COED - Census of Overland Emigrant Documents
PAGE 1: Document Description

Document ID: (5ϕ HOW ϕ1) JMP87

Emigrant's last name: HOWLETT
first & middle names: John
Title: [LETTERS ~~TO FAMILY~~ 5/05/50, 6/09/50 and 10/19/50]

Surveyed by: JEANNE PATTERSON
Date surveyed: 9-28-95

Year of journey: 1850
Year written (if different):
Page numbers surveyed: 3-5
Type of document: L (D - diary; J - journal: R - reminiscence; L - letter; N - newspaper article; G - guide; A - autobiography; O - other)
Items in document: (use all applicable codes)

M - daily mileages	D - emigrant drawings	P - emigrant maps	Q - maps by editor	K - biographical sketch
I - Introduction	B - bibliography	N - Index	X - photos	F - footnotes/commentaries

Published? (Y/N): N
Location of original document: OCTA Library

For PUBLISHED documents only:
Published in:

Publisher:
Year published: 1974
Place published:
Editor's (or translator's) last name:
first & middle names:
Notes about publication history:

For UNPUBLISHED documents only:
Notes about format of document: Photocopy of typed manuscript

Notes on back? NO

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PAGE 2: Journey Description

Document ID: (50 HOW-01) JMP 87

Emigrant's occupation: _____ Origin: Norwalk

Age: _____ M/F: M With family? (Y/N) N No. in family: _____

Departed from (code): J.1 Arrived at (code): C7

Date of departure: 5-21 1950 Date of arrival: 10-03-50 (use form mm/dd/yy)

Party: _____

Mode of travel: W (one code only: **W** - wagons; **P** - packing: **L** - passenger lines; **H** - handcart; **X** - other)

Number of wagons at departure: _____

Number of people at departure: _____ total _____ men _____ women _____ children

Draft animals of departure: _____ oxen 2 mules 6 horses _____ other (use X or a number)

Other animals: _____ (**H** - horses; **C** - cattle; **S** - sheep; **P** - pigs; **F** - fowl; **D** - dogs; **X** - other)

Guidebook used by emigrant (enter either a title, or an author and title, if given):

_____

Routes: ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ 1E ~~10~~ 1W ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ (use codes from the trail maps)

Notes on back? ✓

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PAGE 3: Survey of Names (page 1 of 1)

Document ID: (5ϕ HOW ϕ A JMP87

Last name	First names	Age	M/F	Origin	Party	Page	Date (mm/dd)	Codes 1	Codes 2
HOWLETT	William		M	MO St. Louis		1	04/11/50		Q
HIGGINS	—		M	Birmingham		1			
HIGGINS	—		M	Birmingham		1			
ARNALDS	—		M	Birmingham		1			
JENNEY	E. S		M			1			
CHILD	Mr.		M			1			
SWETT	—		M			2			
Kittredge	Mr.		M			2			Q
Arnold	Mr.		M			3		B	
Sweet	Mr.		M			4			
Drak	Mr.		M	Republic		5			
Joslin			M			5			
Stringes	Lewis		M			5			
Patrick	Boys		M			5			
* Child	Mr.		M			4			W
* Jenney	E.S		M			4			W

CODES for column 1:

- **A** - birth
- **B** - death, illness
- **C** - death, accident
- **D** - death, murder
- **E** - death, other/unknown
- **F** - name on grave
- **G** - marriage (*)
- **H** - registered name
- **I** - name on roster
- **J** - turned back
- **K** - traveling east

CODES for column 2:

- **L** - capt. of party
- **M** - guide of party
- **N** - military
- **O** - govt. surveyor/explorer
- **P** - trader
- **Q** - non-immigrant
- **R** - Black
- **S** - Indian
- **T** - Hispanic
- **U** - non-US citizen
- **V** - Mormon
- **W** - joined other party or left party

Codes may not apply to all names. Use up to 2 codes in each column, if multiple codes apply.

*For marriages, bracket the spouses' names and number the couples sequentially.

