



DR. JOHN HUDSON WAYMAN. From a small photograph made in San Francisco in 1865.

## Introduction

### I.

ON THE MORNING OF JANUARY 24, 1848, James W. Marshall found gold in the tail race of the sawmill whose construction he was supervising for John Sutter on the south fork of the American River in California. By this discovery, he unknowingly determined the destiny of countless numbers of persons — Dr. John Hudson Wayman among them — and altered the course of American history.<sup>1</sup>

The impact of Marshall's discovery was immediate. By the end of the following summer and fall, a rush had started from all parts of California as well as from Oregon, and fortune hunters arrived daily from places as distant as Mexico, Chile, Australia, and even China.<sup>2</sup> Soon the news reached eastern parts of the country, and by late summer, 1848, the press began publishing reports of the gold finds. Interest intensified during the winter, and President Polk's annual message to Congress on December 5, 1848, reinforced the growing excitement. When, just two days later, actual samples of the precious metal itself were displayed in the nation's capitol, the effect was instantaneous and profound. Paper after paper proclaimed the news in extravagant phrases: "The Eldorado of the old Spaniards is discovered at last," wrote the *New York Herald*; in the opinion of the *Pittsburgh Daily Dispatch*, "An emigration will immediately commence for which we venture to say no parallel can be formed in history."<sup>3</sup> The sensational news from the west coast spread from one section of the East to another until the whole country was astir with exciting rumors of instant

<sup>1</sup> An account of his discovery appears in *James Marshall, the Discoverer of California Gold*, by Theresa Gay, pp. 145-51. See also John W. Caughey, *Gold is the Cornerstone*, Chapter I. Facts of publication for these and all other references appear in the bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph P. Bieber, "California Gold Mania," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXV, 12-13. See also Caughey, pp. 23-24. Some of these "forty-eighters" made impressive finds. One of them found \$20,000 worth of gold in six weeks. Others took from \$800 to \$15,000 every day from the north fork of the American River (*ibid.*, p. 29). Chapter II in Caughey gives additional information about the "forty-eighters."

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Bieber, "California Gold Mania," p. 21.



wealth. From the United States the rising gold fever spread to Canada and even leaped the Atlantic to Europe. The contagion was international.<sup>4</sup>

The winter of 1848-49 gave people of adventurous spirit time to prepare for crossing the wide stretches of the continent or for making the journey by sea — discussing routes, laying in supplies, mortgaging or selling land, buying wagons, securing passage. Some even pawned valuable possessions to obtain money for the venture.<sup>5</sup> Those who chose the overland route had to wait until the weather became favorable for wagon travel in the spring. Thus it was not until April or May, 1849, that individuals, families, and organized companies began congregating at the supply points and jumping-off places along the Missouri River.

Of the many who set out early in 1849 was Alonzo Delano, whose physician recommended the trip as a means of improving his health. What he tells us at the beginning of his journal, one of the best of many accounts kept by gold seekers, suggests how individuals responded to the forces luring them westward. He says, for example, that "About this time, the astonishing accounts of the vast deposits of gold in California reached us, and besides the fever of the body, I was suddenly seized with the fever of the mind for gold; and in hopes of receiving a speedy cure for the ills both of body and mind, I turned my attention 'westward ho!' and immediately commenced making arrangements for my departure."<sup>6</sup> When he engaged passage on a steamer going up the Missouri, he found as he says, "Nearly ever State in the Union . . . represented."

Travel to California was not new, but the increase in the number who went there in 1849 as compared to 1848 was fifty-fold.<sup>7</sup> The non-Indian population, to look at this influx another way, increased from 14,000 in 1848 to 223,000 or more towards the end of 1852, the year that Wayman arrived there.<sup>8</sup>

The rush for gold that began in 1848 and 1849 continued in 1850, declined in 1851, and then increased in 1852. As more and more people joined in the adventurous challenge to reap a harvest of wealth, every class of society from the high to the low was affected. In Bancroft's words, they included "the trader . . . , the toiling farmer, whose mortgage loomed above the growing family, the briefless lawyer, the starving student, the quack, the idler, the harlot, the gambler, the hen-pecked husband, the disgraced . . . the many earnest, enterprising, honest men and devoted women."<sup>9</sup> He might also have added the physician.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 3-28, for a richly documented account of the spread of the "gold fever."

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Across the Plains and Among the Diggings* (1936), p. 1. Delano's account was originally published in 1854.

<sup>7</sup> George R. Stewart, *The California Trail*, p. 217.

<sup>8</sup> Rodman Paul, *California Gold*, p. 25. See also his *Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880*, p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Caughey, *Gold is the Cornerstone*, p. 45.

## II.

IT IS NOT SURPRISING, consequently, that two of the Wayman brothers, James Vallores and John Hudson Wayman, both of them physicians, should have decided to give up their practices in Indiana and join in the general exodus to the California El Dorado. First to go was James, who left home in the fall of 1849. Taking the Panama route, he arrived in San Francisco on the *Sea Queen* early in January, 1850, and went directly to the southern mines near Sonora and later to the northern mines above Marysville. When he became discouraged by conditions at both places, he returned to Indiana in 1851 or 1852 and resumed his medical practice.<sup>10</sup> However disappointing his experiences in the gold fields may have been, they were not sufficient to deter his brother John from venturing there in 1852.

Of Dr. John H. Wayman's early life before he went to California little has been preserved. One of six children, he was born in 1820 on a farm near Covington, Kentucky, the son of Moses and Ruth (Jones) Wayman.<sup>11</sup> The family moved to Henry County, Indiana, in 1829. James, after studying medicine with a Dr. Joel Reed, received an M.D. degree in 1837 from Ohio Medical College in Cincinnati, where he had studied under Dr. Samuel Gross,<sup>12</sup> one of the outstanding American physicians and surgeons in the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

Medical education in the United States during the first half of that century, when medical schools were on an insecure footing and often short-lived, was vastly different from what we have become accustomed to today. Standards were low, diagnosis and treatment of disease were far from scientific, and unbelievable chicanery was commonplace. There is the case, for example, of a medical quack in the California gold fields whose sole knowledge of medicine, if it can be called

<sup>10</sup> This information comes to me from Mrs. Wayman E. Ballenger of Concord, California, whose late husband was the grandson of Dr. James V. Wayman.

<sup>11</sup> Covington is located across the Ohio River directly below Cincinnati in Kenton County, Kentucky, on the Licking River. According to Estelle C. Watson in *Some Martin, Jefferies, and Wayman Families*, p. 144, Wayman was born in Campbell County, Kentucky. Information that he was born near Covington comes from Mrs. Wayman E. Ballenger.

Wayman's father was born on May 11, 1785, probably in Culpeper County, Virginia. His parents were Herman and Elizabeth (Clore) Wayman. In addition to John, the other children of Moses and Ruth Wayman were James Vallores (b. October 14, 1811), Milton Herman (b. 1813), Moses (b. 1815), William (b. 1817), and Elizabeth (b. 1833). See Watson, p. 144.

<sup>12</sup> *History of Wayne County*, II, 605. Xerox copy furnished by Annette Osmundsen of the Morrison-Reeves Library, Richmond, Indiana, January 23, 1969.

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Gross was the author of *Treatise on the Anatomy, Physiology, and Diseases and Injuries of the Bones and Joints* (1830), a notable book in its field, followed by others of great distinction. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, VIII, 19. Dr. James Wayman thought so highly of Dr. Gross that he named his first son, Willard Gross Wayman, in his honor.



that, came from boatmen and fishermen whom he knew as a boy living along the Tennessee River.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast, Wayman's training was fortunately of a superior kind. When he was preparing for his career, medical education in Ohio and Indiana was dominated by the preceptor system. Sometimes a medical student's training was limited entirely to this method, based as it was upon a practicing physician's transmitting his knowledge to his protégé working alongside him. In other instances, a student would put in two or three years of such work and then supplement it by study in a medical college, from which he would graduate with his M.D. degree.<sup>15</sup>

John Wayman's decision to enter medicine may have been influenced by his brother's example. In all likelihood, he first studied under a preceptor (as James had done) before entering the Cincinnati College Medical School, where Dr. Samuel Gross was then Professor of Pathology, Physiology, and Jurisprudence.<sup>16</sup> The eminence of this physician and teacher indicates that the education the Wayman brothers received was of high quality by the standards of the time.

Wayman graduated with the M.D. degree in 1841 or 1842 and received a license on May 2, 1842, to practice in Indiana. This license, which still survives and is herein reproduced, bears the signature of his brother, president of the Thirteenth Medical District of the State of Indiana. What definite qualifications Wayman had to meet to obtain his license are obscure. In contrast to standards in Ohio, where a physician had to present credentials of a fairly high caliber, standards in Indiana were lax. The state legislature in 1825 and in 1829 had authorized the Indiana State Medical Association to grant licenses, but the law neglected to prescribe qualifications or even to provide penalties if a physician practiced without one.<sup>17</sup> But as a graduate of a medical school with a good curriculum,<sup>18</sup> Wayman would have been able to satisfy any requirements that may have been expected of him, and his license shows that he was examined in the practice of medicine, surgery, and obstetrics. Taking everything into consideration, his preparation was in all probability as good as he could have received in the region, and when he followed the lure of gold and adventure to California in 1852, he was better prepared than many, if not most, of the doctors who went there.

All such practitioners, however, regardless of the quality of their training, were seriously limited in their knowledge of the causes of disease. The germ

<sup>14</sup> Richard Dunlop, *Doctors of the American Frontier*, p. 178.

