

we had company a squad of adventurers that had been to Laramies peak and fasted 2 days We prepared to feast them well

23d This d after going 11 miles camped 1 1/2 miles above where Fish Creek empties into the Platt Our company in conjunction with the Hebron Com bought a ferry boat to ferry our waggons across³⁸ gave 30 dollars for another cow were to have it for the same money when were through and thus it went from to another There is an Encampment of 5000 on fish creek There to cross Swam our cattle

24th This morning our com commenced ferrying across and got all of our com y waggons across safely Our ferry boat was four dug outs lashed side by side after getting our waggons across started across with a waggon belonging to a Mr. Fall that was accompanying us When in line dist. e opposite shore the man that was to throw the line could not easily get it up on account of articles being laid on it The swift current of the stream still kept taking the boat down till it struck on a rock and capsized Threw out the waggon and other articles There were 6 men in the boat 3 got out immediately onto land and the other 3 on top of the waggon bed that had seperated from the running part And J.B. who with speed went down the stream J. B. was rescued When near the shore after having given up all hope and when his physical strength had failed by a man swimming in from the bank and extending a stick for him to take hold of The other two that were on the waggon bed were rescued by a horseman riding in and throwing a lasso to them J. E. one of the men had went down the stream a shouting not for joy but for help and continued so . . . till he got it The canos that had floted 1 1/2 miles down the stream we had to get apart by cutting the lashing drag them out on the ferry Fall lost the running gear to his waggon but got another that was left deserted We lost some of our yokes and log chains we recovered the yokes and found chains that had been thrown away by a Com that had been overstocked

25th Had the boat repaired and underway at 7 O C in the morning About 2 O C in the P M the Hebron Com got across A man belonging to the Ashland Com was drowned to day While Swimming a horse across The 3 last days have been verry hot

26 We started this morning early had our kegs and canteen filled because we were going through an Alki region and here the water but poisonous to drink The country we passed over had a burnd and barren aperence We pased a man that had been shot and left in this wild region with one companion he had received a ball in his right by the shoulder blade and the ball had lodged near the back bone These two men were the remnant of a Com of 4 that had started from Kentucky

³⁸ Farnham's "Fish creek" is not clearly identifiable, but it is probably Deer Creek, near the mouth of which was a notoriously treacherous ferry across the North Platte which, according to other accounts, claimed over twelve deaths by drowning in this same June of 1849: Irene D. Paden, *The Wake of the Prairie Schooner* (New York, 1944), 192-195. The Upper or Mormon Ferry above present Casper, about thirty miles above this point, has a greater claim to fame, however. In 1859 this was transformed into the first bridge of record across the Platte near which soldiers, including the ill-fated Lieutenant Casper Collins, were stationed in the bloody 1860s.

After the Death of the other two they joined a squad of misourians and it was a misourian one of the Com that had shot this man The shot was accidental This is a lonesome looking case to see a man thus disabled in this wild place laying on the damp ground and in a tent that he could not stretch out his full length in So disabled that he could not help himself in the least And to move him caused the blood to ooze out of his wound It looked as if it would rain and 3 of us stayed and help fix the tent to shed the rain To night camped by lakes These were covered by a crystallized substance that some said was salt-peter

27th Last night had to keep careful guard over cattle to keep them from going and drinking out of these alkali lakes We found a grave with this inscription on the head board

John Brown

found in the river June 19 shot in the head We traveled along the Platt till noon Saw 4 more Alkali lakes with cristalyzed surface Here we left the Platt for the last time We took care though to fill our kegs with water for the night For by our guide books we knew that we could not go to any stream ahead in time to camp The grass on the road near all the old camps is eat off We had to drive the cattle two miles off the road to hurd them Passed a great many cattle that had died from drinking alkali water

28th Our cattle not having any water since yesterday at noon got so dry that they could not be kept within bounds And during the night some of them strayed off for water and we were somewhat delayed in hunting them up this morning In 4 miles came to a stream where we watered our cattle³⁹ after this we saw one mineral spring and some alkali springs and alkali lakes but none that was fit to use till we got to willow springs a distance of 20 m Nooned to day at avenue rock here the rocks are formed in to a high perpendicular wall on both sides of the road We passed a great many cattle that had been poisoned with Alkali and in one place saw 8 laying dead together all of one team Here to night at these Springs was a bad camping place there being a number dead cattle that give the place a bad odor On prospect hill near here one can see over a large scope of country⁴⁰ Can see the South Pass 7 or 8 days journey ahead

29th This day we traveled on untill got to Sweet Water we camped it near Independence rock⁴¹ This rock is about 3/4 of a mile long

³⁹ Poison Spider Creek. This and Willow Springs offered the only suitable water for man or beast on the fifty-mile stretch between the last Platte ferry and the first crossing of the Sweetwater, near Independence Rock.

⁴⁰ Rock Avenue and Prospect Hill are both readily identifiable to the motorist on U.S. Highway No. 26. Near by are the Alcega and Pathfinder Dams, on the North Platte River.

⁴¹ Independence Rock, in the shape of a giant turtle, rocks with Chimney Rock, Scotts Bluff, and Laramie Peak as one of the great landmarks of the California Trail and is now honored as a Wyoming State Park. One theory as to the origin of the name holds that an early caravan of traders or emigrants celebrated here on a July 4th anniversary event, at that approximate date the high tide of emigration was

and 1/2 in breadth and from 2 to 250 feet high and having a perpendicular side next the road. This side is filled with names that emigrants have enscribed thereon.

June 30th In 5 miles after leaving Independence rock we came to the Devils gate. Here the rocks raise lofty and perpendicularly close on each side of the road. Here we saw the grave of a man his friends certainly should of put him in some other spot. The River here near the road seems to run madly through over a rough Rocky bottom with a quick descending current. A foaming roaring and splashing its spray by its waters fiercely dashing again the rocks in its rappid decent. And the high lofty rocks that raise perpendicularly at its margin at the lofty height of some 300 feet hung portentiously overjetting over the stream. The swiftfooted mountain goat and the Antelope that dwell in these rocky barriers. Sometimes lose thier foothold or mis thier aim in leaping from one of these rocks to the other and are hurled mangled on the rocks or plunged into the dashing stream. On one of the bare rocks that came out of the above the surface of the waters was laying the mangled body of an Antelope. After passing through the Devil gate went 7 m and camped. Here we took out our loads. And improved the running of our waggons by cutting 2 to 2 1/2 feet off the length of our waggon beds and coupling the gearing shorter.

July 1 st

got our waggons fixed so that we started at 7 O.C. P.M. went 6 miles and camped again on Sweet water. Near our camping place is another rugged looking kanyon that the river passes through.

The 2 nd Having an early start we went and nooned on the bitter cotton wood creek. The high Snow covered range of wind river mountain was here visible. Saw a man today packing his effects on his back. Crossed the Sweet Water and camped.

3d In sight of last night camping crossed the Sweetwater had to block up our waggon beds then in 40 rods crossed it again⁴² the hills came so close there was no other alternative. The first ford was difficult in coming in we fasened on the ropes and the waggons down then went to the opposite side and travilled up the stream a few rods before we came out. At the 2 n went directly across. This P.M. came to the Ice Spring here the for the space of an Acre or more had a kind of boggy aperence here by diggin 8 or ten inches through the ground thick bed of Ice as good and clear as it could be⁴³.

4th Crossed the 4 times today and camped on its bank to night. Here we run a lead cannon and busted the 4 time we shot it. D T 20 m.

5th Went up and down continually. Nooned on Strawberry creek⁴⁴. Passed 3 alkali lakes in A.M. On the side of a hill near the road found

⁴² This stretch was known, logically enough, as the Three Crossings. According to unsubstantiated tradition, the Pony Express Station here was the terminus of Buffalo Bill's regular run as a Pony Rider.

