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Stansbury -20-

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Dale Morgan &

Merrill J. Mattie

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Friday July 6.

Off $\frac{1}{4}$ to six. Thermom^r Sunrise 62°. The band of Sioux below us together with Badeaus teams followed. At Smith Fork found another band of about 200 in the act of breaking up camp for a move- Bissonette & his family of five children were with them. Here we found a number of cases of diarrhea (sic) & cholera We- The doctor & myself visited under the guidance of Mr. Bissonette every lodge where we had reason to believe any of the symptoms had shewn themselves In one instance after searching for a young man, who we were informed was very bad & had been taken only yesterday, we were told that he had just been carried out & buried. Dr. Blake administered medicines to all who needed it, & I left a bottle with Mr. Bissonette for any who might need it. They seemed quite revived by the presence of the doctor & expressed great thankfulness & an anxiety that he shd remain amongst them. I shall never forget the expression of the countenance of one young man about five & twenty. He had been sick three days, & when we came to see him was sitting on the ground with his knees drawn up, looking the very picture of melancholy & despair. He had evidently given up all hope & had made up his mind that he must die. The doctor examined him carefully & fully & then told Bissonette to tell him that the worst was past & that with a little care he would soon recover. His face flushed, the fire came into his eyes, he was for a moment perfectly radiant a smile of hope & confidence lighted up his countenance, he gently smote his hands together, & told his wife who was standing behind of the good news. It was an affecting sight, & altho we could not understand one word of what was said, the whole scene was most perfectly intelligible.

The whole scene was unique in the highest degree--Squaws, children, mules horses & dogs- all in motion & all apparently busy. The lodge poles are fastened to the packs on the animals back 4 or five of a side (?) trailing behind very much like the shafts of a buggy- On these behind the horse, is fastened a sort of platform consisting of a long hoop pole bent into an oval form & filled in with a sort of net work of raw hide- Upon this light but strong trellice work, they place the lighter bundles, clothing robes & then pack amongst them their puppy dogs & babies, of both of which they seem to have a considerable number. Their dogs they also make to perform their part. Two short lodge poles are fastened together at the smaller end- This rests upon the neck of the dog just behind his ears, over his shoulders comes a sort of pad or saddle, also fastened to the poles. Thus he is between two poles radiating from his neck & the larger ends resting on the ground behind him. Somewhat in the form of the two sides of an isocetes triangle, the base being somewhat shorter than the sides Behind the dog, is fastened a platform similar to those used with the horses, upon which is placed some light articles & often nothing at all We saw numbers of these animals with their wolf like faces, thus trotting along as if it were a duty to which they were perfectly accustomed. The whole duty of packing up, loading the horses, arranging the lodge poles, & leading the animals was performed by the squaws. Upon most of the frames behind the horses, I observed there were wicker frames erected very similar to those upon our wicker basket wagons for children, except that they extended the whole length & was open at the sides. Over this frame was spread a blanket, shawl or buffalo robe, & the women when they were tired with walking got into them & wer thus dragged by the horse who expressed any thing but satisfaction at the additional load thus imposed upon him. The road was strewed for miles with them as each lodge left the encampment as soon as they were ready without waiting for the others. The scene was picturesque in the highest degree & a daguerreotype view of the encampment when we entered it would

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have made one of the most curious characteristic & interesting pictures that can be imagined. The lodge of each brave had its tripod of three poles upon which was suspended his shield, his spear & his medicine sack. It reminded as it did Fremont of the days of Ivanhoe & impressed me with the singularity of the coincidence between what were then the most refined, nations in the world, & the wild untutored savages of this then unknown region. There were ten lodges in the lower & about 30 in the upper band, & altogether there may have been 250 Indians. One old chief as I understood, came to see me last night, & another followed me, & I was obliged to ask him to noon with us. This he did to his entire satisfaction, eating nearly as much meat as the whole mess beside— The whole band halted about 10 o'clock on the bank of the river & when we resumed our afternoons march, their lodges were up & this encampment made. The old chief's name was Fair day, & he had a number of certificates from different companies of Emigrants & amongst them one from Como. Stockton. Badeau represents them as extremely friendly to the whites. The females amongst them are not at all prepossessing, altho I saw some bright eyes & one very sweet smile amongst them. Bissonette's eldest girl 10 years of age if she were white would be very pretty. Encamped at 5½ on the bank of the Platte after a short march of 19 miles. The clouds threatened a heavy storm, but as was the case yesterday it came to nothing. Crossed 7½ miles back a fine stream of running water, & in the ravines near the Camp was found a number of springs of very soft, cold, sandstone water which proved very grateful after the hot & dusty ride all day in the broiling sun. Ther^r. at 10. P. M. 66°

Saturday July 7.