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PAGE 4: Survey of Locations (page 1 of 1)

Document ID: (50-HOW 01) JMP87

Location	Page	Date
FORT KEARNEY	3	
FORT LARIME	3	
MIDDLE SPRING CALIFORNIA	4	10-03-1850
HANGTOWN	4	
SACREMENTO city	4	
salt lake	4	
forty miles desert	4	
placerville	4	
Cold Spring	5	

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PAGE 5: Indian Encounters (page 5 of 15)

Document ID: (50 Howd 1) SMP 87

CODE	Tribe name (leave blank if not mentioned)	Page	Date
F		3	
G		3	

CODES (use up to 3 for each entry)
A - attacked
B - begged
C - robbed
D - saw Indians
E - imagined sighting
F - worried about Indians
G - were warned about
H - traded with Indians
I - other
J - paid toll to Indians
K - helped by Indians, visited/talked to Indians

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AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Manuscript Collections

Name of collection:	Location:
Howlett Family Letters, 1831-1873	Misc. Mss Boxes "H"
Size of collection:	N.U.C. number:
60 items	N.A.

Finding Aids:

N.A.

Source of collection:	Copies available:
Gift of Donald Griswold of Lancaster, Mass., 1974	Electrostatic and microfilm copies available subject to limitation.

Collection Description:

This collection of family correspondence consists principally of correspondence written by, addressed to, or answering John Howlett and his peregrinations through Ohio, Indiana, and California, and back to the midwest in search of steady and remunerative work. Several interesting letters are written from California by Howlett to his wife, Angeline Wilson Howlett. These letters describe his trip over the plains, his efforts to establish himself first in prospecting, then in the saw mill business. These letters contain much information concerning prices, local conditions, and the like.

After a stay of eight to ten years in California, Howlett returned to Ohio where success continued to elude him and where he endeavored to work as a teamster. He seemed continually separated from his wife and children despite his continual comments that he hoped soon to be able to join them. The earliest correspondence is between John and Angeline Howlett in Indiana and Angeline's parents in New York and later in Ohio.

7/12/74

Independance, Mo.
May 5, 1850

Dear Wife and Children,

I have a little leisure time to write a few lines. Iwrote to you when I was in Cincinnati. We left there on the 14th of April arrived at St. Louis on the 22nd. Saw my brother William, found him well. He told me that he would write to you imediately. He is doing very well making $40. to $45. per month. St Louis is a great business place. We left St. Louis on the 25th of April and arrived at Independance on the nigh of last of April. There was about three hundred California passangers abord the boat. Over 100 head of horses and cattle and two mules. All bound for the land of gold. We paid a dollar and a half for hay in St Louis, 60¢ per bu. for oats. It cost us for our passage from Cincinnati to St. Louis about $90. including horse, waggon and freight. We are in camp, our ten is pitched a half a mile east of the city of Independance. It is a very pretty town. Containing probably 3000 inhabitants. There is from two to three thousands emmigrants tenting here, waiting for grass to grow, some are starting but it is rather risky business for the weather is as cold here or colder than it was at Norwalk when we left there. Everything is very backward. Hay is very scarce, worth from $20. to $30. per ton, corn is worth 60¢ to 70¢ per bu., oats is not to be had. There is some mules to be had here but they are very high. Good American mules that has a aged sufficient to stand the trip is worth from $100. to $125. per head. There is some Spanish mules brought in here for sale, they are very small, not much larger than a good large sheep, and they are selling for from $60. to $80. per mule. We have not bought any yet. We can buy horses at better bargains than mules. There is all kind of opinions in regard to teams. There is a great many horse and cattle going. We frequently see cows and yolked up in ox teams. We bought a tent in Cincinnati which cost us $18. It is 7 ft. high, 10½ ft. long, 8½ ft wide. We are doing our own cooking and sleeping. our tent is pitched on quite an elevated hill, it is what is called the commons, well tuffed over, high and dry. A first great spring of water near by us. Our horses is in good condition, rather on the improved. I think they are the best horses- team that I have seen. T

May 12 Independence.

The weather is moderating considerable, quite comfortable, in shirt sleeves. Some apperance of spring. Provender for horses very high, no hay to be had, grain has advanced very much and hard to be found. We spent three day in hunting for corn, we at last found some which we paid $1.00 per bu. for and hasked it ourselves. We bought 23 bu. We shall probably start from here in two or three days. We yesterday bought a pair of mules, tolerable good size cost us $150. about half broke. I think they will be a tolerable pair. We have also bought a light wagon which we intend to load with corn to feed on the road untill the grass grows. The wagon cost us $43. We shall put a cover on it which will cost $4. or $5. Our expenses are high taking all things in consideration. There is a great many backing out and returning home discouraged on account of backwardness of the season ..... of a scarcity of grass and so many are going I do not know but it will be a hard time but I shall go ahead. We Are told in the old Book NOT TO LOOK BACK BUT to press forward to the prise of the gold Reageon We fell in company with 3 young Men the first day that We started from home that live in Burmingham 2 By the Name of higgins one By the Name of Arnalds We traveled together they have the Apearance of Nice Men one of them is now Sick But I think he is gitting Better E.S. Jenney is quit unwell probably Will feel Better When he gits a Little seasond to Camp fare The Rest of us Are in good health except Mr. C. Who is troubled With the diseas Called laiseness he is the dm skunk I ever saw a Real Bragardoza A grate fellow to Make some

