

THE CALIFORNIA GUIDE

WITH DISTANCES & NOTES OF TRAVEL
FROM OHIO TO THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY BY WAY OF
FORT KEARNEY, COURTHOUSE & CHIMNEY ROCK, THE LARAMIE PLAINS
THE BLACK HILLS, MORMON FERRY, DEVIL'S GATE, SOUTH PASS AND SALT LAKE

With A Description of the Indian Tribes and
Objects of Curiosity on the Route

Such As

The Hot Springs, Pelican Heights, Humboldt River and Deadly Sink
The Desert, the Sierra Nevada and the Gold Mines in 1852

And An Account

of Life at the Diggins; Robberies, Murders and Hangings;
Mob Rule; and the Operations of the Vigilance Committee
1853-1856

And The

Return Journey by way of the Isthmus
in November, 1856

By

John Clark of Virginia

1852-1856

THE CALIFORNIA GUIDE

(TO THE READER)

In consequence of a failure in business & the want of means or substantial friends to aid or brace me up again, I became a wanderer amidst the busy throng and old associates of the day, and for that kind of pastime or idle habits I had no relish. Therefore I resolved to put forward in the world again as a new beginner. The only place, or opening I could see for a ten-strike was the mines in California, where it was said one could enrich himself with the precious mineral of the earth without the help of others. Now with speed arrangements were made for the route, that is, a few circulars were sent to different parts of the State soliciting Emigrants to join the train, which would leave Cincinnati the 12th of April (1852) that being the day designated for the start. The morning line, with the evening train brot to the City a portion of the Company.

APRIL 13th, 1852

After buying several necessaries for a part of the outfit we, in company with a number of others, shipped on board the Midas bound for the Upper Missouri. After the business of the day & toward the close, the keen whistle and loud peels of the master bell brot us on board; the cabin full & the decks over-crowded. However, we soon let go. Crossing over to Newport, there adding to our number one hundred United States troops destined for Santa Fe, Lt. Whipple in command. In the dusk we rounded out amidst the cheers of many. Then a booming gun, and we lumbered down till the morning of

APRIL 14th

Which brot us to Madison where we took on the balance of our cargo. Soon under way making a short stay at Louisville. The river high enabled us to pass the falls without the extra pilot.

APRIL 15th

Evansville. The day warm, river full & foliage green. We glided down the rapid tide, touching Shawneetown, Smithland & Cairo in a terable thunder storm.

APRIL 16th

The Mississippi & Cape Girardeau, where still remains many specimens & taste of the ancient French. The flowers & evergreens on the banks, rocky bluffs & the Grand Tower with its satilited & lofty peaks makes the scene grand & interesting to one not accustomed to travel.

APRIL 17th

River scenes & Jefferson Barracks with its lofty striped & well aranged quarters. A hailing gun from the proud steamer & her colors run up told of the troops on board. In a moment several companies of infantry were on the move down the hill to receive our men, which was all ready with knapsack & gun to go on shore. This was soon done & we were off for the City passing the quarantine & general quarters

to the great landing, or depot of the West. The lever in a perfect jam of business.

SUNDAY, APRIL 18th

All quiet. I, with several others, took a stroll through the city passing many fine mansions & stately buildings not only the Planters House, but churches of large size & lofty domes that well bespeaks the pride & richness of the people.

APRIL 19th

The balance of the outfit belonging to the baggage train made ready. In the evening took the packet for Alton, a few miles above, in search of a brother whom I could not find.

APRIL 20th

Returned in time to board our crowded craft that soon left for the dark & muddy river to the north.

APRIL 21st

The wild Missouri with little St. Charles on the right. Small Courthouse & church, graded streets. Shores wild & almost desolate; now & then a rocky bluff.

APRIL 22nd

Many lofty & romantic peaks on each side of the river.

The Gasconade & Osage on the left. Ten miles above the latter is Jefferson City; first the prison then the Statehouse on front. A short distance back, on broken ground, stands the City. This pleasing view, just in the evening, with a splended band made the pasing scene delightful to all on bord.

