

THE DIARY OF JOS. C. BUFFUM

PITTSBURGH, Pa.,

SEPT. 13th, 1847.

CALIFORNIA  
STATE LIBRARY



31. Sab. Cold and blustering. Went to Church.

Jan. 1, 1849. Pretty cold. 2nd. Very cold. Snow drifts, went visiting Capt. Gleasons.

3. Returned home. Very cold and wind blowing.

4. Went to Keene, visited at Mr. Harts. Cars commenced running to Bellows Falls. Still very cold.

5. Very cold. Left home in the evening to take the Coach at 1 o'clock in the night at Col. Barkers. Played cards till the stage came.

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Jan. 6, 1849. Left Westmoreland at 1 o'clock A.M. with my wife for Hanover, reached Walpole  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 2. Charlestown 12 miles  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 5 A.M. Claremont 10 miles, Windsor 10 miles 10 o'clock. Sebanon at 1 o'clock P.M. Took the Passumpscot cars  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 2 P.M. for Norwich, Vt., 4 miles, and arrived at Hanover. Still cold but rather moderating. Paid fare 2 seats to Walpole \$1.00, to Lebanon \$4.50, to Norwich \$0.20, to Hanover \$0.50. Took supper with Mr. Hibling. He is making arrangements to go to California in the spring.

Sabbath 7. Cold keeping house. Weather milder. Rather short for money just at this time expecting it every day, however, and my credit is good here. There are only about a dozen students here at the present. I have just commenced to study French, Prof. Brown tutor. It remains very cold up to Sat. 13. Having hardly thawed this month. Weather moderates some. Cold to sleet in the evening.

Sabbath 14. Rained in the morn. Cleared off at 9 o'clock. Very pleasant and warm. Very windy P.M. and cooler. Listened to Prof. Sanborn in A.M. to; Rev. Richards P.M. Sanborn's discourse was upon sabbath schools, very interesting and rather poetical.

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20. Met with the California A. T. & M. Co. at the Dartmouth Hotel. They have already met twice but have not yet formed a company. But they having obtained the requisite number 25. I was elected one of the Directors of the Company. I had for a long time felt the influence of the tide of enterprise setting towards Cal. and the flattering prospects in that section of our country. I devoted all the time I could spare from my recitations to informing myself on the state of the country, its productions,



mineral wealth, etc., but had not yet met with a proper opportunity to go. It seemed to me that a company of this kind would meet my wishes exactly. Therefore my wife being willing I joined this company. The company effected but little this evening except receiving signatures. The bonds to be given a week from tonight. The principal subject of discussion is how shall we raise a sufficient fund to procure provisions and to ship them via Cape Horn. Adjourned. Weather still severe.

23. Directors met at Mr. Hiblings to consider the matter of raising funds. Made up a report of no progress. Weather milder.

24. Thaws and rains. Snow going fast. Waiting with great anxiety for a letter from my brother at Pittsburgh in relation to drawing some of my funds from him to carry me to C. and also for my present use; being very short indeed having expected some long before this. I have written twice to him during the past week. I have read with great pleasure Kendall's Sante Fe expedition as also Cal. Emory's account of Gen. Kearney's expedition against the Alta California in 47, and also against New Mexico.

27. We had another Cal. meeting. Voted to pay in \$400 instead of \$200 instead of raising a fund by hire as money is scarce and cannot be got except at great interest and the Co. are opposed to selling shares as proposed at \$500 to expire in one year.

Feb. 3. Californians came together again and some gave their notes. The Cash to be paid in 2 weeks preparatory to shipment. Have lately been corresponding with Brother Davis about going to California. There is a Co. going from Pittsburgh of about 100 members. We have had fine sleighing so far this winter. Weather rather pleasant. Poetical moonlight evenings.

10. Returned to Westmoreland. Term not quite out. Preparing for California. Recd. of Brother a draft of fifty dollars; spoke with Prof. Sanborn in regard to going to California. He desired me to complete my studies as soon as possible; said I should be qualified to take any stand I pleased when I might finish my education. He desired me to take notes of the country to which I was traveling, its productions, minerals, etc., and lecture on my return. He desired to know what profession I would follow and told me what our class would read this summer. I told none of the



rest of the faculty of my intentions nor took up my connections at college. I may or may not go there if I ever return from California. The mines I believe were discovered in June 1847. All late reports confirm their richness and inexhaustibility. Some have returned with great quantities of gold and a great amount is on the way for the U. S.

25. This interval I have spent at home nothing of note having occurred. I have been busy getting ready for Pittsburgh and California. Mr. Wills of Walpole, Mr. Hagar, Buchminister and others of Keene, Webster and Dunbar of Westmoreland, 2 Dudleys of Chesterfield, etc. are gone or going soon. My wife's Brother David talks of going soon either with me or some other Co. I get letters from him frequently on the subject. I have today written to our Commissary about taking me on at New Orleans. I went to Samon's River village day before yesterday and purchased a rifle to carry with me out there. I bought of A. Leonard a price \$19. After an extraordinary cold time since the fall of the snow 23 Dec. we find the weather quite moderate. Snow is getting scarce, the hills are bare some. Snows a little today but thaws some. Reading Ovid when I get time.