<sup>15</sup> Burton D. Myers, *The History of Medical Education in Indiana*, pp. 6-7. See also Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880*, p. 532.

<sup>16</sup> See Francis R. Packard, *History of Medicine in the United States*, II, 797.

<sup>17</sup> Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, pp. 533-34.

<sup>18</sup> At the Cincinnati College Medical School the curriculum consisted of anatomy, pathology, physiology, surgery, obstetrics and the diseases of women and children, materia medica, the practice of medicine, chemistry, and botany (Packard, *History of Medicine* . . . , II, 797).

theory, the work of Louis Pasteur, would not be formulated until many years later. In 1852 the causes of cholera, for example, the most dreaded and deadly scourge of the overland emigrants, was still not understood, although the experience of some physicians on the trail led them to believe that contaminated drinking water might be responsible.<sup>19</sup> Lacking scientific knowledge of the causes and cures of many ailments, doctors who struck out across the country, as Wayman did, resorted to a common body of nostrums: bleeding, purging, sweating, blistering, homeopathy, water cures, and numerous others.<sup>20</sup> There is no evidence to show what kinds of treatment Wayman offered his patients while he traveled to California, but he was probably no exception in applying those just enumerated.

### III.

IN DECIDING TO VENTURE TO CALIFORNIA, Wayman was doing what thousands of other people in his region were doing. I do not have the figures for the number who left Indiana, but it has been estimated that from the neighboring state of Ohio somewhere between 13,000 to 15,000 were already in California by 1852.<sup>21</sup> It must, indeed, have been difficult to resist the spirit of the times — the onward surge to the west coast that reminds one of nothing so much as the great migrations of lemmings in their headlong plunge to the sea. Robert Glass Cleland has stated that during the years following Marshall's discovery of gold, the human migration to California ". . . was so stupendous as to out-rank in point of numbers anything of its kind in the nation's history, and to stand on an equal footing with some of the great world movements of population."<sup>22</sup>

Exactly what motivated Wayman to go there remains obscure. Adventure, ambition, the chance of gaining wealth in the gold fields must have been dominant. Too, he was still young — only 32 in 1852 — and uncommitted with family responsibilities. Something of what was in his mind is suggested in a letter he wrote to his brother James two years later: "I think that a voluntary exile of 3 years is sufficient to satisfy any reasonable appetite [*sic*] for the New, strange and marvelous — I am well pleased . . . with my tour to California, and hope to profit by it through all coming life. A ramble of this character is not time

<sup>19</sup> Dunlop, *Doctors of the American Frontier*, p. 100, tells of a Dr. John Powell who came to this conclusion. He urged emigrants to keep water pure and encouraged them, when it was not otherwise available, to dig into the ground until they struck water.

<sup>20</sup> George W. Groh, *Gold Fever*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>21</sup> Melvin R. Thomas, "The Impact of the California Gold Rush on Ohio and Ohioans." Master's thesis, Ohio State University, 1949, p. 46.

<sup>22</sup> *History of California*, p. 232.



*The Diary of Dr. John Hudson Wayman*

*from Cambridge City, Indiana, to the*

*Gold Fields in 1852*



# A Doctor on the California Trail

Edited by EDGELEY WOODMAN TODD

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lost to a close observer, aside from money matters[.]”<sup>23</sup> In any case, his decision to go west determined the course of the remaining years of his life.

That decision made, he departed from Cambridge City, Indiana, on March 25, 1852, leaving behind him his relatives (including his mother, who was still living) and a house on which he owed money. With him was Elbridge Vinton, but whether Vinton was also bound for California is uncertain. Going south to Cincinnati, Wayman boarded the steamer *North Star* and sailed down the Ohio and up the Mississippi to St. Louis, arriving there on April 4.<sup>24</sup>

St. Louis that spring was filled with the bustle of emigrants scurrying to obtain supplies and make arrangements for passage up the Missouri River to various jumping-off points. Arriving in St. Louis a little later that same month, John H. Clark, headed as Wayman was for the gold country, wrote in his diary that “. . . all was hurry and confusion; horses, drays, mules, carts, merchandise, white men and negroes filled the entire space between the landing and the first row of buildings. How or in what manner a person was to make his way through such a medley was not easily explained.”<sup>25</sup> Wayman managed to secure passage on the steamship *Clipper No. 2* and on April 17, eleven days later and 500 miles from St. Louis, disembarked at St. Joseph, Missouri,<sup>26</sup> an important starting point and outfitting post for the 1852 migration.

Somewhere between Cambridge City and St. Joseph, he had joined with a small group of men to form a party – perhaps by pre-arrangement, perhaps not – which eventually consisted of seven or eight persons, including Wayman himself and Elbridge Vinton (assuming that he still remained). These persons were a guide, whose services were probably secured in St. Joseph; a minister, who remains nameless; Maston Campbell, who went along as cook; William Loring, otherwise unidentified; a man named MacPherson, usually referred to in the diary as Mac; and someone named M. Shearer, who might have been the guide. Since the party was small, they could get along with a few horses and one light cart drawn by oxen. They crossed the Missouri on April 23, remained in camp

<sup>23</sup> Letter to Dr. James V. Wayman from Forest City, California, June 12, 1854. Doctors who took the trail to the gold fields were probably motivated by as many reasons as laymen. One physician from Ohio, Dr. David Maynard, left home because of a sharp-tongued wife and a debt of \$30,000 (Dunlop, *Doctors of the American Frontier*, p. 102). Most doctors were probably less interested in practicing medicine than in gaining wealth and then returning as soon as possible to their homes. Often they did not practice their professions at all but engaged in mining or in other menial tasks. See J. Roy Jones, *Memories, Men and Medicine*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>24</sup> Cabin fare in 1849 was \$7.00 (Joseph E. Ware, *Emigrants' Guide to California* [1932 reprint], p. 3). It may have been increased by 1852.

<sup>25</sup> “Overland to the Gold Fields,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, XI, 230.

<sup>26</sup> Cabin fare for one passenger from St. Louis was \$6.00 in 1849, according to Ware, *Emigrants' Guide*, p. 2.

on the west bank until the first day of May, and then started their great trek westward across the prairies, plains, and mountains.

Venturing into the Far West in mid-nineteenth century on a trip that would take four or five months necessitated careful foresight and planning. The road to California, however, would not be hard to follow, for thousands of emigrants during earlier years had already beaten down the sod and sagebrush, and only a blind man would have been unable to follow it. But there remained the more difficult matter of choosing supplies and equipment. Emigrants for the most part were greenhorns ignorant of the needs of the trail and the demands it would make upon them. Should they use mules, horses, or oxen? What foods and medicines should they carry and how much? What kinds of clothing were best (some women introduced bloomers, and lucky persons had goggles to keep irritating dust from their eyes)? How much should they take in the way of utensils, tools, furniture, bedding, and a hundred other items? Most took too much, and the road became strewn with discarded belongings – a junkyard stretching halfway across the country.

Travelers like Wayman found answers to many of their questions in guidebooks and from conversations with outfitters. Guidebooks, which cost about twenty-five cents apiece, were plentiful and ranged from the worthless to the adequate. Emigrants relied upon them for a knowledge of distances, camping places with good water, grazing areas for their cattle, sites where wood was available, and the like. Sometimes the information they contained was completely worthless. But internal evidence in Wayman's diary shows that he had the newest and one of the best: *The Travelers' Guide Across the Plains upon the Overland Route to California*, by P. L. Platt and N. Slater, published in Chicago in 1852.<sup>27</sup> If he read the “General Directions” in this little book, he found useful condensed information – less than some other guidebooks offered but much that was sound enough. Platt and Slater, unlike some authors, had been over the trail and wrote from personal knowledge of its conditions. They recommended oxen over horses or mules and suggested four or five yoke for each wagon. Since Wayman's group took only one light wagon, they needed fewer animals (Wayman's share of the cost of the oxen was \$70.00). “Your wagons,” Platt and Slater recommended, “should not be very heavy, but well made; and should have two good lock chains – one on each side” (p. xvii). In time Wayman and his friends found this piece of advice very sound.

Their choice of food depended largely upon what would keep well. If the Wayman party heeded Platt and Slater, they took “. . . flour, corn-meal, (kiln-dried), hard-bread, crackers of different kinds, side bacon and hams, tea, coffee, sugar, different kinds of dried fruits, beans and rice; to which may be added, some pickles, a little vinegar, and some good butter, well worked and well packed,

<sup>27</sup> A copy of the original edition is extremely scarce. A modern reprint has been published by John Howell (San Francisco, 1963); all citations are to this edition.



and stowed in the bottom of the wagon" (p. xvii).<sup>28</sup> Their diet was supplemented from time to time with fresh fish, antelope, and buffalo. Each man, Platt and Slater believed, should carry a minimum of 300 pounds of provisions. Adequate clothing and bedding as well as a gun apiece were also essentials. One recommendation Wayman's group largely ignored: "Along the worst parts of the route," Platt and Slater advised, "companies ought to consist of not less than twenty-five men. That number, by faithful guarding can come [through] safely. In the midst of the emigration a smaller number might get through without trouble" (p. xviii). It is worth noting that Wayman's party had no trouble at any time with shortages of food nor serious difficulty with Indians. In fact, their entire journey was notably free of emergencies. They did not press their animals hard, rested them when necessary, and in general managed the whole trip with good sense.

Because their route is described in detail in the text of Wayman's diary and in the footnotes, only its general outlines might be given here.