APRIL 23rd

Reach Glasgow, a small town, then Boonville with neat buildings on the left, then comes ugly & desolate Brunswick; beautiful plain, & Grand river just above. Now Miami town, then comes Lexington on the left. Here I beheld a sight that makes me shudder while I write. Some few days before, the Steamer Saluda with a number of passengers bound for the bluff, in shoving off exploded, tearing everything to atoms from the water's edge to the stern, demolishing a building on the bank & throwing a number of passengers with a great portion of the wreck far up the bluff. Some hundred & fifty lost, besides many gathered up in a horid condition & conveyed to the hospital where I visited in the evening. Some fifteen or twenty awfully mutilated beings streached upon the floors. I was horrorstruck at the sight of moving matter without shape or form of flesh, many uttering groans of deep distress - some without a hand, arm or leg gone, eyes out, flesh off the face. This, with the dim

light & gloomy arrangements of the hall, mated cloths & bloody sheets, with the stench of the room, made my very soul sick with sorrow for the suffering pain of my fellow man.

SUNDAY, APRIL 25th

In Company with two large steamers to Independence, where the emigrants cover a large portion of the bluff. We soon left for points above.

APRIL 26th

Fort Leavenworth, a dull looking place on the indian side. Garison on the hill a short distance from the river. Low & heavy stripes, light battery. Such sentinel with broad shoulders & a head like a diner pot. We attempted to land but a stern voice from the Sargent on duty ordered us to back out & land our tonage on the oposite side of the river. We did so, four miles above. This National depot is Weston on the right, the left side of the river belonging to the tribes. For several miles above this is wild & desolate looking shores until we came to a bad point, or short bend, in the river where we found the Pontiac in a sinking condition. We came too for the night, taking off the damaged freight & many of the passengers, which sweld our number to over 600.

APRIL 27th

St. Jo, our starting point. On nearing the City it shows a glowing front with high bluffs or baren banks to the rear. These, with the rich valley below are dotted with waggons, tents, horses, mules & other stock to the number of 20,000 with a great portion of other equipage like the Grand encampment of Eighteen hundred and twelve. We soon made the landing. After a run of thirteen days our tonage, with waggons, mules and so fourth were soon on Shore. We had little room for the Guard to form Caral & pitch tents for the day.

APRIL 28th

Cool & the town crouded with emigrants. Some sickness, Cholery, measels & small pocks. One steamers, with two ferry flatts passing the people with large droves of stock night & day to the oposite shore.

APRIL 29th

The crowd of people here is large & every boat that comes adds to their number. Still they are leaving so fast as they can cross and move off.

APRIL 30th

I visited the heights to the rear of the city where I had a full view of the great encampment. The numerous

waggons, tents & so many thousand head of stock on the ground is a sight thats seldom seen by one so old, or during a life time.

May 1st

Early this morning a caravan of some two hundred Potawatonic indians made this their crossing point on their way to the buffalo range. In coming down the street the scent, or wild odor from the band & dirty looking baggage, bundels of skins & so fourth made every horse & mule in their way brake & leave for the commons below.

SUNDAY, MAY 2nd

A part of our stock had disapeared. Bruce & myself went up the country some 12 miles in search but no find. We returned through a roling country, rich land & well timbered.

MAY 3rd

This morning found the last (of the strays) and began the purchase of stock for balance of our train. About one mile east of the town we were introduced into a large carroll full of stock, many of them young & unbroken. This we soon found to be the case with Thornton, Bil Morton, Tom Elek, Bruce Johnston, Tom Tomson & others. We had to walk in this carol or, pen, full of wild mules & wicked steers, risk our

lives in roping them. After being kicked across the pen some half dozen times & run over as often, we at last succeeded in leading them out & hitching them to the wag-gons and soon made a dash, although somewhat hurt. It was laughable to all creation to see the wild devils run with all hands hanging on to the ropes to keep them in check. However, in a few hours practice we had them in the train stubborn enough.

MAY 4th

Buy Canadian & Indian horses for the saddle, the latter beautiful dark animals just captured & brot in by the trappers. They were gay and swift as the antelope. Our stock was fine & well selected. We were now all ready for the start on tomorrow.

MAY 5th

The rain fell in such torents during the day we had to lay over.

MAY 6th

At early dawn we were on the move towards the ferry, which was one mile from the Bull pen or starting point. So blocked up with teams was the street ahead it took us the day even dark when we reached the ferry & western shore, where we found several hundred teams with anxious

drivers waiting the morning.