28. Although very anxious to get out for California yet it was with great regret that I bid my father's people fare well to set out upon so long and difficult a journey. I thought perhaps I might never meet them all again in this lower world and tears flowed freely as we parted. I now shipped this journal via Cape Horn and took a pocket journal with me.

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Jan. 15, 1850. I have just recd my poor journal by the Brig. Ann from Boston where it was shipped with a box of goods that I left there in care of Cous. George W. Buffum. It was shipped in March '49. Before its arrival I had feared it was lost and had regretted sending it. However, it is safe now. I eagerly snatched those books with which I was so familiar and which reminded me of the halls of literature, together with those articles doubly dear to my heart for their having been so generously selected by near and dear friends; whose hearts were sad and whose cheeks were glistening with warm tears of regret as I shook the parting hand and bade them a long farewell perhaps forever to enter on the long and dangerous pilgrimage to the land of gold; those books and articles, memorials of the warm affection of friends, of the comfort and happiness of home, of my adolescence, and of days past and gone, yet fresh in memory calender, I snatched and pressed to my lips, while my bosom heaved with real joy and



my soul was filled with almost extatic happiness. Nothing may seem strange in the course of a California fever.

Transfer of notes taken on a trip across the Plains and Mountains from the United States to California in the Summer of 1849 by way of the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains and Trucky river.

March 1, 1849. Having bid adieu to home and friends I started in company with my wife for Pittsburgh, Pa. Two short hours sufficed to accomplish our trip from Keene, N. H. to Boston by means of the fine Fitchburgh Railroad. We put up at the Massachusetts house. After arranging some little business there we left Boston at 4 P.M. in the cars via Worcester for New Haven and N. Y.

March 2, 1849. Took steamboat for N. Y. and arrived there on the next morning. Took the 8 o'clock train of cars for Philadelphia, arrived there at noon. It commenced snowing. Philadelphia is filled to over flowing with visitors on their way to the inauguration of Genl Taylor as Pres. of the U. S. of A. All the Hotels were said to be crowded. Stopped at a boarding house and left for Baltimore at 4½ o'clock. Cars were jammed full. Took steamboat in the evening up Chesapeake Bay. We were delighted with the touching strains of music from a band which was going up to Washington to play at the inauguration ball. The boat ran aground in the night but got off without difficulty.

3. Arrived in Baltimore at daylight. Snows. Hotels are crowded. Took breakfast at the American called on my friend E. Chickery. Left for Cumberland by the cars. We were whirled rapidly over precipices among the mountains through tunnels across the verdant fields of Virginia and along the picturesque Potomac till we arrived at Harpers ferry. Dining here we left the same (one of the most grand and imposing scenes furnished by natures handiwork;) and arrived at Cumberland in the evening at 5. Supped and took stage for Brownsville.

4. Passed over the mountains and arrived at B. in the evening. Took steamboat for Pittsburgh. Was well received there.

5. Arrived there in the morning. Spent a few days in preparing for the trip to Cal. Left my wife at her father's and took passage on the steamboat De Witt Clinton for St. Louis. Stopped over night at Cincinnati over night. Attended



the theatre in the evening where I was robbed of my pocket manuscript. Next day proceeded on our trip. Very pleasant journey so far. River was high. Spring began to peep forth and Nature began to smile and look lovely. There is much interesting scenery on the Ohio but the scenery is more grand on the Missouri river. Arrived at St. Louis found a place of more importance than I had supposed it to be; is improving rapidly. Behind it are beautiful rolling prairies and opposite are the flats of Ill. Remained here some 2 weeks waiting for some horses I had sent into the country for. They having arrived we took steamboat, the St. Ange, for Independence. Cholera has broke out at St. Louis.

Apr. 4. Arrived at Independence found it thronged with emigrants. Proceeded to camp with Capt. Allen's party from Pittsburgh and camped some 2 miles back of the town in a grove near Capt. Abner T. Staples a Missouri slaveholder and farmer. Here we had a foretaste of prairie life, here we had an opportunity to review the steps we had taken and to think of the comforts we had left at home. After testing our skill at cookery and the strength of our constitution upon the cold wet ground we made preparation to leave by way of Sante Fee but abandoning that project for the want of sufficient number to awe the bold Camanches. Some thought best to go by the great south pass: a part was unprepared for that difficult journey and others getting mutinous and disliking their Capt. the Company broke up. Mr. Robert Baird and myself took lodgings at Capt. Staples and made an arrangement to go in company with 2 of his sons who were going out with 2 good 6 mule teams and plenty of provisions. Here we fared exceedingly well in a log cabin sleeping in the same room with the Proprietor and his lady and with others. This is frontier life. We arrived ourselves of an opportunity to be present at a slave wedding which was altogether a nice affair. They had a excellent wedding feast. There were some here of handsome complexion and light hair. As the grass is now springing up we prepared to move out upon the plains.