⁴³ The novelty of "Icy Slough" was noted by practically all the journalists who passed this way.

⁴⁴ "Strawberry creek" is not recorded on modern maps, but it appears to be the setting of St. Mary's Crossing of the Sweetwater, site of the later St. Mary's Stage Station. It would be the next to last of an indefinite number of Sweetwater crossings.

any caravan of traders or emigrants celebrated here on a July 4. any event, at that approximate date the high tide of emigration did here in subsequent years. From its crossing at this point the Sweetwater now followed to its source in South Iowa. It was the

From Ohio to California in 1849

317

a bank of snow of great depth at the foot of the hill was a fine stream here was a fine chance for snowballing. At night drove 1 1/2 m off the road to get to the river and to have good pasture [3 sentences of shorthand follow]

6th Were hindered some to find an ox that had strayed off in the night. Forded the river soon after starting and left it for the last time. At 3 O.C. A M we passed the summit⁴⁵. Left an ox on the summit to die. The road to day has been very gradual in its ascent. We have seen a great many dead oxen through this alkalic region between here and the Independence rock often 4 or 6 near a camp ground. We were driving 9 oxen loose that were not able to pull in the team. The first water on the western side of the slope were the Pacific Springs 2 m from it. In 3 from the Spring was the creek⁴⁶. We made our camp 2 m the other side of this for the first time on the western side of the Rocky mountain Summit. For the last days we have had no wood in sight. Nor is there any now. And we burn the waggons that are left for it is the best use that we can make of them.

7th We filled our kegs for we were to get no more water till we could get to Dry Sandy 17 m from the Pacific Springs. The road forks. The left hand one is the Salt lake and the other the Ft Hall road. We took the Ft Hall road with the intention of taking Sublets Cut off⁴⁷. This A M was disagreeable traveling on account of thick clouds of dust that were raised by the hard blowing wind. It blew the sand in our faces so as to cut quite keenly. Pitched our tents on the banks of Dry Sandy a stream here about 4 rods wide and 3 ft deep.

8th Went to Big Sandy a distance of 6 miles camped 3/4 of a mile from the river on a bluff here to stay til tomorrow night to give our

⁴⁵ South Pass, elevation 7,550 feet, the most famous of all crossings of the Continental Divide, is perhaps the least spectacular. Without its gentle but steady ascent the great covered-wagon migrations would not have been possible. Discovered by Robert Stuart and his returning Astorians in 1812, it was rediscovered by Ashley's fur trappers in 1823-1824. The first wagons to roll across it were those of Captain B. L. H. Bonneville, in 1832. In 1868, Union Pacific engineers selected another crossing of the divide near present Creston, Wyoming. Thereafter, South Pass fell into disuse, becoming accessible to the modern tourist only recently with the completion of a new state highway between Lander and Farson, Wyoming.

⁴⁶ At Pacific Springs, site of another stage and Pony Express Station, is the Whitman-Spalding Monument, commemorating the first Independence Day celebration on the west slope, July 4, 1836. The wives of the missionaries, Marcus Whitman and H. H. Spalding, were the first white women to follow the Oregon Trail.

⁴⁷ The original Oregon Trail coincided with the Mormon route, southwestward from South Pass to Salt Lake City, as far as Fort Bridger on Black's Fork of Green River, in the southwest corner of present Wyoming, thence northwestward to Bear River. The fearless Forty-niners were impatient with this big dog-leg detour. After crossing the Dry Sandy, they struck boldly westward over "Sublette's Cut-off" or Farnham's "Fort Hall Road" which, after the crossings of the Little and Big Sandies, consisted of 40 miles of waterless desert before attaining Green River. Captain Bonneville, as well as the fur trader William Sublette, successfully negotiated the cut-off in 1832. Farnham's description of this route, following, barely hints of the trials of heat and thirst here encountered by man and beast.

keelboats, but still required the additional help of windlasses on shore in running dangerous riffles or rapids. In April, 1848, for example, an eighty-foot ark carrying a colony to the New Buffalo settlement in Michigan grounded on a sandbar at Elkhart. Shippers generally planned on a three-day trip down the river and four or five upstream.⁴⁵

In 1850 one guidebook stated that about forty thousand barrels of flour were annually exported from Elkhart County, in the shipment of which the St. Joseph and Elkhart rivers undoubtedly played a large role.⁴⁶ Expanding river traffic was matched by a correspondingly greater population total that reached 20,986 by 1860, which placed Elkhart County second only to La Porte in north central Indiana.⁴⁷

That St. Joseph and Elkhart counties entered the sixties with approximately equal populations and the fact that none of the surrounding counties except Kosciusko not served by an important transportation medium matched their totals indicate that available river facilities in the former were a decisive factor. In addition extensive railroad lines by the fifties and the Michigan Road created strong inducements which nearby counties could not match. Moreover, both St. Joseph and Elkhart counties offered a higher percentage of healthy land area than those bordering the Kankakee marshes and the four in the northeastern corner of Indiana. One of the main reasons for example why the Michigan Road was routed through South Bend rather than the length of La Porte County was fear of the Kankakee swamps.

River transportation was not an unmixed blessing, however, to Elkhart and St. Joseph counties. In the first place, extensive water travel was limited to the spring and fall and was impossible at least six months of the year. Secondly, farmers found it necessary to haul their produce and manufactured goods to and from the streams, which meant a struggle over primitive trails and roads. Finally, even during periods of navigability, riffles, sand bars, and sudden storms created hazards which often ended in disaster. These disadvantages gave strong impetus to the creation of better overland routes and ultimately a railroad network which guaranteed fulfillment of the most sanguine hopes for the region's growth.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 196-197; Hall, *Letters from the West*, 322.

⁴⁶ Richard S. Fisher, *Indiana: In Relation to its Geography*. Sta-

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Documents

From Ohio to California in 1849: The Gold Rush Journal of Elijah Bryan Farnham

Edited by Merrill J. Mattes*
and Esley J. Kirk**

The epic of the California Gold Rush has become firmly implanted among the romantic traditions of the trans-Mississippi West. The historical memory of clear-eyed square-jawed young men and their trains of ox-drawn covered wagons plodding doggedly across hostile prairies, mountains, and deserts toward the setting sun, is certain to stir the blood of those jaded by the mechanical wonders of the mid-twentieth century. In the absence of golden frontiers today, one looks back upon that seemingly romantic era and wishes that he too might be an emigrant bound for California treasure. Many fail to appreciate the fact that an "emigrant" is "one who migrates from," and that the place of origin may be historically of equal interest with the place of destination. The "Forty-niners" were not Californians, but New Yorkers, Pennsylvanians, Virginians, Ohioans, Indianans, Iowans, and representatives of other states within the United States of 1849, Easterners all. This fact is underlined by many documented instances wherein the gold seeker shortly returned, disillusioned, to his beloved homeland. There is no way of knowing what proportion of the emigrants so "re-emigrated" but some scholars are beginning to suspect that their numbers were legion, and that historians have overlooked something here. There was, in fact, a Gold Rush in reverse!

One of the disillusioned was Elijah Bryan Farnham, citizen of Indiana, not related in any way, as far as is known, to the Thomas Jefferson Farnham whose earlier *Travels in the Great Western Prairies* have become known to historians through publication in Reuben G. Thwaites' *Early Western Travel* series. The existence of the Elijah Bryan Farnham journal was disclosed to the writer, while Superintendent of

* Merrill J. Mattes is Regional Historian, Region Two, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, with headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska.