From St. Joseph they went nearly due west, struck the Big Blue and Little Blue rivers south of today's Marysville, Kansas, and then headed northwest up the Little Blue toward the Platte, which they followed to the confluence of its main branches. Here they shifted over to the North Platte, and along its dreary stretches passed such landmarks as Courthouse and Jail Rocks, Chimney Rock, and Scotts Bluff, and finally came to Fort Laramie. After a layover near the fort, they set out once again along the North Platte, leaving it eventually (west of modern Casper, Wyoming) for the Sweetwater, which took them directly to South Pass. Crossing the Continental Divide here, they soon hit Pacific Creek and followed it to the Big Sandy. Down the Sandy they went as far as Kinney's cutoff<sup>29</sup> and then traveled west across the Green River and eventually to Hams Fork. Making their way through the mountains lying to the west, they struck Bear River and followed it north to where Soda Springs, Idaho, is now located.

West of here they had a choice to make, and they apparently made it upon the recommendation of Platt and Slater. They could either take the road that went northwesterly to Fort Hall and the Snake River or follow the Hudspeth cutoff, which went almost due west to the Raft River, where the cutoff joined the road coming diagonally down from Fort Hall. They chose the Hudspeth

<sup>28</sup> A list of expenses in the diary shows that Wayman took the following items with him or bought them along the way: one-half pound citric acid, an ax, whisky, a kettle, a coffee pot, hams, salt, buffalo robes, a lariat, fifty pounds of flour, lead, several pairs of moccasins, horse shoe nails, a bushel of potatoes, corn meal, meat, pies, hay, and shirts.

Alpheus Graham, another 1852 emigrant, lists in detail the supplies he took: flour, sugar, brandy, nails, tea, coffee, rope, powder, shot, thread, cheese, tartaric acid, kettles, pins, liniment, calomel, ginger, ammonia, crackers (125 pounds), dried apples, lemon syrup, jugs, buckets, lead, tar, turpentine, beans, kegs, ink, quinine, castor oil, camphor, sulphur, bacon, vinegar, soap, molasses, salt, caps, needles, beads, soda, rice, a demijohn, cayenne pepper, sweet oil, peppermint, and opium ("Journal," p. 20).

<sup>29</sup> See diary for June 26, 1852, and note 39.

route, although it saved little distance or time. It was a good enough road to follow in 1852, having been in constant use during the summer months since 1849.

As did hundreds and perhaps thousands of other emigrants, Wayman and his party plodded through the mountains of Idaho to the City of Rocks, through the Goose Creek Mountains to Thousands Springs Valley, and eventually came out upon the Humboldt River. They followed this river through some of the most barren country of the entire trip, but it was comparatively free of serious obstacles. By now, though the animals of many travelers were beginning to give out, and Wayman passed hundreds of dead or dying animals and abandoned wagons. The Humboldt curved south to the Carson River, which led them finally to the great barrier stretching across their path — the towering Sierra Nevada Mountains. Up its sheer slopes they struggled at last over Carson Pass, the most difficult stretch of the entire trip. Once across the summit, Wayman and his companions soon arrived at Placerville, where the party broke up, each man now going his own way.

## IV.

IT HAD BEEN A JOURNEY which no one today could possibly experience except vicariously in the written accounts of the emigrants themselves. These show us what men, women, and children endured. In their accounts we see suffering, despair, and defeat; strength and weakness; knowledge and ignorance. We watch some traveling with wagons and teams, some pushing wheelbarrows, and others walking with their provisions on their backs. Ambition and thwarted hope, love and hatred, determination and discouragement, birth and sudden death traveled side by side. Wayman saw it all.

Enormous numbers of people crowded the road to Oregon and California during 1852. As the trails from Independence and St. Joseph converged, the line of traffic was literally endless. "As far as the eye can reach to the east and to the west," Richard O. Hickman observed, "nothing is to be seen but large trains of wagons and stock. When I beheld it first I could not help asking myself where all this mass of human beings came from. . . ." <sup>30</sup> The dust they stirred up was so heavy that sometimes he could hardly see his teams ahead of him. Ezra Meeker, who was also part of the 1852 migration, judged that there was an almost unbroken line of emigrants and animals extending over five hundred miles. On May 28 at Fort Kearney, Alpheus Graham, another of these 1852 venturers, reported 3,280 teams on the south side of the Platte and about 1,000 on the north with little grass to feed them. <sup>31</sup> Sometimes three and four wagons

<sup>30</sup> Hickman, *Overland Journey to California in 1852*, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Meeker, *The Ox Team*, pp. 38-39, and Graham, "Journal," p. 7. Available statistics concerning the migration are often impressive. The *Sacramento Daily Union* on August 17, 1852, published the results of a dispatch from the *St. Louis Republican*, which reported that between May 29 and June 11 the following had passed Fort Kearney: 16,362 men; 3,242 women; 4,666 children; 5,325 wagons; 6,538 horses; 4,606 mules; 1 hog; 59,392 cattle; 10,523 sheep; 100 to 150 turkeys; 4 ducks; and 3 guinea hens.



side by side with no possibility for anyone to pass. One traveler expressed the opinion that where he was at one point, 15,000 wagons were still behind him. He could see neither the beginning nor the rear of the line, so far it extended in both directions.

Such great numbers of people included all strata of society. A. M. Crane, among one of this great mass of people on the move that year, found that the quality of the people were of the lowest sort, ". . . among whom the most horrid profanity and degrading vulgarity and obscenity of language is nearly universal. Their complaining is generally vented upon their oxen, and is of a character too filthy to defile my paper with." In contrast, he said, were respectable people who entirely eschew all these vices. Sometimes one meets here a gentleman or a woman of refinement and education but not often.<sup>32</sup> Many travelers, he was surprised to find, were families, some with six to twenty-four children apiece. One wagon in particular struck my fancy[,] being occupied wholly by the ladies and children. . . . Good easy seats — side curtains to roll up &c. The cry of a young child seemed so domestic that it almost made me homesick.<sup>33</sup>

Such vast numbers of animals and human beings passing over much the same ground and camping at the same camp grounds without sanitation made defilement of water and soil inevitable. Flies spread disease-bearing filth. Deadly illnesses, especially cholera, became unavoidable and so commonplace that every year was filled with mention of death and graves. This is such a prevailing theme that I can give only a slight indication of its magnitude. It is this aspect of the situation, with its great toll in human lives, that is most appalling.

Although many wagons carried supplies of medications, the emigrants were rarely capable of diagnosing their ailments accurately or prescribing for them intelligently; and even doctors, when they could be found, were little better able to treat dread diseases like cholera with the medicines at hand.<sup>34</sup> Some emigrants

<sup>32</sup> "Journal," p. 22.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*, p. 17a.

<sup>34</sup> For various studies of disease on the trail, see John E. Bauer, "The Health Factor in the Gold-Rush Era," in *Rushing for Gold*, John W. Caughey, ed., pp. 97-108; Georgia W. Read, "Diseases, Drugs, and Doctors on the Oregon-California Trail in the Gold-Rush Years," *Mississippi Historical Review*, XXXVIII, 260-76; Groh, *Gold Fever*, Chapters 3 and 9; and Dunlop, *Doctors of the American Frontier*. Dunlop refers to a physician who went to Oregon in 1850 and estimated that between two and three thousand persons bound for Oregon died of cholera. He treated not less than 700 persons (p. 100). Dunlop also says that Dr. John Powell sometimes went fifty miles to deliver babies to emigrant mothers and to treat people suffering from typhoid fever and cholera. Dr. Powell's experience led him to believe that contaminated water was the main cause of such illnesses, and he urged efforts to keep water pure (*loc. cit.*).

even tried to overcome the effects of bad water by adding whiskey in hopes of purifying it.<sup>35</sup>

With such inadequate efforts to stem the spread of cholera, it is no wonder that the disease hit many people. Meeker found "The scourge of cholera on the Platte in 1852 [to be] far beyond [his] power of description," and he reports the experience of one woman who testified that during the course of two nights and a day, forty individuals in her train died. An entire family of seven succumbed and were buried in a common grave.<sup>36</sup> It was not uncommon for an individual to be well in the morning and dead by evening. One diarist, Jared Fox, recorded a case of sudden death of this kind: "7 o'clock and near sundown," he wrote, "the comrades of [a] dead man are digging his grave and burying him near the road some 10 rods in front of our tent. Looks solemn. . . . Had a brother with him and a wife and children. . . . I have since learned that the brother that was well when he was buried died before morning and was buried after we left that morning."<sup>37</sup>

When Alpheus Graham became ill on June 3, he wrote in his diary: "Very unwell, have the diareaha [*sic*] bad, had a doctor in this eve, his medicine helped my bowels, but I have a high fever. The boys . . . are all more or less alarmed. The cholera raging all around us."<sup>38</sup> He gradually recovered, but others were not always that fortunate. Some became so discouraged by the threatening disease that they turned back rather than to continue facing the risk.

J. M. Verdenal tells of an instance of this kind. On May 29, 1852, he reported that ". . . during the day we met, [*sic*] one wagon returning from its intended voyage viz to California; the wagon consisted of two men, both brothers one of whom lost his wife ahead leaving him & his brother to take care of 6 children, 1 not more than 12 months old. under this burden with the news he had learned he thought the wiser plan was to return, to the states, the news he spoke of was that, a head of us, the Cholera & Smallpox was raging, in unbated fury, and that many of the emigrants were returning."<sup>39</sup> Yet, trusting "in Providence," Verdenal and his company pushed on. Some tried various expedients other than trusting in Providence to avoid contagion. Alpheus Graham's party, for example, decided to travel at night in an attempt to pull beyond emigrants ahead of them and thus evade the threat of contagion.

