

HAGELSTEIN, GEORGE MICHEL

THE HAGELSTEIN DIARY



## THE HAGELSTEIN DIARY

Writing in his diary after a hard journey through marsh lands or forest regions on one day, and through desert heat or mountain snows on the next, George Michael Hagelstein probably never imagined that the simple account which he kept of his experiences as a pioneer in the Gold Rush to California in 1850 would some day appear in printed form. Otherwise, he would probably have written in ink rather than in pencil, and on far more durable paper than that which his simple notebook contained. He might even have let his imagination soar at times in an effort to impress the reader with the romance, the tragedy, and the excitement of the overland journey to the Land of Gold. That he wrote merely for his own benefit is evident from the simple objective manner in which he mentions details which in the hands of a professional writer would be expanded into dramatic episodes for a novel, a play, or a movie scenario.

Perhaps it is fortunate that George Hagelstein wrote as he did—briefly, simply, and to the point, without regard for anything but the significant facts of his experiences from day to day; for one feels confident in reading his diary that here was an honest man sincerely recording the truth.

It is partly for this reason that the diary has been published in translation. Although the details of the Gold Rush, and the adventures of the pioneers during the westward movement, are not unfamiliar to American youth from their history texts, from western fiction, or from screen plays, the privilege of reading in a simple form material of the kind on which historians and novelists have often based their works is almost unknown to the boys and girls of our schools.

The Hagelstein Diary is unique in that it is one of the very few accounts of the Gold Rush actually written by a pioneer en route. The fact that this rare account was originally written in German script is itself significant. It reveals the immense fertility of our heritage from foreign cultures in the building of America—a heritage of which we have often been unmindful in our efforts to develop a well integrated American way of life among our citizenry.

It is fortunate that the translation which we have of Hagelstein's diary is the work of his own great-grandson, LeVern W. Cutler, of Palo Alto, California. On pages 3 and 4 Mr. Cutler describes in interesting detail his experiences in translating the record with the aid of chemicals and special magnifying lenses and lights to bring out those portions of the original manuscript which had been obscured by flood-water in the basement in Sacramento where the notebook was found.

The Hagelstein Diary is presented with the hope that it will stimulate an interest among young people in discovering and preserving within their own families or communities letters, pictures, newspapers, or documents of



similar import for gaining a realistic acquaintance with the backgrounds of our present day American culture. A school or class could hardly choose a more worthy, more stimulating, or more educationally significant project than an investigation, interpretation and synthesis of the community's social and cultural heritage as recorded in the original language of the generations which have contributed to the building of America. Many documents of vital interest and significance for our culture have been discovered by students under guidance. The Hagelstein Diary is but one of many examples.

The past lives when it speaks for itself.

*Walter V. Kuefers*

According to the diary, Walter V. Hagelstein was born in September, 1858, in the village of Hagenau, Germany. His early life, but at the age of thirty-two he left his native land for Paris, and sometime within the following two years came to the United States. Leaving his wife in St. Louis, Hagelstein set forth in 1890 to California, the "Land of Gold," and in his diary we find a detailed record of his trip.

As soon as I set out to translate the book then I ran into all manner of difficulties. In the first place, the diary had been written some eighty-eight years ago in pencil on the soft paper of a plain notebook of some sixty-nine pages, 5x8 1/2 inches in size. Furthermore, the diary had been found in a basement in Sacramento, California, where in earlier years it had suffered from contact with the floods which had occasionally inundated the streets of the city. In many places the writing had been obscured by mud and water. However, by carefully dusting the rubbed pages with a little lamp black, and by treating the watermarked portions with light oil and talc, I managed to decipher practically all the writing with the aid of a magnifying-lens and a strong light.

Despite the difficulty of reading the material—written for the most part without paragraph divisions or punctuation marks—the story which began to unfold itself proved so interesting that I could not desert the task. Here, for the first time in nearly a hundred years, someone was reading the actual day-by-day record of a pioneer—the diary of a foreign-born emigrant to the "Land of Hope," pushing on through storm, cold, mountain snow, and desert heat, suffering innumerable hardships, but never shirking the trials of the beauties of the strange land through which he was travelling.