** Esley J. Kirk, a physician of Omaha, Nebraska, is the grandson of Elijah Bryan Farnham.

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Scotts Bluff National Monument in Western Nebraska, by Mrs. Carrie Bell Kirk, a daughter of the journalist who was engaged in the pleasant pastime of following by automobile the transcontinental route traveled by her father on foot. After an interval of nearly ten years since the discovery of the journal, and one hundred and one years after Farnham's memorable trek, comes this opportunity to publish this valuable addition to the source materials on the Gold Rush.

Over one hundred overland journals of 1849, either published or in manuscript form in library or family possession, are known to the writer. The Farnham journal, the newest addition to a slowly growing list, is one of the most honest, most faithful, and most revealing of this notable group of documents. Devoid of vain literary flourish or artifice, the obvious trailside production of a man too tired to write gracefully, yet withal observant and intelligent, the Farnham journal is an important chronicle of a major event in America's adolescence.

Elijah Bryan Farnham was born in Chenango County, New York, May 11, 1825, the youngest child and only son of Eli and Amanda Farnham. During his youth the family moved, first to Solsberry, Indiana, later to Cumberland, Ohio. It is evident from the literary style and penmanship, as well as from certain clues contained in the journal, that Farnham received a good education, including some medical training. Marginal shorthand notes suggest also a career in business college. Little else is known of his boyhood, except that, at the age of eighteen, he enlisted and served in the War with Mexico. Undoubtedly this military experience brought to him a measure of youthful excitement and wanderlust, which well qualified him as a participant in the momentous California Gold Rush of 1849.

The end of Farnham's overland diary, in September, 1849, leaves one in a fruitless speculation as to his movements of the next few years. It is possible to surmise that he had only fair success, if any, as a gold miner, and that he returned East before long. Such a conclusion seems warranted from the complete absence of any knowledge as to his subsequent residence in California, or any evidence of accumulated wealth, coupled with the record of his marriage, in 1858, to Ann Brough, which event, according to family tradition, took place back home in Cumberland, Ohio. Surviving correspondence

enables one to trace the outlines of his later career. During the Civil War he served with Company H, Second Regiment of Ohio, under Captain Peter Weatherby, having enlisted on October 9, 1861, and being discharged on October 27, 1864. After the war he taught school in Ohio, later taking up farming in Greene County, Indiana. Here he died, on December 19, 1898.

Farnham's family connections are of interest. His mother, Amanda, was the tenth of eleven children of Elijah Richard Bryan, a soldier of the Revolutionary War, related to an ancestor of the noted Nebraska statesman, William Jennings Bryan. His wife, Ann Brough, who was one of fourteen children, was born in England in 1838, emigrating to this country with her parents in 1843. She preceded her husband in death by ten years.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Farnham family is its longevity. Of the seven children of Elijah and Ann Farnham, all five daughters yet survive, five daughters whose father was an actor in the dramatic overland stampede to California in 1849. All were born at or near Stanford, in Greene County, Indiana. Mary Francis Mood, born in 1865, and Adda Ella Nora Burch, born in 1875, continue to reside in Indiana. Carrie Bell Kirk, born in 1870 and Eva Jane Carter, born in 1873, are now residing in Nebraska, while Amanda Florence Gracey, born in 1877, is now living in St. Louis. There are twenty-four surviving grandchildren.

Only a few scattered recollections of Elijah Farnham are obtainable from the surviving daughters, i. e.: His farm was in a hilly country far from schools, a poor place to raise children. He loved reading and traveling. He was gone from home for extended periods of time, being often involved in trading of distant property. As a Methodist, he was a teetotaler. His family went to church on horseback, the children often riding in rows behind their parents. Before the big open fireplace Farnham would take the children on his knees and bounce them up and down while singing songs or telling them of his experiences. In the usual manner of little girls, it seems that the daughters paid little attention to his tales of travel and war--heroic true stories, which now survive only in the diary and in a few yellowing letters.

Actually, there are two nearly identical diaries in the possession of Elijah Bryan Farnham, in the transcription of

spectively, of Dr. Kirk and Mrs. Mood. It seems reasonable to conclude that the former is the original, carried overland, notations being made at the end of each day's journey, while the latter is a rewrite, prepared more leisurely at a later date, with descriptions somewhat more flowery, and some travel data added. The contemporary original is the one herewith published. It is a green leather notebook, with folding cover, measuring four by six inches. The leather is of rather fine grain, but faded, worn and cracked with age. The paper is of excellent quality, ruled in ledger-type horizontal and vertical lines, now quite faint. The script is distinct, though the ink is faded to a brownish color. The 211 pages encompass the period April 19 to September 23, 1849, spent in traveling from Independence, Missouri, to a point about three hundred miles from San Francisco. In the second diary Farnham begins his account on April 2, telling of the departure on that date from his parental home in Cumberland, Ohio, thence to Zanesville. From this point he traveled by boat down the Ohio River, passing and leaving impressions of Marietta, Portsmouth, Cincinnati, Port Williams, Louisville, Evansville, Paducah, and Cairo. He changed boats at St. Louis, from there traveling up the Missouri River to Independence.

April 19th — 49

Landed at Independence Mo it is a town of about 1500 inhabitants¹ It is a rich and fine country about here We were here and in the neighbourhood until the 8 of May making preparation for our long journey² While staying on the line of the Mo state and Indian territory we were visited by an Indian who sold one of our company a stolen horse that was afterwards claimed by a white man a settler in the neighbourhood May the 8th³ This morning our train of 8 waggons on the long continuous journey before us we had 29 yoke of cattle in all And our loads was 2500 to a waggon consisting of provisions for us all besides

¹ St. Joseph, Independence, and Westport were the three principal "jumping-off" points in 1849, their popularity being in the order named. Kaneshville or Council Bluffs in Iowa, opposite present Omaha, was the favorite rallying ground of the Utah-bound Mormons from 1847 onward, but travel westward from this point was relatively light in this first gold rush year. Nebraska City and Leavenworth did not come into the limelight as outfitting centers until the late 1850's.

² It may be presumed that young Farnham, in the pattern of the overlanders of 1849, joined up with a group of enthusiastic neighbors, but at no point does he identify them, individually or in company.

³ Although grass normally appeared on the prairies by the first of May, a rough late winter in 1848-1849 delayed its growth and threw the pioneers of the emigration off balance. Departure dates on record range from April 16 (William Kelly, *An Excursion to California Over*

2 years clothing for each⁴ This morning saw a company that had buried a husband last night burying the wife this morning Took the old Santa Fe road⁵ Saw but one tree in todays travel pasture here is good and there is a large range of it Made 12 miles and kamped

9th This morning at 7 O C started again over the prairie during the day found one good spring and found rain water several times in pools went 14 miles kamped in sight of timber

10th on the road at 1/2 past 6 Soon passed the habitation of an Indian who had cultivated fields around them after driving 6 miles came to a squad of indians⁶ they were painted up highly with red paint and wore a hideous ugly wrinkled dried up dwarfish looking set they had come to the road for the purpose of begging of the trains The chief had heard of recommendation to show their fidelity towards the whites The chief offered us the protection of his tribe if we would give him a calf we had none to give and thus had to do without the aid of this powerful force The rest of them begged for liquor tobacco bread meat and even old meat rines The little boys got a number of 5 cents by shooting and hitting them at the distance of 4 or 5 rods with their arrows We crossed two creeks to day one with verry steep banks that we had to go up⁷ Passed companies that stoped on account of the Colery being among them⁸ Days travel 15 miles

the Prairie, Rocky Mountains, and Great Sierra Nevada. With a Guide Through the Diggings and Ranches of that Country. 2 vols., London, 1854, I, 50, 342) to June 8 (Sarah Royce, *A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California*, New Haven, Connecticut, 1900, p. 9), while the majority ranged from May 2 to 22. Thus the Farnham schedule was nearly median.