Every instance of death on the trail was a cause of heartache, and sometimes the fear of death and the need to hurry on caused a wagon company to ignore the needs of the sick or even to abandon members who were dying. In one such instance a woman and her children stood weeping around the new grave of the husband and father after her company drove away. Nor was it unknown for

<sup>35</sup> Crane, "Journal," p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> *The Ox Team*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>37</sup> "Memorandum," p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> "Journal," p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> "Journal," p. 10.



children to become orphans through the deaths of their parents. Margaret Inman tells of carrying "... a little motherless babe five hundred miles, whose mother had died, and when we would camp I would go from camp to camp in search of some good, kind, motherly woman to let it nurse and no one ever refused when I presented it to them."<sup>40</sup>

In another instance, a man who had gone to California ahead of his family started back to meet his wife and children, now traveling west to rejoin him. At the meadows on Carson River, he was reunited with his wife at 3:00 o'clock one afternoon but found her dying. Though unable to speak, she recognized him: "she put her arms around his neck and smiled at 8 o'clock she died leaving three children she had brought with her, the eldest not yet four years old and she but 23. . . ."<sup>41</sup> Such experiences illustrate the anguish of many individuals who started out confident of reaching their hoped-for goals but unaware of the possible hazards in store for them.

It was in the midst of such human suffering that Wayman also traveled. Not infrequently he would be called upon to tend the sick. On the basis of his experience, he reached certain conclusions about disease and its causes on the trail. Writing in his diary on June 30, he made the following observations:

From the commencement of our journey, the diseases were Diarrhea in two forms, the pale free watery discharges and the Bilious[.] This will be sufficient as a description, until we left Fort Laramie after which Dyesentery [sic] seemed to take the place of Diarrhea. After reaching the South Pass, we encountered some fever of a Bilious Remittent [?] character, not maligna[n]t, being easily controlled, when not associated with disease of the Bowels. I have heard of some deaths occurring from this mountain fever, in such cases I think from what I have seen, that it is the result of bad management, and when death does occur, the immediate cause is Peritoneal inflammation. I have visited some cases, & indeed the only serious ones were of this character, This induces me to think that all fatal cases terminate in this way. Peritoneal inflammation seems to be a natural concomitant of this Mountain fever. I have seen a number of cases and all seem to wear [sic] this tendency. Though if properly managed there is no danger.

Since Wayman and his company went through without any illness, they were probably careful to "manage properly."

But death was not always the result of mismanagement or disease. Sometimes it was the consequence of violence in a wilderness, far beyond the reaches of the law where crime occasionally went unpunished and where even murder could take place without reprisal. Alpheus Graham's company, for example, found a dead man floating down the North Platte somewhere beyond Fort Laramie. They brought the body ashore and determined that the man had been killed and

<sup>40</sup> "My Arrival in Washington in 1852," *Washington Historical Quarterly*, XVIII, 254.

<sup>41</sup> H. S. Anable, "Journal," pp. 61-62.

probably tossed into the river.<sup>42</sup> But not all criminal acts went unpunished. Emigrants sometimes took the law into their own hands and dealt severely with persons found guilty of murder.

A good example of punishment which was nearly as brutal as the crime appears in the journal of John Verdenal:

during the day [Monday, July 5] saw the grave of 7. Miller died June 10th 1852 he was murdered in cold blood by a man named Lafayette Tate. . . . [The next day] started early crossed Bosame Creek [?] where I gleaned the following particulars of the murdered Tate. It appeared that Tate had informed some one in Miller's train that as soon as he would be out of the reach of Fort Laramie he would kill Miller and he (Miller) going on one day ahead of the train Tate stabbed him to the heart. Tate was immediately brought before a tribunal of representatives from 200 wagons in the neighborhood. Tate had a fair and impartial trial. by them he was sentenced to be hung and his remains buried but 1 foot below the sod so that his Body should become the prey of the wolves & other animals[.] This sentence was fully carried into effect and thus Tate paid the deep penalty for his crime, when we passed near this day we noticed his grave from which one of his bones protruded forth and his hair was strewn around the grave. It was a shocking sight[.]<sup>43</sup>

Then there was also the murder of Mathias Beal (or Beel) by his partner Leo Balsey, which George Stewart calls "... the classical story of wagon-train justice." The shooting, which occurred somewhere between Green River and Hams Fork, is reported in many diaries. On July 3 Alpheus Graham came to the spot where Beal had been murdered. He wrote briefly in his diary: "We passed the grave of Mathias Beal of Boon County, Ky., who had been shot on the 12th day of June by Leon Balsey of the same place." The next day Graham neared Hams Fork; and "Here," he says, "we saw the grave of Balsey [sic] shot on the 14th of June for the murder of Beal, we have heard particulars."<sup>44</sup>

Stewart has pieced out the affair with many more details. After Balsey was taken into custody, he was tried before a twelve-man jury. Balsey denied none of the testimony, was found guilty, and condemned to be executed by a firing squad at six o'clock the next morning. Six rifles were loaded only with powder, six others with powder and ball. With his back toward the firing squad and kneeling on a blanket, Balsey himself gave the signal to fire. He was buried alongside the trail.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Alpheus Graham, "Journal," pp. 10-11.

<sup>43</sup> "Journal," p. 22. Caroline Richardson devoted three pages of her "Journal and Commonplace Book" to recounting this affair; see pp. 63-66.

<sup>44</sup> "Journal," p. 13.

<sup>45</sup> For Stewart's account, see his *The California Trail*, pp. 308-309.



The experiences of the emigrants were not all concerned with grim death and violence, however. There was also entertainment in the camps at night, with singing, dancing, and merrymaking. One John H. Clark, tells of ". . . many musicians belonging to the different encampments surrounding us, and after supper all commenced to practice the sweet tunes that were to enliven us while sitting around the camp fire on the far off plain."<sup>46</sup> Another diarist mentions dancing to the "inspiring strains of the violin" and also of seeing two girls playing an accordion and a guitar as they drove along in their wagon.<sup>47</sup> But diaries report far fewer experiences like these than they do the humdrum details of travel and the numbers of miles covered per day.

Wayman himself especially liked to wander from the road, observing rock formations and classifying specimens which he picked up. His daily entries comment upon familiar landmarks, the annoyance of insects, the monotony of traveling along the Platte, the food he and his friends ate, what they did while resting, the sublimity of the landscape, the weather, and other common details. His diary is relatively free of the sensational aspects that some travelers knew. Like those of most emigrants, Wayman's diary is basically an account of the day-to-day effort to make a few more miles toward the beckoning gold fields. When he reached Placerville, tired of the trip and of the irritating delays imposed by his partners, he felt a profound satisfaction that the long trek was over and that he could now devote his time to the purpose for which he had come. "Well[,] this Hangtown [Placerville] is one of the towns what is a town," he exclaimed in his diary on August 27. "We sold out our interest in all Cattle and a glad[d]er boy never presented himself in this region[.]" He was now ready to visit the gold camps and learn what opportunities they might hold for him.

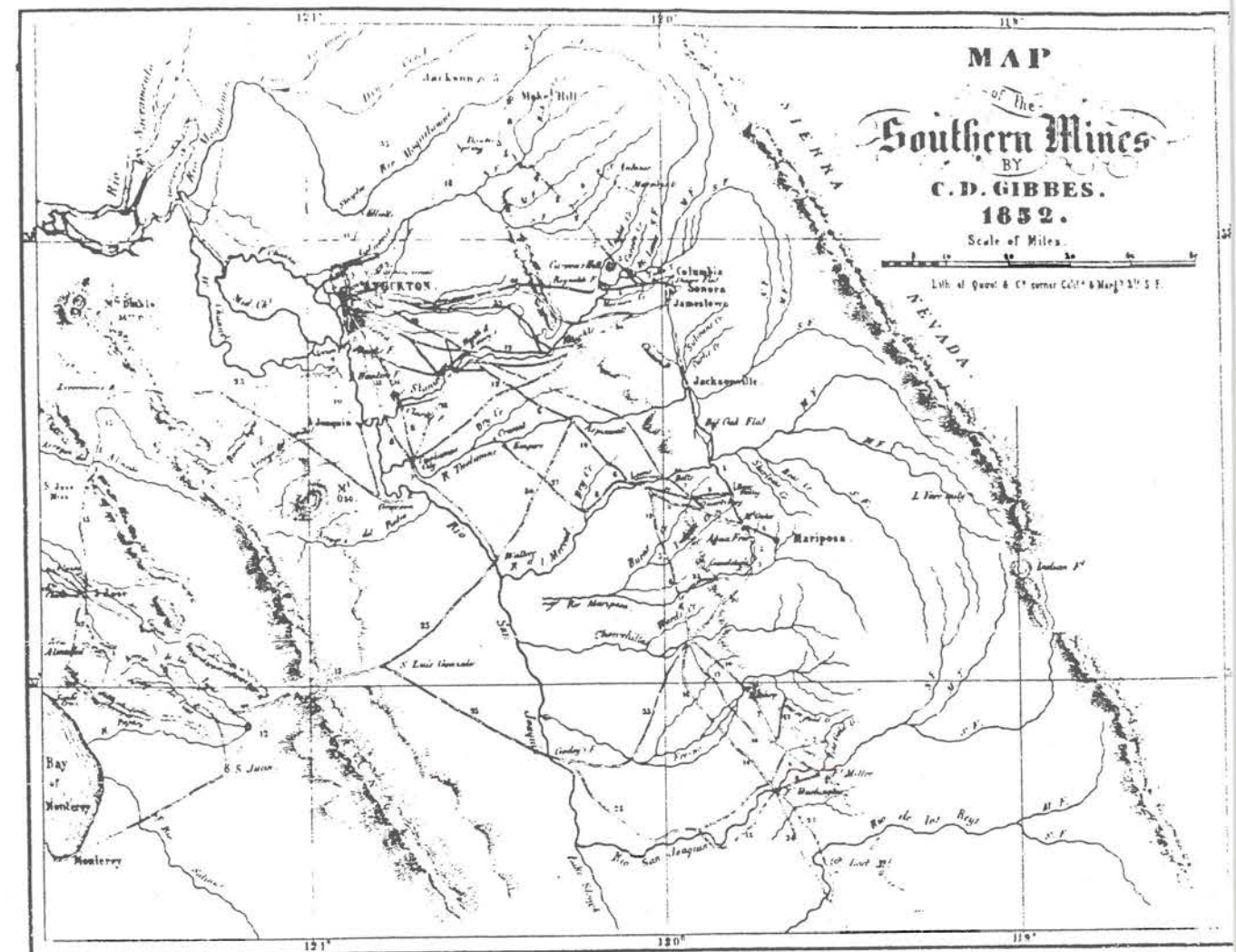
## V.