Throughout the translation I have tried to preserve the simple, random, Germanic style in which my great grandfather wrote. In order to do this, I was forced in a few places to sacrifice accuracy to a minor degree. The reader must remember that this record was written during evening halts and wayfarer rests by a

\* The diary comprises thirty-one or thirty-two, closely written or bound stories.



## DISCOVERY AND TRANSLATION OF THE HAGELSTEIN DIARY

Several years ago my grandmother, Mrs. D. Jurgens, of Sacramento, California, gave me the diary of my great grandfather, George Michael Hagelstein. This diary was a record of his trip across the plains to the goldfields in 1850, and was written in German, his native tongue. I was studying German at Stanford University at the time; and at once became greatly interested in translating the record, together with some of the papers which had been found with the diary. The latter proved to be a birth certificate, a passport, and letters which enabled me to piece together something of my great grandfather's story.

According to these documents, George Michael Hagelstein was born in Württemberg (now a part of Germany) in the village of Kunzelsau on September 18, 1816. Practically nothing is known of his early life, but at the age of thirty-two he apparently left his native land for Paris, and sometime within the following two years came to the United States. Leaving his wife in St. Louis, Hagelstein set forth in 1850 to California, the "Land of Gold," and in his diary we find a detailed record of his trip.

No sooner had I set out to translate the book than I ran into all manner of difficulties. In the first place, the diary had been written some eighty-eight years ago in pencil on the soft paper of a plain notebook of some sixty-nine pages, 5x8½ inches in size.\* Furthermore, the diary had been found in a basement in Sacramento, California, where in earlier years it had suffered from contact with the floods which had occasionally inundated the streets of the city. In many places the writing had been obscured by mud and water. However, by carefully dusting the rubbed pages with a little lamp black, and by treating the watermarked portions with light oil and talc, I managed to decipher practically all the writing with the aid of a magnifying-lens and a strong light.

Despite the difficulty of reading the material—written for the most part without paragraph divisions or punctuation marks—the story which began to unfold itself proved so interesting that I could not desert the task. Here, for the first time in nearly a hundred years, someone was reading the actual day-by-day record of a pioneer—the diary of a foreign-born emigrant to the "Land of Hope," pushing on through storm, cold, mountain snow, and desert heat, suffering innumerable hardships, but never wholly losing sight of the beauties of the strange land through which he was traveling.

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\* The Diary occupies thirty-one of these, closely written on both sides.



weary traveler, a man whose one thought was to set down for his own benefit a few of the outstanding incidents in a hard day's journey—in any form in which they might present themselves to his memory. It seemed more important to retain his simple, objective style than to lose the whole feeling of the original in too radical a reconstruction according to the rules of pedantic English usage.

The paragraphing and division into chapters are the work of the translator, since there were no divisions of this kind in the original. Where a careful examination of maps suggested that Hagelstein may have been in error concerning the names of rivers or mountains, a footnote has been added to call attention to this fact.

Sincere appreciation for assistance in making the translation is due Miss H. M. Nye of the Department of Germanic Languages, Stanford University.

Life and culture, for example, will find in this diary a unique opportunity for vitalizing an appreciation of the German people and the contribution of their life to the development of our national life.

*Le Vern W. Cullen*

3. For plot-reading on the part of pupils having a relatively equal in difficulty, the diary provides beautiful material for use in connection with programs designed to develop speed and comprehension in reading. For the development of reading comprehension, objective exercises have been devised for each chapter.

4. For integrative activities—especially at the upper elementary levels—combining geography, map work, etc., art, music, literature, simple arithmetic, and history, in a unified setting.

Since the exercises and suggested activities have been designed with a view to facilitating the use of the diary in the several connections noted above, it is not assumed that any time or interest of a particular class group will justify the completion of all the reading or research projects indicated for each chapter, or for the general review of the unit at the end. Probably the most educationally significant activities are indicated under the captions Problems for Discussion and Research. It is hoped that the activities proposed under these headings will be at least suggestive of concrete ways and means for relating the unit to the core program of the school.

To avoid breaks in the continuity of the text, all special tests and exercises have been grouped according to chapters at the end of the diary.

To facilitate integration of the unit with reading programs in English and social studies, a sketch map of the region being read is provided in the diary, and a list of suggested reading is provided at the end.



