

ILLINOIS REPUBLICAN
 BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS
 JUNE 27, 1849

Our readers will be pleased to hear that a letter has been received of recent date, from our esteemed fellow townsman J. Murray Morrison, who at the time of the writing-on the Republican Fork of the Platte. This is the latest and most authentic information from any of the Emigrants from this region, and sets at rest the many unfounded rumors concerning the number of deaths in Jarrot's Company. There has been but one death, young Boismenue-who was accidentally killed near the Big Blue River. He was from Cahokia, where he was raised. His death will create a void that will be severely felt among his numerous relatives and friends.

ILLINOIS REPUBLICAN
 BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS
 NOVEMBER 28, 1949

DIED. About the 18th of August at the Dry Diggins, in California, Mr. John Boismenue, son of Nicolas Boismenue of St. Clair County, Ill.

recd f Carol Wight

2210 Devon

montrou CO 81401 dated 2/6/91

(Nick Boismenue an ancestral cousin)

ILLINOIS REPUBLICAN
 BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS
 JANUARY 1, 1850

The first page of this weeks paper has been devoted almost entirely to California intelligence, deeming such to be as interesting as anything we could publish.

Since the letter referred to was put to type we have received the painful intelligence of the death of the writer of the same. Mr. Louis Tramble, former proprietor of the Belleville Times, and well known to most of the citizens as a highly respectable and gifted young man. His death occurred in San Francisco, the precise date of which we are not informed. He has left many relatives and warm friends in this community to mourn his untimely decease.

ILLINOIS REPUBLICAN
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 JANUARY 23, 1850

The Pacific News of November 25th, contains the following in relation to this worthy young man, whose death we announced in a former number of our paper. His numerous relations and friends here will be pleased to know that he was cared for and his wants ministered to, by kind friends, during his illness. The News says;

On Saturday, 19th of November, after a lingering illness of Dysentery, Louis Tramble, printer (formerly of St. Louis, Mo.) one of the Compostors employed on this paper from its commencement. From his mild and obliging disposition he became endeared to his employers and fellow workmen, who mourn his loss as a brother. Until Thursday last, he remained in the office full of hope of speedy recovery but in order that nothing which might benefit him should be wanting; he was removed by the Officers of the Lodge of Odd Fellows here, of which he was a member, to the hospital, but the hand of death was upon him. He died composed and serene. His effects were taken charge of by the Officers of California Lodge No. 1

ILLINOIS REPUBLICAN
 BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS
 JANUARY 1, 1850

Through the kindness of Capt. Miles, we have been placed in possession of the following letter from California, written by Louis Tremble to his brother, of this county. The first is dated Webster's Creek, Dry Diggins, California, August 6, 1849.

It is my intention to give you a plain and brief description of a few incidents that occurred on our route. My words you can depend upon as really true, and not mere flights of imagination.

The trip just performed has been one of great severity-induced beyond anticipation. Had I but known the half I have endured before starting, not all the gold in California would have made me undertake it. But I passed through all and glad am I to be at the end of this tedious and tiresome journey. We arrived at the first gold diggings the first of August, after being on the road one hundred and four days.

You know how we were fitted out previous to leaving home. We had an extraordinarily large wagon, unfit for such a trip, and a light spring carriage. The carriage we sold to Col. Jarrot before leaving St. Joseph, and bought a two horse wagon in its place. Our mules were mostly young and wild, which caused us considerable trouble. But, to be brief, under circumstances the most unpropitious, we determined to commence our journey, being situated where we could not better ourselves to company with Col. Jarrot we set out in route to California the 19th day of April. We had purchased oats for our animals to last until we reached the Big Blue River, for the grass was quite scarce at the time of our starting, where it was the intention of Col. Jarrot to stop for some time. The night after starting commenced guard duty, which lasted the entire trip. Many a night have I spent in this pleasant manner, many a soaking have I got since I left home, on guard, for the whole time we were on Platte River we never had a clear day or night-nothing but rain, hail and wind, and bad roads, did we meet on this ever to be remembered river.