RATHER THAN REMAINING in Placerville, Wayman determined to start immediately for the southern mines near Sonora, where his brother James had been early in 1850. He remained in Placerville only from August 27 until the morning of August 29 and then left by stage for Sacramento. On August 31 he took a stage to Stockton, where he arrived the same day, and then went to Sonora on September 1.

Sonora put him close to such mining camps as Columbia, Shaw's Flat, Springfield, and Jamestown, and he spent several weeks moving from one to another looking for a favorable mining opportunity. He wrote in his diary on September 23: "I again, in company with Mr. Cooper and Dr. Butler, tramped among the mountains till noon to day; during which time we passed several mining locations some of which, looked very favorable according to my judgment of such

<sup>46</sup> "Overland to the Gold Fields," p. 233.

<sup>47</sup> E. W. Conyers, "Diary," *Transactions of the Thirty-Third Annual Reunion of the Oregon Pioneer Association*, pp. 434-35.





March 25 – April 30, 1852

**MARCH 25th 1852** J. H. Wayman, left Ca[m]bridge city<sup>1</sup> in company with El-bridge Vinton about 9 O'clock in the morning, arrived at Richmond<sup>2</sup> at noon, stoped with D. M. Akin, and remained there till 2 O'clock next morning, left in the stage & went to Hamilton,<sup>3</sup> there boarded the cars & arrived in Cincinnati by noon – Remained in Cinti [sic] during<sup>4</sup> the 27. 28. 29 & 30.

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge City, Wayne County, Indiana, is located in the eastern part of the state. Wayman owned a house and lot here.

<sup>2</sup> Richmond, Indiana, about fifteen miles east of Cambridge City, is the seat of Henry County.

<sup>3</sup> Hamilton, Ohio, is thirty-four miles southeast of Richmond and north of Cincinnati on the Miami River.

<sup>4</sup> The numerals 7 and 8 are crossed out following *during*.

**[MARCH 31]** Wednesday the 31st left on board the Steamer North River bound for St Louis –

**[APRIL 4th]** Sunday morning the 4 of April, landed at St. Louis –<sup>5</sup> remained there the 4. 5. 6 & Wednesday the 7th left that Port on board the Steamer Clipper No. 2.<sup>6</sup> for St Jo 8. 9. 10.

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<sup>5</sup> During April, numerous diarists reported throngs of California-bound emigrants in the streets and docking areas of St. Louis. One of them, Alpheus Richardson from Ohio, observed: "The streets are literally crowded with people and on the wharf there is not room enough for a dray to turn around scarcely for the crowd of people, drays, carriages and wagons bound for California, and provisions which are ready to be shipped" ("Diary," pp. 1-2). Complete bibliographical data for all citations appear in the bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> Although John H. Clark went up the Missouri to St. Joseph on this same steamship later in the month, his observations probably give a good idea of the conditions that Wayman also



witnessed: "Here we began to see the rush for California; a string of adventurers like ourselves came thronging on board until every hole and corner in this spacious ship was full to overflowing. . . ." The next day he wrote: ". . . Still in port and the cry is: 'Still they come.' What are we to do with so many passengers? We were loaded yesterday, but a steamboat, like an omnibus, is never full" ("Overland to the Gold Fields of California in 1852" . . . , ed. Louis Barry, *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, XI, 230).

[April 11th] Sunday the 11 we arrived at Boonville<sup>7</sup> & remained till morning. this little Boonville is one of the most heartsom places that I ever saw, I like it.

<sup>7</sup> Settled in 1810 as a frontier stockade, Boonville (named for Daniel Boone) is located approximately 150 miles from St. Louis on the south side of the Missouri. When Wayman was there, it was an important trading center for pioneers.

[APRIL] 12 —

[April 13th] Tuesday 13th arrived at Lexington<sup>8</sup> Mo. & visited the remains of the ill fated Saluda.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Lexington is located some forty miles east of Kansas City on the south bank of the Missouri. Its history goes back to 1819. At one time it was the westernmost starting point for the Santa Fe Trail. James A. Pritchard described it in 1849 as being unsurpassed "in beauty or fertility" and heavily timbered (*Overland Diary of James A. Pritchard*, p. 53).

<sup>9</sup> The *Saluda*, a side-wheeled steamer, exploded at Lexington on April 9, three days before Wayman visited the wreckage. Two hundred persons bound for Salt Lake and California lost their lives, and for several weeks men probed the water for bodies. Most diarists who traveled up the river refer to it. One of them noted that men were ". . . digging from the hulk . . . such articles as were of value, or to ascertain if there were any dead bodies, to give them burial. I suppose they had found many for they had a line on which was hung promiscuously men, women, & children's clothes . . ." (Lodisa Frizzell, *Across the Plains to California in 1852* . . . , p. 8). Another reported that ". . . nothing but the bare hull remained — heavy articles were thrown up nearly half a mile from shore. They said eyes, fingers & toes of the poor unfortunate suffere[r]s were found on the shore & [at] quite a distance" (MS journal of Mary Stuart Bailey, p. 3). John H. Clark stated that "The boat is a total wreck and marks of the terrible catastrophe are still plainly visible on the shore" ("Overland to the Gold Fields," p. 231). See also Phil. E. Chappell, "A History of the Missouri River," *Transactions of the Kansas Historical Society*, 1905-1906, IX, 288, 310.

[APRIL] 14. 15. 16. Stopped at Weston<sup>10</sup> Mo. and on Saturday the 17th in the evening arrived at St. Jo.<sup>11</sup> I and Mc went up in town, & feeling a little hungry stopped in a shanty and called for 2 Oister Soupes; after wating a long hour, our host presented us with 2 shin poultices well done, — Well I was beaten, we laughed

at them until we attracted the attention of the whole house, after which, feeling a little asslamed of my rudeness turned about and ate it up like a good boy — Sunday the 18 went into Camp 23 crossed the river and took up our abode amonge the Indians.<sup>12</sup> we remained here during the 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29 & 30.

<sup>10</sup> Weston lies on the east bank of the Missouri River a short distance north of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>11</sup> Started as a trading post in 1826, St. Joseph, Missouri, by 1852 was an important outfitting center and starting point for emigrants bound for Utah, Oregon, and California. It is located on the east bank of the Missouri River and is the seat of Buchanan County. Estimates by emigrants as to its population in 1852 vary from three to four thousand persons. Henry S. Anable, who passed through St. Joseph for California in the spring of that year, observed that it was ". . . filled with emigrants to California and Oregon, the hills, valleys, and docks are covered with the tents of the emigrants, Horses, Cattle, mules and every kind of Vehicle crowd the streets, many have already crossed the river and some are far on their way" ("Journal," p. 6). John H. Clark noted that "Oxen, horses and mules are brought in from the surrounding country to sell; the merchant has anticipated all the wants of the emigrant and has everything needful for an 'outfit'" ("Overland to the Gold Fields," p. 232). See also Walker D. Wyman, "The Outfitting Posts," in *Rushing for Gold*, ed. John W. Caughey, pp. 18-21.

<sup>12</sup> Crossing the Missouri created problems for the many emigrants who converged upon St. Joseph. Mrs. Lodisa Frizzell observed in her diary: "Teams [were] crossing the river all the while, but there is not half ferry boats enough here, great delay is the consequence, besides the pushing & crowding, to see who shall get across first. There is every description of teams & waggons; from a hand cart & wheelbarrow, to a fine six horse carriage & buggy; but more than two thirds are oxen & waggons similar to our own; & by the looks of their loads they do not intend to starve" (*Across the Plains to California*, p. 10). John H. Clark said that there were several ferries as well as a steamboat, but emigrants still experienced a delay of two or three days. Rates were one dollar per wagon and fifty cents for each animal ("Overland to the Gold Fields," p. 230).

Once across the Missouri, travelers were in the northeast corner of Kansas. *Travelers' Guide . . . to California*, by P. L. Platt and N. Slater, which Wayman's party appears to have used, states that once across the ferry, ". . . you pass over a heavy-timbered bottom, which in many places is soft and miry, and in wet seasons of the year is exceedingly difficult. This is the heaviest body of timber through which the road runs in passing from the Missouri river to the Nevada mountains" (San Francisco, 1963, p. 1).