May 1. Cholera had already broken out here among the emigrants. Having completed our outfit we bid adieu to civilization and "rolled" out of town at 2 P.M. Our mess consisted of Michael T. Staples, Felix Staples, R. Wm. Childs, Saml. H. Irwin, Robert Baird and myself. We had 2 6 mule teams good-aged mules (6 is about the right age) 2 spare mules, young, and 2 riding ponies, good waggons between 4 and 5 thousand lbs. baggage. Cholera was increasing at Independence. There had been several deaths there. We were glad to get out upon the plains hoping to be free from the



pestilence. We learned last night that the town of Kansas had been so severely visited by it that the inhabitants had deserted the place. With all the usual preliminaries of teamsters breaking their teams in passing others stalled in the mud with a wheel or a pole broke and amid the moving multitude of emigrants we passed on 9 miles to Rice's and encamped for the night. We are now fairly upon the prairie. This is lovely plantation. Scarcely had we unharnessed and picketed our animals and partaken of our hasty supper when a thunder storm burst upon us and we crept beneath and into the waggons and slept till morning. Our mess had discouraged me from taking a tent but I now the need of one.

2. Taking a supply of corn from Rice's we moved on over the prairies and passed some excellent plantations. The morning was fair but the road slippery and a great amount of breath was spent in shouting and swearing at the teams increasing bad runs, etc. At Sloans we took the left hand road which is a near cut to the blue. We encamped about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from the blue, picketed our animals and prepared our supper; then we took a stroll down to the Blue and caught some cat fish. This is a very pretty small stream, clam shells are plenty upon the banks. Buckeyes grow here. This is the very outskirts of civilization. We stationed a guard about our animals tonight. Friend Baird and myself were on the morning watch. Here while walking the rounds of the guard, while the stars were beaming brightly above me and all nature seemed hushed around in a death like stillness save the occasional tinkle of the bell as the pony shook the dew from his bushy mane, here in the spontaneous garden of Nature at the outskirts of civilization, my mind seemed freer than ever before and while reflection retraced the scenes of my past life calmly contemplation portrayed my present self then wild imagination burst unfettered into the future.

3. When I arose this morning I discovered a prairie rattlesnake coiled beneath the blanket under my head where I suppose he had rested very comfortably but I soon put an end to his snakish career by separating his head to far from his body. This kind of snake is said to be as poisonous as the copperhead. They are much smaller than the common rattlesnake. The usual remedy for a snake bite here is to get drunk on whisky or some other liquor. It is said to be a cure. Having "caught" up (harnessed), we crossed the Blue took in some wood and passed on over the prairie a few miles and camped near a little run at the right where we caught plenty of small



fish and spent the afternoon in preparing our arms for immediate use as we are now in the indian country. Here some of our party overtook us who had been detained at Independence after the time of starting.

4. Rains cold northeast storm. Passed about noon the camping place called Lone elm a solitary tree scarce another in the range of vision. Near night we came to Indian creek, passed over and camped on the other side. Here a great number of emigrants were encamped. A half breed lives here by the name of Rodgers who cultivates some land and is fencing in his grounds. Having travelled all day in the storm without food we were very cold and hungry. Some of our party in searching for wood came across some rails which they brought into camp and we soon had a fire and a comfortable supper. But Mr. Rodgers soon made his appearance and apprized us that we had made use of his rails and claimed a compensation for them. We paid him and then threw ourselves upon the wet ground and slept till morning. I met a Shawnee Indian who seemed to be pretty drunk. He pressed me to take a dram with him. He spoke broken English. He said a million thousand had gone to California. He said he would go there soon to hunt. He said his tribe had one 1000 warriors. Said their country was 100-35 miles. He boasted of his war feats and showed a deep scar in his leg from a wound caused by an arrow.

5. Here we took the right hand trail - a shorter cut by twenty miles than the old trail to the Wakarusa. We came up to an Indian's hut and stopped to hold a talk with him. Passed Bull creek, fine water, steep banks; passed another small creek and came to the Wakarusa. Banks very steep. After about 3 hours hard labor we got our waggon all up and proceeded to camp beyond the timber at a late hour. 3 other waggons have joined us. One of the messes broke a pole from their wagon. We found water and camped. A half breed lives here; keeps cows; asked me up to tea with him but I declined going prepared to go on as we were. This is the most lovely portion of country I have ever seen surrounded by beautiful rolling prairies checked in every direction by lovely creeks slowly gliding amid the undulations of the prairie yet distinctly marked to the eye even at a great distance by the long lines of trees that grace their banks.

6. The bottom was very wet from recent rains and in crossing we broke another pole. Camped on the rising ground. Found water in holes but in a dry time it would be scarce here. Grass is first rate. We might have started 10



days sooner than we did. It has rained more or less every day since we started untill today. Fine today, made 3 miles.

7. Passed on some 18 miles and camped near a run. Passed Capt. Hedspeths Co. today. Wood scarce except at a distance. We have passed the head waters of the Wakalupee which wind its way through a great vally to the Kansas,

8. Passed on some 10 miles and turned out near Willow Spring yielding pure sweet water the first I have tasted since I left the Wakalupee. With my glass I reconnoitred an Indian town across a pretty creek. Passed several trails. Passed Monchock creek, good water. Saw some old buffalo wallows. Saw for the first time on the route the prickly pear. Passed in sight of 3 Indian towns. Came into camp near the Mission and stopped to get a wheel fixed. Here are several houses and a blacksmith shop. A good many Indians about, some finely decked off. An Old Indian calling himself a Doctor showed me a kind of snake root with bulbous root that he said would cure snakebites by chewing and spitting it on the wound or by putting it on as a poultice.

