

Five wagons abandoned by the Donner party were still standing on the Salt Desert along the trail used by these gold-seekers in 1850, yet not one journalist mentions them. Most of the later travelers must have retrieved their wagons from the salt flats; when I followed this trail in 1929, I found remains of less than half a dozen wagons which could be considered relics of the gold rush.

Immigrants reaching water on the western edge of the desert at the base of Pilot Peak speak of Relief Spring. There are in fact two large springs. One is on the Eugene Muncie homestead, 22 miles north of Wendover, and the other on the old Cummings ranch, two miles further north. The latter was the one first reached by immigrants, who rested and then moved to the other spring for better grass. Due to heavy loss of stock on the desert it became necessary to abandon many wagons and most of their contents. At the end of 1850 the "shoreline" of the salt flats near these springs was strewn for miles with wagons, parts of wagons and goods of every description. Indians helped themselves to anything they fancied and in time the wagons fell apart and perishable goods disappeared. But in that dry atmosphere the iron remained almost as good as new for many years. Mormons living at Grantsville are said to have brought in wagon iron over a period of years, but we have no details of these salvage operations. After the railroad was built north of Great Salt Lake in 1869, Nevada settlers supplied themselves with tools, plows, heavy chains and blacksmithing iron from around the springs at Pilot Peak. As late as 1880, when Eugene Muncie located on Pilot Creek, he found wagon loads of old iron, which was later hauled to Tecoma, Nevada, and used to repair wagons and farm tools.

William P. Bennett, who later lived in Utah, blames the Mormons for recommending the Salt Desert route in 1850, claiming they made huge profit by trading riding animals for wagons and would pay nothing for goods left behind. If this were strictly true it would have been to their advantage to continue promotion of the Hastings Cutoff route in 1851 and succeeding years.

However, for some reason not entirely clear, the Salt Desert route was abandoned after 1850. Lansford W. Hastings' famous cutoff, which had caused so much misery and suffering, was suddenly and completely finished. Wagons and property left on the salt would remain untouched and forgotten for more than three-quarters of a century.

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## THE JOURNAL OF ROBERT CHALMERS

April 17-September 1, 1850

EDITED BY CHARLES KELLY

### INTRODUCTION

ROBERT CHALMERS was the eldest of fourteen children born to William and Elizabeth (née Templeton) Chalmers who were natives of Scotland, and married in Kilmarnick.

Robert was born May 24, 1820, and moved with his parents to Haldimand County, Canada, in 1834. Boyhood days were spent on his father's farm and when but 19 years old he was married to Miss Katie Ferrier, also a native of Scotland. For a short time he engaged himself at rope making, and as a fireman on a steamer on Lake Erie, after which he purchased a farm in the forests of Haldimand County, and with an ox team and ax began the tedious task of clearing for a home. He purchased and took into the country the first threshing machine ever used there.

When the news of the discovery of gold in California reached Canada he was one of the first to catch the inspiration, and at once disposed of his farm and settled his family near the old home, and in April 1850, started for California. The steamer on which he took passage up the Missouri River was burned and he, with others of his party, lost all their effects except what was on their backs. He was not deterred, however, by his misfortune; having set his face thither he turned not back for trifles, but continued across the plains and arrived at Coloma in the autumn of the same year.

For a while he mined in various claims about Coloma, and eventually began work for a Mr. Homes in his bakery and store. While in this position he saved about \$2,500, and in January, 1852 returned to the east; but after a short time he longed for the climate and activity of California life and again crossed the plains with his family, arriving at Coloma in September, 1852.

In a short time he purchased the Sierra Nevada Hotel, enlarged and improved it, and continued as its owner until 1865. For a number of years he was Foreign Miner's Tax Collector, and

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after this office was abolished was elected county treasurer in 1867. In 1886 he was chosen to represent his county in the legislature. He was a zealous worker in whatever duty he undertook and as the custodian of the people's money and assistant in the making of their laws, gave universal satisfaction to his constituents. He soon abandoned politics and turned his attention to agricultural pursuits in which he always took an active interest.

At the time of his death (June 2, 1891), he had one of the finest vineyards and wine cellars in Eldorado County, known as the Coloma Vineyard. On this property he had erected a three-story building used as a residence and a hotel. It overlooks the Marshall monument and the spot where gold was first discovered in California. He was a man without the advantages of an education, save as acquired by observation and reading in later years, as he never attended school after 12 years of age; but being very fond of reading he provided himself with one of the finest libraries in the county, and was well informed on all topics of interest. For a number of years he was a member of the Coloma band, and tried to cultivate the tastes of the young by teaching music in the village.

He was, in short, the life of Coloma, being possessed of an indomitable will, a spirit of enterprise—never idle a moment. He displayed an active interest in every work that promised the elevation and welfare of mankind and, through his generous nature was ever helpful in every society of which he became a member. He was a member of the A. O. U. W., of the I. O. O. F. and of the Masonic fraternity of which he had taken every degree from the first to the thirty-second, inclusive.<sup>1</sup>

Seven journals of the 1850 crossings of the Salt Desert have come to light, but unpublished material on the subject is always of great interest. The route has been well described by J. Roderic Korn in annotating the Lienhard and Reed journals of 1846,<sup>2</sup> so that few additional remarks are called for in connection with the journal of Robert Chalmers. Chalmers was one of a party who crossed the desert one day ahead of the company of 300 piloted by Auguste Archambault. Through the courtesy of the California State Library his journal is now here published for the first time.

<sup>1</sup>From *A Historical Souvenir of Eldorado County* (Oakland, 1883), 222.

<sup>2</sup>See J. Roderic Korn, *West From Fort Bridger*, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XIX (1951).

## CHALMERS' JOURNAL

April 17.—We left home<sup>3</sup> for California. Arrived at Buffalo at 3 p.m.; found James Stephenson, John Davies, F. V. Rice, Bernard, John Dickin and Robert Campbell from Caledonia and Grandrivo waiting for us. Got my money changed. Parted with my father, sisters and friends on the wharf.

April 18.—Started on board *The Anthony Wayne* for Sandusky at one o'clock this morning, called at Erie, Connaautic, Astabuly and Cliavland [Cleveland]. Cold North wind and heavy sea on the American shore. Spent the greater part of the day on the upper deck. Looked back often towards home and thought of those I had left behind.

April 19.—Cold and rainy. Arrived at Sandusky at 7 a.m. Was too late for the cars. Found James McCulloch waiting for us. Started for Cincinnati at 6 p.m. It rained all night, called at several small places on the way. J. Stephenson got off at Cara, 45 miles from Sandusky and was left; but he came on the morning train. I like the country well, (what I saw of it.) The land is rich and rolling, but badly cultivated.