May 1 – May 31, 1852

[MAY 1st] On the first day of May, we started on our westward journey — our first days travel found us 22 miles from the Bluffs on Woolf river. Sunday the 2 we crossed Woolf river & camped.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was a small stream with steep banks. Wayman's party probably crossed on a toll bridge constructed by Indians, who charged a toll variously reported as fifty cents or one dollar per wagon. John H. Clark said the bridge was about fifty feet long and that on the day he was there (May 9) "not less than 1,500 wagons" crossed it. The Indians demanded silver coin, not gold ("Overland to the Gold Fields," p. 235). Lydia Rudd said of these Indians: "Some of them [had] on no shirt only a blanket, while others were ornamented in Indian style with their faces painted in spots and stripes feathers and furs on their heads beads on their neck brass rings on their wrists and arms and in their ears armed with rifles and spears" ("Diary of Overland Journey . . .," no pagination; entry for May 7).

Platt and Slater give the distance from St. Joseph as twenty-seven miles instead of twenty-two (*Travelers' Guide*, p. 1).

Monday 3rd we packed up & traveled 14 miles, passing the Mission house —<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A. M. Crane refers to this institution as "Iowa Mission and farm of about 200 acres sustained [sic] by Methodists." Here his company learned that 700 wagons had already passed ahead of them. See his "Journal of a Trip Across the Plains in 1852," pp. 1a and 3. Other diarists also refer to the mission, which Platt and Slater placed four miles west of Wolf River. Esther Hanna placed the mission thirty-one miles west of St. Joseph (Eleanor Allen, *Canvas Caravans*, p. 25).

Tuesday 4. The company went on, and I and Mc returned to the Mission house for the purpose of buying a yoke of oxen: failing there, we went on and crossed the river at Iowa Point 6 miles further. We traveled 5 miles in the country to Oregon town,<sup>3</sup> left there and lodged with a Mr Baldwin[.] Wednesday 5 we visited Mr Hawn of whom we bought a yoke of Oxen and pushed for the ferry. arrived there about 8 O'clock. A drove of cattle was being ferried over, and we

were forced to wate. During our stay there we visited Negro Peter, of whom we bought some whiskey and grub, and became acquainted with Indian Mary, we made a bargain with Mary for some cat meat, and just as we were ready to fill our part of the contract a company of d—d Indians passed along and spoiled our fun.<sup>4</sup> Mary crossed the river with us in the hope that we might come it, but we had not the time to stay. We traveled all day and all night till about day light. it rained like Hell all night. *very cold.*

<sup>3</sup> Unidentified. Probably a camp site for Oregon-bound emigrants. Wayman's expense account shows that "near Oregon town" he paid \$70 for a yoke of oxen.

<sup>4</sup> "Oh God how rosy" is inserted at this point between lines.

Thursday 6[th] Early in the morning we eat grub with a Lady & three gents and pushed on. we caught up with our Company late in the evening.

[Friday] 7[th] Made a good drive Camped on the Nemaha.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> On modern maps this appears as the South Fork of the Nemaha River in Nemaha County, Kansas.

[Saturday] 8[th] Traveled to and Camped on<sup>6</sup> Stony Creek,<sup>7</sup> and helped to bury a young man after night.

<sup>6</sup> The letters *th* are crossed out following *on*.

<sup>7</sup> "In the bottom of this stream are large stones. The Indians call it Vermillion Creek. From its banks they get red clay with which to paint their faces" (Platt and Slater, p. 2). The Big Vermilion is a tributary of the Big Blue and flows into it from the northeast.

Sunday the 9th We arrived at Big Blue river —<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Wayman would have read the following passage in Platt and Slater: "This is a fine stream, some four or five rods wide, with a swift current, generally three or four feet deep. Fish are often caught in it. . . . Plenty of wood and grass. . . ."

"The latter part of the distance between the Big and Little Blue rivers will be found more hilly than any other part of the route yet passed over. There are numerous steep pitches which will require the use of lock chains.

"About ten miles out from the Big Blue, you pass the intersection of the Independence road with the St. Joseph road" (pp. 2-3).

The crossing of Big Blue, which flows south into the Kansas River, was about eight miles below present-day Marysville, Kansas. Where John H. Clark crossed, there was, he wrote, ". . . a private postoffice, a dramshop, hotel and a ferry, the business all under one roof" ("Overland to California," p. 237). Letters cost a dollar to mail; a dram of whisky was seventy-five cents, and a meal one dollar and a half. Ferriage per wagon was an exhorbitant four dollars.



[Monday] 10th we crossed the river and Camped on the west side. One of our party set his hook and caught a Catfish weighing not less than 12 lbs. We had a fine mess of fresh fish.<sup>9</sup> In the afternoon of this day it rained, Oh Hell how it rained.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Note that Wayman's companion followed Platt and Slater's suggestion about catching fish.

<sup>10</sup> Other diarists also mention this torrential downpour of May 10: ". . . I noticed a storm was approaching from the west," wrote Richard O. Hickman, "and by the time we were ready for starting, the rain commenced descending in torrents. Both of the boys crawled into the wagon, and I had to take it. I have seen rain in Illinois, but it was not worth talking about. . . . in less than a half hour I was standing in water over my boot tops. I don't want to be in many rains on the plains" (*An Overland Journey to California in 1852*, p. 4). See also Esther Hanna in Eleanor Allen, *Canvas Caravans*, p. 25.

[Tuesday 11th] Tuesday morning the 11th we took our line of march,<sup>11</sup> traveled about 22 miles & camped on Cotton Wood creek[.]<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The following interlineation appears at this point: "met Osage Indians on their return from the Pawnee Territory 'war'."

<sup>12</sup> "Good place to camp" (Platt and Slater, p. 3).

Wednesday 12th we jourined 22½ miles & camped on Little Sandy[.]

Thursday 13th made a drive of 24 miles, and Camped on Ale-Nease Creek[.]<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ale Neas' Creek in Platt and Slater, p. 3.

Friday 14th made a short drive of 10 miles, arrived at Little Blue.<sup>14</sup> suned and aired our provisions, caught some fish, made a pot of bean soupe, lived fine[.]

<sup>14</sup> A. M. Crane wrote of the Little Blue: "It has high banks, a very swift current, and is from 5 to 8 rods wide and 3 to 6 feet deep. The water has a dark turbid appearance but is good drinking water and becomes clear by stirring in a little meal and settling it" ("Journal," p. 74). See also Platt and Slater, p. 3. The Little Blue flows into the Big Blue below Marysville, Kansas.

Saturday 15th Remained in Camp to day until noon, made a good half days drive & Camped in a Burr oak bottom. I stood sentinel & found it very cold & windy.

Sunday 16th This was an awful cold & windy day — the most disagreeable, outrageous day that I ever experienced[.] Were it not Sunday I would not take

any account of it. The road since we struck the Little Blue River is and has been much better, being more level. The scenery is some changed[.]

Monday 17th 1852 Got an early start, left the Little Blue, and bore to the right, in the direction of the Platt —<sup>15</sup> Took dinner on a high level plane saw four Antelope; the boys give them a hard chase, but could not get near enough to Kill any — Last night was awful cold, some ice, & a very heavy frost this morning —<sup>16</sup> Encamped on a level plain; saw several Antelope in the afternoon, but Killed none. Since we struck the Little Blue, the scene has been changed, the country being more level & easy[.] From the Bluffs at St Jo, it has been one continued sea of Prairie, without any material change. The streams are generally narrow deep & crooked with muddy abrupt banks & sometimes quite difficult to cross. The streams & branches are skirted with Cotton Wood, Willow, Elm and shrubby Burr Oak — & this onley occurs along the water courses, I saw plenty of Wild Rose bushes & Cactus. This continued, unaltered scene, has been presented so long and every day, that it has become tiresome dull & monotonous. The only thing occuring interesting to me in a Geological view, is the continued evidence of Iron, in all & every place, that I have noticed[.] The rock generally are formed of Silica, Horn blend, Carbonate of Lime and Oxide of Iron. Mica & Flint are also common, besides other formations not mentioned. It is now the 17th of May & the grass is too short to do our stock justice. It certainly is a very backward spring[.]

<sup>15</sup> That Wayman was relying on Platt and Slater is evident in the following statement in *Travelers' Guide*: "Here, leaving the Little Blue, you bear to the right in a north-westerly direction over high prairie, towards the Platt river" (p. 4).

<sup>16</sup> On this same day A. M. Crane noted: "This morning the wind was blowing a gale from [the] North West, and as cold as Greenland and so continued during the day. I put on three pair pants and 3 woolen shirts besides divers other garments and so made out to keep warm by walking" ("Journal," p. 7b).

Tuesday MAY 18th 1852 A clear windy day — quite cold. Kept my over coat on all day — saw several Antelope & one Buffaloe cow & calf, killed none. About 5 O'clock P.M. we arrived at the Platt River. This river is about two-hundred yards wide,<sup>17</sup> low banks, & very turbid & muddy[.] Not one stick of timber where we camp — On the north side some woods, more indeed than I have seen since we left the Missouri[.] I saw a Funeral procession by the road side, about 3 O'clock, this looks sad, in this God-forsaken region[.] Grass still scarce.

