

If "politics" controlled in the proceedings of the convention at Des Moines it was the natural and necessary result of the collision of contrary interests in the State whose representatives in the nature of the case sought position and power to protect and further those interests. The conclusion of their proceedings—their negation of instructions or of the unit rule—in the light of the conditions then manifest and in the judgment of those who have studied them in the lights and shades of subsequent events, was the very essence of common sense as well as the very substance of political wisdom.

If the delegates selected by Iowa's Republicans on January 18, 1860, to represent them in the celebrated convention at Chicago were "politicians" and "wire-pullers" they were certainly excellent samples of the species—and a sort that it would be well if their numbers and kind would increase and multiply.

The attitude of the delegates in Sherman's Hall towards national issues and the several candidates then mentioned and urged upon their consideration completely represented the dominant wish of the rank and file of the party throughout the State as it was indicated in their party press during the year preceding. Prejudices relative to sundry moot points that aroused animosity and alienated allies and personal preferences for particular candidates were deliberately checked, in order that there might result an efficient harmony on matters of universal interest among the opposition to the Administration in control at Washington.

Finally the name of Abraham Lincoln of Illinois seems to have been as much in the minds and in the calculations of the delegates and leaders at Des Moines, as were the names of Banks or Bates or Cameron or Chase or Fessenden or McLean or Wade—and possibly—or Seward.

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ACROSS THE PLAINS IN 1850.

Journal and Letters of Jerome Dutton, Written During an Overland Journey from Scott County, Iowa, to Sacramento County, California, in the Year Named.¹

INTRODUCTORY.

In the biographical section of "The History of Clinton County, Iowa," published in 1879 by the Western Historical Company of Chicago, appear brief sketches of Jerome Dutton, on page 792, and of Lorenzo D. Dutton and Josiah F. Hill, on page 810. In each of these sketches mention is made of a trip taken across the plains to California in the spring and summer of 1850. The three men named, with others, made this long journey in company, and one, at least, of the party, kept a journal of the expedition.

This journal follows, together with several supplementary letters by Jerome Dutton, the writer of the journal, during, or shortly after the conclusion of the journey. Both the journal and the letters appear herein essentially as they were written. To avoid repetition, portions of the letters have been omitted, and in the furtherance of a connected narrative occasional detail mentioned in the letters and omitted from the journal are herein included in the journal. These changes, however, are few; and otherwise no alterations have been made, except to eliminate some errors of punctuation and orthography, and to add an occasional note that may aid

¹On Dec. 29, 1850, Jerome Dutton sent his journal by mail from Mormon Island, Cal., to Le Roy Dutton in Clinton County, Iowa. Before mailing it he inscribed the subjoined note on the fly leaf:

"You must let no one see my journal. There are so many mistakes in it and I have not had time to rectify them. But I will do it when I get home. This is just enough to keep it fresh in memory. Remember that a good part of it was written after dark with no other light than such as I could make out of buffalo chips.—Jerome."

in identifying some of the persons mentioned. Whenever reference is made to the "History of Clinton County" the volume described at the beginning is the book alluded to.

Before they started on this journey, the three men named entered into a contract with Rudolphus S. Dickinson whereby he was to provide them and their belongings with transportation to California, and with board during the trip. Whether others of the party went under the same terms is not known. For this service Mr. Dickinson was to receive, according to the evidences at hand, \$400 from each individual. He was, however, unable to fully perform his part of the contract. When the party reached the Missouri river it became evident that from thence forward the burdens of the horses and oxen must be lightened, and as the best means of reaching this end, the men in the party made the entire remainder of the journey from the Missouri river to their destination on foot. In the middle fifties when many of the party had returned to Iowa, Mr. Dickinson began suit, with Cook and Dodge, of Davenport, as his attorneys, against Hill and the two Dutton brothers for \$400 each under this contract, but as he had failed to provide them with transportation and as the defendants had performed many services for him, he obtained only a modified judgment.

It is, perhaps, not out of place to mention here that the town of Dixon in Scott county, takes its name, in an abbreviated form, from the leader of this party, who opened the first store in the community, when it was known as Little Walnut Grove. He was also one of the founders of the town of Calamus in Clinton county. On page 633 of the "History of Clinton County" appears the following: "Calamus . . . was platted in 1860 by R. S. Dickinson, who owned the land on the north side of the railroad. He and his son, A. L. Dickinson, built the first store of consequence and opened a large line of merchandise and engaged in grain buying."

Jerome Dutton, with his brother Lorenzo, left California in the early summer of 1854, returning by way of the Isthmus of Panama, thence to New York city and from there by rail to Davenport, Iowa. He was born March 2nd, 1826, in Afton

(then Bainbridge) Chenango county, N. Y., being the fifth son of Charles and Nancy (Pearsall) Dutton. His mother died in 1837, and in the fall of that year he, together with his father and four brothers, Le Roy, Lorenzo Dow, John, and Charles went to Potter county, Penn., where they lived with his mother's brother, Samuel Pearsall, until the following spring. They then went by raft to Madison, Ind., where they lived with another uncle, William Dutton, until December, 1838. The father and his sons, Le Roy, John, Charles and Jerome, then started for Iowa, proceeding down the Ohio and up the Mississippi, but at Alton, Ills., the river became frozen over and the party remained there until the spring of 1839. They then continued up the river to Comanche, where they left the boat and walked out to the home of another uncle, William Pearsall. Here, along the banks of the Wapsipinicon river in the south-east corner of Olive township, Clinton county, the father and his sons, Le Roy, John, Charles and, in 1842 Lorenzo, established what were to be the homes of four of them for the remainder of their lives. Here the brother John died in 1840, the father, Charles Sr., in 1859, Le Roy, Dec. 19th, 1894, Lorenzo D., March 13th, 1895. Charles, who survived all the others, died April 2nd, 1899, at Durant, Iowa, whence he had moved from his farm in Olive township only the year before.

Until his marriage, Jerome Dutton lived, for the most part, with his oldest brother, Le Roy. He was married November 16th, 1856, at Tipton, Cedar county, Iowa, by Judge W. H. Tuthill, to Celinda, a daughter of Francis and Rhoda (Chaplin) Parker. A few months later he took up his abode on his farm on the south bank of the Wapsipinicon in Allen's Grove township, Scott county.

In 1859 he bought the Buena Vista ferry that had, some years previously, been operated by Dr. Amos Witter, and the south landing of which was on the north-east corner of his farm. He operated this ferry until the fall of 1864 when the ferry at this point was discontinued, and he moved to the neighboring town of Dixon. From thence he moved to

Wheatland, in Clinton county, in the fall of 1865. Here, directly after his arrival, he opened an insurance, real estate, collecting and loan office, and also began a large business as an auctioneer. These were his business pursuits for the remainder of his life. He held many minor offices in his home community and was Justice of the Peace for many years. He was Postmaster at Wheatland at the time of his death, which occurred October 4th, 1893.

References to Charles Dutton, Sr., or his sons may be found on pages 352, 363, 364, 365, 392, 792, and 810 "History of Clinton County." C. W. D.

Journal.

Started from home¹ for California March 31st, 1850, and from Allen's Grove [Scott Co.] April 3rd. Stopped over night with Mr. Owens and Bennett in Walnut Grove in company with Daniel Carlisle, Josiah Hill, L. D. Dutton, John Gochenour, Sam, Adam, and John White and the latter's wife, Mr. and Mrs. Powell, Solomon Gee and two Irish boys from Illinois by the name of John and Henry Hart. The second night we stayed at ——— Akerman's, in Posten's Grove. Here we received a visit from Mr. Owen and Andrew and John Posten.²

April 5th we stayed in Tipton at the home of Abraham Lett, a very jovial old fellow. We had a "rake down" there that evening, Adam White presiding as fiddler. Left Tipton April 6th, and after ploughing through sloughs all day we stopped at the house of John Johnston, a distance of five miles from Tipton.

¹The farm of LeRoy Dutton, in Sec. I, Olive township, Clinton county.

²The Mr. Powell mentioned died about a year after his arrival in California. His widow, Elizabeth Powell, married F. E. Rothstein, in March, 1852. Mr. Rothstein went to California by the overland route in 1849, and in the spring of 1857, he and his wife returned to Scott county. In 1861 he moved into Clinton county, and built and operated "Rothstein's Mill,"—a landmark for many years—on the north bank of the Wapsipinicon river in Olive township. A sketch of Mr. Rothstein is given on page 813, "History of Clinton County." The "Mr. Owen" last mentioned was John Ervin Owen, whose wife, Diantha, was the eldest sister of Celinda Parker, whom Jerome Dutton subsequently married. Andrew and John Posten were sons of James Posten. James Posten was the earliest settler in the northwest corner of Scott county, and "Posten's Grove" took its name from him.

We left Johnston's Sunday morning April 7th, and crossed the Cedar at Washington's Ferry. We traveled two miles farther and tarried at the house of John Doland. . . .

On the 8th we arrived at our Capitol and camped close by the College. Iowa City is not a very pretty place, the houses are scattering and generally very small. There are several small churches, however, among which are the Congregational, Baptist, Universalist and several others. The State House is a rather good looking building built of unhewn stone. We were advised at Iowa City to take the southern route on account of the scarcity of feed on the northern, but I now believe it would have been better to have taken the northern route, for the hay and corn began to grow very scarce as soon as we left the city, and the northern is a much nearer route.

On the 9th we crossed the Iowa river at the middle ferry, drove 12 miles and stopped at the house of William Fry. Here feed began to grow scarce, and we started in the morning of the 10th before feeding hay simply because we could not get it. We drove four miles and put up at the house of an old bachelor by the name of Lambert. He was a smart looking man and had everything about him much nicer than any other man on the road. In this he is the equal of old man Dickerman. We got corn of him for 40 cents per bushel, and went about five miles off the road and got a ton of hay delivered for \$6.50. We laid up here the 11th, 12th and 13th.

On the 14th we left Lambert's and crossed English river (on a bridge) at Warrensville, and after traveling over a rough and sloughy country a distance of 20 miles stopped at the house of John Houston. William and the Parkers stayed at the same house last spring.¹ We got no feed here except what we hauled with us 20 miles.

All day the 14th the country is about the same; the land high, wet and cold. We stopped near Sigourney, Keokuk Co.

¹William R. Pearsall, Francis Parker, and the latter's son, Francis Jackson Parker. The three, in company had followed this route to California in the spring of 1849. William R. Pearsall was a son of the William Pearsall mentioned in the introduction hereto, and thus a cousin of Jerome Dutton. His wife, Rhoda, was a daughter of Francis Parker, and thus a sister of Jerome Dutton's future wife.

The country begins to look better this morning, the 16th. We drove 11 miles today and laid up at Louis Gregory's, the best man we have met with yet, and lives in the prettiest country we have passed through. He sold us the hay off his stable roof, and it was the cheapest hay we have bought at that. We got corn from a man that lives four miles off the road for 55 cents, delivered.

We laid by again the 17th, 18th and 19th, and to pass away the time Daniel Carlisle bought three chickens and put them up at a distance of 15 rods to be shot at with the rifle held at arms length. I killed one the first shot I made. He also got two turkeys and put them up at 25 rods. Ten shots brought them both down. We have some first-rate marksmen in our crowd.

On the 20th we again set out and after going two miles forded the north branch of Skunk river—a beautiful mill stream. About eight miles from there we ferried the south fork. Here we met five very pretty girls on their way to meeting and they created quite a sensation throughout the company. The country from this fork back a distance of 20 miles is as beautiful a country as ever I saw, and is in Keokuk Co. After crossing the south fork it was quite different, being very hilly and sloughy. We camped that night near Oskaloosa the county seat of Mahaska Co.

On the 21st we drove into Oskaloosa and there heard that a Californian named Hudson had died and been buried there the day before, and the citizens mistrusted that his remains had been dug up. We went one mile beyond town and put up at the house of E. Hale. After we had fed our teams we went back to town to find out the truth of the matter. The citizens opened the grave and found the body missing. Two doctors, E. W. Pierson and G. Singer, with ——— Sampsel as accessory, had hired two men by the names of James Moore and ——— Wallace to dig up the body and bring it to their buggy. The body was found while we were in town. I never in my life felt so much like putting mob law in force as I did when I saw the body. It caused considerable excitement among the Californians as well as the citizens and there

was a crowd around all day. The two men who dug up the body made their escape, but Dr. Pierson and Singer were taken at night with a warrant, but were released under bonds of \$1,000. The suit was just called as we left there on the 22nd.

We ferried the Des Moines at Tuley's [Tool's] ferry (or ford) and stayed all night at Belle Fountain, a little town on the south side. Here we got corn for 75 cents per bushel. The 23rd we stayed at Wolf's Run. The night of the 24th we stayed five miles from any house in a pretty place and killed a large wild turkey. On the 25th we arrived at Chariton Point where we got hay for \$1.00 per hundred and corn for \$1.50 per bushel. This place is 40 miles from the Des Moines.

Here we struck the old Mormon trail and from this on had a first rate road with the exception that it was more crooked than the Wapsipinicon. The 28th we passed through Mount Pisgah, a settlement of Mormons that stopped here in 1846 because they were so poor they could not get any farther. There are about 60 families. All that are able are going on to Salt Lake this season. This settlement is about 60 miles from any other. They have seen hard times here. They have a mill on Grand river which runs through the town, but they are selling out as fast as they can and leaving for the Land of Promise. This place is 125 miles from Council Bluffs. We bought corn here for 25 cents per bushel. This corn the Mormons had brought from the Missouri, a three days' journey, expressly to sell to the Californians.

On the 29th we started for the Nishnabotna, 75 miles from Mount Pisgah, with (we are told) only one settler in the distance. [We find] the Mormons settled along the road all the way where there is timber; but this is scarce. The road is very crooked in consequence of proceeding through a rough part of the country and keeping on the dividing ridge all the way.

We arrived on the Nishnabotna May 3rd. It is a small but very pretty stream and is about 50 miles from St. Francis. There are speckled trout in this stream, and the prairies are

very large all through here. This is on the North Fork, the South Fork being 20 miles distant. There is an old Indian town here of the same name but there is no one here now but about nine families of Mormons. It is a very pretty country and, I think, a healthy one.

May 6th. Today we got within 5 miles of Trader's Point (or St. Francis) and camped in the timber. We stayed in this vicinity until the 16th.

Letter No. 1.

St. Francis, Iowa, May 7th, A. D. 1850.

Dear Brother:—

We started from Allen's Grove April 3rd. (Here follow extracts from his journal already given.) I have mentioned all names so that from time to time as I write you may know who I mean when I say that we are all well, &c. I shall number each letter so that you will know if any miscarry. I should have written before, but after we had got far enough to make it interesting there was no post-office.

We camped today within 5 miles of Trader's Point, and here I am sitting on the wagon tongue writing to you. There is no town nor post-office here by the name of Council Bluffs, but that name is applied to a large tract of country here. The only post-office near here is the Mormon town, Kanessville. I forgot to tell you that in Tipton I traded my new thick boots to Henry Hart for a pair that he got a shoemaker in Illinois to make for him. He had worn them only a few days. They were too large for him so he gave me an even trade, and a good trade it was for me. I also traded my rifle for a U. S. piece that carries a ball of almost half an ounce weight. It is a new rifle at that.

I will now wait until I find out when we start.

May 16th.

Dickinson arrived the 9th and we have joined a company and expect to cross the river tomorrow. On this date we organized a company to be called the "Fear Not." William Clapp is our Captain, R. S. Dickinson, Lieut., Thomas W.

Hinchman, Clerk. I have not room for the By-Laws. The Captain was through last spring and is now taking his family through. We have a good many families in our company. I think it will be very doubtful about L. D. D. writing to Charles. I have spoken to him a dozen times, but we have such a poor chance that it is hard to get at it. I have got me a good revolver in my belt and I feel perfectly safe, although some difficulty with the Indians is apprehended. We have seen along the road nine dead horses and one dead ox. I have neither seen nor heard anything of Scott or James.¹ If they are not short of money I lose my guess. Flour has been \$7 per hundred here until lately. It is now \$5. If you want to know how I feel I can tell you that I would hate awfully to be back there working for \$15 per month. I have been well ever since I started and weigh 179 pounds. I was exposed to, but did not take the measles. Smallpox is prevalent here but the vaccination in my arm worked very well. I have vaccinated several. The grass is just high enough to start on and that is all. It is very dry and dusty and the grass can grow only in the sloughs.

I found my rifle was more bother than profit so I traded it for a patent lever watch, pronounced by good judges to be worth \$25. Kanessville is a small place but the business done here would astonish you. Just at this time five or six auctioneers are holding sales, and property sells well. A great many have come here to buy their outfits. Some sell out and hire their passage through, and some back out because of funds running out. Love to all. I would write more if I had room.

Respects of,

LeRoy Dutton.

Jerome Dutton.

¹William Scott, and James B. and Abner Alger had preceded them along this route but a week or two. William Scott's wife, Harriet M. Pearsall, was a daughter of the Samuel Pearsall mentioned in the Introduction. At this writing (December, 1909) Mr. Scott is living, at an advanced age, in Calamus, Iowa, and of all those mentioned herein, as having made the journey to California, it is believed he is the only survivor. A sketch of Mr. Scott appears on page 813, "History of Clinton County." James B. and Abner Alger were sons of Oliver Alger, who is mentioned in the sketch of Rev. Dewitt C. Curtis on page 809, "History of Clinton County," as being one of the first settlers in Olive township. Abner Alger enlisted in Company A. of the Eighth Iowa Infantry, Aug. 12, 1861. He was captured at the battle of Shiloh and died in St. Louis during the war.

Journal.

We drove (May 16th) within four miles of the ferry and laid over until the 18th. We number 22 wagons, 57 men, 6 women, 9 children, 10 horses and 157 head of cattle. This is rather a larger company than common. We crossed the Missouri at the old Mormon ferry, which is distant 12 miles from Kanessville. Therefore we did not cross until the 18th.

There was a willow shade on the bank at the ferry beneath which a seller of "hot stuff" had set up shop. As this was the last chance, some of our boys soon felt finely. Several companies were on the bank waiting for their turn to cross, and as the last load (I was on board) of our company shoved off from shore some one on the bank proposed three cheers for the departing company, and there went up three deafening "Hurrahs."

There are a few log houses here at the river where the Mormons wintered one season in the Nebraska or Indian Territory and it goes by the name of "Winter Quarters." I mention this for the reason that the distances on this road are all measured from that point. The Mormons measured the distance from there to the Salt Lake by means of a "Roadometre" and therefore all the crooks and turns in the road are measured and this is one reason why it is so far. We drove 6 miles from Winter Quarters and stopped until morning.