⁴ Here again is an indication that the Farnham party was an average outfit. A wagon load of 2500 pounds weight is recommended by Joseph E. Ware, *The Emigrants' Guide to California* (reprinted from the 1849 edition, Princeton, New Jersey, 1932), 4-10. The principal items consisted of such staples as flour, bacon, coffee, tea, sugar, calumet, seasoning, rice, dried fruit, and lard; firearms and accessories, mining tools, bedding, cooking utensils, and extra clothes, with a recommended investment of around \$200 per man. See also Randolph B. Maury, *The Prairie Traveler. A Handbook for Overland Expeditions* (New York, 1859), 30-37. Any superfluous items such as anvils, printing presses, oak chests, books, and family heirlooms would probably soon litter the trail side. The "cattle" were oxen, much favored over horses or mules because of their strength, stamina, and patience. An extra unanticipated dividend was their edibility, if worse came to worse.

⁵ Westward from Independence the Santa Fe Trail followed the crest of Blue Ridge, crossing the present Missouri-Kansas line near Dallas, and joining the Westport branch near present Olathe. Near present Gardner, Kansas, the road to California veered northwestward to parallel the Kaw or Kansas River, leaving the Santa Fe Trail to go its own ancient way to the southwest.

⁶ Possibly Kansa Indians, a once powerful tribe, who were now reduced to mendicancy.

⁷ Captain Creek and the Wakarusa River. The crossings lay to the southwest of Lawrence, Kansas.

⁸ Asiatic cholera, brought first to the port of New Orleans and by steamboat to St. Louis, wreaked havoc among the Forty-niners. The

11th Saw a wolf for the first time it came up to sniff our vittles while we were at breakfast.

The country here is rolling and presents a butiful scenery The groves of trees along the ravines between the high raises of table land gives the country here the aperance of a long continuity of parks exhibited on a grand scale And the continued succession of table lands one portion exalted above the other with uniform raises like the steps of stairs look as if it were done by hand for some horticultural design And one cannot but be deeply impressed by the grand beauty of the scene when he looks over this until his gaze is lost in the dim blue vista of the long extended range Days travil 18 ms ~~816588~~

12th The aperance of stone here was a rairity Land less rolling The road good not much cut up and hard as a pike went 26 miles this day and encamped in 4 m of the Kansas river BIG SPRINGS/UNION TOWN RD?

13 This morning we started at 4 in order to get to the ferry crossed at 10 There is a smart little town near the crossing⁹ Then went about 2 miles came to a stream with periendicular banks¹⁰ There were about 60 waggons waiting to cross We camped untill they should cross it was verry slow crossing the teems has to be rough locked then a rope was fastened on to the hind end and then by the aid of 20 or 30 men the waggons were eased down It generly took 10 yoke to haul the loads up the oposite bank

14th This morning we got up and crossed the creek and as soon as we got across it commenced raining hard We stoped the train here we tried to make ourselves as comfortable as we could some by getting in the wagons some under and some by getting on the lee side of them Overtook the Hebron company and camped with them on soil-dier cree k D T 10 m SOLDIER CREEK?

15th At 4 this morning a man encamped with us died with the collyery he had a wife and children they went back A young man that was hired to drive team showed much regret at going But it was a duty he could not neglect 3 of our cattle got away last night on account of its having been so dark and raining it was late when we found them the surface of the prairies to day was low and flat now and then cut up

effective remedy was known at the time. Conditions under which the emigrants traveled aggravated the incidence of the disease, and hasty trailside burials were commonplace. It has been estimated that five thousand emigrants died from this cause, including those who succumbed on Missouri River steamboats and at the border towns: Georgia Willis the Gold-Rush Years," *Missouri Historical Review* (Columbia, 1906-), XXXVIII (1943-1944), 260-276.

⁹ To judge from mileage figures given, this was Union Village, near present Rossville, Kansas, composed of a few log buildings housing traders and ferry operators. This was several miles west of present Topeka, where there was a later crossing of the Kansas River known as Papin's Ferry.

¹⁰ Small but steep-sided tributary Cross Creek proved to be almost a more formidable obstacle than the big Kansas River until 1850 when the Potawatomi, somewhat more imaginative than the Kansa, here erected a toll bridge, one of several such monuments to their enterprise.

by deep narrow ravines Camped on the bank of the vermillion¹¹ D Travil 20 m

16th Had to take out our Picks and Spades and fix the road before we could cross the creek We fastened ropes on to the hind end of the waggons and held them back going down the bank Tieded teams to pull up the opposite one found some wild onions and had a fry of them There was a large patches of them in diferent places on the plains D T 22 16th We having Broke an axeltree to day were compeled to stop this evening before selecting our place slept on the wet ground at night

17th had the axeltree repaired and was on the road at 7 o c had the pleasure of drinking a cool drink out of a spring that we found by the side of the road After our D J camped by a butiful stream of water

18 Was on the road early at noon crossed the big blue¹² D T 25m

19th Went 22 miles to a runing stream and camped¹³ the grass is not so high here as back on the road but finer and of a more nutritious kind

20th Sunday lay still

21th Went 22 miles and camped by a wet wether stream Saw a bride and groom to day that had ben tied together this morning Saw timber some distance up the road There was a considerable wrangling about mess No helping themselves to bread

22 had a cold morning While eating our noon piece saw Antelopes a loping over the plain in the evening past the Columbus and Hebron company¹⁴ that were laying still on account of losing thier cattle On the night of the 20th thier cattle that were correld got frightened at the lightning during a thunder storm and 87 broke out of which they had recovered but 20

23th Crossed Sandy Creek 3 times and then wended our way about

¹¹ The Red Vermillion is not to be confused with the Black or Big Vermillion, a tributary of the Big Blue River, which Fairbank crossed two days later without comment. After crossing the Red Vermillion the Trail swerved from its westward course along the north bank of the Kansas, to climb northwestward toward the Platte River.

¹² Just beyond the crossing of the Big Blue, west of Marysville, Kansas, was the junction with the "St. Jo road," used by the respectable numbers of emigrants who chose St. Joseph, Missouri, as their assembly point. This town was higher on the Missouri and somewhat farther west than Independence, so that there was an appreciable saving in land miles. For accounts of this first of numerous "cut-offs" in the California Trail, see Georgia Willis Read and Ruth Gaines (eds.), *Gold Rush: The Journals, Drawings, and Other Papers of J. Goldborough Bruff, Captain, Washington City and California Mining Association, April 2, 1849-July 20, 1851* (New York, 1949), and David M. Potter (ed.), *Trail to California: The Overland Journal of Vincent Geiger and Wakeman Bryarly* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1945), 76-80.

¹³ Rock Creek, in Jefferson County, Nebraska. The later stage station here was the scene of the historic and bloody encounter between Wild Bill Hickok and "the McCaules gang."