But, to commence with my yarn. On the 19th day of April we left Peter's Creek, five miles from St. Joseph, in the Kickapoo Territory, on our march towards California. After traveling four days we reached Nemahah Creek, where we lay camped three days. Having learnt that we could reach the Big Blue in two days travel, we set out the next morning.

The next morning after this occurred the death of poor Nicolas Boismenu, of which no doubt you have heard the particulars. After a short delay we continued on our road, until we reached the Blue. Upon its banks, the remains of poor Nick found a last resting place. The next day was occupied in crossing the river-and the third we again continued on our journey. A general gloom prevailed over the company, caused by the sad accident just transpired.

About the first of May, we reached the Platt. The next day after striking it we passed Fort Child, where we bought flour, fearing that we would run short. Immense herds of buffalo were passed on this river-many were killed by the company. We followed up this river, or its forks, some seven hundred miles. We had constant showers of rain, not infrequently hail storms, accompanied with tremendous winds. After traveling for some time up the main river, then up the South Fork, we came to the ford, at which we found a Souix village of five hundred. We were treated very

kindly by them. Here Wm. C. Davis, of Belleville, passed us. The next day after crossing, we entered Ash Hollow. We traveled up it some thirty miles, in sand six inches deep; we were then on the North Fork of the Platte; we continued up it until reaching Roubidoux's Blacksmith Shop, at Scott's Bluff, where the road turned to the left. We stopped here an entire day, for the purpose of shoeing our animals. Three days after this we reached Laramie's Fort; we encamped near the Fort two days. Some of our boys, four men, thought it would be impossible for us ever to reach California as we were then fixed, proposed a division of the mess. We all consented, and "cast lots" for mules. The Piggott boys, (Peter, Joe and Levi) made a cart. On the other hand, Gelwicks, Fred Snyder, Ben Davis, Joe Sargent, Louis Bayette, Green and myself, determined to take one of our wagons and the leave the other. I forgot to mention that Green was then crippled-one of our teams took flight and in attempting to stop it, the wagon ran over and severely bruised him. After leaving the Fort, our road lay over the Blacks Hills-a rough road we had of it too. The third day after leaving the Fort, Thatcher, Bill Cairns and Tom Short concluded to "pack" and go ahead of us. Two days after this we reached the Mormon Ferry on the North Fork of the Platte, where we were to bid adieu to this abominable stream. While lying there, and at the time of our crossing our animals, a black cloud was seen rising over the mountains, and before the mules could be caught up, it was upon us. Hail stones the size of hen's eggs fell, accompanied with torrents of rain, whilst the wind blew a perfect hurricane. Every animal belonging to the company stampeded and ran with the wind, towards the mountains. As soon as the storm subsided, search was made. All was found, although we were in the very midst of Crow Indians. Traveling over the mountains a few days after leaving the North Fork of the Platte, we struck the Sweet Water River. We continued up it for some eight or nine days. At the head of the river, or where the road forks, Green joined Capt. Goodyear's company, going by way of Salt Lake. We had previously made up our minds to go by way of Sublett's Cut-Off, or Fort Hall. Dr. Illiniski also left us here. We too wished to see the Mormon city on the lake. Late in the evening of the day this occurred, we reached Little Sandy River. Col. Jarrot thought it to be Big Sandy, and knowing that a distance of forty five miles was to be gone over without water, ordered all casks to be filled. We moved off about eight o'clock in the evening, and after traveling three hours, we came to a pretty large stream. We all were astonished as this was the real Big Sandy. We remained here until the evening when we commenced our journey over this, our first desert. After traveling to one o'clock at night, we halted, the road being too dangerous to travel, on account of a very bad bluff to descend. Early in the morning we were again under way. We reached Green River about 10 o'clock in the forenoon. We delayed here two days, not being able to cross, on account of the rains before us. The ferry was kept by old mountaineers-one of them a cousin to Joe and Eil Trotier.

