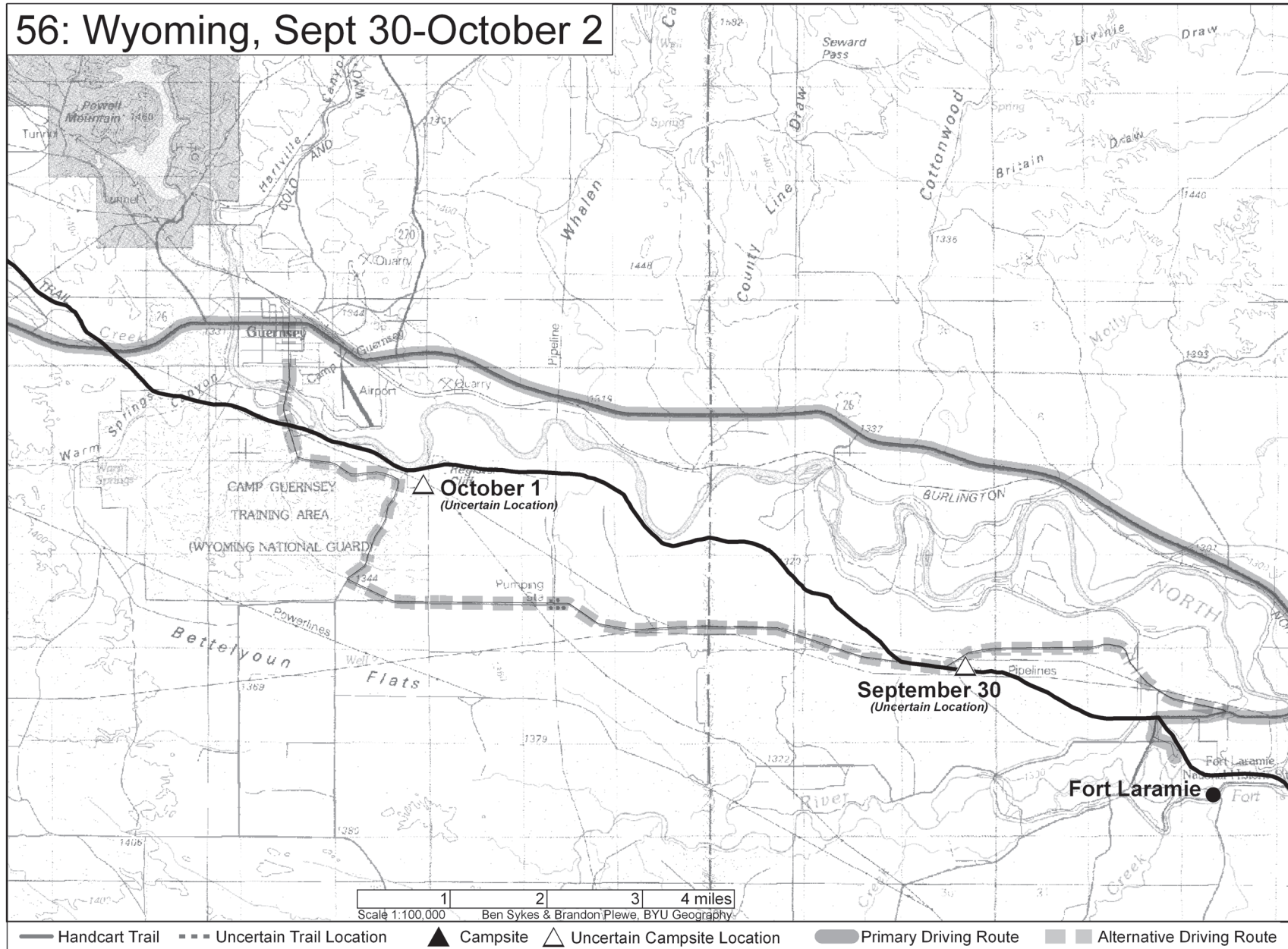
54: Wyoming, September 28-29



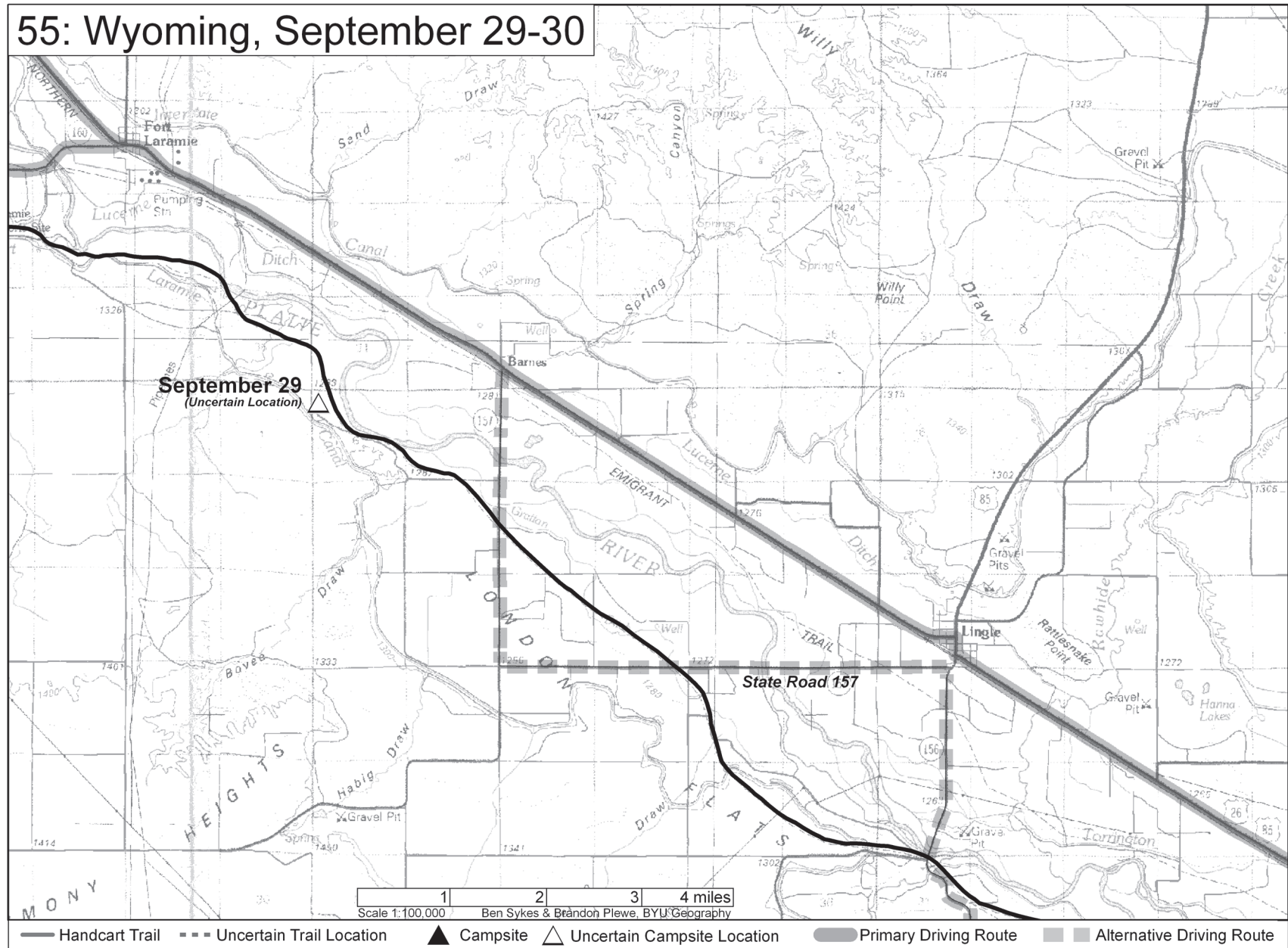
53: Nebraska/Wyoming, Sep 27-28



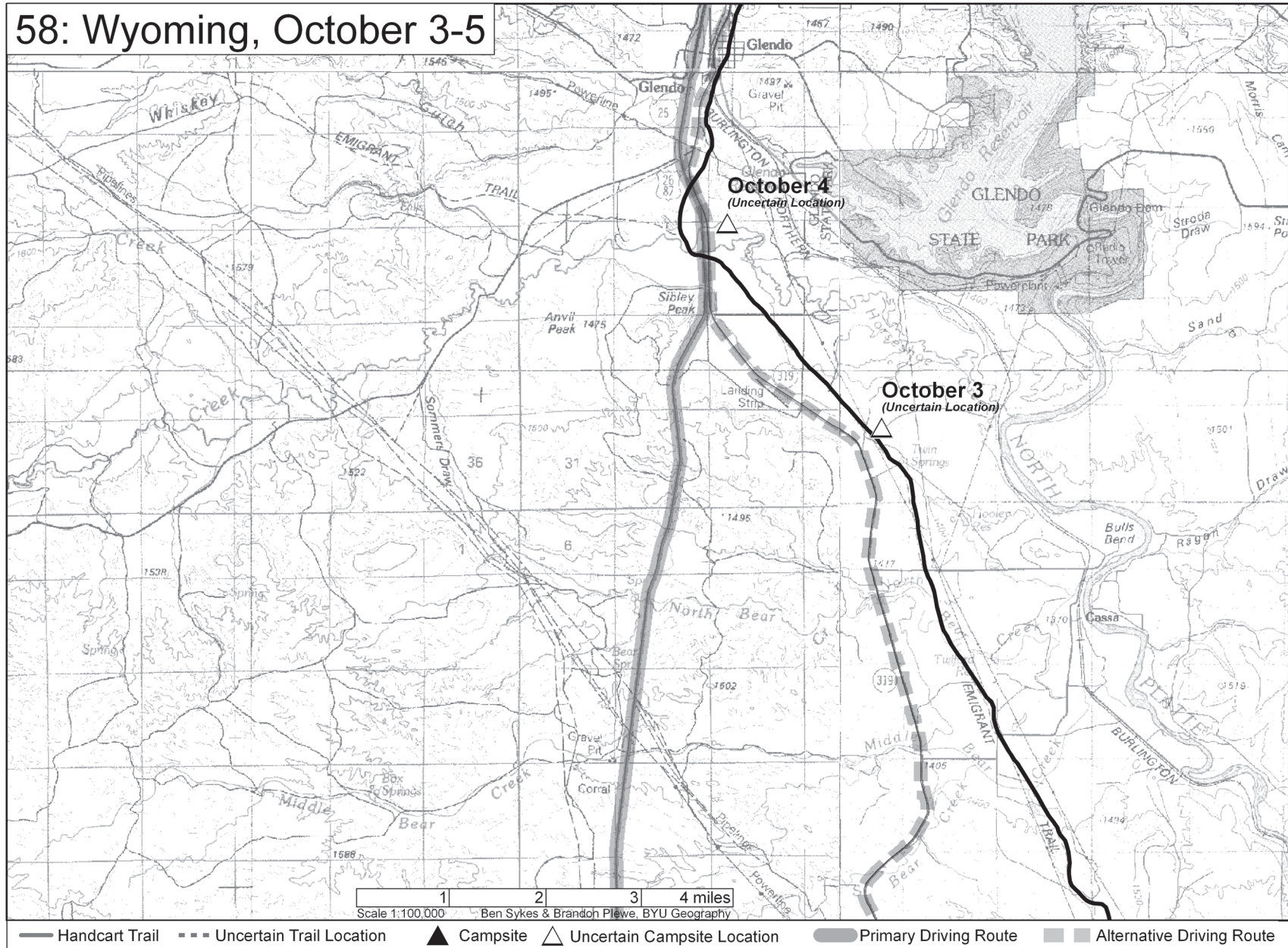
56: Wyoming, Sept 30-October 2



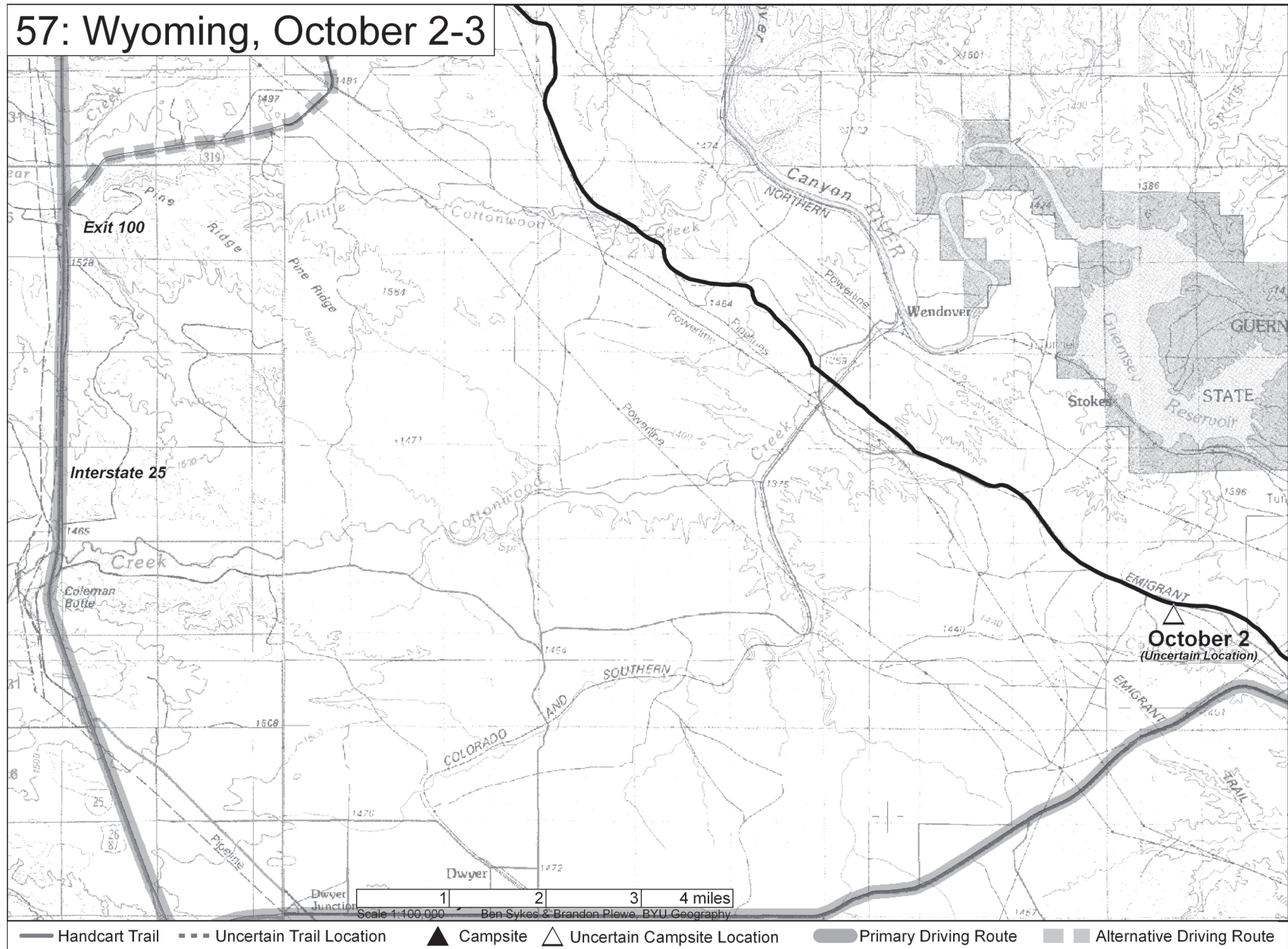
55: Wyoming, September 29-30



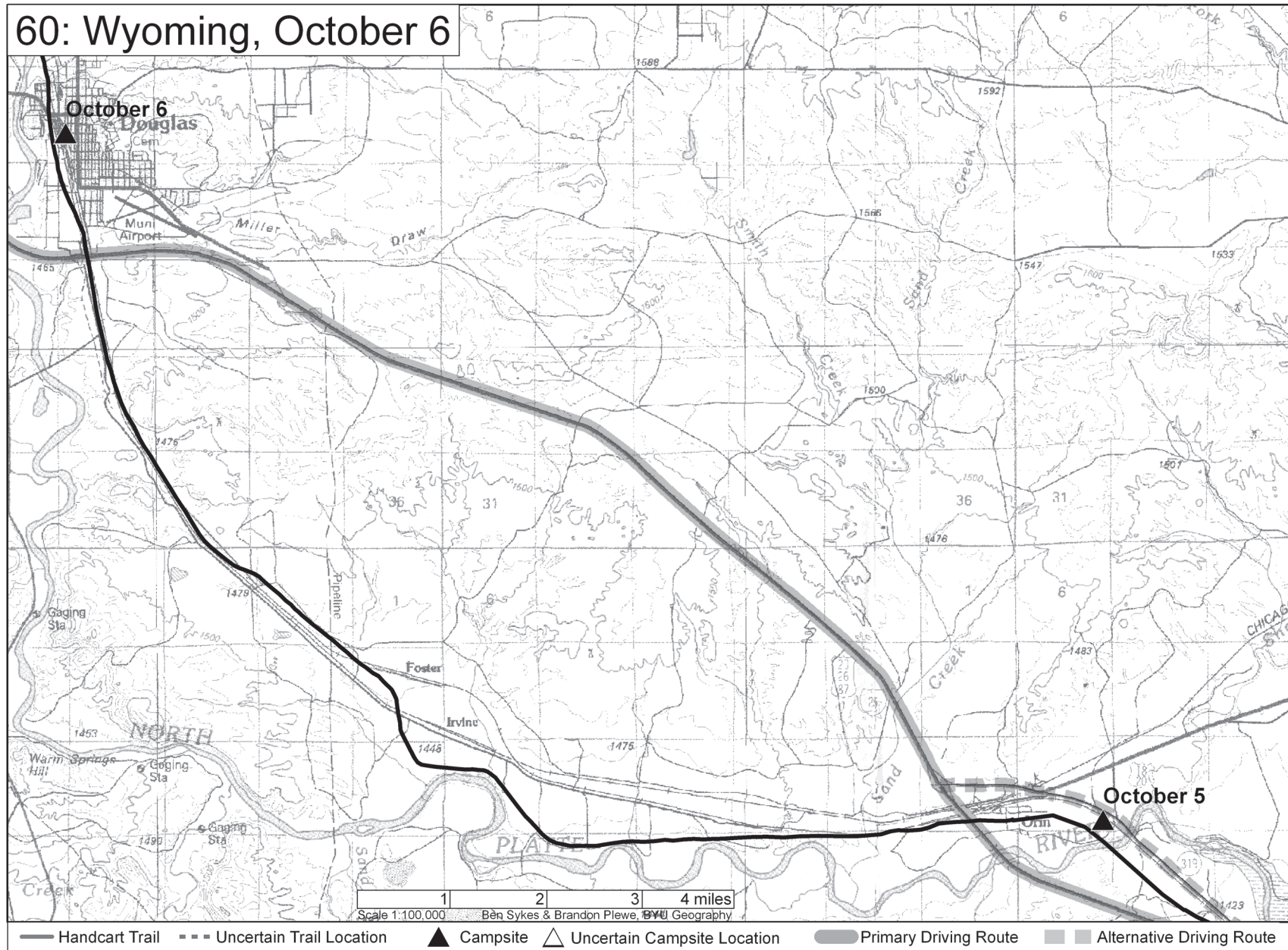
58: Wyoming, October 3-5



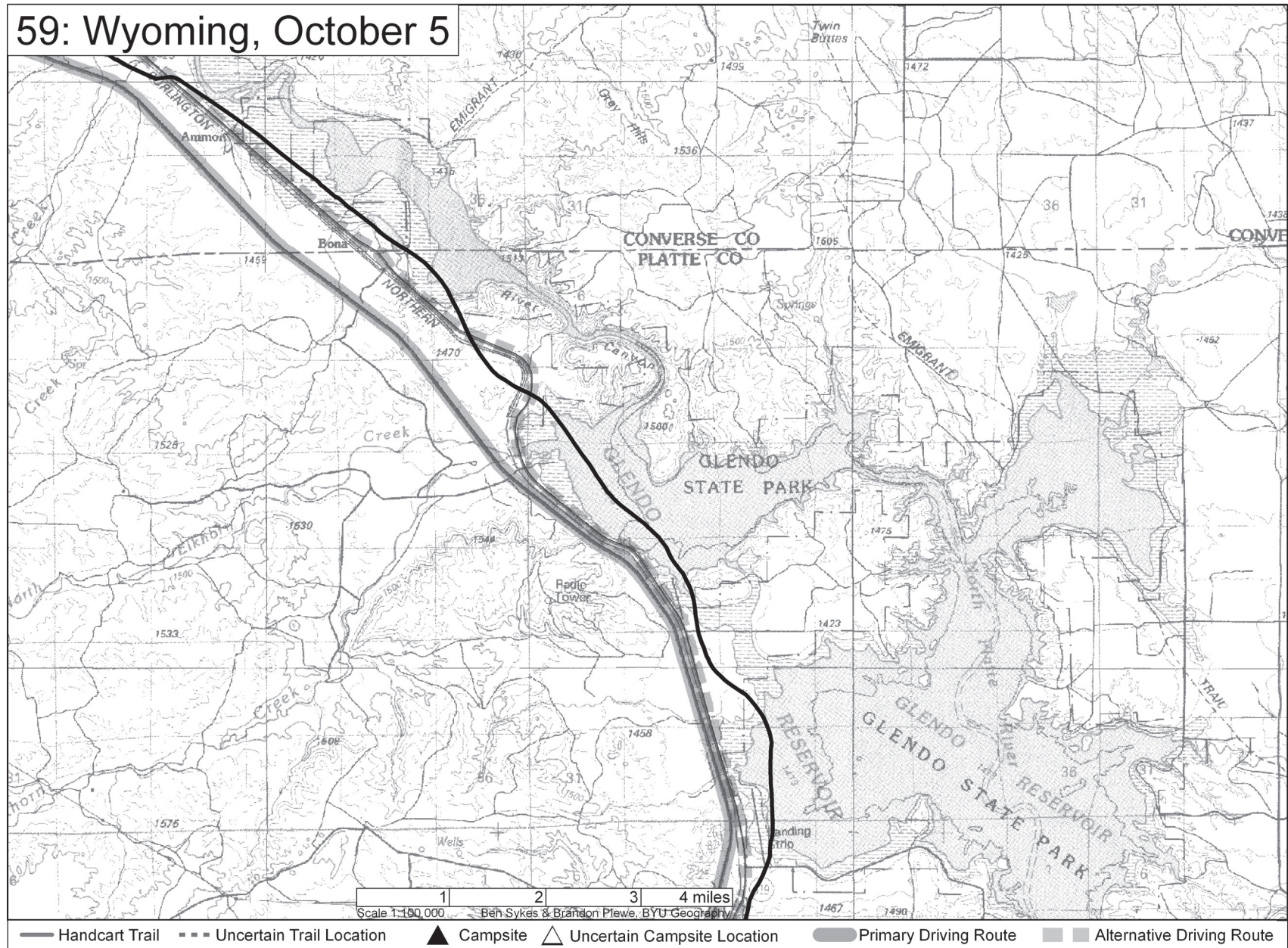
57: Wyoming, October 2-3