April 20.—Arrived at Cincinnati at 10 a.m. It is a nice place for a city, on the Ohio River opposite Newport and Covington in the State of Kentucky. It is a very smokey, dirty place on account of so much machinery. The streets are narrow.

April 21.—Very warm. Went to McBether Church in the a.m. And to the Presbyterian in the afternoon. Saw the largest building said to be in America, intended for a hotel. Stores open all day, boats loading and unloading on Sunday the same as on any other day. They drive good horses and some mules, double teams with single line.

April 23.—About midnight the Captain came down to the cabin and gave the alarm that the boat was on fire, but not to be frightened for there was plenty of time for all to get safely ashore. By this time he had set her bow to shore as near as he could and a plank out with one end in the water; but before half of the passengers knew what was up, especially those who were in state-rooms, (although they had nearly knocked the doors in

<sup>3</sup>"Home" was in Canada, across the Niagara River from Buffalo.

to awaken them.) her stern was all in a flame. I got together what clothes I could and put out. By this time the fire was rushing forward rapidly. I made an attempt twice to get aboard and get the rest of my clothes and gun, but the rush was too great coming off. By this time the fire had gotten as far as the boilers and the roaring of them frightened all so that they left as fast as possible. All of our company got off safely, but they had left more or less of their traps behind them in the hurry. The loss of lives was not known, for a great many had not paid their passage; but we unluckily had. We spent the remainder of the night by a good fire on the bank, hearing each one tell of his losses. When day broke we went to a farm house and had breakfast; then we tramped about 'till that afternoon, when we hailed another boat that was going down to Louisville, Ky. We got aboard and arrived there about midnight.

**April 24.**—Wrote a letter and sent a paper home this morning. Left at noon for St. Louis. Ran down the river 2 miles. A man fell overboard and was drowned. No one seemed to know who he was. The crew made little or no exertion to save him. They think nothing of a man drow[n]ing on these rivers.

**April 25.**—Col[d] and rainy past the mouth of the Green River. The Ohio River is wide and its banks low from Louisville down past the mouth of the Tennessee River. Arrived at the mouth of the Ohio river about 10 at night and turned up the Mississippi. It is about 2 miles wide.

**April 26.**—Foggy and rainy running up the Miss., between the states of Missouri and Illinois. Water was mud[d]y and full of sticks. From 50 miles below St. Louis up, the banks are high and rocky in many places, scenery beautiful, the timber is principally cotton wood, resembling white wood.

**April 27.**—Arrived at St. Louis 7 a.m. It is a great place for commerce. The streets are narrow. We bought our provisions and tent and shipped the *Anna* for Wayne City or Independence Landing.

**April 28.**—Cold and rainy, run down the river ten miles to Jefferson Barricks for a company of Dragoons that were going to Fort Hall [Cantonment Loring]. Got back to St. Louis 4 p.m. Lay there two hours and started on up the Missouri river. Perry Wiggins joined our company.

**April 29.**—Running up the Missouri River past several small villages, the banks high and rocky in many places, the boat struck a snag and ran aground which caused some little excitement but she was gotten off without being hurt.

**April 30.**—Fine weather but running very slow. Water very muddy and she called at Jefferson City, 168 miles from St. Louis.

**May 1.**—The boat struck a stump but no damage was done. Called at Stream Rock, 238 miles from St. Louis. Saw them bailing hemp from 70 to 80 per ton, but this was as cheap as 10 at Cincinnati.

**May 2.**—Another man fell overboard but luckily he was near shore. The boats here have no railing or guards along the sides. She caught fire, but it was put out before it got under headway. Ran aground 3 or 4 times where a boat was snag[g]ed a short time ago and sunk. The water is from 2 to 10 feet, quick sandy bottom.

**May 3.**—Windy and cold. Another man fell overboard, one of the Dragoons. He was drowned. He was a young Irishman and a smart young fellow, but the river runs rapid and the water whirls and the banks are steep so that if a man gets in it is impossible to get out.

**May 4.**—Arrived at Wayne City. It is a small place, 4 miles from Independence. I walked in to Independence. It is quite a stirring place. There are so many fitting up for the journey. We found that teams could be gotten reasonable. We returned and pitched our tents on the banks of the river. It was a round tent with a pole up the center, about 19 feet wide and pegged down all around. One ran 3 feet up at the eve and another ran hooked up, pegs at the bottom, and one seam left open for a draft.

**May 5.**—Rained all night and we had a cold day with bad weather. We spent our first camping day with J. Stephenson on the river banks.

**May 6.**—Wrote a letter home. We bought 8 yoke of oxen all unbroke. We parted with James Stephenson. He made up his mind to return and try something else. News from the diggings read rather discouraging.

**May 7.**—Rained hard. We got 4 yoke of oxen and with the assistance of an odd yoke which we hired, moved our traps half a mile beyond Independence to fit up for a start.

May 8.—We got the other 4 yoke in town and got them so that we could navigate them through the streets first rate. I came across James Sharp and would like to have had him along but he had not fully made up his mind whether he would go to California or not. Samuel Hopkins joined our company. We bought two wagons and got covers of cotton. Bought some provisions and got about ready for a start.

May 9.—We left Independence and traveled 10 miles over a good farming country Roads bad and cattle a little unruly. Camped on the prairie near a farm house in the State of Missouri.

May 10.—Went 10 miles and forded a stream called the Big Blue.<sup>4</sup> It is 3 or 4 rods wide and 3 or 4 feet deep, clear water. Crossed the State Boundary into the Indian Territory [Kansas]. Camped in a valley and herded our cattle. Stood 2 hours guard for the first time.

May 11.—Went 10 miles one wagon tongue broke in a deep rut, but it was soon replaced by a hickory pole which we had gotten 3 or 4 miles off. Found plenty of wood all along by going 2 or 3 miles off the road. Camped 2 miles off the road in a valley. A company that had camped close by lost 5 horses and 14 oxen, which were stolen by Indians or Whites for they are worse than Indians. They steal here and take them back and sell again to emigrants.

May 12.—Went 20 miles, had some difficulty crossing several creeks, because the oxen had not been broke. Saw several Indians' houses at some distance. The prairie rolling, camped on a branch of the Kansas river.