On Sunday, the 19th, we drove to the Elkhorn and ferried and corraled around the Liberty Pole put up by the Mormons some years ago. We make a corral in this way: At night we form our wagons in a circle and put the tongue of each wagon up on the hind end of the wagon in front of it. A chain is run from the hind end board of one to the fore end of the next wagon. We leave a place large enough to drive in the cattle and in this way we yard them. Then we stretch a rope across the entrance, and the corral is finished. In this way we often get along with only three watchmen. It is necessary to keep guard all the time, and when we herd the cattle it generally takes five men.

We turn the cattle out at half past 3 in the morning and keep with them night and day. We passed a company that had lost 55 head of cattle by leaving them just before daylight. We passed them in the evening, and although they had been looking for their cattle all day they had not found them. The cattle had taken fright at something and ran away all in one direction and got such a start that their owners could not overtake them.

The country from here on is as level as any land I ever saw. This is the Platte bottoms; very low but the road was good.

We followed up the Platte without any trouble until we came to Looking Glass creek, a stream that enters into the Loup fork. But on the night of the 19th and again the evening of the 22nd we had very heavy thunder showers and consequently when we arrived at the creek on the 23rd we found it very much swollen and the bridge gone. We therefore had to stop and corral at 12 o'clock and proceed to build a bridge 52 feet long. We had it ready to cross on the next morning, having plenty of help from other companies in the same fix. There were many Pawnees along the road from the Elkhorn to this stream, and great beggars they are, too.

After crossing this stream we went about 8 miles and formed a corral on the bank of Beaver river. Here we were again water bound, and built, not a wire but a brush suspension bridge. There was some flood trash collected in the middle of the stream and using this for a pier we felled some willows onto it from each shore. We then cut brush and laid across the willows thick enough so that we could haul our wagons over by hand. Our cattle we swam over to the west bank where we remained over night. There were six other companies corraled there, also, and in all there were 304 men, 24 women, 21 children, 920 head of cattle, 73 horses and 154 wagons.

Sunday, the 25th, we traveled about 6 miles and forded the Loup fork of the Platte at a point 133 3-4 miles from Winter Quarters. We had to raise our wagon boxes 8 inches to clear the water and had to drive very crooked and keep moving

to prevent our wagons from sinking in the quick sand. Several wagons belonging to other companies were stalled and nearly upset in consequence of the sand washing out from under one side faster than the other. But the wagons were quickly got out; otherwise they would have soon been under the water. Their drivers did not follow the road that Capt. Clapp had staked out. They thought their road the best, but they found out their mistake. We have a first rate captain. The Mormons claim him, but I guess he is not much of a Mormon. William Davison crossed right after us and passed us here.

Wild onions were plenty from the Elkhorn here, growing in some places as thick as they could stand. The country from Winter Quarters here is almost destitute of timber. There are some willows and cottonwoods (although but few) along the creeks and the Platte. Such of these trees as there are along the Platte, or Loup fork are mostly on the islands. It is a very flat country, but pretty prairie.

We came past some old Pawnee villages that were destroyed by the Sioux in the fall of 1846. Their main town covered about 20 acres and was walled in with a turf wall. But the Sioux had taken them by surprise in the night and burned their town and massacred a great many of its inhabitants. Their bones lay about in every direction, and there were also a great many buffalo skulls that look as if the buffaloes were killed about the same time as the Indians. I suppose the Pawnees had trespassed upon the Sioux hunting grounds, and that is what the fuss originated from.

The Chief of the Pawnees came out to the road to see us. He was the best looking Indian of his tribe. He had on a silver medal on one side of which was inscribed "Peace & Friendship" showing also a tomahawk and pipe and two hands firmly clasped.

On the other side was a head of James Madison with an inscription reading "A. D. 1803." He was a young man and this medal has doubtless been handed down from chief to chief.

Close by their town that was destroyed was a large piece of breaking that I suppose was done for them by the Government when they were moved there. I saw an old Peacock plough near. But their ground is now deserted and they now live farther down the river and on the opposite side.

May 28th: This day we saw the first prairie dog city. They are much smaller than I expected, being about the size of a large grey prairie ground squirrel. In color they are between a gopher and a prairie grey squirrel. They resemble a dog but very little. They keep up an awful barking as you approach them but never bark until they are right over their holes ready to dive in. When barking their motion is something like a small dog, but their bark does not in the least resemble the bark of a dog. I have seen a tract as large as 200 acres quite thickly covered with their houses, which are, in fact, nothing but a small heap of dirt with a hole in the top. There are in Texas, I am told, a much larger kind which much more resemble the dog.

May 30th: This day a gentleman was kind enough to offer me the use of his horse so that I might go hunting. His offer was most thankfully accepted. I started in the morning and was gone until noon. I saw plenty of antelope, an animal smaller than a deer. They make a noise similar to a young cow, and are generally quite tame. Their meat is excellent. I caught one young antelope. After petting it awhile and wishing that it was at my home back in Iowa I went on and left it. I saw many gray wolves, but no buffalo except dead ones. They were plenty. Whether they died from starvation or were killed by the Indians I do not know, but a great many of them had never been skinned.

Saw plenty of prickly pear for the first time. They resemble a large leaf on the ground. They are covered with stickers about half an inch long. There [are] some that look like a pineapple.

May 31st: This day we drove 28 miles and passed several other companies under way. At night we made use of buffalo

chips for the first time to cook our supper with. I was agreeably disappointed when we got the fire started and found that they burned so much better than I expected. It is not a hard matter to find them, for they are plentiful.

June 1st. This day our company killed its first buffalo, a large cow. She was chased in from the bluffs toward our train and several of us started out with our rifles to meet her, but she was killed by her pursuers before I had a chance to give her a shot.

June 2nd: We had traveled 16 miles today—which was altogether the hottest day we have had up to this time—when the Captain rode along the train and told us to halt and get a drink of water at a good spring that rose a few rods from the road. We stopped, and nearly all of us had gathered at the spring, when a pack horse came running past. He frightened and started the hindmost team and they turned out to pass the next team ahead. At this they, too, took a start and so on until every team in the train was off in a perfect stampede. This made a scattering at the spring, every man running for his team. John White was run over by another team in attempting to stop his own, but came out unhurt. Powell was run over and seriously scared, but not much hurt. Mrs. Dickinson was also run over by four yoke of cattle, and somewhat bruised. I presume the wheels did not strike her, although Dickinson thinks that one passed over her ankle. In consequence of the bruises she is not able to walk. She got out of the wagon with her little boy, but in falling she fell over him and he escaped unhurt. The stampede was a grand as well as an awful sight. It lasted 15 minutes of 4 o'clock when it commenced. The cattle were very tired and warm, and so were we. This was the first good water we had since crossing the Missouri, a distance of 289 miles. We had frequent thunder showers and every creek was black with the mud washed in from a large scope of country. Many a drink of water did I take that I would not have washed in at home. All these circumstances together render the Cold Springs a spot that will long be remembered by the most of us.

June 3rd: This was a day of hard work. We laid over to wash and bake in preparation for crossing a 200 mile strip of country barren, with the exception of one lone tree, of a single stick of timber. We took some wood with us to start the fires, but buffalo chips are the principal part of our fuel, and they are plentiful. There [are] places where they may be gathered, I believe, at the rate of ten bushels to the acre.

While I was walking around here I came across a buffalo skull, and I measured it between the inside corners of the eyes. The distance was 13 1-2 inches. The animal had been killed but a short time. Here also was the grave of a man named Gordon, from Dubuque county, Iowa. He died the first day of May.

June 4th: We left with the intention of going to Fort Laramie before laying up. Nothing of importance transpired until Sunday, the 9th. When Lieut. Dickinson was called on watch this morning he refused to serve, in consequence of his wife being unable to help herself. Some of the company found fault with him and the matter was brought before the company at 12 o'clock. The decision was in Dickinson's favor. Some other difficulties arose, one being that the Captain drove too fast to suit Dickinson and his associates, and they asked the privilege of withdrawing from the company. On the morning of the 10th this privilege was granted by a vote of the company.¹ We arrived at Fort Laramie at 12 o'clock June 13th and laid over until the 15th to recruit our teams and lighten up.

Letter No. 2.

Fort Laramie, June 13th, 1850.

Dear Brother:—

Our company had not got together when I wrote my last. [Here follow extracts from the journal]. We have now arrived at Fort Laramie and I hasten to finish this letter to you, if you can call it by that name. We (that is, Dickinson and his wagons and men) left the Fear Not company three

¹Those who here separated from the "Fear Not" company were R. S. Dickinson, wife and child, Josiah Hill, Daniel Carlisle, L. D. Dutton, Jerome Dutton, and one other who cannot be identified.

days before getting here on account of their hard driving as well as some other bad management. We have kept close to them so far by getting started earlier and driving later than they. If that company keeps on the way they have driven so far one half of their cattle will give out before they get to Salt Lake. The feed has been scarce for several days and heavy, sandy roads and hot weather make it hard on the cattle and no mistake. These companies seldom keep together but a very short time. Our two wagons are alone at present, but we can join a company any time we wish. But for my part I prefer going by ourselves. We can get along much better and there is no danger of Indians for we are close to some company every night. I would think by the number of teams on the south side of the river that when we all get together we cannot be alone any of the way.

We had intended to cross the Platte here, but it could not be forded and the ferry boat was sunk the other day by some Californians who were on a spree. The river here is 108 yards wide, runs very swift and is now high. There have been seven men drowned here, I understand, while ferrying themselves across in wagon boxes, etc.

Today I came across the grave of a man from Van Buren County, Iowa, who was killed by his brother-in-law. There were four of them playing cards and drinking and they got into a quarrel which resulted in the death of one. The man who killed him is at the Fort and is not expected to live. He received a dangerous wound from the man that he killed. The balance of them are in the Fort and in irons and will be taken back. This I do not know to be a fact, but presume it is.

Since I left Winter Quarters I have seen seven dead horses and one left behind because it had accidentally been shot through the fore leg, cutting all the sinews and rendering the leg useless. Also one dead ox and three that were left because they were unable to go any farther. There are plenty of others that will not go much farther. Lorenzo and I drive the Widow Knight cattle, a yoke that Ale Dunn got of Snyder.¹ They stand it well, but I see plainly that we have got

¹Simon Snyder, of Allen Grove township, Scott county.

to drive slower. If we get through with one half of our cattle it will be as well as I expect. The old wagon is better than when we started, but I think it quite likely that we shall leave it before long and put the teams all on one wagon. There are plenty of good wagons burned up between here and Winter Quarters, and good wagons that men offer to give away. But when wood is scarce, they generally burn them. We have passed first rate log chains laying beside the road and half worn clothing, bed clothing, saws and a great many things that would be useful any place but this.

We came here from Winter Quarters in 26 days. We laid up just about two days, which leaves 24 days that we drove to get to Fort Laramie. The distance is 522 miles, and I think that is stiff driving for an ox team. Lorenzo has just come up from the ferry and tells me that he saw Davison, so, you see, we have kept up with the horse teams.

The distance from here to Salt Lake is 509 miles, so, you see, we are more than half way there. I will now tell you the reason that letter writers so seldom mention particulars. It is this: They are so busy that they have no time to write anything that can possibly be dispensed with and write at all, and any man that writes a letter on this road deprives himself of rest of which he is much in need. We generally get up about 2 o'clock in the morning and seldom get to bed before 9 o'clock in the evening, and when we are not eating or yoking cattle every step counts one for California. The country from the Missouri here is almost destitute of timber and what we would call brush in our country is timber here, and nothing but cottonwood and willow at that. So, if you hear anybody talking about a railroad to the Pacific, tell them for me that they are crazy. All of our boys are well except "old Mr. Hill." He has been grievously afflicted, has had the ague, the carache, has been sick at the stomach and at present has sore eyes. He wants me to write to Joseph Alger for him, but you may tell Joe that it is not Cy's fault that he don't get a letter.¹

¹A characteristic story of Josiah Hill, in connection with the lynching of Bennet Warren (an event of much celebrity in western Clinton county in 1857), is given on page 442 "History of Clinton County."

I have heard nothing of William Scott and James B. Alger. I want you should write immediately after receiving this. I want to know how you and Doe Witter get along.¹ If he or Dawson had heard themselves cursed as much as I have for sending people over that new road they would feel very much like fighting. I want that you should take out all the letters that come for me, read them, answer them and put them in my box so that I can see them when I get home. You may think that is a great ways ahead, but I feel as though it must not be such a great while. What goes the hardest with me is the total loss of the company of young ladies. I believe if we had a few along I should be at home.

We came through a Sioux village. They are good looking Indians, and there was one young woman, a chief's daughter, that was really good looking. She had her cheeks painted red and wore, in addition to a red blanket, a bueskin dress flowered off with beads. The Sioux are a wealthy tribe and have many ponies.

This will doubtless be the last letter you will get until I get through. There is no opportunity to send letters, as the mail leaves Salt Lake only twice a year, and therefore it will be better for me to wait until I get there before I write. I presume Lorenzo will not write. Give my love to all and tell Father and Charles I would like to write to them but have not time. Tell Cyrus² he must write me at Sacramento City and let me know all about the young folks in Iowa. Tell Rhoda that I hope to meet her husband³ about the first of September and remember me to Aunt and George.⁴ Lorenzo says to tell you that he is well and doing the best he can to get to California, and that when he arrives there he will write.

I was the cook all the way to Council Bluffs, and since Mrs. Dickinson was hurt I have done nearly all the cooking for seven adults and a boy about 3 years old. There is any amount of quarreling on this road, and a great many are dividing their

¹This refers to Dr. Amos Witter, subsequently a member of the Fifth General Assembly from Scott county.

²Cyrus A. Pearsall, brother of William R. Pearsall.

³William R. Pearsall.

⁴Phoebe Pearsall, mother of W. R. and C. A. Pearsall. George was her youngest son. He enlisted and was killed in service during the rebellion.

teams, and many a person have I seen and heard say that if he was back and knew what he knew then he would never start for California. Among this latter class is Dickinson and lady. That, though, is what no one has heard me say.

But I am getting tired sitting here in the wagon with a board on my lap. Yet I can scarcely stop. I see several words badly spelled, but will not bother myself to rectify the errors. So, no more at present.

Respects of your brother,
LeRoy Dutton, Esq. Jerome Dutton.

Journal.

June 15th: We left Fort Laramie this morning and followed up the north side of the river to cross the Black Hills. This road has been traveled but very little until now, but as the ferry boat was gone we either had to go up on this side or ferry ourselves on a float, and no timber to build it of. We therefore concluded to keep up the north side, and as there have been but few trains up on this side the feed was good until we got up to where the teams from the other side commenced crossing. The upper Platte ferry is 126 miles from Fort Laramie. The game, antelope and mountain sheep, was plenty.

About 15 miles from Fort Laramie we came to a pretty spring that emerged at the foot of a bluff, and after flowing about eight feet, lost itself in the sand. This was a romantic looking place. There were numerous dry creeks, some of them as much as 20 rods wide, and they looked as though they were large rivers in the spring of the year. I think there must be very heavy rains here by the appearance of the bluffs and dry creeks.

June 23rd: This day we got to Independence Rock on the Sweetwater, and laid by one and a half days. We drove our cattle 1 to 2 miles from the road and found just feed enough to keep them alive. This Rock is 698 1-4 miles from Winter Quarters, and is something of a curiosity. It is 600 yards long and 120 wide, and is composed of hard granite. By dint

of good management I got time to ascend this rock and look at the surrounding country. Back east in the direction we came from can be seen the Atlantic spring, its edges white with saleratus, and to the south-west can be seen mountains with here and there a patch of snow. The beautiful Sweetwater can be seen here to advantage, winding its serpentine course in a south-easterly direction to the Platte, into which it empties. How appropriate, after traveling 700 miles up the Platte (the waters of which resemble the Missouri) and then coming on to this beautiful mountain stream, how appropriate, I say, that it should be called "Sweetwater." At the west could be seen the Devil's Gate, 5 miles distant (but it did not look to be a mile). This is a place where the Sweetwater passes through rocks 400 feet high, and as you stand at the edge of the stream on the south side you can see the rock at the top projecting over your head, and it looks as though you could almost jump across from one side to the other. I attempted to go through from the lower side of the gate to the upper, but found I could not get through the Devil's Gate as easily as I expected, as the only chance to pass through was to wade, or perhaps swim, and I decided to back out and not go through his gate until some future period. What is remarkable about these rocks is that they are placed in solid heaps and the country around them is sandy and without a stone.

We traveled up the Sweetwater 100 miles and crossed it five times. The 28th we crossed it twice in order to avoid clambering over the rocks where they came up close to the river. At the lower ford the water was so deep that it rose into the wagon boxes. So we had to carry some of our things up over the rocks to the second crossing to prevent them from getting wet. The balance we put on deck, and in this way we got across with little trouble.

July 1st: This day we passed Pacific Spring (the first water that runs into the Pacific) and crossed a desert 19 miles without water. The first was the Little Sandy, about 4 miles west of the junction of the Salt Lake road with the Oregon

Trail (which is generally called Subblett's Cut-Off). Here we camped one night.

July 2nd: We traveled forward 12 miles to the Big Sandy and laid over until 5 o'clock on the 3rd. We then started and drove all night and until 4 o'clock of the 4th to cross a desert 50 miles wide, which brought us to the ferry on Green river. Here there was a great many teams on either side. We got across at 6 o'clock by swimming our cattle and paying \$7 for ferrying our wagon. We left our cart here. There were several flags flying and a great many guns were fired in honor of the day. I heard some good fiddling and thought several times of sweet home and the merry ones that, no doubt, at that time were "patting it down" to some old favorite air. Here we began to see a great many sick, and there was one death that night. The thermometer in the morning was 4 degrees below freezing, and at 12 o'clock it was up to 95 in the shade. While we were here Daniel Solis, John Turner and Ainsworth came up and went on, and that is the last we have seen or heard of them. They were well. We laid over here the 5th.

We left on the 6th, drove 12 miles and camped on a small branch of Green river. A man had been buried there that day, and there were two other graves that had been made but a short time.

July 7th: We traveled 15 miles today over a sandy and dusty road. We stopped at noon and took our dinner on top of a hill where there was nothing but wild sage, and dust three inches deep. We accidentally spilled some vinegar on the dust, and it foamed up like so much saleratus. And this is what is blowing into your face day after day (and some nights) as regular as the day comes. At night we camped in a very pretty place. Plenty of snow close by us. A funeral ceremony was just concluded as we arrived there.

July 8th: This day we traveled over some very steep mountains and camped over night at Hams Fork. Here the forage began to be more plenty and we came upon the first good grass we had found from a point 25 miles below the upper

Platte ferry without leaving the road from 1 to 5 miles. There were some half-breed Indians here with some very fine horses. We tried to buy one, but their lowest price was \$100 for a horse that had been broken to ride.

July 9th: We arrived at the foot of a mountain and in sight of Bear river after traveling a rough and rocky road over some very steep hills.