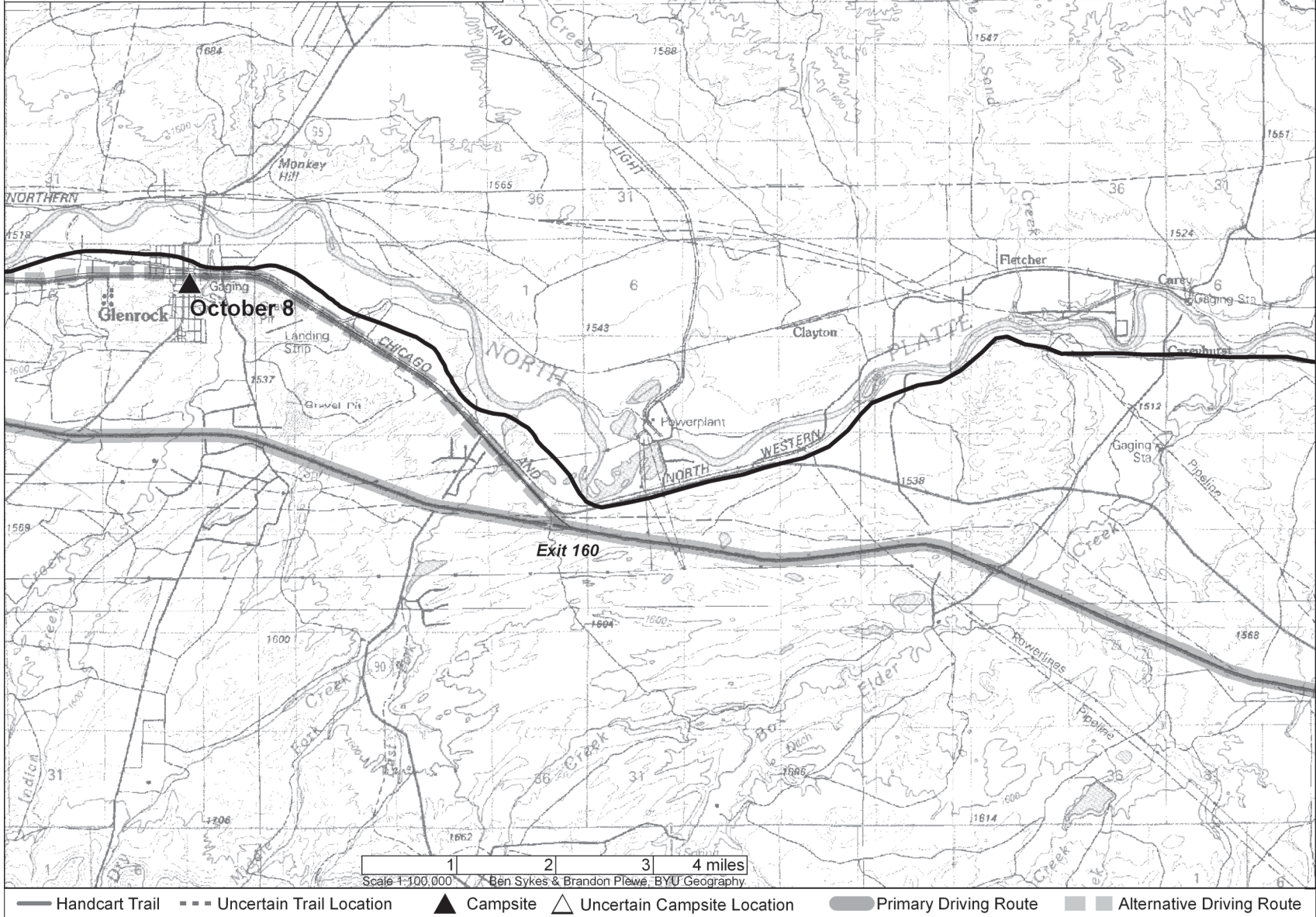
60: Wyoming, October 6



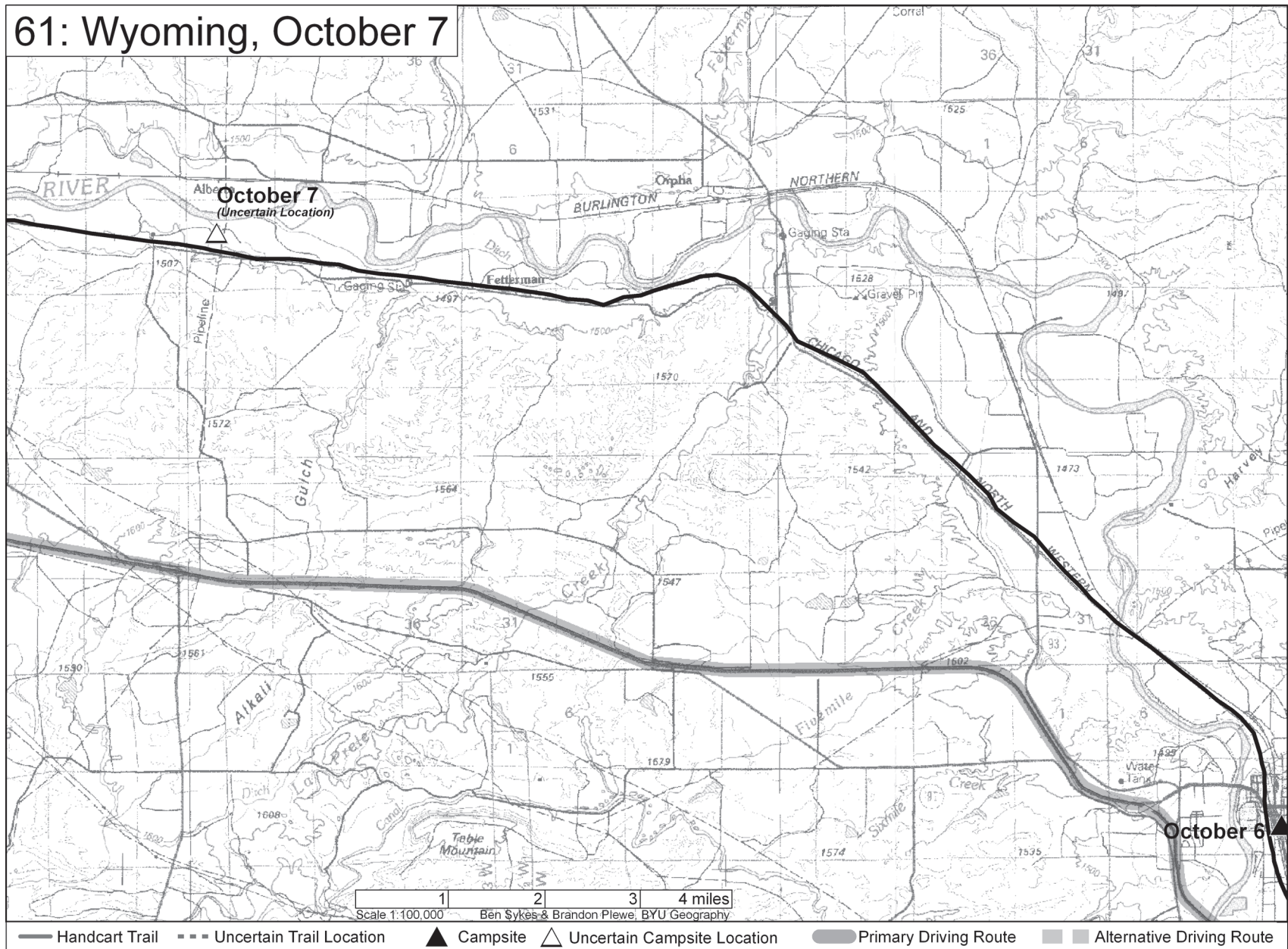
59: Wyoming, October 5



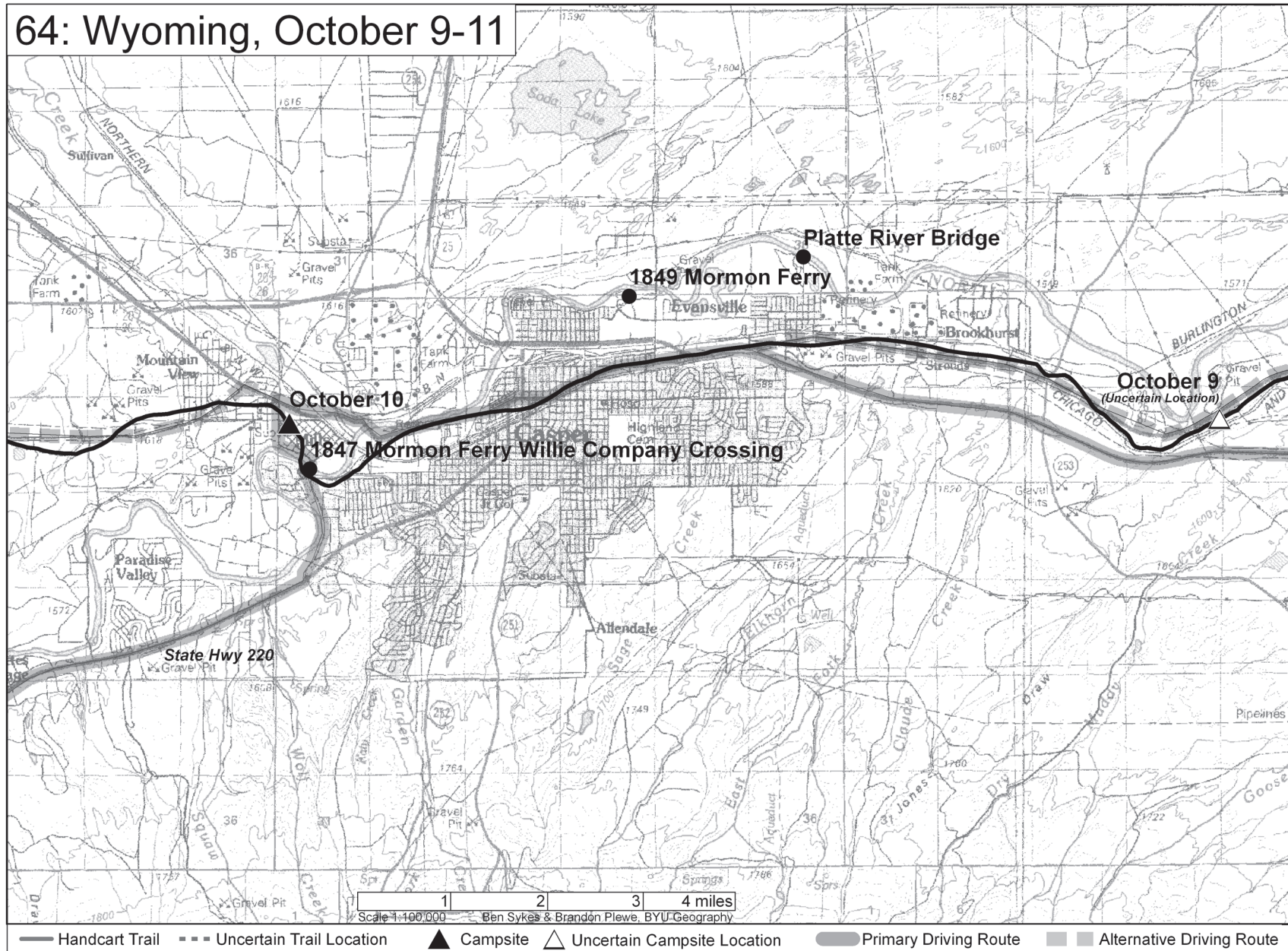
62: Wyoming, October 8-9



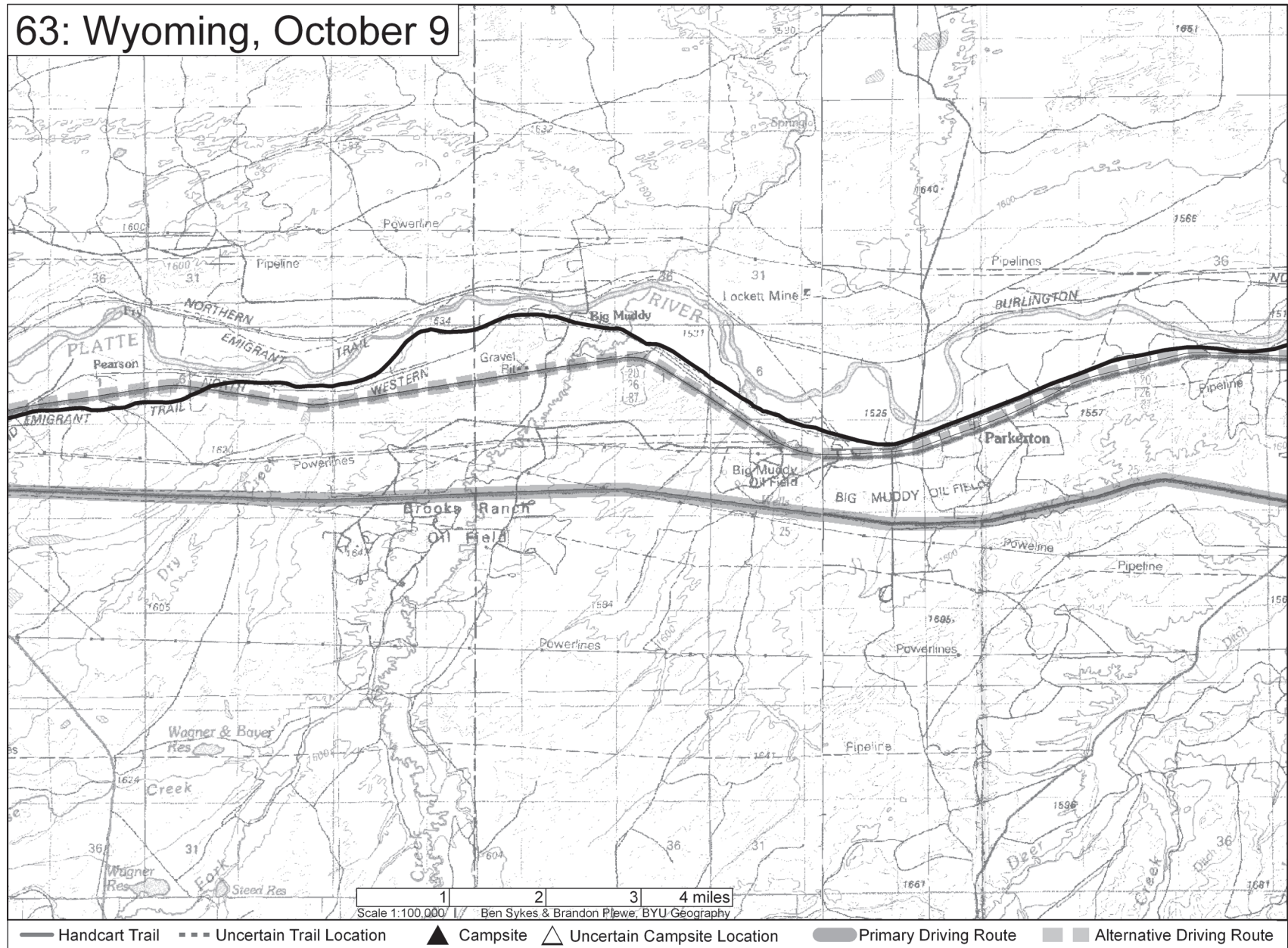
61: Wyoming, October 7



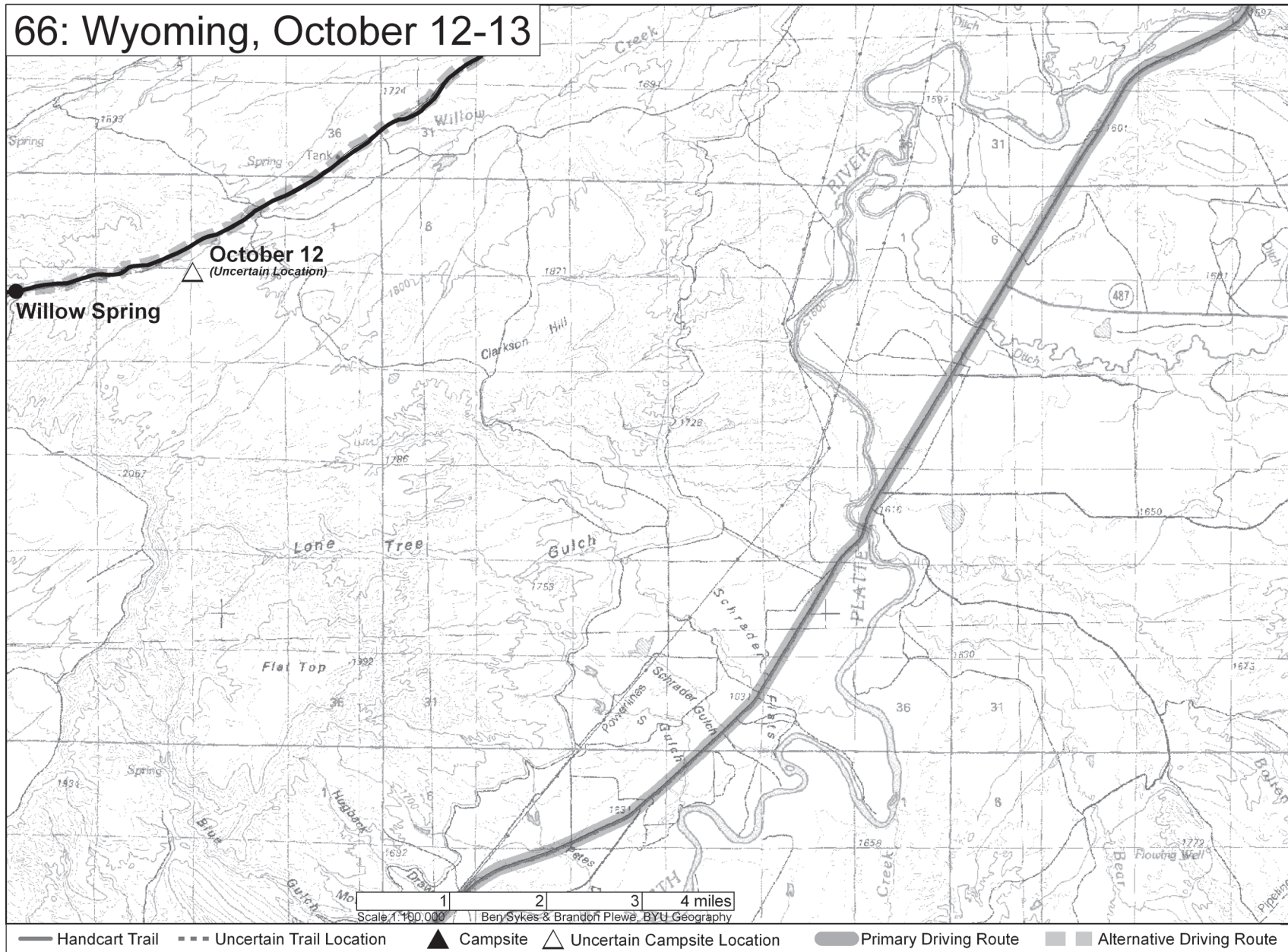
64: Wyoming, October 9-11



63: Wyoming, October 9



66: Wyoming, October 12-13



65: Wyoming, October 11-12

Map of Wyoming showing the Handcart Trail and Emigrant Trail routes. The map includes topographic features like Spider Ridge, Mt. Nates, and Coal Mountain. Key locations marked include Rock Avenue, Bessemer Bend, and Goose Egg Creek. A legend at the bottom identifies symbols for Handcart Trail, Uncertain Trail Location, Campsite, Uncertain Campsite Location, Primary Driving Route, and Alternative Driving Route. A scale bar indicates 1:100,000.

