

Emigrant's last name: Springer  
first & middle names: A.M.  
Title: [Letter 08-04-51]

Surveyed by: JEJ92 Jim Jarrett  
Date surveyed: 08/08/95

Year of journey: 1851 Year written (if different): \_\_\_\_\_ Page numbers surveyed: 1-4

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: Indiana State Library OCTA Library

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Notes on back? \_\_\_\_\_

Emigrant's occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Origin: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Departed from (code): J3

Arrived at (code): 03

Date of departure: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of arrival: \_\_\_\_\_ (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 \_\_\_\_\_ mules \_\_\_\_\_ 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: 1B 1D 1E 1I 1L 2L 2N 2P \_\_\_\_\_ (use codes from the trail maps)

Notes on back? \_\_\_\_\_







1851

A. M. Springer

YEAR/NAME OF EMIGRANT

51 SPR 01

SURVEY ID NUMBER

\* \* \* PLEASE NOTE \* \* \*

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REFERENCE AND LOAN

Re A. M. Springer, 1851

~~Allen Varner, 1849~~

See Mattes,

Platte River and Navigation

Entry # 1081

Dear Mr. Mattes:

Enclosed please find some new Gold Rush materials. The ~~letter~~ <sup>4 pages</sup> of 8-4-1851? <sup>are</sup> all we have. The first four pages are missing, probably the best four. The letter of Jan. 25, 1852, written in Negbauer's book, by the same man, includes a description of his trip from Oregon to California. The rest of the letter is a description of the gold diggings and I thought you would not be interested in it. The A. M. Springer letters were given us by Margaret Brayton, Westminster village, Muncie, Indiana. The Springer family lived at the time in Orange County, Indiana.

The third item is a letter from Allen Varner at Independence, Mo. This is a copy of a Xerox copy



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Made for us by Mrs. Philip K. Winslow,  
Apt. 711, 4401 Narrow Lane Road, Montgomery,  
Alabama 36111. It was sent to us in 1974.

I hope the Brayton and Varner letters  
are of some help to you.

Sincerely,

Marybelle Buch



August 21<sup>th</sup>

A.M. Springer 1851  
Indian Stake Library  
Metcalf Collection

84-1851?

I have already written 4 pages and have not yet made a commencement of my letter. But I cannot in this Epistle think of telling you one half that I would wish. But to commence where I left off I would just say that this disagreeable country of which I have spoken is on the Platt River. The Roads on these plains are certainly the finest the world can produce, being level or a gradual ascent with the River, and from 2 to smooth. In some places they were quite as hard as a rock & yet entirely void of stone. There are neither hills or timber here to obstruct the view consequently the traveler can see objects many days travel in advance of him. Yet notwithstanding all this it is the most uninteresting portion of country through which the Oregon emigrant chaste pass in crossing the plains. The atmosphere is rarely two hours at a time of the same temperature the days were generally warm enough to be pleasant but the nights were generally cold & attended with the most chilling wind that I ever experienced. On the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May while we were laying at the crossing of the South Platt river a storm arose about 2 o'clock and lasted until sun up next morning. This I suppose was the hardest storm that the emigrant this season had to withstand, and had it not been for some Emigrants who were camped close by us, with waggon. I do not know whether or not we would have survived the storm. The rain & hail fell in perfect torrents, driven by a cold chilling wind from the north west & north, that came with such violence that one could scarcely keep their feet when exposed to it. We had neither tent or any thing else to protect us as there was not a whisp of timber in sight and the nearest timber on either side was 15 miles distant. However we were offered a tent by some of the wagoners but when we attempted to fix it we found it took 3 men to keep it from being carried off by the wind. They then offered us one of their own tents but we refused it and stayed the night in our own tent for the



