

[re Andrew Goodyear]

MILES GOODYEAR

FIRST CITIZEN OF UTAH

Trapper, Trader
and
California Pioneer



By
CHARLES KELLY, 1869-
and
MAURICE L. HOWE



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ANDREW COMES WEST IN SEARCH OF MILES

1847

Andrew Goodyear, Miles' younger brother, had been raised from childhood by a kind foster-mother, and did not suffer the experience of being bound out to a hard master. Other than this, we know little of his early life, except that for some time previous to 1847 he had been engaged in an apparently prosperous wholesale oyster business in Springfield, Mass.

Andrew, no doubt, replied at once to Miles' letter of Nov. 1, 1842, and his reply was probably delivered to Miles by Dr. Whitman at Soda Springs in the summer of 1843. Because of his trading activities Miles had little opportunity to keep up what might have been called a regular correspondence; under the best of conditions a year or two might elapse between letters. As a matter of fact it is doubtful if the brothers ever exchanged more than one letter.

The picture Miles had painted in his letter of the perfect freedom and contentment he enjoyed in his mountain home seems to have sowed the seed of discontent in Andrew's mind. As he packed and shipped oysters he visualized, in his mind's eye, his brother Miles traversing the high passes and wide valleys of the Rockies at the head of a trading expedition to some Indian tribe; as he made out invoices and haggled over past due accounts, he could imagine Miles trapping beaver or hunting the mighty buffalo. As time passed the oyster business became more and more distasteful. At last he could endure it no longer. He turned his business over to another and made preparations to visit the mountains. His excuse to his brothers and sisters was that he was going in search of Miles, the

ANDREW COMES WEST IN SEARCH OF MILES 77

long lost brother, to bring him back home. He may actually have started with that intention; but after experiencing the "unlimited liberty" which Miles had enjoyed for eleven years, he never returned permanently to his eastern home.

Andrew set his face toward the west in the summer of 1847. The jumping-off place for trapping expeditions and emigrants had long been the little town of Independence, Missouri, and to that place he went to make arrangements for the westward journey. Most westbound expeditions left Independence in May, but Andrew did not arrive there until August, by which time most of the emigrant trains had already passed Fort Bridger. The Mormons, in fact, had already located in Salt Lake Valley. He had the good fortune, however, to meet Joe Walker, who was about to start for the mountains, and made arrangements to join that expedition. Letters written to his brother William and a sister, Mrs. Eliza A. Smith, fortunately preserved in the family genealogy, give a fine description of his journey:

Independence, Mo., Aug. 28, 1847.

Dear Brother:

I received your kind letter and was glad to hear you were all well. I am enjoying good health, though I have just endured a rain of nearly two days while on a trip on the plains, with no covering at night but my blanket, which was not quite as comfortable as sleeping in the old Exchange. I was showing Captain Walker my India rubber coverings, and he laughed at me and said the rain never troubled him when he had his head high enough to keep from drowning.

We had a circus day here last week, and they had an attendance of about three thousand Indians. A good many Indians also attended the camp meetings, but I will probably see many more of them on the mountains in their native simplicity. There is a battalion of troops here which is going out to fight the Indians, and there have been several arrivals by the way of Santa Fe and the mountains. An old man came here

some two or three weeks ago by the name of Bill Williams, who has been upon the mountains some twenty-three years. I asked him if he knew a young man by the name of Goodyear. He replied, "No." I said Miles. "Miles!" he said, "———! that red-head Miles! He is the best friend I have in the world, and would have come in with me if I could have waited a month!"

I have seen quite a number who have seen him.

I shall start for California on Wednesday morning next by way of Bear River; I will stay there during the winter with Miles, and go on to California in the spring, I think. We have seven men in the company, from nearly as many different states, and as there are but few of us, we will have a rather hard time standing watch; otherwise we will have a fine time. We will have two wagons, one drawn by oxen, the other by mules, each of us a good mule to ride, and all armed to the teeth. If the Indians take our scalps they will have to pay dearly for them. Be sure to write at every opportunity.

Your affectionate brother,
ANDREW GOODYEAR.

Fort Laramie,
Oct. 18, 1847.

Dear Brother:

As I have a few leisure moments I will write to you, for Captain Papin, commander of the fort, a trading post of the American Fur Co., sends an express to Council Bluffs in a few days.

I started from Independence on the 1st of September in company with four others, mounted upon mules, having a wagon and four yoke of oxen to draw our baggage. We crossed all the streams without difficulty, until we came to the Caw or Kansas River, where we were obliged to unload the wagon and convey the loading across in a canoe by the help of some Canadian French and Indians living there. It was raining all the time, but our greatest trouble was with some sheep which we took along for provisions to last us until we came into the buffalo country.