9. Passed Mission Creek. Passed old Kansas town consisting of 4 houses. As we approached the old trading post called Uniontown, Indians came up with us finely decked and trimmed mounted on beautiful Indian ponies which they desired to swap for American horses. Swap was all they could utter in english except tobac meaning tobacco and whiskey. They rode along with into town. This place is made up of some 20 houses and 5 stores inhabited by French and half breeds with squaws for wives. We passed on to the ferry and crossed. 2 half breeds keep the ferry. We swam the stock over and camped on the other bank of the Kansas.

10. Moved 2 miles to good grass and camped. The Potawatomes live on the opposite side of the river. The Kansas Indians are riding fine ponies in every direction. They are said to be quite thevish. We keep a good eye upon them. I here wrote a letter back to my wife. Spent the afternoon in fishing in Soldier creek, caught some good catfish. Very warm today. Left my letter at Uniontown.

11. Passed Soldier creek and went some 5 miles and camped to await an organization. Very warm showers passed round to the north.



May 12. As Capt. Headspeth had promised to pilot us we were to await him here; but learning that he had already a large company we determined to move on by ourselves. Accordingly we called a meeting from 13 waggons for the purpose of organizing a co. of sufficient number to travel through the wild Indian territory with safety. Being called to preside in the chair we proceeded to elect a Capt. for our company. Elijah Childs was chosen unanimously. A case of cholera occurred in a waggon camped near us. It was a man from Mississippi. 2 had already died from this waggon. This case was spasmodic. One of his friends in pursuit of a Doctor learning that I had some medicine with me desired me to administer to him as there was no doctor at hand. I gave him the Neutral mixture and bathed his legs and gave No. 6 brought on a perspiration and he said he was better; he was gently perspiring and freed from cramps and his discharges were checked. But a Dr. happening along ordered opium and another ordered Opium and blue mass so that he was stupefied by evening and was near dying when we left next morning and as I afterwards learned did die. Warm days and cool nights.

13. Sabbath. We moved on today, passed Crooked creek which is bridged. Toll 1 dime per waggon. Here is a horse power saw mill, log cabins and bark wigwams, inhabited by half breeds and Indians. Passed through a pretty country inhabited by the Kaws with pretty towns and missions. I noticed one house surmounted by a cross with a small bell suspended to a post to invite with its chiming sounds the aborigines to religious worship. To see this bell ready to yield its charming sounds here in this wild region gave the place a very romantic yet sublime aspect. We passed 2 or 3 small runs. Passed Clear Creek. These waters are about 1½ miles apart. At 3 P.M. we came to little Vermillion Creek. This is the boundary between the Kaws and Pawnees. Here is a village from which the Kaws were driven by the Pawnees lately. The river banks are covered with a stout growth of timber. One of our men thought he was attacked with the cholera but it proved to be a diarrhea. There appears to be a great tendency to this complaint here. We passed the creek without much difficulty and camped on the opposite side. We now keep a sharp lookout for the Pawnees who are represented as savage.

14. We had an awful display of lightning last night and a severe storm at morn. Passed on about 2 miles and nooned. We formed a coral for the first time tonight as we are now among the wild Indians.

15. Cool today. Wind east, some storm. Plenty water and grass. Passed the Big Vermillion near night and camped on the



bank. The banks are steep. We let the waggon down with ropes. Bryant of Kentucky passed us here with his pack company. We passed a small creek today called Hurricane Creek. Oxen are keeping up with mules thus far.

16. Passed Rock Creek. We are passing over a very rolling country. Came to Big Blue passed 2 graves, saw 2 graves on the east bank of the blue, one a Mrs. Keys and one a young man killed by the accidental discharge of his gun in the wagon. Let this be a lesson to us that we put no guns into the wagon capped. Passed the Blue and nooned. This stream has a good bottom fine timber and game such as deer, turkies, elk, etc. Passed on and camped 9 miles from the Blue. Country here is very rolling.

17. Some 3 miles further on we passed the junction of the St. Joseph road with this. This road was also swarming with emigrants. Some large trains with families some for Cal. and others for Oregon. The road is covered with waggon as far as the sight extends which with their white tops presents to the distant spectator a truly imposing spectacle. I think St. Joseph is a better starting place than Independence. It is a shorter distance from there to the junction than from Independence and on that road there is but little water to cross. The cholera has prevailed some at St. Joseph and some have died on St. Jo road since setting out. We passed a little run 2 or 3 miles from the junction and during the day some holes in the prairie where there is a little water but did not stop. Passed on and came to water in a sort of a run. Made 22 miles over a high rolling ridge. Passed another grave near here. Mr. Landon died here of typhoid fever. How many that set out with golden hopes have found a grave in the western wilds where the desert air shall sing their requiem till time shall cease. Grass is poor and appears to grow poorer daily as we advance but we have fine roads. An antelope was seen yesterday by one of our party and Mr. Sappington brought a fine deer into camp from which we had some fine feasting as it is the first fresh meat we have partaken of since we left Independence; save some small game such as squirrels, snipes, etc.

