

9-30-94

JOHN:

I TRANSCRIBED THE ENCLOSED LETTER
AS YOUR COPY AS WELL AS MINE
WAS DIFFICULT TO READ. THOUGHT YOU
WOULD WANT THIS.

Charlie

Charles M. Little
4909 Alta Mesa Dr.
Redding, CA 96002

LETTER OF BERNARD BLOEMKER
TO HIS FAMILY
HEIMRICK BLOEMKER, ST. LOUIS

Mattes: #1112

Fort Laramie
June 29, 1852

Beloved Parents, Brother, and Sister:

For the love of you I am writing you from the plains as is my duty. Thank the Lord that until now we are all well and happy and hope the same for you.

You have probably already heard that many wagons have returned and many deaths have occurred and there is hardly a day that we do not come across some graves on the way (bearing) mostly American names. Likewise those we have met returning are for the most part Americans. When asked why they are returning, they reply, "You will find out for yourselves." All this does not frighten us and we keep on.

One day, just before Pennecost, we lost our black --ley-oxen and we bought a new pair of oxen from those returning from California for \$75.00, and now our wagons are in first class order. Our next troubles will be when we run into the hot weather and in the Rocky Mountains where our wheels may collapse because we have already found it necessary to place wedges in the tires of our wagons. We took the tops off of our wagons to use as tents.

Our appetites are as good as they were in St. Louis.

Our company consists of only four wagons as one of us had already been in California and thought it better to shorten our wagons and have fewer.

Danger from the indians has not been great up to the present. Most of those we met were near the --- River. They were all friendly, although rumor says they have attacked others and we should not trust them farther than we can see them. The indians we ----- (encountered) raise their hands and say, "How, how" which is equivalent to "How are you".

At present we are probably nine hundred or a thousand miles from St. Louis and we have hopes we will fair as well as we have done until now. We go through valleys and hills, but when we reach rivers, the wagons must be let down by ropes. The South Platte River was the worst - three quarters of a mile wide, not very deep, but a sandy bottom so that if we stopped for a moment we sank into it until our front wheels almost disappeared.

You must excuse my writing, but am writing under the canopy of heaven on the road. My next will be better.

This, Fort Laramie, is the second fort that we have reached. The first was Fort Kearny. There are about sixty men in the fort and they stop every wagon and check up on the number of oxen, horses, wagons and men in each company.

One of the company has either too many or not enough (drinks) for he acts just like the Indian who, if he heard a shot, decided he must die. He will probably write of it himself. It makes no difference as all the others understood each other very well.

We are very happy in this prairie life. We travel for six days and on the seventh we rest, although we have much work to do then. Thank God, we've gotten this far. I will write again when I reach the Gold Land.

Bernard Bloemker

(Letter loaned by his sons, Benedict J. Bloemker and Frank I. Bloemker, 3627 Jenista Ave.)

A.L.S.
Bernard Bloeker

To:
His parents
Benedict Bloeker
St. Louis

Fort Laramie,
June 29, 1852.

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One day, just before Pentecost, we lost our black mule-ox and we bought a new pair of oxen from those returning from California for \$75.00, and now our wagons and outfit are in first class order. Our next troubles will be when we get into the hot weather and on the Rocky Mountains where our wheels may collapse because we have already found it necessary to place wedges in the tires of our wagons. We took the tops off of our wagons to use as tents.

Our appetites are as good as they were in St. Louis.

Our company consists of only four wagons as one of us had already been in California and thought it better to shorten our wagons and have fewer.

Danger from the Indians has not been great up to the present. Most of them we met were near the Far River. They were all friendly, although rumor says they have attacked others and we should not trust them farther than we can see them. The Indians we overtook raise their hands and say, "How, how" which is equivalent to "How are you?"

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