MAY 7th

The whips began to pop. The ox teams with the wild mules from the bar turned out in rapid succession from early dawn until noon before we could pay the chief of the Kickapoo tribe & join our little squad to the rear of one hundred and ninety six waggons, leaving hundreds to our rear. We past a deep & muddy road seven miles to the bluff, where we pitched our tents for the first time on our long journey to the west. It is realy laughable to see the general outfit & camp equipage of this wonderful emigration. Just consider yourself one among the many thousands bound for the desert, mounted on a sunburnt steed, or long eared mule with a rough Spanish saddle - something like a notch cut in a log-huge stirups, fender behind, snubing post before, high enough to hang a bullock on, & still room for the lariett. It is now late & we have seen several dirty looking redskins pass too & fro so we take our grub, station the guard, and turn in for the night.

MAY 8th

All hands early up anxious to see the path that leads to the Elephant. We hurry the morning grub, saddle the mules & gather in the steers & we were soon in line again winding our way to the first sumit of the great plain. On

our arrival I held up for a moment taking a general view of the wonderful & barren looking desert of the west. Great God, I thought, what a sight lay before us. Long ridges, dry knobs, deep gullies, few flowers, and short grass; now & then a stunted grove or lonely oak & for miles towards the mission could see hundreds of teams stretching forward like a great Caravan in line on the dark & winding trace leading towards the setting sun. I had little time to reflect or gaze upon the desolate looking waste as the teams were far ahead & my Indian steed had pawed a hole in the ground almost big enough to hide in. I mounted the first dash in a gallop, her mouth open, tail out, & mane in my face. I attempted to hold up, but a common bit was of no use, for the more I strove the harder the devil went. So I could only hold to my carbine; the drivers in line giving way, and I hanging on like a Comanche for some time, when I righted up with the teams I thought so far ahead. Here I found to my utter surprise the forward waggon had met with a mishap. In going down nearly a perpendicular pitch fifty feet the hounds had give way emptying the load at the foot of the bench & the waggon on top of the steers. This was awful to see our best team, waggon, & grub all in a pile so quick. It was some two hours before we could right up & proceed to Indian Run, fifteen

miles. Here is wood, water, short grass & five new graves, four dead steers. Some sickness in the crowd, so we drive up the hill & set our tent for the second time. The evening cold, some rain. No fire or supper. Make the stock all fast to the waggons, station our guard around the Carol, huddle into the waggons and tent for the night.

SUNDAY, MAY 9th

No grass on the barren nobbs. We hitched up, put forward to Wolf Creek 7 miles. Here we struck camp for balance of day. Plenty of Kickapoo & Fox indians all around us. One of our company, George Ball from Wheelersburg, Ohio, is taken sick. Over 100 teams pass us this afternoon. This creek is deep, 100 feet wide, scattering trees along the margin. A toll bridge is kept here by the Kickapoos who own the land & appear friendly. Numerous wigwams are far up & down the creek.

MAY 10th

We cross the bridge & put forward over a rolling plain to the Mission 5 miles. Here we find a Smith to mend our broken waggon, also we see here a large farm under excellent cultivation with store & schoolhouse where they teach the young indians & learn the old ones how to raise corn. This is a beautiful spot indeed; land rich & rolling, scattering trees, & small groves in the distance. Many fine looking

indians here, with pleasing Mohalas that mounted their nags at the store facing the right, set off in a lope making the dust fly as far as I could see them. They had come in here for the purpose of buying trinkets, but hearing the cholera was in our crowd left with the speed of an antelope. Four emigrants had just been buried. Many sick, & some turning back. We dread the epidemic but push forward over a delightful portion of the plain 7 miles to Buffalo Creek. This branch is quite small, a few brush thrown in to cross on, for the purpose of giving the native a chance to make a little in the way of toll, which is perfectly right for wood & grass. Two large indians nearly naked are the gate keepers. They gave me a good drink of whiskey out of their jug & told me to pass on without toll but to fill our drinking cans here as there was neither wood nor water for 30 miles. The plain is delightful to look over; game rather scarce & not a tree or bush to be seen on this wide level. In a heavy rain we had to camp without fire or supper. We had to turn in, in our wet blankets, but just before this was careful to broach the brandy jug for the first time. It answered a good purpose but the infernal wailings kept us in fearful music the whole night.