18. Very cool but fine weather for travelling. Passed a pretty run about 9 o'clock with considerable timber. Steep banks. Nooned at a little run. Passed on and reached the little Blue and camped. Last night just after we had put on the guards it being somewhat dark our ears were assailed by the hideous howls of a hungry band of wolves. All from the oldest to the youngest of them joined in the doleful



chorus and rendered the night sad and gloomy. Today we passed a small run near which the road forks. We took the left hand and here I saw some kind of mineral but had not time to examine it. It looked like an oxide of iron or lead. Passed the Pawnee trail and Wyeths run.

19. Today we passed over a very level portion, a good distance from the Blue. Buffalo grass begins to be plenty. Here we saw a Buffalo skul and much old signs. They used to roam here but are now retreating west. Saw frequent Elk horns of exceeding large dimensions. Every bone or horn by the way side is endorsed with numerous individuals and companies names who have preceded us, together with the date of passing. Papers are stuck up upon sticks recording unfortunate circumstance encounters with Indians and cautionary devices. Saw some Indians and a squad went out to reconnoiter but failed to come up with them. Passed a large Co. from Ohio whose stock stampeded and ran off in the night breaking through their coral and nearly killing one of the Co. by running over him. They have lost 80 head of oxen and cannot get a trace of them as yet. They are in a sad condition in the midst of this wild region! This is our first day up the little blue. Along drive to water some 20 miles but we passed a little run poor water at noon. Passed on and camped near the river in good grass. Saw some very pretty stones in the runs today.

May 20, 1849. Passed on and nooned in a very pleasant vally of the Blue. We here refreshed ourselves with bathing; a thing very essential to health on the journey and very delightful after travelling long in the dust. We were all taken by surprise this afternoon by an antelope which bounded past the waggons stopping for a moment to gaze at us then fleeing away before a gun could be got at. He ascended to the top of a hill took one more look at us then bounded away. Camped on a neck of the river.

21. Six waggons drove out from our Company this morning through some dissatisfaction with our regulations. They were from San dusky O. They made choise of M. M. Titus for Capt. of their squad. I saw an elk yesterday in the distance. We passed a little creek and camped some 4 miles from where the road leaves the Blue.

22. A single horseman bearing an express from Fort Larimie met us here on his way to the states. Left the Blue passed some water and wood about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 9 A.M. Nooned near a little run on the left. We are now passing over a very level but dry country between the Blue and Platte rivers. Buffalo bones are plenty saw many antelopes but



could not get a shot at them. They are very shy and fleet. Here for the first time I saw the Phantasmagoria of the plains. I at first thought the prairies were all on fire in the distance, then that I saw a large and beautiful river made lovelier by the clustering groves that bowed gracefully to the breeze. Passed a small spring on the right at 4 o'clock. Passed on and encamped on a mound near a muddy pool of water. Water so poor that I could not use it. So I camped without my supper (for we had no more wood). The others drank it made into coffee and soaked their hard bread in for we had no more wood. We are not far from the Platte now. Some companys teams are badly used up the young ones especially.

23. Passed on to Platte River. Nooned and laid up for the day. Aired our baggage and prepared our arms for active duty as we are in the near vicinity of large numbers of Pawnees. We have just past their principal trail.

24. Passed up the river to Fort Kearny over a plain strewn with the bones of the Buffalo. This fort heretofore called Fort Childs consists of a few adobe huts and quarters for the troops. It is however about to be improved. Capt. Rop commands here. It having rained a great deal of late the road is very bad - three wheels often sinking in up to axeltree. We turned down by the fort to the right passed a difficult run went on some 2 miles and laid up. It has rained most of the day. Wood is scarce here often having to cross the water for it. A severe thunder storm came on from the east about nightfall and continued till midnight. Such lightning as we had I never before witnessed. It seemed as if everything in camp was waapt in a sheet of flame and Nature groaned with awful and continued thunder. The display of electricity on the plains is grand and sublime beyond conception. The guards were driven in by the storm and the water increased to 3 inches depth in our tents and we crowded into the waggons and slept across bales and boxes for the night. We have acquired the art of sleeping anywhere at this period of our journey. Large companies are splitting here badly many are selling out at low rates giving or throwing away their waggons and much of their loads and packing the remainder upon their already jaded animals and hastening forward to grasp those yellow lumps which a fevered imagination is picturing to their hopes and minds.

May 25. Very cool. Rode up to the fort and left a letter. Passed up the river some 16 miles and camped. Buffalo are said to be 20 miles off the trail.



26. Wood scarce. Nooned today without wood none to be had consequently we took a cold snack. Very cold today. North wind with some rain. The river is high. There is some good grass but it is very backward. This must be a very cold climate. We entered a prairie dog town and shot some of the inhabitants and served them up for supper. We also shot one of the owls that reside with the dogs in the same hole and killed a rattle snake that makes their third companion often finding the three in company. The soil there is fairly undermined by these animals. Camped on Plain Creek. An antelope was shot near camp tonight. They are plenty here.