Legend:

- Handcart Trail
- Uncertain Trail Location
- Campsite
- Uncertain Campsite Location
- Primary Driving Route
- Alternative Driving Route

Scale: 1:100,000

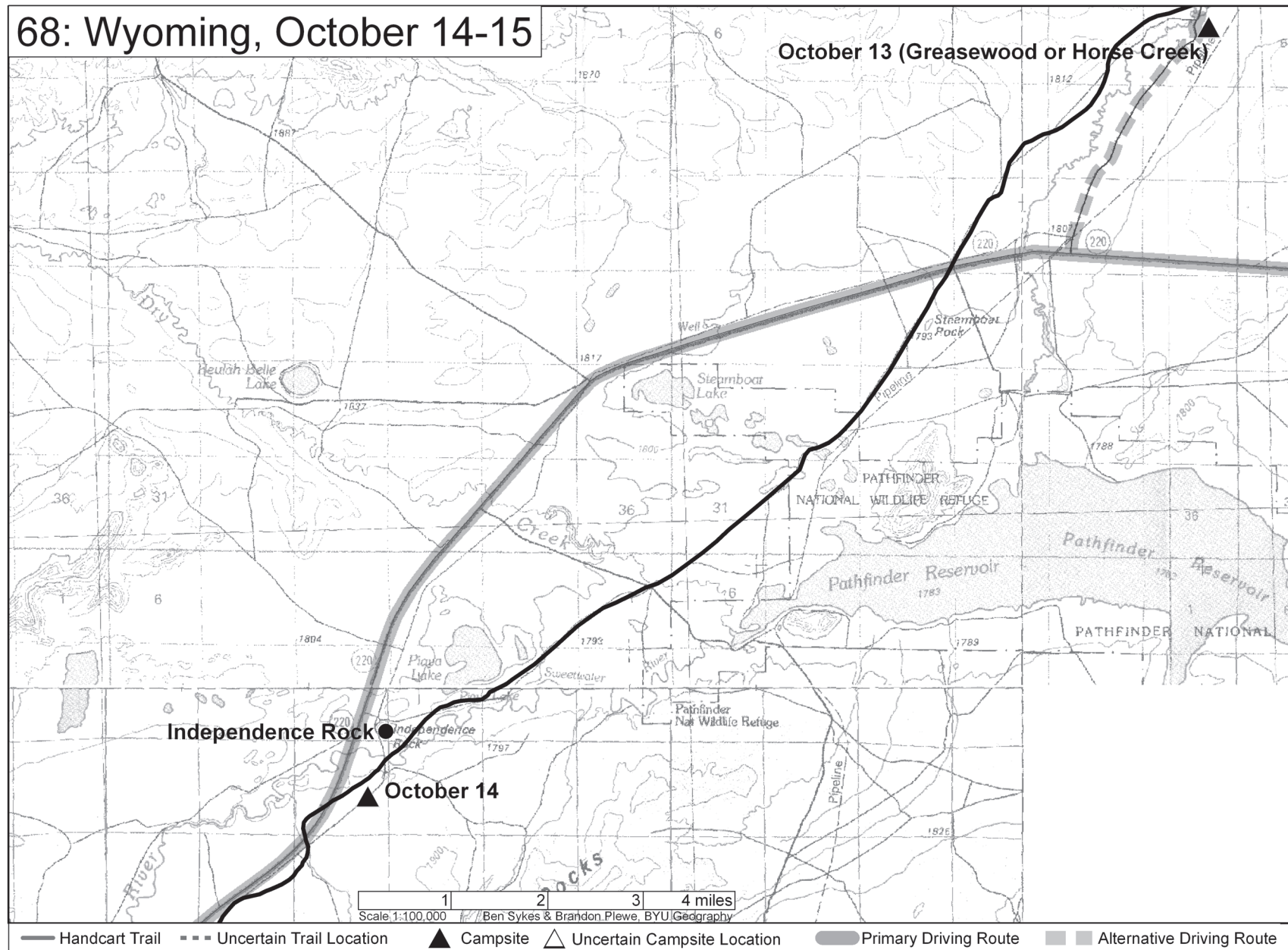
Scale bar: 1 2 3 4 miles

Scale: 1:100,000

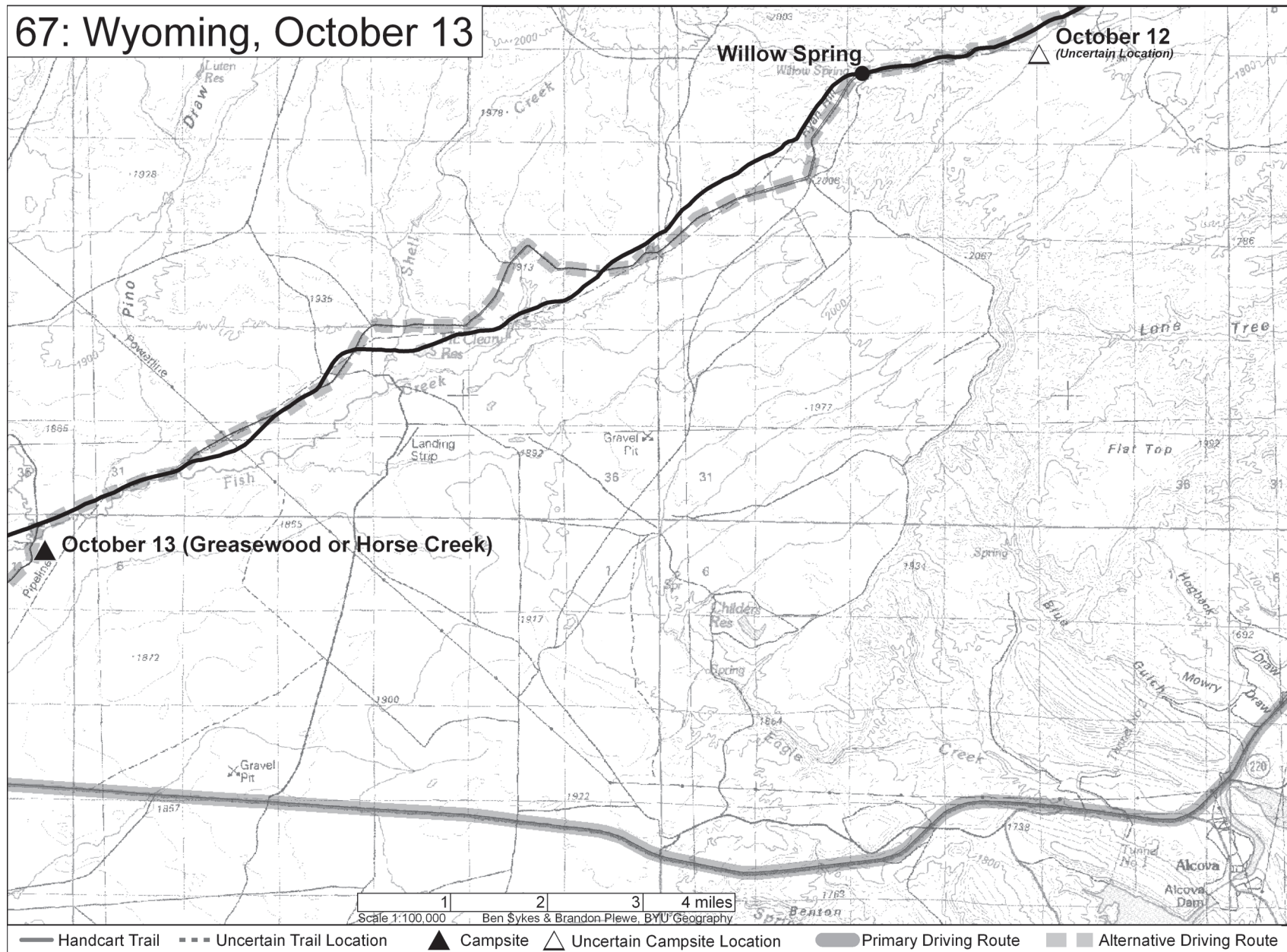
Ben Sykes & Brandon Plewe, BYU Geography

— Handcart Trail - - - Uncertain Trail Location ▲ Campsite △ Uncertain Campsite Location Primary Driving Route Alternative Driving Route