MAY 11th

Clear, and by the peep of day we were on the road with

little to note save the digging of graves, burying the dead. Emigrants in camp sick. Wolf & antelope on the move. Plain rolling without brush or timber to Thomson's Creek 30 miles. This stream we name after one of our Company was run in by the indians just after dark. The last two days we have past 14 new graves, five dead steers & one broken waggon. Some eight of the boys posted themselves around the stock as guard. I was one of the after watch & heard for the first time the musical talent of the plains. The night was dark and lonely some mist. Now & then a lone skake from the evening bird, then a sharp screech of the night hawk, the prowling wolf with his hungary howl. This fearful noise with the heavy groans of the tired ox, long brays, or half-smothered wails of the pack mule, and the whining cries of the young kiote, made me rather sick & fearful of the nightly choir I thought so well adapted to the plain. I was glad when morning came when I left the haunted ground imprest with feelings I never shall forget on coming in this morning.

MAY 12th

One of our Company, G. Ball very sick, also several more in tents close by us. Two were about dying of cholra so they were going on with the grave-diging. We soon gathered up our traps & left the sickly glade before breakfast.

The plain a little rolling to Bruce's Run, three miles. Here is four new graves, three dead steers, two horses & one mule. This is good camping. Wood, water and some grass. At this branch fill your drinking cans; raise a long hill to a high, level & beautiful plain far before you. Road good & level to the Onahaw River, twenty five miles. Half way on this stretch we camp. Little grass & no wood unless you leave the trail one & two miles. Here keep your stock well guarded or you loose them.

MAY 13th

A bright morning & long before sunrise on the trail. A steady jog till noon when we reached the little river, 80 feet wide, steep & muddy banks. Large timber, no grass or grub. Just before crossing the stream we counted 8 graves in one cluster, four broken waggons, nine dead steers & two horses; with much loose damage strewed about. Just beyond the south bank we attempted to dine on a cold bit, but the stench sprung up so strong we had to gear up & go forward but before leaving took a turn around to see the cause. Just west of us was 11 new graves, three buried in one hole from Perry's train. Close by was four burnt waggons, & scattered about the Common lay 13 dead steers, two horses & one mule. These were all within a few rods of each other. We followed up our waggons & before overtaking

them past three Companies digging & burying. To Hazel Run, 8 miles. Here is water, grass, brush & 32 waggons in camp. Four more graves, one broke waggon & 3 dead steers. We drive up the point & camp. The night is cold; wolves howl, ox groans & neighbors sick. Kept our watch posted for the night.

MAY 14th

We broke down the ridge one mile to the crossing of Kinney's Run. Excellent camping ground, water, wood & grass. Rolling country full of game & Omahaw indians to Elm Branch, ten miles. This small drain, with water and three small trees. Plains dry & poor to Sour Run, ten miles. Here is good grass, sour water. About 80 waggons in camp. We pitched our tents but soon found we were in a distressed crowd. Many Oregon families. One woman & two men lay dead on the grass & some more ready to die of cholera, measles & small pocks. A few men were digging graves, others tending to the sick. Women & children crying, some hunting medicine & none to be found scarcely; those that had were loathe to spare. With heartfelt sorrow we looked around for some time until I felt unwell myself. Ordered the teams got up & move forward one mile so as to be out of hearing of cry & suffering. I almost wanted to turn back. Just as we were setting our tents there came a young hawk & lit upon the ground.

Thomson, the Kentucky boy, drew his rifle & toppled the lark at a long distance. This was really gratifying; to think I would have fowl for supper. But came to look, the water cask was empty & no wood in sight. So all hands done without the supper. This days travel 21 miles. Passing graves, one dead horse, & four steers. Our guards were out, but soon after dark, our stock, 70 in number, with others, took a general stampede & run like so many devils at least three miles before the guards could overhaul & bring them back; then it was daybreak.