July 10th: Today we overtook a company from Missouri, under Captain John E. Develby, with which we had traveled several days in Iowa. I had formed an attachment for some of them, and when we came up they were yet gathered around the grave of a companion whom they had just buried. He was sick but six hours with what is supposed to be the cholera. Directly after leaving them we came to four rushing creeks that all ran down between the points of two mountains that were not more than a quarter of a mile apart. The creeks were all deep and difficult to cross. After crossing the last we had to turn and go down it close to the foot of the mountain, and over large, rough rocks that would jar a wagon to pieces unless it was well put together. There are plenty of dead cattle around, and the smell is strong enough to almost take your breath away. We also passed four new made graves today, and at night camped beside a beautiful little spring creek that ran down from the mountains over riffles close by our tent and made sweet music for us to sleep by.

The 10th, 11th and 12th we continued to keep down the Bear river with very good roads, as a general thing, and grass enough for the whole emigration.

July 13th: Today we came to the Soda, or Copperas springs. The first two were on the bank of a creek close to the river. The water gurgles up with a snapping noise and the first taste resembles soda, but the after taste is more like iron and very disagreeable. A little lower down and directly on the bank of the river is what is called the Steamboat spring. Through a hole in the rock about 18 inches in circumference it gushes up to a height, sometimes, of two feet. It makes

considerable noise and foams something like soda. Like the other springs, it is of very unpleasant taste and smell.

We arrived today at a point where the road forks. One fork, the Oregon road, goes past Fort Hall; the other, Hedgepeth's Cut-Off, is the road we took.

We left Bear river about 2 o'clock, and as we had to go about 15 miles with no water along the road we took in enough to last us until 9 o'clock the next day. We drove about 8 miles and stopped over night. Although there was plenty of good grass there was nothing to make a fire with. Therefore we had to eat a cold lunch for supper and go on in the morning before breakfast, which made it 11 o'clock when we ate. It being Sunday (July 14th) we laid over the balance of the day. There were some half-breed Indians here who had established themselves to trade with the emigrants and buy up broken down cattle at small prices.

We resumed our journey on the 15th and passed four graves all made this month. Above one of them was a headboard with the man's name on it, below which was written a message requesting that if his friends saw it they would please inform his family, as his company had gone on and left him there while yet alive. His name was Dennis, and he was from St. Louis. Another was the grave of a man named W. H. Williams. He had been shot by another member of his company by the name of Hunter, and died a few hours later.

July 16th: We traveled until noon today and then laid by in consequence of sickness. Josiah Hill and Mrs. Dickinson were taken sick. Hill got better and was able to go on, but Mrs. D. was too sick for us to proceed.

July 18th: Today we resumed our journey and traveled most of the day through deep ravines, a little ascending until about 6 o'clock. Then we came to where we descended into a valley. The descent was lengthy, steep and dangerous. Here we had a strip of country 15 miles without water. We had to leave the road three-quarters of a mile to the left. This [road?] was discovered this year and formerly it was 20 miles [to water.] The last water was a big spring, and there were

two tracks, one leading to the right, and the other crossing the creek a half mile below the spring. After crossing the road bore southwest down the creek at a short distance from it. (This is what is generally called Hedgepeth's Cut-Off.)

July 19th: This day we traveled until 10 o'clock through ravines down a creek until we came to where the stream sank in the sand. From here it was 12 miles to water. After climbing a steep bluff (close to the creek) we had a good road, which descended gradually until we arrived at water, three creeks close together.

July 22d: We crossed Raft river near its head where it was quite a small creek. After crossing, the Fort Hall road came into ours. In the forenoon we could see the dust arising from the Salt Lake road.

July 23d: We came to the Salt Lake road, distant between 20 and 25 miles from Raft river.

July 24th: We passed over some rough road and stopped on Goose creek, where we heard that Captain Clapp's Fear Not company were 5 miles behind us. They went past Salt Lake, and had three days the start of us.

July 25th: This morning we resumed our journey up Goose creek, and before leaving it followed it 18 miles from where we first came to it. Here we came to a deep ravine, with a rough and somewhat crooked road for a quarter of a mile at the entrance. After leaving the head of the creek it is 12 miles to water, and very little grass. We camped four miles from the last mentioned water.

July 26th: At about 10 o'clock this morning we came to the Thousand Spring Valley. No grass. For a few miles after entering this valley we followed down it, seeing numerous springs, or wells along the road. They are from three to seven feet deep, some of them cold and good, others warm and laden with alkali. We camped at the lower end of the valley.

July 27th: Though the road was good the grass was poorer than we had along back. We left two big springs today at 5 o'clock, and had to cross a barren district of 9 miles without

water. The Fear Not company caught up with us today and at night we camped close together.

July 28th: We drove about 12 miles and found the road good, with the exception that it was very dusty and included some short, steep pitches that we had to go down. We came to several of the natural wells, some of which contain fish. They are dangerous in consequence of careless horses and cattle falling into them. The country here is rolling, the ravines wide, and grass good in the valleys. Fuel is scarce. Some sage and grease weed.

29th: Arrived at Mary's or Humbolt river. Grass and road good. July 30th, 31st: Kept down Mary's river, with good grass but bad and unclean water. Road good, with the exception of the dust which is from one to four inches deep. Sloughs are plentiful along the river and so mirey that in some places it bothers us to get our cattle on the best grass. We laid up this afternoon.

August 1st: Forded the river 4 times in that number of miles. First three deep; had to raise our wagon boxes 4 to 8 inches to keep our provisions dry. The fords were good; keep well down the middle of the stream in all of them. There was a road that kept down the river on the west side, but it was over mountains and we preferred keeping on the bottom, as the grass was good and road much better than on the west side. We passed two little creeks today and camped on the mountains. No grass nor water. From these creeks it is 8 miles to water and this, I think, not safe to depend on. It was springs, and they ran but a short distance before they sank in the sand. It was 15 miles from the creeks to the river and over rough road, and dusty.

2d: Crossed the river again and came down on the east side. Along here there is a road on both sides. The most of the emigration came the east side. Very dusty either side; barren saleratus land; nothing but greaseweed and wild sage. Good grass close to the river, but very sloughy and bad getting to it. Water bad and getting worse.

3d and 4th: About the same all day. Left an ox today. He swam the river where there was no ford and we left him there.

5th: Today we drove until 12 o'clock, and then joined the Wapello company, Capt. McDaniel [or McDaniels]. Nine wagons in the company when we joined. They were from Iowa, and we had seen them all along the road from the Platte. They went by Salt Lake, and we came in ahead of them. The reason we joined them was this: The Indians were troublesome and we concluded it was not safe to leave our cattle unguarded, and it was too hard for so few of us to guard them. We laid by until 4 o'clock and then drove until 10 o'clock at night over a very rough and rocky road; some places rocks square up and down from 2 to 3 feet.

6th, 7th, 8th and 9th: Still continue down Mary's river, on the south-east side, until the 9th. We then crossed over by ferrying in our wagon boxes and swimming the cattle. Grass hard to be got at because of the many sloughs. We had to build bridges of willow brush to get our cattle across them onto the grass.

10th, 11th and 12th: Travel down Mary's river with grass very scarce, or, in fact, what you may call none, over a complete desert with this exception: We occasionally touched the river for water. We traveled considerably nights. Dusty road, and many dry ruts. We swam our cattle across the river often and some of us swim over after them, and find nothing but willows for them to browse on at that. Great numbers of dead cattle and horses line the road from the crossing place to the Sink.

August 13th: We arrived at the place for making hay this morning. Had to wade in the water and mud (from ankle deep to 2 feet), cut our hay, bind it up some, and "back" it out. Others draw it out with light cattle and wagons, with great difficulty. Grass good, but the ground is so mirey that it is a miserable place to recruit cattle. There was a trading establishment here, kept up by the Mormons.

They sell beef at from 15 to 20 cents per pound, and kill cattle that the emigrants leave. Flour is \$1.50 per pound, sugar \$1.00 per pound, whiskey 50 cents for a little less than a gill. They would not let you drink what you wanted for that. Water bad here. By wading half a mile you can get as good as there is in the river. The wells are brackish.

14th: Laid up to cure our hay until the morning of the 15th. We then moved on down past the Sink and camped on the south-east of the slough. Plenty of stock water here, but none fit for other use.

16th: We started at three o'clock this morning to cross the desert, 40 miles without wood, water or grass. The road was good for the first 25 miles. Here the road commenced being very heavy and sandy. There was plenty of water to be had at the commencement of the sandy road for \$1.00 per gallon. This water they haul 15 miles from Carson river; this is the first water after crossing the desert. There were sights to be seen in crossing this desert. After the first 5 miles you could not get out of sight of dead cattle or horses. Any number of wagons. At one spot I could stand and count 25 in sight. Two-thirds of the emigrants had to leave their wagons and plunder on the last part of this desert and drive their cattle on and grass them and then go back for their wagons. One-half of our company had this to do; the other got through at daylight the morning of the 17th. We were among the forward teams.

There was a large Rag Town on the river where we first came to it and several victualing tents. Their prices were high, viz., 10 cents per pint for coffee, if with sugar, 15 cents; 25 cents per pint for rice soup, 50 cents for a sour pie about the size of your hand, 25 cents for a small biscuit, 50 cents a dram for whiskey, 75 cents ditto for brandy, beef, good for 50 cents per pound, flour \$1.25 per pound. There was no grass nearer than 6 miles from here, but you could get hay for 25 cents per bundle that could be spanned with both hands. It would take a dozen of them to make a feed for a yoke of cattle. We drove 6 miles up Carson's river today and laid by on the 18th.

The 19th we again set out up the river, the road sandy and in many places rough and rocky. Grass tolerably good.

20th, 21st, 22d and until 2 o'clock the 23d we traveled up Carson river. Trading posts plenty for the last 60 miles. They all ask about the same prices as the one where we first touched the river. Passed Warm Springs on the 23d; the water so warm that you could hold your hand in it but for a short time. We arrived at the foot of the Canyon at 2 o'clock the 24th and laid by until morning. The 25th we drove through the Canyon,¹ a distance of 6 miles over as rough and rocky a road as a wagon could pass over. We, however, got along very well. Upset only once, and that did no particular damage. A branch of the Carson river ran through the Canyon. There were mountains on either side, the tops of which nearly touched the clouds. There was some good (pine) timber here, the first we saw that you could call timber after leaving Winter Quarters.

26th: We left the head of the canyon this morning, and crossed the first of the Sierra Nevada mountains. At the foot of this mountain was an iron safe that some emigrant had started with, but when he got here and looked up this mountain I expect he came to the conclusion that he had hauled it far enough, and I think it a wise conclusion. The ascent was steep, rocky and about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in length. There were four dead horses in this distance, and we traveled only 6 miles this day.

27th: We crossed the second mountain, or summit of the Sierra Nevada. The road was such as would be considered impassable by anybody but a Californian—rough, rocky and steep, and in addition to this there was snow that we had to go over for half a mile. The snow just at the right of the road was from 10 to 20 feet deep. It was two miles from the foot of the mountain to the summit; very steep in places. When we were on the summit we could look down and see plenty of snow 100 feet below us. There was plenty of the best water I ever drank.

¹An asterisk here refers to a note written on a fly leaf of the journal. This note reads: "Canon, This is a Spanish word, pronounced Canyon."

28th, 29th & 30th: Traveled these days over rough road and on a dividing ridge. Water scarce and grass more so, and dust ankle deep. Trading posts are plenty.

31st: No feed today. We had to cut down oak trees for our cattle to browse on.

September 1st: Today we arrived at Weaver, the first town that we came to in California. Here we stopped and bought tools and went to mining on Methenis creek, 4 miles south of Weaver. (Here we came across James and Abner Alger.) Our tools cost us \$35. We mined here but a few days. Lorenzo started off to look for a better place and went to the Mormon Island, and here he found William R. Pearsall, mining. He stayed part of a day with him and then came back to the creek and we sold everything except what we could carry and moved to the Island where we arrived on the 11th at 12 o'clock.

[End of the Journal.]

Letter No. 3 is missing. Letter No. 4 follows:

Mormon Island, California, Sept. the 27th, A. D. 1850.

[This letter opens with extracts from the journal from the entry for July 1st to July 14th.]

Dear Brother:—

I find out that my journal will occupy too much space to admit of my writing it in this letter. I will therefore find out what the postage will cost me and if not too much I will write my next in the back part of it and send it to you. We arrived at Weaver, a little town close by the first diggings, on the first day of September. Here Dickinson considered his part of the contract fulfilled. We therefore stopped here, and as a man cannot live idle in California we bought us a full set of mining tools—that is, a pick, shovel, pan, blower, dipper and rocker, for which we paid \$35, and as Hill and Daniel Carlisle were out of funds and wanted to go in with us, we all started together for Methenis creek, 4 miles south of Weaver. Judge of our surprise and joy when, walking down the creek and passing the miners, we came to a hole

and found James Alger sitting on the bank and Abner in the hole—the first we had seen or heard of them after leaving home. They told us that Scott came in with them, but started back on the road the next day with another man. Whether he was going to prospecting or not they did not know. I have left a letter for him at Weaver, but have not heard from him yet. I guess that he and the boys did not agree very well. James and Abner wanted a partner, so we got rid of Uncle Hill. Carlisle and I stayed and dug and Lorenzo went off on a scout to look for better diggings. He went to Mormon Island, and there he found William. He was interested in a dam across the south fork of the American river. He told Lorenzo if we would come down he would buy us a share in the dam. Lorenzo told him we would do so, and came back to where Daniel and I were at work. We sold all of our duds except what we could carry and came down here.

We arrived here on the 11th. William had bought the share for \$700, and let us have it at the same. There are 10 shares in the dam. It therefore takes one of us to work the share and the other works for the company at \$5 per day and boards himself. In this way we have been at work up to this time. We paid \$30 for our share when we came and we have taken out enough, with our work included, to pay for one-half of our share. If the water did not bother so much we could have had the debt paid and money to spare now, but the water has been so high that we have not been able to work in the bed of the river but a few days. We have had several rains since we arrived here. Some think the rainy season has already commenced, and some think it will stay off until the middle of November. If it has commenced we cannot do anything more this year. If it stays off a month or so, we shall do well, I think, without a doubt. William owns 1 3-4 shares in the dam. He thinks we will have a month or two of good weather yet, and from appearances it bids fair at present. Daniel Carlisle came down here and worked by the day for the company until the river raised. They did not want him longer, and he started this morning for Deep Creek dry diggings, 65 miles from here. If you get an opportunity let his

wife know that he is well. He is a fine boy and I wish that he was at home, and I guess if he had the money he would go. William will come home this fall or winter. If the weather continues good for a month or two I am in hopes that I will be able to send you a little by him. The gold on Methenis Creek is coarse; that that is taken out of the river here is fine. But you have doubtless seen some of this, as William sent 40 ounces to his wife some time ago. I found a piece on Methenis creek that was worth a dollar.

While we were there we made a little more than enough to pay our way. James, Abner and Josiah have gone to Dry Creek, about 30 miles south of here. Where Dickinson will stop I do not know. His family was in Weaver when we left, and he was out on a trip to find a place where something could be made without work. He is as lazy a man as is now living. There was not a person that came through with him but that hates him now above ground. Along on Hedgepeth's Cut-Off he got an opportunity to sell some flour for 50 cents per pound. That looked so large to him that he sold 50 pounds and thought he would have enough to last through. But it gave out by the time we got to Carson river, and flour was \$1.50 per pound here (and was sold) by Californians that had come out here and started a trading post. It almost killed him to pay that, and he would have been glad to have kept us on half rations if we would have submitted. But we told him he could have his choice; buy us food or we would leave him and buy for ourselves. He concluded to buy, and soon run out of money and had to pawn his watch for the last we got at Leek Springs.¹

I traded my watch for a pony on the road and in a few days sold the pony for \$30 in cash, so Lorenzo and I had about \$5 when we got here. Everything is high here. Flour is worth 16 cents per pound, onions \$1 per pound, potatoes 20 cents per pound, pork 25, beef from 25 to 40 cents, green corn 12 1-2 per ear. You can get most anything you want here if you have plenty of money. We have had a jar of preserves for

¹The ill feeling evinced here and in other places between various members of the party was only temporary. After their return to Iowa friendly relations were soon re-established.

which we paid \$3—2 quarts, and put up in China—a bottle of pickles, 1 quart, \$1.25, put up in Philadelphia and composed of cucumbers, cabbage, onions, muskmelon and small ears of corn, etc.

You want to know what I think of California, no doubt. I am not sorry I came, but at the same time I would not come again in the same way for a clean five thousand. There is something indescribable about the journey here—that, I am well satisfied is, of all journeys, the most tiresome—and I would say to you all: Stay at home if you know when you are well off. A great many are leaving here and going home without trying their luck. (Kirtley is at Sacramento City, and is going in a short time.¹) Mining here is a perfect lottery. Some do well, but many work hard and get hardly enough to live on, and the miners here are like the farmers in Iowa; by far the poorest class there is here. The man that has money to start with can do better at anything else than mining. A tavern does well, and there are plenty of them. A grocery and gambling house makes money, and the Justice of the Peace in this town sits at his table with a pile of money before him and deals Monte for the bystanders to bet on. The cattle buyers are another class that makes money. Fat cattle sell from \$120 to \$200 per yoke, and from \$50 to \$75 is all that an emigrant can get for them when he first comes in. If he puts them on a ranch it will cost \$4 per month and run his own risk of having them stolen, and that is something of a risk in this country.

We got through with four yoke of cattle, but he (Dickinson) bought one on Mary's river. The black steers that Snyder used to own stood the trip well. The Widow Knight's cattle did well until we got about half way through Hedgepeth's Cut-Off. Here the near one took sick, and we had to leave him. This I hated to do, for I thought more of him than any ox in the team. The off ox was very near worn out, so we drove him loose until we came to Mary's river. He was very dry and jumped down the bank and swam across, and

¹J. W. Kirby, the man referred to, is mentioned on page 540, "History of Clinton County," as one of the earliest settlers of DeWitt township, having settled there in 1836.

we went on and left him there. The near ox that he got of Bennett gave out, and he sold him for \$8 to a trader on Bear river, and this was all the cattle (oxen) he lost. But his cow gave out on Green river. Cattle can stand more hardship than I thought, for there were several days that I did not expect anything else but that we would have to throw our duds away and foot it through. But as good luck would have it we got through with all our clothes, and well.

I lost, from the time I left Kaesville until I got here, 20 pounds. William is well and is decidedly fat and weighs 165 pounds. The company that left Allen's Grove with us stayed in Clapp's company and went past Salt Lake. At the junction of the Salt Lake road they had three days the start of us, but we were about seven miles ahead of them when the Salt Lake road came into ours, and they all got through about the same time that we did, and are somewhere about Hingtown.

