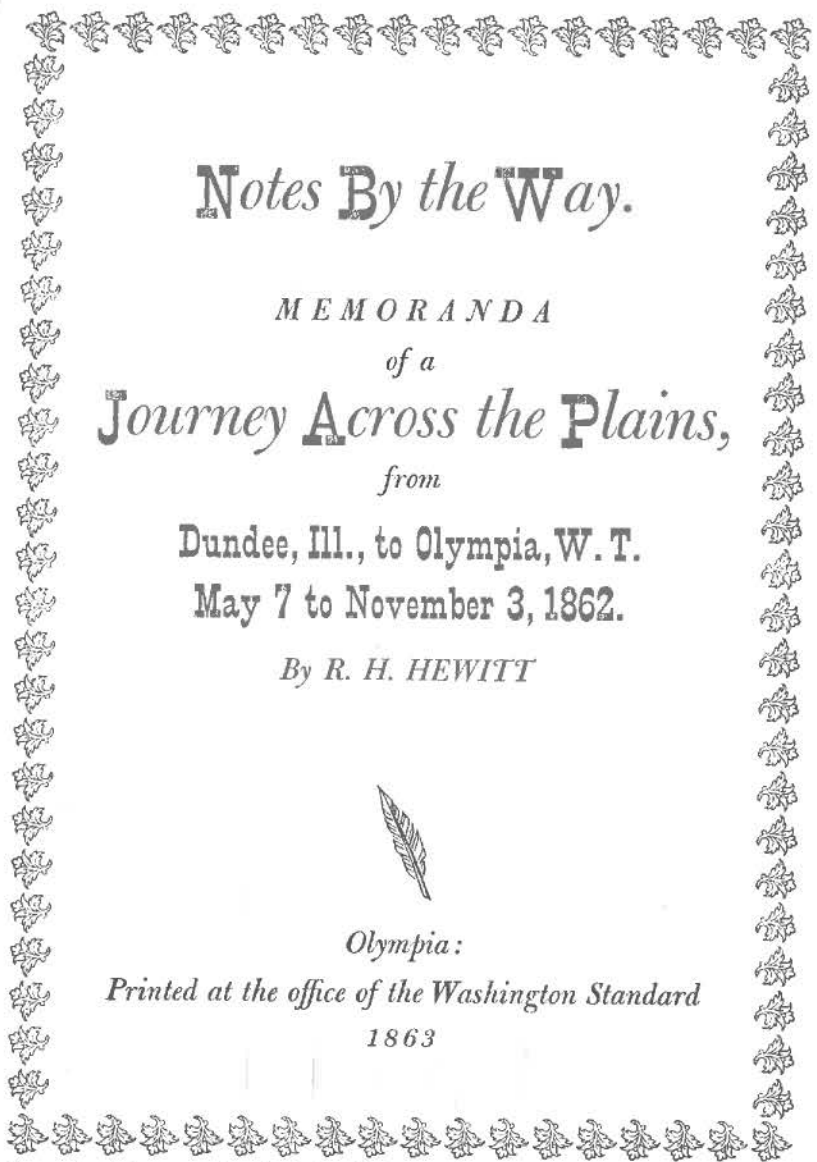


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# Notes By the Way.

MEMORANDA

of a

## Journey Across the Plains,

from

Dundee, Ill., to Olympia, W. T.

May 7 to November 3, 1862.

By R. H. HEWITT



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is our own. Judging from the beginning we shall have no lack of amusement. We shall see.

MAY 6:—The usual amount of preparation and aranging preparatory to a long and wearisome pilgrimage. Sun hot and scorching but do not know the degree of temperature. Uncle received telegram announcing the death of Carrie, a daughter about ten years of age. Thus had the rude hand of death entered our little band. The thought is saddening and has cast a gloom over the entire company. Which of us will next be called upon to yield up our life is a matter of which we know nothing, but we hope and trust that we shall be spared the painful necessity of laying another of our company 'neath the sod. Towards evening another storm arose, and gave every indication of being a severe one. Our animals were taken in and safely picketed at an early hour,—which precaution becomes necessary, because of the horse and mule stealing,—and every convenience within our limited means, arranged for protection from the approaching storm. Near midnight the rain was heralded by constant, vivid flashes of lightning, and increasing thunder. About 12 o'clock it burst upon us with fury. The whole Heavens seemed one continued flame, and flashes of chain-lightning chased each other with malignant venom. The thunder crashed and rolled with terrible earnestness, 'till it seemed that the whole artillery of Heaven was brought into action. This lasted about one hour, when it settled into a steady, chilly rain.