## POSSIBLE USES FOR THE HAGELSTEIN DIARY

In editing the translation of the Hagelstein Diary the writer has kept in mind the following uses to which the material might appropriately be put:

1. For units (either in the upper elementary or secondary school) dealing with pioneer life, the development of the West, the Gold Rush, or the immigrant problem. The simplicity of the text from the standpoint of content, vocabulary, structure, and brevity, makes it readable at any level beyond the lower elementary grades. The editor is certain that teachers will welcome the opportunity afforded by the translation for enabling pupils to contact primary source material intimately related to problems ordinarily considered vital in so-called core curricula.

2. For orientation courses in the backgrounds of American life and culture. Teachers of orientation courses in German life and culture, for example, will find in the diary a unique opportunity for vitalizing an appreciation of the contribution of the German people to the colonization of America, and to the development of our national life.

3. For plateau-reading on the part of pupils handicapped in their reading ability. Since the seven chapters are short, and relatively equal in difficulty, the diary provides meaningful material for use in connection with programs designed to develop speed and comprehension in reading. For the measurement of reading comprehension, objective exercises have been devised for each chapter.

4. For integrative activities—especially at the upper elementary levels—combining geography (map work, etc.), art, music, literature, simple arithmetic, and history, in a unified setting.

Since the exercises and suggested activities have been designed with a view to facilitating the use of the diary in the several connections noted above, it is not assumed that the time or interest of a particular class group will justify the completion of all the reading or research problems indicated for each chapter, or for the general review of the unit at the end. Probably the most educationally significant activities are indicated under the captions Problems for Discussion and Research. It is hoped that the activities proposed under these headings will be at least suggestive of concrete ways and means for relating the unit to the core-program of the school.

To avoid breaks in the continuity of the text, all special tests and exercises have been grouped according to chapters at the end of the diary.

To facilitate integration of the unit with reading programs in English and social studies, a select list of interesting books dealing with pioneer life is provided in the Bibliography on pages 50-54.



## MY TRIP TO CALIFORNIA

Chapter I. We Steam Up the Missouri

It was Thursday afternoon on the twenty-fifth of April, 1850, when I took leave of my dear wife in order to set out on my trip across the Rocky Mountains to the Land of Gold. The farewell was short but painful. Our way led past our dwelling. I packed my belongings and placed them with those of my comrades on board the steamship "Princeton." We waited a night until we had stowed all our things, and could make our way through the enormous crowd of men who took their places on the boat—all pioneers who wished to go to the Land of Gold.

Our company consisted of five men—Kühnlen\* (from Württemberg), Scheller (a Swiss), Scheerer (a Scot), Eilers, (a Hanoverian) and I. We still believed we would leave on the same day, but because there was so much freight to load we had to remain much longer... Indeed, it was three o'clock the next morning when we finally broke away—after I had watched through a long night, because it was quite impossible to sleep. I lay down on the deck because I had no other place, but I could not sleep, for the separation from my wife soon began to oppress my heart.

The day of our departure was overcast, and seemed to blend itself with my grief. However, the weather cleared about noon. The sun shone through the clouds in a friendly way as if to smile good courage upon us. Our breakfast consisted of black bread and ham, but I could eat almost nothing; besides, we had to drink our coffee without sugar, because the sugar happened to be in the hold with the other things.

Shortly after a trip of about fifteen miles from St. Louis we suffered a stroke of bad luck—that is to say, an Irishman, on drawing some water, fell into the river. However, since he could swim very well he remained on top of the water until someone was able to come to his aid in a small boat and pull him out. He merely suffered a shock and a cold bath.

On the twenty-sixth of April, at five o'clock in the evening, we reached St. Charles, and at nine o'clock in the morning of the twenty-seventh we reached Washington. The weather is warm, and on both sides on the banks of the Missouri River high rocky cliffs rear aloft. Then again there are small colonies, pretty gardens where peach trees and apple trees are decked in their blossoms, which impart a friendly appearance.

At three o'clock in the afternoon we came to Herman, a pretty little town on a knoll surrounded by vineyards. The next day, on the twenty-eighth, we passed by Jefferson's City. It is a beautiful little town situated very romantically, especially the house of legislature of Missouri lying atop a beautiful little hill surrounded by blossoming trees.