Indeed we travel no day without seeing a number of old or new graves, with a board of flat stone to mark the last resting place of some unfortunate pilgrim to the land of gold — On the head board, you may see rudely carved by the hand of affection, the Name, Age & Residence of the departed. To me, it looks strange, yes very hard, to know that so many poor fellow Mortals, leave



perhaps a good home & come in these Savage wilds to die & be no more only in memory.<sup>18</sup>

As usual we had a Concert last night, by the Woolvs, who seem to be sole proprietors of this prairie during the night time. These concerts are given nightly free gratis, for nothing without any pay, Program or notice. "This is music, what is music."

"The soul that is not moved by concord of sweet sounds is only fit for Stratagem, treason and Spoils[.]"<sup>19</sup>

Supper being nearly ready, I will desist from further description, as I feel rather woolfish myself[.] so endeth the 18th day of Old May —

<sup>17</sup> The following interlineation appears at this point: "this is only a small arm."

<sup>18</sup> Wayman here touches on an all-too-common experience of emigrants. Silas Miller, in a letter from Oregon to his brother, paraphrases an observer as saying ". . . that from Loup Fork to Ft. Laramie it would average 6 fresh graves to Every mile. From other accounts I should think that this Estimate was none too grate" (MS letter, Nov. 24, 1852, from Salem, Oregon, pp. 7-8).

Jared Fox on May 26 wrote in his diary: "Past one new grave and one not so new and I don't know how many old ones. Saw several by the boards yet standing but I see that graves don't last long here as there is no coffins and many only half buried. They soon fall in and the buffalo and wild animals soon tear and paw them to pieces ("Memorandum," p. 12).

John H. Clark on May 11 witnessed the burial of an only child of an emigrant couple in a cracker box used as a coffin. They piled stones and dirt in the grave and then drove wagons over it. "Perhaps we had cheated the wolf by so doing — perhaps not" ("Overland to the Gold Fields," p. 236). Two days later he passed a grave in which a man had just been buried. Around the spot stood his grieving wife and children, apparently abandoned by their company, which had moved on. "A more desolate looking group," he sadly remarked, "than that mother and her five children presented would be hard to find" (*ibid.*, p. 236). Enoch Conyers reported meeting this woman and her "four or five little helpless children" on July 18 the day before reaching the Bear River; see his "Diary," pp. 466-67. She had bravely continued her journey.

<sup>19</sup> A misquotation of *The Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 83-85: "The man that hath no music in himself, / Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, / Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils."

**Wednesday 19th 1852** Nothing unusual to day. saw some Antelope — bad grazing & no wood —<sup>20</sup> Made a moderate drive, & arrived at the long heard of Fort Kearney —<sup>21</sup> No soldiers at home, all having started the day before after a large party of Indians, which had disturbed<sup>22</sup> some emigrants & stole their Mules, killing one of the party — I hope to God, they may find and chastise to [*sic*; the] scoundrels[.] We have as usual to carry wood & water for Camp use, since we struck the Platt river. the road has been level & easy[.]

The Platte river is about one mile in width, on an average; — in some places it is more than 2 miles wide.<sup>23</sup> No wood yet to be found on the south side. We find the river too high to ford, & no ferry boat. We are necessarily forced to keep

the south side of the river, for which I am very sorry; yet it may be as well. We can't find wood enough to Kook our grub, "so we have to let the grub be"[.] I am now tired of this interminable prairie, it does me good to see even a respectable bush[.]

Here we are, go it. — row row!

<sup>20</sup> The following insertion appears between lines: "We met some 30 wagons belonging to the fur company. The teamsters were hard looking nuts."

Several other diarists record meeting these traders. Lodisa Frizzell wrote: "Met a company of fur traders with 16 waggons loaded with buffalo robes, they were very singular in appearance looking like so many huge elephants, & the men, except 2, were half breeds; & indians, & a rougher looking set, I never saw; & their teams which were cattle, looked about used up . . ." (*Across the Plains to California*, p. 17).

John N. Lewis, who also met these men, wrote that there were twenty wagons ("Diary of an Overland Journey to Oregon," p. 36).

<sup>21</sup> Fort Kearney (also Kearny), established in 1848, was situated on the right bank of the Platte River eight miles southeast of present-day Kearney, Nebraska, and 294 miles, according to Platt and Slater, from St. Joseph. Fort Kearney State Historic Park is now located at the site. Numerous emigrant diaries describe the fort as Wayman saw it. One writer observed on May 26 that it ". . . is beautifully situated on the Platte bottom about two miles from the river. It has four or five good-looking frame houses . . . , two or three of them, I should suppose were 50 or 60 feet long. The troops all are decently dressed and the captain appears to be very much of a gentleman" (John Joseph Callison, "Diary," p. 6).

A few days later, another diarist wrote: "I saw any quantity of teams — horses & oxen mules men women & children, all pass through Fort Kerney [*sic*], we left letters there, it is a military post quite a stiring [*sic*] place the government buildings at least the residents [*sic*] of the officers are very fine some small framed buildings others built of sods or turf laid up like brick with windows & doors — . . . our people paid 1.00 per pound for horse nails [meat?] Some other things were not so dear but almost everything was so — We went into the register office [and] looked over the names of those who had passed before us some 20,00[0] men and 9,000 women besides cattle & horses mules & sheep to almost any amount, we saw a great many new made graves — there had been a good deal of sickness on the St Joe's road — almost every company had [one word illegible; buried?] one or more . . ." ("Journal of Mary Stuart Bailey," p. 6).

An idea of the extent of the migration in which Wayman participated appears in the following figures, which differ from Mary Bailey's given above: 13,089 men; 2,562 women; 3,482 children; 5,482 horses; 3,163 mules; 43,878 oxen; 4,291 wagons; 2,812 sheep; 1 hog (Evan O. Jones, "Overland Diary of a Journey from Wisconsin to California," p. 12). These figures are for only one month. Wayman gives different figures in his entry for May 25.

A. M. Crane stated that the personnel of the fort were very kind to the emigrants and operated a blacksmith shop free of charge ("Journal," p. 12). There was also a hospital, which treated emigrants (John H. Clark, "Overland to the Gold Fields," p. 243).

See also Lyle E. Mantor, "Fort Kearny and the Westward Movement," *Nebraska History*, XXIX, 175-207 and Francis Paul Prucha, *A Guide to the Military Posts of the United States, 1789-1895* (Madison, 1964).

<sup>22</sup> *And* is crossed out after *disturbed*.



of which he had recently visited for the first time in two years. He predicted that San Francisco would become one of the most important cities in the United States and praised it for its broad, paved streets, new buildings, and lighting. But he reserved his highest praise for Sacramento, which he regarded as being superior to San Francisco in its refined society, thriftiness, beauty, taste, elegance, and public spirit. He intended to make one or the other his permanent home, he stated, if he decided to remain in California much longer.

The diary gives evidence that Wayman wrote additional letters from the southern mines after his arrival there late in 1852, and the diary entry for Sunday, June 6, 1852, shows that he wrote a letter to James from Fort Laramie, which Wayman and his party had reached the day before on their journey to California. This letter is also in Mrs. Ballenger's possession, but unfortunately I have been unable to see it. It most likely contains an interesting account of his trip up to this point in the journey.

The six letters given here, however, enable us to see details in Wayman's life not revealed in the diary, to which they are a valuable supplement.

\* \* \*

Indian Territory, Tent N<sup>o</sup> 1 — April 25th [1852]

Bro J. V. Wayman,

I left Cincinnati the 31st of March, and arrived at St Louis the Sunday following: Nothing occurred during the trip worthy of note, save the gentlemanly treatment of the Captain and officers — they are fine fellows, we lived well and had a pleasant time. I found M. Trade<sup>1</sup> at St Louis as expected *all right*. On Wednesday April the 7th, we shipped on board the steamer Clipper, No. 2 bound for St. Joseph. And were lucky enough to find a very good set of officers: The Captain and first Clerk were Odd-Fellows — Notwithstanding the tediousness of the trip, we spent out time pleasantly — We were Eleven days making the run from St Louis to St Joseph, a distance of 550 miles. Arrived at St Jo — Saturday the 17th[.]

Next day being Sunday we packed our *Kit* and went into Camp, and have been enjoying Camp life since. Friday the 23 we crossed the river<sup>2</sup> and took a location in the Indian Territory where we will remain until we leave for the Plains. I think that we will make a move the first week in May, if so I am satisfied.— We are fitting up an Ox team for provisions and baggage and a light Cart and horse extra, for such purposes as circumstances may demand. The emigration is not as great as I expected — Persons living here say that it is not half<sup>3</sup> what it was in 1850 — indeed I am agreeably disappointed in the number at this point —

<sup>1</sup> Wayman mentions him later during his stay at Shaw's Flat, California; see his diary entries for September 28 and October 4. In the latter entry he spells his name *McTrade*.

<sup>2</sup> The Missouri River.

<sup>3</sup> Two or three illegible words are crossed out after *half*.

I am told that the main rush is at Council Bluffs, about 180 miles above this place — One third of the emigrants so far as I can learn, is going to Oregon. Every 3rd tent in our vicinity, has women and children, some for California and others for Oregon[.]