MAY 17:—Morning dawned rainy and cold. Nothing transpired of especial interest. Drank coffee this morning for the first time in my life.

SUNDAY, MAY 18:—Each one amusing themselves as best they may. The atmosphere still cloudy and uncomfortable.

MAY 19 to 22:—No circumstance has taken place during a few days past of peculiar interest worthy of record, and camp-life drags wearily. Weather quite cold. To-day two mules broke from their fastenings and strayed off. Found them about 5 miles north, about 9 o'clock P. M. A kind-hearted old gentleman took them up and put them in his stable. An act of such disinterested kindness cannot pass unmentioned, especially in this country, where "Jayhawkers," "Bushwhackers" and horse-thieves abound, and we regret that we did not learn his name. From the several disappointments we have met with while here, such as delay and death, and other causes, we have named this, our first encampment, "Camp Disappointment."

MAY 23:—No intelligence from Uncle. Feel quite uneasy and discontented in consequence. This evening Father arrived, which proved a panacea indeed. Uncle will not be able to start before next week, because of the sickness of his daughter.

MAY 24:—A slight activity characterized the events of the day.

SUNDAY, MAY 25:—Quiet and orderly to-day. In the morning appearances indicated a storm, which, however, passed over, leaving a beautiful Sabbath.

MAY 26:—Weather warm, oppressively so. Nothing unusual or alarming to-day. In the evening indications of rain.

## JUNE.

JUNE 3.—The preceeding days from last date, have hung heavily about our camp. Uncle has directed us to move on to Omaha, Nebraska, 150 miles up the river, where he hopes to meet us, as soon as the recovery of Lucy will permit. An Emigrant Escort starts from that point, and he wishes us to go with it. To-day the camp presented a business-like activity. Wagons were packed and fitted, and all arrangements made for a march. Having lain in "Camp Disappointment" so long, order "forward," has a peculiarly cheerful, musical sound. We shall take leave of our old camp-ground, around which every object has become familiar, with no regret whatever. Since we have been here, three of our little party have been afflicted severely with the measles, but have nearly recovered, and a fourth, Ella, is now coming down with them. Should she be able to move, the morning is fixed upon for our cavalcade to start. Whatever the events of the day, will be developed on the morrow.

JUNE 4:—Unable to start. The day spent in preparation.

CAMP 2, June 3:—Broke up camp and left St. Jo. behind, at 11 A. M., with buoyant spirits in one respect from satisfaction of moving, and with heavy depressed spirits in another,—because of the sickness of three of our company. Our carriage we have converted into an hospital, and have spared no effort within our power to administer to the comfort of the invalids, thus thrown upon our care. Thus far it would seem as though some obstacle has been thrown in our way, or some circumstances continually arising beyond our ability to control, to prevent our progress or allow us to move on. But we still have hope that what now appears to us almost incomprehensible, will soon be clear and bright, and that the dark cloud which hangs so gloomily over our prospects will soon recede and reveal its silver lining.

The country through which we passed is not what would be termed beautiful. What should be its attractive feature is decidedly not very charming, but appears dull and forbidding. Judging from appearances but a small portion of it is worked, and that, but indifferently. Towards evening passed

through a place called Savannah; a place of not very large dimensions, but of large pretensions. Here, also, troops are quartered to prevent an uprising of the "over-burdened," "down-trodden," sympathisers with secession, and to rid the country of horse-thieves and murderers. We are told that soldiers are stationed in nearly every town in the State for the same purpose. Towards evening four Indians passed our train. They were well mounted and armed, and evidently bound out on a hunting or some other excursion, which only concerned themselves. Our "dusky friends" appeared to take no notice of us, but to our party they were quite a novelty—being the first we had ever seen in their native country. Pitched our tent at 6 P. M., as near as we could judge, in a very pleasant place, and set our house in order to enjoy Camp No. 2 as best we might. Traveled about 17 miles.