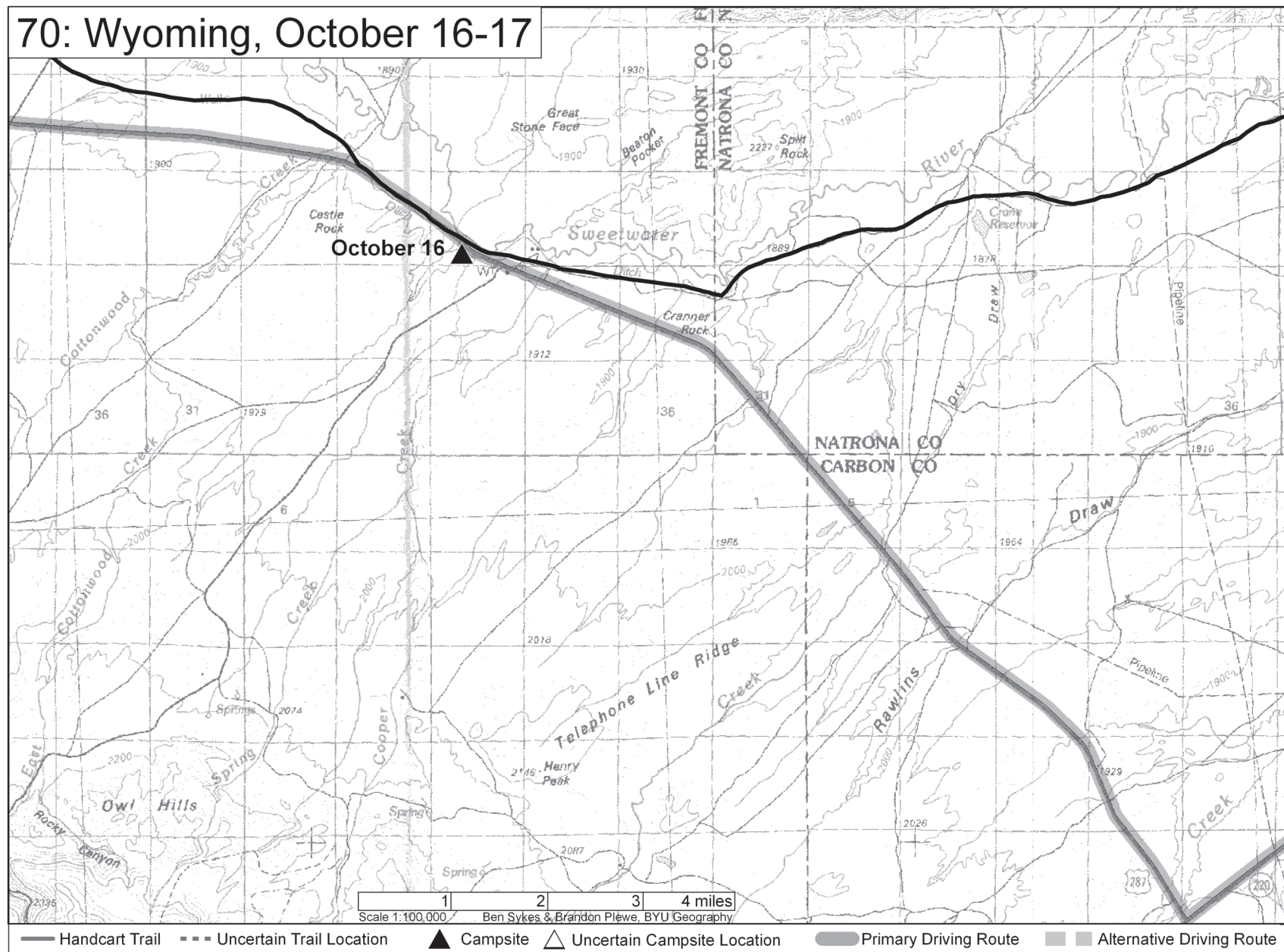
68: Wyoming, October 14-15



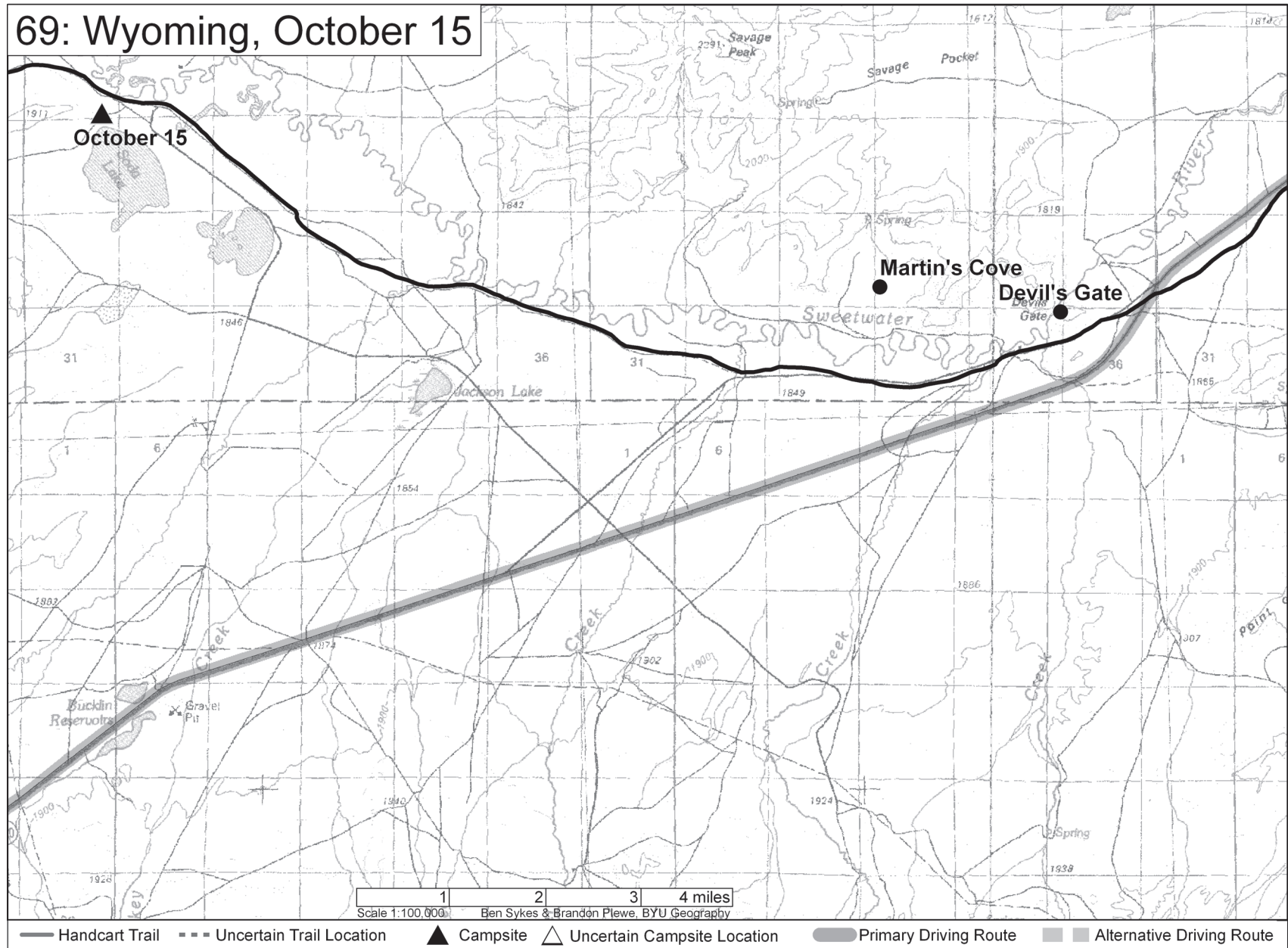
67: Wyoming, October 13



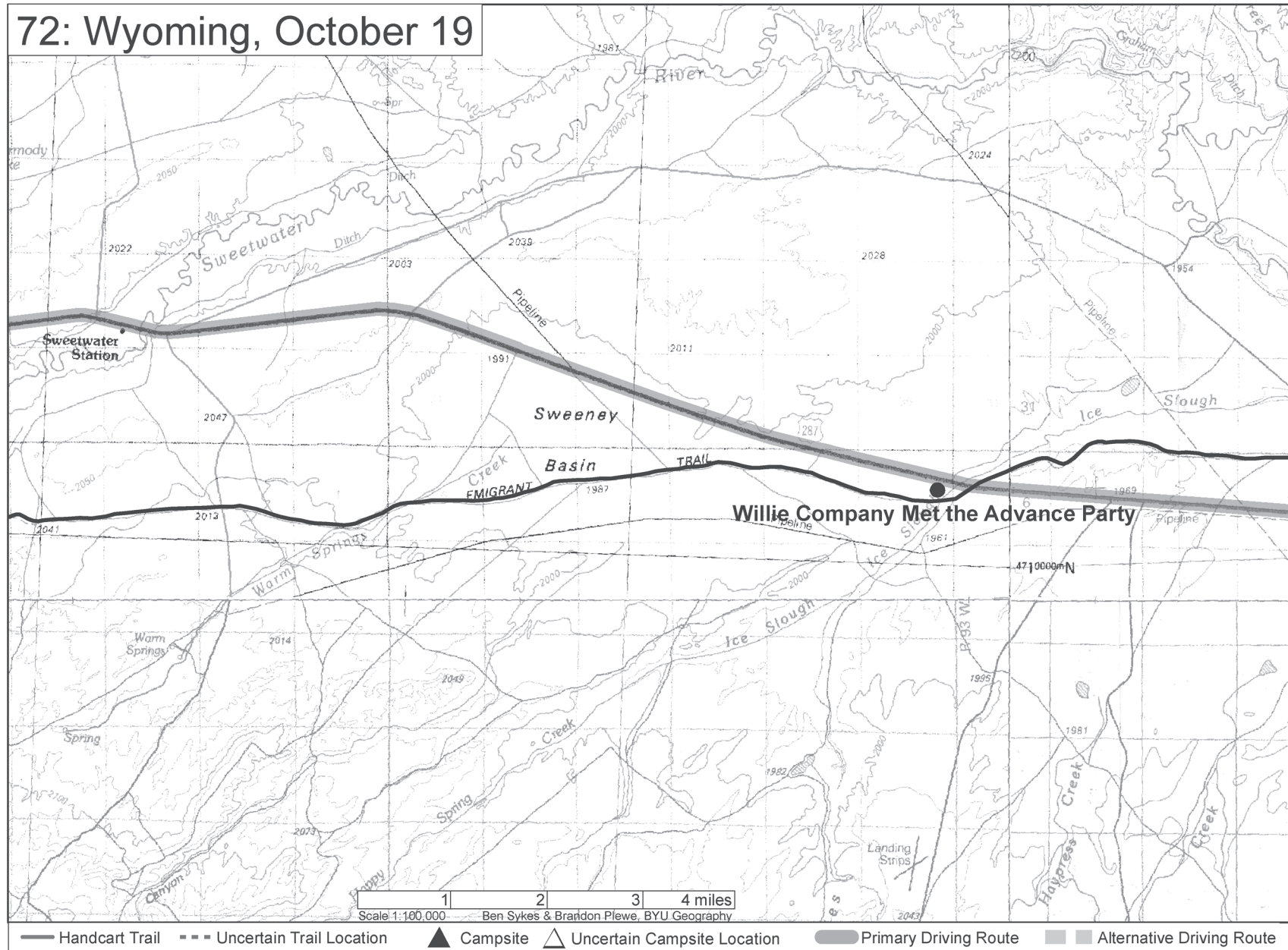
70: Wyoming, October 16-17



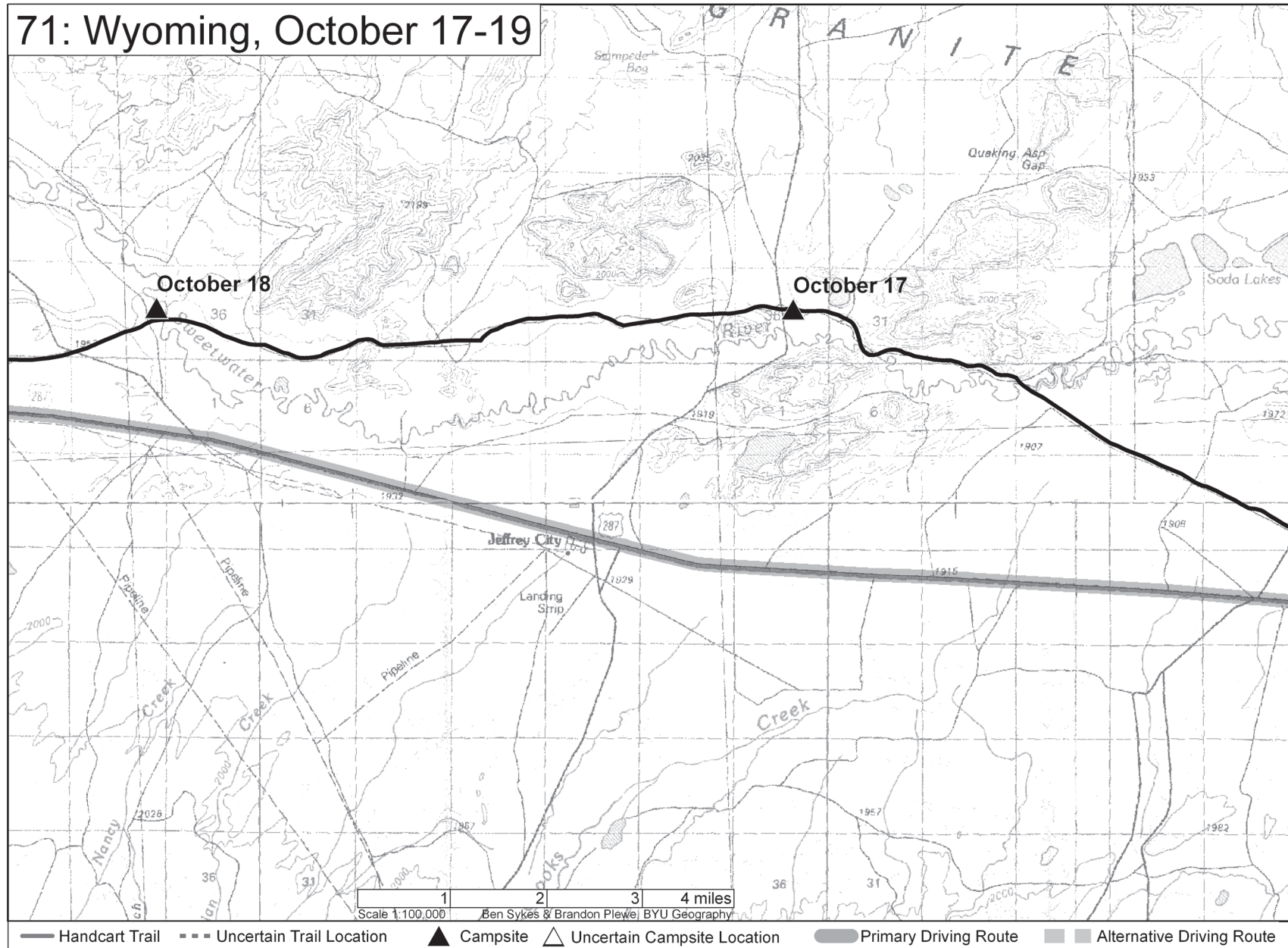
69: Wyoming, October 15



72: Wyoming, October 19



71: Wyoming, October 17-19

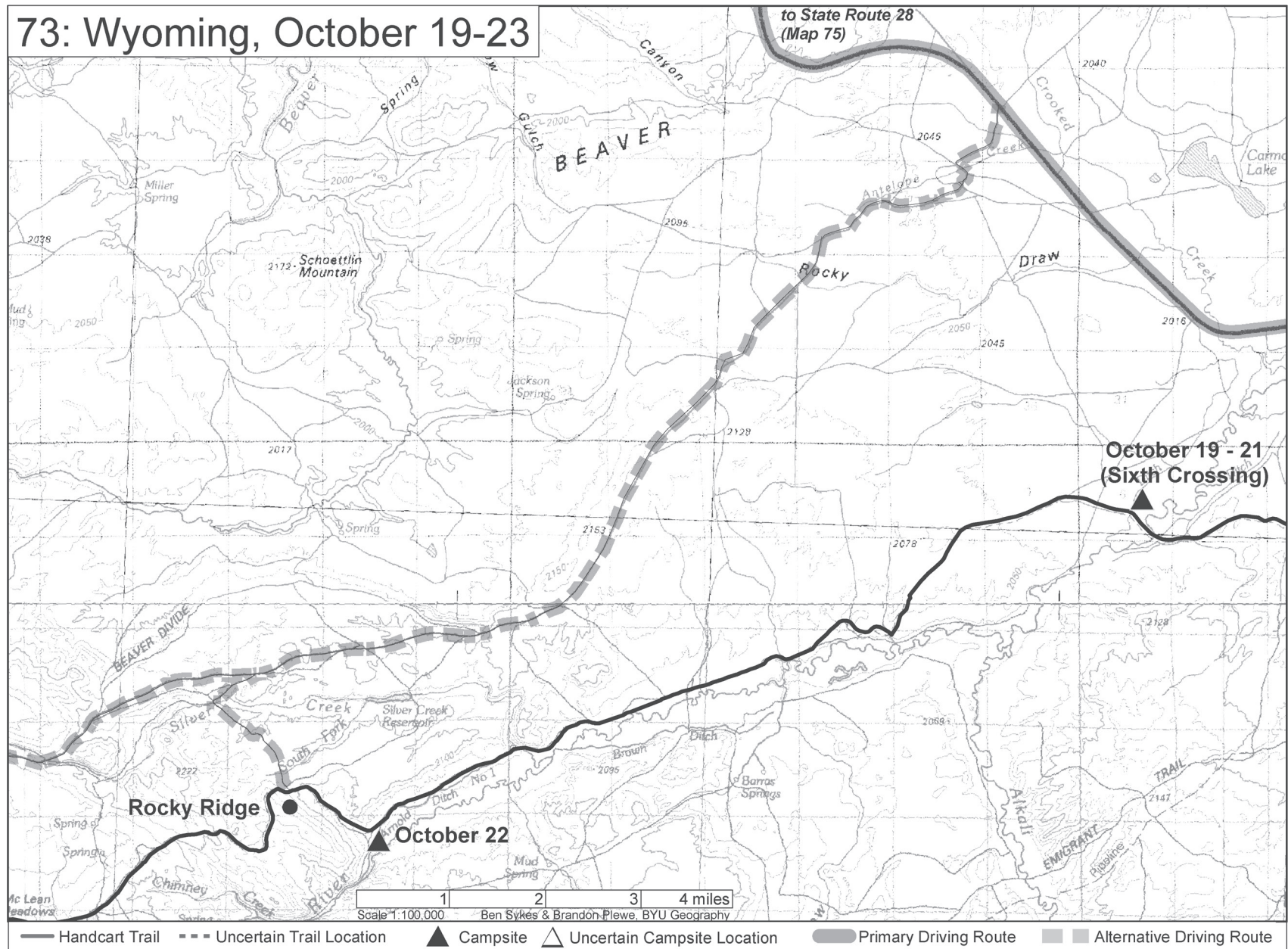


**October 23 & 24
(Rock Creek Hollow)**

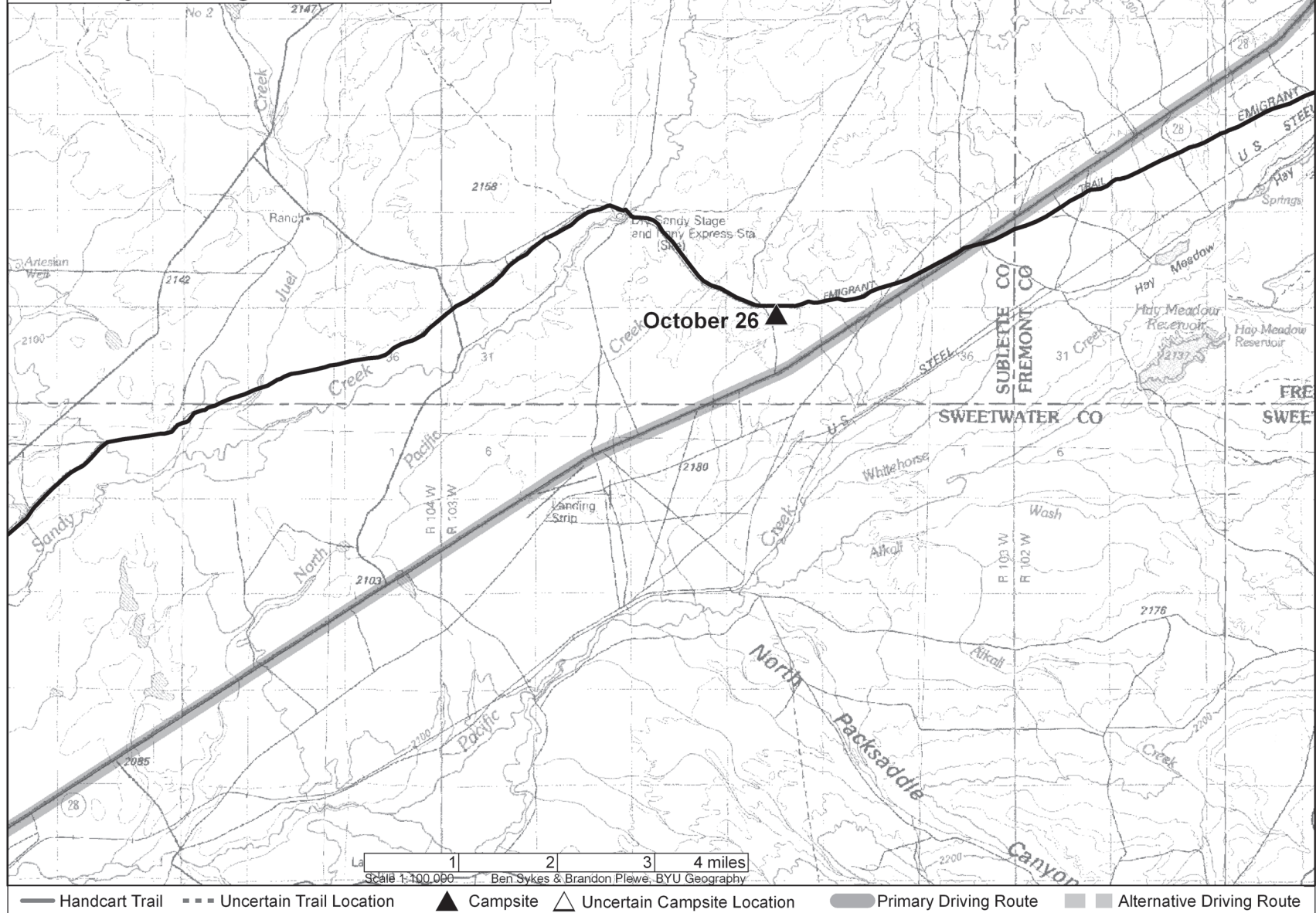
Scale 1:100,000
Ben Sykes & Brandon Pfeife, BYU Geography