¹⁴ In the interests of mutual protection, the covered-wagon emigrants traveled in large trains, democratically organized as to leadership, schedules, rations, guard duty, etc. Although some of these trains

the big blue¹⁵ Saw an indian village at a distance Here we first see prickly pears

24th had two heavy showers today one with hail once lightning struck near us Went 15 miles and stoped. It rained all night

25 the wind blew the fine rain in our faces the whole day left the big blue at noon At night camped by the stream of pools¹⁶

26th at 4 O-c P.M. Came into the Valley of the Platt it is about 6 miles wide and perfectly level There was a number of encampments in various parts The plain was every where spotted by the numerous herds of cattle a grazing on the luxurient grass

27th Sunday This morning as we wended our way up the river we saw a great many teams that had stoped and the companies Were lightning thier waggons by throwing out some of thier load We saw large piles of bacon that had been thrown out from the overloded teams Some of the companies when they are out of wood make use of this bacon for fuil We stoped and camped at noon No sooner had we camped than some were making ready for lighting up We had some of the bread taking out of the boxes and put in sacks and thus got rid of a good deal of weight It was imposible to keep the bread whole or clean this way Yet we were forced to submit to this inconvenience and economise in this way and relieve our cattle of every pound that we could for the roads that had heretofore been good when on the level were here Sandy and the waggons pulled hard over them and from the information that we could get from guides They were so for some ways ahead We also throwed some beans out Some of the company that had some rough boxes Tried to get up an excitement to have all the trunks thrown away But as it was alowed by the constitution for every one to have a light trunk and as the majority had articles that they wished to keep secure those considerate schemers could not succeed Days T 8 m

28th This morning after going 3 miles came to Ft Carney or Charles¹⁷

¹⁵ Farnham apparently didn't know it, but he had long since left the Big Blue behind and had since been following the pleasant valley of the Little Blue, destined to become one of the first outposts of Nebraska settlement, which the Sioux ferociously attacked in 1864.

¹⁶ The emigrants saw the last of the Kansas River Basin at the head of Thirty-two Mile Creek. This is possibly identical with Farnham's "Stream of Pools." In the wide valley of the lazy, shallow braided Platte, the Oregon-California Trail was joined by the Nebraska City Road, which boomed in the Colorado gold rush of 1859.

¹⁷ Fort Kearny (originally Fort Childs), named for General Stephen Watts Kearny, was established in 1848 by a company of Mounted Riflemen, the first in a series of forts designed to protect overland travel, to which next year would be added Forts Laramie and Hall. It was an unhandsome, squalid affair, built first of sod, later of cottonwood logs. In 1849 the commander was Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville, famed for his explorations in the Far West in 1832-1835, immortalized by the pen of Washington Irving: *The Rocky Mountains: or, Scenes, Incidents, and Adventures in the Far West; Digested from the Journal of Captain B. L. E. Bonneville* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1837). Abandoned in 1871, the fort stood about seven miles southeast of modern Kearny, Nebraska, south of Platte River. The site, now a Nebraska State Park, is marked by earth disturbances and ancient cottonwoods. See Lillian M. Willman, "The History of Fort Kearny," *Nebraska State Historical Society Publications* (Lincoln, 1895), XXI (1920), 215-215, and

This is but a small Station the houses here are but one story high and built of mud these together with several tents compose the village the fort is of mud also We tried to sell some of our ammunition here but could sell nothing but a small portion of our lead at half what it cost in St Louis Powder we could get nothing for Went 8 miles farther and camped

29th Got an early start The broad river on our right the Sand hills bluffs on our left The bluffs and river run parall to one another for the whole way being only 5 or 6 miles apart The soil here is sandy but black and rich There are three trails here and these are full with waggons for as far as the eye can see We here learnt that 27th waggons were ahead of us on the 27th¹⁸ saw three men start back to the States with thier knapsaks on thier backs The men generly bid them good Speed as they went past There was also two waggons going back to the States belonging to an old man and his two sons The old man had broken one of his legs This accident compeld them to turn back much against thier will one of the boys was so disappointed that he could not surpress his tears even when he went past us Thier ambition had received a severe check This night camped on the river bank among a huddle of other camps Here the plain is everywhere spotted with tents and numerous herd of cattle and horses are grazing on its luxurient pasture It is a fine sight to see so many beings enlivening the dull monotonous plains We failed of getting wood and had to burn buffalo chips to do our cooking They did not make a bad fire either The river banks here are so low that to look at the river when away from it it looks the highest D.T. 20 m

30th This morning got out of a wet pile of blankets for it had been raining in the night and we were late starting on account of its raining So this morning it was 10 O clock before we were under way We were

Lyle E. Mantor, "Fort Kearny and the Westward Movement," *Nebraska History* (Lincoln, 1918-), XXIX (1948), 175-207.

¹⁸ The Farnham party rode the crest of the migration wave. "Proceeding," a correspondent of the *Missouri Republican*, on June 21 reported from Fort Kearny that, on May 29, 381 waggons; 28th, 460 passed the post—3739 in all to date, for California." By June 6, "emigrant waggons were rapidly diminishing in number. Up to last evening, 1891 had passed the fort, exclusive of 250 government waggons. More to come would make a total of more than 5000." Another correspondent observed at Fort Laramie counted 5,500 waggons there up to July 21 and calculated an average of 3 1/2 people per wagon; Albert Watkins (ed.), *Publications of the Nebraska State Historical Society*, XX (1922), 201-203. On the basis of such eyewitness accounts, it appears that the number of Forty-niners who went overland by the Central Route would not have exceeded 25,000; although historical estimates have ranged up to 50,000. See Stewart Edward White, *The Forty Niners: A Chronicle of the California Trail and El Dorado* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1941); Archer Butler Hulbert, *Forty-Niners: The Chronicle of the California Trail* (New York, 1931); and Howard R. Driggs, *Westward Across* with water color paintings by William H. Jackson (Philadelphia, 1917).

¹⁹ Without the dried buffalo dung which littered the plain, early cooks would have been in sore straits on the treeless plains. The virtues of the pungent "bois de vache," a standard fuel for the nomadic Sioux, were soon discovered by the fur trappers, the pioneers of the Great Platte Route.

through a town of prairie dogs. There was a tract of ground a mile square in extent crowded full of oval mud houses and populated by this canine race. These little villagers will set for hours on their houses barking at passer by and at the near approach of any person will jump to their holes that lead into the top of their dwellings. Some of our men shot a few of these saucy villagers as they were on top of their houses but did not get many after killing them for the others would come out and drag them in. These animals are about half as large as an opossum and good deal of the same build and of a reddish brown colour. We sold one of our horses to day. This night we camped where there was plenty of wood and water done a good deal of cooking so as to be prepared for immergences ahead. D.T. 15 m

31th This morning started off in a drizzling rain which continued without cessation for the whole day. This was mixed with sleet and the wind blew it hard in our faces the road was muddy and hard to pull over. We hauled our wood from the last stopping place if we had not of took this precaution we should have been out of fires for wet buffalo chips are a hard article to burn and even in dry wether this is the only combustible material in these parts. D T 20m

June the 1st Today met a train of waggons loaded with buffalo skins from Ft Larimy²¹. Three antelope were brought into camp this evening on which we made quite a feast.

June 2nd Still kept on our river course. The bluffs that still run parallel to the river are here on fire. The islands in the river are also on fire²².

3rd lay by this night we saw the islands of the river on fire. it showed fine.

4th A days rest so refreshed our cattle that they traveled off quite nimbly. The road in some places approached within a few rods of the

²⁰ A full account of the historic prairie dog, a quaint phenomenon of Plains travel, is given in Theodore H. Scheffer, "Historical Encounter and Accounts of the Plains Prairie Dog," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* (Topeka, 1931-), XIII (1944-1945), 527-537.

²¹ Fort Laramie, the remains of which are now preserved as a national monument twenty miles west of Torrington in Goshen County, Wyoming, would become a military post soon after another company of Mounted Riflemen, within a day's march of the Farnham train, arrived at that point. At the moment, however, it was an outpost of the American Fur Company, which once specialized in mountain beaver trapped by their own help, now bartered with the Plains tribes for tanned buffalo robes. Swarthy of mien, riding a perch their rough, humpbacked carts, the caravaneers, usually French-Canadians or half-breeds, gave the emigrants quite a romantic jolt. This particular train, noted by other diarists, may have included Andrew Drips, old-time mountain man and manager of the Company's interest at Fort Laramie, who is known to have hastened back to headquarters at St. Louis about this time knowing that big changes were in the wind and anxious for instructions.