CAMP 3. JUNE 5:—Left camp 2 at 7½ o'clock A. M. The country through which the day's journey was performed, was similar to yesterday's record, in many respects. We found some heavy hills and dense underbrush. In the forenoon lost our road going out of the way about 2 miles, and were obliged to retrace our steps. It is not a hard matter to find the wrong way, in a region poorly supplied with guideboards and fences, but having numerous branch roads. The village of Fillmore is effected much by old age, being in a wretched state of dilapidation and decay. Our camp this evening is situate on the line between the rough country and a broad beautiful prairie which stretches far off in the distance before us. A perceptible change and for the better, is noticed among the invalids this evening. Sky clear and moon shining brilliantly.

We know not how far we advanced to-day. Having no means of computing distances, and as the information obtained from the inhabitants vary so much in their estimate, that nothing can be accepted as reliable. Knowing our destination and the distance, we hope to reach it in due time.

CAMP 4, JUNE 6:—Our course to-day lay through a large rolling prairie, then into a hilly, heavily timbered section, again into a prairie along side of which our camp is fixed. We saw many uncultivated fields over-grown with wild grass and weeds, and on inquiry learned that nearly all the male population had gone to war. Many dwellings also, were deserted; a reason for this we are unable to give. A mule of the female persuasion slipped her fastenings this evening, and retired from camp-life. She retreated in "good order" about one mile, when she was overtaken and returned. Crossed Terkio river by bridge, and passed through "Mound City." We were obliged to look twice before we could really make out what it was. This also, in common with

many other such "cities," have their existence only on paper, or in the imitable imagination of land speculators, or their dupes whose names are legion, and who seem willing to be "taken in."

The invalids suffered much from the heat to-day, but they are gradually gaining.

CAMP 5 JUNE 7:—The country we passed through to-day was beautiful, and compared well with that mentioned yesterday. On the margin of the prairie we are camped. The weather oppressively hot, which depresses the spirits of the invalids. Received a call from some of our new neighbors. Found many of a genuine, high-toned hospitality. The villages of Rockport and Linden, which we passed, leave impress of the ruin that pervades the other places mentioned. For the most part, the country is in the state which nature left it, and man found it. When emigration does set this way, and settlements are formed here, then we may expect Missouri will make a populous State.\*

CAMP 6, SUNDAY, JUNE 8:—Our time being limited, and a lengthy journey to perform, rendered it necessary for us to continue our march over to-day, which under other circumstances would not have been done. Our route has laid along a prairie, or what is known here as "river bottoms," which consists of an immense tract of level country, on both sides of the Missouri river. On the east side of the road is a line of high, steep bluffs; on the west, the broad expanse of prairie, extending as far as the eye can reach. Crossed the Nishnabottana river, and soon passed the narrows, a neck of land but a few rods in width, which separate that river from the Missouri. The bed of the former, is lower than that of the latter; the streams run parallel to each other nearly fifty miles. This year is the period for the scourge of Egypt, the locust, to appear, and myriads of this destructive little insect swarm among the trees and shrubbery along the road, and their humming can be heard a long distance, as they ply their task. They are said to be plentiful also, back in the country.

Camp 6 is situated in a beautiful spot, at the foot of the bluffs. In the west in the dim distance, is the river, along which a steamboat is plowing its way.

\*We have been enlightened in regard to the deserted dwellings, mills and farms we have noted so much since we started. It seems their owners or occupants were secessionists, whose howling about their "rights," fancying themselves deprived of them, and ranting about their "oppressions," feeling much aggrieved, had rendered them obnoxious to the better portion of society, and they were invited to vacate, to seek a more congenial clime. They had the impudent assurance to take their families and movable property to free Iowa, uncontaminated by rebellion, for safety, and the ineffable meanness to return and make war on the country which was protecting their families under the false plea of Unionists. Comment is unnecessary. "The dog shall return to his vomit, and the hog that is washed to his wallowing in the mire."