A newspaper sells for one dollar here, so you may judge it is very little reading I do. Hay sells for 15 cents per pound; 40 cents per pound for horse feed. There is a good chance for cutting hay here in the spring, but everything is dead and dry now.

Now, remember this: I have been very punctual in writing to you but I have sent to the city for letters but cannot hear anything from you—and you at home and nothing to do but write Sunday. Be sure and write direct to Sacramento City. The reason I have not written before is this: I wanted to get stationery, and after I got here there was no use, for the mail only leaves San Francisco the 1st and 15th of the month, and I was not here in time to send this month. Tell Charles and Father that I don't know as Lorenzo will ever write to them. I have been trying to get him to ever since we came, but cannot. Give my respects to all and a kiss to Wilmet.¹

LeRoy Dutton.

Jerome Dutton.

N. B. Tell C. A. Pearsall to write to me.²

¹His nephew, eldest son of Charles.

²As indicated in this letter, he forwarded his journal by mail to his brother Le Roy Dec. 29th, 1850. The journal had taken up about a third only of the little volume in which it was written, and on some of its unused pages he wrote Letter No. 5. The gold dollar mentioned below is now in the possession of his nephew, H. G. Dutton, a son of Charles Dutton.

Letter No. 5.¹

Natoma, Dec. 28th, 1850.

Dear Brother:—

Sitting by your fireside these long winter evenings with nothing to busy yourself one would think you would write (to your far distant brother) often. Ever since I have been here I have sent to the city every opportunity for letters, but have been disappointed, until last Monday I went to the city and received your No. 1. Many a night have I laid down on the ground with my head to the fire to try to write something that would interest you, but, after all, have received but one letter yet, and I had almost come to the conclusion to write no more.

But the fact of it is I do not have time to write. While we were mining I worked every day, except Sunday, until the 20th of November. We had some rain about this time and the river rose and we had to suspend operations for this year. Lorenzo and the writer had, after working all this time and earning about \$50 by working nights for the company, about \$2.40 between us. That is what we had left after paying for our share in the company. We still own our share and I expect we will work it another year.

If William had gone home I should have sent you \$100, but he concluded to stay, and we all went in together and bought a trading house here and keep a provision and grocery store. We bought two teams. William and myself drive the teams and Lorenzo tends the store. We are 27 miles from the city. We have 5 cents per pound for hauling here. The difficulty is that we cannot get as much hauling as we can do, and when we have to lay idle the teams are a great expense. You may judge for yourself: We pay 8 cents per pound for barley at the city and from 6 to 20 cents per pound for hay. We get it for 6 cents in the city, but at Hingtown, a distance of 50 miles, we have to pay 20 and for hauling to Hingtown

¹Written on a fly leaf of the Journal: "Natoma (this is the Spanish for Mormon Island). I have sealed a gold dollar in the fore part of this book. I want you to give that to father. It is the first I ever saw.—Jerome."

we get from 8 to 10 cents per pound. Business of all kinds is over done here. There are too many stores, too many teams, too many taverns for any of them to make their pile right quick, but I am in hopes that business will be more brisk in the spring. At any rate I think we will do very well. We gave \$600 apiece for our teams, that is, \$1,200 for eight mules and harness and two wagons.

Lorenzo is well; William is also well. I have been well ever since we quit mining. Before that time I was in the water more or less every day, and was quite unwell. Was troubled with the rheumatism so that I could not rest nights, but since we have commenced business I have had good health, and have got fat once more and weigh 182 1-2.

I will now say a few words in relation to the country. We have very pretty weather at present, clear, sunshiny days, cool, frosty nights. The winter is very light so far. Last year at this time the roads were almost impassable in consequence of the heavy rains converting the soil into an ocean of mud.

The country from here to the city is a very pretty country. It is tolerably level, and is nearly all what we would call oak openings, being thinly covered with short, scrubby oaks. The soil I think but little of, being red gravel, and sandy in places. Among the birds of this country is the magpie, a most beautiful bird—and in walking through the timber you frequently see the much famed mistletoe bough growing out of a tree of oak without being grafted; different boughs and different leaves and always green. Among the animals here is the Kiota, a small prairie wolf, the Tarantula, of the spider species, as large as your hand, covered with short hairs and said to be very poisonous. The next, a scorpion, is built similar to a crawfish. They have a stinger in their tail; they grasp their prey in their claws and then throw their tail forward and sting, and are very poisonous.

There are several tavern keepers here who are sowing barley on the road, and a good many are going into it quite ex-

tensively, but I have my doubts about their raising much of a crop without irrigating the ground.

Now, one word in relation to emigrating here. Say to all of my friends: Stay at home. Tell my enemies to come. I would not want a worse punishment inflicted on any person on earth than to have to come here across the plains, and it is the worst place to spoil a young man in the world. In Sacramento City there are no less than four long gambling houses that have four musicians hired to play every night. In one they have four singers, two women and two men that sing at intervals every night. In addition to this you can sit down to a gaming table beside a lady and do your betting, and you know this is a temptation hard to resist. I have seen women take their seat at a Monte table and bet their ounce on a single card as cool as I would pay two bits for a card of ginger bread.

Tell friend George Atherton by all means to stay where he is, but if he will come, come by water. If I had time I would write how a man should rig himself to come, as I am confident that if I had it to do over I could come more comfortably.

R. S. Dickinson is in the city keeping tavern. Scott I have not seen nor heard from. I wish you would let me know where he is, if he has written home. James, Abner and Josiah are still on Methenis creek. We got a letter from James. They were well. Josiah had killed two black tailed deer.

Stewart, poor fellow, was unfortunate. If you see him give him my respects. Tell him he must write to me. I wrote to him at the Bluffs, but have received no answer. I was glad to hear that Cyrus and Richard are coming out and I wish them good luck in their undertakings.

But I am so confused that I can scarcely write, writing in our store on the head of a barrel. Some are talking about coming around the Horn, some are playing cards, and one has just "hollered," "High, Jack, Game," and all this on Sunday! This is the busiest day of the week. Let me know how you manage my affairs, that note of Rogers, for instance.

Lorenzo says he will write before long. He did not like William Wicks manouvering very well. Let me know if there were any letters came for me, and who lives on the Wicks place. If you could make a good trade—my farm for the Buena Vista place (Buena Vista Ferry) do so. There was a man offered me \$500 for my place and he had never seen it, but had been through the country and knows what it is. But I think more of my place than when I was there.

But I will draw to a close, and will try to write oftener. Then I shall not have to write so long.

Give my respects to all.
LEROY DUTTON.

JEROME DUTTON.

End.



Over Barren Plains and Rock-Bound Mountains

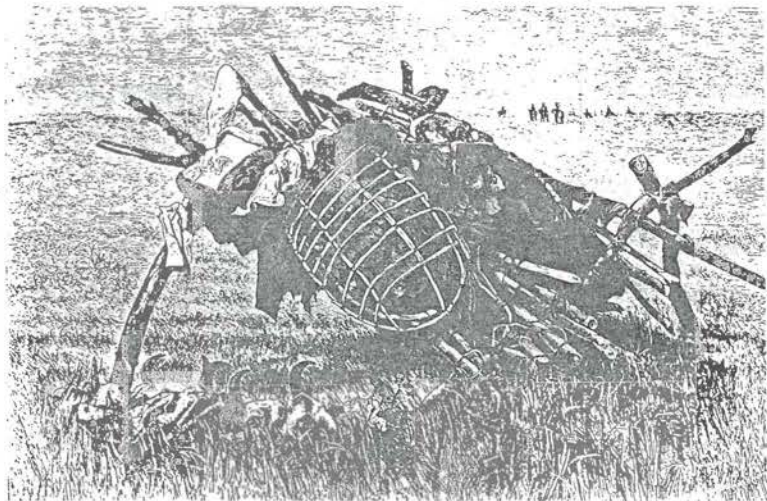
being the journal
of a tour by the
Overland Route and
South Pass of the
Rocky Mountains,
across the Great Basin
and through California,
with incidents and
scenes of the homeward voyage,
in the years 1850 and 1851,
by Adam Mercer Brown
of Pittsburgh.

74) ADAM MERCER BROWN
MONTANA MAG. OF WESTERN HISTORY 22 (1972)

edited by DAVID M. KIEFER

Early in 1850, a recently married 23-year-old native of Western Pennsylvania named Adam Mercer Brown heard the siren call of the California gold fields. Along with his younger brother, William, he joined other Pennsylvanians on a trip westward, and as he traveled, he kept a journal. As it turned out, success eluded Adam in California and he soon rejoined his wife, Lucetta, in Pennsylvania, and greeted the first of his ten children, born during his absence. In 1851, he privately published the journal he had kept, under the title "The Gold Region and Scenes by the Way." Today, this little volume is not to be found in the Library of Congress, nor is it listed in any standard bibliography of Western Americana that I have searched. And I have searched diligently, for Adam Mercer Brown was my great grandfather, and, as an ensuing epilogue will show, he became one of Pittsburgh's best known residents, a crusading lawyer and civic leader.

The lure of wealth in the West was not surprising in an ambitious young man who had seen nothing of the world except his parents' farm, near the present town of Brownsdale, Pennsylvania, and Pittsburgh, where he had clerked in his uncle's wholesale grocery. "The yellow fever was upon us," was the way Adam phrased it. "The magnificent placers of golden boulders in the mountains, and rivers of gold in the valleys—to say nothing of the lumps varying in size from a common tea kettle to a two-year-old omnibus—had attractions for us as well as thousands of our go-ahead countrymen. The gold mania was raging in the East and West, and in the North and South. There was nothing thought of but 'dig gold,' 'wash gold,' and 'grind quartz.'"



INDIAN GRAVE

Harper's Weekly, 1874

ADAM AND WILLIAM BROWN had originally tried to book passage around Cape Horn to reach California, but failing that, they left Pittsburgh on March 27, 1850, on the steamer *Fairmont*. Descending the Ohio River, they arrived in St. Louis on April 5 and immediately set off on the *Mary Blane*, crowded with fellow adventurers, on a slow, tedious steamer trip up the Missouri to St. Joseph, which they reached on April 13. They were at St. Joe for several days, outfitting themselves, buying oxen, and teaming up with a party of western Pennsylvanians. The weather was cold and damp. Prices were high, corn and oats running \$1.00 per bushel and horses priced between \$40 and \$100 a head.

"The emigration from the western states is immense," Adam noted in his journal. "Some towns in Missouri are nearly depopulated by the 'yellow fever.' Many who are not able to purchase animals are starting on foot, packing their provisions on their backs. One stout-hearted Missourian started, several days since, with a wheelbarrow. Oxen, mules, and horses are the principal power brought into the field of enterprise."

On April 25, 1850, Adam and William Brown and their new-found companions, calling themselves "The Harrisville California Company," were ready to start overland. There were 26 men, six wagons, and 55 head of animals. The first day out was "fair and pleasant."

The next day, Adam wrote: "Continuing our journey over the beautiful plains, we arrived at

Wolf Creek, 18 feet wide and three deep. The Sacs and Fox Indians have erected a rough bridge across this stream and charged 25 cents per wagon for passing over it. Two miles beyond this we crossed Mosquito Creek, 12 feet wide and two deep. Here was a large Indian village, and the squaws were busily engaged in industrial pursuits. They were enclosing a large lot of ground for cultivation of corn.

"Arrived at the Iowa Mission. A fine brick mission house, numerous log buildings, and a large farm, constitute the improvements. An Indian village adjacent contains about 40 lodges, constructed of poles, buffalo skins, and bark. We visited the Indian burying grounds. These savages lay the defunct on the surface of the earth, covering them with earth and poles. The grave of a warrior chief, who had recently died, was particularly distinguished by a pole with a white flag upon it, and a post upon which were painted some 15 decapitated warriors, representing the number of enemies he had slain in battle. These Indians are decidedly a dissipated and debased people, having acquired all of the vices and none of the virtues of the whites. It is not an uncommon thing to see a squaw picking the vermin off another's head, and eating them with evident gusto!

"Zealous missionary efforts are much needed here, but it certainly is a bad method Christianizing these heathens, for one man to preach the gospel, while two others are sawing timbers and making shingles, on the Sabbath day, in the immediate vicinity. This we witnessed at the mission."

THE COMPANY PROCEEDED ACROSS the plains, making between nine and fifteen miles each day. Already they had begun to meet discouraged, homesick emigrants who were returning eastward—and also to pass the graves of those less fortunate. The weather continued cold, windy, and damp; grass for the animals was scarce.

"The land throughout the whole of the extensive plains is of a rich nature," Adam wrote, "and produces a heavy growth of grass and other vegetable matter in the summer season. Early in the Spring, these prairies are set on fire by the Indians, causing most extensive and long continued conflagrations. These fires consume all the existing vegetable matter on the surface and retard the growth of a new crop."

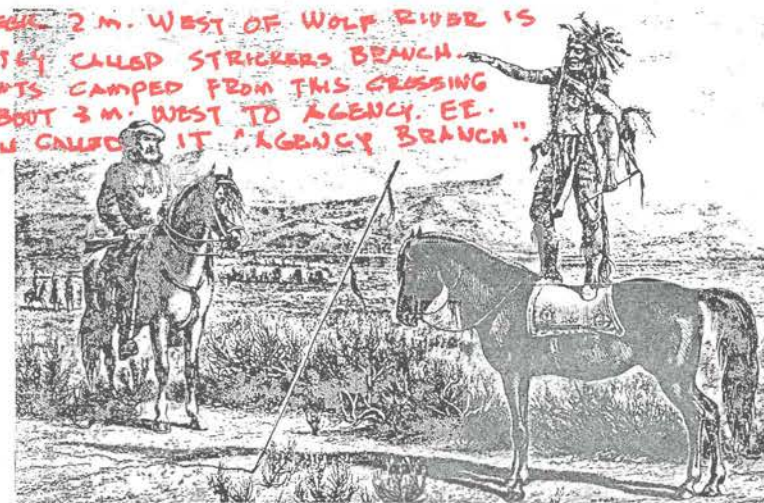
The condition of the wagon teams was a constant worry: "Men who have crossed the sterile wastes and mountain chains of the wild west are duly impressed with the importance of their teams. When you have witnessed the great endurance and patient suffering of the ox, travelling on, day after day, for several months, tiring down and leaving by the wayside horses, mules, and dogs, and even man himself, you will look upon him kindly, and involuntarily feel the incense of gratitude rising to him from the very altar of your heart, and when you reflect that he has borne you hundreds of miles, and that your life has been staked upon his labors and life, you will fully appreciate his valuable services and make it a standing rule to take care of your cattle in all cases."

Much of the trip across the prairies was relatively uneventful. One day a war party of Indians passed by, with painted faces and armed with rifles or bows. They were displaying thirteen scalps they had recently taken from another tribe. Another night a hailstorm leveled the tents, but, Adam noted, the weather was becoming more pleasant. Game was abundant, and the scenery often magnificent to eastern eyes.

"A prairie possesses singularly captivating charms, and excites the most profound admiration," the traveler wrote one day. "Fancy a boundless meadow, clothed in the richest verdure, and embellished with countless flowers of innumerable varieties and hues, and you form but a faint idea of the picturesque beauty of the charming scene."

Brown described a typical evening in camp, after a day of traveling as much as twenty miles (but often less): "The cattle watch was mustered into service, and sent out to herd the cattle; while others were busily engaged pitching tents, or running hither, thither, and yonder for wood and water. After the kitchen fires were kindled, the cooks commenced operations, with coats off and sleeves rolled up. One industriously attended the iron pan, in which the process of frying bacon was conducted, followed by a grand fry in the fat thereof of 'pilot bread'; while his assistant, diving into smoke and flame, with a crooked stick, hauled forth a bed of live coals, on which he deposited the iron camp-kettle filled with water, to be converted in due time into highly flavored coffee. A few hasty flap-jacks

* THE CREEK 2 M. WEST OF WOLF RIVER IS PRESENTLY CALLED STRICKERS BRANCH. EMIGRANTS CAMPED FROM THIS CROSSING FOR ABOUT 3 M. WEST TO AGENCY. EE. PARRISH CALLED IT "AGENCY BRANCH."



CHIEF FORBIDDING PASSAGE OF A TRAIL

Harper's Weekly, 1874

were prepared for a dessert. Tin cups, plates, spoons, and savory viands were appropriately located on the grassy table. The preparations for a supper being completed, we all commenced operations with appetites of wolves; and seated, some on ox yokes, some on wagon tongues, and some on the ground, we did equal and ample justice to fried bacon, pilot bread, flap-jacks, and coffee. A darkness covered the plains, the regular guard was ordered on duty; and, after pleasant converse about home and friends around us, and the girls we left behind us, we retired to rest."

PICKING UP THE SEQUENCE OF DAYS, Adam wrote: "May 8th. We are now in the country of the Grand Pawnees, one of the most powerful Indian tribes of the wild West. Preserving the physiognomy of their race in more purity than most other bands, they have, also, most of the vices of savage races. They are bold, brave, and daring, and astute and cunning, and are the greatest thieves this side of the Rocky Mountains. Contact with the whites has taught them nothing but vices, and they are as uninitiated in the arts of civilization (excepting the use of fire-arms) as were the Quapas, when DeSoto first found them on the banks of the Mississippi. Their numbers are estimated at from 12 to 15 thousand. They frequently visited our camp and were closely watched to prevent articles from leaving about the time they did.

"May 16th. Pleasant weather. Game is abundant in this region. We shot several wild turkeys and prairie hens. Herds of deer and antelope were frequently seen. The antelope is the most fleet and graceful animal I have seen. They are attracted by red colors, and several of our hunters in red shirts approached them to get a shot; for a while the issue seemed doubtful, but the sportsmen got to windward of them, when suddenly snuffing the air, they bounded away with the 'speeding of the wind.' These beautiful animals seem to belong to the Society of Friends among the animals of the West, for they wear drab coats, and preserve perpetual peace in their roamings over the plains. Blue River yielded to our anglers a reasonable share of its piscatory treasures, in the shape of pike and cat-fish. We also obtained several turtles and enjoyed a soup, which, to our mind, outvied the most brilliant results of Parisian skill.

"May 23rd. Clear and warm. Resuming our journey up the valley (of the Little Blue River), we

met a train of seven wagons and a small party of trappers and half-breed Indians, returning to the states with the products of a two-years trapping and trading tour, in the mountains North of Laramie. The bodies of two murdered emigrants were found, today, about one mile North of the trail. The thievish Pawnees were supposed to have committed the murders; distance twenty miles."

TWO DAYS LATER, THE PARTY left the valley of the Little Blue, and on May 26 reached the broad, shallow, sluggish, and muddy Platte River near Grand Island. The weather was fair and warm and grass was abundant. On the day following, they passed Fort Kearny, four large frame buildings and a number of one-story mud houses on the south side of the Platte opposite Grand Island.