May 13.—Went 20 miles across a creek and had 4 miles of miserable rain over a wet prairie all covered with water. Met several Indians of the Caw tribe all armed. They had been at war with the Pawnees and were returning. Their heads were all shaved, but a small spot on the crown. It was braided and tied up. Their heads were painted red. They were large men, 6 feet and heavily built in proportion. They seemed friendly to the whites. We offered them some whiskey, but they would not drink any until we drank of the same. The weapons they used were

<sup>4</sup>Blue River, now in the eastern limits of Kansas City, Mo. The Big Blue was farther west and the Little Blue still beyond.

a tomahawk, knife, spear seven or eight feet long, bow and arrow. They had taken three white scalps which had belonged to two men and a boy.

May 14.—Went 25 miles. Crossed several creeks. Had some high hills to go up and down. Saw some wolves. Camped under a hill near a branch of the Kansas River on the road to the upper ferry.

May 15.—Went 12 miles, passed Union Town. A few Indian huts and two or three stores kept by traders were scattered along the way. Arrived at the ferry and camped, for there were so many wagons there that we could not get across till morning. We drove the cattle down to the river to drink and they all got mired. It proved quick sandy clay. We had a good deal of trouble to get them out. We unyoked them and drew them out with ropes.

May 16.—Went 2 miles. Ferried our wagons and forded our cattle and laid up half a day to let our cattle recruit after their mire. We joined a company of 19 men and 4 wagons, belonging to James Blair. He came from Pique, Miami County. He was worth a great deal of property there, but was not satisfied with thousands at home He died at the head of the Humboldt River and was buried on the plains with hundreds more that go to seek gold.

May 17.—Went 16 miles. Crossed some creeks, lowered the wagons with ropes down some of the banks. The roads were very hilly. Camped on a hill near some good springs.

May 18.—Went 7 miles. Crossed the Big Vermillion River.<sup>ESP VERMILLION</sup> Saw a man that was shot the night before through the breast. He had made a mistake while hearing cattle and had gone to another camp. Camped along the river. Laid up to wash our clothes.

May 19.—Went 16 miles. Roads hilly and spring water plentiful. Crossed the Little Vermillion.<sup>BLACK VERMILLION</sup> Camped in a valley. Saw some graves.

May 20.—Went 18 miles. It rained hard this morning, prairie rolling. Crossed a creek called the Blue.<sup>5</sup> The banks were steep, lowered the wagons with ropes. When we lower the

<sup>5</sup>This was the Big Blue, which he crossed near Marysville, Kansas.

ropes we dont unhitch the cattle but lock both hind wheels and put a long rope on each hub tale. 20 or 30 men drive them straight down the bank.

May 20.—Went 22 miles. Crossed one creek and the Bug River. It is wide and deep but good for fording. Saw some horses and oxen that had died on the route. Met some teams returning. Saw Indians camped.

May 22.—Went 16 miles. It rained hard this morning. Roads muddy. We passed the end of St. Joseph's Road It was lined with teams and also the other behind us. There was not less than 200 wagons in sight. Some were traveling 2 or 3 abreast. Camped off the road in a bed of Iron. Stone and wood scarce.

May 23.—Went 18 miles. Cold and rainy. Crossed two creeks. Met several returning. They had gotten discouraged seeing so many going. Saw a number of graves. Camped on a hill, surrounded by wolves all night.

May 24.—Went 20 miles over a flat prairie. Wood and good water scarce. In the last 3 days crossed 2 small creeks. Camped on a valley near the road, grass good.

May 25.—W. 22 miles. Road hilly. Saw two antelope. Arrived at [Little] Blue River. It runs rapidly and good water. We followed it up and camped on its bank. Shot a large turkey.

May 26.—Laid up all day. Saw a Buffalo run past the camp. Heard of a herd close by. Day very warm, counted 260 wagons pass today.

May 27.—Went 24 miles off and on the creek met a Government train of wagons from Fort Larimie and a train of traders from the same place. Also a train of a trader's wagon loaded with furs. Two of our men went after a herd of Buffalo and shot one. They lost their way coming back and did not find us till next day.

May 28.—Went 22 miles. Left the [Little] Blue river. Saw a number of antelope, the prairie flat and roads good. Camped in a valley, found neither wood nor water.

May 29.—Went 25 miles. Met some returning. The mail passed us for California. We arrived in sight of Fort Carnin [Kearny] which stands on the bank of the Platt River. The buildings with the exception of the barracks are built of turf.

There are about 50 soldiers kept here to keep the Indians down. Camped 2 miles from the fort on the flat of the river. The river is wide but shoal water and no timber of this side.

May 30.—Went 16 miles up along the [Platte] river. Met some returning. Wood and good water scarce. The river water is muddy. Camped a mile from the river on the flat. It is from 3 to five miles wide to the Bluffs which are very high. We had to cook with weeds and buffalo dung.

May 31.—Went 20 miles. One of our teams got frightened and ran away with the wagon but was stopped by a train one half mile ahead. They did little or no damage of any account. Some of the company was in the wagon sick. They were some frightened but not hurt. Camped near the river.

June 1.—Went 15 miles, a thunder storm came on and it rained and hailed hard. Laid up half a day. Saw several antelope and wolves. They were very wild. Camped near the river. Grass poor.

June 2.—Went 20 miles. We got along with a large train of wagons, which we had always tried to avoid if possible for it often hindered us in crossing creeks or rivers. Some of their cattle got frightened and ran away, which started all the men. Some of them got hurt very badly. The Captain was not expected to live for several days, but he got better. Three oxen got killed, and a number badly hurt. Some wagons were upset and broken. We were ahead and got our cattle doubled before they caught up with us. It was an awful sight to see them running across the plain. Some oxen fell down and were dragged until they were killed. The general average of teams to a wagon on the route is 4 yoke of oxen and often 1 or 2 yoke of cows which stand the journey quite as well as oxen can on the flat grass. Poor mules stand the journey but horses do not, especially if they are large.

June 3.—Went 18 miles. Rained all night. There is an island in the river opposite here and tim[b]ered so that wood can be gotten by wading out for it in the water, which is from 3 to 4 feet deep. We arrived at the forks of the Platt River. Camped on a low bottom. Grass Good.

June 4.—Went 15 miles. Cold and wet, we arrived at the lower ford of the south fork. It is about one mile wide and has a very uneven bottom, from 1 to 4 feet deep and a quick-sand,

heavy drawing. We were obliged to wade and drive which was a tiresome job. The current was so strong that some had difficulty in crossing, but we got over safely. If they stopped their wheels and their teams they banked. Others got off on the bars in the holes and got their stuff all wet. A girl rode a cow over and got through safe. There was a great number camped on each side of the river. We went on to the north fork bottom and camped. Grass poor and the bottom had been burned.