Ther^r. at sunrise 56. Gentle air from E.S.E. As the sun rose it became quite warm. After travelling about 3 miles passed three graves side by side. Their occupants had belonged to an Ohio Comp^y & as the pieces of board at the heads of each grave informed us had died of cholera on the 14th & 15th & 17th June. At 7 o'clock caught a view of the celebrated Chimney rock far in the distance. Dr. Blake & myself rode out among the undulating hills to the left to try & see where the main bluff was. We saw it from the tops of the rounded hillocks about 5 miles to the south. "The Court House" was also seen it consists of two bald elevations similar in structure to those seen day before yesterday. We were not near enough to form any estimate of their height & at length determined to visit it we accordingly rode across the open prairie some two miles to the left of road toward them. In our ride we crossed the dry bed of a stream about 250 feet in width. The bottom consisted entirely of white sand, & must in the rainy season discharge a large quantity of water. It had little or no banks & from the appearance of drift wood far out on the Prairies must overflow its banks a very considerable distance. The soil is so sandy that at this time it would take the discharge of a large river to fill its channel & keep the water running. About 1½ miles from this creek we came rather unexpectedly upon another, called by Fremont Dry Creek but known amongst the Frenchmen by the name of Laurences fork from the fact of a man of that name having been killed on it by the Sioux. The courthouse was but a few hundred yards beyond this second stream, which was about thirty feet wide & two or three feet deep, full, & running with a fine bold & tolerably rapid current. We attempted to ford it, but found the bottom to consist of a stiff marly mud upon which the animals could with difficulty withdraw their legs which sank rapidly into it. Fearful of miring them down, we returned & thus lost the opportunity of examining this curious formation more closely. We were however richly rewarded for our labour. For we found upon regaining the bank, lying upon a large lump of (sic) what Dr Blake at once pronounced to be Lignite. And in corroboration of his opinion we found nearby a lump of oolitic clay from which we picked many fresh water shells of them which were carefully preserved. This lignite was evidently brought down by the creek as many larger lumps were seeing (sic) lying in the

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water § strewed along the bank. Should the substance be found in any quantity in the hills to the south, it will have a most important bearing upon the future settlement of this region; destitute of timber lignite will furnish a most valuable substitute as fuel. If I had time I wd make further examinations, but the objects of my expeditions have been already so much delayed, that I cannot afford any farther delay. If possible I will make ^{some} farther examinations. The Court house" is the S.E. termination so far as can be seen from the valley of the Platte of a range of bluffs or hills extending as far N W as the Chimney Rock. It is in many places washed by the action of the elements into the most fantastic forms, resembling castles Fortifications of vast magnitude §c. After passing the Court house, a huge butte to the right of the chimney rock was before us the whole afternoon § presented so remarkable a resemblance to a view from the East of the Capitol at Washington, with its dome in the center, §/ its wings on each side that it was the subject of remark at the time § was again mentioned at breakfast next morning by another member of the mess who was not present when our comments were made. I wonder that it did not strike Fremont, as aside from the chimney it is a much larger § imposing object. The likeness is very strong, § I was carried back by the sight of it, to years long past when for years the building was before my eyes. Thro what vicissitudes have I passed since those days of happy boyhood. The day has been extremely warm, § in the afternoon the gnats have been almost insufferable. We were obliged to make a long drive this afternoon, I encamped within a mile of the chimney Rock upon a point or rather knoll of land overlooking the prairie between it § the Platte about a mile distant. Directly at the foot of the bluff was a most beautiful spring, which came bubbling up out of the ground with a bold clear pelucid stream, affording abundance of the coldest § most delicious water we have yet found Distance travelled to day 25 miles Whilst assisting Dr Blake in picking out shells from the clay on the bank of the creek near the Court house, my mule ran off, § it was not until after a hard chase, § a regular race, that I succeeded in running her down with the Drs horse My coat which was hanging on her saddle was lost, with all that the pockets contained, § the Dr had a long walk to the noon halting place in the hot sun (?) I had picked a parcel of seeds on the prairie which wer also lost. Fortunately my note book was in the pocket of my holsters, § was thus saved. Temperature of the spring 52°. Passed six graves today