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\* In later parts of the diary Hagelstein seems to have changed the spelling of his companion's name to Kienlen.



On the twenty-ninth, at one o'clock noon, we arrived at Glasgow. It lies very high on the left bank of the Missouri. At ten o'clock in the evening we reached Lexington, which lies on the left bank of the Missouri.

On the thirtieth of April, at five o'clock in the morning, our boat stuck on a sand-bank where we had to lie a day and a half. In the morning, after breakfast, all the men (about 100) were ferried from the boat to shore in order to lighten the ship. We took our guns with us in order to pass the time hunting in the virgin forest, but we did not think to take anything to eat. About noon we became hungry. My friends and I had shot some birds. We made a fire, picked and roasted the birds as well as we could over the fire, and ate them.

However, since we had not yet been sent for by three o'clock in the afternoon, and since the crowd raged and howled for food, we made a flag of distress out of white and red handkerchiefs, and signalled to the officers of the ship to send us something to eat. Finally, about three o'clock, some men came in a skiff with a basket of bread and meat. Everyone wanted to be first. They all rushed to the men—in short, he who was not alert got nothing. Meanwhile, by way of amusement, some others set the forest on fire, and as there was a heavy wind, it was changed in a minute to a sea of fire which welled forth, not to be stopped.

On the boat they worked incessantly in order to free it, but all was in vain, until finally the steamship "Julia of St. Joseph" came down and took pity on us. It took all the freight to land, and finally, after mutually encouraging one another until after midnight, the crews succeeded in getting the boat once more afloat, and by moonlight we were again taken on board. Our mules remained in the forest where they had been taken, and therefore we had to watch them half the night.

The next day was the first of May, and at ten o'clock in the morning our boat again started. On the fourth of May we passed Independence and Kansas City, where many of our passengers disembarked. On the fifth we came to Weston, the largest city which I had come to on the trip from St. Louis.

## Chapter II. The Overland Trail Begins

At one o'clock in the morning on the sixth of May we arrived at St. Joseph. It is the emporium of most California bound travelers. This city lies, like most of the others, in a romantic setting on the left shore of the Missouri River, surrounded by beautiful hills. We made camp on a knoll not far from the landing place. We had no tent as yet, and therefore had to camp right on the ground. The first night went all right, although it was fairly cold. On the second night, however, it rained and snowed heavily. We wrapped ourselves in our oil-skins, but in time they soaked through. We shivered from hand to foot, and the night seemed like eternity, until the next day brought better weather.



On the following morning we bought ourselves a tent, and thereafter things were better; for even though the days are hot, the nights are always cold in St. Joseph. On the following Thursday, the ninth of May, we left St. Joseph and crossed the river to the other shore of the Missouri. From there it was seven miles through the primeval forest to where the prairies began. The road through the forest was very bad, and we thereupon were forced to take only half our cargo with us. Nevertheless, the going was still hard enough. Many times our wagon was up to the axle in the morass. We had four mules, but because the strain was too great, two yoke of oxen were harnessed, which, after many difficulties, finally succeeded in drawing us out of the mud.

At the end of the forest, beautiful mountains towered up on both sides. A wildly picturesque scene presented itself there before our eyes. Century-old oak leaves crunched under the wheels. Bands of wanderers were scattered everywhere, some resting, others cooking, the rest mending their broken wagons. All was in confusion. Men of all kinds were to be found here; blacks, whites, and Indians. On a stream at the edge of the forest we pitched our tent, rested a day, and then on Whitsuntide, the twelfth of May, prepared to start. At first it was hard because our mules were not used to the pulling. We covered ten English miles. We crossed Mosquito Creek, where the Indians had built a bridge at which they charged twenty-five cents for every wagon which crossed. We pitched a camp on Wolfe Creek.

The second day we had very bad going up and down hill, and we had difficulty getting our heavy wagon through. We made barely eight miles when we met a band of Sac Indians who did not show themselves to be hostile, but gave us to understand that we could place a five-cent piece on edge in a slit in a little stick of wood that was stuck in the ground. When we had fulfilled their wish, they stretched their bows, went back about twenty paces, and shot their arrows at the coin until one of them shot it down, to whom it then belonged. They went on in this way until each of us had paid five cents; then they went away again.