— Handcart Trail - - - Uncertain Trail Location ▲ Campsite △ Uncertain Campsite Location Primary Driving Route Alternative Driving Route

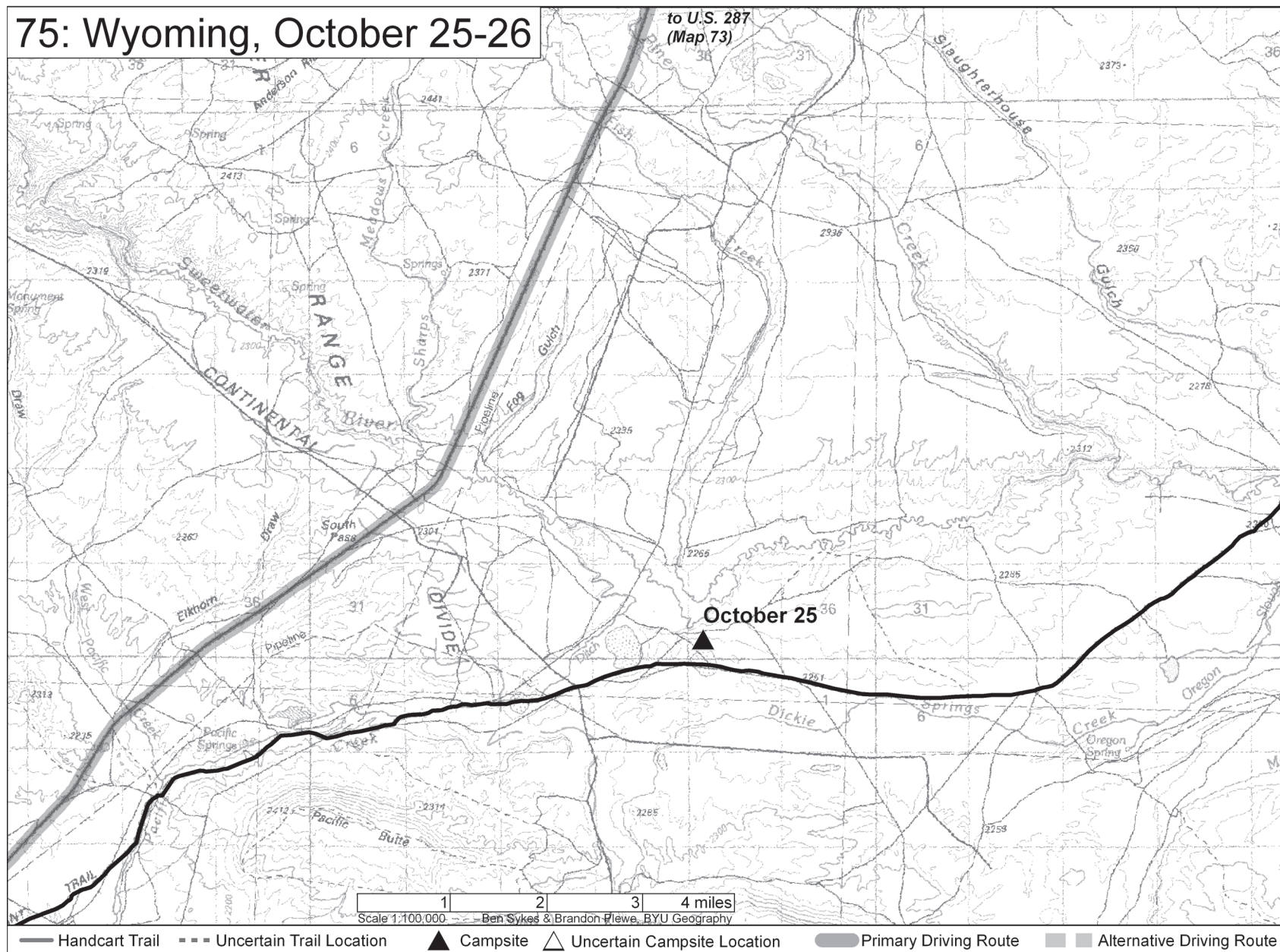
73: Wyoming, October 19-23



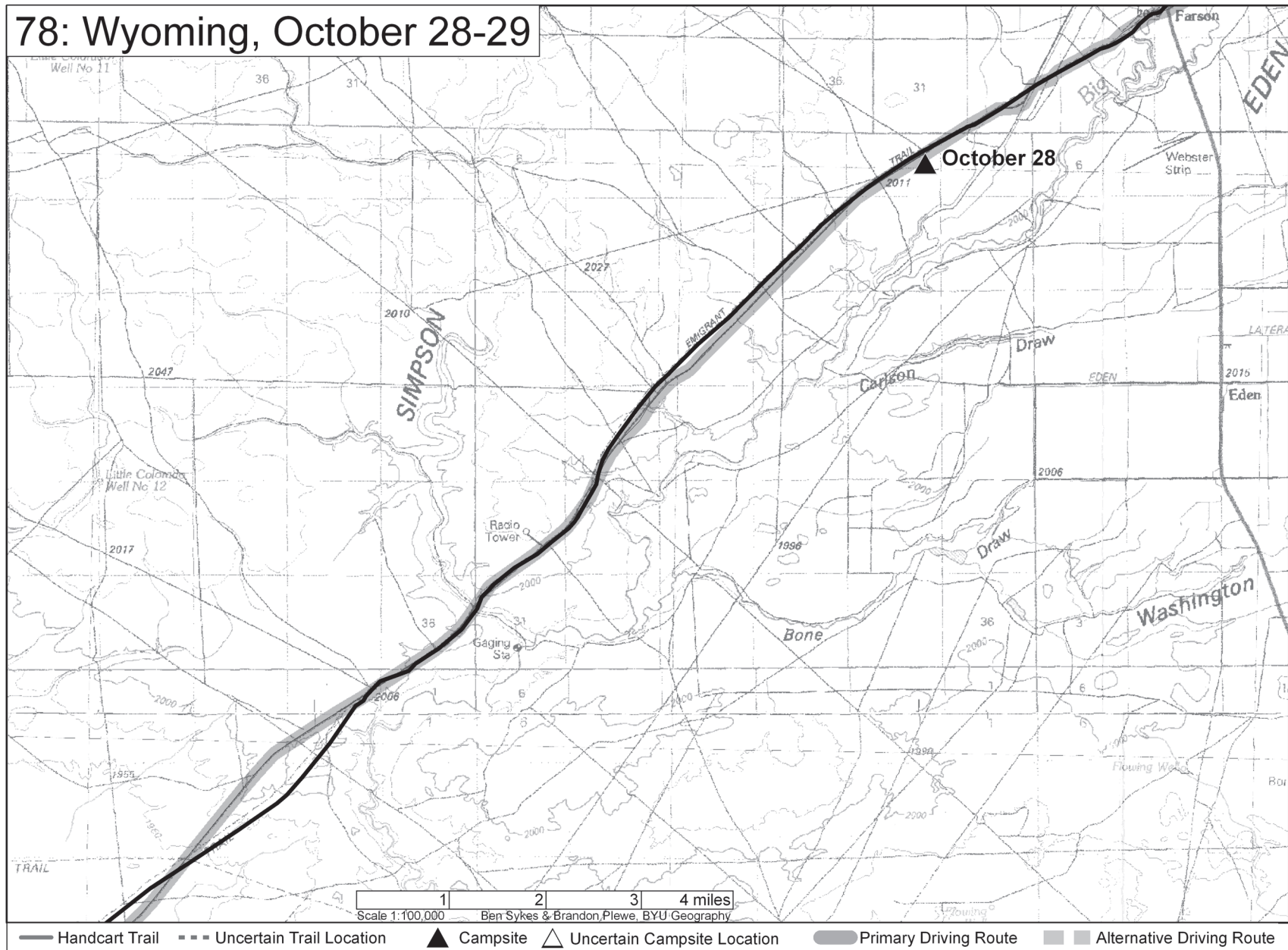
76: Wyoming, October 26-27



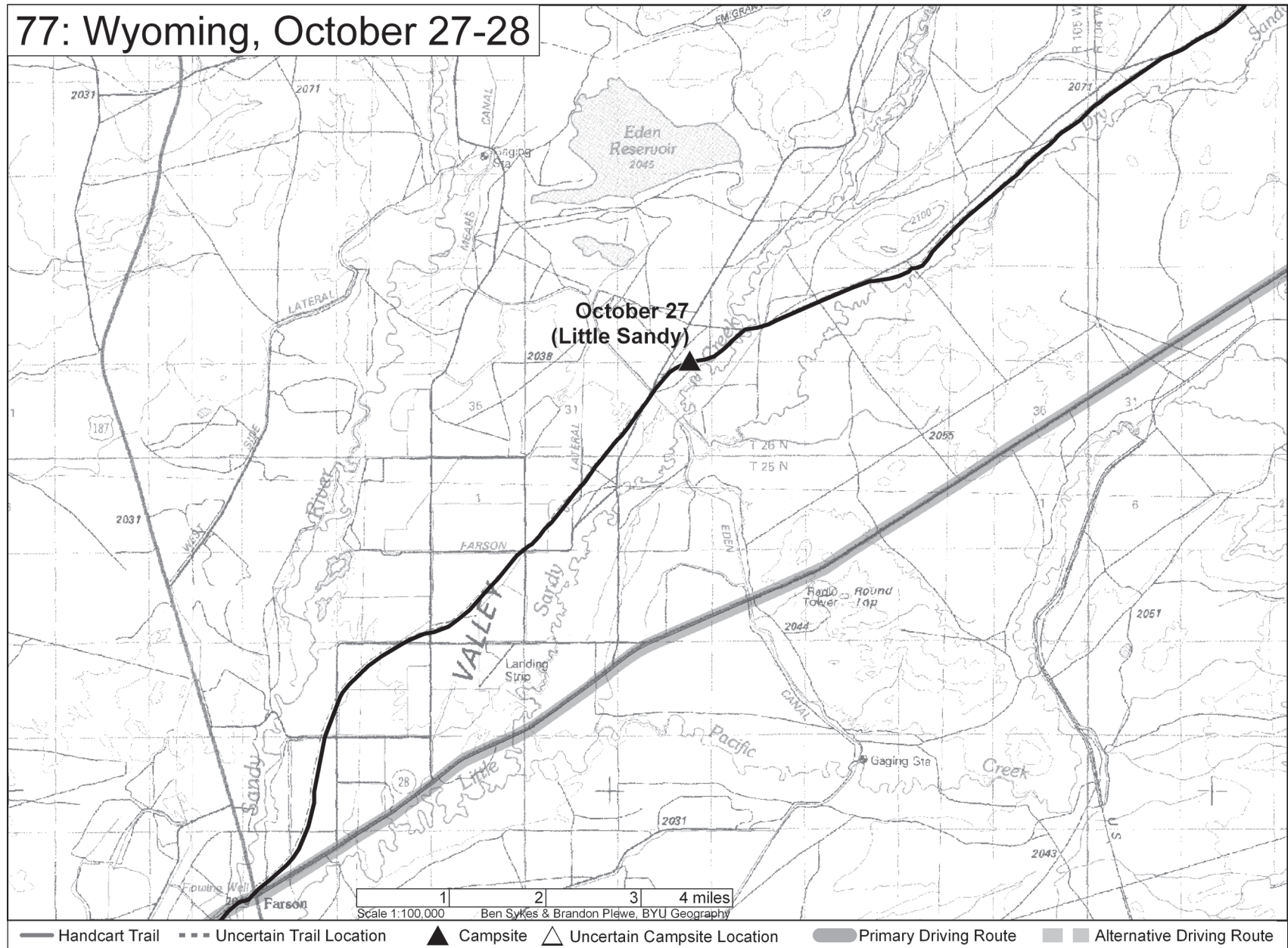
75: Wyoming, October 25-26



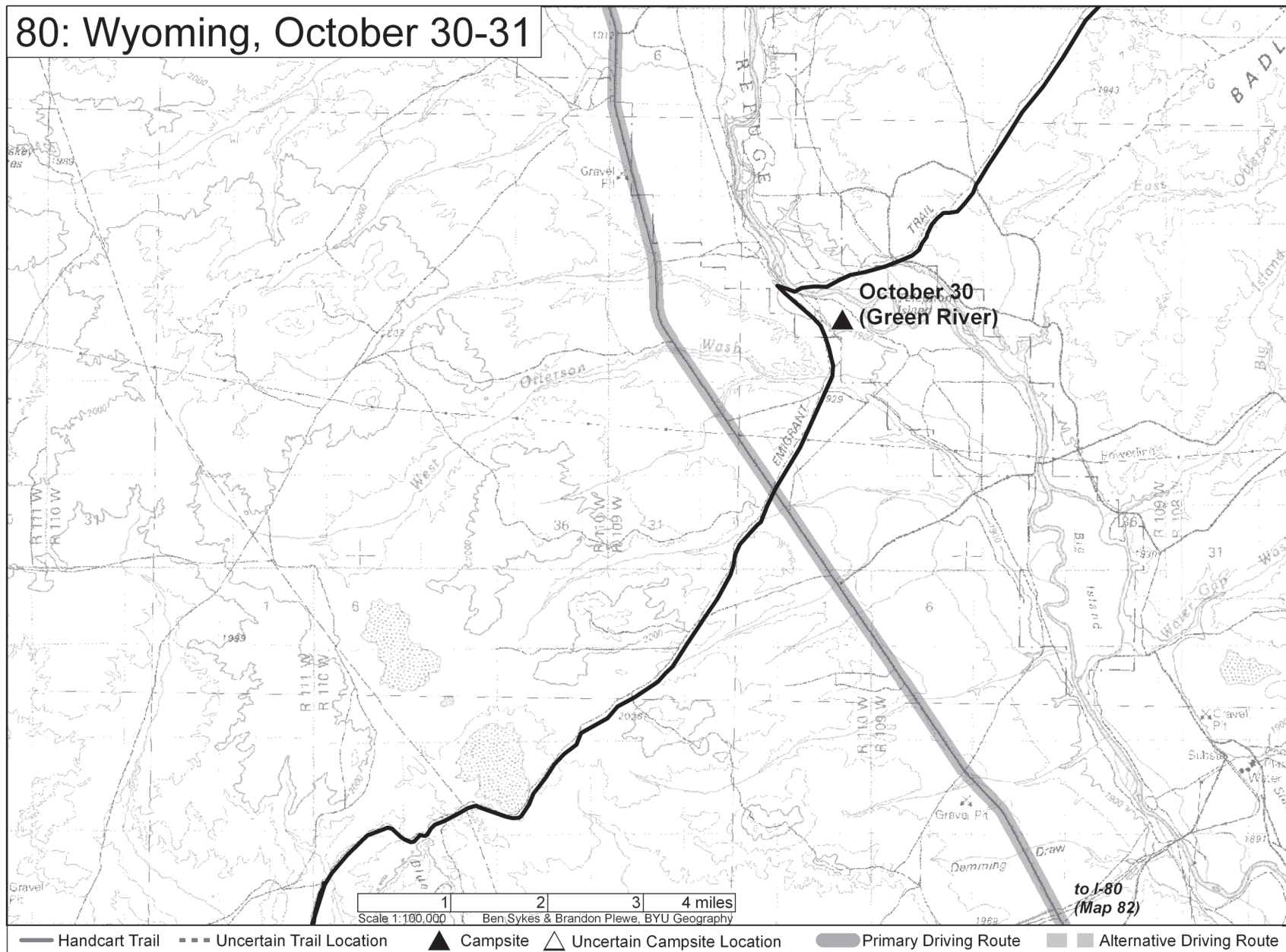
78: Wyoming, October 28-29



77: Wyoming, October 27-28



80: Wyoming, October 30-31



79: Wyoming, October 29-30

Map of Wyoming showing the route for October 29-30. The map includes the Big Sandy River, Big Sandy Bend, and the Little Colorado Desert. A primary driving route is shown in thick black, and an alternative driving route is shown in grey. A campsite is marked with a black triangle at Big Sandy Bend. The map also shows various trails, including the Jeep Trail and the Eighteenmile Trail. A scale bar indicates 1:100,000, and the map is credited to Ben Sykes & Brandon Plewe, BYU Geography.