Herds of antelope and buffalo were a common sight by now, and for fuel they found an abundance of "buffalo chips, which have become sun-dried and hard, and make a good strong fire." The going was relatively easy up the broad, sandy Platte Valley, and the party was usually able to cover 20 to 25 miles each day. Adam continued:

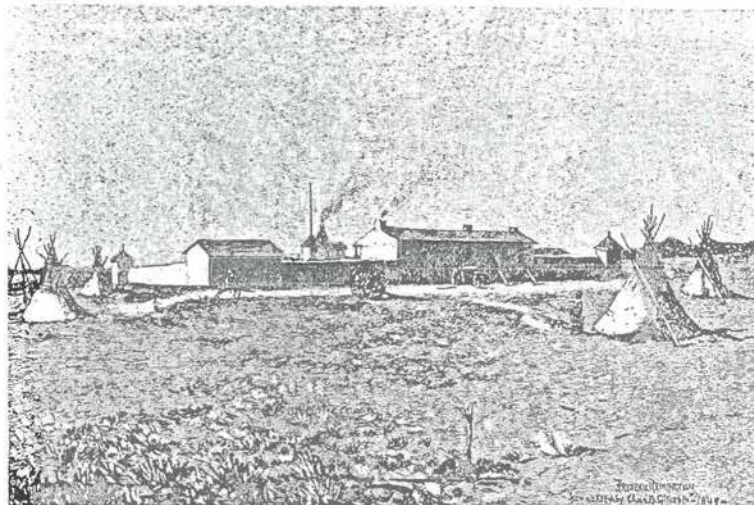
"June 4th. Remained in camp (on the bank of the North Platte), to rest and recruit our jaded animals. No person accustomed to the comforts of civilization can expect to cross a continent, exposed to all the vicissitudes of wind and rain, etc., without suffering somewhat in health; and, therefore, an important portion of every emigrant's outfit should be medicines and cordials, as preservatives against the alternations of heat, cold, and wet. A few dollars judiciously expended for articles for which a high value is set by the Indians, would enable emigrants to exchange with the savage tribes, whose territories they cross, their jaded animals for fresh ones, and reach the inhabited portion of California or Oregon, way-worn and fatigued, it is true, but not exhausted.

"June 6th. We [are] now traveling through the territory of the Sioux Indians. The men are generally well formed, robust and noble specimens of the aborigines of our country; many of the females [are] decidedly good looking, but squaws who appear lovely in a wigwam lose most of their attractions when transferred to a parlor. Travellers generally speak well of the women of all countries—not excepting those of our Western wilds—but flattering accounts of the personal charms of women

FORT LARAMIE

drawn by
Frederic
Remington

reproduced
from
Century
Magazine
Nov., 1890



seen in a desert surrounded by uncouth men, are generally taken *cum grano*. We passed through many of their villages, containing from fifty to sixty lodges, each. They meet us with a 'how,' and usually 'shake hands,' begging for 'bread,' 'tobac,' and 'wees-ka.' Distance twenty three miles."

Two days later the party camped near Chimney Rock, remaining there through a fierce storm of wind and rain. On the 10th they left the river near Scott's Bluff, "a large and isolated pile of sand cliffs and soft sandstone." The scenery reminded Brown of "desolate and deserted ruins, rivaling the remains of Egyptian temples or Mexican pyramids. The trail led through a wide valley, walled in by the huge bluffs, in which "a blacksmith had erected his forge, and was busily engaged shoeing horses, etc., etc."

The next day they had their first view of the mountains, "among which Laramie Peak is distinctly seen at a distance of 125 miles."

Adam went on: "As we progress the country assumes a barren and miserable aspect, destitute of every species of vegetation except the cactus. The needles or thorns of this plant, though of the most slender and minute description, pierce through the soles of heavy boots; and they are also very injurious to cattle's feet."

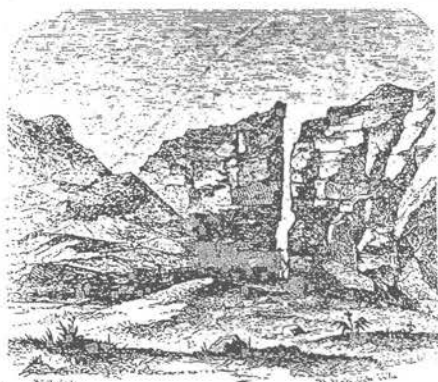
That night, after heavy going through barren sand hills, they reached and camped once more on the bank of the Platte.

ON JUNE 12, THE PARTY forded the swift Laramie River and passed Fort Laramie, "about 12 houses, enclosed by a wall 11 feet high built of adobes, or Spanish brick," and surrounded by a post office, trading establishment, bakery, gunsmith shops, and a variety of other buildings. Wrote Brown: "From a register kept at the fort, I obtained the following statistics of emigration up to the 12th instant; this does not give the total of the emigration thus far, but only a record of those who registered their names: Number of men 18,790; women 270; children 271; wagons 5,122; horses 15,980; mules 4,900; oxen 9,659; cows 1,245."

Leaving the Platte several miles above Fort Laramie, the trail led through increasingly rugged, hilly country to the La Bonte and A La Prele rivers.

"Antelope, elk, black-tail deer, mountain sheep and buffalo are very numerous here," Adam said. "The country through which we are passing is generally barren, producing little else than wild sage on the high lands and plains. We saw a natural curiosity, to day, in the shape of *toads with horns and tails*."

On June 18 the party crossed the Fourche Boise river in a heavy snow storm. "I lifted snow with one hand and plucked drooping flowers with the other at the same time." A few miles further on they were back along the Platte and encamped at Deer Creek. Two days later they crossed the river at the Upper Platte Ferry. Tolls: wagons, \$5 each; horses, oxen, etc., \$1 each.



DEVIL'S GATE (SOUTH PASS)
Harper's Weekly, 1874

Adam continued his day to day entries:

"June 21st. Fair and warm. We had now about 200 miles to travel, dangerous to teams, on account of alkali springs, etc. Great care is necessary to avoid this poisonous water, as its free use is fatal to animals . . . Alkaline water may generally be known by its dark, or brown color, and offensive smell . . . Grass is very scarce, in fact it has been used up by preceding trains. Distance travelled, twenty eight miles.

"June 22nd. A fine clear day: Have seen great numbers of dead cattle, horses, and mules, that had been poisoned by alkali. Some men lost their whole teams from the same cause . . . The scenery is generally wild, barren and dreary. From the Upper Platte Ferry to the Sweetwater River, the country is rough and barren, producing scarcely anything but wild sage. We occasionally see an oasis, but they are few and far between . . . Encamped within two miles of Independence Rock, an immense mass of granite, rising out of the level prairie like a huge battlemented castle, surrounded by a wild waste of sterile desolation. Some grass, no wood nor water. Distance to-day, nineteen miles.

"June 24th. Pleasant day. Sweetwater Valley is lined on each side with rocky mountain ridges, entirely destitute of vegetation, excepting here and there a dwarf cedar, in some crag of the rocks, struggling with the utter sterility of the desolation around it, for a blighted existence. Some heavy sandy road. The second mess broke their wagon, and replaced it by taking a new wagon which had been left at the road side. Almost any article,

excepting provisions, could be supplied in this way. There is a vast amount of property lying along the route, which has been thrown away to lighten loads, and in consequence of the failure of teams, etc. Distance travelled, seventeen miles."

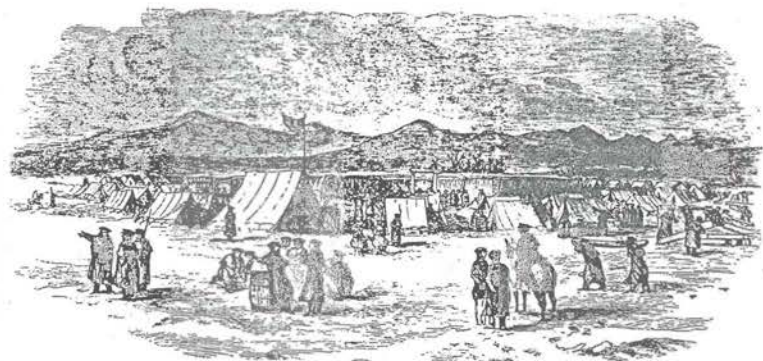
ASCENDING THE SWEETWATER, the party crossed and recrossed the river several times until June 29, when they turned south to cross the Continental Divide, amid drifted piles of snow and ice, at South Pass, and descended into the valley of Pacific Creek. Good water and grass were very scarce and only wild sage and greasewood were available for fuel.

At the junction of the Great Salt Lake and Oregon Trails, they turned left toward Big Sandy River, "a fine bold stream" with "wide, handsome bottom land, clothed with verdure and adorned in various places with clumps of tall timber, presenting a striking contrast to the sterile sandy plains, which stretch far away in the dim distance on every side."

On the morning of July 3, they reached Green River, where two ferries were operating, and paid \$5 each to have their wagons boated across.

Commented Adam on Independence Day: "The day is clear and pleasant. Although encamped upon the heights of the rock-bound mountains of the far West, our hearts throb in unison with thousands at home, who, doubtless, are celebrating the national jubilee. Our fare is not so sumptuous as it has been on many a former 'Fourth'; yet the rough subsistence of the California emigrant is not eaten with less appetite than the richer and more costly preparations of the festive board . . . A large number of Indians and Mountaineers are encamped in our vicinity. Distance to-day, 19 miles."

Early on July 6, the party reached Fort Bridger, where grass, timber, and water were abundant: "The fort buildings consist of several log houses, and an enclosure for horses. This establishment is the property of Mr. Bridger, an old mountain and Indian trader. It was currently reported at the fort that a fight had occurred between a company of emigrants and Indians, by which nine of the latter were killed. It was also stated, that the Indians were preparing to attack the emigrants. This has caused some alarm, and the emigrants were banding together for common defence."



PART OF
THE CAMP
AT FORT
BRIDGER

Harper's
Weekly, 1858

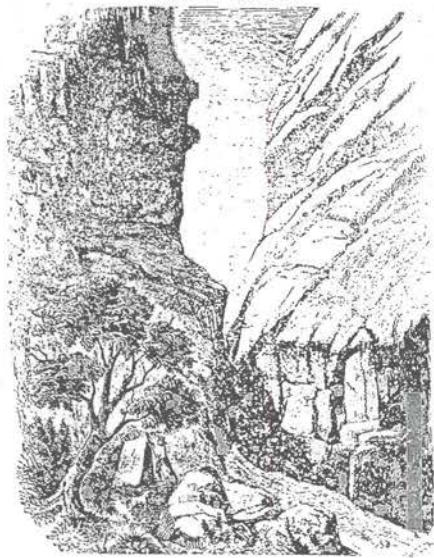
That night they camped on Muddy Creek: "About 15 wagons and 30 'packers' encamped with us. We formed a *carrel* and arranged everything in order, so that we should not be surprised, if the Indians should make an attack. In forming the *carrel* the wagons are driven sufficiently close to allow the tongue of one to reach the hind wheels of the other, which makes a formidable defence. A *carrel* is generally in the form of a hollow square. When danger is apprehended, the mules and cattle are generally brought into the *carrel*, and there kept during the night. There is a large Indian encampment about one mile distant. Distance, 19 miles.

"July 7th. Clear and warm. One of the men on guard last night, shot twice at his own mule, mistaking it for an Indian. The animal had managed to free itself from the lariat, and passed unnoticed into a thicket of willows, where he observed it and fired two shots from his revolver, wounding the mule, and causing it to rush forth just in time to prevent more sharp shooting! This ridiculous accident caused quite an alarm in camp. We remained in camp during the day to rest our teams. The mountain fever is very prevalent among the emigrants."

THE NEXT DAY THEY PASSED OVER Dividing Ridge and descended into the Great Basin. Along the trail they saw the decomposing bodies of several Indians who had been shot while attempting to steal emigrants' teams. On the 10th they reached Weber River, where they gathered wild strawberries. Excellent grass was available.

Two days later they passed through a narrow canyon: "The mountains on each side rise almost perpendicularly about 2000 feet, with scarcely room between them, at their base, for the passage of Canon Creek; the road passing down the rough and dangerous channel . . . There is nothing in nature so strongly impressive as the sublimity of mountain scenery. Wild, varied and majestic scenery, awful chasms, romantic and frightful pre-

PARLEY'S CANYON



Harper's Weekly, 1858

cupices—traces of past convulsions and awful fires—and immense sierras, whose peaks, crowned with eternal snows, penetrate the clouds—sublimity and impressive sternness, on every side, astonished our senses and filled us with awe and delight . . . After a most toilsome and difficult trip, over the worst portion of the road between the States and Salt Lake, we reached the valley, and encamped within five miles of Great Salt Lake City." The next day they entered the city itself.

The company remained in the vicinity of Salt Lake City for about a week, helping with the harvest in order to obtain a supply of flour.

"Large numbers of Californians are arriving daily," Adam noted, "and numbers are passing on toward the 'diggings.' The city is a general place of deposit for property of every description, by emigrants—thousands of whom intend packing through from this city, whilst others are disposing of everything they can spare either to lighten their loads, or to procure flour, etc. Good wagons are for sale at from \$10 to \$20; spades and shovels, 50 cents each; full chests of joiner's tools, that would cost \$150 in the States, were sold here for \$25. Indeed, almost every article, except sugar, coffee, bacon, and dried fruits, sell at from 50 to 75 per cent below wholesale prices in the States!"

He found many of the Mormons "gentlemanly and hospitable," although others "were disposed to make our misfortunes their opportunity to take every advantage in a bargain." Of a sermon by Brigham Young, however, he wrote "his discourses would better grace a butcher's block than a pulpit."

O'FALLON'S BLUFFS FROM NEAR THE JUNCTION OF THE FORKS OF THE PLATTE



Century Magazine

ON JULY 23, THE PARTY was again underway, driving around the northern shore of Great Salt Lake, fording the Weber and Ogden rivers, and being ferried across the Bear River. Adam continued his narrative: "We occasionally met with parties of Digger Indians, who were the most miserable specimens of the red race our eyes ever rested upon. They subsist upon roots, carrion, and a species of cricket of a very large size, that abound in the valley, and frequently do immense injury to the crops of grain.

"July 29th. Clear, and very warm. The trail passes over a rough mountain ridge (north of Great Salt Lake) and across a valley to Warm Springs. This water is milk warm and saltish. Our cattle drink it, but extreme thirst alone induced us to try it; and, I doubt not, its use partook more of the injurious than the beneficial . . . We suffered, in common with other emigrants, the pangs of extreme thirst during the greater part of the day. Good water would have commanded any price on the route to-day; but it was not obtainable for either love or money. Imagination cannot realize the sufferings which we experienced in travelling over dreary and sterile wastes, under a scorching sun, without water. Distance, 22 miles."

The next days were more of the same: "We entered a level sterile plain, destitute of everything resembling vegetation, except a stunted growth of miserable sage . . . Around us is a sterile desolation, cheerless and gloomy, while far in the distance barren mountains raise their cloud-associated peaks to the regions of eternal snow.

"August 2nd. Grass being abundant here [on Casus Creek], we concluded to remain in camp

to day for the purpose of recruiting our stock. The graves which line the road side, attest the melancholy fact, that thousands have found a final resting place in these inhospitable wilds. This is but the beginning of the end; when the whole emigration shall have passed to its destination, the impress of its disastrous march over the barren plains, sandy deserts and rock-bound mountains of this sunset land will have been written upon a thousand hearts. Disease and death are claiming their victims, in numbers 'like the leaves of the forest, when autumn hath flown.'

"August 4th. Fair day. The trail lies up Goose Creek, passing over some very rough ground. We are very much annoyed by the offensive effluvia arising from the dead cattle, horses and mules along the trail. Crossed Crooked Creek, a miry stream, very difficult to cross. We disposed of fifty pounds of flour to a company who were destitute of provisions. Much suffering is expected amongst the emigrants who came via the Sublette Cut-off and Fort Hall, and are almost destitute of provisions. A vast amount of property of all kinds is thrown away or destroyed; wagons, axes, guns, chairs, carpenter's tools, clothing, and almost every article usually brought on this route by emigrants. Encamped on the banks of Goose Creek. Excellent grass, willows, etc. Distance to-day 16 miles."

ON AUGUST 8, THE COMPANY passed into the head of the valley of the Humboldt River: "The valley presents a delightful scent of smiling meadows covered with a very luxuriant growth of tall grass . . . I noticed many newly made graves to day . . . In conversation with Capt. B. F. Sperry, of Mo., he informed me that he started from the Missouri river on the 21st of May, and traveled along the lower Platte about the 1st of June, and that the ravages of cholera and other diseases were almost beyond calculation, that probably one fifth of the later portion of the emigration had died. He had seen nine out of a company of thirteen, lying dead at one time. Other persons confirmed these reports. Distance to-day about 21 miles.

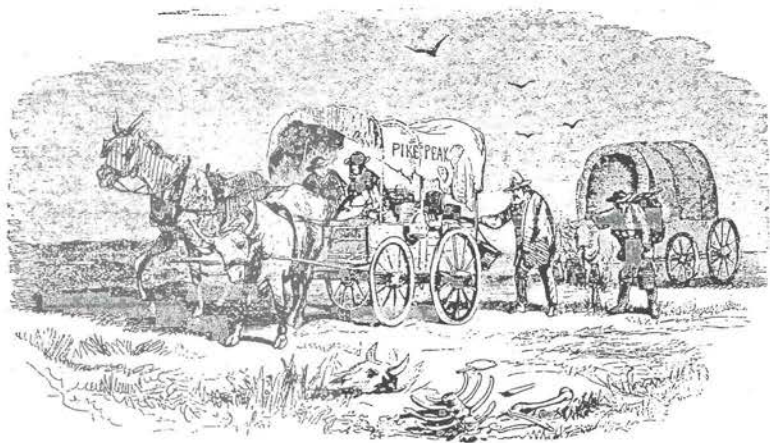
"August 9th. Fair and very warm. A good pleasant road to the head of Humboldt river . . . The water is clear but quite warm . . . There is a great amount of sickness amongst the emigrants, if we can judge from the records that we have noticed on graves. By far the greater portion of

deaths has been confined to Missourians and Illinoisians. The heaviest portion of the emigration is from those states. I counted ten or twelve newly made graves this afternoon. Two of the deceased were aged 61 and 60 years—another a child of five years! Thus age and youth have been sacrificed in the wild pursuit of wealth. . . Distance 21 miles.

"August 11th. Cool and pleasant. We remain in camp for the purpose of resting ourselves and teams. A great many emigrants called at our camp to day to beg flour and bread. Many of these starving emigrants have money but provisions cannot be obtained for gold; no person has more than he needs, and by far the greater number see want staring them in the face . . . Many started with very meagre supplies and most emigrants have been much longer on the route than they expected.

