

History of California

Farther on, the well known landmark "CHIMNEY ROCK", which can be seen a great distance is met by the emigrants. It is composed of soft rock, and is several hundred feet high. The scenery in the neighborhood of the rock is very remarkable and picturesque. There are a number of rocky elevations which present the appearance of vast temples and pyramids, with domes and spires partially in ruins. Over a sandy soil the trail is pursued for about 20 miles. The surrounding scenery being of the most sublime and singular character. Near a rocky and remarkable conformation, called SCOTT'S BLUFF, the trail leaves the river, and runs over smooth valley in the rear of the bluff. IT THERE ASCENDS TO THE TOP OF A DIVIDING RIDGE, from which the ROCKY MOUNTAINS can be seen. Descending from the ridge, it passes over a barren country, broken by deep chasms and ravines, for about 12 miles, then HORSE CREEK is reached. From that creek, the trail is followed to the PLATTE RIVER, where a place for encampment is found, though the grass is very thin. Continuing for several miles thru a barren country, the trail is followed to FORT BERNARD, a small building, rudly constructed of logs, used as a TRADING POST.-- EIGHT MILES further on, is FORT LARAMIE OR FT. JOHN, as it is sometimes called. This fort has been the principal trading post of American Fur co., It is situated on the Laramie river, near its junction with the Platte, and is 672 miles from INDEPENDENCE. The building is quadrangular and is constructed of adobe, or sundried bricks. Its walls are surmounted by watch towers, and its gate is defended by two brass SWIVELS. From Ft. Laramie the trail continues on thru a broken country, to the PLATTE RIVER a distance of 20 miles. CROSSING A SMALL CREEK which empties into the PLATTE, it proceeds thru the dry beds of one of its branches, over a deep sand for 6 or 7 miles, and reaches the summit of a ridge. From thence it descends into a narrow valley, thru which flows a small stream of water. Another ridge of hills is then ascended, and a wild desolate, but pictureque scene is presented to the view. Numerous lofty mountain peaks barren rocks, and a vast prospect of low conical hills are the principal features.

Matter collected

f Paul Hansen