27. Sabbath. The day fine. Road soft. Many companies lay by today but we think it better discretion to move on. An antelope was killed today the meat was very fine. We thought we saw buffalo on the opposite side of the river. Plenty of old sign. We now have to resort to buffalo chips to cook with. The country is broken back from the river and highly picturesque. The buffalo have been frightened away from our tail by the preceding emigrants. Saw some concrete salt beneath the turf today. Made 20 miles today and camped near the river. Grass pretty good. River falling.

28. Made 20 miles and camped on tolerable grass. Passed a line of picturesque butes. Met some hunters and traders returning to the states with loads of buffalo hides. They give an unfavorable account of the grass ahead.

29. Passed a little creek today camped in good grass. Went east, signs of a heavy storm. About 11 o'clock at night we were aroused by the howling of a fierce tempest that had suddenly burst upon us. We instantly sprang to the support of our laboring tent but it was soon wrested from our grasp and hurled down over our heads. The lightning seemed to glance along the wetted sheet which we were trying to keep between us and the storm, for a moment glaring in our faces while the thunder almost preceding the flash stunned our ears with an awful crash. When the storm had somewhat subsided with to our skins and shivering with cold we ventured out and crept into the waggons till morning. This was one of our hardest trials.

30. Very cold and rainy. Some of our stock was driven off by the storm but they were found in the afternoon. Much stock was lost in this storm. Buffalo chip were wet, could not cook. We were compelled to go 3 miles for wood and we finally succeeded in cooking a supper. We suffered much.



today and turned in tonight in wet blankets. One of our men has an attack of fever.

31. Cold N. W. wind. Some rain. Passed the fork of the river and proceeded some 15 miles up the south fork to the crossing and camped. Saw here the carcass of a buffalo that had been lately killed indicating that we are now in their region.

June 1. A delightful morning. We had a fine chase for a deer this morning but did not succeed in getting any. Passed the ford in about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet water without difficulty. The river is shallow here and full of changing quicksands. This ford was discovered 2 days ago. We crossed over to the other fork about 1 mile and proceeded 8 miles up the river and camped in fine grass. Some of our men had good success in hunting this afternoon. They came into camp just at sunset laden with the choicest portions of some buffalo cows they had killed on the opposite side of the fork. And we cooked and eat of it till our craving stomachs were satisfied in the evening. This was certainly the best feast that I had ever enjoyed. We had no sooner arranged our camp and picketed our animals than a huge old buffalo bull which had walked leisurely up the fork on the opposite side for some miles plunged into the stream with a majestic mien and swan towards our camp. As he approached he paused in the middle of the stream to look around and take breath then came on again. Hastily capping our rifles we stole down to the bank and awaited his coming. As he rose upon the bank he caught the alarm and began to gallop away for the hills when we at a given signal saluted his majesty of the prairie with a volly of 25 rifle balls none of which brought him down but seemed to urge him to greater speed. Before we could reload he was beyond the reach of our balls. But there being some horses by he was despatched after a serious chase by the aid of holster pistols one shot taking effect about the heart. He had 40 bullet holes in him and he was left untouched to feast the wolves. Sad sport!

2. The high bluffs here extend to the rivers bank and we were driven to the highlands where a road comes in from the ford. We came down upon the fork again camped. Made 15 miles.

3. Sabbath. Fine. Road sandy. Took the highlands again and struck into the old trail at Ash hollow. Drove a mile above and camped. Here were some lodges of French and half breed traders with their Indian squaws and children. The young Indian girls were neatly dressed in deer skin frocks



and beautiful moccasins. Their lodges are large some like a round tent and covered with dressed buffalo hides. A hole is left at top to serve as a chimney and the fire is built in the middle of the lodge. They were just serving up a dog for supper as we went into a lodge; they keep a large number of wolfish looking dogs for their meat as we would a drove of cattle. They seem to lead a pleasant life in their way. They were very busy making moccasins for the emigrants which they exchange in trade with them. Here is a delightful vally. On one side the river glides noiselessly away studded with pretty islands covered with cedars. On the other side stands a long line of most attracting bluffs varying into almost every form as if to please some wild caprice of nature. Here I thought I witnessed one of the most glorious sunsets I had ever been my lot to behold. We passed a fine spring this afternoon by a cedar bluff. A large body of Pawnees are daily expected from the south to trade.

4. Passed over a very sandy country but occasionally found good grass. Weather hot. A wolf stole very near me on guard tonight but it being against our rules to alarm the camp except at the approach of Indians he escaped with his life. 130 miles forward to Fort Larimie.

5. Passed a salt marsh this afternoon, about 5 as a heavy storm seemed about to burst over our heads. We hastened into camp and had but just ungeared our animals when another terrific storm of thunder and hail bearing dark clouds of sand before it came upon us. We sprang into the waggons for shelter closing the sheet and holding it to prevent the storm from tearing it any. When it had abated.. we crept out and took a cup of coffee and again turned in for the night. A waggon said to contain 40 cwt. was rolled over and over by this gale and much of its contents were lost in the river.

June 6. Passed Smiths and Dry Creeks. The latter is a boisterous stream. 1 mule and 1 horse were drowned here yesterday by a sudden rise of its waters. We are now passing in full view of court house rock several miles from the trail to the left. This is a high, oblong, architectural looking rock resembling much the capitol at Washington. Chimney Rock appears in view 12 miles distant. Camped in another thunder storm. These storms are very frequent here at this time.