Sunday July 8

Ther^r at 6 oclock 72. Wind fresh from N.W. At 8 shifts to N.E. At $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. Ther^r in sun 98 $\frac{1}{2}$ °. The gnats § horse flies are very annoying in camp all day. Archambau went hunting early § returned laden with as much meat as two mules could carry. He had killed three buck elk § an antelope The boys were soon busy drying it. Was obliged to send the buggy off to obtain wood, as there was none to be gotten nearer than the bluffs The hunter (sic) that there is plenty of dry cedar on the prairie near the foot of the hills brought down by the waters in the Spring

Monday July 9

Gentle breeze at sunrise from N.W. Ther^r 55° Off at $\frac{1}{2}$ to 6. Dr Blake § myself started to take a look at the very curious bluffs or range which extends from the Court house to Chimney rock § on beyond to Scott's bluff (last 6 words inserted later with a caret) Riding south from the camp for about 5 miles over a prair(i)e cut up into every shape by hollows § little short ridges we arrived at a pass or gorge in what appeared to be the main bluff of the Platte; on reaching the summit of the pass, however we saw that the bluff was only a ridge between the valley of the Platte § Laurences fork which runs about N.E. thro a broad level prairie about 3 or 4 miles wide bounded by a high bluff on its southern side. Another fork comes into it a little above, § a high ridge

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similar in character to the others divides the two. A few trees were seen on the further one. In the pass found some superb specimens of digitalis, in full flower & very beautiful. These two branches of Laurences fork extend apparently a very considerable distance West. We hoped to find some more specimens of Lignite on this stream & accordingly rode out to it. It is a beautiful bubbling brook & perfectly refreshing to look at, running with a rapid current over sand & rolled stones brought down from the Court house ridge in immense quantities. It is extremely crooked has no valley but has apparently dug a channel for itself in the prairie, so that you come upon it when you least expect it. The South side of the ridge presents the same fantastic appearance as does that fronting the Platte valley with it(s) jutting rounded abutments, & castellated towers. We climbed & crossed the ridge to return to the Platte valley just below the chimney. The ridge is here about two miles wide, very much broken, & the sides so steep that we were obliged to lead our horses up them sides crossing descending the North slope of the ridge through a narrow and extremely sinuous ravine, through which we were guided principally by a well worn buffalo trail, we resumed the course of the Platte & before long came to the Chimney. We estimated that the chimney was about 30 feet high, & the whole from the bottom or base of the pyramid, 150- not at exc^d 200. Several well worn paths of mens feet wound up the cone to the base of the chimney, & the perpendicular clay in two deep ravines in the vicinity where there were Springs, was indented with the names of numerous emigrants who had preceded us. Passing the elevation called by us the Capitol, we came up with the train just as it had started for the afternoons march. After 3 miles the road leaves the River, striking behind a bluff or projection where there is no track between it & the river. We were thus forced to go on until we could get water which we did not find until 9 oclock at night when we encamped on a small run near a delicious spring on Scotts bluff, the doctor & myself having been on horse back 16 hours without food-- Passed 2 graves today. Near us were encamped two bands of Emigrants amongst one of which I saw 3 very well dressed women. This band owned the poney found by Archambau. There was some difficulty as to the ownership between two of that party & they commenced stripping for a fight when I jumped up & stopped it. They then settled it amicably, & the poney was given up. (This occurred the next morning.) The afternoon was very hot, the flies & gnats very annoying. The mules suffered very much, having been nearly seven continuous hours on the wagons (?) without water. The grass too was very poor & they had little or no time to eat before being picketed. The night was very warm, & the mosquitoes swarmed in countless numbers

Tuesday July 10.

Owing to the fatiguing march of yesterday & the swarms of mosquitoes which prevented either man or beast from sleeping we did not make a morning march today. Dr Blakes horse & one of the mules was sent to be shod at a temporary blacksmiths shop erected for the benefit of the emigrants & the owner a short distance above. The owner lived in an Indian lodge, had erected a log shantie (?) in one end of which was a shop & in the other a grog shop & sort of grocery the stock consisting of such articles as the owner had bought of the Emigrants at a great sacrifice. I understood too(sic) that he had in this way bought a good wagon for 75 cents. The smith himself was sick from overwork & had hired the use of the shop & tools for 75 cents the hour. The day was excessively hot, the ther^m standing at 98° in the shade, & 106° in the sun exposed to a free current of air. In the afternoon a most violent wind sprang up with heavy black clouds, & vivid lightning & thunder. Encamped after dark upon the bluff of an affluent of horse creek which was about a mile ahead in a broad level prair(i)e without a stick of timber. We had stopped

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at the spring § filled our tanks with that delicious water, § put some wood into our wagons with which we were enabled to cook breakfast next morning. The mosquitoes were most troublesome § as thick as I had ever seen them. The men slept but little § the cattle could neither eat nor sleep. Days march 13 miles. The black Hills were seen distinctly this afternoon, § a peak 40 miles beyond Laramie. The grass is getting very poor § dry.