The weather has been very cold and disagreeable for some weeks past — it is a very backward spring so far — Yesterday evening a fine shower of rain fell, and this morning is clear and fine, but yet too cool — We are all in fine health, and able for double rations, indeed I never felt better, with an appetite like a saw Mill. Maston Campbell<sup>4</sup> is our cook — We have good grub — Sleep well, live well, feel well, and expect to do *well* —

Coming down the river from Cincinnati, I became acquainted with an elderly gentleman who gave me a history of Uncle Sol Wayman's property — He says that Uncle Sol has sold three different lots off the farm, and the purchasers have recently learned that there is an old Mortgage not satisfied, and consequently refuse to make any further payments — it is creating quite an excitement among them[.] This old gentleman of whom I speak seemed to know all about it, and wanted to buy of me, my interest in the Mortgage. He was very inquisitive about the number of heirs, and the probable course they would take in the matter — He spoke of going out to see Mother & you about it — The County having been divided, and the old record not Examined those men who bought did not know till very lately that anything of the kind existed, and now refuse to make payment until this Mortgage is satisfied[.] The ground was sold at the rate of 100\$ per acre. You will send this word to Mother — I think that it would [be] well enough to see unto the matter and see how the land lies[.] For further particulars in relation to my perigrinations see Hunt<sup>5</sup> and Sim's letter[.] I will write you again from Fort Carney — Truly

J. H. Wayman

<sup>4</sup> He is not mentioned in the diary and is otherwise unidentified.

<sup>5</sup> His full name was James Hunt; but other than the fact that he was an acquaintance of Wayman, he remains unidentified; see below, letter to J. V. Wayman, August 2, 1858, where Wayman refers to him as Jim Hunt.



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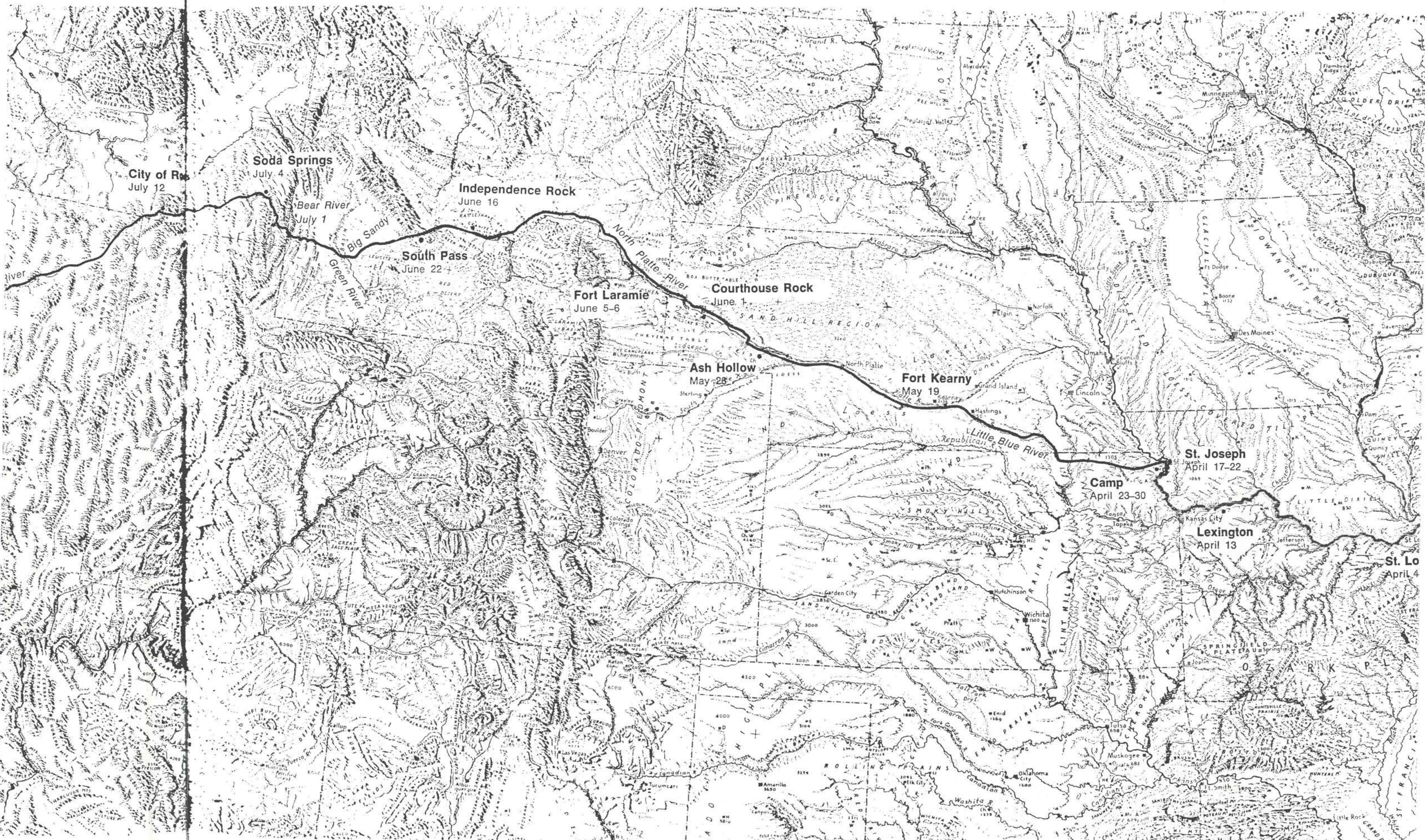
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City of Reno  
July 12

Soda Springs  
July 4

Bear River  
July 1

Independence Rock  
June 16

South Pass  
June 22

Fort Laramie  
June 5-6

Courthouse Rock  
June 1

Ash Hollow  
May 28

Fort Kearny  
May 19

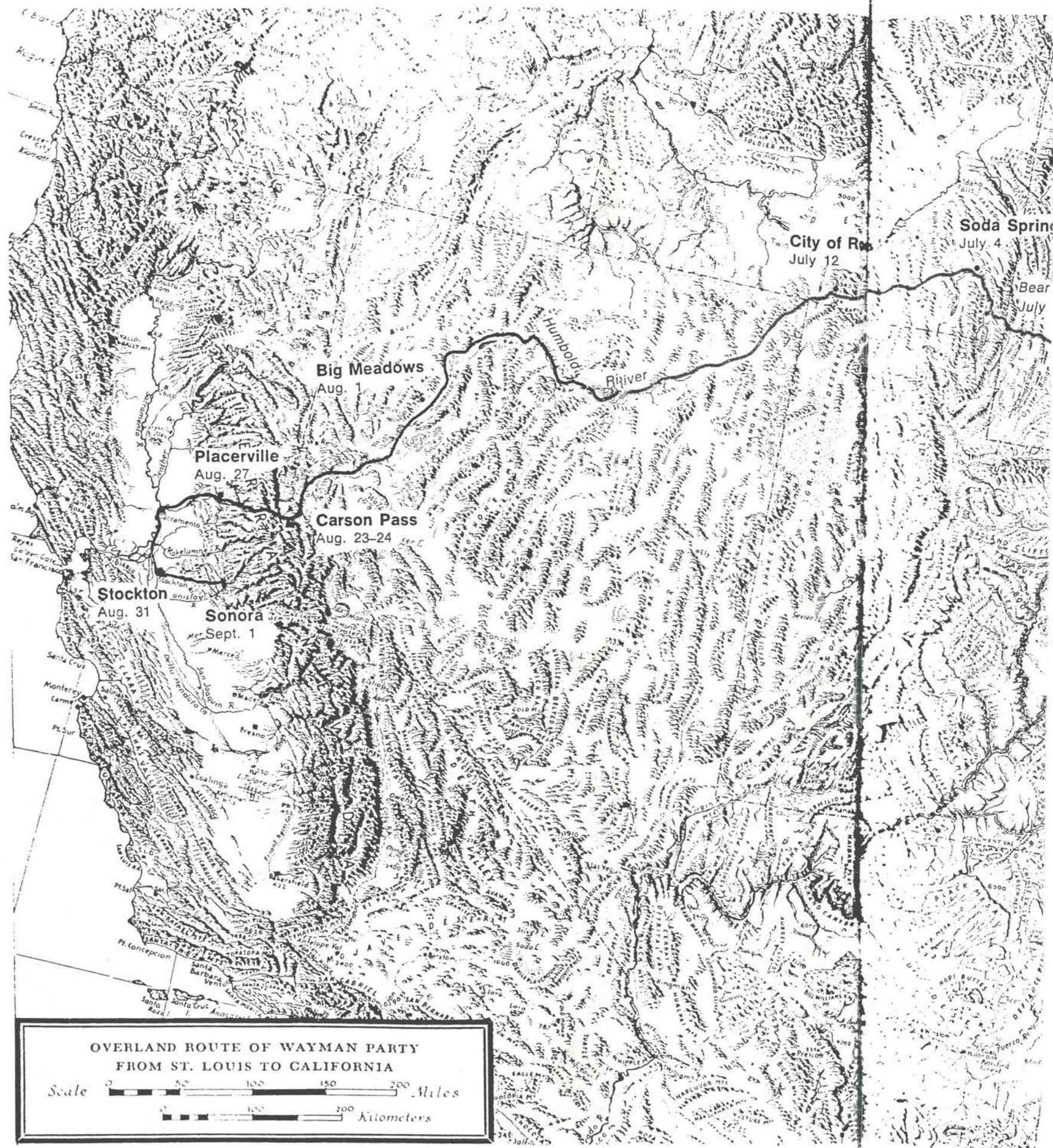
St. Joseph  
April 17-22

Camp  
April 23-30

Lexington  
April 13

St. Louis  
April 4





OVERLAND ROUTE OF WAYMAN PARTY  
FROM ST. LOUIS TO CALIFORNIA

Scale 0 50 100 150 200 Miles  
0 100 200 Kilometers