7. I started this morning to visit Chimney Rock. After crossing a desolate plain for 8 miles I came up with it and ascended about 150 feet and carved my name upon the side. This rock is about 300 feet high. The lower part is cemented sand stone, the tower is of basalt. It appears to have been struck by lightning at some former time and a part has fallen. It is much cracked and doubtless 20 years will send its pinnacle to the ground and it will cease to be the great curiosity of this region. The bluffs here also present a most imposing spectacle presenting almost any shape that the wildest reverie of the imagination could conjure up. Returned to camp. tolerable grass.

8. Approached Scotts bluff. At a distance by a little aid of the imaginary powers we beheld in this bluff a large and extended fort with high walls, battlements and gates; while the low cedars upon the top were metamorphosed into troops preparing to do battle. Nooned near a blacksmith shop kept by a Frenchman by the name of Roubadoux. He is intermarried with the Indians. Near here we found a fine spring in a small canon. Passed a short distance and camped. A part of the company have concluded to pack very from this place.

9. Four of the waggons remaining to prepare for packing the other 4 moved on and passed over Horse creek and nooned at a small lake on the left of the trail. Good road but poor grass. Saw volcanic matter on the hill tops today and indication of mineral.

10. A squad of us rode on in advance of the train to Fort Larimie. After passing over some 18 miles of country somewhat sandy but decked with almost every variety of wild flowers as roses, lillies, a sort of marygold, etc., etc., we came to Larimie's creek and having crossed with some difficulty as the water was high we rode up to the fort. This fort is built of adobies surrounded by a high wall with towers above the gates to defend them. In the inclosed fort are stores, barracks, stables and work shops. It being sabbath everything was pretty quiet. Some are curring down their waggons to make them lighter and throwing away much of their loads as the fort is already over stocked with provisions and refuse to purchase more. Almost every body has goods to dispose of. We returned across the creek and met our train and camped in a thunder storm. Cooked our frugal meal and partook of it beneath the waggons for shelter. Our numbers are now so decreased that each of us are obliged to stand on guard every night 2 hours which is pretty hard duty after the tiresomeness of traveling all day.



11. The creek being high we crossed by ferry \$1.00 per waggon. I stopped at the fort and wrote 2 letters to my friends in the states. Rode on about 3 miles and found the train camped on the river. Spent the afternoon in lightening our waggons by throwing out bacon, etc. This whole valley is scattered with goods and chattels that people have thrown out to lighten their waggons in their impatience to get forward more rapidly.

12. Passed warm creek and drove late to reach bitter creek; crossed it twice and went some ways down to tolerable grass.

June 13, 1849. Crossed the creek again and passed Horse Shoe creek. Nooned on poor grass. Excellent roads. Camped near three creeks tolerable grass. Oxen are getting foot sore here. Black hills are on our left (right?) and the roads are rocky.

14. Crossed the La Bonte some distance beyond found a little water and camped among the wormwood. It seems very disagreeable. Passed over a very broken volcanic region. We saw some beautiful specimens of lava and large red butes where the earth seems filled with the red oxide of iron, thrown up by volcanic action. The road for a long distance has the appearance of an old brock yard and the dust that rises from it is almost suffocating.

15. Passed the Sea Phele Boize and camped on the opposite side of Deer creek. Grass rather poor.

16. Passed on about 18 miles to the Ferry. The 2 lower ferries being crowded with 200 waggons we drove to the upper one. We found 300 waiting here. Some were crossing on rafts. As we could not cross under a day or two we drove a mile and a half south and camped on good grass by a little creek. There is considerable snow on the heights to our left.

17. Waited for our turn at the ferry.

18. Cut off and coupled up the waggons. Washed, etc. Shot plenty of antelope on the hills.

19. Crossed the ferry at 12 o'clock M. \$3 dollars per waggon toll-current price; swim the stock. The river here has a rapid current, and the boat is constructed of 3 canoes fastened together with planks making a passage somewhat unsafe. Several persons have been drowned at the



ferries below. We here saw leaking from the bluffs a salt similar to suberatus. We drove till late, camped and drove our animals  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to water. We camped near a salt lake, the water was nearly like lye and poison to animals. We are obliged to guard the animals from these sinks which are abundant in this region. Some running water is saturated with soda. I scraped an acquaintance with Horace and John Buffum, sons of Thomas Buffum of Rhode Island. They told me that their Unkle had travelled and searched in England but could find no record or coat of arms or other emblem of the genealogy of the Buffonian race but satisfied himself that we are a branch of the same line and probably a descendant of Count Buffon of France. Very cool today.

20. Cold morning. Struck camp at peep of day; drove 5 miles to a spring, watered and filled our casks and drove till 9 a.m. then ungeared and prepared breakfast. Passed Willow spring about 3 P.M., water sulphurous but tolerable good. Filled our casks and camped 4 miles from the spring near a little run at the left by a big meadow. Signs of coal formation.