**June 5.**—Went 16 miles. It rained all night and half the day. We followed the river 14 miles and the road turned off up on the hill. The bottom here is narrow. Camped on the hill.

**June 6.**—Went 18 miles. Roads hilly and sandy. Came on the river at noon found no pasture. One of our oxen had worn his feet through, in such a case we skin a piece of the first ox we find and put a moccasin on which will last 4 or 5 days. Dead oxen or horses we found every day we camped.

**June 7.**—Went 16 miles past Cedar Bluff, a grove of cedar trees which are all cut for wood. Road turned off the river and up a very high hill. Roads sandy. Saw some large bones, thought to belong to a mammoth. Went down Ash Creek or Valley to the river. Grass very poor all along. Camped near a number of Indian wigwams, about 20 Indians and squaws of the Soo [Sioux] Tribe. There [sic] were at war with the Pawnee Indians. Camped close by them on the flat. They were very friendly but stole everything they could lay their hands on. There were a quantity of wagon irons all along the flat, for some left their wagons every day and packed. The next ones would come along and burn them up for firewood no matter what their cost was.

**June 8.**—Went 16 miles. Roads sandy, traveling heavy. Saw some Indians buried. Their way of burying is to put the body up off the ground 10 or 15 feet either on the branches of trees or on the crotches across poles. We passed Priestman, Cook, and Misoner from Marshville,—the first time we had seen them. Camped near the river.

**June 9.**—Went 25 miles. Roads heavy. Passed several graves during the day, also a company and Burirainy was one of the companions. There was sickness in every train which was caused by drinking bad water out of holes along the flat. Camped near the river.

**June 10.**—Went 25 miles past Court House Rock. It stands six miles off the road. It resembles a building at a distance. It is a large rock, standing on the plains alone, about 2000 feet high and about a quarter of a mile round. It is a soft sandy rock with thousands of names cut on it and mine is among them.<sup>6</sup> Camped along the river, 12 miles from there near Chimney Rock. This is another tall slim pillar of the same substance, but nearly all washed away by heavy rains. It is a hundred feet high.

**June 11.**—Went 18 miles. Sand Roads. Left the river near nightfall. On a high hill, we camped near Scotts Bluff. This man, Scott, was buried here 2 or 3 years ago.<sup>7</sup> From him it takes its name. We passed an Indian Village and a blacksmith shop. Camped several miles from there on Horse Creek. Perry Wiggins left us here and joined the Marshville Boys. We have not seen them since.

**June 13.**—Went 20 miles. Road sandy and high gravel banks along the river. The same train that ran away 10 days ago got frightened again and hurt some men and oxen very badly. Both cattle and horses seem to be easier to frighten on the plains than anywhere else. Camped near the river.

**June 14.**—Went 17 miles, roads hilly across a point. Teams were thick rushing for the ford on Laramie River. Passed a woman who had been badly hurt getting out of a wagon. She was hurt so badly that she died next day, leaving 3 children. Her husband died 2 days afterwards with cholera. Arrived at the Laramie River. It is narrow but deep and of very strong current. We raised our wagon box on blocks to keep our stuff dry and got over safely, but some had bad luck. In crossing their wagons got uncoupled and the contents were swept down with the current. We passed Fort Laramie. It is situated on the banks of the river. About 20 frame and unburnt brick houses, one store and a company of soldiers occupy it. Camped three miles further away in a heavy hail storm. Wrote home.

**June 15.**—Went 18 miles and along the river the road turned off across the plains. Went down a steep, rocky hill. We low-

<sup>6</sup>Thousands of names were cut on Court House Rock and Chimney Rock by passing immigrants, but nearly all have been destroyed by erosion.

<sup>7</sup>Scott, a trapper, died about 1828, near the bluffs named for him. See Merrill J. Mattes, "Hiram Scott, Fur Trader," *Nebraska History*, XXVII (July-September, 1945), 127-162.

ered with ropes. Came to a deep ravine and followed it down to a spring boiling up from under a high hill, large enough to form a small creek. Camped on a small hill.

June 16.—Went 9 miles, in a gully or dry creek nearly all the way. Arrived at a good spring, good pasture and plenty of wood. Camped in the shade of some large trees for the day.

June 17.—Went 16 miles. Part of the road was in a ravine and the rest very hilly and stony. Hard on cattle feet. We are now among what they call the Black Hills. They look, at a distance, very black, with scattering trees and bushes on them. We are opposite Laramie Peak. It is a very high hill 6 or 8 thousand feet above the sea. It was named by Col. Fremont. It was white with snow. Camped on Horse Creek. One man died with cholera next camp, and left a wife and 4 children here on the plains. Two men have cholera a few miles back and some all along the road.

June 18.—Went 23 miles over some high hills. Roads very gravelly. Crossed two creeks. Wood and good water plentiful but grass scarce. Passed some red rocky bluffs. Camped on a small creek.

June 19.—Went 23 miles. Roads hilly and nothing on them but wild sage. Passed a high pile of rocks shaped like a hay stack. Crossed three creeks. Pasture poor. Camped 4 miles from the river.

June 20.—Went 11 miles. Laid up half a day. Capt. Blair got sick. We left him to go ahead where food was better and rest up 'till he and his train came up, but we have not seen them since. Arrived at the river again. Passed two men lying in their tent dying of cholera. Food poor along river. Crossed Deer Creek. It is swarming with fish. Camped along the river.

June 21.—Went 22 miles. Roads good but some hilly. Crossed three small creeks. Found no pasture of any account. Sage plentiful. It grows on large bushes 3 to 6 inches high. We had nothing else for firewood for hundreds of miles. Camped near the river, 4 miles from the ferry.

June 22.—Went 8 miles. Arrived at the upper ferry of the North Platt River.<sup>8</sup> It is about 25 rods wide. It is deep and runs

<sup>8</sup>See Dale L. Morgan, "The Mormon Ferry on the North Platte," *Annals of Wyoming*, XXI (July-October, 1949), 111-167.

rapidly. The scows are sent to and fro by the current. They have a rope stretched across the river and a rope from it to each end of the scow, the slack of the stern end and the current drives it across. We swim the oxen and ferry the wagons. Fare is 5 dollars a wagon and one for a horse or an ox. There has been a number of men drowned this season by fording to save cost. We went on 4 miles of the road up the river in an out-of-the-way place. Found good grass and laid up a day and a half, country hilly all around. It seems to have been heaved up by volcanic eruptions. Saw some nice stones of all shapes and sizes. Laid up 23rd. Sunday.