On the fourteenth, at three o'clock in the morning, we again set out. We had good roads today and made twenty miles. As far as the eye could see there was nothing but a long train of gold-seekers. Many were making this great journey on foot, with packs on their backs; others were on horseback with pack-saddles. Many were already coming back again because they had used up their provisions, and therefore had to turn about. Today we passed four graves decorated with deerhorns. We also counted six horses which had fallen.

The next day we made approximately eighteen miles. Water is scarce. Far and wide one sees nothing but an endless plain.

On the sixteenth the wind blew unceasingly from the north the entire day, and drifted the dust about like a cloud, so that we could not open our eyes. We had to cross many brooks today, and hence were often in danger of tipping the wagons over, because it always went down very steep. However, we made nineteen miles.



On the seventeenth all went very well. The wind blew hard, and it was very hot. We made twenty-three miles, and about evening came to the Big Blue River over which we had to cross. It went down very steep, and we had to wade up to our waists in water. On the other side of the river we pitched our tent. Our mules were galled, and we had to stay there half the next day. It was Saturday, and we made it a day of rest. However, we didn't let this day go by entirely idle, but I made our wagon smaller, and what we could possibly do without, we threw away in order to lighten it. Even then we had too much, and when we went on the next day we packed the two injured animals because we could not harness them. Leading on four-spanned we made twenty-two miles.

On the nineteenth we passed through more brooks. We came across many dead horses and more graves from the preceeding year. We made about nineteen miles. About midnight came a storm so frightful that our tent could no longer protect us, and we were in danger of being washed away. It did not last long, but about three o'clock there came a second, more terrible than the first, and we had to get up. The next day the road had become so bad on account of the rain that we could hardly go on. We made fifteen miles, and about evening reached the Little Blue River. It is not as wide as the Big Blue, but is more difficult to cross, because it goes down too steep and rises too steep on the other side.

On the twenty-second we had to spend the whole day crossing brooks and swamps and going up and down hill. Nevertheless, we made twenty miles. The next morning, about three o'clock, another storm came up. It rained until ten o'clock, and we made hardly twelve miles because the roads were too bad.

On the twenty-third we had smooth going the whole day along the left bank of a rather large stream. We made twenty-five miles. Today we saw buffalo about us and went after them on horseback. However, we could only kill one because they were faster than we.

On the twenty-fourth we met a band of five or six Indians of the Banyas tribe. They were approximately four feet, eight inches tall, but very strongly built. Most of them had firearms along with their arrows, and they seemed very wild and warlike, and gave us to understand that they wanted something to eat. We gave them biscuit, and they went away peacefully. We also saw a wolf, and a great many rattlesnakes which were as thick as a child's arm, and from three to six feet long. The road was fairly good, and we made twenty miles.

On the twenty-fifth we had a heavy wind. The road was good, and we made twenty-one miles. I had an accident today. I was careless in hitching up, and the rear wagon-wheel passed over my foot. However, the foot was not badly injured, and on the following day I was able to walk.



At two o'clock on the morning of the twenty-sixth we had a storm and such an ice cold wind that we could hardly keep it out. However, the day was very hot. In the evening we came to the Platte River.\* We pitched our tent here having made twenty miles.

On the twenty-seventh, about midnight, we had still another frightful storm. The wind blew our tent down, and the hail, like pigeon eggs, fell on our heads. We fled into the wagon, wet through and through, where we shivered in every limb from the cold. We made a halt, dried our clothes and beds, and hunted down our mules because they had run away together in the storm. About four o'clock in the afternoon we set out again. We passed through Fort Kearney where I mailed a letter to St. Louis to my wife. We made five miles.

On the twenty-eighth we had neither wood nor water. We had good roads and made twenty-five miles. During the night it was very cold.

On the twenty-ninth we had water, but no wood. This time, therefore, nothing could be cooked. The roads were good, and we made twenty-five miles.

On the thirtieth we again had to endure great thirst until near evening when we came to the Platte River. There we found wood and water. We pitched our tent and stayed there. We had covered twenty-two miles.