21. 2 of our animals sick from poison water or grass. Gave them salt and bled them in the mouth. They showed symptoms of poison by frequently stretching out their necks and refusing food and water. Passed 2 small creeks this morning. Nooned 3 miles from Sweetwater River. Passed Independence rock. This rock stands in an insulated position in the midst of a valley walled in by high barren granite cliffs. We have passed several Salt lakes; some of them were dry and the ground was covered 2 or 3 inches in depth with this deposite which as you approached looked like snow. The earth is filled with an alkaline substance resembling ashes which at the time of the rains leakes into these hollows and concretes. Many use this salt to raise bread and say that it is as good as pearlash or soda. The coal formation which appeared in several spots today resembles charcoal. This portion of the country at some period has been as it were consumed by volcanic fires. Every object here gives evidence of this fact. We forded the river at Independence rock, drove past the Devils gate, crossed a small creek and camped in the valley. Buffalo chips are still our principal fire wood. The devils gate has been made by a rupture of a granite cliff of 300 feet in height. The rock is sundered and separated a sufficient distance to allow the Sweetwater river to pass through. We were almost enchanted with the romantic beauty of this spot. We lingered long to gaze



upon this work of Nature and to enjoy the fresh breeze that wafted gently through the canon. We scaled its height to view the setting sun and saw a large quantity of dark iron stone. Just as the sun had hid his fiery face behind the frowning mountains we descended by letting ourselves down from one rock to another by our hands. We arrived in safty at the mouth of the gate and after observing large quantities of the yellow mica which is abundant here we proceeded to camp. Nights cool and frosty as we approach the mountains.

22. At 9 A.M. on a rise we came in view of the Rocky Mountains white with snow looking like impassable barriers of marble. Nooned on a bend of the river. Friend Baird came near being killed this morning by getting entangled in the whiffletrees as he attempted to get into the waggon to cross a creek. But escaped without broken bones yet was severely bruised. Drove a 6 mile stretch from the river and camped in the valley near the Bluffs.

23. Crossed the river twice and left Fremont's route to the left of the river, crossed again. Nooned and struck Fremont's trail again about 18 miles from the river on the dry stretch. Camped 4 miles beyond Ice spring without water. Ice spring is a boggy place where ice remains beneath the soil throughout the summer, from whence its name.

24. Reached the ford at 9 o'clock. Crossed a creek near and took the Mormon route to the river again where we found pretty good grass. Now struck over some steep hills, passed Cherry creek and camped. Grass scarce. Cool with showers and hail.

25. Passed 2 branches and fed. Passed a little creek about noon. A short distance farther on passed the Sweetwater for the last time. Filled our kegs and bid adieu to the waters that are hastening to the Atlantic. Passed up by a gradual ascent to the culminating point of the great South Pass of the Rocky Mountains. So gradual is the inclination that it is indeed difficult to decide upon the highest point. High and rugged mountains covered perhaps with the snows of an eternal winter stand on our right. Elevations less bold lay at our left among the most prominent of which is Fable rock. The wind was blowing raw and cold. We drew on our over coats and still shook with the cold. We have passed banks of snow today 8 feet deep. We gently descended about 2 miles made roaring fires with the pitchy sage bushes and feasted on an antelope we had killed today. We are now in the territory formerly belonging Mexico and have passed the



great wall that formerly separated it from the territory of the U. S. almost without knowing it. And it comes forcibly to mind that this passage in the great Rocky Mountain was fashioned by the supreme ruler to aid the progress of the American people in their westward march to the Pacific Ocean.

26. One mile brought us to Pacific Springs the first water we meet that flows westward to the Pacific. There seemed to be a novelty in drinking of these waters - almost a sympathy for that rill that leaping and sparkling as if in joy at our meeting was about to set out with us on the long journey to the Pacific Ocean its Father waters. Filling our kegs here we proceeded over an gently undulating plain with a slight descent 10 miles to Dry Sandy Creek and nooned beyond. Grass tolerable. We are now past most of the oxen. Many are foot sore and we have passed a dozen lying dead by the way side today from the effects of the poison waters and over driving. Rail and hail today. Passed Little Sandy 10 miles from Dry. Little grass. Camped  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile ahead. Passed over a level plain.

27. Six miles brought us to Big Sandy pretty large stream. Grass is pretty much eaten up in this part. Three miles from Dry Sandy the road forks. The right fork is Greenwoods Cut-off to Bear Valley said to be 50 miles nearer than to take left fork which is the old trail by Fort Bridger. Remained at Big Sandy till 4 P.M. to recruit and cook preparatory to crossing the desert before us which is 50 miles across to Green river without water and but little grass. Night is the best time to cross this burning desert. Proceeded till 10 A.M. over a level ashy plain strewn with small volcanic fragments (passed some salt water) when the Nature being entirely wearied out we picketed our stock in the sage and taking a cup of coffee we made our beds upon the sands and slept soundly till morning.

28. Passed some very deep hollows. 26 miles brought us to Green river; Badly fatigued and suffering for water. When near our animals smelling the water quickened their pace till they came in sight of it then struck into a gallop and ran wildly into the river and drunk as long as they could hold. We took Capt. Childs into our waggon yesterday. He is sick with bilious fever. There are several sick here with this complaint. Had a slight attack myself but threw it off with an antibilious physic.