Engaged Nelson Boyer from today Scotts bluff

Wednesday 11

Off at 6½- Made 22 miles- More timber most of it cut off (rest of this page and the following page left blank, evidently for entries never filled in)

Thursday July 12-

Last night was deliciously cool § fully made up for the sufferings of the two last nights. Consequently as we were but a short march from Fort Laramie I allowed both the men § the animals to take advantage of it. Did not leave until 7 Ther^r. Over coats quite comfortable after a march of 13 miles crossed Laramie fork § drove up to this Fort. Called upon Maj^r Sanderson § paid respects. Dined at the mess. Lt Woodbury § Capt Rhett the QrMr were absent hunting. Encamped just above the fort. Below us is a company of mounted rifles- also encamped on the bank of the river. March 14½ miles.

The Laramie river is quite a rapid stream about 3 feet deep where the wagons crossed which was just opposite and (sic) old adobe Fort now abandoned. The American Fur Companys peo(1)e are encamped on the left bank having sold out Ft Laramie to the Govt for \$4000.

Friday July 13.

Morning clear § bright Ther^r

Engaged all day in repacking the wagons, overhauling provisions § making arrangements for the march to Fort Hall. Our (one?) man engaged by the Quartermaster in shoeing mules. The green wagon will require three of its tires to be cut § shrunk. Made a special requisition for 15 mules § two horses which was complied with § ten mules brought into Camp the others to be obtained tomorrow Lt Woodbury called-

Saturday July 14.

Morning bright § pleasant. Discharged Deemares (?) the cook, § made Frank Tison cook in his place § Engaged Lajeunesse as teamster in his place. Engaged in writing to Dept. Dr. Henry Pa § Helen Arranging the loading a new, dividing the provisions into messes §c §. Opened the two barometers belonging to the Smithsonian Institution § found them to be in perfect order § very correct, agreeing within 3/1000 with our mountain one which is a most excellent one. Sent it up to the Fort in care of Lieut Woodbury Corps Eng^s. Lt Gunnison engaged in making observations for time § for the Latitude. Wild man- his oaths § curses §c. Kitty- Dumarris discharged. Singing in the evening. Mr. Langdon left us today on account of his health. His amiability § good temper had endeared him to us § we part from him with regret. Ther^r at Sundown 78° Wrote to the Col. § to Proff Henry Blacksmith still engaged in shoeing mules- Hired Jaunees (sic) to drive Frank Tisons wagon.

Sunday July 15

Slept late this morning as usual on Sundays. Ther. Capt Duncan of the Rifles who is encamped with his Compy just below us, came § called this morning § invited the Dr § myself to his quarters. We accompanied him § spent an hour or two very pleasantly. Writing reading § lazying all day-

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Observe for Time-
Dineat Lt Elliotts-
Dr. Moore informs that Capt S-y had better tarry a day more.

Tuesday Oct 15th

A high gale from WSW all day filled the air with dust & sand rendering it almost impossible to move about.

From what I learn the letters sent by us from G.S.L. City per Mr. Holliday were lost on the way -

In my letter was a check drawn on R. & W Campbell for two Hundred dollars, by Capt. H. Stansbury, & for which I had advanced him the money. This should be duplicated

Wednesday Oct 16th

After adjusting papers at the Several Depts, of Q Mr- Com. - Ord - we started the three wagons across the Laramie at the Fort & encamped on the Platte six miles below.

We took leave of our hospitable friends, Woodbury, Elliott, Rhett & their amiable families - also Mr. Langdon of the Qr. Mr. Dept from all of whom we have received great Kindness*

Mr. Carrington remains behind to take charge of our government wagon with our baggage & public property, which has been every moment expected since our arrival; much now to our disappointment no newshas been received of them.

Only one building for quarters of the projected fort arrangement is completed at Fort Laramie- Several small ones are erected for temporary offices - but most of the officers of the garrison reside in the old adobie fort.

Timber is scarce, has to be hauled about 20 miles from the ravines in the hills & then is mostly sawed by the convict soldiers - The 12 mule mill has given much trouble; until lately but two days of the week being in order to run.