²² Prairie fires were deliberately set by the Indians as an auxiliary in the pursuit of game or, in some cases, to spite the invading white man. Just what was afoot here is not clear. Also puzzling is the ap-

bluffs. These bluffs are mere sand piles. The soil here is poor and sandy. There was a herd of thousands of Buffalo by those that went off the road to hunt. Went 20 miles. Grass not so plenty as heretofore. 5th About 10 O.C. came to the Platt where we had to cross. The river here at the ford is about 3/4 of a mile across. It mile seem like a somewhat venturesome undertaking to attempt fording a wide river like this where the waters are so muddy that one cannot see the bottom of the stream. But we drove our teams through waded ourselves and found the water to be but 3 1/2 feet in the deepest place. We had to exert ourselves in wading to keep up with our cattle when pulling so as to hurry them and not allow them to stop if they had we should of been stuck. The bottom is composed of quicksand and the waggons are constantly settling down. This settling shakes the waggons awfully. The shaking would not be more over a rough rocky road. There was a large concourse of trains on each bank and a long line of waggons crossing with us. There was a great many Sioux Indians here at the ford²⁴. These are the first of this tribe that we have seen. They are a proud noble looking race of good proportion tall strong athletic and good horsemen. They dressed with little clothing. The only clothes that most of them had was a breechcloth over their hips. They wore a great many ornaments the tusks of animals pearls and strings of beads. They ornamented their mocasins with beads. One Indian prided himself in having about a dozen Pawnee scalps a wearing over his shoulders. One of these nakedly dessed Indians took quite a fancy to one of the women that was traveling in company with us and offered her husband before her face 3 horses for her. She must of felt herself highly flattered. In chilly wether these Indians wrap buffalo hides around them this serves also for bedcloths. The flesh part they ornament with different figures by paint. This night camped in a mile of their grand village. Men Squaws and children came to our camp tonight. It was interesting to them to observe our buisy doings. The meat of two buffaloe were brought in off which we made a hearty meal.

6th This morning We were troubled in getting started early on account of some cattle having run over the bluffs. So as to take us some time

²³ Farnham had passed present Grand Island, traveling across the river from present U. S. Highway No. 30, and had now to cross the South Platte. There were supposedly two major crossings of this stream. From the "Upper California Crossing," near present Julesburg, Colorado, the Trail meandered northward to Courthouse Rock, noted Trail landmark near present Bridgeport, Nebraska. The "Lower California Crossing" was near present Brule, Nebraska, and from here the Trail went northwest over the divide to Ash Hollow, the descent into which Francis Parkman so vividly described in 1846 (Mason Wade, ed., *The Journals of Francis Parkman*, 2 vols., New York, 1947, p. 436). To judge from mileage estimates, however, it appears that Farnham describes a third crossing of the South Platte, which would be just above the great fork near the site of present North Platte, Nebraska.

²⁴ Brule and Ogallala lands of the Tetou Dakota Sioux had at this time pre-empted the Platte Valley, a choice haunt of the buffalo. They were generally peaceable until 1854 when a company of soldiers from Fort Laramie and the

to find them. It commenced raining as we got started. We went through the Indian village of wigwams. This has a population of about 2000 souls. Their tents are made of dressed buffalo skins sewed together are round in shape with a pole passing through the top. The Indians old and young stood outside of their tents watching the long line of emigrant waggon that were passing through their village. They evidently are much wonder struck at the crowds going past on these plains that never was until late years ever disturbed by the rumbling of a waggon wheel. That seldom witnessed the appearance of a white man to disturb the monotony of this natural wild over which such swarms are now daily passing. At this time there was a solid train 5 or 6 miles in length and was over two hours passing through. They took a great fancy to the women that were in some of the waggons. They do not understand the value of money coin and would as leve have some trinket of equal brightness. They highly esteemed our provisions and would give a pair of mocicins for 2 buisquet or a robe for 3 or 4 pts of beans. We left the south fork here at this village and went across the bluffs to the north fork camped on the banks of this stream.

7th and 8th We kept up the river sometimes over the bluffs but most of the time over the level plane. About the middle of the day of the 8 On the bluffs facing the river found some ash trees growing. Wild current and rose bushes were growing also. After this came to a range of rocky bluffs of quite a rugged like appearance. There was good springs of cool water running from the foot of these Cedar bushes grew upon the sides. There was no scarcity of rattle snakes among the rocks. I saw 3 of enormous size about to pitch a me once as I got so as I could look over onto the top of a rock that I had been climbing. I jumped down quick. We got over the bluff into ash hollow²⁵ it is so named from the quantity of ash trees that grow here. This is the best looking place that we have seen for some time. It is cool shady looking place fragrant with different kinds of flowers of which roses and jasmamine are the principle. Grape vines and current bushes are plenteous. We had to travel late tonight for when we got out of onto the plain was very narrow and a perpendicular rock hemmed it in on the side opposite the river and when we did stop we found very poor grass.

9th This morning we went on until 8 o c and then stopped to graze our cattle. After we got started again picked up a man belonging to one of the trains ahead that had shot himself with a pistle while loading it the ball went through the calf of his leg. As soon as we camped to night a thunder shower came pouring down upon us.

10th resumed our journey. We are now going through an alkali region. It is said to travel cattle through this when wet will cause their hoofs to come off. Found musquitoses plenty where we camped to night.

11th Started off lively this morning and was not crowded much with other trains there being but few in sight. Saw Chimney and Court house

²⁵ After traversing the section of the North Platte River Valley now inundated by Lake McConaughey, behind the giant Kingsley Dam, the Trail apparently climbed back up on the plateau, then redescended into the valley at Ash Hollow. This is approximately the route now used by U.S. Highway No. 26.

rock this forenoon at a distance ahead of us. Camped opposite court house rock tonight it rained again.

12th Started again over the sandy road and went to opposite Chimney rock and camped²⁶. These two aforementioned rocks are thus named on account of the one resembling a court house the other for its resemblance of a high chimney such as is seen at a steam factory. This is about 200 feet high but the dirt at its base show that it has been much higher. It is split at the top and looks so that now it might fall apart. It is composed of hard baked dirt instead of rock. The action of the water on the hard clay bluffs that lay in the distance have wrought them into curious shapes. Fortresses with regular bastions, castles with their domed porticoes, doors, windows, houses with roofs and corniced churches with their steeples and spires then the bluffs seemed to raise perpendicularly in a circular form around at the back of these. So as to look like a regular built wall partly encompassing them. To look at this makes one almost imagine that he is beholding an ancient city partly gone to ruin. We here burned the last wood that we had with us. This we had carried in our waggons from ash hollow. Two antelopes were killed this forenoon. To night had a heavy shower of rain accompanied with hail.

13th It began to rain as we started. It was bothersome getting over some of the miry slues. Scots bluffs were ahead of us. These bluffs are so called from the fact of a party of fur traders headed by a man of the name of Scot, set him out on the bank of the river and left him to his fate. The next spring his body was found high on the bluffs by another party of traders and by his clothing he was identified²⁷.

Here the bluffs were curiously shaped. Here the numerous ranges of bare clay bluffs rising the other side of a range of grassy bluffs so close as to seem to be set on the top of them each range raising more high the further they were off. These were wrought by the rains. So as to have the appearance of a city on a hill. And the deep cut ravines that run down the sides assumed the appearance of so many cross streets and gave it a compact and regular appearance. Surely this is one of

²⁶ Courthouse Rock and Chimney Rock, both mentioned by almost all overland trail diarists, were a welcome relief to travelers who had seen nothing but the low, monotonous Platte for the past several days. They were among the advance guard of a range of picturesque hills, today called the Wildcat Hills, which extend for over forty miles along the south bank of the North Platte. Farnham echoes most of his contemporaries in giving free rein to his imagination in describing the freakish formations.