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right. I don't think that I was ever so well killed to death  
in all my life than I was during this night. A man with a team  
encamped just on the opposite side of the river from us was swept  
ed down by his hail and severely beaten before he could get relief.  
The waggon covers were much cut to pieces. A team encamped  
some 15 miles from us lost 5 mules by the same storm.  
The mules can't stand it what can I. If I were going to  
cross the plains again I would want at least one waggon to every  
three persons and 3 good mules to each person also packs, saddles  
and packs so that the waggon could be thrown out after the  
first 6 or 8 hundred miles. From there on until the Yosemite  
the Willamette Valley the roads get worse I would not haul a  
waggon over the Cascade Mountains which is a distance of 100 miles  
for it. On these mountains there are many gray miles through which  
it is difficult for a waggon to pass aside from this the ascent  
and descent of the mountains are so near bordering on perpendicular  
that it is killing or stark to travel the way, but more par-  
ticularly with a waggon. After we left Fort Larimer we had  
no rain and the whole scenery was changed, the country now comen-  
s rolling and afforded considerable pine & cedar timber and like  
the country through which we had just past, the scenery was very  
variate changing which was quite a relief to the traveler, & more espe-  
cially one who had been raised amongst the hills. I was much sur-  
prised to find the road across the rocky mountains so good as they  
were. I don't believe that the world can produce another route  
of the same length with so few obstructions to travel as the  
Oregon Road, from Saint Joseph to the summit of the Rocky  
Mountains. The ascent is so gradual that one can scarcely  
conceive that they are ~~even~~ ascending at all. But the mountains  
on either side are heads of Stone Towers to the height of some  
thousand feet above the level of the valleys.



I'll Mr. Jones that I'm glad to hear of  
 There are many curiosities to be seen in crossing the plains which  
 I have received nearly, not quite paid the wages - for his time &  
 recompences him for the trouble & difficulty through which he has  
 pass. The first grand curiosity is the Clouth pass or Nevil  
 This is where sweet water river runs through a mountain  
 it looks as if the mountain had been cut into after it was  
 purpose to let the river pass. The mountain rises  
 perpendicularly to some 400 feet in height above the water  
 and presents a sublime view to the eye of the spectator or observer  
 who has any love for natural scenery. The Soda Springs come  
 next upon the catalogue of curiosities I would like to give you  
 a full description of these springs and speak of them at some length  
 but I have already indulged in detail too much. But suffice  
 it the present to say, that there are quite a number of them boiling  
 out of the earth affording an abundance of Soda water of various  
 aures from very cold to that of warmer than blood heat.  
 The colder ones make an excellent drink, and if I had them in  
 the state Jerry Ford might say but I would make  
 the most money. There are many other curiosities which I  
 have seen, but I fear I have already wearied your patience.  
 I have as yet traveled but little in the settlements of Oregon  
 one day last week I went from Oregon city down to Portland on board  
 of what they call in this country a stern boat. When I first  
 saw it I really thought it was a floating battery and that the fire  
 - place and boiler was the cook stove. For riding on this a dis-  
 tance of 12 miles and back they charge \$6,00. Portland is a very pretty  
 town and is rapidly improving. The Willammett River is navigable  
 for whips up to this point, at all seasons of the year. There are quite  
 a number laying the cat present waiting for freight. It is rather  
 dull times here at present, as it is harvesting time with the farmers  
 I have seen



keep in the States oats also is raised in abundance with but little trouble  
there is an abundance of wheat raised here this season in consequence  
of which the price is quite low being only from \$1.00 to \$1.25 per bushel  
(at) is \$3.00 per Bu potatoes from \$1.00 to \$1.25 per Bu which is very  
low for them. Boasting in the towns is from 10¢ to 15¢ per bushel  
and very common at that I have been stopping in Oregon city since  
I came into the valley but I think I shall go up the valley tomorrow  
to look at the valley I have no notion however of laying a claim  
as the law requires that one shall reside on and cultivate the land  
for 3 consecutive years before he can get a title to it. This gives the  
bachelor no chance at all for he would not be bound to live on one  
little spot of earth and keep back for four years for all the land  
in Oregon. I have not gone into business yet neither have I  
sold my stock all kinds of stock there now is near as low as it  
was in the States. But I think it will raise again in the fall when  
the rush is made for the mines. As we were the first over the plains  
we were bored to death with questions respecting the Emigration  
By my next letter I will be able to tell you something about Oregon  
and let you know how I like it. I have drawn none of my Old acqu  
aintances here yet. Ed Coffin & all the boys that came with  
him to Oregon have gone to the mines, Many of the gold mines  
near Oregon are yet considered rich. The common labourer here  
gets from 2 to 3 dollars per day & board. Mechanics wages  
are much lower than they have been ranging from 5¢ to 10¢  
per day. I had like to have forgotten to tell you about my health  
I was most generally in good health and was able to ride on horse  
back every day. The worst enemy I had on the plains was my ap  
petite which many times could not be satisfied. My health  
at present is very good. I stood the trip much better  
than I thought was possible for me when I left the States.  
I have had a hard time getting this letter wrote having to write in the  
narrow bar room and besides some questions about the emigration  
every five minutes. Hence the miserable penmanship and broken  
sentences of which this letter is composed. Tell Father Stewart that  
he can't save potatoes that we Oregon men would buy. My respects to  
all the folks and I shall expect to hear from you at earliest  
opportunity. A.M.