On the thirty-first our road was always in a valley, because on both sides of the Platte River rise long mountain chains. Many deer, wolves, and buffalo are found here; we also saw several graves from the preceding year. We had to travel from early morning until about three o'clock in order to find water and grass. We had already cooked with buffalo chips for several days. Today we made twenty-seven miles. About midnight a terrible wind tipped our tent over, and we had to endure a cold night.

On the first of June we had a storm in the morning just as we were setting out. We put our oil skins on quickly, but it did not help much. The rain went through them. In the afternoon it was very hot. About evening we had a second storm, worse than the first. However, we made twenty-two miles. The soil here is sandy or black for the most part.

On the second of June it was very hot. About five o'clock in the evening we crossed the Platte River. This river is a mile and a half wide, has a sandy bottom, and is two or three feet deep where the ford is. When we had gone approximately one hundred steps from shore, our wagon stuck, and our mules could no longer pull it out, and it sank deeper and deeper. Then one of our men rode to the other shore to get a yoke of oxen. But because the night was approaching, and with it another frightful storm, no one would help us. Finally, for a good price (we paid five dollars) we got someone to pull us out with three yoke of oxen. We were glad to get free. After an hour our wagon was on the other side of the river.

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\* It is possible that Hagelstein may have confused the Platte River with the Republican River.



I took some dry pieces of clothing in my arms and began the dangerous trip through the stream. At times I was in danger of being upset, because the current was very swift, and the bottom was insecure under my feet. However, I fortunately reached the other side of the river in a short time. We pitched our tent here, but I could not sleep, because it hailed and rained so heavily that we were wet through and through in our coverings. We made twenty-two miles today.

### Chapter III. Into the Indian Country

On the third we had to go twenty miles to the north fork of the Platte River before we had either grass or water. We arrived there about evening. We were notified immediately that the Indians had stolen seventy-six oxen the night before, and that we should be on our guard. Since it was again raining frightfully, we made a fire in our tent, and no one went to bed. All pistols and weapons were loaded, but the night passed without incident.

Going on again, on the fourth, we passed through an Indian village. Its dwellings are round, projecting on top to a point, and are built of buffalo-hides and branches. Above is an opening which serves in place of a chimney, because they make a big fire in the middle, around which lie dogs and men together on buffalo hides. These Indians belong to the Sioux tribe. The trail is very sandy and today we made only ten miles.

On the third of June, we passed through a very wild, picturesque region. On both sides of the trail rose a chain of round, steep hills on which now and then stood a juniper tree. Some miles farther we passed through a narrow valley which was quite over-grown with green bushes. It was something new to the eyes, since on the entire trip one found little green.

On the fifth, we made the day a day of rest, and only traveled about six miles in the evening. We reached an Indian burial ground on a hill. It is four poles stuck in the ground with the upper ends tied together. In the middle, about five feet above the ground, are fixed diagonal poles on which the body rests, swathed in the trappings which it had previously worn. Above, at the peak of the sticks, hangs a game bag.

On the sixth, the road was very bad. We passed through two large Indian villages of over a hundred dwellings. On a hill we also saw three graves from the year before. We met many Indians who were moving their houses to another part of the country. We made twenty miles.

On the seventh our mules would not go. After we had gone two miles, they lay down from the terrible strain, and we were compelled to lie over this day. We made all kinds of plans. We intended to let the wagon stand and pack our mules. We divided the mules and provisions. We had only five mules, because the Scot had already left, and had taken one mule with him. Kionlon and I took three mules, and counted thirty-five dollars out to the others.



On the eighth we changed our plans again, harnessing five mules. Until now we had gone only four-span. We passed the Church or City Hall artistically fashioned in natural rock which strangely resembled a church. Twelve miles farther on we came to the Chimney Rocks, which is much like a roof with tall chimneys over two hundred and fifty feet high. The day was very hot. We made fifteen miles, and tonight we had a frightful storm. Whole bands of wolves drew about and howled. They were close to our tents.

On the ninth, after we crossed a mountain, our road lay in a valley between two long ranges. The road is sandy. We found no water, and made twenty miles.