June 24.—Went 25 miles. Roads hilly and sandy. Passed several alkali springs and swamps, all of which are poisonous. We passed 30 or 40 oxen and some horses that had drunk of the water and died. We arrived at small spring of good water but there was no grass. Camped on a side hill in view of the Sweet Water Mountains. The plains are covered with sage.

June 25.—Went 20 miles. Roads sandy and heavy. We passed a small lake of alkali water and a bottom covered with salaratus and saltpetre. It is in cakes or sheets like ice and good to use, but stronger than the refined. We passed a company that had camped after dark. Their cattle all drank the water and were lying very sick this morning. Crossed two creeks and arrived at the Sweet Water River, six rods wide and forded. It is 4 feet deep. Independence Rock stands on the edge of the river. It is a very large, hard rock and stands alone. It is 50 or 80 feet high and 500 feet long. Camped near it under a heavy hail storm.

June 26.—Went 18 miles. Passed a place called Devil's Gate. It is a narrow pass through the end of a mountain where the Sweet Water River runs. It is about 3 rods wide and 400 feet high and stands perpendicular and is hard rock. Passed 4 people who had died with cholera. Some of them drove yesterday and were dead this morning. Followed along the river all day in a valley. It had high hills on each side. Camped on the flat.

June 27.—Went 18 miles. Passed several cases of cholera morbus. Five deaths, and two dying. Crossed 1 creek and forded the river three times. Bad fording between two high ridges of

rocks. Passed two alkali lakes, one on each side of the road. Saw a panther dead. It had been killed a few days ago by some emigrants. The hills are very rough and rocky. Camped near the river. Grass a little better than it has been.

June 28.—Went 25 miles. The greater part of the journey was over a very barren country. Crossed the river four times. There was nothing on the plains but sage. Roads sandy and a strong wind. Passed a number of graves and some sicknesses. Camped on the river.

June 29.—Went 18 miles. Left the river and commenced the ascent to the Rocky Mountains. We had 4 miles of a very hilly, rocky road. After that the roads became gravelly. We crossed five small creeks and a branch of the Sweet Water River. Camped near it on a bottom near some snow banks from 10 to 15 feet deep.

June 30.—Went four miles down to the river and laid up. Found grass, for the first time in many days of some account. The river here ran rapidly down the mountains. Snow banks all along. We burned a good wagon for fuel. There were wagons and harnesses all along the road. The greater part of the horse and mule companies were packing on account of the food being so poor. Nights very cold and warm days.

July 1.—Went 27 miles passing several that died last night. Crossed the river for the last time and ascended the summit of the Rocky Mountains. The ascent and descent is gradual for miles on each side. Roads gravelly. Altitude 7,085. A few miles from here the mountain [Wind River Mountains] is very rocky and twice the height. By Fremont's report they are white with snow. There is a spring near the top, but grass is scarce. Camped on a hill 12 miles from the summit.

July 2.—Went 20 miles. Roads sandy and plains barren, but sage bushes plentiful. Arrived at the junction of the Fort Hall and Salt Lake roads<sup>9</sup> and thought it best to go to Salt Lake thinking food would be better. There was a great many who intended to go to Oregon from Fort Hall on account of food being so bad. Passed a great number of dead horses and oxen. Crossed the little Sandy Creek. Arrived at the Big Sandy Creek. Camped.

<sup>9</sup>By "Fort Hall Road" Chalmers means the Greenwood Cutoff over which Caleb Greenwood had taken California immigrants in 1844. See Charles Kelly, *Old Greenwood* (Salt Lake City, 1936). From 1849 this route began to be called the Sublette Cutoff, and today is best known by that name.

July 3.—Went 20 miles on some descending hills. Forded the Big Sandy Creek and went 17 miles without water and arrived at the creek again and camped. Grass good across the creek. Saw some antelope.

July 4.—Went 12 miles. We arrived at the upper ferry on the Green River early this morning but could not get our wagons over 'till afternoon. There were so many there. We swam the cattle. The current is so strong and the water cold. One man was drowned this morning by riding a mule over the river. It is 15 rods wide and 8 or 10 feet deep. The ferry boats or skows are made of hewed timber. We got the wagons over and went on 4 miles.

July 5.—Went 20 miles. Roads heavy and sandy. 16 miles without water. Passed through some ravines and over some stony hills. It was hard on cattle feet. Arrived at Black's fork of Green River and camped. Grass good.

July 6.—Went 25 miles. Crossed two creeks. Roads hilly but good; bunch or Buffalo grass where we camped, but there was no water.

July 7.—Went 12 miles. Arrived at Bridger's Fort and laid up a half a day. It is a trading Fort. Bridger comes from the states. He has been here 28 years and here he built a square of small log huts as a fort to protect himself and 2 or 3 men from the Indians. It is on a large flat and a rapidly running stream which winds through it of cold snow water.<sup>10</sup> Camped four miles further on.<sup>11</sup>

July 8.—Went 22 miles. Roads very hilly and stony. Crossed two creeks and passed some springs of good water and several copras [copperas] and soda springs. Camped by a small creek with two other wagons. Grass poor.

July 9.—Went 18 miles. Roads hillier than ever. Crossed three creeks. Passed one oil or tar spring. It is said to be good for sores on cattle or horses. Plenty of colic in this part of the

<sup>10</sup>Bridger had been a mountain man for 28 years, but his fort dated only from 1841, and had been located where Chalmers saw it only since 1843. For the best account of Bridger see J. Cecil Alter's biography, *James Bridger* (Salt Lake City, 1925).

<sup>11</sup>Chalmers' route from Fort Bridger has been described in detail by J. Roderic Korn in annotating the journals of 1846, so will not be footnoted except where he detoured from the original road.



country. Arrived at Bear River and forded it. It runs rapidly and is from 3 to 4 feet deep. Water too cold to wade. Passed some high rocky bluffs and camped in a ravine.

July 10.—Went 22 miles. The first few miles were hilly. Crossed some creeks and got into a ravine. Followed it for 16 miles. There were hills on each side from 2 to 4 hundred feet high and they were very rocky. Passed two caves. Camped near the Red Fork of Webber River. Grass good.

July 11.—Went 18 miles. Roads heavy and several bad spring creeks to cross. We crossed the Webber River and followed it all day.<sup>12</sup> Off and on it is four rods wide. Cold and the river runs rapidly. There are high hills on each side. Plenty of sage and some timber. Camped near it. Grass good.