Legend:

- Handcart Trail
- Uncertain Trail Location
- Campsite
- Uncertain Campsite Location
- Primary Driving Route
- Alternative Driving Route

— Handcart Trail - - - Uncertain Trail Location ▲ Campsite △ Uncertain Campsite Location Primary Driving Route Alternative Driving Route

[illegible]

to Exit 83-State Route 372
(Map 80)

**November 1
(Black's Fork)**

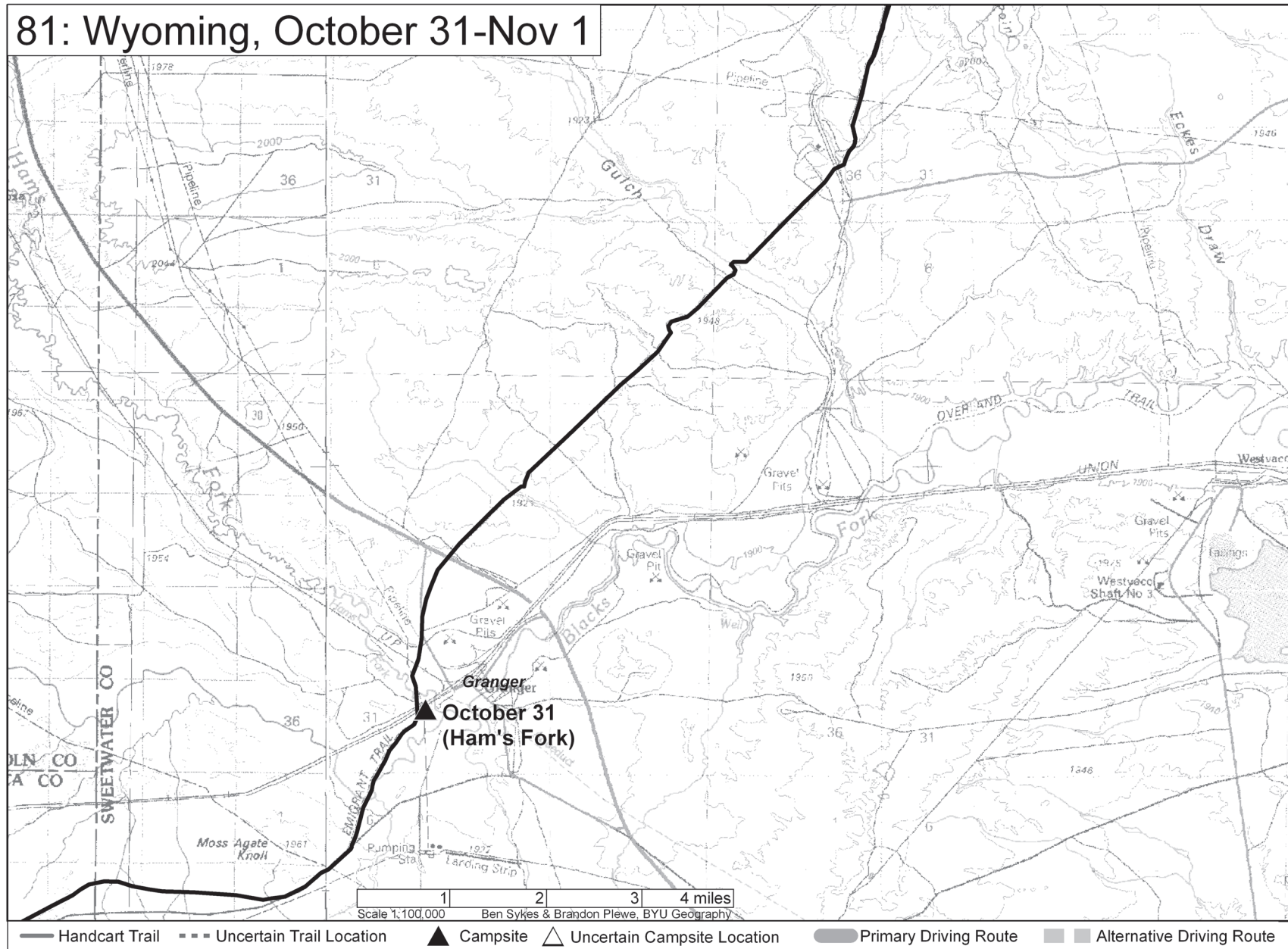
UNITA CO
FEETWATER CO

1	2	3	4 miles
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Scale 1:100,000 Ben Sykes & Brandon Plewe, BYU Geography

— Handcart Trail ■ ■ ■ Uncertain Trail Location ▲ Campsite △ Uncertain Campsite Location — Primary Driving Route ■ ■ Alternative Driving Route

81: Wyoming, October 31-Nov 1



to Evanston (Map 86)

November 2 (Fort Bridger)

November 3 (Muddy Creek)