witty Remark and laugh at himself he is a Real Nobody I am verry Much disoponte in him you Nead Not say anything about him to anyone if We get through and he does nNot do his part Better than he has he will have to pay for it in the distrabution of the property there is one thing verry sure There Will Bea No pardner ship With him after gitting through I like Mr. Swett verry Much so fare I think he is a verry good kind of a man I almost frogot to tell you about one of MY old teeth I took a little cold on the SteamBoat and one of My teath troulbed for 3 or 4 days and when I got to Indipendance I had it extracted came out very easy for it was very Much Materated I asked the doctor the-do what his charge was he said one dollar I said I thought that was rather high he said 2 dollars was the custamary prise but as I was going to California he only charge me half price for he said he was going there too he thought he would Not Bea hard with Me for I might want his survises thare so I just paid him and went about my business. you can let Mr. Kittredge read this letter it contains all that I have to write at present. You must Bea very equinomical for it willbea late before we git through to California because I think feed is going to bea scarce there is so many going and we shall have to give our teams more time to feed keep up good courage I hope all things will come round right rite side up yet little girls I want you to be good girls bea kind to your mother so that when I receive a letter from you all I may heare a good report tend to your book, and try to improve. give my respects to all my friends and God bless you all I shall write a few lines as often as I can my letter will not be long as I am a poor hand to write John Howlett Sunday. — Independance, May 19 We are here yet on account of the ill health of E.S. Jenney We have Bin ready for 5 or 6 days to, have started but E. has Bin quit sick but is

Fort Kearney, June 9th 1850

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Dear Wife & Children

We arrived here last night We left Independance on the 21st of May with 2 Mr. higgins & Mr. Arnold in company with us Mr Arnold was sick or had bin for some days but had got better We traveled about 1 hundred miles when Arnold was taken worse and dide We burryed him by the side of the road on the prearys and went on E S Jenny was sick also when we left but is gainning fast but has not ben of any sirvis to us yet in the way of work he has been verry peavish wanted a grate deal of waiting on I had the diearhea when I left Independance was verry sick the night before we left there with that old pain in my side but was better in the morning My diearhea continued on untill d day before yesterday I think. I have got it checked but have bin reathe weake but feel much better the rest of the boys is complaining som Som 3 or 4 days ago we have some hard rains which we think had a bad afect on the emigrants for the cholrea raged verry bad we passed a xx nomber of teames that was burying the dead and som more dying there was five other temes traveling with us they lost two men with the cholra We have not seen or heard of any cholra for 3 or 4 days We were told that the Indians would be verry trou lesom but we have not bin troubled any yet we stand gard every night to protect our teams Our teams look verry well yet the grass is not so good as it was last year We are over 3 hundred miles from Independance have traveled about 14 days We have passed through the most delighful seanrey that I ever saw high roling peraries not a tree nor schrub in sight for hours We have not seen any buffaloes yet we see lots of antelops and wolves They have kept count of the noumber of temas that has passed the fort this season which falls but little short of 9000 I did not undesstand how many p sons but I should judge there could not bea less than 35000 persons and we have passed on the road brovably 300 teams that are now behind us and lots more coming There are a grat many famileys going some to California and some to Oregon women and children of all classes abd xx sizes We passed a few day since a family moving to Oregon the woman had bin confind 3 or 4 day before in there tent Had a fine boy all do doing well She had aspring carige to lay in We have passed from 4 to 6000 head of cattle that the emigrants are sriving to California and Oregon It beats all I ever saw the road is lined with masses of living beaings for miles and miles you can see them before you and behind you We are in about 330 miles of fort Larime we are told that we will be about half way through I want to write more but have not time it is sunday and we are buissey in over hauling and airing our beding and provisions We had a verry hard rain last night with wind When it rains here pores down verry hard I will write when I get to fort Larime Excuse bad writing and spelling Give my respect to all I want to see you all verry much tell the doct that I will write to him when I git through You can sho him this so he will now what spead we are making from your afectionat husband & farther