MAY 15th

All were up. Broke the cracker barrel to make fire & roasted the hawk for myself. The rest done without. Put forward on the road by sunrise. Past a man just buried from Perry's train. He was not fairly covered. His old boots still on his feet pointed up through the sand. We had no spade to cover them so we had to pass on. Over a wide & level plain without water, but a few trees in the distance, to Big Blue, 15 miles. Here was over 100 waggons waiting their turn to ferry & ford. Some drove through but we, like many others, paid three dollars & took the boat. This is a mild running stream, 50 yards wide. Large cottonwood on the banks, grass on the flat. A little trading post on the bank that sells awful dear. Sugar, coffee & bread, 50

cents the pound. Whiskey six bits the pint, or 50 the drink. The rain is pouring down. We are all wet, many are drunk & some fighting. It was near sundown before we cross the ferry & camp at the edge of the Pawnee plains. A short distance from the crossing is the graveyard & good spring to fill your cans. On the first bench we camp & pack the wood on horses from the River. The wind is cold & very strong from Norwest. We had to lock the waggons to keep them from running off my hat was blown over a quarter mile before I got it. Young Ball is nearly dead & no phesecian to be had. This days travel only 15 miles. Pasing 8 graves, one waggon & four steers.

SUNDAY, MAY 16th

Sabath. The wind very cold & so strong it drove a thick mist of sand before it. Our tents were blown down. We then droped our waggons down in a deep hollow & layed by for the day, doing all we could for our dying friend, who began to sink during the night. He called for drink & Thornton, his own brother-in-law, & Bill Morton, his old schoolmate, both refused to get up & give the sufferer water. But Mrs. Kinsey, a lady passenger in the train, hearing the others refuse got up out of her tent with a blanket round her & sat in the waggon by the young man until morning.

MAY 17th

When the stock was got up the point, we went 9 miles to the junction of Independence Road, which was crowded with emigrant teams beyond anything we had yet seen. Here we met a band of trappers from the headwaters of the Platte. They report grass good & over three thousand waggons ahead of us. We here made a halt & brot a doctor from a passing train. He could do nothing for our friend as mortification had began. So we drove on to Cottonwood, 3 miles. Here we take our lunch & tell Ball he must die. The tears was full in his eye when he said, I am sorry to leave you & die on the plain; O my God is it so. Imagine our feelings when the teams were got up & ready to go. He requested I should go forward & select the place. I did so going over a beautiful level 10 miles to Ball's branch, small & dry. But just beyond is a high, level & gentle rise. By the wayside I reined up, waiting for the teams until sundown. When they came the young man was still alive & spoke. Water we had none, but two of the boys put down toward the ravine near two miles and found a little. They brot in a cup & gave it. Soon after he said Sister & Mother then expired. We then wound him in his blanket, the green grass his cooling bord until morning.

MAY 18th

We procured a spade, selected the spot, dug narrow &

s to
h
.
ad
ag
s
t
.
t-
g
y

deep & laid him down. His hat covered the face, the coat over the breast & body. Then we turned in the sand & clay until it was full; a bone at the fee, while at the head was a bord inscribed in pencil mark: George Ball. Died May 18/52, Measels. Age 20. Clark & Companys train, Portsmouth, Ohio. It was now about sunrise & the teams had gone forward while we were filling up the grave. After we were done, stood in silence for some time imprest with feelings of the deepest sorrow for him we leave. And now we follow up our train on a wide & clean looking level, dotted with deer, wolf & antelope. I left the crowd, bore off to the left some two miles to a deep ravine without bush or tree. Saw several large wolves, one black & four gray, one fox & two badger. Followed up the bluff until I saw a small group of dirty looking indians just above on the oposite bank. I broke in a lope for the teams on the trail, which were three miles ahead. I overtook them before they reached Rocky Run, 12 miles from the Grove. Here we found oak trees, red squirrels & some porquepine. Troublesome indians skulking down the branch. The country somewhat roling, with signs of iron ore & stone coal. Nine new graves, one dead mule, 7 steers and three dogs. We took our dinner, gathered up the traps & the teams & put forward, while Thomson, Bruce, me & others bore off to the right in search of game. We soon made a prominent point overlooking a vast portion

of the broken country. We reind up for a moment & just to our left saw two large black bears on the run, their tongues out, and three mounted indians just to their rear with Bow & Spear ready to strike. But the bears appeared to be gaining on their naked pursuers and were soon lost between the broken bluffs. We made for the train at Flat Hollow, 3 miles. From Rockey Run good grass. Two graves & 3 steers. The plain is dry & poor. To first branch, 5 miles. Here we camp. Soon after came along an old man packing his grub & blankets on a cow. She had but one horn & thin at that. The balance of his stock had died & some stolen. He spread his kit by our fire & next morning the cow gone.