July 12.—Went 15 miles. Left the river and ascended a long hill up a gully road, which was narrow and bad and steep in many places.<sup>13</sup> Crossed two bad hills and went down another gully in a small opening. Grass poor.

July 13.—Went 11 miles. Roads worse than ever.<sup>14</sup> Crossed the creek 25 or 30 times. Arrived in sight of the Great Salt Lake City and camped 6 miles from it on a hill. Some of us walked in to the city, situated on the east side of a large valley, twenty miles from the Salt Lake and on the west side of the Bear [Wasatch] Mountains. The buildings are principally brick unburnt. They have a low church or temple [bowery] with ten or twelve doors. They are building a large building of stone and the upper part frame, which is to be a court house or city hall [the Council House]. The streets are wide and all watered by spring water. The land is rich and yields good crops. There is no rain for three or four months at a time. They water their crops with spring water, which turns down each furrow. They have a bathing house. The water comes from a warm sulphur spring and is good for many diseases. There is a spring of boiling water

<sup>12</sup>Although he does not so state, Chalmers turned upstream along the Weber River after leaving the mouth of Red Fork (Echo Canyon), leaving the Hastings' road to take Parley P. Pratt's new cutoff into Salt Lake Valley, the "Golden Pass" route. See J. Roderic Korn's account of this route, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XIX (1951).

<sup>13</sup>Threemile Canyon, west of present Rockport. A much better description of Pratt's new road is given by Henry S. Bloom, immediately behind Chalmers. Both traveled the road during the first week after it was opened.

<sup>14</sup>In Parleys Canyon.

[Beck's Hot Spring] four miles from town and one cold spring a few feet from it. We could get no bed and slept under a carpenter's bench.

July 14.—Returned to camp this morning. It blew hard, and it was very dusty. Drove our cattle three or four miles to pasture.

July 15.—Went to town to try and sell our oxen and wagons and found cattle sold well but wagons bring nothing. Returned to the Camp and was taken with a bad headache.

July 16 and 17.—Very sick and feverish.

July 18.—Drove six miles into the city and offered the oxen and wagons for sale. We sold 4 yoke and the wagons for \$15 a piece. John and I bought two horses and one mule. They cost us \$70 to \$90. Feed was very high, so it ran them up higher.

July 20.—Fixing pack saddles and making bags to put our provisions in. There are hundreds here fixing to get a short cut off in fifteen days to save twenty days travel, and we thought it best to go the nearest road.<sup>15</sup> I wrote a letter home.

July 21.—Went 5 miles. Crossed a small river called Jordan and several bad holes.<sup>16</sup> Camped on the flat without any tent. It rained a little tonight and we had to lie still for there was no shelter to go to. Pasture good.

July 22.—Went 20 miles. Arrived at Salt Lake. It is 100 miles long and 40 or 50 miles wide. The water is so strong that 3 pails full of it will make one pail of salt. Passed several springs. Camped at an old mud house by a spring.<sup>17</sup> A company came up to us with a pilot to take them across the desert and he camped with us.

<sup>15</sup>The Salt Desert route.

<sup>16</sup>Chalmers crossed the Jordan at present North Temple Street and went on to Great Salt Lake by the most southerly of the two variant "Hastings roads" of 1846. This became the principal road to the lake used by Mormon settlers.

<sup>17</sup>This mud house was doubtless the one which gave name to Adobe Rock in Tooele Valley. It was built probably in the winter of 1849-50 to shelter a herdsman. Stansbury's stock was a part of the herd ranged here that winter. Compare this entry from Lt. J. W. Gunnison's manuscript journal, in the National Archives: "Feby 26th [1850]. Took the wagons for Tuilla valley this morning. . . . passing by Black Rock we arrived at the Adobe house where our [stock] is kept by Mr. Chase. . . . This house is situated at the Nineteen Springs & near a remar[kable] Rock (Hotel Rock) which is about 50 feet on all sides above the ground—this upper part forming a cube."

July 23.—Went 15 miles and passed two springs. Camped at a small creek [Willow Creek] and laid up. Grass good. The guide is going to wait here to make up his company. He is a Frenchman and was Fremont's guide, for two or three years and is here now with a company exploring around the lake.<sup>18</sup>

July 24.—Went 36 miles in the valley,—around the point of a high mountain [Stansbury Mountains]. The water was brackish and not fit to use. Arrived at a spring and camped where the road turns across the desert.<sup>19</sup>

July 25.—Went 12 miles across a salt bottom. No grass on it. Camped on a side hill near a spring.<sup>20</sup> Water brackish but the last seventy-five miles, good or bad. Grass good.

July 26.—Went 45 miles. Started across the desert this morning. The first ten miles was very hilly and rocky,<sup>21</sup> but after that, sandy with sage bushes. Then we went on to a salt bottom where nothing ever grew. We followed a trail across this bottom until next morning. It blew and rained hard in the night but we were obliged to travel on because what little grass and water we had with us was gone.

July 27.—Went 30, or 75 miles altogether, going 12 in the morning. The roads were gravelly round the end of some high rocks. Barren mountains [Silver Island]. Went across another salt bottom to a spring under a high hill where we arrived at noon.<sup>22</sup> We were pretty fagged out. We passed several horses and oxen that had given out. A number of people had to leave their packs and drive their animals and feed them a day and then go back for their packs. We camped here to recruit.

July 28.—Laid up all day. Went to a meeting in a large tent that was erected with blankets. The man who officiated

<sup>18</sup>The pilot was Auguste Archambault (usually spelled Archambeau), who had been a guide for Frémont when he crossed this desert in 1845, and was now employed by Capt. Howard Stansbury, who was making a survey of Great Salt Lake. Archambault made only one trip across the salt flats as emigrant guide. Chalmers was one day ahead of Archambault's large group.

<sup>19</sup>This camp was at the big spring near present Iosepa in Skull Valley.

<sup>20</sup>Redlum Spring. Like all other travelers in 1850, Chalmers had been told the desert was only 75 miles wide. Since he had camped with Archambault, he probably got his information from that source.

<sup>21</sup>That is, across the Cedar Mountains.