I send you and father some specimens of gold I should like to send some larger specimens but cannot conveniently enclose it in a letter. Previous to leaving the states I promised to write to many persons, but it would be out of the question for me to write to each one separately. So be it understood that when I write to one I write to all and should be happy at any and at all times to hear from relatives and friends, please write soon direct A. M. Springer  
P.S. I can get my letters from Oregon City by

Shasta City California Jan 1850  
Dear Mother I do please you think it is long very long time I have not written in. I understand over which I have no control is the cause of the long delay. I suppose you will be much disappointed to learn that I have left Oregon. I have written to you from Oregon City & then expected to remain in that Territory for at least a few years, and then pay California a passing visit on my return home. But being much disappointed with regard to the country in general, I had not







This is the extreme <sup>southern</sup> ~~northern~~ portion of the territory and there are no settlements of consequence in it.

The willamett valley is reckoned the largest valley in Oregon, which is 250 m. in length and from 15 to 20 m. in width. Much of the upper portion of this valley is level prairie land and is covered with water during the winter & spring seasons. Making the roads that pass through it almost impassable. But I believe it is with difficulty traveled all seasons of the year by persons going to and from the gold mines.

The roads were quite good when I came out, with the exception of 12 miles where the road runs through a range of mountains in a cañon. This is decidedly the worst piece of road that my eyes ever beheld. In traveling the distance of 10 miles in this cañon you cross one stream some 150 times and some portions of it is very swampy. Several mules in our company mired down with their packs on. However, we whole day get through.



I believe in a previous letter I gave you a history of  
my trip across the plains and also a few items concern-  
ing Oregon. And now, to wind up my narrative  
of the beauties of this fair land, (which has been  
exceedingly brief,) in order to give you an unmistak-  
able conception of what I think of Oregon.  
The land of promise; - the earthly paradise;  
the garden spot of the world, permit me to say  
that I consider it the greatest bumper of the day  
wooden nutmegs and yummy nettles not  
excepted; but enough of this. It has been near  
five months since I left Oregon bound for Cal-  
ifornia and from that time up to the present, I  
have enjoyed uninterrupted health, notwith-  
standing during near half that time, I was  
much exposed to the weather, having nothing to  
protect me from the heavy dews of the Summer  
nights, (which are invariably cool) except my  
blankets, which, owing to the inconvenience of



9.  
canyons, were not over profuse. One blanket spread  
upon the ground, which was generally hard, and some-  
times smooth, formed my bed, my boots answering most  
admirably for a pillow. At present, after the fa-  
tigue of the day I could lie down and sleep as com-  
monly as though I were resting upon a bed of down, with  
in the walls of a palace. I am now stopping in a  
comfortable cabin with two very agreeable com-  
rades, upon a small stream called Humboldt creek  
about six miles distant from Chasta City, where  
I have been mining ever since I came to California.  
I have been very successful so far, and have very fla-  
tering prospects for the future - least some 4 or 5 months  
to come. Some few that have worked upon this  
creek have taken out from 15 to 20 thousand doll-  
ars in a very short time, these, have mostly left for  
the Atlantic States leaving their more unsuccess-  
ful fellows, still labouring in hope, and it is  
much to be feared that some of them labour in vain



10.  
for it is a fact which time has proven, that - it is not every one that comes to California that goes home with a fortune, nor is it a less stubborn fact - that those who return to their homes as well off as when they left, are strongly in the minority. I know many persons now mining on this coast who have been mining in California some two or three years - and during that time have but little over cleared expenses. Some make money very fast and spend it the same way, gambling drinking &c. It has been but a short time since one man working near us took out nine hundred dollars in one day and lost one thousand at cards on the following night -

But I believe that any prudent industrious man can make money fast in these mines as they are at present, how long they will continue good I cannot say. Wages are from 5<sup>00</sup> to 6<sup>00</sup> per day. Boarding is from 18<sup>00</sup> to 20<sup>00</sup> per week. But as the miners generally keep back and lay in their provisions by the quantity, by being



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SURVEYOR INFORMATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SURVEYOR)

JIM JARRETT JES 92  
SURVEYOR NAME SURVEYOR ID NO.

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