Scale 1:100,000

Ben Sykes & Brandon Plewe, BYU Geography

Handcart Trail

Uncertain Trail Location

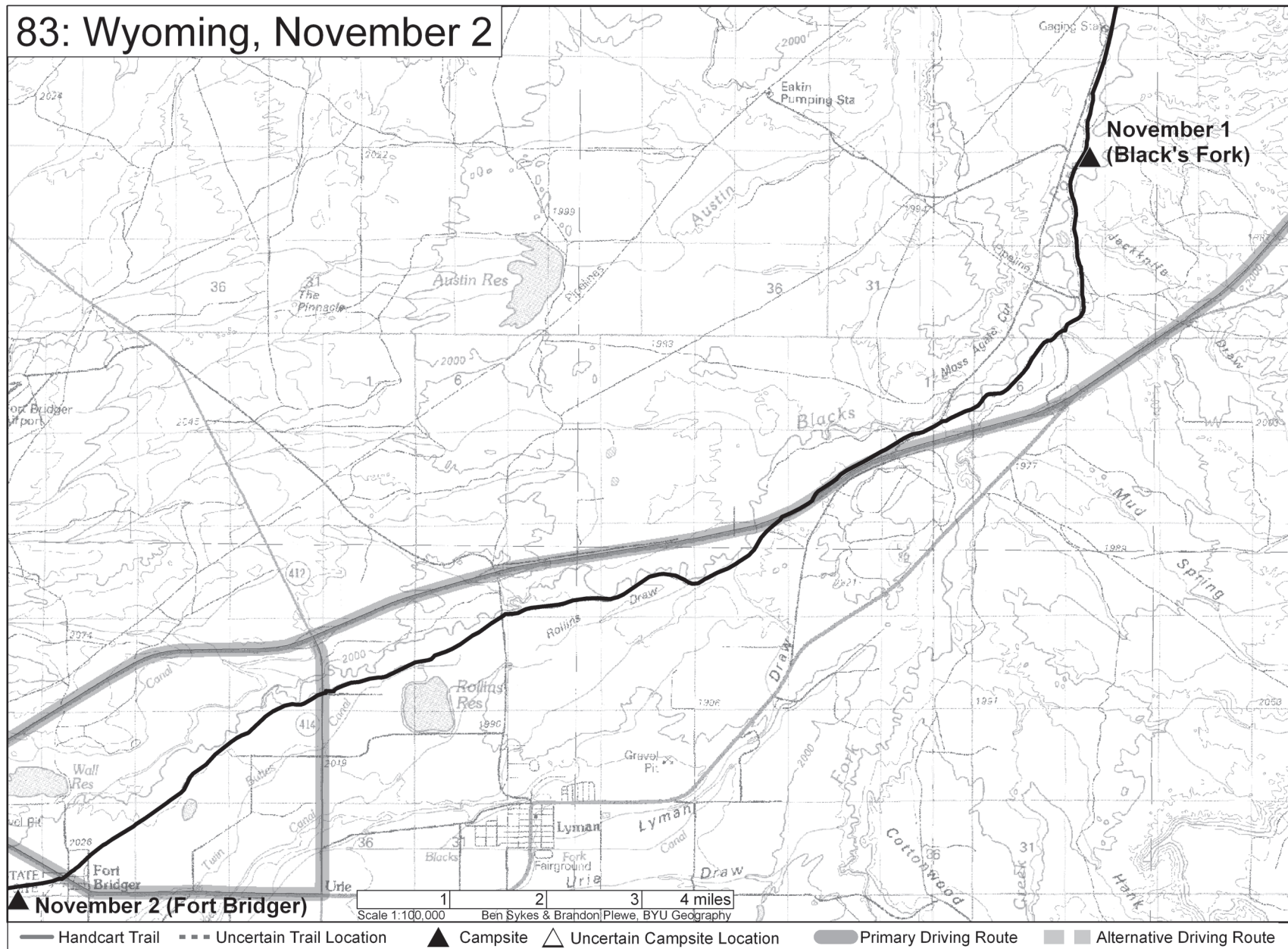
Campsite

Uncertain Campsite Location

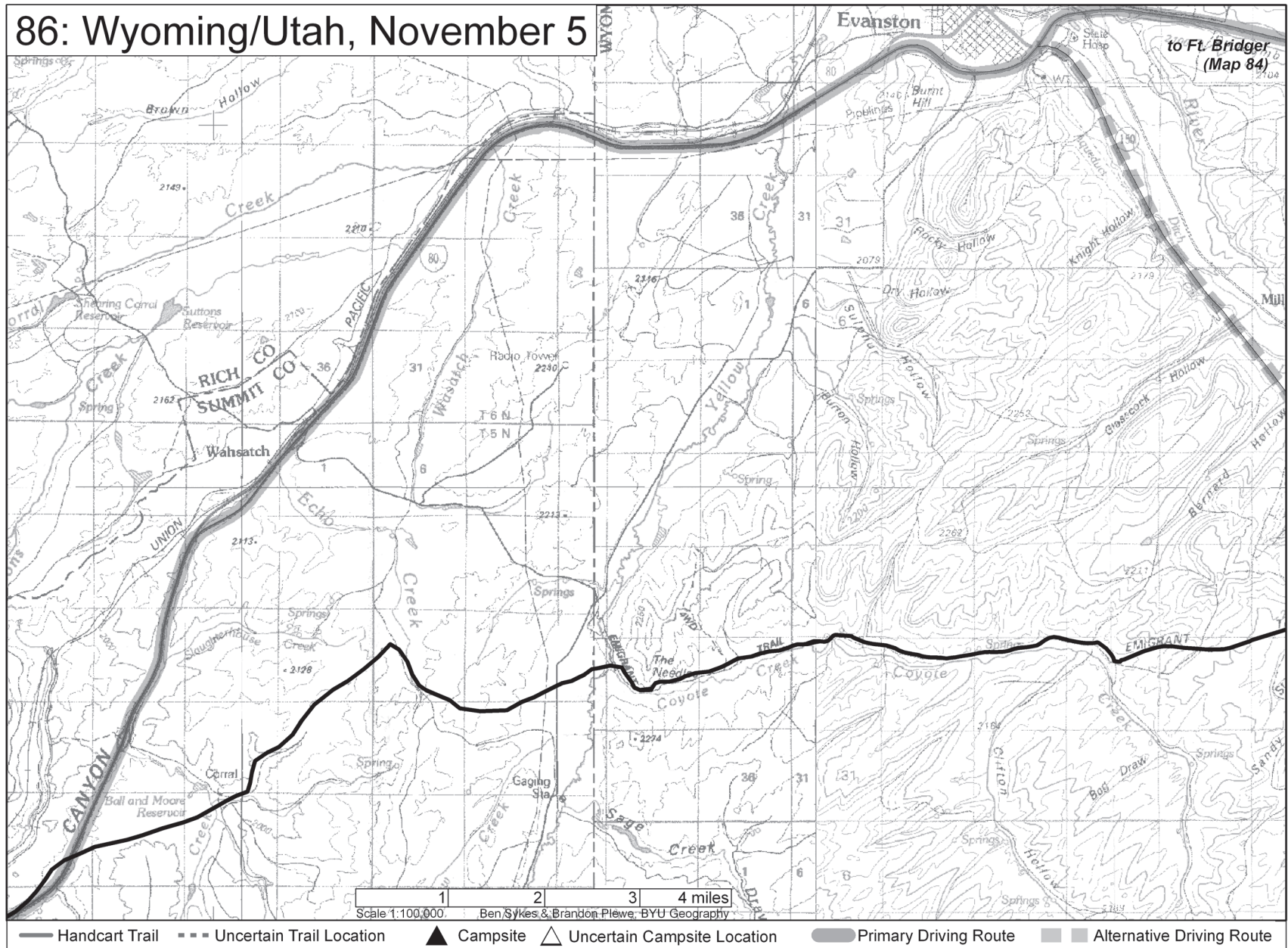
Primary Driving Route

Alternative Driving Route

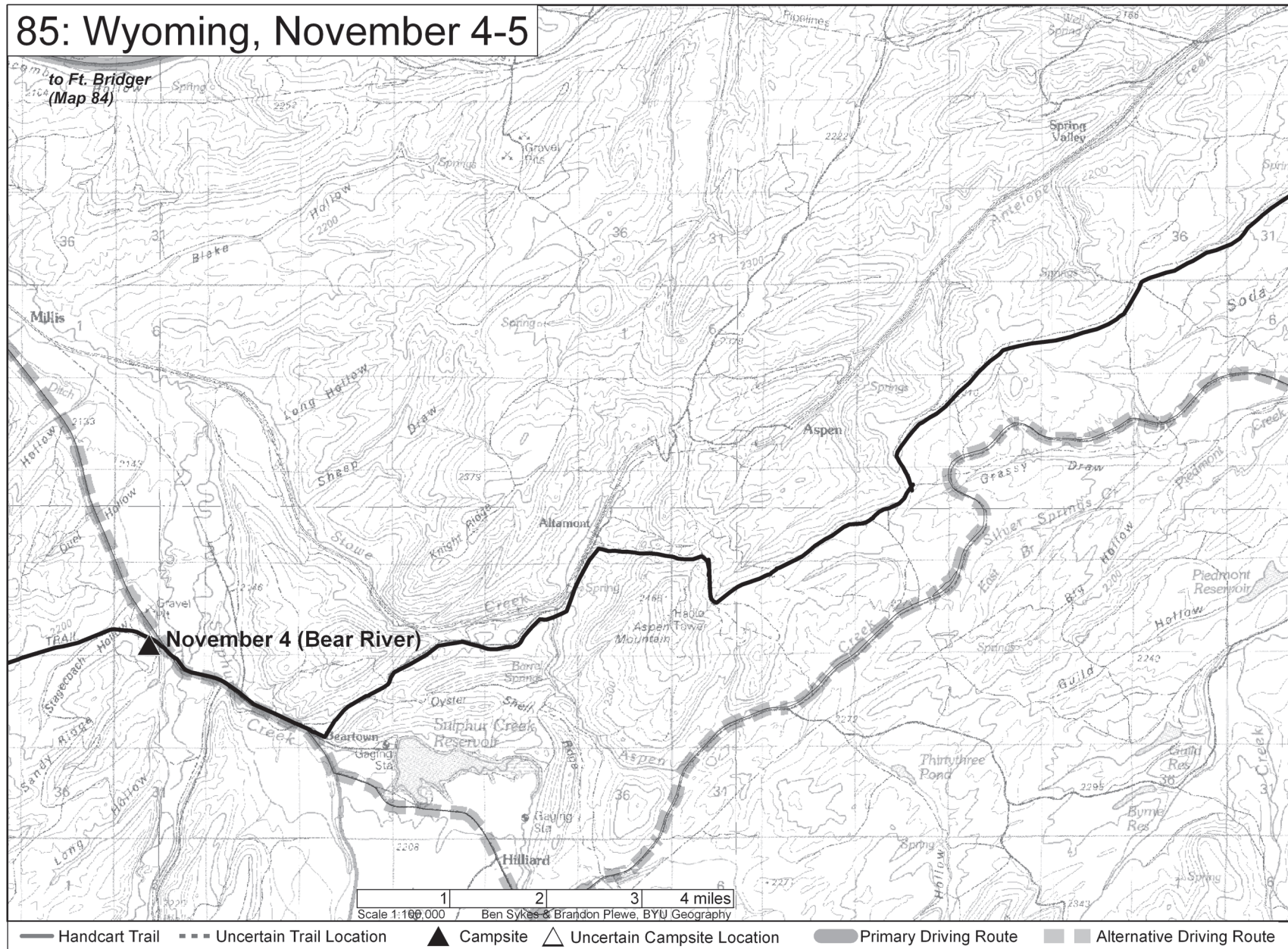
83: Wyoming, November 2



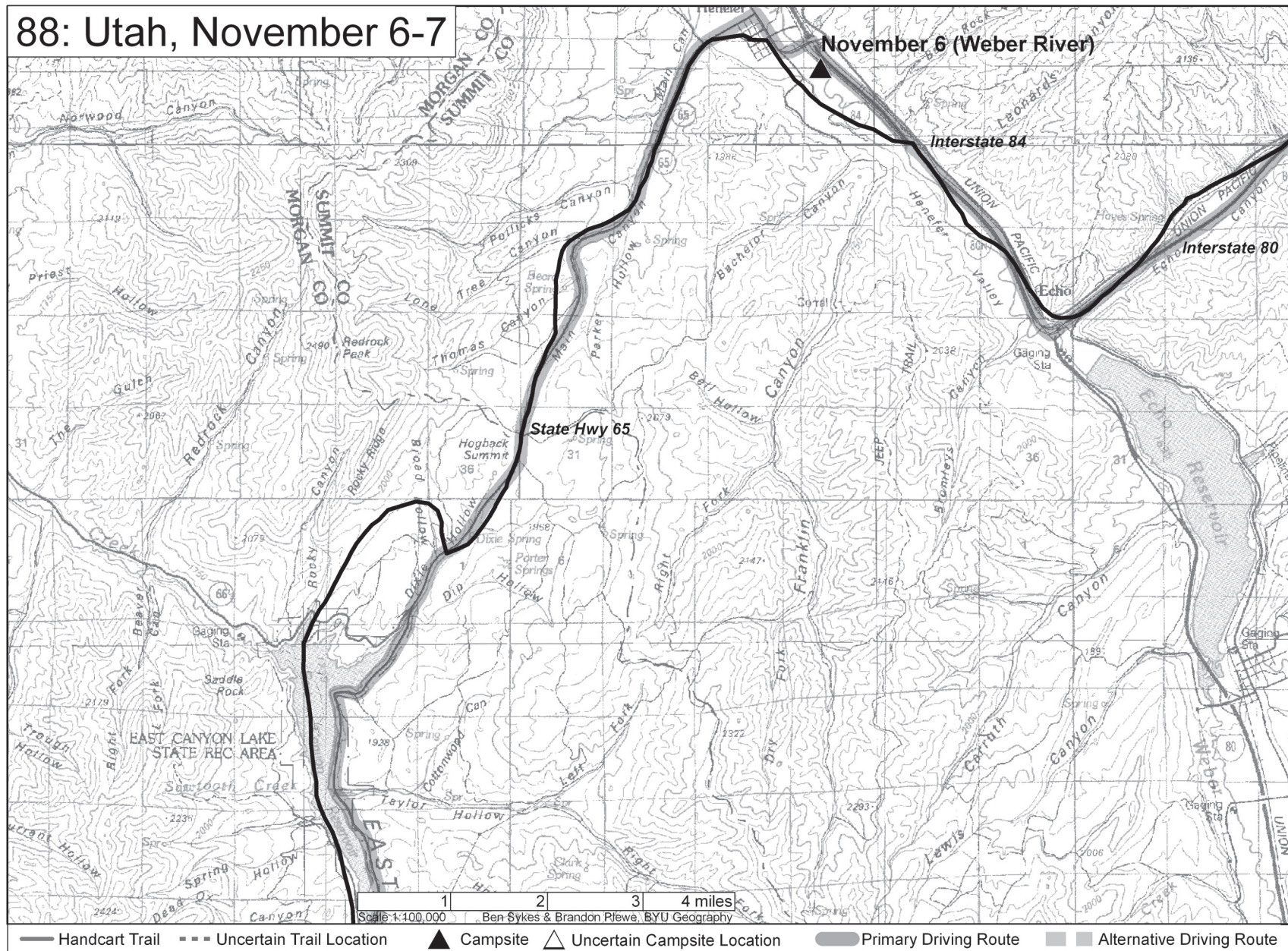
86: Wyoming/Utah, November 5



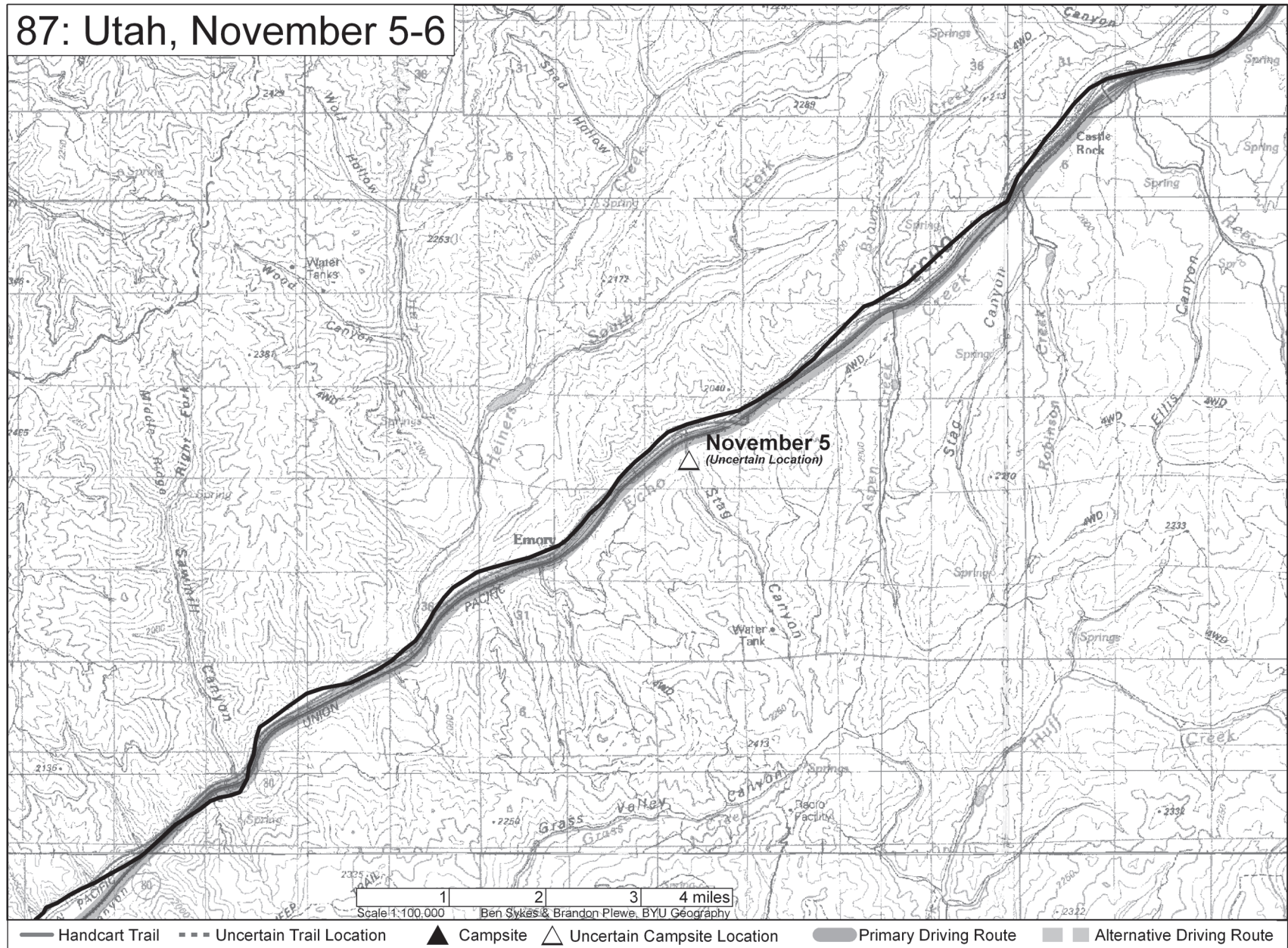
85: Wyoming, November 4-5



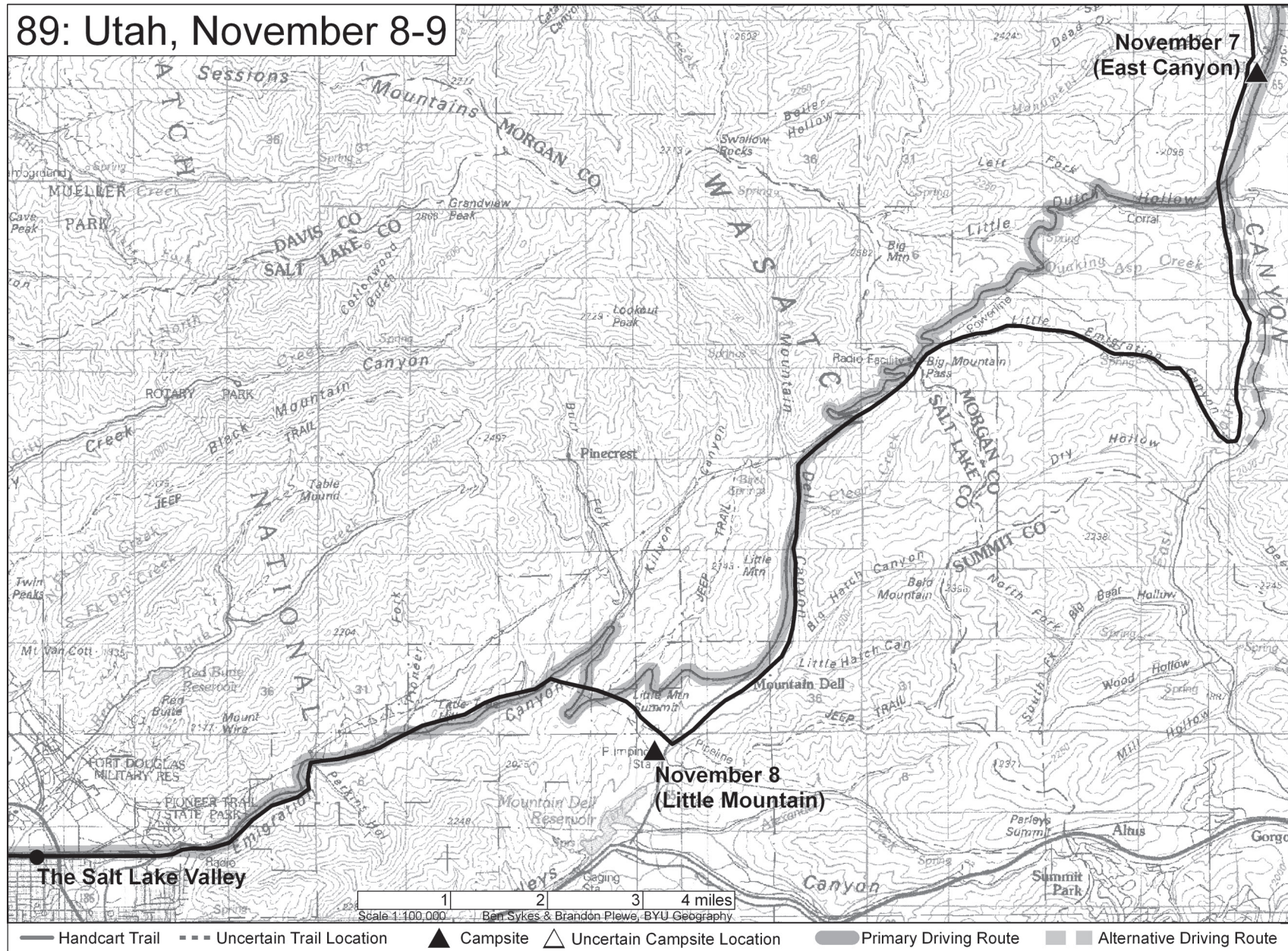
88: Utah, November 6-7



87: Utah, November 5-6



89: Utah, November 8-9



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