<sup>22</sup>The spring was on the old Cummings ranch, 24 miles north of Wendover, Utah, and the "high hill" was Pilot Peak.

said that he belonged to no persuasion but he gave us a good discourse. The guide arrived this afternoon with his company of two or three hundred, which gave him \$300, to pilot them this far.<sup>23</sup> They had lost some of their animals and had found one man dead on the plains. He had died of fatigue during last night.<sup>24</sup>

July 29.—Went 40 miles across another desert. Roads heavy. Crossed one high mountain and half way we found a very small spring but no grass, but there were so many around it that it was impossible to get a sight of it. We dipped a little of it with our tin cups and watered our horses in our plates. We traveled on until 9 o'clock when we arrived at a small creek at the foot of a high mountain [Pequop Mountains], which was white with snow.<sup>25</sup> The air was cold at night and all the shelter we had was a blanket under us and another over us fourpack. Don't often carry many clothes and not often tents.

July 30.—Went 15 miles. We followed the creek down a few miles to where it sunk. Roads heavy. Arrived at some warm springs and camped. Grass good but mirey around the springs.<sup>26</sup>

July 31.—Went 30 miles. 15 to a spring over a mountain and across a bottom. It was gaugey and mirey. A mule went to drink at the spring and its feet slipped and it went head first into the mud and water out of sight except that its hind legs which they tied a rope to and pulled it out, but it was nearly gone.<sup>27</sup> Went

<sup>23</sup>When Archambault guided these gold-seekers across the Salt Desert he was in government employ. According to a guarded comment in the journal of Lieut. J. W. Gunnison, Archambault was required to return half of his \$300 fee to Stansbury. See also "Diary of Albert Carrington," *Heart Throbs of the West* (Salt Lake City, 1947), VIII, 107.

<sup>24</sup>In various crossings of the Salt Desert by the Hasting Cutoff a great many cattle died of thirst and exhaustion, but this is the only recorded human death attributed to fatigue. Considering the nature of the desert and distance between water, this record is remarkable. In 1897 the sheriff of Tooele County organized an expedition to bury bones reported to be still lying on the desert, but no human bones were found.

<sup>25</sup>Across Tecoma Valley and over the Toano Range by Silver Zone Pass to the Johnson ranch in Gosiute Valley. The mountain spring Chalmers describes is in Silver Zone Pass below the present US 40.

<sup>26</sup>The day's journey was south in Gosiute Valley along the east base of the Pequops to Flowery Lake, a little south of Shafter, Nevada.

<sup>27</sup>To Mound Springs by way of Jasper Pass. For a modern description of these and other springs along the route, see Irene D. Paden, *Prairie Schooner Detours*, 81-102. Mrs. Paden refers to Chalmers' journal, but under the misapprehension that it is a journal of 1849.

15 miles over another mountain and a bottom to a creek and camped.<sup>28</sup>

August 1.—Went 23 miles over another mountain to a running stream of snow water [Franklin River] at the foot of a mountain [Ruby Mountains] which we should have crossed, but we could find no trail over and followed this ahead of us and some others followed the route we took.<sup>29</sup> Camped. Grass good.

August 2.—Went 35 miles down a nice bottom [Ruby Valley] from 15 to 20 miles wide. It was between two high mountains crossing spring or snow water. Streams ever[y] two or three miles were good. Grass all along. Passed 50 or 60 Indians. They had three horses and had shot three last night with poison arrows, but they denied it now when a company went in pursuit of their horses. They had hidden them in the mountain. There were the Shoshoni Tribe, —small men, but quick and very thrifty. Camped near a large company, which had lost a mule. It was stolen.

August 3.—Went 30 miles, 16 of which were down the bottom to a wide opening over the mountain [Hastings Pass] and 14 across to another bottom where we found a small stream [Huntington Creek] and camped.

August 4.—Went 35 miles up [down] the bottom. Grass good and plenty of wild wheat and rye which a number of squaws were gathering. They strip the heads off and boil it. We were near their wigwams at noon and there were about 50. They gathered around us and begged and stole all they could get. They would give anything they had for a knife or a gun. They wore clothes that they had picked up on the plains, some wore fur. We went on 15 miles further and camped.

August 5.—Went 25 miles. Came to a small river [South Fork of Humboldt] which we followed. We were just opposite the place where we were on August 1, on the other side of the

<sup>28</sup>The afternoon journey brought them to the springs that break out at the foot of the East Humboldt Mountains, south of Snow Water Lake in Clover Valley.

<sup>29</sup>Here, interestingly enough, Chalmers is telling us that the route through Secret Pass used by James Clyman and Edwin Bryant in 1846 was known and perhaps used in 1850. John Wood's journal speaks of a cutoff across the Ruby Mountains, but it is apparent he has reference to Harrison Pass, farther south. What gold-seekers first used the Harrison Pass route in 1850 we do not know, though Frémont had adopted it in 1845.

mountain. There were a hundred with us that had only two or three days provision and we had very little more. We started from S. L. City with 20 days provisions but expected to be in California in 15 days, as we heard others had gone there in that time; but we found that the story was not true. Camped. Grass good.

August 6.—Went 26 miles, 10 of which were down through a narrow gully between high rocky bluffs, 360 feet high, and crossed the stream ten or twelve times.<sup>30</sup> Arrived at the Humboldt River at noon, 30 miles from the head instead of at the sink as we expected, which was 274 miles further down. We traveled on down the river, roads very hilly and dusty. Camped on its banks. Grass and water good.

August 7.—Went 25 miles, 17 of which were over a range of hills. Passed several springs. Roads heavy for eight miles down the river. W. Bennett<sup>31</sup> took another road across the hills and lost us. Crossed the river and camped.

August 8.—Went 25 miles down the river. Met a company going back from California. One of their company was shot in the breast with an arrow while on guard, and he died. Our provisions are nearly gone and we have at least three weeks travel to go before we get to where there is plenty of food, but we must trust to providence. We came across the remains of an ox that the packers had killed and divided what they could cut off. We found the bones here and made soup of them, thickened with a little flour, which made two or three good meals. Camped here.

August 9.—Went 25 miles over Salaratus ground, dusty roads and grass scarce. Camped near the river and caught a mess of frogs which we found and they eat first rate, (in a pinch).

August 10.—Went 15 miles. We forded the river and crossed a mirey bottom three miles wide and then crossed the point of a mountain over a very rough, rocky road. S. Hopkins took another road and we lost him and found Bennet. He had had nothing much to eat since he left us. You would think it strange how anyone could get lost on the road, but there are so many roads that if you get separated you don't know when you will meet again. Camped near some warm springs. There were

<sup>30</sup>The canyon of the South Fork of the Humboldt, through the Elko Range.

<sup>31</sup>For William Bennett's experiences see his *The Sky-Sifter*.

eight or ten springs on a small knoll. The largest was cold and two roads from it was one that was boiling, which was sixteen or twenty feet deep. The others were smaller and of different temperatures. All seemed to flow over at different seasons of the year. John Ames had one of his horses stolen tonight and five were stolen from a nearby company. Two of them belonged to a man who had his family with him in a wagon.

**August 11.**—Went 20 miles, roads sandy and heavy. Traveled all night. Camped on the bottom. Mired one of our horses, but got it out. Bought a few pounds of beef at 4 per pound.

**August 12.**—Went 25 miles. Ferried over the river Box. Roads ankle-deep in dust. Traveled 'till 9 o'clock expecting to come to grass. Stopped on the river bank, but found none. Tied our horses to sage bushes and lay down supperless for the first time.

**August 13.**—Went 15 miles down the bottom, passing dozens of dead oxen and horses every day. Wagons and harnesses and property of all kinds were lying around. Came across a wagon that spared us a few pounds of pork and five pounds of crackers at one dollar per pound each. We camped near the river but no grass except what we could get across the river. We swam across and cut it with our knives, which was a slow job, for the grass was thin.

**August 14.**—Went 25 miles. Dusty and heavy roads. No feed. Both wagons and scores of dead animals were all along the bottom. It was mirey and narrow. Camped and cut willow tops for feed. Discouraging times.

**August 15.**—Went 16 miles, the best part of which was over a mucky bottom and sandy plain. Camped at a small spring, grub scarce.

**August 16.**—Went 9 miles to cut grass for another 65 miles desert. There is a large bottom here, 25 miles from the sink and plenty of grass, but we had to pack it for about [omission?] knee-deep in water. We carried it out, three loads apiece and dried it for the trip.

**August 17.**—Went 13 miles this afternoon to a large slow water bed. One of our horses gave out and we shot him, for if we didn't its life would be dragged out when another company would take him.

**August 18.**—Went 37 miles, 12 to the sink [of the Humboldt] early this morning and started this afternoon over the desert. The first end was knolly, but the last half was very deep sand and no water for about 45 miles. It is impossible to tell the destruction of property on the desert. There were thousands of animals, hundreds of wagons and harnesses strewn all along. Traveled all night, teams and packers were thick.

**August 19.**—Went 20 miles. Our other horse gave out and we left him. Bennet's and McCulloch's gave out also and two others of our company. We bought some water to try and recruit our horses at 6 shillings per gallon, but all was in vain. They were fairly tired out and we arrived at the Carson River<sup>32</sup> about ten o'clock with our mules packed and the rest of our belongings we carried. Our grub was gone but there were a number of traders here who sold flour at \$10 per pound and pork for \$1, and everything else accordingly. There are hundreds camped here to recruit their animals after the desert.

**August 20.**—Went 7 miles. Started with our mules packed and a pack on our own backs, up the river to where the grass is good. Camped off the road, two miles.

**August 21.**—Went 16 miles to the desert and arrived at the river again. Roads hilly and stony. Camped on the bottom grass.

**August 22.**—Went 28 miles, ten of which over a sandy plain and 18 along the river, fording it. Came across a Yorkshire man and his wife, traveling on foot. They started from Galena and lead mines with horses and wagons but had to leave them on the desert. Passed another trading station and paid 12 shillings for flour and \$1 for pork per lb. We had none left when we had gotten to the mountain.

**August 23.**—Went 26 miles, part of which was along the river and part over a desert. Roads hilly. We arrived at Carson's Valley. It lies along the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Grass good all along. Camped along the river for the last time.

**August 24.**—Went 26 miles down the valley. Passed several

<sup>32</sup>Chalmers took the Carson River route rather than the earlier Truckee River road. For details see Irene D. Paden, *The Wake of the Prairie Schooner* (New York, 1943), 415-457.

stations at the foot of the gully that leads up onto the mountains, a short cut off to the mines, or Georgetown.

**August 25.**—Went 26 miles, six of which were over the first mountain and twenty through a pine grove which leads down to a valley and a stream at the foot of another mountain and there we camped. There was no road through here, but a packers trade has been made here.

**August 26.**—Went 17 miles. Five over the mountain, and seven over a rough rocky road to the foot of another mountain higher than either of the others. We reached the top which was about five miles winding up and lost the path and could not find the right one for some time. There were so many paths that we thought we had arrived at the jumping off place, for we were on a precipice 8 or 10 feet high and nothing to be seen but barren rocks and a small lake far away, and ice and snow in abundance. We turned back on the side hill and camped and cooked the last of our provisions not knowing when we would get any more but trusted to providence.

**August 27.**—Went 10 miles. We found the path again and traveled over a stony, hilly country. We met some traders with flour and we bought a 50 lb. sack for they would sell no less. We paid \$50 for it. The pork was the same price.

**August 28.**—Went 25 miles, crossed several steep rocky hills and one mountain, which was very steep, descending to a stream which we crossed. Camped at a rancho or herding station, 40 miles from Georgetown.

**August 29.**—Laid up to recruit our animals and do some washing. Copied part of the journal. The country here is more level and has some very heavy pine from 6 to 10 feet through and cedar from 4 to 6 feet tall.

**August 30.**—Went 16 miles, part of the road hilly and grass scarce. Camped on a small stream. There are plenty of grizzly bears here. We have not met any of them yet.

**August 31.**—Went 18 miles. Roads good. Arrived at Georgetown. Some miners at work there. There are 5 or 6 hundred houses or tents here, such as they are. Some are enclosed with cotton and some with clapboards and some with logs. Camped under an oak tree on a hill in tent. Some went to get grub.

**Sept. 1.**—Laid up as it was Sunday. 60 miles from Sacramento Northwest, about in the center of the gold region and there has been some fortunes made all around it this Spring.

**Sept. 2.**—Went around the country to see what was being done in the diggings. Saw some hundreds at work, some in the dry and some in the wet diggings. Some making their 4 or 5 hundred dollars per day, others working hard for weeks and not making their board. They dig various depths from 2 to 12 feet and look for gold until they get to the rock, after getting to the rock which stands edge up they stop if good for gold. It is soft and easy to pick to pieces. They wash, after picking out of the crevices, the largest pieces of all shapes that are found. I have seen the diggers in hollows and gulleys, between high hills and the higher the hill or mountain the better the bottom. The country is all well timbered until we get down to Sacramento flat, then the trees are scattering. The remainder I shall write, if I live, at some future time. The distances are all longer an any guide books for I have seen them, they are here. For I only judge by the hours that we traveled and I think it is not far wrong. The miles are placed at the head of every day traveled which can easily be added up from one place to another.