Good sandstone for building lies in convenient quarries within 5 miles, & foundation rock from 1/2 to 2 miles -

A brick of medium quality is easily made hard by the Fort & the buildings can doubtless be erected cheaper of the more permanent materials than of wood-

A race could be cut opposite the Fort & a brush dam of no great magnitude might turn the Laramie water into it & have milling here nearly if not at times of the year-

The experiment of a half breed Tesson, in farming on a branch South of the fort called Deer creek 2 miles off, shows that an experienced farmer could raise an abundant harvest here -

The mineral qualities of the soil are good; & wheat with oats rye & potatoes would flourish well had they the proper cultivation - -

There seems to be some apprehension that the place is not healthy for children, & the soldiers are afflicted with scorbutic diseases.

Oct 17th

1 m. below Bissonets

At Camp 35 on N Platte Odometer reads 22.23- & we change sides & run forward - Dist: 6.806 ms: from [?] Fort Laramie About 2 ms below we passBodeau's trading house; & then Noon at Richards Odometer reads 66.27

Horse Creek is said to be 18 ms down = Mr. Richard [Richot?] says, "take the road toward river at Horse Creek; not much of a trail but used last winter; about 3 ms the trail not much, then keep 1/2 way between river & bluffs - only one small gully to cross & it is level as a floor and at least 8 miles nearer. One little hill also to go over at 4 m. beyond Horse creek -

One hour & rise from bottom" & soon see Scott's Bluff - picturesque but not so varied as from the East side = We again come near river & then pass over ridge - & descend to Horse Creek. On the Platte, from which we pass about 2 ms on the ridges, there is but little wood - the drift furnishes fuel

At odometer 24.89 cross Horse Creek 6 inches by 60 feet & low banks -
No wood but good grass -

We pass nearly in direction of Platte Valley to mouth of a (30.34) small creek which runs nearly parallel with Horse for last two miles from S.W. & Odometer reads 30.34 - * which reads 15.3 feet circumference

But little wood here & that of drift which lies on the islands. * * * 31.037 days work

[Observations omitted]

Friday Oct 18

Leave Camp at 7 1/2 - the sun rose clear with Ther at 26 & then was clouded in & snow squalls =

We find that the road is disagreeable & turn from the Richards track Southy to old track & read Odr = 50.70. 16 ms Here enter the tables lands & see Laramie Peak-

We pass on amid the sand bluffs on good road to Robideaus old station, & about 1/2 m. East of his deserted houses observe with Paughter [?] Sext & silver watch for mer. alt of Os upper limb =

[observations omitted]

Ther 48°

The wind blows violently from the West & disturbs the horizon - the above will give approximate latitude.

The odometer reads 7700 at noon & at night Camp 37 on Platte (99) + 49.88 = About 6 ms from Scotts bluffs we come upon the Platte banks again - There is not even willows on this part of its course to mark the bed - The stream is divided by innumerable small islands & not more water than where we crossed beyond Med- Bow Mts. We cross to isles for a little driftwood & with chip [?] start a fire [?] after sunset.

There is wood & several small springs at Scotts Blfs & feed in the vicinity -

The trading Post of the Am Fur- Co. is removed 3 ms South, on the hills & at timber & water.

We cross water 5 ms. on road West [?] of Blfs & shortly after striking the old road. The want of fuel is a serious objection to this route.

Days work *** 34.349

[observations omitted] Ther 27°

River bottom appears between the two & road runs about 1 1/2 m N of Chimney & 1 1/2 S of River

The Chimney Rk is fast wearing down - it has at present a point in the centre or top which makes a fair representation of an Espy -

Old trappers say that 20 years ago this needle rock was a guide from near Laramie to a like distance below & was more than a hundred feet higher than at present.

The bottom has widened below the bluffs to about ten miles-
South of Chimney is a valley with a fine stream running nearly parallel with
the Platte in this part -

S 50 E
5 ms =

Saturday October 19

Leave 7 1/2 at Chimney Rk 1 1/2 m north the Odom reads 66.80 =

Noon 27.47

at 12.20 stop to noon § leave road § go down to river § to keep distance take off
Odometer * * * Morn 22.2

One mile from noon cross Elk creek 6 inches by 20 feet of water bed 65
feet wide, from S by W - (70.47) which comes from behind Chimney Rk -

Same character to Camp 38 on Platte where Odometer reads 70.47 * * * Days work
34.653 ms