"August 12th. Very cold morning . . . On the south side of the river a large canon is in view. The Hastings Cut-off, via the south end of Great Salt Lake, passes down this canon and enters Humboldt valley. I have seen a number who came by this route, and by comparing notes we ascertained that the Cut-off was a 'cut-on;' that we had made this point in three days less time than packers and teams who came by the Hastings route! . . . Whilst we were at Salt Lake great excitement prevailed among the emigrants in relation to this Cut-off. Several old mountaineers proffered, for a considerable sum of money, to be paid in advance, to conduct companies by a new route across the Great Basin Desert to the 'Gold Diggings,' in eighteen or twenty days; the guides to proceed no further than the West end of the desert, which was said to be within a few days travel of the California mines. Many companies accepted these proposals, and others followed the trail of the preceding companies. They parted with their 'guides' in good faith, after receiving full directions for their future progress. Their arrival at the Humboldt river exposed the deception. The desert that they crossed is eighty miles wide, and many teams were lost in attempting to cross it. The emigrants describe their own sufferings as being almost beyond endurance. Their provisions are now exhausted, and they have yet nearly five hundred miles to travel.

"August 13th. Many emigrants are killing oxen that are worn down and almost unable to travel, for food. Others, who have neither teams nor



CROSSING
THE PLAINS
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money, are wholly dependent upon the charities of those who have provisions for food to sustain life . . . The country around presents a continuous scene of utter sterility. The dry and parched earth is so warm during the heat of the day that it burns the feet of our cattle . . . We saw the body of a white man lying a short distance from the trail, with his head severed from his body; supposed to have been the act of Indians. Distance, 24 miles.

"August 14th. Clear and warm. Eighteen head of cattle were stolen by the Indians from a camp about one mile below us last night. The owners were compelled to start on foot, with their provisions on their backs, leaving their wagons, clothing, and a great variety of articles. We left our wagon and picked up a lighter and better one, which was left as above stated . . . On the evening of the 11th inst., Mr. A. G. Shields and company encamped on the south side of the river, and turned their cattle across to graze. In the morning the cattle were gone. Mr. S. and five others followed the trail of the cattle and Indians, whose tracks were plainly visible in the dry and dusty earth, about 12 miles north, into the mountains. Mr. S. was considerably in advance of his men, when a large party of Indians sprang from their concealed position and fired at Shields, who fell pierced by many arrows. The other men turned and fled for life, and escaped the foe. This, and numerous other occurrences too numerous to relate,

has alarmed the emigrants . . . The body of an emigrant was found to-day, a few miles from our camp. The scalp had been taken. Encamped on a small affluent of Humboldt river. Distance, 18 miles.

"August 15th. We suffered much from thirst, having travelled the greater part of the day under an almost scorching sun, and amidst clouds of dust, without water. The following is a copy of a written notice, which was conspicuously posted near the trail:—*Emigrants, be on your guard. Three families were robbed of their teams by the Snake Indians. The Indians exhibited strong signs of hostilities.*

"Aug. 18th. Fair and pleasant. Three teams were stolen yesterday morning by Indians. The owners had left the cattle some considerable distance from camp, unguarded, whilst they were at breakfast; when they returned, the cattle were missing. Several packers saw the Indians, fifteen in number, running the cattle into a mountain pass.

"August 19th. It has been our general custom to leave our stock in the charge of the man or men on guard when the remainder of the company retire to rest. At about two o'clock this morning, the guard heard a number of the cattle rushing through the growth of wild sage that surrounded our encampment, and in a moment the alarm was sounded, and we were up and ready for the pursuit. The night was quite dark, and not knowing the exact course to take, we divided into

small parties of two or three and started in different directions.

"Capt. Russell, with several others, started immediately up the river, and found eight head of cattle about two miles and a half from the camp; they immediately drove these back to camp, and ascertained that there were thirteen head yet missing. The other parties had not yet returned to camp. In the hurry of business, Mr. Uber had gone out without his gun, and became separated from his companions. In his perambulations through the sage, he espied the form of a man with stealthy step approaching him under cover of the dense growth of tall sage. Mr. Uber came suddenly to a halt. He put the interrogatory, 'Who comes there?' but the figure was silent as the ghost of Banquo. Mr. U., doubtless prompted by as much curiosity to know whether it was real flesh and blood as mother Eve was to taste the forbidden fruit, again shouted, 'Who's that?' The answer was conveyed in the shape of an arrow that whizzed past Mr. U.'s ear! Uber being convinced of the perils that environed him, made hasty retreat.

"The parties all returned to camp without making any discoveries relative to the remainder of our cattle. With the dawn of morning we again started on the trail. The foot prints of four Indians were easily traced. After a toilsome search, the lost cattle were found in a horse-shoe bend of the river, about four miles from camp. I doubt not, the Indian stampede was successfully quieted by our prompt pursuit. They had started the cattle and would have driven a part of them into the mountains, if we had not followed them.

"A company encamped about two miles below us lost some of their oxen last night. The trail of the cattle and Indians was traced to a canon in the mountains.

"Aug. 20th. Clear and warm. The trail, to-day, has been principally over heavy sand. The whole country around, excepting the low land, or river bottom, is sterile and barren, a desolate and dreary waste. The usual calls for food by starving emigrants are almost hourly made, but prudence forbids us to give much in this way, as we have not sufficient for ourselves. . . Grass is very scarce, and we generally have to drive our cattle across the river for feed. There is not a single tree on the Humboldt. The largest growth of wood is willow rods. Distance 20 miles.

"Aug. 23d. Clear and warm. Our route to-day lies over barren plains similar to those we passed yesterday. The whole aspect of the country is cheerless and disheartening. A deathlike stillness reigns to be broken only by the measured tread of emigrant trains; the scorching sands, browned sage and grease-wood, and the black mountains awful with the traces of ancient fires, present a scene in which nature figures in her most miserable garb! A country wholly unfitted for the residence of man . . . Saw a number of Pah Utah Indians; they came to camp and appeared to be friendly. They are a miserable race of beings and appear to be, at present, subsisting upon the carcasses of dead animals along our trail. Distance to-day 16 miles."

ON AUGUST 26, PRIOR TO CROSSING the "long-looked-for desert," the party encamped at the head of Humboldt Lake, whose water was "very brackish and impregnated with alkali . . . Many emigrants were killing broken down cattle for food; and others who had neither cattle nor provisions, were seen gathering the refuse portions of slaughtered animals or cutting carcasses for food (if we may so term it) to sustain life!

"August 27th. Resumed our toilsome progress at one o'clock A.M., passing over a heavy sandy road. A sickly growth of grease-wood covers the bluffs between the lake and mountains . . . Words cannot convey an idea of the desolation everywhere witnessed around us; sufficiently cheerless to depress the most buoyant feeling, and excite despair, if it were not for the hopes of a more pleasant scene beyond. The aspect of nature here presented was the most gloomy we had ever beheld, while on every side the destruction of life and property was unparalleled. The trail was defined by dead cattle, horses and mules, and a vast amount of all kinds of property, and the awful stench arising from these causes combined with the heated atmosphere, and the sand and dust driven by every breeze, taxed the power of endurance to its utmost extent . . . Whole teams failed, and wagons with their contents were deserted, the owners seeking their own safety at the expense of everything else. Several of our animals fell down exhausted, under the yoke. Dead and dying animals literally covered the trail, and we were compelled to seek a new route to avoid them. Many emigrants were desert-



ing their wagons and endeavoring to drive their animals through to water . . . Water was the article on which life and all else seemed to depend

"After having passed through dust and heat, and thirst, enough to appal the stoutest hearts, we arrived at Carson River at 12 o'clock, M., Aug. 28th. We were on the desert twenty-two hours and a half, and travelled almost without cessation a distance of fifty-two miles. A number of California traders were established here selling flour at two dollars and a half per pound, bacon at two dollars a pound, and whiskey half a dollar a drink! They were purchasing stock from emigrants who were destitute of provisions and money, at nominal prices. We saw a good mule exchanged for twelve pounds of flour! and a horse for seven pounds of the same article! . . . There is an abundance of timber on the banks of the Carson River, the first we have seen since leaving Weber River, a distance of more than 500 miles."

In fair, warm weather, the party moved up the valley of the Carson River through a landscape that was alternately barren and, at least along the banks, covered with abundant grass. Traders

from California, with mules loaded with flour, brandy, and tobacco, were common. Flour was offered at \$1.50 a pound. The company traded its teams of oxen for mules, convinced that they could pack through to the gold diggings more quickly if they were unencumbered with wagons. They abandoned much of their heavier tools, clothing, and utensils.

By September 4, 1850, the party was well into the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The nights were cold and the mornings would find ice on the streams flowing out of the surrounding mountains. The trail was rough and rock strewn. On September 6, they made the long climb over the dividing ridge separating the Great Basin from the Pacific slopes. Piles of snow were along the trail and the mountain sides were covered with timber. The following day, they sold their mules to two traders, and the next day brought them to the road to Webersville:

"Sept. 9th. Cloudy and cool day. Nine miles travel over a smooth trail brought us to village of Ringgold, the first settlement in California. Ringgold contains about forty rudely constructed houses built of poles and clapboards. Some of these domicils are adorned with a rude construction resembling a door, whilst others are utterly devoid of this luxury. About a mile below, across Weber Creek, a larger collection of houses are dignified by the deathless cognomen of Webersville. Boarding houses, emigrant's and miner's saloons, are numerous. A very large number of miners are at work in this vicinity, but they give a decidedly unfavorable account of the 'diggings'."

By this time, the little company that had crossed the plains and mountains together had broken up. The two Brown brothers decided to proceed to Sacramento, 50 miles further on. They had traveled, according to their calculations, 2,032 miles since leaving St. Joseph 19 weeks before. The wealth they sought in California eluded them, however, and the next January they booked passage for home by ship, by way of Central America. They arrived in New York on March 23, 1851, and soon rejoined their families in Pennsylvania.



The fortune that young Adam Mercer Brown sought without success in California he soon found at home. When he returned to Western Pennsylvania, he briefly took up medicine but within a short time decided to study law in the office of his uncle, Thomas Marshall, a prominent Pittsburgh attorney. In 1853 he was admitted to the county bar and entered into partnership with his uncle in the firm of Marshall and Brown. His distinguished career as a leading Pittsburgh lawyer was to span 50 years. He was involved in the commercial life of Pittsburgh, as well; he was one of the organizers of the Anchor Savings Bank and served as president from the bank's founding in 1873 until his death. Major Brown—he was commissioned in the Pennsylvania Guards in 1849, although he never served in a military campaign—was also active in local Republican politics. He was a delegate to the Republican National Conventions of 1864 and 1868 and a member of the Pittsburgh Select Council for three years. Despite frequent urging by both friends and the Pittsburgh newspapers, however, he steadfastly refused to give up his lucrative law practice to either run for major public office or accept an appointment to the bench. In 1874, for example, several newspapers backed his nomination and election as mayor. Said the Pittsburgh *Leader*: "He is beyond question the strongest man yet presented for the position. For ability and character, professional and personal, he has few equals and no superiors among our public men." But Major Brown declined to run. He explained to a news reporter: "I don't believe I could be induced to hold the office, for the reason that by so doing my private practice would be interfered with, if not destroyed."

Perhaps the capstone of his career came in 1901. For nearly 20 years, Pittsburgh had been controlled by an efficient but graft-ridden Republican political machine. Lincoln Steffens characterized the nation's steel center physically as "Hell with the lid off," but politically as "Hell with the lid on." By the turn of the century, though, a reform movement was gaining strength, and a split within the Republican party of Pennsylvania resulted in the state legislature changing the city's charter. The act was known as the Ripper Bill because it gave to the Governor the right to remove or "rip out" the head of the city government. Under the reform charter, the Governor dismissed the machine-backed mayor from office and appointed Major Brown as recorder—in essence, acting mayor.

Adam Brown held the office only a few controversial months, however. Conservative, unbending, and not attuned to the workings of entrenched machine politics, he soon found himself caught between warring political factions. His independent traits caused the Governor to rip him out, in turn. The episode temporarily undermined his health, while within a couple of years Pittsburgh politics returned to its accustomed ways.

By 1903, Major Brown had largely retired from active practice of the law; two of his sons continued the business of his law firm, A. M. Brown and Sons. A third son was a judge in the county courts. His wife, Lucetta, had died of pneumonia in 1892. Adam Mercer Brown is remembered by his grandchildren with a certain amount of awe—a righteous and dignified old gentleman, stern but kind and affectionate. When he died in 1910 at the age of 84, the phrase the Pittsburgh press found appropriate for eulogizing him was: "A gentleman of the old school, serious, honorable, and determined."

DAVID M. KIEFER is a great grandson of Major A. M. Brown, whose eye witness account of the gold rush to California provides the substance of the accompanying article. As a boy, he heard much about Major Brown's accomplishments from his mother, Brown's granddaughter. Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Kiefer is a 1947 graduate of the University of Louisville and has an M.B.A. degree from The American University in Washington, D. C. At present, he is senior editor on the staff of *Chemical & Engineering News*, a chemical news weekly published by the American Chemical Society. He and his wife, Irene, a native of Butte, Montana, and their two children make their home in Bethesda, Maryland. The Kiefers' interest in regional history has led them to investigate the many historic sites near their home and also, during several summer vacations, to explore the ghost towns and old mining camps of Montana.



of thinking of realities, and not merely of the historical narrative or of graphic representations of areas of the earth, must be cultivated in both teacher and learner.

Lectures, the queries and answers of recitation periods, examination questions and the resulting papers or blue-books, should all be clear and definite. In all of them, however, the necessity of recreating history as something that was once in the making should be constantly recognized. It is appalling to note to what extent an able well-prepared, conscientious, hard-working teacher can ruin, or partially ruin, the study of history by using too rigidly a text-book, an outline, a required note-book, a special type of examination questions. One, or more, or all of these can kill the spirit of a class, or, if not that, leave the members with a wooden notion of history or a wooden knowledge of events.

To present accurate information, never losing sight of the fact that everything that ever happened had to happen somewhere and sometime and affect somebody, and to make clear the sequence and connection of events—these are the outstanding obligations of the teacher of history. All devices and methods are secondary to these fundamentals. The significance of past events for the people of today is not a matter of first importance. The interpretation of history comes in as a matter of course, but it should be remembered that it can easily be overdone; that the meaning of events is often not apparent; that what thinkers of one generation make out of a past age, those of another will discard; that different social classes of the same period arrive at different conclusions. Nothing is more certain than this, that the teacher of history who forces a contribution for the benefit of present day society from all past events or movements is sure to present much of doubtful value. To re-create the past is a fascinating process, and there is no danger that the study of history will ever be abandoned. It is foolish, however, to believe that peoples have lived and struggled in bygone times mainly in order that we might profit through their wisdom or by avoiding their mistakes. They lived, they achieved, they made mistakes, and the best that we can do is to strive to make the most of our heritage.

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JOURNAL OF JOHN T. WILLIAMS, 1850

The old journal or diary which is here reproduced was written by John T. Williams while on a long over-land trip to California in 1850. The journey began on March 11, 1850, at Kirclin, Clinton County, Indiana, and ended on September 20 at Parks Bar, California. The diarist and his immediate companions stayed in camp at this place for six months when they moved to Grass Valley, Nevada County. The last entry which gives this information was of necessity added at some date not only after the six months period had elapsed but after the end of the gold-digging period in Grass Valley was over. The blank book in which the gold-seeker kept the record is of an old type much used for keeping personal accounts or recording memoranda. It has a tan leather binding but not the usual flap and short strap fastener. It is 3½ x 6 inches. The journal was started on the fifth page. The second and third pages list the supplies bought in the vicinity of St. Joseph, Missouri, and the prices paid in detail. The total expenditure for the initial outfit was \$551.95 and the total load was 1800 pounds. Most of the items with cost are mentioned in the journal at the time of purchase, and along the way prices of commodities are often stated.

The journal is not separated into daily entries, but they are recorded in regular sequence. Each page is numbered and the month and day is indicated at the top of each page; that is, the date of the matter recorded at the beginning of each page determines the month and day written at the top. Since it would have been difficult to reproduce the document as written, and, since the dates of entries are given through the body of each page, it has been very easy to reduce the journal to the usual form of a diary. It seems entirely probable that the entire diary was carefully copied by Mr. Williams at some date shortly after his California experience ended. The probability that this was true is suggested by the fact that there is no break in the writing anywhere as there certainly would be in an original copy written from day to day. Furthermore there is but one change in the color or character of the ink used, and no evidence that more than one kind of pen was used. Still the diary reads as if each

entry was originally made either on the day to which it refers or almost immediately afterwards, except the last two or three lines.

The journal is the property of a daughter of the diarist, Mrs. Sarah Williams Leasure, who lives in Auburn, Indiana. Through the kindness of Mrs. Leasure, the *Editor* has had the use of the manuscript copy, which was obtained for him by the Rev. John W. Meloy, pastor of the United Presbyterian Church of Bloomington, Indiana.

John T. Williams was born in Pennsylvania on July 3, 1825, and was therefore twenty-five when he made the trip to California. He remained in California for about four years, being quite successful in his search for gold. He returned, not to Indiana, where he had lived for a few years before going to California, but to Pennsylvania. There he married Jane Bryerly at Frankfort Springs, Beaver County, on September 20, 1855. The next year he migrated to the Iowa frontier, settling in Ringgold County. He died at Mt. Ayr, Iowa, on March 12, 1881.¹

1850

JOURNAL OF THE ROUT FROM INDIANA TO CALIFORNIA.

March 11th four of us left Kirkland Clinton Co. Ia.² for California, the day was fair the road some muddy, we only traveled 15 miles put up at Cottons tavern at 4 o'clock in the evening.

12th fair day roads good we traveled to Indianapolis at one o'clock in the afternoon, we put up at a tavern till next morning.

13th we got on the car at 8 o'clock and roled out for Madison, at one o'clock in the afternoon, we were in Madison safe and sound,³ we got on a steamboat the same evening bound for Lewisville, at 9 o'clock at night we were at Lewisville. it has rained all day and is still raining, the river is high.

14th we got on another steamboat bound for St. Lewis, passage 8 dollars in the cabin, but did not leave till the next day [15th] at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. in the evening we saw one boy brushing in oats⁴ and different others had commenced ploughing.

¹This information relative to Mr. Williams is contained in obituary notices published at the time of his death in 1881, and from an obituary notice which appeared at the death of his widow in 1917. These notices were furnished by the Rev. John W. Meloy.

²Kirklin, Clinton County, Indiana. This town is on the Michigan Road (State Road No. 29) about ten miles southeast of Frankfort.

³The train ride from Indianapolis to Madison was possibly a new experience for the four gold-seekers. The first train came into Indianapolis from Madison over this line, the first railroad of Indiana, in October, 1847. Mr. Williams had come to Indiana about four years earlier, and he may have ridden on a train before going to Madison from Indianapolis.