We were now in the midst of the mountains and one particularly, I shall remember-where we had to let down the wagons by hand-having taken the mules off. Several of the mountains that we descended were so steep, that we were compelled to hold the wagons back with ropes when going down, others we had to double team to go up. When through these mountains, we struck Bear River. Here we were very much annoyed with mosquitoes-I have never seen them so numerous. Grass was excellent. On this river we saw a great natural curiosity-the Steamboat Spring-it puffs like a steamboat and throws water to the height of six or seven feet. Near this were the Soda Springs-also several warm and hot springs. After leaving the river, and traveling several days over a rough and mountainous road, we reached Fort Hall. Here we obtained a few luxuries-such as milk, cheese, butter and fresh beef. I made myself sick drinking milk, which satisfied me with luxuries. Leaving Fort Hall, and crossing the Pannack River and after traveling some eight or ten miles, we struck Lewis Fork of the Columbia

River, down which we traveled some eighty miles. It was upon this river that some of us CAHO boys saw a sight beholding-it was the American Falls of the Columbia; so called. We heard the sound of their dashing before reaching them, and none could conjecture what it was. We had seen the "elephant" yet such a sight could not but make one halt and view this sublime work of nature. The river is some two hundred yards wide, and the whole of its water fell some hundred and fifty feet, over a bed of rock, causing a loud roar, very much like a violent storm. The reflection of the sun upon the falling waters caused rainbows of great beauty. After feasting our eyes for some time, we left this spot, all satisfied, and felt fully repaid for the hardships we had undergone since leaving home.

Leaving this river, the road took a southerly direction, passing through the mountains. We had yet to go two hundred and fifty miles before the Humbolt River, upon which it was reported the road was good and level. We had quite a serious time of it traveling these mountains-several of our wagons were broken, and two of them left entirely. Notwithstanding the bad state of the road, we traveled at the rate of thirty miles a day. The day previous to our striking Mary's or Humbolt river, was the fourth of July. Being in company with two Sucker trains, the Colonel proposed to lay by and celebrate the glorious fourth in a proper manner. On the morning of the 4th, we traveled some ten miles to a good campground, where we stopped for the day, and where the Bonner train of Chicago, and the Jacksonville train were already encamped. Shortly after, we were joined by Capt. Hendrickson's train, and two pack mule companies. The company (or camp) numbered one hundred and seventy in all. After drinking all around, J. Murray Morrison was called upon to deliver an address to the "assembled multitude". He did so. At night a dance was proposed, and acceded to. A large fire was made, a fiddler provided, and the dance commenced, which continued until twelve, when the crowd dispersed, and each went to his respected tent. It was my good fortune to be on guard duty that night, so I enjoyed myself charmingly, watching mules. Early next morning we were under way-all anxious to reach Humbolt River. Books represented the valley of this river as a place where all the comforts the emigrant required, could be obtained-plenty of grass for our animals-a good level road for three hundred miles ect. ect. True, we traveled down it that distance, but in regards the other statements, they were all false. It is nothing but a desert, and frequently our animals did not get a mouth full of grass for three days in succession; and instead of the road being level, it was over mountains. When within a week's travel of the Sink, or where the river disappears, we found it impossible to travel during the day, on account of the heat of the sun, and being too dusty. Having heard that the Mormons had made a cut-off, which shortened our road considerably, and partially avoided the desert, on the old road, four men were sent ahead to search for it. John Christy, Fred Snyder, Pierre Perou, and Narcisse Cornoyer, were appointed for that purpose. The evening they left, I fell into the river, and came near drowning; the river being deep and the current very swift. Some four days after this, whilst crossing a plain, or rather a desert, of twenty miles, we recognized Narcisse Cornoyer at a distance-shortly after Fred Snyder and Pierre Perou made their appearance. John Christy had continued on his road to California. They took us to a good patch of grass where we remained all night.

Our animals were nearly all broken down, the great scarcity of grass being the principal cause of it. That night we reached a spring, dist. of ten miles from our last campground, where we lay until morning, when the train moved six miles further to the Sulphur Wells, and where we could cut what we called "virgin leaves" for our animals, preparatory to crossing the desert. We were then ten miles from the Sink, and twenty-five miles to the second Sulphur Wells, our next watering place. From this place (the first well) commences the desert. We lay here till evening, filled our water casks, then started upon the desert. We traveled all night, and early in

the morning reached the second well. We all thought that we had only twenty five or thirty miles further to travel before reaching Truckey River, as our advance guard had reported to us that no one this year had passed through the Mormon cut-off. As I said before, we reached the Second Sulphur Well early in the morning after traveling twenty five miles, and without stopping to rest our weary animals, continued on our road. Traveling ten miles further, we came to a poisonous slough, where we halted two hours to allow our animals to blow, and ourselves to breakfast. The sun was intensely hot, and not a breath of air stirring. As there was no grass here, being no more than a sandy lake, it would not do for us to remain long. We harnessed our jaded animals, and again moved off, the whole company being under the impression that we had only some ten miles further to go before reaching the river. We were all out of water, and the weather extremely hot, which made our thirst ten fold worse. The train moved slowly, the road being exceedingly heavy-the wagon wheels sinking in sand six inches. We traveled eight miles and yet no appearance of a river. Going two miles further, we found a notice stuck-up, stating that it was twenty five miles to the river. We could not believe it, and supposed that some wag had stuck it up for the purpose of humbugging folks. We could plainly see that our animals could not go much further, yet having hopes of reaching the river by traveling a few miles more, we still moved on. We made only two miles more, when our mules refused to pull. Here we unharnessed them and Dan Gelwicks and Louis Bayette started with them, loose for the river whilst Benj. Davis and I remained with the wagon. Joe Sargent and Fred Snyder went ahead with Col. Jarrot's wagons. The Col. made out to get eight miles further, where he was obliged to stop. However, he reached the river with two of his wagons, by putting on them his best mules. I had been without water since 12 o'clock of that day, and yet here I was in the middle of a desert with a single drop. I was so thirsty I could hardly speak, but I could not abandon the wagon, and determined to remain with it all night, hoping that someone would reach us with water early next morning. I never spent a more miserable night in my life than this one. When day broke, it revived us considerably. The hope that someone would come to us with water, was the cause for my remaining here in this God forsaken spot. Three long hours, to us eternities, rolled by, yet no one could be seen. At last, about 10 o'clock, we espied a person coming in the distance, from the direction of the river. I started on the way to meet him, and if I ever saw a happy moment in my life, I saw it then-it was Louis Bayette, loaded with five canteens of water. He did what few men would do-he walked to the river, a distance of twenty miles and back again, without resting, through sand knee deep, after traveling two nights and a whole day-yes, walked sixty hours without resting. Many would have forgotten us after reaching the river, but he did not. He knew that we were suffering, and immediately started back to relieve us. Louis then informed us (after drinking, of course) that he reached the river with only two mules. He found Joseph Sargent lying in the sand, on the road, completely "gave out". Fred Snyder had reached the river; Louis Emel fainted five times before getting water. Dr. Piggott bled at the mouth and nose-but why enumerate? All, all suffered. He also informed us the Indians were very bad-stealing in broad daylight. To make the story short-after collecting all the mules to be found-only five out of nine, the Indians having stolen four-we drove them back to the wagon, and hauled it to the river. It took a whole day to do this, being a distance of twenty miles. Dead animals, cut up by the Indians, were found every hundred yards. We were the first to cross the desert this summer, and it is impossible to imagine how much suffering will be experienced here by the thousands behind us.

After resting here (the river) two days, we again continued on our weary journey. Having lost four animals in the desert, our team was too weak to keep up with the Colonel, we purchased a mule from Jesse Morison,

of Galena, for fifty seven dollars, and Colonel Jarrot having tendered all the assistance in his power-even going as far as to lend us two of his animals-we again felt "right side up". After traveling up Carson River (for we were on the Mormon cut-off), over a very rough road, we reached the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains. The next day we entered the mountains, by a "canon"-a very narrow pass. Had we not known that trains had preceded us, I doubt whether we would have attempted this road; it looked so impractical for wagons. Large granite rocks were piled one upon the other., The first three days we made but seven miles, having had to pack all our baggage and provisions all way, and at the same time breaking two of our wagons. The next day we came to the foot of the first ridge. Here again we had to pack everything up a steep hill a mile in length, which took us almost a day. This over, we descended into a valley, where we met a party of Californians, who stated they were out "prospecting". They told us that California was not the county it had been represented-that we would find gold quite scarce-provisions also-and that emigrants were going back home as fast as they could, being so disappointed. We all felt downhearted at the reception of such news. However we could not turn back, but continued jugging along, up one mountain and down another, until we came to one of 'em. It nearly touched the clouds and no less than a mile and a half long, over a bed of snow. We hitched on seven spans (or fourteen) mules to the first wagon-then the second, and so on, until all were up.

On the very summit, we met six ox teams on their way to the Mormon City, direct from Sutter's Fort. They contradicted everything that was told by the company we had met the day previously-they told us that gold was plenty, provisions abundant, and cheap, and ect. We were again in good spirits. This train entertained fear of being waylaid and supposed the company above mentioned to be a set of land pirates. We traveled over mountains four days from this point, then reached what is Pleasant Valley, where we nooned. Here John Christy met us, just from Sacramento City, and told us that after traveling fifteen miles, we would reach the first settlement. After dinner we hitched up our mules for the last time, and reached Weaver's Creek just at sundown. Everything was taken out of the wagons, and Fred Snyder and Benj. Davis, in company with Col. Jarrot's wagons, immediately started for Sacramento City to sell them.

We are in the GOLD MINES at last. Yes, not ten yards from our tent, thousands of dollars have been excavated, and miners now here are reaping a rich harvest-making from an ounce to twenty dollars a day.

Being exhausted from our long and tedious journey, we determined on resting three or four days before recommencing operations. But the great anxiety of a few of our company of trying their luck, would not let them remain idle more than a half day. Being unsuccessful the first afternoon did not prevent them from trying the next day. Having learned somewhat the art of "washing"-or separating the dirt and gold-they were more successful. Baptiste Delude washed out twelve dollars worth in three pans full. The next day all hands were at it-but getting little of the "dust", we concluded that the diggings were poor. In fact, they were considered but ordinary, on account of the great scarcity of water. Having exposed myself too much in the sun, the fourth day I fell sick-and continued so until evening. Col. Jarrot intended to send provisions back as soon as he reached Sacramento City-for we were all out, and they sold at enormous rates here. Flour 37½ cts. per pound, pickled pork 50 cts., salt beef 37½ cts., molasses \$2 per quart, fresh beef 50 cts. per pound. We were told that eggs sold at \$12 per dozen, potatoes 50 cts. per pound, onions 50 cts. apiece. I found it afterwards to be true. After remaining here for five days, the Colonel's wagons arrived, loaded with provisions. Fred Snyder had bought for us 1 bbl of salt beef, half do pickled pork, 200 lbs flour, sugar, coffee, ect., but the mess not fully disposed to remain together, concluded to sell them again. This little lot of freight cost us ninety

seven dollars for hauling it fifty miles-twenty dollars per hundred being the charge for that distance. Benj. Davis did not return with Fred Snyder, having obtained employment at twelve dollars a day. We soon disposed of our provisions together with our cooking utensils. I also sold my six-shooter for thirty five dollars. John Boyle and Narcisse Cornoyer were going, the next day, with wagons, to Sacramento City; and although quite unwell, I concluded on going along with my mess mates, where a partition of our money was to be made, and thereafter each one to shift for himself. We started at early breakfast, and traveled fifteen miles to a spring, where we remained until three o'clock on account of the heat. In the evening we traveled ten miles further-where it was our intention to remain overnight. In the country we passed over, be a specimen of California, there is not a more barren country on the face of the earth. In fact, how can the vegetables or grass grow, even if the soil admit of it, where there is not rain for seven months in a year. At four o'clock the next morning, we were underway and after passing over a desert like plain for fifteen miles, we reached the American Fork of the Sacramento River, where we stopped until evening-it being impossible to travel any longer. The heat being so extreme. About sundown we passed Sutter's Fort, one mile from Sacramento City, which was in sight. Tents could be seen for miles up and down the Sacramento, of recently arrived emigrants. Some of my mess mates stopped with William C. Davis, camped in a grove two hundred yards or so from town. I took board for the time, at the Miner's Boarding House, but not being able to obtain lodging, I had to sleep under a tree near Davis's tent. Board was twenty dollars a week, without lodging.

SACRAMENTO CITY
AUGUST 18, 1849

This place is not yet two months old, yet it contains no less than 7000 souls. Everything is in a perfect confusion. Emigrants are arriving by hundreds, both by land and by sea, and immediately set out for the mines. Money is plenty; a man here does not regard a dollar more than he would a dime in the states. Wages are high-from two to four hundred dollars per month, board paid. It is a wonder to me that people get along so smoothly as they do, for not having any established rules to go by, everything goes off in a hurry, yet peacefully. Ship loads of provisions and goods are stacked upon the banks of the river yet seldom or ever a theft occurs. It is true that criminals are roughly handled when detected. I saw a man take a hundred and fifty lashes yesterday for stealing a pair of blankets-two days before, I saw one get an ear cut off for stealing a mule. Every other house in this place is a drinking house-and to each of such are connected one or two monte banks, a roulette, a faro bank too. Gaming of every description and on the most expensive scale, is going on in every part of this young and thriving city. Men bet even thousands upon a single card, and as coolly lose or win it as if it were a dime. This appears to be the only pastime of the whole community. I do not know whether the same state of things is universal in this country, but presume it is.

After remaining here a week, I concluded on going to San Francisco, fearing to undertake the mining business on account of feeble health. On the same evening that Gelwicks, Louis Bayette, Joe Sargent and Fred Snyder started for the mines, I took passage for San Francisco on the schooner Eclipse.

SAN FRANCISCO
SEPTEMBER 8, 1849

After being here a half day and taking a fair view of the town, I took board at the Excelsior Restaurant, board being comparatively low—fourteen dollars per week for day board, or seventeen for board and lodging. It being a Sunday, I did not seek employment, but next morning I set about it, and on the second application, I obtained work at my trade at the Pacific News Office, at fifty dollars a week and board found where I am now.

There is not such another place upon the earth where so many different classes of people are found. Even the Hindoos have found their way here; Chinese are plenty—Sandwich Islanders, Chilians, Peruvians, and in fact all the known world is fully represented here.

Since my arrival in this country, I have not eaten anything like vegetables, except onions, which cost 50 cents each. Potatoes sell at 40 cts per pound. Agriculture has been almost entirely abandoned, although it would be profitable. I've seen few pears in town, which sold at a rial, or "bit" apiece.

This place can never be a large city, on account of the site. It is surrounded by a range of low mountains, and has but very little level ground about it. There is no timber in this country fit for building purposes, except on the Sierra Nevada mountains. All the timber is imported from the State of Oregon and China.

As regards the gold mines, I have this to say—it is a lottery business—a mere chance. A man may happen to strike a lead and make a fortune in a short time; but where you will find one of this kind, you will find fifty that will hardly pay their expenses. Besides, it requires hard labor, and you are exposed to the heat of the sun, and being in the water half the time. Sickness is also quite prevalent in the mines at the present time—the prevailing diseases are brain fever and diarrhea. The mining districts are full of laborers.

This city, like its sister city, Sacramento, has its hundreds of gambling houses, and on a yet more extensive scale. Each house employs a band of musicians to play in the bar room every evening to attract crowds. I have seen as much as thirty five hundred dollars staked on a single card, at faro. Gambling seems to be infectious in this country; nearly everybody gambles. Houses of this character are quite numerous—at least one in four are gambling establishments.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
OCTOBER 20, 1849

Fred Snyder, Joseph Sargent, and Daniel W. Gelwicks are on the American or North Fork of the Sacramento River, near Sutter's Mill; Louis Bayette is on the middle fork; the Piggott boys are on Weavers Creek (Dry Diggins); Benj. Davis is working at his trade in Embarcadero.. Old man Green I have not seen since he left us on the head of Sweet Water River, to go by way of Salt Lake. He has reached the mines however. Col. Jarrot's Company is on the Tuolumni River. All of the above I understand are doing well.