On the tenth our way led over mountains. We passed through an Indian village. There was also a blacksmith here on the mountain. Under some tents near the Indians was his forge. Farther up we came to a good spring which flowed from a rock. We refreshed ourselves well in it. Five miles farther, we had to cross Horse Creek. It was a fairly broad stream, but not steep. Eight miles farther on we again went over high sand-dunes. We pitched our tent on the ridge of the hill. The grass was bad, and we had neither wood nor water. On all these mountains cedar trees stand here and there. Except for these, there is no wood. We made twenty-four miles.

On the eleventh we again went over some mountains. The road was sandy. In the afternoon we again came to the Platte River. We again passed Indian dwellings, also some Frenchmen living there among the Indians. We made eighteen miles.

On the twelfth of June we passed through Fort Laramie at eleven o'clock in the morning. We had to cross a river here which bore the name of Laramie. This river is over four feet deep, and very swift. We raised the wagon bed so that the water would not get in. However, we had difficulty in crossing. Fort Laramie consists of some frame houses and barracks of dried brick, a post office, a bakery, and a saw-mill driven by sixteen horses. Here we bought some bread, mailed a letter at the post office, and went a mile and a half farther until we found grass and water. There we made a stop and pitched our tent.

We lay over the thirteenth and fourteenth of June, because two of our company had left, and each packed his things on a mule in order to go on more rapidly. Kienlen and I had three mules, the others two. At first we, too, thought we were going to pack. I made a pack saddle and sacks. However, we had an opportunity to buy a mare. Since we were resolved to go still farther, we bought from the other two their shares of the wagon, and divided completely the remaining things.

On the fifteenth of June, at two o'clock in the afternoon, we separated, said goodby, and our wagon went away. Where there were five men before, there were now but two. We made our way over the Black Hills, for here there was still another route along the bank of the Platte River. We made ten miles.



On the sixteenth, after going a distance of fifteen miles, we came to a spring of warm water. The water was as clear as crystal, and warm through the sandy soil. The road went up and down over hills, and the grass was good. Some miles farther on we came across an immense sandstone block which no one passed without writing his name on it. I could hardly find room enough for my name although the block was over nine feet square. We had to cross one and the same brook three times within two hours. We made twenty-seven miles.

On the seventeenth we made an early halt by a brook at eleven o'clock, and for the second time we made our wagons smaller and as light as possible. We threw away all iron that could possibly be done without. This took the rest of the day. We made only twelve miles.

On the eighteenth it went considerably easier, indeed, for we had taken twenty-five pounds off of the wagon. We went over the Black Hills,\* always steep, up and down, in a serpentine course. In the afternoon we passed a range of hills red as burned brick, with darker red veins running through them. Here and there rose green bushes which stood out very prettily from the distance. The day was very cold, especially the morning. We made twenty-five miles.

On the nineteenth of June it was very cold in the morning. During the day, however, it was very hot. Again we had to pass over high steep hills. Here there grew a species of plant whose roots, when dry, serve as firewood. This plant is very similar to the German *Salberpflanze*\*\* and smells very strong. Many deer must previously have lived on these hills, for we find antlers here weighing over fifty pounds, and over four and a half feet long.

We made twenty-five miles, and had to cross a fairly swift brook twice.

#### Chapter IV. Into the Rocky Mountains

On the afternoon of the twentieth of June I met on the road an acquaintance of mine by the name of Liebe, a cabinet maker from St. Louis. He had a very light wagon. When he saw me he was very happy, because he was quite lonely. He had only two mules, one of which he could no longer harness because it had an open shoulder; so he had to leave the wagon behind. We loaded our belongings on to his wagon, and left our party. We made twenty miles. We had left the Platte River approximately eighty miles behind, but yesterday we came to it again, and again went about fifty miles farther along its bank. The grass along this river is very bad, and quite dried up.

\* Probably the Laramie Mountains

\*\* sage plant



On the twenty-first we had to pass more ravines filled with mud and water. It was hard to get across these. At four o'clock in the afternoon we came to Salt Ferry. Here we had to cross, although it was very expensive. The wagons cost five dollars, and each mule one dollar. However, we were not delayed for four ferries were put to work. We went three miles farther and pitched our tent. We made twenty miles.

On the twenty-second we had a hard day, for we had neither grass nor water. The oxen fell about us like flies. Everywhere dead oxen could be seen lying in the road. We made twenty-five miles.