⁴Instead of drawing a harrow over the field where the grain had been sowed by hand (called "broadcasting"), the team was drawing a small tree with many branches and smaller limbs over the field in order to cover the grain with the loose soil.

16th at 10 o'clock in the morning we passed the mouth of the wabash river the Ohio river is very high the water is in the bottoms and in the first story of the buildings the cattle and other stock [stock] is in flat boats to keep them from drounding.

sunday morning the 17th we come in the Mississippi river, the wheat fields is green here, the boat struck a sand bar in the forenoon, but backed of in a few minuets and no damage done. the river is low it is warm enough here to go in our shirt sleeves and be comfortable.

18th at half past 1 o'clock in the afternoon we landed at St. Lewis, the day was warm and the streets is crowed with buisness we got on board [19th] of another boat bound for St. Joseph passage 8 dollars.

20th at 1 o'clock in the morning the boat left for St. Joseph, at 6 o'clock in the morning we come in the mouth of the Missouri river the river is low, at 2 o'clock in the evening we passed a steamboat that was snaged and sunk one week agoe, but no lives was lost, it was in water up to the cabin on one side and over it on the other side.

21st at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the boat struck a sand bar there was some gamblers gambling at the time the boat struck they had about 40 dollars in silver on the table, the boat struck so hard that the money all jolted of the table on the floor, they all run out and left their money on the floor but finding there was no damage done they come back and gethered up their money, there was one child died on the boat this morning with croop.

22nd at 8 o'clock in the morning we are at Jefferson City, there was one man lost last night it is supposed that he was pushed overboard.

23rd the river is very low and the boat is on sand bars every hour or 2

Sunday morning [24th] the snow is about 4 inches deep, and stormy, the boat is on sand bar and out of wood, they run ashore and gethered some dead cotton wood poles, that lasted till they got to a wood yard.

25th at noon we come to Independance. Jacob and William got of the boat here and went up to St. Joseph by land, at 4 o'clock in the evening we saw 8 Indians for the first I ever seen,

26th at 6 o'clock in morning we were at Fort Levensworth,⁵ at 12 o'clock at night we were at St. Joseph.

27th we got boarding at 2 dollars per week, one mile east of town. Jacob and William to town this evening.

28th we bought four yoke of oxen at 70 dollars per yoke.

29 I started for Wm Downards
30th at 10 o'clock I come to Downards they were all well, the country was beautifull between St. Joseph and Downards

31st I started back to St. Joseph it rained nearly all day, I stoped at John Russels and stayed all night, they were all well I bought one yoke of oxen from him price 60 dollars

April 1st I got back to St. Joseph at 10 o'clock we bought one wagon price 100 dollars.

April 2 the colery is said to be in town today.

3d cold and stormy, 4th still cold and raining, 5th snow and rain.

⁵Fort Leavenworth, was on the west side of the Missouri, a little way north of the present Leavenworth, Kansas.

6th we hooked up our cattle and started for Downards,⁶ we eat at John Russels we overtook McIntyre's and Winkop's boys in the evening and campt together that night.

Sunday the 7 we roled on, in the evening we bought 480 pounds flower at 2.50 cents per cwt campt 12 miles from Downards

8th at 5 oclock in the evening we come to Downards.

9th we bought 4 bushels corn at 25 cents per bushel. 10, 11, 12 cold and frosty we were at one log cabin raising to day [13th]

14th a light skift of snow.

15th, 16th cold and rainy

17th we drove our oxen to the bottom about one mile to grass for the first they have got this season.

18th clear but cold with north east wind 19th cloudy and cold, 20 clear and cold, 21 cloudy, 22, 23d, cool 24, 25, 26, warm, 27, 28, 29, 30th clear and warm the grass is begining to grow a little on the high ground. we have nothing to do but play ball pitch horse shoes and dollars and shute when we feel that way

May 1st and 2nd warm, 3 cold, 4 and 5th frosty in the morning, 6th warm, 7th rain, 8, 9, 10 warm and clear, 11th frost.

12th we hooked up our cattle and made a start for Callifornia 13 wagons with 52 men of us started together, we drove till dark about 14 miles over bad road and campt on a creek, grass was thin but short.

13th our company split 7 wagons crossed the river, and 6 in our company went farther up before we would cross the river,⁷ days drive about 10 miles grass was good

May 14th was very warm the road was good we drove about 10 miles and campt.

15 warm but windy, we drove abot 8 miles and campt grass was tolerble good.

16th warm and calm we drove about 5 miles and campt by a creek grass was good.

17th we drove about 10 miles went 7 miles past the Iowa line and come to Bomans ferry, the ferry was crowded and we commenced crossing at 11 oclock at night, no grass for our cattle, at 7 oclock in the morning of the 18th⁸

May 18th we were all over safe, we got some breakfast and roled out about 3 miles and come to grass and water and campt till next morning, we now commence standing gard.

19th we roled out beautifull road no timber, grass still short days drive about 18 miles, we campt in the Prarie cooked with buffaloe chips

20th there was a fine shower in the morning, the day was cool traveled about 20 miles grass and water plenty a little wood

21st cool we travled 20 miles campt in the prarie, no buffaloe chips nor wood except a little that we had halled

⁶ They now traveled northward from St. Joseph on the east side of the Missouri River until they passed the Iowa line.

⁷ The Missouri River. When the company made the actual start for California, they were a few miles northeast of St. Joseph and about fifty miles from the Iowa line.

⁸ The division of the caravan that moved northward into Iowa before crossing the Missouri ferried the River about forty miles south of Council Bluffs. They now made their way westward towards Fort Kearney on the Platte River, about 175 miles from the Missouri River crossing which they had used.

22nd we roled on the road being a little slippy by the rain that fell the night before, crossed salt creek in the afternoon drove up the creek about 2 miles and campt on the creek, good grass, water and some wood days travel about 18 miles

23rd cool we traveled about 20 miles, and campt good grass water and a little wood.

24th we drove about 10 miles to Plat river at noon there was an Indian vilage there also a creek a little above that was so high that we could not cross we campt close by the vilage we had to give the Indians some provisions to pay them for the grass that the cattle eat, the Indians was verry friendly dirty louzy and theivish.

25th the creek had fell we crosed the creek the banks was steep and muddy we then roled on about 15 miles up plat river and campt good grass a little wood.

26th we drove about 25 miles from one bend on the river to another no water except slew water, we campt by the river good grass no wood except on the Islands which we waded and swum after

27th there was a verry heavy rain in the morning and then clears up, our provisions and clothes being damp we lay here the most of the day to dry them, we hooked up in the afternoon and drove about six miles and campt on the river.

28th we drove about 20 miles, drove through two old Pawnee vilages but no Indians, there campt on the river bank

29th some of the men went out to hunt buffaloo, two of them on horse back went together, after they had been out some time they saw a party of Indians, they begun to put spur to their horses for the road the Indians seeing their fright begun to lay whip after them the Indians horses being swiftest at first they begun to flank out to head them, they seeing the Indians calculations drew their ramrods and begun to whip and spur, one horse being swifter than the other the hindmost man begun to get alarmed and cried out to the other to make your escape I am lost, I am lost make your escape, the other hollows to him to lay whip while there life there is hope, there horses outwinding the Indians horses they got away, the same Indians the same day come across one of our men that was a foot they surrounded him, he presented his gun and would not let one of them tuche him they found he was not afraid of them and let him go, days drive 18 miles

30th we drove about 20 miles met one wagon on the return they said there was no grass, campt on the river good grass but little wood

May 31st we come in the St Joseph road it was full of emigration, 3 miles farther and then we come to New fort Carny [Kearney] it is on a beautifull place in the prarie in the river bottom but little timber. we drove three miles farther and campt the grass is good water plenty no wood but willow brush

June the 1st we have light shower but cool breezes from the mountains, there is some cases of colery on the road now we campt in the Prarie good grass no wood except willow brush

Sunday June 2nd we passed one company that was detained by burying one man that died with Collera, we also passed between one and two hundred teems, some of them was resting others detained by

sickness we camped one mile from a cool spring of pure water, the first one we have seen since we left Missouri, little grass no wood except willow brush

3rd we passed different companies that had stopped on account of colery cases, also one death. camped one mile from the river but little grass no water nearer than the river, some brush

June 4th cool and windy barren country, we filled up our water cags in the afternoon and camped at the best grass we could see, it was short but thin no wood some buffaloe chips.

5th cool and rainy drove about 15 miles camped by a slough, swamp grass and rushes plenty, no wood but little of willow brush.

6th we drove 3 miles farther and then crossed the south fork of Plat river,⁹ it was one mile wide, and the water was up to the wagon beds in places, the bottom was nothing but sand and very uneven, which made it very heavy drawing, I saw some teams that mist the ford a little and got into swimming water they got their provisions wet and had to double team to get out, I also saw one wagon come out with 11 yoke of cattle to it they were all nearly give out, by being to long and swimming some, I and one more of our mess waded the river and drove our team without much trouble, we was one hour and a quarter crossing the heaviest pulling I have seen, we drove 2 miles farther and come to good grass and camped the balance of the day, no wood some willow brush about one mile from us.

7th we lay by on account of one of our company being sick with dyaree, we called on a doctor that was going by, he give some medison that checked the diseas.

8th, we hooked up and roled on halling our sick man, we got to the north fork of plat river against noon distance about 10 miles, there is no grass here nor wood the[We] keeps up the river about 4 miles, and then we took the high lands, we drove till night and come to neither grass, wood, nor water, we drove on till 9 oclock at night, and on the account of storm we had to camp, we staked our cattle to the ground without any thing to eat, we were not much hungary ourselves and lay down without eating much.

9th we hooked up at daylight drove about 6 miles and come to the river again, there was but very little grass here, we turned out our cattle for 2 hours they picked around and got a little to eat, we then hooked up again and traveled till noon and come to wet bottom where the grass was about 3 inches long, we unyoked again for 2 or 3 hours, the day is very cool with a little rain, the land here is nothing but sand we hooked up about 3 oclock and roled on till night, the grass was very short but thin no wood

10th we come to 2 indian vilages the Sews [Sioux], we also come to alkily water which we had to be carefull to keep our cattle from, one of our company was taken very sick this evening, some said he had the colery, I have the mumps for my part. we camped close to a Indian vilage

⁹ They were now more than 100 miles west of Fort Kearney and traveled on toward Fort Laramie over the trail south of the North Fork of the Platte River.

grass was good to what we have had no wood except a little drift wood along the river.

11th Simpson McIntyre one of our company died with colery, at daylight, the Indians would not let us burry him near their town, we haled [hauled] him about 3 miles and burryed him in a sand bank, because the land is nothing but sand here, we then drove on till evening and got good grass for the first on this fork of the river but little wood, evenings cool

June 12th we hooked up and roled on, it was very warm at noon, in the evening two more of our company Garret and James Winekoop were takeing ill with dyaree, we camped on the river bottom grass was good wood scarce.

13th the sick men was still bad, and we did not hook up till 10 oclock, drove till one oclock, one of the sick men getting worse we stoped again till next day, we had a fine shower in the evening there was one steer struck with lightening and killed, grass was short no wood

June 14th we hooked up at 7 oclock and roled on, the day being cool cattle traveled well, at noon we stoped to rest one hour oposite a large rock called the courthouse rock caled so on account of shape, drove till evening and camped on the river bank good grass, some drift wood.

15th we lay by on account of Garret Winekoop sickness, he died at 3 oclock in the evening with dyaree, we burryed him 6 oclock, and then hooked up and drove about 4 miles and camped by a spring good grass but no wood.

Sunday the 16th we went through another Indian vilage, we left the[re] early in the afternoon, drove about 7 miles from the river and camped grass was good no water except one cag we haled from the river, no wood.

17th we roled out beautiful road about 6 miles and come to a small spring also a blacksmith and another Indian vilage and trading house, there was no water for our cattle, there was some pine timber here, we drove on and got water for our cattle at three oclock in the afternoon then drove six miles farther and come to good grass, but little wood river water as usual

June 18th we come in sight of snow, near 100 miles of us, we also come to one trading house build of dride brick or clay, drove 20 miles and camped in the river bottom 10 miles from Fort Lawrame¹⁰ some grass no wood, light showers of rain in the evening

19th we crossed lawrame fork of plat river at noon, it was 100 yards wide and over the fore wheel of our wagon and run very swift, we raised our provisions on the upper bottom of the bed and roled over dry and safe, the fort was situated in the fork of the river there was 10 or 12 buildings, some of them frame but most of them built of dride brick there was one sawmill, run by mules, one store, whiskey was worth six dollars per gallon other things in proportion, we drove 6 miles past the fort and camped grass was short no wood.

20th we drove over some very rough hills in the morning come to

¹⁰ Fort Laramie was about 200 miles west of Fort Kearney. It is in the eastern part of the present state of Wyoming about 80 miles north of Cheyenne.

a warm spring at noon drove ten miles farther and camped on dead timber creek, plenty of wood water and the best of grass

21st we drove 18 miles over some hilly roads, crossed a creek at noon, camped on a small branch, good grass some wood there was a light hail storm in the evening.

22nd we drove till noon over hills and hollows, stopped one hour on a small creek drove 10 miles farther over hills of red sand and rock, camped in the hills drove our cattle 2 miles to grass but little wood.

23 we drove 20 miles over hilly road and crossed three creeks, and camped on a small river 30 feet wide one deep plenty of grass 1½ miles up the stream

24th we drove four miles farther and came to the river again drove five miles up the river to deer creek 20 feet wide one deep, drove two miles up the creek and camped our cattle being very tired and some of them lame we lay here one day and a half grass tolerable good some wood and some fish in the creek.

25th we had rain nearly all day we kept in our tents and wagons.

26th we drove 20 miles crossed different creeks, camped on one drove our cattle 2 miles up it to grass, but little wood, light showers of rain in the evening

27th we drove 10 miles farther to the upper ferry on plat river,¹¹ crossed in the afternoon ferryage five dollars per wagon, swum our cattle, the river was 150 yards wide and deep also very swift drove out 4 miles in the evening and camped on a ridge grass was very short and thin no wood, some wild sage which answered in the place of wood we had light hail storm in the evening.

28th we hooked up early drove 24 miles without water no grass we then rested one hour let our cattle drink at a spring branch which was very muddy by the quantity of cattle tramping the ground got supper and hooked up again at dark drove five miles farther against ten o'clock no grass yet, we tied our cattle to the stakes, till next morning

29th we hooked up at 4 o'clock drove 20 miles farther against 1 o'clock in the afternoon before we come to grass, camped on sweet water [Sweetwater River] 2 miles from the devils hole,¹² drove our cattle 1½ miles from the road to grass, we have passed alcahy springs for the last 2 days that would kill cattle in a few minutes that got to the water, also passed a saleratis lake, the saleratis lay on top of the water resembling ice but when lifted out and dried become white as snow, it was about one inch thick three or four acres in the lake

June 30th we hooked up at noon drove two miles and came to the devils hole where the creek run through the hill of rocks about 300 feet deep and about 100 yards wide at the top about 50 yards wide in the bed of the creek, the road went around the hill and was not hilly but very sandy, we drove till 10 o'clock at night before we come to grass, got grass 1 mile from the road no wood but plenty of wild sage.

¹¹ The North Platte River flows northward from its source to the junction with the Sweetwater where it turns eastward. The Sweetwater flows eastward from South Pass. For this reason the trail crossed the North Platte and passed up the Sweetwater.

¹² Usually called Devil's Gap or Devil's Gate, a canyon cut through a granite ridge by the Sweetwater.

July 1st we hooked up at 9 o'clock drove till noon rested one hour, we then drove on, our men that went on ahead of the teams to hunt grass found some, some distance from the road, struck back to the road to turn the wagons but come in behind the wagons, we drove on come to no grass, left the river in the evening, and drove till 11 o'clock at night before we come to water or grass our men caught up with us one hour before we got through.

2nd we traveled five miles and come to good grass we camped the balance of the day.

3rd we traveled 19 miles 16 without water, crossed sweet water once and camped on it grass was scarce plenty of wild sage.

4th hooked up crossed sweet water twice drove 14 miles over hilly and rocky road camped at 4 o'clock drove one mile of the road to grass there was plenty of snow a few rods from the grass under the hill, we camped by a cool spring and had snow in the place of ice to cool our brandy.

5th we seen plenty of snow, drove 20 miles crossed two creeks branches of sweetwater camped by a bank of snow grass was good no wood but plenty of wild sage.

July 6th we drove 6 miles went through the south pass¹³ of the rocky mountains the road was beautiful and nearly level, three miles farther to pacific springs drove five miles down the pacific creek¹⁴ and camped, grass short, bad water, we left one steer by being lame

7th drove 16 miles over a small desert or sand plain to little sandy creek, drove 5 miles up the creek to grass, grass was good water plenty, plenty of willows and wild sage, we left the salt lake road at noon.

8th we drove six miles to big sand [Big Sandy River] the road was nothing but dust and sand drove 4 miles up the creek to grass, creek 3 rods wide one foot deep.

9th at ½ past ten o'clock we started through the green river desert, 50 miles we filled up our water vessels, about 20 gallons, drove till 1 o'clock rested ½ hour eat a few bites then drove till 7 rested one hour and got supper, then drove till midnight rested ½ hour then drove till 3 o'clock rested till four then drove till 7 give the cattle what water we had left about one gallon each. the road has been level but very dusty about shoe mouth deep and as light as lime, and smelt of lime and I believe was partly lime.

at twelve o'clock the 10th we got to green river ferry watered and rested our cattle 4 hours till our turn come to cross in the boat paid 7 dollars for ferrying our wagon over, swum our cattle and drove about five miles to grass, the grass was short no wood but little sage

¹³ South Pass, a very famous pass of the Rocky Mountains, is in west-central Wyoming. Though about 7500 feet above sea level, this Pass is not high in relation to the adjacent gentle slopes. Two travelers who went over the Pass in 1813, wrote: "Both the ascent and descent were so gradual, that had we not been told, we should have passed over the dividing ridge in the Rocky Mountains without knowing it." See *Route across the Rocky Mountains* by Overton Johnson and William H. Winter (reprint of 1832), 22.

¹⁴ Pacific Creek flows southwestward from South Pass. Its waters find their way to the Green River via the Sandy River. Green River is a tributary of the Colorado which discharges into the Gulf of California.

11th we drove 7 miles grass was cours water scarce sage plenty road good.

12th we drove five miles farther come to good grass water and fur timber, our cattle being tired we stop the remainder of the day.

13th we still lay still to rest our cattle

14th we moved 10 miles farther over verry hilly and rough road

15 we roled over some of the bear river mountains crossed one creek come through a beautifull grove of fur timber in the evening campt close to a beautifull branch good grass and water plenty of sage days drive 20 miles part of our company commenced packing this morn- ing also passed the devles ladder it was about 20 feet nearly perpendic- ular wher wagons used to be let down by ropes and cattle unyoked to get down, but the road goes about one mile around now but is verry steep still.