On the 15th of September Captain Walker and two others came up to us, as we were encamped on a branch of the Little Vermillion. His arrival cheered up every one of us, as heretofore we had had neither captain nor guide. On the eighteenth

we came up, at Ketchum's creek, to Captain Papin and six men from Fort Laramie, waiting for the United States troops which were ordered out to the Indian country in this direction, to protect him through the country of the Pawnees. But he concluded he would move on with us, thus making our force fifteen men, though we have had all the time three men on the sick list, and two so badly off as to be confined to the wagons. On the 26th we came to the Platte, opposite Grand Island, and on the 27th found buffalo, on which we have lived (as the country is full of them), until we came to Chimney Rock, where we found the Sioux Indians; and as they always drive the buffalo before them, we have not seen any since, but expect to find them again on the Sweetwater River.

We traveled up the south bank of the Platte, or Nebraska (as the Indians call it) until we came to McFallon's crossing, near the junction of the north and south forks of the river; then we passed the south fork a few days and crossed over to the north fork at Cedar Bluffs, where we found some Mormons returning to the States from Salt Lake. They informed us that Commodore Stockton was traveling on the south fork, a few miles from us, with 40 men, towards the states. They saw Miles on the 25th of August last; he was in good health and had a large number of horses and cattle. He got back from California about the middle of last July, and on his way had a fight with the Indians, in which he had one man killed and himself slightly wounded. He told them he intended going to California again this fall.

The Indians stole forty-five horses from the Mormons on their way and the Crows came down this last summer and stole thirty within gunshot of the fort. The Sioux Indians had been down to the Pawnees while most of the men were off hunting buffalo; they destroyed the village killing nineteen Pawnees, and lost one of their men. None of the Indians have the least troubled us, except by begging.

On the 16th of this month we arrived at Fort Laramie, and are now encamped about a mile above it, and shall remain here a day or two until our wagons are repaired. The fort is a square building, forming an enclosure built of adobies or unburned brick, making an excellent protection against Indians; for they cannot set it on fire and no rifle ball could penetrate its walls. It has rooms to accommodate some twenty families, and blacksmith, carpenter and tailor shops.

About the fort are both Indian and white burial grounds. The Indians place their dead upon a scaffold, with their robes, blankets and other equipments.

I have now been out forty-seven days and nights, sleeping with no covering but my blankets, and the sky above me for a shelter; living most of the time upon buffalo meat, without a particle of salt or pepper, except a little we got from Papin. The little flour we have we think we had better keep for a time when we cannot get meat; for that may be the case while we are in winter quarters in the vicinity of Green River, where there is no game but deer and antelope.

I never enjoyed better health than I have now. I have a good mule and horse which I think will take me through without trouble, by riding alternately. Give my love to my sisters and all friends, and tell them I will be back in a year or two if my life is spared.

Affectionately yours,

A. GOODYEAR.

To William B. Goodyear, Esquire, Fair Haven, Conn.

In the above letter Andrew speaks of meeting Mormons on their return to the States from Salt Lake, and his statement is verified by Mormon records. After establishing his followers in Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young and twelve men started back to Winter Quarters. On the evening of October 6, 1847, about 15 miles east of Ash Hollow, the Mormons met Joe Walker's party, including Andrew Goodyear, as recorded in "*Journal History*" of the Mormon church:

After traveling two miles we met three mountaineers on their way from Independence, Mo., to Fort John. One of them was Capt. Joseph Walker, who served as guide to Colonel Fremont through California, and another Mr. Papin, the main proprietor of Fort John. They had seen us from the other side of the river and had come for the purpose of having an interview with us. Their whole number consisted of eight men, the other five having remained on the south side. . . . As Captain Walker intended to go as far west as Weber's Fork, a number of letters were written by several of the brethren and sent with him to the valley.