MAY 19th

We were off with the old man in tow to Funny Run, 3 miles. Here the plain is poor & broken. Lots of deer, elk & gray woolves long & gaunt looking as they kite over the Knobs. Often a sharp crack or two from the rifles. The road is bad to Little Sandy, 4 miles. Little grass, some trees & good water. Just south of this is the Valley of the Little Blue with indian campoodies in the distance & the bluffs far off. We now take a gradual rise. The plains a fine beautiful sight with much game on the move. Young Thomson & myself broke for the fun, first

firing at the antelope then the wolf as they broke past from the scorching flame that was spreading fast & wide before the wind. We past through, following the meanders of the creek some five miles & came upon an old wolf that run in the direction of the teams. We gave chase up one bluff & down the other. It was nip & tuck, with revolver in hand, for 3 miles when, leaping a small ravine, my kickapoo steed broke down. Thomson & the wolf kept kiting so far as I could see, while I made for the train without wood or water to Morgans Creek 15 miles. Here was ten graves, 4 broken waggons, 7 dead steers. We raise a low bench & camp.

MAY 20th

On leaving camp this morning before sunrise four large black wolves & one gray came right up within gun shot we gave them a round from our revolvers which made them scamper while the bullets flew in their midst. Soon after this saw five men in chase of Buffalo, two of which soon fell; the others made for the bluffs far south. The road is now good & dry. A fine cottonwood on the bank. Seven new graves, one old waggon, 2 dead horses & nine steers. A little further is 4 more graves, and in the creek lay 3 Steers and two horses, with a host of buzards on the bank. On leaving this, a gentle raise. The plain is beautiful,

far & wide. To the left in the distance is the winding Blue, skirted with small trees, while the flats is wide, rich and level. To the high bluff & river, 5 miles. This is a fine stream, 80 feet wide. Plenty of fish & good water. We dine here & cross over the bluff to the river again, 3 miles. One mile further we camp. Soon after dark, our stock, with a number of others, took fright. Such a thundering & clattering of huffs I had not heard before on the route. Ours accidentally run into camp & we soon made them fast for the night.

MAY 21st

In the rain we put forward. On raising the first point saw a large group of indians on the oposite bluff holding their horses & seemingly waching the progress of the passing trains. Soon after this we came to the Old Orchard, a singular looking group of Scrubby Oaks, & as the rain was coming down in torents we concluded to pitch our tents for the day. This afternoon two from a neighboring camp croseed the little river in search of game. They had gone but a short distance in the broken bluffs when five Pawnees sprang upon them. But the young men through fright jumped, dropping one gun. As they broke in a run like quarter horses for camp, the indians close to the rear, the boys, not having time to select a shallow

Blue, ford, took the first deep water losing the other gun & one
and hat, while the Pawnees hallowed & hawed & scudded back.
fine The men made camp in a fainting condition. This little
dine flury caused us with neighboring train to put 30 on guard
. One during the night.

MAY 22nd

We mooved off with young Bruce very sick in our train.
We now pass up a grassy flat three miles to Johnsons bluff.
Here we had to stop & call in the ade of a phisician for
Bruce. This kept us some two hours when he began to revive,
& the teams drove on passing over the point. Soon after a
gradual rise on a high, level or table land most beautiful
to look over for 12 miles to the creek again. Now the road
keeps near the stream. Country somewhat roling without
timber but good grass generally. This afternoon in pasing
up a few miles saw the emigrants burying a man whom the
indians had speared & striped. It appears he had fallen
a little behind his Company & a band of stragling indians
crossing the road caught & run him through in several places.
It is now near night & we find good grass & wood at the creek
where we camp. Came 20 miles today, pasing eight graves, one
burnt waggon, 7 dead steers. Saw much small game and a few
Red Skins far off. We are now surounded by many waggons, &
a large drove of sheep, some 2000 or more, are near by the
caroll.

SUNDAY, MAY 23rd

We lay by. Some of the men are washing, some hunting, others fishing, while the dinner is under way. The guards were on duty on the opposite side of the creek.