On the twenty-third it was still the same. For sixty miles we had nothing but sandy soil. The road is very sandy, and our mules can hardly go on any longer. About evening we came to Sweet Water River. Here we pitched our tent. We made twenty miles.

On the twenty-fourth we had some grass. We had to cross the Sweet Water River, and again went up a mountain. Yesterday we went for the most part along the level. However, the road is still sandy. Today we traveled only until noon, and paused for the afternoon on the Sweet Water River. Here there was some grass for our animals, which were in need of fodder and rest. Therefore we made only ten miles.

The night of the twenty-fourth we had rainy weather. Hence we had to wait until about eleven o'clock in the morning before we could break camp. We had bad roads, and had to cross many brooks and ravines. In one brook or quagmire we got stuck, the animals sinking up to their bellies in the swamp. We had to unpack everything in order to get the wagons out, and succeeded only after much difficulty. Our road always followed the Sweet Water River, and since this made a great many bends, we had to go through it many times. The road is always sandy, and stretches away over the mountains. About evening we had a frightful storm. The thunder-claps re-echoed in the rocky cliffs. We made fifteen miles.

On the twenty-sixth we had a very bad road in foot-deep sand. We had to go through the Sweet Water River, and the water got into our wagons. When we had gone two miles our road went twice through the same river. However, we could not get through because here the water was too deep. Therefore we had to turn back again and take up our way on the right side of the river. Here the road was very sandy and bad. We made nineteen miles.

The road got somewhat better on the twenty-seventh. It went up hill continually. Our animals were exhausted, for we had gone sixteen miles without water. Just as night fell we again came to the Sweet Water River. There was very little grass here. The wind howled frightfully until midnight, and it was very cold. We made twenty-two miles.

Is there a discrepancy in the paragraph concerning the number of miles? Can you suggest a possible explanation?



On the twenty-eighth we had to cross the same river twice. The road got better, but was always up hill. We are now almost on the highest point of the Rocky Mountains. The wind drives terrible dust-clouds about so that one cannot see. Everywhere in the road lie dead oxen, horses, and mules, which give off a bad odor. Toward evening we came to a little brook. Here we pitched our tent. We made nineteen miles.

On the twenty-ninth we reached the summit of the Rocky Mountains. It was very cold. We had winter in the middle of summer. About us, in depressions, was quite hard, foot-deep snow. The north wind howled terribly. This morning we had fairly thick ice. The road was fairly good, so we made twenty-nine miles, and passed across the Sweet Water River for the last time. The grass was very bad.

On the thirtieth we had no water until we came to the Little Sandy River near evening. Four miles before this river are two roads. The southern road, which goes to Salt Lake, and the northern road. A Frenchman named Sublett found a still shorter way which was known as Sublett's Cut-Off. We took this one because it was supposed to be eighty miles shorter. We made eighteen miles.

On the first of July at five o'clock in the afternoon we reached the Little Sandy River. The road is bad, sandy, and there is no grass. We halted on the other side of the river. We made eighteen miles.

On the second of July, at nine o'clock in the morning, we came to the Big Sandy River. Here we rested until four o'clock in the afternoon because there was no water for forty miles. We traveled until ten o'clock in the evening, because we wished to reach the Green River the next day. We set out early, and traveled on until night, and finally off in the distance we saw water. However, to our misfortune, it was still five miles away. It was pitch dark, and we had a very high, steep mountain to go down. We wanted to push on to the water, but our mules did no more pulling, and we were obliged to make a halt on the mountain. We unharnessed and lay down on the ground, since we were all very tired.

On the following morning, the third of July, only one of our four mules was still there, the others probably having gone off in search of water. We hunted for them all day, but could find no traces of them.... Well, we camped, two men with one mule. On the fourth of July we again hunted. I scoured seven miles in the surrounding country, but all in vain. We did not find our mules again. In the afternoon we dragged our wagon to the upper ferry of the Green River with two mules.\* Here we had to cross. There were three ferry-boats here. The wagon cost seven dollars, live stock a dollar and a head. These ferry boats are largely run by Canadians of French descent, and Americans who have already lived among the Indians. On the other side of the river we pitched camp for the night.

\* Is there a discrepancy in the paragraph concerning the number of mules? Can you suggest a possible explanation?