John Howlett

Middle Spring, California
19 October 1850

Dear Wife & ChildrenI expect you are waiting with great anxiety to hear from me I arrived here on the 3rd day of October after a long and tedious journey of near six months I wrote to you when I was at Fort Larimer I then stated to you that I had not ben verry well but was getting better but it did not last long for I was taken worse and was sick withe what they call the Mountain fever and was quite sick for 3 weeks got better of the fever but the diarehia continued verry bad till I got to salt lake the grate Mormon city of the west where we stayed about 2 weeks where I got quite well: Here the other boys thought we had better sell the waggon aad pach I was aposed to it but I was one of three so they carried the day and we sold the waggon 2 harnesses and bought one more horse that gave us 7 horses and mules, 4 to ride, 3 to pack When we started we traveled about one hundred and nintey miles We had 2 horses s stolen from us that left us in a bad fix We had to pack the rest of our horses with our baggage an go on foot between 5 and 6 hundred miles through the hots sun sand and dust In crossing the forty miles desart we had the misfortune to have one horse die and before we got across 2 more gave out and so that we sold one of them a mule for 35.00 dollars And then we was 2 hundred miles from where I now write We had to hire some of our baggage carried and got along the best we could we suffered from fateigue verry much and som fore want of food though we did not suffer so much as a grate many that we saw on the road when we got about 3 hundred miles of gitting through we had to commence buying provisions which was high and scasse I paid one dollar a lb. for bacon the same for flour one doll for shugar per lb. 75¢ for coffee We saw men that had nothing but meat to eat for days I will not undertak to describe the suffring of both men and beasts and the destruction of property in crossing the plains this year for you could not amagine nor bign tb think that there could be such destruction without fire or water- if I live to see you I can tell you something about it but I will not attempt to write it you will probably see accounts of it from pens that is better able to write than mine: After losing all our horse except 2 Child and Janny had an offer made them by a man that vw as going through with a number of wagaons and horses and cattle to drive a team , So Mr. Sweet and myself took our horses and mule that we had left and went on I hage not seen them since that is som 4 or 5 weeks ago They are all out ofmoney I had to advance money to by provisions nad pay other expenses on the road which had reduced my funds considerably But I have sold the horse and mule sold the horse for $44 and the mule for 55.00 dollars and horses and mules are verry low expense them that are in low flesh which I will assure you ours were I have not seen sweet for 2 weeks he has gone to wook for an old miner gits his board and half that he can make he is east of hangtown about 60 miles of sacremento city I am about 50 miles from Sacremento city 3 miles from hangtown or more properly called pääcerville I had joined 3 other men in putting up a log house where the prospect for winter digging is tolobale for I have ben to the city of sacremento and bought som provisions It is a grate place for one of its age I think I shall go to digging this winter but let me tell you that California is not the place that it is cracked up to be thare is a grate many men here that is not earning their board Men with long faces wish they had never com here if I was at home and new what I now no I should not go but I am here

and must make the best of it If I have my health I shall try hard but my health is quite poor I have had the diahrrea for 2 week feel verry bad by spell My appitite is quite good but I am worn down withe the journey feel week I have no energey left my feet and legs are verry much swolen but I keep about can do about a half days work in a day I think after resting the weather gits cooler I shall feel better We are living in a tent at present we cannot be verry comfortable we have got our house logs cut and drawed and have commenced laying them up have got the boards split out to cover it I think when we get into our house we shall feel better I no but little about the mines yet I have not dug any thare are 2 men that tents with us at present that is digging they are new beginners at digging some days they take out 5.00 dollars som 20.00 dollars it is thought that the moners are not doing so well this season as last my advice to all whome is desiring to come to california is just to stay to home if anyone asks you how your husband likes california tell them to take my word for it that I do not like it yet but am in hopes to before I come back I am verry glad that there is som other way of getting back besides crossing the plains as they are called but just immagin what kind of plains they are when I tell you that more than two thids of the way is over mountains through mud holes over rocks imagin the worst roads in Gods world that teams and waggons ever passed over and you cannot begin to think anything about it I saw Mr Drak of Republic he is in sacremento in the grocery buissness I also saw .....Joslin he was in the city buying provisions to cary into the mines I saw Lewis Stringes at a place called Cold Spring He told me that his father was dead which newes you have probably had before this time Lewis is a hard case from what I can learn the Patrick Boys are about 5 miles from Cold Spring wor5hless creatures drinking and gambling this is what mr Drak sais and others

John Howlett

Direct yourletters to Sacremento City California