MAY 24th

Long before sunrise we were on the road winding our way up the little river meeting Robidoux's train of 18 wagons from the mountains. The drivers were greedy & filthy looking with six or eight span of poor mules or oxen to each waggon that was filled with robes & furs at least eight & ten feet above the beds. The wild odor or smell from the train give vigor to our stock that would not face them but left the road in spite of drivers until the black & greasy crowd was far past. We then continue up the Stream some distance to a high bank when we see the last of the Little Blue. Here got wood & water, & take a gradual raise to the right on barren plain to Rotton Run, 5 miles. No wood nor water fit to use. Some grass & lots of dead stock. Here the plain far & side to Willies Drain, 3 miles. Here we camp. This days travel 25 miles. Pass 11 graves, nine steers. No wood or sage bush to make fire. We had bread & eat our baken raw.

MAY 25th

At early dawn, we, with a number of emigrants, were

ng,
rds

in line passing over the most beautiful portion of the Pawnee plain; green & level without weed, bush or tree so far as the eye can reach. Now & then may be seen a stragling wolf, with numerous antelope grazing in the distance. To Bartlows Pond, 15 miles. Here we dine on the bread & raw baken. The water in the little pond black and sour with polly wogs, lizards & small snakes. A little beyond this is the bluff that overlooks a great flat with Grand Island & the roling Platte in the distance. I stood here for some time feasting on the richness of the scene. The bottom is long & wide, green trees are seen on the Island far off, while to your left, in the distance, with the ade of the glass from the bluff may be seen Fort Kearney on the low level some fifteen or 20 miles ahead. Our trail now goes south & we pass along way up before we camp. Have to gather dry bones to make fire & boil the kettle. This created quite a stir with the neighbouring wolves that caught the scent of the burning bones; & scarcely dark before we were surrounded by dozens of the hungary devils that kept up their howling cries for the night, notwithstanding the boys gave them several rounds from their Carabines. That only hushed them for a moment when their hungary cravings began again & continued until daylight, when they scatered round but a short distance sitting on their haunches to see us start when they could pitch in & gather up the crumbs.

MAY 26th

(FORT KEARNEY)

Long before sunrise we were on the move in company with a long train of waggons working up the grassy flat towards the Fort, which is now seen in the distance. By 11 we reach the garison on the open plain one mile from the river and some distance from the bluff. Nothing commanding in its appearance, site rather low. Some four or five frame buildings, with several singular looking out-houses or irish built hovels composed of sod. Some quite lengthy, 7 or 8 feet high, covered with grass & weeds. Dark & gloomy looking & no doubt was first intended to burrow some wonderful beast of the forest. Notwithstanding the temporary appearance of the garison the officers were gentlemen giving satisfactory answers to all; besides showing us the fortifications, with strength of Garison, and the Pawnee prisnors. Also his report of the passing emigration: waggons, 33176 men women & children, 16880 cattle horses & mules, 31780. This statement was near correct as the Commanding officer had each day kept a subordinate at the road keeping tally so as to give statement in his official report to the government. We considered ourselves in the fore part of the emigration so you may judge the number behind. All those from Kanesville or Council Bluff passing up on the north side of the Platte he had no account

of. After a stay of several hours we deposited our letters for the monthly mail bot several articles from the store. A touch of the beaver & in friendship we left, keeping our course up & near the Platte. To the first crossing, 15 miles. Here we camp & swap the Sage mare for a Pawnee steed, a black roan sweeping tail & foretop like a broom; in fact she was the pride of the plain, and at times hard to manage, as a coman bit was of little use. The last two days we have passed 13 graves 2 broken down waggon & 9 dead steers; making in all since we left the Missouri 160 graves 19 waggons, dead stock 122. We keep count of these things just to see what dies by the wayside during this wonderful emigration. We are now in camp with quite a number of waggons. Many making preparation, as well as ourselves, to cross the river with a hope of avoiding the sickness which is fearful in the crowded trains. Mostly Cholera, Smalpox and Measels.

MAY 27th

Early up & begin raising the waggon beds to take the ford. Mudy water & quicksand bottom. We now double our teams & start in for the north side, quartering up for some two miles or more. I mounted the new steed & put forward to sound the ford. Some half mile from there accidentally fell into a hole or swirl that was near drownding us both.