²⁷ At least forty horrendous versions of Scott's death, no two exactly alike, appear in trail journals, beginning with the fur trader Warren A. Ferris in 1830. Among the few certain facts are that (1) Hiram Scott was a clerk in the employ of William Ashley; (2) his death occurred in this vicinity in the autumn of 1828 under circumstances of abandonment; and (3) his remains were discovered in 1829 by fur traders returning to the mountains, who thereupon gave Scott's Bluff its name. See Merrill J. Mattes, "Hiram Scott, Fur Trader," *Nebraska History*, XXVI (1945), 127-162. At present Scott's Bluff National Monument there is a paved road to the summit of the historic landmark, and at its base, an excellent Oregon-California Trail museum. The present spelling of the bluff should not be confused with that of "Scottsbluff," the largest city in western Nebraska, which lies on the

natures greatest pranks of castle building Stopped to night in a plain surrounded on all sides by bluffs On the bank of a spring run Wood was procured by going about 3 miles to the bluffs and feched to camp on the horses

14th We started at sunrise Went 3 miles came to a Spring of water of icy coldness here the water driped out of the perpendicular side of a ravine and fell into a natural basin formed beneath The water was so good that we almost disipated upon it This is shaded with trees and bushes This is the first time that we have been near wood with our waggons since we left ash hollow 6 days ago²⁸ In the afternoon crossed two streams one called horsecreek²⁹ After that went to where the road come to the river and pitched our tents Major Sandersons command were camped near us³⁰

15th The Government train was before us We were kept back by thier slow travling Got ahead of them when they nooned This afternoon broke a wheel to one of the waggons got it replaced by a wheel of a waggon that was left on the road Camped on the bank of the river 8 miles from Ft. Laramie found plenty of drift wood on the bank

16th Started at sunrise Came to Laramy Creek one mile from the fort and that we had to ford This is a wide clear swift running stream and so deep that we had to block up our waggon beds in order to keep our provisions dry in crossing We did not cross till we watched while other trains that had got here earlier had to take thier turn And there was quite a number Our hearts were light in anticipation of getting to the fort There among this multitude all was excitement to get across Something was ahead It seemed like a galy day as a convention 4 of July or some such time was at hand to which we were agoing to have a recreation Then the sound of the cannon that was fired to greet the arrivle of Major Sanderson came abooming from the fort the hills around echoed the report one from another and it dwelt long among them before it died away It was soul stirring their successive reports in this expansive wild

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²⁸ This was Robidoux Pass, one of the most celebrated camp sites on the California Trail. It is surprising that Farnham fails to mention the French squawman and trader who lived here, and who is spoken of by most of the Forty-niners. See Merrill J. Mattes, "Robidoux's Trading Post at 'Scott's Bluffs,' and the California Gold Rush," *Nebraska History*, XXX (1949), 95-138. From the summit of Robidoux Pass, if atmospheric conditions were favorable, the emigrants obtained their first intimation of the rugged terrain ahead, in the shape of Laramie Peak, 100 miles to the west.

²⁹ In two years the mouth of Horse Creek, one of the principal tributaries of the North Platte, would become the setting of the great treaty council of the Plains Indians, which resulted in the far-reaching Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851.

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³¹ Transfer of the fort from the American Fur Company to the United States was formally effected on June 26 after negotiations between Bruce Husbands and Lieutenant Daniel Woodbury. The adobe pile, purchased for \$4,000, soon deteriorated, but work was begun at once on several new buildings, two of which—an adobe-lined frame officers quarters called "Old Bedlam" and the adobe sutler's store—survive today as the most notable features of Fort Laramie National Monument. See LeRoy R. Hafen and Francis M. Young, *Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West, 1814-1890* (Glendale, California, 1938); Raymond W. Settle (ed.), *The March of the Mounted Riflemen* (Glendale, California, 1940); and Merrill J. Mattes, *Fort Laramie and the Forty-Niners*, a booklet published by the Rocky Mountain Nature Association.

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³⁰ Major Winslow P. Sanderson, a hero of the Mexican War, was in charge of the company of the regiment of Mounted Riflemen, destination Fort Laramie. Other companies, under Colonel Leasing, were a few

imposing apperence. It is a structure made out of A dozen or sun dried bricks. This is so built as to form a square court in its center. The doors to each seperate room opens on the side of the court or yard. There are two large doors sufficiently big to admit a waggon. These are on two opposite sides and are the entrences into the fort. The cannon that we heard firing is the only piece belonging here but is small and light and can easily be run from one door to the other. It is impossible for emigrants to sell any thing here that they would wish to get rid of there have been too many hevy loaded teams here before this. And these men at the fort will take nothing unless it is given to them. And yet for things that they have to sell and which emigrant buy they ask a high price vinegar they sold at 25 cents a pt. The inhabitants of this fort consist at this time of about 18 or 20 traders and trappers regular old hosses as they termed themselves. Some of these have squaw wives living with them here at the fort and are a rough outlaw dish whisky drinking looking set having neither the affections or desires of more civilized men. Major Sanderson is to take possession of the fort with his command and thus turn it into a military post³¹. One stage of our long journey is now performed. The wide plain on the eastern side of the rocky mountains have been crossed one of its snow capped peaks we saw two days since. This is Laramie peak. It appears as if it were yet 100 miles off. But we are at the base of the lower ranges and our next journeying will be among them. In our journeying over the plains we have the most of the time had good road. be chure we had some bad places in crossing streams. But could it it be supposed that a natural road 700 miles in length would be free of them. The places where we had so much difficulty in goin down and up banks and over streams could have been made conveniently possible had a little labour been bestowed upon them. But every party would go over a bad place without trying to make it better and a party when they would get over would leave the others to do the same. Our frequent hard rains sometimes made the roads muddy but in the aggrate I think that they helped the road in more times than they injured it. Where the roads were sandy the rains helped to settle them and made them hard and the roads were soon dry after a rain. We had been a month and 8 days from the misouri line a coming here. Thus averaging about 18 miles a day. For the whole way since we started we have never lacked for company. At times there were at times 5 or 6 hundred waggons in one unbroken string. These waggons were each drawn by from 3 to 5 yoke of cattle.

³¹ Transfer of the fort from the American Fur Company to the United States was formally effected on June 26 after negotiations between Bruce Husbands and Lieutenant Daniel Woodbury. The adobe pile, purchased for \$4,000, soon deteriorated, but work was begun at once on several new buildings, two of which--an adobe-lined frame officers quarters called "Old Bedlam" and the adobe sutler's store--survive today as the most notable features of Fort Laramie National Monument. See LeRoy R. Hafen and Francis M. Young, *Fort Laramie and the Purgant of the West, 1834-1890* (Glendale, California, 1920); Raymond W. Settle (ed.), *The March of the Mounted Riflemen* (Glendale, California, 1940); and Merrill J. Mattes, *Fort Laramie and the Forty-Niners*, a booklet published by the Rocky Mountain Nature Association.