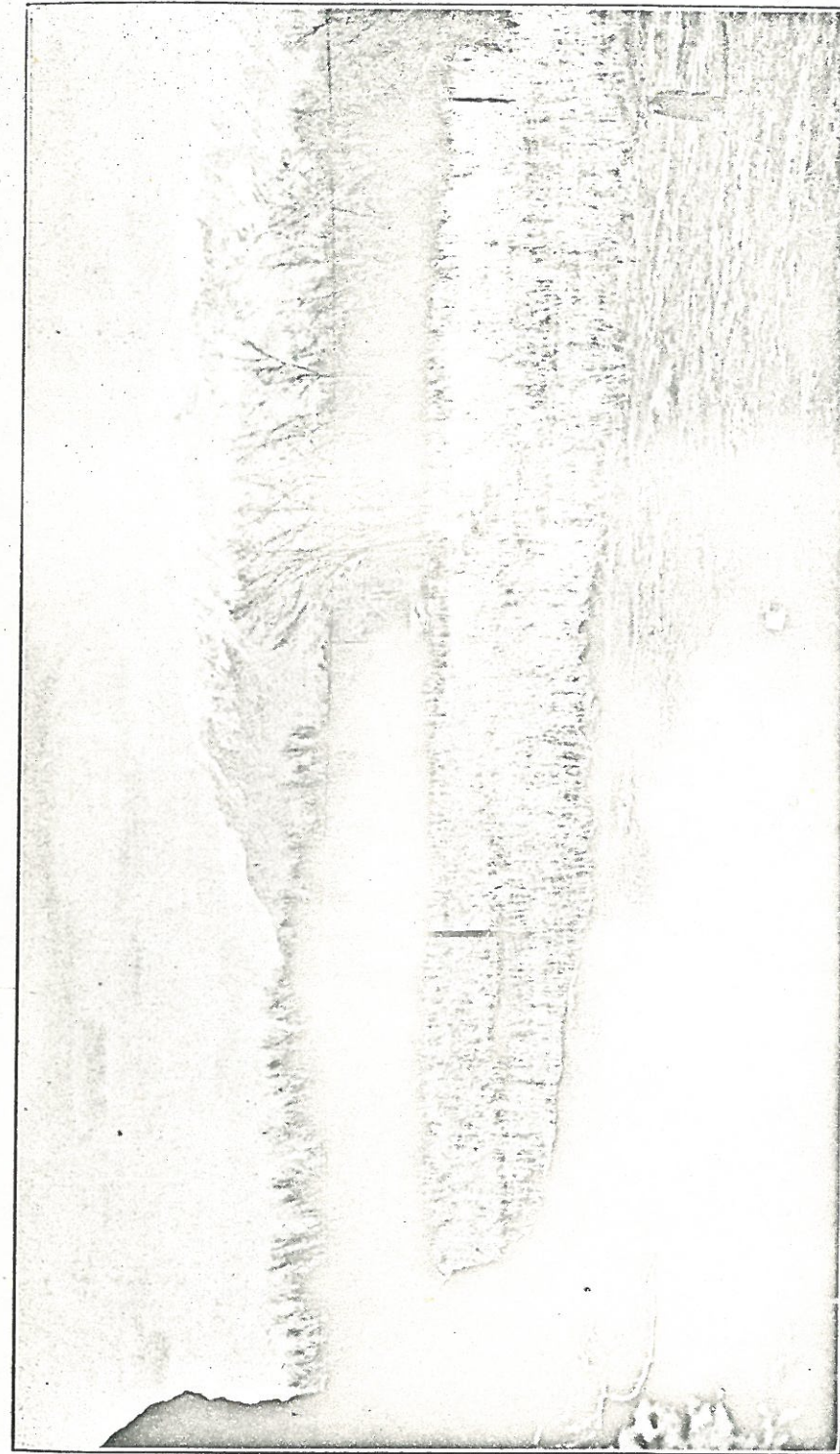


Photo by Charles Kelly

SITE OF OLD FORT BUENAVENTURA

The area covered by light-colored growth is the exact site of Miles Goodyear's fort and home. Trees mark the bank of Weber River, but cut off a view of Ogden, Utah, which lies at the foot of the distant mountains (View looking north, with sand mound visible at left.)

Another letter describes Andrew's journey from Ft. Laramie to the Sweetwater:

Sweetwater Mountain,
25 miles west of Independence Rock,
October 29, 1847.

Dear Sister:

I have now an opportunity to write you a few lines that you may know how I am getting along.

On the 12th of October we arrived at Castle and Chimney Rocks where we found a village of Sioux Indians. I took breakfast with them, composed of toro and buffalo meat. Castle Rock is a large rock looking like a castle with turrets, bastions and towers, just as the weather and rain have crumbled it; and Chimney Rock is a straight column set up on the top of a high hill, though much higher than chimneys generally are, for it is seen at the distance of twenty-five miles. On the 16th we arrived at Fort Laramie, where we waited two days to have our wagons repaired and lay in more supplies. Prices ranged for coffee and sugar one dollar a pound, and tea four dollars a pound; and all other articles at like prices.

On the 27th we reached Independence Rock, on the Sweetwater River. This rock is a very large hill of solid rock, rising up out of the plain all alone, and received its name from a party under Captain Sublett passing the 4th of July around it. About five miles from this rock the Sweetwater passes through another range of immensely high rocks, forcing a passage through. The walls on each side of it are close together and hundreds of feet high; they call it Hell Gate. We had a snowstorm on the 24th but the weather just now is pleasant. I must draw to a close, as our wagon has gone ahead, while I staid behind to write. I will write again at the first opportunity.

Your affectionate brother,

A. GOODYEAR.

To Mrs. Eliza A. Smith, North Haven, Conn.

To complete the picture of Andrew's journey and his meeting with Miles, we here introduce, somewhat out of its proper sequence, part of a letter written from Los Angeles: