

CASL

MEMORANDUM OF OUR TRIP ACROSS THE PLAINS

TO CALIFORNIA

April 13 - July 20, 1863

by

B. P. Lewis

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Platte River Road Narrative
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Memorandum of our trip
across the plains to California

Monday April 19th 1863

The morning
was spent in making preparations
to start and bidding good by to
friends in the afternoon I went
to the place from which we were
to start the next day being about
three miles distant from home.

Tuesday Apr. 21st / 63

Eleven O'clock

A. W. found us all ready to start.
We camped near Sheffield. After
supper I was appointed cook. We all
had our own revolvers. Made some
pretty wild shooting. A pleasant camp

Wednesday April 15th 1863

Started from camp bright and early nothing of interest transpired during the day. We passed through some beautiful country and through the City of Geneva. Henry Co. Ill. Camped about dusk. The good accommodations. The roads were first very dusty during the day. We are camped on Mineral Creek.

Thursday April 16th 1863
Camped Iowa. The road we have traveled today is through a fully broken country. We traveled some time near the bank of Rock River. This River what it is called has very low banks and the appearance of being a slow moving stream. We crossed it on a toll bridge. Passed through Madison River.

Island. Thence across the Mississippi
River through the City of Davenport
in Iowa. Camped 1/2 mile west of
same. The Mississippi is a noble
stream and a beautiful steam ferry
crosses it between the Cities of
Rock Island & Davenport.

Friday April 11th 1863

This morning we bid good bye to our
friends, Doctor, Anthony, & Bryant &
started on our way, passed through
Blue Grass, Scott Co Iowa. The
country through which we have
passed today is very hilly, and poor
looking land. We have just crossed
Cedar River on a Ferry and are
now camped on right bank of same.

then went up in the City. visited the
Deaf & Dumb Asylum, was pleased
with our entertainment there.
Evening called us back to camp
where we found the supper waiting
for us.

Monday April 20th 1863

Started from early all feeling very
much refreshed after our day of rest.
The country through which we have
passed to day has been a dreary looking
place. We passed through Windham,
Petersburg, and are now camped
near Little City.

Tuesday Apr. 21st /63

All quiet on the Potomac. we started
from camp in good spirits. passed
through a very rough hilly country
passed through Millersburg & Dresden

and went into camp on Deep River,
Pawshick County

Wednesday Apr 22nd / 63

Started from camp later than usual
The rain we had last night making
the roads slippery. The country through
which we have passed has been very
nice. We passed through Montezuma
the County Seat of Pawshick County
Camped within $\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the County
line near a small town called
Westfield

Thursday Apr 23rd / 63

All right and up passed over some
awful hard looking country. Passed
through Newton the County Seat of
Aspen. Lem and I had our likenesses
taken there. Camped near Skunk
River

Friday April 24th 1863

Great excitement all quiet Country generally good. Passed through Keosauqua Iowa & Fort Desmoine, the Capital of Iowa & County Seat of Polk County. This is a flourishing City. Crossed the Desmoine River on a toll bridge. And also over Keosauqua River on toll bridge. These are both small Rivers.

Saturday April 25th /63

Started from camp bright and early. Passed over some very nice country. Passed through Wintereth the County Seat of Madison County. Camped on the left bank of Middle River Adair County.

Sunday April 26th /63

It being Sabbath we did not leave.

camp very early. It commenced raining about ten o'clock. We hurried along to a small town called Greenfield, and camped with good accommodations. It is raining now & I guess we will sing some to drive away lonesome thoughts. I am going to write some letters to my friends. The country through which we have passed to day is very thinly settled. The land is generally good. Timber very scarce.

Monday, Apr. 21st / 43

The roads being muddy we did not start very early. Passed through some nice looking country. Went within one mile of the County Seat, of Adair County, Fontenell. Also passed through the City of Beth where one lived and his starved to death.

camped in Cass County, in a pretty
 large grove on Hedges Creek. Timber
 very scarce through here.

Tuesday Apr. 28th 1863.

Started from camp in good time
 passed through some nice rolling
 prairie. Passed through the town of
 Lewis the County Seat of Cass County.
 Bought a part of our flour to use on
 our plains in Lewis. Camped on
 and Mishana Potana Creek
 in Kawatomie County. Twenty miles
 from Council Bluffs.

Wednesday Apr. 29th 1863

This morning found no snow on the road
 early before sunrise in order to reach
 Council Bluffs by noon, at which
 time we entered the City. Found a
 very good camping place. We passed

Friday May 1st 1863

To day we have been traveling in Nebraska Territory. This morning we passed through Omaha City. This is nicely situated and a flourishing place. The Capital is situated on a high elevation of land west of the City. Population 2000. We are camped near Elkhorn City on the bank of Elkhorn's River, twenty five miles from Omaha. It is raining very fast now the boys are digging trenches around the tent. We are now in Douglas County.

Saturday May 2nd /63

Started rather late this morning. The road this fore noon was level and sandy. Took dinner on the left bank of a branch of Platte River.

appearance a short distance from
 us on the Prairie. Two of our men
 started in pursuit. In a few moments
 we were all gazing at the prostrate form
 of one of these wild animals. It
 was soon dressed and we all started
 on passed through some beautiful
 country during the day all the
 objection is scarcity of timber.
 We are now camped in Butler Co
 and near an Indian wigam.
 We have been visited by these wild
 animals this Ev^g to our hearts content
 These are the first wild Indians
 I ever saw.

Tuesday May 5th 1863

saw nothing of interest to note to
 day. We have been traveling near the
 banks of the River. But very few

Friday May 8th / 63.

was on guard last night and this morning I slept until eleven o'clock, so much of our journey is done. One of our animals took the back track about noon. And we have been considerably detained. We have passed through some nice looking country to day. This eve, one of our boys wounded and took prisoner a skunk.

Saturday May 9th / 63

We started early this morning all appeared to reach the Fort & get some letters from home. Passed through a small town called Valley City also through Buffalo City. Buffalo skulls are lying along the road here in great numbers. I saw

of the River, & are now camped on
an Island in same, with good accommo-
dations

Tuesday May 12th /63

Started from camp early. Mr Barwith
was very sick during the fore part of
the day but is better now. Some of
our boys have been hunting
Buffalo to day & have just returned
with many Buffalo. We are camped
near the bank of the River on the
open Prairie

Wednesday May 13th /63

Our road to day has been near the
bank of the River. Passed through
Yellow-wood Springs and are camped
two miles west of same, in a City
of Prairie Dogs. They are very cunning
& the creatures & seem to enjoy themselves

with shrubs of most every description
which made it very beautiful. We
are in camp about two hundred yds
from the River

Saturday May 16th /63

Left camp all in good spirits. I
saw an Indian burying ground.
The dead are placed upon a scaffold
about twelve feet high, wrapped in
Buffalo skins, their earthly property
is deposited with them & their bodies
are thus left to decay. Their favorite
pony is shot and left beneath them.
We are now on the South Fork of
Platte River & camped near the
bank of same without grass for our
animals.

Sunday May 17th /63

We started very early this morning in

in Colorado Territory this afternoon
we camped on Platte about five miles
west of Julesburg

Tuesday May 19th / 63,
were all tired this eve. Have traveled
through a great deal of sand, which
is tiresome. Grass is much better
here than on the other side of Julesburg
Have traveled about ten miles on
a toll road

Wednesday May 20th / 63
We have traveled over the darndest
road to day I ever saw. The wind is
blowing very hard. We fear our tent
will blow down. And now later
here we are, wandering around in the
dark. The wind has blown down our
tent. I see some of the boys are wrapped
in their blankets lying on the tent

a little sleep. We have passed by several Indian wigwams and saw the inmates. They were of the tribe called the Cheyennes

Saturday May 23rd /63

We had a beautiful morning with a cool refreshing breeze blowing from the West. Crossed Big Horn Creek a short time after starting. After traveling about thirty miles we came in sight of the Rocky Mts. They presented a grand spectacle resembling at first view dark heavy clouds fringed white (this being snow). We are now camped about sixty miles from the Mts and in full view of them. George Peak is plainly to be seen towering its snowy head far above all the others

Monday May 25th / 1863

The morning was indeed beautiful
 We all started from camp feeling
 much refreshed after our day's rest
 Mrs Bosworth is some better today

We reached the Ford of the Platte
 about noon found the crossing good
 took dinner across the River, near
 the bank of Cache-la-poudre, River
 Cross on this side of the River is
 about fourteen inches high. I
 mailed two letters home first,
 before crossing the River. Sixty
 seven Soldiers are in camp here
 they have been here about two
 months. The Overland Stage is
 running down the Cache-la-poudre
 it commenced running today

climbing some of the mountain
cliffs. Reached them about noon at
the junction of the Denver & Salt
Lake City roads. One Hundred
soldiers are quartered here at camp
Collins. There is a small town
here called Leadville. After getting
in the pits we took dinner, after
which some of us climbed a high
mountain near camp we had a
glorious time. I have seen some
very high peaks to day. We are camped
on the bank of a beautiful stream
with good accommodations.

Thursday May 28th/68

To day the country has been more
picturesque than yesterday. Some
of the highest precipices I ever saw,
composed of solid rock and running

of snow. As we neared the summit
vegetation ceased and one huge mass of
rocks presented themselves.

We are now at the foot of the mountain
down a deep ravine partly filled
with snow, the snow is from thirty to
forty feet deep. We reached camp
about one o'clock tired & hungry but
well pleased with what we had seen.

Friday June 2nd/3

The morning was clear & pleasant. We
left camp early. Passed through
Fort Halleck. I mailed a letter home
at that place. One company of soldiers
are quartered there. After traveling
thirty four miles we reached the
North Platte River, and are now
camped on same. The feed is
very poor here.

morning all being up very late last night. Passed over the summit of the Rocky Mountains, through Bridgers Pass. The road has been very dusty. We are camped near Sulphur Springs on very good pasture.

Friday June 5th / 863

Started from camp in good spirits. Our horses all feeling much better after having a good feed of grass. We have traveled thirty four miles to day and are now camped in a miserable place. ~~Nothing~~ grass or water except what is strongly tinted with alkali. We all feel rather low spirited to night.

Saturday June 6th / 863

Left camp at four o'clock. This day

miles from Green River are
going to start at three O'clock in
the morning to get ahead of a large
train camped near us. We will
cross the River in a ferry.

Tuesday June 9th / 86

The morning was clear and cold
Overcoats were necessary for us just
Towards noon however the sun
began to pour down his rays of
heat making our wadded men
portable. Reached Green River
about nine O'clock and were
soon all ferried over the stream
and have made a good camp on
the West side. Found good feed
three miles from camp. Two of our
animals gave out today but they
are now feeding on excellent grass

Friday June 12th / 68

Morning clear and warm. We did not get an early start this morning as usual. The road has been very hilly to day. Reached Fort Bridges about noon. I rec^d these letters these from home. The Fort. looked lik quite a City after traveling so long in the wilderness. We are camped on a beautiful Mountain stream. Ten miles west of the Fort. Mosquitoes are very thick here and the bite like thunders, a good many of them weigh a pound

Saturday June 13th / 68

The morning was very warm. One of our horses was taken sick this morning and we are going to lay over until he gets better

very hilly. To day, I took dinner at
 Duwakenap Hills. Crossed Rock
 Creek & Bear River. Are now
 camped on the left bank of R.R.
 with good accommodations

Tuesday June 16th / 1863

The morning was very cold. We
 found the water which had been
 left in our pails covered with ice
 a half an inch in thickness. The
 road has been very hilly and
 rough today. We are now camped
 within the walls of Echo Canyon
 and in rather a dangerous place
 if Indians should attack us. We
 passed the battle field between fifteen
 Indians and fifty one white men.
 The Indians made the attack. One
 of the men had a slight wound in
 the breast and a horse was shot.

will principally all the time. Passed through Parley's Canyon. Reached the city about seven o'clock. The soldiers in Camp Douglas (situated three miles east of here) have given us all an invitation to attend a grand ball, a great number of them have gone and while I am now writing letters home they are engaged in the mazy dance.

Friday June 19th 1868

In the city all day. Visited the new Temple & Tabernacle which they are now building President Young's residence, Theater rooms, and the City generally. Streets wide neat & level. We laid in our supplies for the remainder of our journey. Brigham visited us in the evening & made a few remarks with which we

good accommodations

Friday June 23rd / 68

Some of our horses strayed away this morning and we did not leave camp until quite late. The roads have been hilly & rough. Are in camp near Government Springs. Found very good feed & water. A part of two companies of soldiers are camped near us

Wednesday June 24th / 68

Did not leave camp until afternoon. Traveled ten miles over the roughest road I ever saw and are now camped near Indian Springs in full view of the Desert lying before us. We visited the battle field between Indians & Soldiers saw the bodies of five Indians. This is about halfway between Indian

This morning found good water & grass. camp at Willow Springs have spent the day principally in sleeping

Sunday June 28th/68

Started from camp early this morning. The road has been good. Passed the ground upon which three soldiers were killed by Indians. They were killed last Wednesday. Are camped on Deep Creek. A nice shower of rain passed over us this evening.

Monday June 29th/68

The morning was clear and pleasant. Passed through Deep Creek station and camped six miles above to wait until evening. Have good grass & water but no wood. We have twenty six miles

Constitution of Abe Lincoln
Administration, Have traveled
 eighteen miles to day and are
 camped one mile from the road
 and good grass and near good water.
 The road to day has been good

Monday July 6th/68

The morning was clear and warm,
 left camp early. Crossed Diamond
 Mountain. Found the steepest hill
 we have had to climb yet. Are
 now camped at Sulphur Spring
 without wood and very poor water
 and grass.

Tuesday July 7th/68.

Traveled fifteen miles and
 camped on Roberts Creek. Three
 miles from the road. Found good
 grass and water. Are not going
 out until tomorrow eve. The

46
Indians are our constant visitors
And we all dread to see them

Wednesday July 8th/63

The fore part of the day was
spent in making preparations for
traveling through the night. We
left camp about three O'clock and
traveled over a splendid road
eighteen miles to Grouse Wells
Reached here about nine O'clock
P.M. and camped for the night

Thursday July 9th/63

Started from camp this morning
at two O'clock. Reached Dry Creek
Station twenty miles distant about
nine O'clock A.M. The road to
Dry Creek was good, after leaving
there we had a very hard road to
travel. We are camped near
Simpson's Park with good water

but no grass.

Friday July 10th/863
 Left camp early anxious to find
 grass for our hungry animals. Found
 good grass at Simpsons Park three
 miles ahead and camped for the
 remainder of the day. We were
 told to day that wages were five
 dollars per day in Reese River
 Silver mines. My self and some
 others are going to stop if such
 wages are paid.

Saturday July 11th/863
 The morning was clear and very
 warm. We made a halt at the
 mines. Found wages good but no
 employment. We are camped on
 Reese River about twenty miles
 from the mines. This is a
 small stream. We have good grass

Sunday July 12th / 03

The morning was clear and very warm. Last eve. about ten o'clock our horses became frightened stampeded and ran away. We did not start in pursuit until this morning. They were found about ten miles from camp. After traveling twenty two miles we Smiths Creek on which we are now camped. This is a small crooked stream. Affords good water. Grass is very poor here

Monday July 13th / 03

Left camp early. Traveled up Smiths Creek about seven miles crossed the Summit of the Mountain and came to Roberts Creek. Traveled about four miles down creek and

camped for the night, with good
grass and water.

Tuesday July 14th / 63

The morning was indeed beautiful
The shower which we had yesterday
made the morning air cool & refreshing
The road to day has been very stony
and dusty. Traveled eighteen miles
without water, ^{to Cold Springs} thence thence to
Middle Gate 12 miles. Where
we are now camped without grass
or wood and very poor water.

Wednesday July 15th / 63

The morning was clear and very
warm. Passed through West Gate
seven miles from Middle Gate
found the water very poor, from
there to Sourd Springs where the
water was still poorer. Went seven
miles further to Sulphur Springs

50.

found splendid grass but miserable
water. We have traveled thirty
four miles today. Are now ten
miles from The Sink of The Canon

Thursday July 16th/63

The morning was very warm
Our first six miles was over a
heavy sand hill. We all suffered
very much from the heat while
crossing. Reached the Sink
about noon traveled along the
bank about four miles and
camped for dinner. after taking
dinner we started for Desert
Wells fifteen miles distant. Reached
the Wells late in the evening
Found good water and grass

Friday July 17th/63

It was decided last night that
we should not leave camp until

noon consequently we did not arise very early this morning. Our horses all returned to camp about eleven o'clock and we were soon on our way for Fort Churchill. Camped about five o'clock in a beautiful place. Three of our boys hired out here to make hay at fifty dollars per month.

Saturday July 18th / 63

After bidding good bye to the boys we started for Carson City, thirty five miles distant. Passed through Dayton, Carson City & reached Carson City about sunset. During the eve. I went up to the P. O. and recd. a welcome letter from home.

Sunday July 19th / 63

Took breakfast this morning rather late being in the city and visiting

52.

To conform with City Styles, Giffitt
stopped there leaving me the only
one to go through with Mrs. B.
Left the City about noon and
camped near Senour

Monday July 19th/63

Left camp bright and early Reached
the grade over the Sierra Nevada
about seven and commenced our
tedious task. The grades to day
have been very nice. We
camped at the Log Cabin. and
in leaf for the first night

Tuesday July 20th/63

Left Camp early all anxious
to soon be to our journey's end
Passed through some splendid
Pine Timber. Camped at
Sportsmans Hall. Reached there
after sun-set

Wednesday July 25th 1860

I arose this morning with a severe headache, but knowing that we would end my journey I soon had the horses on the road bound for the Duroc. Took dinner in the City of Placerville. I had been suffering some days with the tooth ache, I had it extracted at Placerville. Reached the Duroc House, where my Wm's lives about five o'clock. Found them all well and looking for me.

Thus ended our trip across the Plains. Being out thirty seven days. This is a true copy of the original, and let me say that I have not taken the pains I wish I could have done, but bear in mind dear friends it has been

written little by little until
you have the whole now
together. I can say that on the
whole we have had as pleasant
a trip across the plains as could
be expected laboring under the
disadvantages all are obliged to
Our company separated one after
another all friends Good Bye,
With respect B. P. Lewis

Respectfully presented to
Miss Emily J. Childs