The mule and horse waggons were drawn by two spans each sometimes by 3. These teams hauled baggage for between 2 and 3 thousand people. In fact the teams were so thick in many places as to considerably retard each others progress. The collery has been among the trains that were in company with us. Ever since we started until the 2 last days yet there has been none died out of our company from it. In some it has raged fearfully. A great many hours of the day we could see companies stoped on the side of the road to burry thier dead. We passed one grave with 3 buried in it. We could hear of it prevailing to a more alarming extent in companies that were further back on the road than in those that were with us. There have been a great many accidents hapend by foolishly handling guns and pistoles. And putting loaded guns in waggons has been a great source of mischief by this. A great many have been killed and others seriously wounded. The most of the water that we have used has been bad. Sometimes we have come across good springs or runs of water but the most of the water has been out of pools of rain water or out of the muddy waters of the Platt. We have generally found plenty of grass for our cattle. After stopping and grazing our cattle. We would secure them at night by forming a yard or enclosure by driving our waggons around in a circle. This enclosure we called a coroll. A company from Hebron traviled with us most of the way and joined with us in making our coroll. Thier waggons added to the number of waggons. So in company we had 2 (companies) to form with. Each company also sent out an equal number of men to guard the cattle. The tribes of Indians that we saw were Shawnee, Paw Pottawotamies and the Sioux. We passed the territory of the Pawees and one or two other tribes without seeing an Indian. The fear of the Calvary kept a good many of them off. The sight of game was not as frequent as we were led to expect from the reports of other former travelers. The immense throng of emigrants kept the game scared off the road.

17th This day we lay by and while we were here we had the tires to our waggons cut and reset. They charged us here 3 dollars for each tire that they reset. We managed here to again lighten up to 150 pounds from each wagon 1200 in all. One of our men took a faint spell while walking about the Fort D and myself took him into the avenue of the Fort where there was a shade and he soon recovered. The weather was sultry hot. I saw a man that was wounded by a comrad. The man that committed the accident was fixing at the tube of his gun and thus caused it to go off into the leg of this man that was now suffering at the fort. The man that was thus shot has been deserted by all his company save one even the man that shot him deserted him and not being satisfied with deserting him stole one of his blankets. This is a human exception to nature here unmercifully selfish and indifferent to the wants of others. This suffering man was laying on a frame of cross sticks over which his blanket was spread. Another man that was sick and reduced to a mere living frame was laying in a waggon near the fort his entire company had deserted him. They had left him however the waggon that he lay in provishions two barels of liquor. These they could not take along with them very plentifully supplied with drink

but scarce of attendants. Now the government train is here men that are thus left may be taken care of.

18th at 11 O.C. this day we again resumed our onward journey and going 14 miles over bald hills we came to a warm spring and camped for the night³².

19th Our travils to day was over hills finely timbered with pine. There was a prominent mark near the road dissignated as Porters rock. It was about 15 feet high and the sides were marked with the names of emigrants that have passed³³. The timber on bitter creek³⁴ was all dead over acers of ground. The emigrants have lightened up here to a prodigious extent. Flower beans and bacon lay in large piles over the recently deserted camp grounds. Nor was this all tools of every description for farming mining or meccanical purposes lead and tobacco were thrown away in quantities. A number of waggons were left deserted on the road side. Passed a butiful spring that lay off to the right of the road. The last time that we crossed bitter creek we cooled and filled our water casks. And camped about 3 miles further on. This we did to get good grass.

20th Started and went to Horse Shoe creek³⁵ where we nooned. There was quite a steep descent between this creek and the last. The hills here look quite romantick when on the top of one we could look over a great many pine covered hill at one gaze. There is a spring of water here that is very nasty tasted water. Horse Shoe creek is a strong running stream of clear cool water and runs off Laramie peak that here is in so close proxemity that we now distinguish the trees growing upon it. This day also saw deal of thrown away property.

21th We went on assending and desending among the black hills. We nooned on La Banta Creek³⁶ a stream 2 rods wide by 2 feet deep in the afternoon went 4 or 5 miles through hills of a Spanish brown coloured earth. The banks of a still dity? had quite bold looking red rocks. While agoing through this region every thing except this red earth looked green. We found a camping ground of tolerble good pasture but had to lug water a good ways.

22th This morning went 8 miles to the Prella river³⁷. This was about 3 rods wide by 2 ft deep. To day a Buffaloe was killed and brought in and this night we had a hearty feasting on fresh meat. This night

³² Warm Spring, opposite present Guernsey, Wyoming, was another camp site of exceptional merit. From Fort Laramie to the vicinity of present Casper, Wyoming, the Trail kept some distance away from the river.

³³ This answers to the description of Register Cliff, still covered with names and protected by a mesh fence. There is a discrepancy here though, for Register Cliff is ahead of Warm Spring.

³⁴ Bitter Cottonwood Creek.

³⁵ Horseshoe Creek, just below Glendo, was once the setting of the division headquarters of the overland stage line operated by the notorious Jack Slade.

³⁶ La Bonte Creek, debouching opposite modern Douglas, Wyoming, and named for an obscure fur trapper, was another stage station site of the 1860's.

³⁷ La Prella Creek marked the end of the sharp, flinty passage around the Laramie Peak foothills.

cattle a good resting and get ready for crossing the Desert. We cooked enough of everything to last over

9 th At 4 O C we started on our Deasert journey. The road that we passed over in the night was good and level. The latter part of the road was rough and we had a cloud of dust hanging over the road that was fairly chocking. The heat of the sun was intens and we used up our kegs and canteens of water. Sometime before we got in 4 m before we got to green river we had to decend a hill where the waggons would have to go at one jog off a rock 3 feet high. At 4 P M we got to Green River⁴⁸ after 24 hours continuous journey over a Desert region of 50 M. Our cattle were glad to get to water and they rushed madly to it. But they had a poor range for grass. There were emigrants here encamped some of whom had been here 2 days and the place on both sides of the river had quite a city like appearence and when night set in the numerous camp fires gave the place quite a cheerful aperence. And those that had been here long enough to get rested were amusing with musick and dancing and the fireing of guns and rockets and singing glee songs
[To be continued in the next issue.]

⁴⁸ Green River, the Rio Verde of the Spaniards, and the Siskadee of the Shoshones and Rocky Mountain trappers, ranked with the South Platte and the Snake River as a major crossing. The ferry, apparently a Mormon monopoly at this date, was located a few miles below present La Barge, Wyoming.

Book Reviews

Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian and Owenite Phases of Communitarian Socialism in America: 1663-1829. By Arthur Eugene Bestor, Jr. (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950, pp. xi, 288. Bibliographical essay, appendix, and index. \$3.50.)

Despite the title, the bulk of this volume is given over to Robert Owen and his experiment at New Harmony. The first three chapters serve more as an introduction to the subject and as background for understanding Owenism than as analyses comparable to the detailed treatment accorded the latter. This is said in explanation, not in criticism. For at last we have what has long been needed, a painstaking, perspective study and evaluation of Owen's contribution to social thought, free from local patriotism, propaganda, bigotry, ridicule, shock, and above all from just plain ignorance.

Dr. Bestor makes clear what so many have failed to note, that the communitarian point of view that flowered in the early nineteenth century was a stubborn ridge between revolution and evolution in the landscape of reform. It was collectivistic, like later Communism, but it was opposed to revolution. It was impatient of gradual reform in the democratic tradition. It was often associated with religious cults in America, but that relation was not integral. Rather it carried the idea of the model, the example, the pilot plant. A group of believers undertook an immediate and drastic reform, but in a peaceable and non-revolutionary form. The force of their example was expected to encourage imitation, and soon the "social regeneration of mankind" would be universally achieved by voluntary conviction, without bloodshed.

Thus it is irrelevant to call Owen an atheist, and incorrect to label him a Communist. His fatal weakness was that his idea was simply not sound economically. Details were never worked out, and so far from failing, the community at New Harmony never even got started before it disintegrated. The collapse revealed how impractical this reputedly practical man could be. Indeed there is an air of comic opera about much of the action and divisions on the banks of the Wabash. Out of it all William Maclure emerges the stronger, more soundly enlightened leader who made of New Harmony a true Athens of the West—post-Owen.