16th we roled over another mountain and come to bear river at noon, rested 1½ hours then roled on down the river in the evening we crossed three verry swift creeks, within ½ mile the water was over belly deep in each, we upset our wagon at the bank after we had crossed the last one, broke nothing but a few bottols, one of pickles which was the most loss we went over some verry rough road for ¼ of a mile after we crossed the creek, then drove 2 miles farther campt on a beautifull branch good grass water and wood.

17th we drove 18 miles crossed one creek 2 rods wide 3 feet deep made a short turn around a bend of bear river, then took the bluffs campt in the hills, grass was good water plenty no wood some sage.

18th road hilly in the morning, come down a verry steep hill and got to bear river again at noon, beautifull road in the afternoon campt on a spring branch good grass some wood.

19th we come to a french and Indian trading vilage. they had horses and oxen that was rested to trade for others that was nearly give out, they also had liquors at one dollar per pint, we campt by a large spring grass was good, some willow brush, one snake Indian stayed all night with us, he was friendly and peacible we give him as much as he could eat.

20th fine road we come to the soda springs¹⁵ at noon there was another french and Indian trading post here, there was a fine shower of rain it lasted for one hour, the first we have had for one month, there was also a boiling spring here, it foamed like a pot, but yet was cool. also a steamboat spring which come out of a hole in the rock about three inches in diameter it throwed the water from three to four feet high, once about every four of five seconds, the water was warm. the soda water sparkled some, and was sower but not palatable we drove about two miles in the afternoon and campt on bear river bank good grass plenty of wood by swiming the river about 100 yards wide

sunday the 21st we drove two miles and come to the forks of the cutoff and fort hall road, we took the fort hall¹⁶ road because it was used the least and we thought grass would be the best, we come to

¹⁵ Soda Springs is a town in what is now southeastern Idaho about fifty miles southeast of Fort Hall.

¹⁶ That is, they decided to go farther north (50 miles) to Fort Hall before turning westward.

another large soda spring in the forenoon at 2 oclock we come to a beautifull branch and good grass, we loosed our cattle and let them eat one hour or more then hooked up and drove on good road, in the evening our cattle began to get sick they would rase theire eood and throw it out on the ground, we drove about one mile in this way and come to a creek and campt, we give each of our steers about one pound of fat meat, they would not eat any, good water grass and some wil- low brush.

22nd our cattle was better and eating, we lay by all day for fear of hurting our teems by driving.

23d we hooked up and drove up the creek four of five miles and crossed it, it was very muddy and bad to cross. I saw one man get trowed [thrown] over a mules head by it sticking in the mud. he lit on his hands and feet in the mud up to his belly. we then went over a mountain and campt in the valley of Snake river, plenty of grass good water and dead cotton wood poles, which made it a first rate place to camp.

24th we hooked up and drove down the branch, crossed it different times, it was bad to cross, on the account of mud and steep banks. in the afternoon we struck into a sand plain, which was verry heavy draw- ing it was seven miles across, we then come to a creek and campt five miles from fort hall, good grass water and willow brush we had a fine shower of rain at dark which laid the dust.

25th we crossed different muddy branches in the morning we come to fort hall at 9 oclock there was butter and chickens for sale here chickens five dollars each, butter one dollar per pound we did not buy any, I saw potatoes growing verry nice here, they were out in bloom, we drove on, fine road, we crossed a branch of snake river in the after- noon, it was one hundred yards wide, and half way up on our wagon beds, we raised our load on top of the wagon beds and forded safe, we roled on and in the bottom of snake river¹⁷ water grass and sage was good, moskitoes plenty the first we have seen.

26th we drove down snake river about 20 miles, road some hilly in places. we come by one place the river had about thirty feet fall nearly perpendicular, in the evening we crossed one verry steep hollow but short campt on th bank of the river grass and water good some sage, there was a light shower of rain in the evening.

27th we roled on crossed three creeks bad to cross on the account of rough rocks. left the river in the afternoon, drove nine miles over a ridge campt on a creek at the forks of the Callifornia and Oregon road,¹⁸ grass good creek water plenty, some fish, sage scarce

Sunday the 28th we drove up the creek about 12 miles crossed it once bad to cross on the account of mud and steep banks, campt a[t] one oclock grass wild wheat and curns plenty we gethered curns and made pies, plenty of willow brush for wood.

¹⁷ The trail westward from Fort Hall was down the Snake River Valley. From Fort Hall to the Raft River, a tributary of the Snake, these bound for Oregon and Cali- fornia over the Fort Hall road used the same road.

¹⁸ Near the mouth of the Raft River, about 80 miles west of Fort Hall, a road ran southward up the valley of that river to join the main California Trail. This is where Williams and those with him who were en route to California must have left the Oregon Trail.

29th we roled two miles crossed the creek muddy crossing, drove till noon then come to the cut off road rested one hour in the afternoon we come up to two men that had been making their way on foot one of them had took sick and dide under some willow bushes the other had his grave dug, some of us that could be spared from the teams stopt and helpt him to bury the dead man. in the evening we crossed the creek again drove two miles farther campt on a beautifull branch grass was good we got some peaces of wagon that had been left that answered for wood road fine and level

30th we drove about 10 miles over a ridge rested one hour on a branch some grass, in the afternoon we drove in to the hills there was a great many verry large rock some of them 200 feet high, we come into the salt lake road¹⁹ in the evening, we drove about five miles farther and campt at sun down grass was good water scarce sage scarce and a poor place to camp

July 31st we come over some verry rough steep hills nooned on a branch good water no grass drove over some verry steep hills in the afternoon campt on goose vreek grass and water good sage plenty. there is men passing us now daily their teams has give out some has had their horses stole and they are obliged to try it on foot they are generally scarce of provision and we have none to spare.

August the 1st there was ice $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thick this morning in buckets, we travled about 15 miles up the creek crossed one verry muddy branch road good campt of the creek bank grass good willow brush plenty.

2nd we left the creek in the morning and went up a spring branch about five miles crossed the branch muddy crossing, and left it drove over a ridge about 12 miles and come to thousand spring valley then campt plenty of spring water drove our cattle two miles to grass some sage, grass was thin but short.

3rd we left the springs drove about 12 miles down the valley, thence over a ridge of three four miles to cold water creek but no water, drove up the creek about 3 miles found some water standing in holes watered our cattle and rested one hour, and then drove about five miles farther up the creek, water plenty standing in holes along the creek and verry cold, then campt wild wheat plenty some grass some wild sage road good but dusty.

Sunday the 4th we drove about eight miles up the creek and come to the hot springs, the water was so hot that we could not bear our hands in it, we stopt one hour above the hot spring, plenty of cool running water in the creek grass good. the hot springs covered nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre of ground, the water boiled up in the black ground in places which made a branch three feet wide 3 or 4 inches deep the smell was verry disagreeable, we then drove about one mile farther up the creek and left it, followed up a spring branch of a gradual ascent for about six miles then over one hill about four miles, then four miles farther down a valley to grass and water, we then campt at nine oclock at night on the head waters of marys river good water grass and sage.

5th we roled out at 7 oclock drove four miles and come to a creek

¹⁹ The road from Salt Lake City which passed around the northern end of the Lake.

crossed it bad to cross drove four miles farther down the [creek] and crossed it seven times the road was verry rough and rocky drove two miles farther and got out of the canon and rested one hour good grass and water we travled about 10 miles down the bottom the creek sunk and rased again every two or three miles campt on the creek bank standing water plenty grass scarce, some sage.

6th a beautifull morning and some appearance of rain we roled on down the bottom about nine miles and come to another fork of the creek crossed it one rod wide 15 inches deep gravelly bottom rested one hour good grass. in the afternoon we travled about 10 miles down the river and campt on the bank good water grass clover and willow brush river two rods wide four feet deep

7th we travled 11 miles down the river good grass all the way, then crossed a creek 20 feet wide two feet deep, the bottom was then narrow we then travled over some small hills for six miles and then campt grass not verry good willow brush plenty

8th we drove about 18 miles down the river good grass all the way down campt on the river bank drove our cattle across to grass plenty of willows

9th we drove five miles and crossed the river it was 20 yards wide and up to our wagonbeds we also come to salt lake cut off road,²⁰ we then drove 2 miles farther and crossed the river again. drove 2 miles then drove 2 miles farther and crossed the river the third time grass was all the way from the first crossing drove one mile farther and crossed the river the fourth time the bluffs was between three and four hundred feet high nearly perpendicular on both sides then drove two miles farther the bottom getting wider and grass good we campt at two oclock and rested the remainder of the day

10th we drove five miles down the river crossed three small creeks then took the hills drove 6 miles and come to a small spring watered a little and drove four miles farther to the sunet of the ridge drove one mile farther and come to some springs drove six miles farther and come to the river road was some rough and verry dusty at last end of the days travel then drove two miles down the river and crossed it once and campt grass was verry poor willow brush plenty.

11th we travled 17 miles down the river good grass all the way timber scarce, parts of the road verry dusty about 8 inches deep campt on a slough near the river feed good, plenty of willow brush.

12th drove about 20 miles down the valley there was no grass or water near the road, in the evening we drove to the river and campt plenty of grass and willow brush.

13th the day being verry warm we travled about 15 miles down the river the road was level but verry dusty, campt on the river bank grass poor willow brush plenty

14th we drove 7 miles north west thence 8 miles south west campt on the river bank good grass willow brush scarce.

²⁰ On July 27 (1850), the caravan left the Oregon Trail near the mouth of the Snake River. The movement was then south and southwest to the Humbolt River. The cut-off trail from Salt Lake City, passing south of Great Salt Lake reached the Trail coming from the Snake River about 75 miles directly west of the lake and about 140 miles from Salt Lake City.

15th in the morning we drove 4 miles over the point of a mountain then come to the river drove 19 miles down the river²¹ campd on the bank good grass.

16th we travled about 19 miles part of the way over verry sandy road, campd on the river bank, grass scarce and wood to.

17th we travled about 17 miles parts of the road verry dusty come to a ferry at noon but did not cross kept down the south side of the river in the evening campd on the river bank grass and water good willows small.

Sunday the 18th we drove about 20 miles with out water for our cattle the most of the road verry dusty but the day being cool our stalk did not suffer much campd on the river bank grass short wood scarce,

19th we drove 14 miles over verry dusty roads campd on the river bottom grass poor willow brush small and good spring watter which we have not had for some time past.

20th in the morning we took one german girl in our company who by the loss of friends and misfortunes of this trip was left nearly alone without teem or provisions, we then drove about 10 miles down the river bank road verry dusty campd at one oclock in the afternoon, grass scarce willows and sage plenty

21st we drove about 14 miles down the valley road verry dusty campd on the edge of the slough above the sink or lake grass and rushes plenty willows and sage brush verry small and scarce, water brackish, we dug some holes about 3 feet deep for water and got plenty of it but so salt that we could not use it for anything. the country for miles around is verry level and no vegittation growing except where the water is standing

22nd we drove 10 miles down the slough the road is verry level and soled [solid] with the exception of a few places where there was some mud we campd at noon on the edge of the slough and cut grass and rushes to do our cattle across the desert, grass was plenty we did mow a good swath willows there was none sage was verry scarce and small.

23rd we hooked up at half past 7 oclock in the morning drove 8 miles down the lake watered our cattle and rested one hour then drove four miles farther against 3 oclock which brought us to the lower end of the lake or sink, we then rested our cattle till half-past 5 oclock then watered our stalk filled up our water vessles which held about 25 gallons, we then roled out for across the desert, the road was beautiful level and soled as a pike we roled on till half past 11 oclock then rested one hour gethered some sage brush [Aug. 24] and made a cup of tea and eat a chesk [cheese] we then roled on till half past five in the morning we then give our cattle what grass and water we had for them built a fire of the wagons that was left and got breakfast we now see dead stalk all the time and wagons left as many [as] 6 to ten in a place, we roled on at half past 7 oclock at nine oclock we come to verry heavy sandy roads which lasted till we got through to Carson river, we rested one hour at noon and then roled on at 4 oclock we got to Carson river²² no

²¹ They were now on the long stretch of the Trail which followed the Humbolt River.

²² The Carson River is in what is now western Nevada. It flows northeast from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to Carson Lake or Carson Sink, which is a few miles southeast of Humbolt Sink into which the westward flowing Humbolt River discharges.

grass but plenty of willow brous [browse] we got our cattle all over safe it was said by one man that counted the dead stalk and wagons that there was one thousand head cattle 1400 horses and mules, and 1000 wagons left on the desert a distance of forty miles.

25th we drove five miles up the river passed different provision stores, flower was 2 dollars per lb, bacon one dollar per lb. sugar 1.50 cents per lb, we campd on the river bank at ten oclock grass was short willow brous plenty and some cotton wood timber, we rested our stalk the balance of the day

26th we drove 14 miles up the river went across a desert of 12 miles then come to the river again the road was rocky and rough in places, we campd on the river bank grass was good wood plenty.

27 we travled 15 miles on the river road, 10 miles of the way over verry sandy road campd on the river bank under a few large cotton wood trees the first shade trees we have had for months plenty of good river water grass knee high of the best quality.

28th we travled 15 miles up the river crosed it at noon the road was rough sandy and dusty in places campd on the river bank grass not verry good wood plenty.

29 drove 8 miles and crosed the river there was provisions at this point flower was 1.25 cents per lb, sugar the same, pies one dollar each, we stopt till evening, then starting out at dark across a desert of ten miles, drove till three oclock the next morning a night travel of 15 miles then campd grass was short willows plenty.

30th we drove 7 miles across a desert come to the river at noon, campd grass and water good plenty of sage for wood pack train selling flower one dollar per lb, pork 1.25 per lb.

31st this morning is verry cool we roled on up the river bottom beautiful spring branches crossing the road every mile or two running from the mountains beautiful road bottom covered with wild clover and grass, the mountains covered with pine timber the top covered with snow, there is gold mines in the mountains here but not found plenty enough yet to be prophitable plenty of provisions for sale here flower one dollar per lb, we bought 10 pounds flower, sugar 1.25 cents, rice 1.25 cents brandy 50 cents per drink campd out from the river on a branch good grass wood and water day drive 16 miles.

Sept the 1st, drove 5 miles and campd by a branch of cool water good grass wood and shade trees 8 miles from the carson river canon we bought sugar at 1.25 cents per lb brandy at 1.25 cents per pint

2nd we rolled out got to the cannon at 11 oclock, we drove on through the cannon a distance of 8 miles the roughest road we have had on the trip, then drove one mile further and campd good grass and water one mile from the road plenty of cedar wood

3rd we travled eight miles up the creek parts of the road was verry rough and rocky thence one mile up the first Sirre Nevada mountain²³ the steepest and roughest road I ever sen before thence three miles down the mountain to a small valley where we campd drove our

²³ Since the Sierra Nevada Mountains were reached on September 3, the trip from the Missouri River (crossed May 18th) to the Sierras had required 109 days.

cattle one and a half mile to grass plenty of snow a short distance from us plenty of wood and water

4th we drove five miles to the top of another mountain parts of the road rough and steep, and parts covered with snow as much as 12 feet deep, thence seven miles down a divide parts of the road rough through heavy pine and cedar timber camped close to a spring or small branch drove our cattle two miles to a valley to grass, and bought flower at 37½ cents per lb.

5th we drove eight miles over hilly road, come to good grass at two o'clock camped drove our cattle one mile to grass.

6th we cut some grass in the morning and roled out at half past ten drove eight miles over hills then come to sink springs and camped no grass but there was some willow brous and wild onions, there was different trading posts here flower 20 cts beef 50 cents pies one dollar each

Sept 7th we traveled 12 miles over very hilly road rocky in places large pines two or three hundred feet high and plenty of them, then we come to water watered our stalk and rested one hour then roled out again traveled three miles up a large hill then the girl that was in our train got shot by a gun going off in a wagon that was a short distance before our company it was said to go off by the wagon jolting over the rocks, the girl did not get bad hurt as there was only two shot that struck her one on the side of her neck just cutting the skin the other in one breast but stooped against a rib or was said to by the doctor we had to camp there on the top of a mountain as the girl was bad scared and considerable hurt we was there without water or grass we drove our cattle about a mile to some bushes and let them brouse that night and carried our water two miles to cook with

8th the girl said she could stand it to ride in the wagon we hooked up and roled three miles to water part of the road very rough thence nine miles further over hilly rocky and dusty roads we then come to water and camped there was no grass we had a little that we had halled for four days we give it to our stalk and cut blackoak timber for our stalk to brouse at,

9th we traveled 10 miles camped in pleasant valley, cut black and bur oak timber for our cattle to brouse at the timber was very full of mast, the road was very dusty

10th we traveled ten miles and was in weaver town in the gold mines, the show for mining did look dull here as there was but very little water and a man for every 10 feet square of mining ground we drove two miles farther toward Sac city²⁴ and camped at diamond springs there was a little dry grass hay worth 15 cents per lb, we cut some oak timber for our stalk but the cattle would not eat it,

11th we drove eighteen miles good road some dusty camped by a spring plenty of dry grass and oak timber rather scrubby

12th we drove 20 miles through a prairie country there was some scrubby oak timber the road was good, we camped on the American river 10 miles from Sac city plenty of willows and dry grass

²⁴ Sac City, a name applied to Sacramento.

13th we got to Sac city at noon beautiful road drove a little below town and camped grass was short and willows was plenty

14 we lade in load of provisions,

sunday the 15th we lay by still resting our cattle gambling was carried on to a high degree in this city

16 we left the City at noon crossed the American river drove four miles farther and camped on dry creek good dry grass but little water and wood

17th we drove 17 miles beautiful road camped on a small lake good grass plenty of water but little wood

18th drove six miles and crossed bear river at Nichlous [Nicolaus] thence eight farther and camped on feather river good grass plenty of wood and water

19th drove eight miles farther and crossed the Yuba river at Marysville²⁵ thence six miles up the Yuba river and camped good grass water and wood

20th we drove ten miles farther up the river and camped on parks bar where we stayed six months [to] April 20, 1851 thence to grass valley²⁶ Nevada Co where we stayed till we got our pile.²⁷

²⁵ Marysville, about 40 miles north of Sacramento on the Yuba River.

²⁶ Grass Valley, about 30 miles east and a little north of Marysville, not far from Nevada City. As stated in the foreword, the last two lines of the diary had to be written some time after the events mentioned.

²⁷ Perhaps some of our readers will be interested in comparing this diary of John T. Williams with that of Taylor Snow which was published in the *Indiana Magazine of History* (Sept., 1932), XXVIII, 196-209. Mr. Snow, who probably lost his life in Humboldt Valley, made the trip from Indiana nine years after that of Mr. Williams. Much of the way the routes were the same.